

Iron Cross and Crescent
Press Discussion of the Ottoman Empire in the United Kingdom,
1914-1918

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Abstract

First World War historians have increasingly sought to move beyond conventional narratives of a self-contained Anglo-German conflict. It was, after all, a ‘world war’, reflected in the United Kingdom’s four years of nearly continuous fighting against the Ottoman Empire. Despite growing interest in cultural representations of this Eastern theatre, the ‘globalising’ impulses motivating this scholarship have led historians to overlook the remarkable Germano-centrism with which such events were discussed in UK newspapers, both provincial and national. The Ottoman Empire’s entry into the war was attributed to a campaign of intense German intrigue and bribery that, supposedly, brought Constantinople under complete German domination. Praise for its soldiers’ ‘gentlemanly’ conduct at Gallipoli served mostly to criticise German misconduct by contrast, while condemnation of Ottoman atrocities was directed mainly at Germany. Its military defeat was, likewise, valued only insofar as it thwarted German war aims. While such claims have not gone entirely unnoticed, they have been unduly dismissed as deliberately deceitful propaganda or, otherwise, reflections of condemnable racial prejudices regarding the supposed manipulability of ‘backward Orientals’, underserving of further exploration. This thesis argues that such press interpretations, though often demonstrably false, were based upon considerably more complex (if misguided) reasoning than conventionally assumed and gave the Ottoman Empire great, but hitherto unappreciated, importance within the press’ Germano-centric conception of the First World War. Claims that the previously ‘Unspeakable Turk’ upheld ‘civilised’ British values on the battlefield, where Germans did not, deepened the UK’s belief in the righteousness of its ‘just war’ against Germany, as did Germany’s alleged complicity in Ottoman atrocities like the Armenian Genocide. Likewise, Germany’s supposed dominance in Constantinople, secured to achieve its *Drang nach Osten* towards India, placed the Ottoman Empire at the heart of an Anglo-German proxy-war to decide what the press believed was the main issue of the war: whether Britain, or Germany, would have mastery of the East. This thesis shows that newspapers viewed wartime events in the Ottoman Empire as tremendously important, but only because of their perceived relationship to the broader Anglo-German conflict. Paradoxically, therefore, its attempt to move beyond conventional Germano-centric narratives into a more globalised view of the conflict, in accordance with recent scholarly trends, only highlights the extent to which Germany dominated the UK wartime imagination.

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Introduction

This thesis uses newspapers from throughout the United Kingdom to explore how the press understood its conflict with the Ottoman Empire from 1914-1918 and, ultimately, the First World War in which it was situated. At the heart of this commentary was a tension between the global scale of the United Kingdom's war effort and the press' continued fixation upon their primary enemy, Germany, which offered a constant frame of reference for wartime events in the East. Though scholars now desire to move beyond parochial narratives which treat the First World War as a self-contained Anglo-German conflict, this thesis shows that contemporary press coverage of these ostensibly global events remained remarkably Germano-centric. For journalists, the war in the East was, in many respects, as much about Germany as the war in Europe; both the Ottoman Sultan and the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the Ottoman Empire's *de facto* rulers, were given only a minor role in this commentary. By embracing the Germano-centrism evident within these sources, the thesis not only offers new insights into wartime views of the Ottoman Empire, including its atrocities like the Armenian Genocide, but also highlights Germany's dominance over the wartime imagination through a hitherto unexamined perspective. It contributes towards the larger project of analysing the First World War as a transnational event, fought between global empires, by considering how far contemporary media understood the war in these terms.

Historiography

In his study of wartime British politics, John Turner declared that 'no one writing about the First World War can pretend to be treading on ground "hitherto neglected by historians".'¹ Subject to endless scholarly analysis from seemingly every conceivable angle, it might appear there is little novel left to say about the conflict.² 'Far from going gentle into the good night of historical obscurity', however, Heather Jones notes that the war's historiography has matured

¹ John Turner, *British Politics and the Great War: Coalition and Conflict 1915-1918* (New Haven, 1992), 8.

² Robin Higham and Dennis E. Showalter (eds.), *Researching World War I: A Handbook* (Westport, 2003) and Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2005) hint at the enormous scale of this ever-expanding scholarship.

considerably since the 1990s, adopting new approaches which have ‘reinvigorated establish debates... as well as revealing previously overlooked themes for scholarly study.’³

Most notably, First World War scholars have embraced history’s broader ‘global turn’, seeking to accommodate the obvious but previously underappreciated fact that the war was a truly global conflict – indeed a ‘world war’ – into their research.⁴ Some simply wish to highlight military events beyond the Western Front.⁵ Others have taken a more sophisticated approach inherited from the ‘transnational turn’ in American historiography of the early 1990s. Defining a new ‘transnational generation’ in the war’s historiography,⁶ these scholars analyse the wartime experience both ‘beyond and below’ the nation-state.⁷ Most significantly, they have turned their attention towards the war’s imperial character, reconceptualising the conflict as one between global empires.⁸ This ‘imperial turn’ has been especially pronounced in British scholarship, where increasing emphasis on ‘Greater Britain’ or the ‘British World’ has produced new interest in uncovering the wartime experiences of Britain’s imperial subjects.⁹ The nation-state should not be abandoned altogether, however. Despite the ever-expanding geographic scope of these analysis, historians must still, as Leonard Smith notes in another context, ‘reconcile two unattainable goals, seeing things clearly and seeing them whole’ through ‘a unit of investigation large enough to make possible meaningful generalizations, but small enough to study intensively.’¹⁰ As recent Australian scholarship shows, national histories

³ Heather Jones, ‘As the Centenary Approaches: The Regeneration of First World War Historiography’, *Historical Journal*, 56:3 (2013), 857. See also Alan Kramer, ‘Recent Historiography of the First World War (Part I)’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 12:1 (2014), 5-28 and ‘Recent Historiography of the First World War (Part II)’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 12:2 (2014), 155-174.

⁴ Hew Strachan, ‘The First World War as a Global War’, *First World War Studies*, 1:1 (2010), 3-14. Notable general examples include Hew Strachan, *The First World War: To Arms* (Oxford, 2001); Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 2014); Keith Jeffrey, *1916: A Global History* (London, 2015).

⁵ E.g., Ian F.W. Beckett (ed.), *1917 – Beyond the Western Front* (Leiden, 2009); Jonathan Krause (ed.), *The Greater War: Other Combatants and Other Fronts* (Basingstoke, 2014).

⁶ Jay Winter, ‘General Introduction’, in Winter (ed.), *Cambridge History*, vol. 1, 6.

⁷ E.g. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge, 1997) and *vol. 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, 2007); Pierre Purseigle, ‘Beyond and Below Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War’, in Jenny Macleod and Pierre Purseigle (eds.), *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden, 2004), 95-123; Adrian Gregory, ‘Globalising and Localising the Great War’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 27 (2017), 233-251.

⁸ On the necessity of this approach, see Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, ‘The Great War as a Global War: Imperial Conflict and the Reconfiguration of World Order, 1914-1923’, *Diplomatic History*, 38:4 (2014), 786-800. Examples include Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge, 2011) and Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (eds.), *Empires at War: 1914-1923* (Oxford, 2014).

⁹ E.g. Richard Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War: Race, Masculinity and the Development of National Consciousness* (Manchester, 2004); Timothy C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2014); Michael J.K. Walsh and Andrekos Varnarva (eds.), *The Great War and the British Empire: Culture and Society* (London, 2016); Santanu Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images and Songs* (Cambridge, 2018).

¹⁰ Leonard V. Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I* (Princeton, 1994), 17.

can still contribute meaningfully to this ‘global turn’ by analysing how participants engaged with the war’s global, transnational and imperial dimensions.¹¹ This thesis does likewise through contemporary depictions of the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire’s campaigns in the East.

The press is well-suited for such a task. Though newspapers do not provide an immediate, unfiltered window into ‘public opinion’,¹² they nonetheless offer ‘significant insight[s] into how societies or cultures came to understand themselves and the world around them.’¹³ As influential promoters of the ‘ideology of empire’, they are also especially valuable for analysing Britain’s war against the Ottoman Empire as an imperialist venture.¹⁴ Yet, newspapers have been greatly under-used by First World War historians, despite considerable interest in the war’s cultural history since Paul Fussell’s foundational *Great War and Modern Memory* in 1975.¹⁵ Their wartime reputation as recruiting organs which glamourised the war, masked the brutal reality of the soldiers’ experience and the associated horrific casualty rates from potential volunteers, and demonised the enemy through exaggerated if not outright fabricated tales of German atrocities has significantly impeded serious analysis of newspapers as meaningful sources of opinion.¹⁶

Undeniably, many prominent press men were directly involved in propaganda. Most infamous was the press magnate Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe), founder and *de facto* editor of the *Daily Mail* and, from 1908, proprietor of *The Times*. Through his fervent advocacy

¹¹ Kate Ariotti and James E. Bennett (eds.), *Australians and the First World War: Local-Global Connections and Contexts* (London, 2017).

¹² See Virginia Berridge, ‘Content Analysis and Historical Research on Newspapers’, in Michael Harris and Alan Lee (eds.), *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (London, 1986), 201; T.R.E. Paddock, ‘Introduction: Newspapers, Public Opinion and Propaganda’, in T.R.E. Paddock (ed.), *A Call to Arms: Propaganda, Public Opinion and Newspapers in the Great War* (Westport, 2004), 2-3; Simon J. Potter, ‘Empire and the English Press, c. 1857-1914’, in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire, c. 1857-1921* (Dublin, 2004), 39-61.

¹³ Stephen Vella, ‘Newspapers’, in Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (eds.), *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century History* (London, 2009), 192.

¹⁴ See J.D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire: The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Stately Press, 1903-13* (Westport, 1991); Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System* (Oxford, 2003); Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c. 1880-1922* (Manchester, 2003); Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire*; Justin Fantauzzo, ‘The Finest Feats of the War? The Captures of Baghdad and Jerusalem during the First World War and Public Opinion throughout the British Empire’, *War in History*, 24:1 (2017), 64-86.

¹⁵ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York, 2000 [1975]). On this ‘cultural turn’, see Jessica Meyer, ‘Introduction: Popular Culture and the First World War’, in Jessica Meyer (ed.), *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden, 2008), 1-17, which, notably, makes no mention of the press.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations During the Great War* (London, 1928); Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (London, 1975); Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda in the First World War* (London, 1977); Gerard J. De Groot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London, 1996), 180-187; Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London, 1998), ch. 8.

for increased propaganda efforts in his papers and his later official involvement as Director of the Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries at Crewe House, Northcliffe came to personify Britain's entire propaganda enterprise for both critics and admirers alike.¹⁷ However, wartime propagandists did not consider spreading deliberately manipulative falsehoods as within their purview: 'propaganda' did not assume its pernicious connotations until well after the First World War, being used interchangeably with 'publicity', 'advertising' and, occasionally, 'education' in popular discourse even in the late 1920s.¹⁸ Indeed, recent reassessments have found little basis in the above caricature. In-depth studies of the Liverpool press reveal a more truthful picture of military events and soldiers' experiences than conventionally assumed.¹⁹ Likewise, Adrian Gregory finds surprisingly few reports on violent acts towards civilians in the *Daily Mail*, supposedly the most rabid purveyor of atrocity stories, while what coverage it did provide of Germany's 'rape of Belgium' focused primarily on destruction of property.²⁰ This reporting was not always accurate, but it did agree with both the imperfect evidence available at the time and the general truth, as revealed by John Horne and Alan Kramer, that German soldiers did, in fact, commit widespread atrocities in their invasion of Belgium.²¹

Subsequent studies have proved the value of press analysis for what Richard Grayson terms 'military history from the street'. Though coined to describe Grayson's statistical analysis of recruitment data in local newspapers,²² Justin Fantauzzo finds the term equally apt for describing recent studies that use the press to interrogate popular responses to the First World War.²³ Most significant is Catriona Pennell's *A Kingdom United*, which examines over 70 newspapers and, most importantly, 441 diverse 'historical witnesses' to discern as complete

¹⁷ See Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime*, 58. Likewise, Adolf Hitler's admiration for British wartime propaganda in *Mein Kampf* seem to have referred specifically to Northcliffe's at Crewe House: Ferguson, *Pity of War*, 213. For Northcliffe's propaganda career, see J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the Press & Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe & the Great War, 1914-1919* (Kent, OH, 1999).

¹⁸ Mariel Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2013), 14-15. On propagandists' belief in the truth of their material, see Hew Strachan, 'John Buchan and the First World War: Fact into Fiction', in Kate Macdonald (ed.), *Reassessing John Buchan: Beyond the Thirty-Nine Steps* (London, 2009), 77-90; David Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale* (Liverpool, 2012), 269.

¹⁹ Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge, 2005), 103-117; Michael Finn, 'Local Heroes: War News and the Construction of "Community" in Britain, 1914-18', *Historical Research*, 83 (2010), 520-538.

²⁰ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (London, 2008), 51-53.

²¹ Gregory, *Last Great War*, 63-68; John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, 2001).

²² Richard S. Grayson, *Belfast Boys: How Unionists and Nationalists Fought and Died Together in the First World War* (London, 2009), 185-198; expanded in 'Military History from the Street: New Methods for Researching First World War Service in the British Military', *War in History*, 21:4 (2014), 465-495.

²³ Fantauzzo, 'Finest Feats'.

a picture of ‘public opinion’ in the war’s opening months as historical records allow. This tight chronological focus allows for in-depth analysis of a remarkably broad source base and is well-suited to Pennell’s main task, refuting popular notions of universal ‘war enthusiasm’.²⁴ It does, however, afford little space to the Ottoman Empire, which did not become a formal enemy until November 1914 and did not become a notable military adversary until much later.²⁵

How the Ottoman Empire was presented to and understood by the public has not been completely neglected, however. Scholars have given much greater attention to Britain’s war against the Ottoman Empire than its other non-German enemies.²⁶ The Gallipoli campaign has been especially well-covered in Australian and New Zealand scholarship for its place in their emerging national identities.²⁷ As the most infamous and disastrous diversion from the Western Front, both militarily and politically, it also holds a significant place in the UK historiography.²⁸ Press coverage has also been considered, albeit largely through individual war correspondents,²⁹ or as part of the domestic political crisis caused by dissatisfaction with the Dardanelles operations.³⁰ Additionally, recent turmoil in the Middle East, in many ways a direct legacy of British and French imperialism in the First World War, has excited new interest

²⁴ Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2012). See also Adrian Gregory, ‘British “War Enthusiasm” in 1914: A Reassessment’, in Grail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918* (Oxford, 2003), 67-85; Stuart Hallifax, ‘“Over by Christmas”: British Popular Opinion and the Short War in 1914’, *First World War Studies*, 1:2 (2010), 103-121; Meilyr Powel, ‘The Welsh Press and the July Crisis of 1914’, *First World War Studies*, 8:2-3 (2017), 133-152.

²⁵ The Ottoman Empire is discussed briefly to highlight Germany’s monopoly on the public imagination: Pennell, *Kingdom United*, 97-98.

²⁶ On the Salonika campaign against Bulgaria, see Alan Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonika: The Macedonian Campaign, 1915-1918* (London, 1965) and, more recently, Alan Wakefield and Simon Moody, *Under the Devil’s Eye: The British Military Experience in Macedonia 1915-18* (Barnsley, 2011); on British involvement in Italy’s war against Austria-Hungary, see George H. Cassar, *The Forgotten Front: The British Campaign in Italy, 1917-1918* (London, 1998); on British perceptions of the Austria-Hungarian enemy, see Harry Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War: A Study in the Formation of Public Opinion* (London, 1962) and Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (London, 2000).

²⁷ See Jenny Macleod, ‘Decentering Anzac: Gallipoli and Britishness, 1916-1913’ in Ariotti and Bennett (eds.), *Australians and the First World War*, 185-201.

²⁸ See Fred R. van Hartesveldt, *The Dardanelles Campaign, 1915: Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, 1997). Notable recent additions include Tim Travers, *Gallipoli: 1915* (Stroud, 2004 [2001]); Jenny Macleod, *Reconsidering Gallipoli* (Manchester, 2004); Jenny Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: Making History* (London, 2004); Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth* (New Haven, 2009); Jenny Macleod, *Gallipoli* (Oxford, 2015). For the Ottoman perspective, see Edward J. Erickson, *Gallipoli: The Ottoman Campaign* (Barnsley, 2010).

²⁹ E.g. Macleod, *Reconsidering Gallipoli*, 103-146; Fred Brenchley and Elizabeth Brenchley, *Myth Maker: Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett: The Englishman who Sparked Australia’s Gallipoli Legend* (Milton, Qld, 2005); Angela V. John, *War Journalism and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century: The Life and Times of Henry W. Nevins* (London, 2006), 144-153; Ron Palenski, ‘Malcolm Ross: A New Zealand Failure in the Great War’, *Australian Historical Studies*, 39:1 (2008), 19-35. There is, additionally, an enormous scholarship on Australia’s Gallipoli correspondent, Charles Bean: see Peter Stanley (ed.), *Charles Bean: Man, Myth, Legacy* (Sydney, 2017), for an introduction.

³⁰ E.g. Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, vol. 2: The Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1984), 274-282.

in the Mesopotamian and Palestine campaigns, most apparent in the republication of A.J. Barker's 1967 classic, *The Neglected War*, as *The First Iraq War* in 2009.³¹ As is well-understood, policy-makers supported these expeditions not for their highly dubious military value but for the potential domestic impact of cheap and decisive victories in places of historical or religious importance, such as Baghdad and Jerusalem, in boosting morale and, in India, quelling potential political unrest following the Ottoman Sultan's call for jihad.³² Thus, new studies especially stress matters of representation and reception, probing official and semi-official propaganda at length,³³ and assessing efforts to draw parallels between the Palestine campaign and the Medieval Crusades.³⁴ Nadia Atia's discussion of press coverage of Britain's Mesopotamian campaigns, though short and limited to a small selection of papers, is especially valuable, suggesting that UK newspapers were well aware of the imperial stakes involved.³⁵ Fantauzzo's recent examination of 'nearly 100 newspapers' from the UK, Dominions and India for public responses to the captures of Baghdad and Jerusalem, the most extensive analysis of the press material to date, suggests likewise. Regarding this thesis' central query, he finds within this 'well-informed' and 'sophisticated' commentary clear evidence that 'both the press and public understood that the Great War was, in fact, a world war.'

However, little appreciation is shown within existing scholarship of the remarkably Germano-centric analysis of the Middle East's significance. Fantauzzo's suggestion that the press 'paused' from their regular coverage of European affairs to discuss these events ignores the Ottoman Empire's perceived place within the broader Anglo-German conflict.³⁶ This reflects recent desires to analyse the First World War as 'a whole series of regional conflicts and latent antagonisms [which] attached themselves to the central conflict' but were otherwise

³¹ A.J. Barker, *The First Iraq War, 1914-1918: Britain's Mesopotamia Campaign* (New York, 2009 [1967]). The modern political landscape also motivated David Fromkin's *A Peace to End all Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East, 1914-1922* (London, 1989).

³² David French, 'The Dardanelles, Mecca and Kut: Prestige as a Factor in British Eastern Strategy, 1914-1916', *War & Society* 5:1 (1987), 45-61; Matthew Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East, 1917-1919* (London, 1999); Nikolas Gardener, 'British Prestige and the Mesopotamian Campaign, 1914-1916', *Historian*, 77:2 (2015), 269-289; Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The First World War in the Middle East* (London, 2014).

³³ Sadia McEvoy, 'The Construction of Ottoman Asia and its Muslim Peoples in Wellington House's Propaganda and Associated Literature, 1914-1918', PhD Thesis (King's College, London, 2016); Ahmed K. al-Rawi, 'Islam and the East in John Buchan's Novels', in Macdonald (ed.), *Reassessing John Buchan*, 117-128; David S. Katz, *The Shaping of Turkey in the British Imagination, 1776-1923* (New York, 2017), ch. 5.

³⁴ Eitan Bar-Yosef, 'The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-18', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36:1 (2001), 87-109 and *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799-1917* (Oxford, 2005); Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge, 2007), 114-126; James Kitchen, "Khaki Crusaders": Crusading Rhetoric and the British Imperial Soldier during the Egypt and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-18', *First World War Studies*, 1:2 (2010), 141-160.

³⁵ Nadia Atia, *World War I in Mesopotamia: The British and the Ottomans in Iraq* (London, 2016), esp. 145-147.

³⁶ Fantauzzo, 'Finest Feats', quotations at 85.

separate from, not merely an extension of, the war in Europe.³⁷ Such efforts are admirable. Contemporary characterisations of the Ottoman Empire as a ‘German proxy’ were wholly inaccurate and, according to Hasan Kayalı, their legacy in modern scholarship has impeded meaningful historical analysis of the Ottoman Empire significantly.³⁸ However, this thesis is less concerned with history as it ‘really’ was than with how contemporaries perceived it. While histories of ‘representations’ cannot ignore this reality entirely, and nor does this thesis, truth has unfortunately impeded serious interrogation of why these false assertions were made, what they meant for press interest in the Ottoman Empire, and where such Germano-centrism placed the East within contemporary conceptions of the First World War itself. These are questions that this thesis seeks to answer.

Previous scholarship has also, too often, reduced the war with the Ottoman Empire solely to its military campaigns, at the expense of more important cultural representations. Contemporary participants conceived of the First World War as a ‘just war’ in which they were defending the principles of civilization from barbarism.³⁹ Numerous studies have stressed the role of German atrocities in affirming for those in the UK the righteousness of their cause.⁴⁰ Where Ottoman crimes like the Armenian Genocide and its brutal treatment of prisoners of war or praise for the chivalrous ‘clean-fighting Turk’ fit into this picture remains unclear, however. Existing inquiries into UK responses to the Armenian Genocide centre predominantly around Armenophile humanitarians, the nature of their interest in the Armenians and how they

³⁷ Strachan, ‘Global War’, 10.

³⁸ Hasan Kayalı, ‘The Ottoman Experience of World War I: Historiographical Problems and Trends’, *Journal of Modern History*, 89:4 (2017), 883-884. Important challenges to this narrative include Ulrich Trampener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918* (Princeton, 1968); Donald Bloxham, ‘Power Politics, Prejudice, Protest and Propaganda: A Reassessment of the German Role in the Armenian Genocide of WWI’, in Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller (eds.), *Der Völkermord an der Armenien und die Shoah* (Zürich, 2002), 213-244; Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford, 2005), 115-133; Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914* (Cambridge, 2008); Mustafa Aksakal, “‘Holy War Made in Germany?’” Ottoman Origins of the 1914 Jihad’, *War in History*, 18:2 (2011), 184-199.

³⁹ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *1914-1918: Understanding the Great War*, trans. Catherine Temerson (London, 2002), ch. 5.

⁴⁰ E.g. Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 291-326; Adrian Gregory, ‘A Clash of Cultures: The British Press and the Opening of the Great War’, in Paddock (ed.), *Call to Arms*, 15-49 and *Last Great War*, ch. 2; Pennell, *Kingdom United*, 57-67, 92-107 and “‘Why We Are at War’: Justifying War in Britain, 1914”, in David Welch and Jo Fox (ed.), *Justifying War: Propaganda, Politics and the Modern Age* (New York, 2012), 95-108.

presented their cause to wider audiences.⁴¹ Despite substantial scholarship on the Armenian Genocide over the past few decades, including growing interest in its representations in international media, its coverage within UK newspapers has not received detailed investigation.⁴² J.M. Read and, more recently, Jo Laycock have used the press to some extent, although it is not their primary focus and their analyses are confined to *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian*, elite papers with limited circulation and questionable generalisability.⁴³ Moreover, the Ottoman Empire's mistreatment of prisoners of war is nearly completely neglected in UK scholarship, despite growing interest from Australian historians.⁴⁴ For example, Jones' short, comparative treatment of German and British imperial-colonial encounters, addresses the curious absence of any notable domestic outcry only briefly.⁴⁵ The nature of press interest or otherwise in these atrocities, their relationship to the 'just war' and Turkish soldiers' strangely positive, 'clean-fighting' reputation are all crucial aspects of press discussions of the Ottoman Empire that remain to be explored. By doing so, this thesis offers a fuller understanding of contemporary views of the Ottoman enemy than previously available, while also offering new insights into the perceived moral imperative of the First World War.

⁴¹ E.g. Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question, 1915-1923* (New York, 1984); Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (Manchester, 2009); Michelle Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes: Humanitarianism, Genocide, and the Birth of the Middle East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2012); Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread From Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Oakland, 2015); Michelle Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide: Humanitarianism and Imperial Politics from Gladstone to Churchill* (London, 2017); David Monger, 'Networking Against Genocide During the First World War: The International Network Behind the British Parliamentary Report on the Armenian Genocide', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 16:3 (2018), 295-316.

⁴² Cf. Thomas C. Leonard, 'When News is Not Enough: American Media and Armenian Deaths', in Jay Winter (ed.), *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915* (New York, 2003), 294-308; Joceline Chabot et al. (eds.), *Mass Media and the Genocide of the Armenians: One Hundred Years of Uncertain Representation* (London, 2016); Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA, 2016); Vicken Babkenian and Peter Stanley, *Armenia, Australia and the Great War* (Sydney, 2016). For useful general historiographical discussions, see Ronald Grigor Suny, 'Writing Genocide: The Fate of the Ottoman Armenians', in Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek and Norman M. Naimark (eds.), *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 2011), 15-41 and Jo Laycock, 'Beyond National Narratives? Centenary, Histories, the First World War and the Armenian Genocide', *Revolutionary Russia*, 28:2 (2015), 93-117.

⁴³ J.M. Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1919* (New Haven, 1941), 216-222; Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 103, 114-116, 124, 130.

⁴⁴ E.g. Jennifer Lawless, *Kismet: The Story of the Gallipoli Prisoners of War* (Melbourne, 2015); Kate Ariotti, *Captive Anzacs: Australian POWs of the Ottomans during the First World War* (Cambridge, 2018).

⁴⁵ Heather Jones, 'Imperial Captives: Colonial Prisoners of War in Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918', in Das (ed.), *Race*, 185-189, esp. 185-186.

Sources and Methodology

This study provides a more comprehensive survey of the press material than those before it, which have considered aspects of its discussion of the Ottoman Empire in relative isolation. This has been made possible by the emergence of digital newspaper archives as part of the recent ‘digital turn’ in historical scholarship.⁴⁶ Collections like the British Library’s *British Newspaper Archive (BNA)* expand the sources available to those outside the UK considerably, who need no longer rely exclusively on elite broadsheets of dubious representative qualities like *The Times*. Digitisation has greatly alleviated traditional barriers to press analysis, namely the extensive time required to conduct ‘anything more than superficial research’ using physical and microfilm copies, through keyword searches.⁴⁷ Keyword searching also presents new methodological opportunities beyond conventional ‘top-down’ approaches to press research, where historians begin with selected dates where they expect relevant discussion to occur, and then select articles based on their headlines. ‘At each stage’ of this multi-step process, Bob Nicholson explains, ‘we exclude large quantities of information’, including relevant material through incidental references to ‘deeply embedded’ ideas which can be uncovered through the ‘bottom-up’ approach offered by searching for keywords within the articles themselves, beyond their headlines.⁴⁸ Such unexpected references to the Ottoman Empire and its non-German allies in discussions of Germany allowed journalists’ efforts to tie events in the East to Germany, such as military success at Baghdad already analysed by Fantauzzo, to be placed within their broader Germano-centric conception of the First World War in this thesis. That such articles were discovered without specifically looking for ‘Germany’ (or its variants) reinforced this picture.

Keyword searching presents its own challenges, however. To retrieve meaningful results, historians must select keywords carefully, accounting for contemporary terminology and variations.⁴⁹ My primary keywords thus included not only ‘Ottoman’ and ‘Ottomans’ (encompassing ‘Ottoman Empire’ as well), but also numerous alternatives, most importantly ‘Turkey’ and its variations. Though a Turkish nation-state did not exist until 1923, the Ottoman

⁴⁶ See Bob Nicholson, ‘The Digital Turn: Exploring the Methodological Possibilities of Digital Newspaper Archives’, *Media History*, 19:1 (2013), 59-73.

⁴⁷ Adrian Bingham, ‘The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 21:2 (2010), 226. On the difficulties of press research before the ‘digital turn’, see John M. Mackenzie, ‘The Press and Empire’, Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire*, 24.

⁴⁸ See Nicholson, ‘Digital Turn’, 66-71.

⁴⁹ On this issue, see Joanna Guldi, ‘The History of Walking and the Digital Turn: Stride and Lounge in London, 1808-1851’, *Journal of Modern History*, 84:1 (2012), 116-144.

Empire was routinely referred to as ‘Turkey’, its people as ‘Turks’ (unless referring specifically to Ottoman minorities like the Armenians), and so on. Such alternatives were the preferred terms. Searching ‘Turkey’ (and its variants) within the ‘Opinion and Editorial’ section of *The Telegraph Historical Archive* between 1 August 1914 and 30 November 1914, for example, returned 349 results against only 61 for ‘Ottoman’ or ‘Ottomans’. No matter how well-chosen the keywords, however, technological limitations render such searches fallible. Imperfect optical character (OCR) recognition risks both false positives and false negatives (where, for example, ‘America’ is read as ‘Armenia’ and vice versa), such that articles which do contain the selected keywords are omitted from the search results. Additionally, if traditional ‘top-down’ approaches tend to overlook residual discussions of historical events, ‘bottom-up’ alternatives risk ignoring the equally important surrounding ‘peripheral content’, such as adjacent articles or advertisements, that shaped readers’ perception of this material. News does not occur in a vacuum, yet critics express concern that digital archives encourage historians to view newspaper articles in an artificial, isolated format, removed from their proper context. In this respect, the digital newspaper fundamentally differs from the original print copy as an historical text.⁵⁰ Fortunately, digital archives also allow newspapers to be viewed as complete pages, reflecting their original form. Applying the traditional ‘top-down’ approach to complete issues helps mitigate these methodological concerns. This was used alongside keyword searches to place important events within their appropriate context and to ensure, as far as possible, that relevant articles were not omitted due to poor OCR, as sometimes occurred.

Effective digital research is, therefore, considerably more time-consuming than it first appears. As Nicholson observes, ‘keyword searching’ does not replace ‘the need for extensive reading’; instead of ‘searching through irrelevant articles’, historians are now presented with ‘billions of individual words... at our fingertips.’⁵¹ In fact, digitisation has not freed historians from navigating extensive irrelevant material either. For instance, *The BNA*, with its inadequate filtering options, returned numerous unhelpful results about Turkish baths and Ottoman stools. Thus, it was not practical to examine every single instance where the Ottoman Empire, or related topics like the Armenian Genocide, appeared in the examined papers (outlined below) over four years. Instead, the research was largely confined to direct sources of opinion, such as editorials and letters, to provide immediate access to the most useful material. Exceptions were made for August to November 1914, where a fuller picture of the specific reporting was

⁵⁰ Bingham, 230; Edward Hampshire and Valerie Johnson, ‘The Digital World and the Future of Historical Research’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 20:3 (2009), 411.

⁵¹ Nicholson, ‘Digital Turn’, 67.

necessary to discern the exact process through which the Ottoman Empire supposedly became a German ‘vassal’, examined in Chapter One; and in smaller provincial papers to gather soldiers’ letters, used extensively in Chapter Two, which could not be singled out through search filters. Otherwise, unfiltered searches in daily papers were confined either to important dates or a more specific combination of keywords to supplement the more useful editorial material.

Practical constraints also necessitated confining the research to a smaller, broadly representative sample, accounting for varying political viewpoints and target audiences. Political considerations are especially important for the UK press. Proprietors of provincial English papers, for example, were often politicians who purchased the papers to disseminate their party’s political views and would, therefore, editorialise along party lines.⁵² Others, like the *Manchester Guardian*, were not direct party organs but nonetheless capitalised on their political influence. Its editor, C.P. Scott, a Liberal MP from 1895 to 1906, used the paper to push Liberal agendas, most notably opposition to the Boer War.⁵³ Metropolitan papers were equally politicised and, according to Stephen Koss, acquired ‘new partisan functions’ during the First World War. The pretence to a ‘party truce’ between politicians, who supposedly put aside their differences to allow for a unified war effort, ensured that these ‘political animosities went underground at Westminster, only to surface in Fleet Street.’⁵⁴

Also important was a newspaper’s price, which corresponded to the socio-economic class of its readers. Northcliffe’s London-based tabloid, the *Daily Mail*, famously declared itself a ‘penny paper for a halfpenny’, supposedly offering the quality of an elite broadsheet at an affordable price. Northcliffe recognised that a penny paper was beyond the means of his target audience, Britain’s middle class.⁵⁵ At the same time, their mass-market appeal earned them the contempt of upper-class readers. Lord Newton, a Conservative politician, recalled in his memoirs:

⁵² Michael Dawson, ‘Party Politics and the Provincial Press in Early Twentieth Century England: The Case of the South West’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 9:2 (1998), 201-218; Paul Giddon, ‘The Political Importance of Provincial Newspapers, 1903-1945: The Rowntrees and the Liberal Press’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 14:1 (2003), 24-42.

⁵³ Mark Hampton, ‘The Press, Patriotism, and Public Discussion: C.P. Scott, the “Manchester Guardian”, and the Boer War, 1899-1902’, *Historical Journal*, 44:1 (2001), 177-197. For Scott’s role in the ‘New Liberalism’ movement, see P.F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1971), 153-198. For the influence of Scott’s political views on the *Manchester Guardian*, see C.E. Montague, ‘Journalist and Editor’, in *C.P. Scott, 1846-1932: The Making of the Manchester Guardian* (London, 1956), 75-83.

⁵⁴ Koss, *Political Press*, 247-248.

⁵⁵ See Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the present* (Oxford, 2015), 165-175.

The late Lord Burnham, the proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, told me that Mr. Kennedy Jones, M.P., at one time editor of the *Daily Mail*, had stated that the newer halfpenny journals had been instituted in order to cater for those who could not think, while the halfpenny illustrated papers were intended for those who could not read. This is derogatory, but we all know that many a true word is spoken in jest.⁵⁶

Thus, a penny paper possessed a wealthier readership, while a half-penny paper aimed at a broader audience, a fact that informed editorial opinions and selection of news content.

Such choices had to be made within the limitations of the existing digital corpus. Digitalisation projects are ongoing and, as Nicholson observed in 2013, copyright and other considerations have directed their resources principally towards nineteenth-century newspapers at the expense of twentieth-century sources. The digital availability of newspapers from 1914-1918 has certainly improved subsequently, doubtless accelerated by the recent centenary, but it remains comparatively modest in 2019. For instance, the *BNA* offers only 263 of the 2,366 newspapers recorded in the *Newspaper Press Directory* for 1917.⁵⁷ Amongst the more notable omissions are leading metropolitan dailies like *Morning Post* and *Daily News*, which cease to be available from 1909 and 1912, respectively, and are not available digitally through other archives.

With these considerations in mind, 21 newspapers from across the United Kingdom were selected for principal analysis, with occasional use of further, supplementary newspapers. Representing the so-called ‘quality press’ that is such a staple of historical scholarship are the liberal *Manchester Guardian*, the conservative *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, which, as the ‘newspaper of record’, claimed political independence.⁵⁸ Heeding Bingham’s warning about the dangers of relying exclusively on these papers, given their elite readership and limited circulation, this study also consults the *Daily Mail* which, with a wartime circulation of about one million, was the most widely-read paper during the war.⁵⁹ Of course, the *Daily Mail* has

⁵⁶ Lord Newton, *Retrospection* (London, 1941), 273.

⁵⁷ ‘Publishers’ Address’, in *72nd Newspaper Press Directory: And Advertisers’ Guide, Containing Particulars of Every Newspaper, Magazine, Review, and Periodical Published in the United Kingdom and the British Isles* (London, 1917), 3.

⁵⁸ See *72nd Newspaper Press Directory* for the declared political leanings for all newspapers. To avoid confusion, ‘Conservative’ is used in place of ‘Unionist’ for papers outside of Ireland. English, Scottish and Welsh papers still maintained the distinction to some degree after the Liberal Unionist party was subsumed into the Conservative and Unionist party in 1912, but it does not seem to have indicated an adherence to Liberal principles in matters outside the Irish Question. Northcliffe’s notoriously conservative *Daily Mail*, for instance, presented itself as an ‘Independent Unionist’ paper: *72nd Newspaper Press Directory*, 79.

⁵⁹ Adrian Bingham, ‘Ignoring the First Draft of History? Searching for the Popular Press in Studies of Twentieth-Century Britain’, *Media History*, 18:3-4 (2012), 311-326; John M. McEwen, ‘The National Press During the First World War: Ownership and Circulation’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17:3 (1982), 492.

its own representational issues, being unapologetically conservative and contemptuously middle-class, but this was typical of the ‘popular press’ at this time, which did not seek to appeal to working-class sensibilities until the 1930s.⁶⁰ J.L. Garvin’s weekly *Observer* and the satirical magazine, *Punch*, round out this metropolitan picture.⁶¹

The far more numerous and widely-read provincial press also requires attention.⁶² Since it would be impossible to examine all 1,458 newspapers of ‘the English and Welsh provinces’,⁶³ the analysis is confined to two case studies of regions which supplied two of the most prominent Territorial Forces to fight against the Ottoman Empire, the 42nd (East Lancashire) and 54th (East Anglia) Divisions, which, despite its name, included brigades not only from East Anglia—Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk—but also from Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire in the Midlands.⁶⁴ Included for Lancashire are the liberal *Burnley News*, the conservative *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Advertiser* (hereafter *Burnley Express*), the liberal *Rochdale Observer* (its conservative rival, the *Rochdale Times*, was unavailable) and, finally, the halfpenny *Manchester Evening News*, which acts as a mass-market, politically independent and more localised counterpoint to the *Manchester Guardian*. Four papers were also selected for the ‘East Anglian’ corpus (in reference to the 54th Division rather than its broader geographic location): the independent *Essex County Chronicle* and its mass-market equivalent, the *Essex Newsman*, the liberal *Northampton Mercury* and the *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, an ‘Independent-Liberal’ paper which claimed to be ‘read by all classes, and by all parties, because of the completeness and impartiality of its news.’⁶⁵ Major Suffolk papers like the *East Anglia Daily Times* are, unfortunately, not digitised. These local newspapers’ perspectives are valuable for not only the special attention provincial papers gave to battles in which locals were involved—in this instance, those in the Middle East and Gallipoli—but also for the copious amounts of soldiers’ letters they published,⁶⁶ used extensively in the thesis’ second chapter. The contrasting demographics of the two divisions make them especially well-suited to such an analysis. With the notable exception of working-class Northampton, the 54th

⁶⁰ Bingham and Conboy, *Tabloid Century*, 165-183.

⁶¹ The *Manchester Guardian*, although technically a regional paper, is included in this group for its national readership, particularly prominent in London, as the ‘principle voice of establishment liberalism’: Gregory, ‘Clash of Cultures’, 18.

⁶² Finn, ‘Local Heroes’, 522-523. This remained so until the 1920: Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press, 1918-1878* (Oxford, 2009), 16.

⁶³ 1917 figure: ‘Publishers’ Address’, in *72nd Newspaper Press Directory*, 3.

⁶⁴ For the composition of these divisions, see Major A.F. Becke, *Order of Battles of Divisions Part 2A. The Territorial Force Mounted Divisions and the 1st-Line Territorial Force Divisions (42-56)* (London, 1936), 35-41 and 125-132 respectively.

⁶⁵ *72nd Newspaper Press Directory*, 107.

⁶⁶ As already demonstrated through the Liverpool press: see Finn, ‘Local Heroes’; McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*.

Division drew from mostly rural constituencies in the East Midlands and South-Eastern England with predominantly middle-class urban centres, whereas those in the 42nd Division came from industrial, working-class areas of the North-West.⁶⁷

Yet ‘British’ history is not, as it is so often presented, simply ‘English’ history by another name: the United Kingdom, J.G.A. Pocock reminds us, is one of ‘four nations’.⁶⁸ Each had their own press industries which remained dominant locally, partly for practical reasons. David Hutchison explains that limitations in railway technology greatly impeded the circulation of London-based, metropolitan dailies in Scotland, for instance.⁶⁹ Consequently, attention is also given to the newspapers of Scotland, Wales and Ireland within the limitations of digital archives outlined above. Four Scottish papers were selected, representing both Edinburgh to the south and Aberdeen to the north. Edinburgh’s renowned *Scotsman* and the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, both penny papers with correspondingly elite audiences, provide the Conservative perspective. It is unfortunate, given Scotland’s strong Liberal voting record and its press’ consequent ‘liberal bias’,⁷⁰ that it was not possible to source digitised liberal papers for these cities. Instead, the conservative voices are measured by leading mass-market papers which declared themselves politically neutral or independent, Aberdeen’s *Evening Express* and the *Edinburgh Evening News*. The conservative *Western Mail* stands as the sole representative of the Welsh press; its major liberal competitor, the *South Wales Daily News*, is not available digitally past 1900. Though at odds with Wales’ staunch Liberalism, Chris Williams explains that ‘its audience was larger than its politics might have suggested’ and, according to Welsh Liberal politician and future wartime Prime Minister David Lloyd George, was even the newspaper of choice for many Liberals.⁷¹ For Ireland, the study considers both Unionist and Nationalist perspectives through the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*, respectively, reflecting the main political divide in early-twentieth-century Irish politics, which was not between Conservative and Liberal but regarding the question of home rule. As ‘the only

⁶⁷ Demographic information provided in Neal Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: The General Election of 1910* (London, 1972), Appendix II; Turner, *British Politics*, Appendix II.

⁶⁸ J.G.A. Pocock, ‘The Limits and Divisions of British History: In Search of the Unknown Subject’, *American Historical Review*, 87 (1982), 311-336. More recently, see Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2006); John M. Mackenzie, ‘Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Worlds? A Four-Nation Approach to the History of the British Empire’, *History Compass*, 6 (2008), 1244-1263.

⁶⁹ David Hutchison, ‘The History of the Press’, in Neil Blain and David Hutchison (eds.), *The Media in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2008), 60-61.

⁷⁰ Catriona M.M. Macdonald, ‘May 1915: Race, Riot and Representations of War’, in Catriona M.M. Macdonald and E.W. McFarland (eds.), *Scotland and the Great War* (Phantassie, 1999), 148.

⁷¹ Chris Williams, ‘“Our War History in Cartoons is Unique”: J.M. Staniforth, British Public Opinion, and the South African War, 1899-1902’, *War in History*, 20:4 (2013), 497-498.

halfpenny morning paper in Ireland’, the *Irish Independent* also offers a ‘popular’ counterpoint to the elite *Irish Times*.⁷²

This is a sample of mainstream press opinion. Consequently, Ireland's more radical, ‘advanced nationalist’ press is not examined. Several leading seditious newspapers, including *Sinn Fein*, ceased publication in late 1914 due to pressure or compulsion from officials, newly empowered under the Defence of the Realm Act. Many remaining ‘advanced nationalist’ papers experienced a rapid decline in sales.⁷³ The Labour press’ dire financial troubles indicate a similarly diminished wartime appeal. Its leading paper, the *Daily Herald*, was forced to downsize to weekly circulation, while others disappeared entirely.⁷⁴ These anti-war voices remain important, however, and are considered briefly the work of socialist journalist, H.N. Brailsford, as a counterpoint to the pro-war consensus. Analysing depictions of the Ottoman enemy within ‘advanced nationalist’ papers would certainly be valuable from the perspective of Irish history. Keith Jeffrey identifies the failed campaign against the Ottoman Empire at Gallipoli as the ‘beginning of a progressive public disillusionment with the war’ within nationalist Ireland, a view which was not echoed in the pro-war *Irish Independent*’s celebration of Ireland’s involvement as a valuable recruiting tool.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the select sources offer a sufficient variety of political, class and regional perspectives to draw general conclusions about ‘press opinion’ on the war with the Ottoman Empire from which further, more specialised studies such as this might be conducted.

Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One introduces and analyses in depth the thesis’ central theme: that the Ottoman Empire was understood as a subservient vassal to Germany, which was regarded as Britain’s principal enemy in both East and West. Though claims of German dominance are not necessarily a new discovery, no-one has examined their origins through press reporting on Ottoman diplomacy during its months of ‘pseudo-neutrality’, leading to significant misunderstandings. The ostensibly Orientalist interpretation of Ottoman-German relations was, in reality, grounded in a series of specific political

⁷² 72nd *Newspaper Press Directory*, 211.

⁷³ Pennell, *Kingdom United*, 185.

⁷⁴ McEwen, ‘National Press’, 479.

⁷⁵ Keith Jeffrey, ‘Gallipoli and Ireland’, in Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli*, 106. On the *Irish Independent*’s pro-war views, see Patrick Maume, ‘The *Irish Independent* and Empire, 1911-1919’, in Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire*, 139-141.

developments the press, like those in the Foreign Office, believed – falsely, although with encouragement by Ottoman officials – to have occurred in Constantinople from August to November 1914. Observers perceived a factional dispute between the majority of Ottoman statesmen who favoured neutrality and a small faction, led by War Minister Enver Pasha and backed by German gold and intrigue, who sought to force a declaration of war for German interests. That Ottoman officials proved either unable or unwilling to expel this German influence after the Ottoman-German fleet’s unprovoked attack on Russia in late-October indicated the final victory of Enver’s ‘war party’, bringing the Ottoman Empire under complete German dominance. Subsequent press commentary was, consequently, overwhelmingly Germano-centric, with the Young Turk leaders themselves largely fading into the background.

The following chapters concern the period after November 1914, each focusing on a different aspect of the conflict against this ‘Turco-German’ enemy. Chapter Two examines representations of Ottoman military conduct at length and, in particular, the contradiction between Turkish soldiers’ popular reputation as a ‘clean fighter’ who did not commit German-style atrocities and the reality of their widely-documented misconduct. It, firstly, explains the longevity of the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ trope through its origins in first-hand testimonies in soldiers’ letters, chiefly from Gallipoli, disseminated to a broader public through their reproduction in the press, building on existing scholarship stressing the unimpeachability of the soldier’s story. This allowed Turks’ positive reputation to survive news of both the Armenian Genocide and Ottoman mistreatment of Allied prisoners apparently unscathed in the public mind. It then places these claims within the context of Britain’s ‘just war’, arguing that their main rhetorical effect was to offer the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ as a foil to the ‘Hun’, highlighting German ‘barbarity’ by contrast. Ottoman atrocities like the Armenian Genocide and the mistreatment of prisoners of war served similar ends, being interesting only insofar as they could be used to condemn Germany.

The final chapter considers why the press believed it mattered to defeat this enemy within the British Empire’s broader military strategy. Though the Gallipoli campaign is considered, the discussion mainly concerns the Middle Eastern campaigns since, while not nearly as famous, this was where war with the Ottoman Empire was mostly conducted. Promising little towards victory in Europe, they also allow for better insights into what value the press ascribed to defeating the Ottoman Empire specifically. This chapter confirms previous work by Fantauzzo and others, stressing the primacy of imperialism, although it argues that they have misunderstood against whom this imperialist venture was fought, at least according to the newspapers examined here. It was, in short, a war of imperial defence against German

expansion towards Egypt and, most especially, India in order to supplant Britain as the world's premier imperial power, which leading pan-German theorists had openly declared to be the goal of their alliance with the Ottoman Empire. Commentators both within and outside the press believed realising this *Mitteleuropa* scheme was Germany's central war aim. This gave the Eastern 'sideshows' tremendous, and hitherto underappreciated, importance to the broader conflict, understood by the press as an existential struggle between the British and German Empires fought on a global scale. At the same time, however, the Ottoman Empire itself was accorded only a minor role, relevant only because of its apparent subservience to Germany.

Together, these chapters paint a notably Germano-centric picture of the Ottoman Empire and Britain's war in the East. Present efforts to expand scholarly discussion beyond the conventional narrative of a self-contained Anglo-German conflict towards a global history of a 'world war' are admirable, giving new impetus to studying otherwise obscured aspects of the conflict, such as those explored in this thesis. However, whether or not those contemporaries following the news at home did so with the globalised, transnational perspective scholars now favour should not be overlooked. Indeed, this thesis' attempt to move 'beyond the red poppy-covered corner of a mythic Western Front where Britain sent its sons to die' into a more globalised view of the conflict, as Susan Grayzel suggests is necessary,⁷⁶ only highlights Germany's centrality to the press' understanding of the First World War.

⁷⁶ Susan R. Grayzel, 'Belonging to the Imperial Nation: Rethinking the History of the First World War in Britain and Its Empire', *Journal of Modern History*, 90:2 (2018), 387.

Chapter One

The Ottoman Road to War and the Emergence of a German Vassal State

The Ottoman Empire entered the First World War (informally) on 29 October 1914 when its fleet bombarded several Russian Black Sea ports without provocation or a formal declaration of war. Cardiff's *Western Mail* explained this as the culmination of an extended campaign of German intrigue and bribery which had been 'so violent and persistent that Turkey can hardly be said to have survived as an independent sovereign state: rather it must be said that she passed under the suzerainty of Germany, who dictated both her foreign policy and her military policy.'¹ Aberdeen's *Evening Express* agreed that 'for the purposes of war Turkey has virtually become a German province'.² Such arguments have not gone unnoticed, although this chapter argues that they have been greatly misunderstood. Kayalı suggests that 'notions that the Ottoman were hapless pawns in Germany's sinister war designs' emerged from nefarious propaganda designed 'to aggrandize the German menace and denounce German perfidy.'³ Those who have viewed these assertions as sincere have been equally dismissive. Kate Ariotti attributes identical arguments in the Australian press to simple Orientalist stereotypes of Turkish 'backwardness', which viewed Ottoman statesmen as easily manipulable by a 'superior' European power.⁴ Claims of German dominance were demonstrably false.⁵ However, were they not kneejerk reactions, grounded in little more than racial prejudice.

This chapter offers the first serious consideration of why contemporary newspapers believed the Ottoman Empire had become a vassal state of Germany through detailed analysis of its hitherto unexamined reporting on the Ottoman Porte's months of formal neutrality from August to November 1914. From the outset, press interest in Ottoman affairs was remarkably Germano-centric. Confronted with repeated assurances from Ottoman officials of their strict neutrality, alongside their increasingly pro-German actions, the press presumed a factional struggle within the CUP against German efforts to compel them into the conflict. Its eventual decision to enter into hostilities with the Allies was considered so irrational, and so heavily opposed by the majority of Ottoman statesmen who supposedly desired peace, that it could

¹ 'Turkey and Germany', *Western Mail*, 2/11/1914, 4.

² 'Enter Turkey', *Evening Express*, 2/10/1914, 2.

³ Kayalı, 'Ottoman Experience' 883-884. See also Bloxham, *Great Game*, 133.

⁴ Ariotti, *Captive Anzacs*, 34. See also David French, 'The Origins of the Dardanelles Campaign Reconsidered', *History*, 68 (1983), 213-214

⁵ See Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire*.

only be explained through the complete triumph of German influence over Constantinople. Though traditional Orientalist stereotypes perhaps made this narrative easier to accept, giving them undue primacy obscures its true significance. This was found in its Germano-centrism and implication that Germans, not Turks, were the true enemy in the East, recurring themes of press coverage of the Ottoman Empire throughout the war.

Goeben and Breslau

For UK observers, the most pivotal event in the Ottoman Empire's transition from neutrality to belligerence was the entry of two German vessels, the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, into the Dardanelles on 10 August 1914. International law required the Ottoman Empire, as a neutral power, to intern and dismantle the ships within twenty-four hours. Instead, the Grand Vizier informed Britain's *chargé d'affaires* in Constantinople, Henry Beaumont, that the Ottomans had 'purchased' the vessels to replace the two Ottoman dreadnoughts, *Reshadieh* and *Sultan Osman*, under construction in London, which had been controversially requisitioned for the Royal Navy by Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty.⁶ When the *Breslau* was sunk and the *Goeben* heavily damaged in the Battle of Imbros on 20 January 1918, the *Observer's* naval correspondent, Gerard Fiennes, reflected that 'no two ships in the world's history have ever exercised so malefic an influence on world politics.' With Germany's 'newest and most powerful battle-cruiser' at Constantinople's gates, the city had come under complete German coercion. 'Imagine the effect of an alien battle-cruiser lying off Westminster Bridge if we were a feeble sea Power', Fiennes explained, 'and the influence of the *Goeben* may be imagined.' Finding a direct link from their entry into the Dardanelles to the Ottoman Empire's belligerence and 'the hecatombs of Gallipoli', he argued that the Royal Navy permitting these vessels to escape from Messina was 'the costliest mistake we ever made'.⁷ This interpretation was presented with greater levity in a fictionalised letter to the Kaiser from Ottoman War Minister Enver Pasha, written in *Punch* by renowned satirist R.C. Lehmann. Expressing his regret for allegedly conspiring with the Germans to embroil the Ottoman Empire in the conflict, Lehman's Enver writes that the Ottoman Empire might have had the respite and recovery it so desperately needed after its humiliating defeat in the Balkan Wars, 'while others endured privation and loss', had it remained neutral. Yet, 'from the day the *Goeben* arrived off

⁶ Henry Beaumont to Sir Edward Grey, 11 August 1914, in *Correspondences Respecting the Rupture of Relations with Turkey* (London, 1914), 3, no. 9.

⁷ Gerard Fiennes, 'The *Goeben* and *Breslau*', *Observer*, 27/1/1918, 9.

Constantinople we were doomed. That, indeed, was a master-stroke on your part, but for us it has meant misery on an ever-increasing scale.’⁸ Even Churchill, who was judged particularly responsible for the *Goeben* and *Breslau* affair for his requisition of the Ottoman dreadnoughts,⁹ reflected in his post-war memoirs that the *Goeben*’s entry into the Dardanelles brought ‘the peoples of the East and Middle East more slaughter, more misery and more ruin than has ever before been borne within the compass of a ship.’¹⁰

Its diplomatic importance was not lost on the Foreign Office. Concerns about Turkey’s possession of these German-manned vessels were expressed in nearly twenty telegrams exchanged between the Foreign Office and the British Embassy throughout August.¹¹ It was feared that the *Goeben* and *Breslau* might serve as vehicles through which Germany could strengthen its political presence in Constantinople and, perhaps, attempt a *coup d’état*, installing the pro-German Enver as dictator.¹² Aware that Germany was ‘recklessly striving to force the Turks into declaring war on Russia’, British Ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Louis Mallet, thought that they might also be directed against the Russians, compelling the Allies to declare war on the Ottoman Empire and thus bringing them into the conflict on the side of the Central Powers.¹³ In support of these fears, the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, despite their new Turkish names (*Yavuz Sultan Selim* and *Midilli* respectively), retained their German officers and crews in the face of repeated insistence by Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey that they be removed. The ships thus remained, according to naval commentators like the *Daily Telegraph*’s Archibald Hurd, ‘German in all respects—of German construction and German manned, and responsible to the orders of the German Naval Staff at Berlin.’¹⁴

Mallet would be greatly criticised for his general misreading of the diplomatic situation in Constantinople, especially his ignorance of the Ottoman-German treaty and his consequently misplaced faith in Turkey’s commitment to neutrality.¹⁵ In this instance, however, he had accurately appraised Germany’s intentions. The sale was wholly fictitious; the reported 18 million marks never changed hands. The Ottoman-German alliance had been formed on the understanding that Turkey would attack Russia to relieve pressure on the Central Powers in the east and Berlin had been pushing for such an action to be made in the Black Sea by the Turkish

⁸ Enver Pasha [R.C. Lehmann], ‘Unwritten Letters to the Kaiser’, *Punch*, 1/3/1916, 146.

⁹ Herbert Asquith to Venetia Stanley, 12/8/1914, in Michael and Eleanor Brock (eds.), *H.H. Asquith: Letters to Venetia Stanley* (Oxford, 1982), 168.

¹⁰ Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1911-1918. Abridged and Revised Edition*, (London, 1932), 152.

¹¹ See nos. 7-11, 16, 18, 20-22, 27, 28, 30, 32, 41 and 42 in *Correspondences*.

¹² Sir Louis Mallet to Grey, 19/8/1914, in *Correspondences*, 7, no. 22.

¹³ Mallet to Grey, 22/8/1914, in *Correspondences*, 9, no. 27.

¹⁴ Archibald Hurd, ‘A Dramatic Coup’, *Daily Telegraph*, 21/1/1918, 5.

¹⁵ Joseph Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914* (London, 1983), 133.

navy, strengthened by the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, since mid-August.¹⁶ Indeed, Berlin gifted the ships hoping that it would strengthen the Ottoman Porte's uncertain commitment to their alliance and, in the German Chancellor's words, 'render Ottoman neutrality untenable'.¹⁷

UK newspapers were not as quick to grasp its significance. Throughout August, only *The Times* gave its diplomatic ramifications serious considerations and its remarks were largely theoretical musings on the rights and obligations of neutral states in wartime. Though it cautioned that Turkey's conduct 'must be watched closely and with some anxiety', it was confident that the Ottoman Empire, guided by the 'more enlightened Turkish statesmen', would remain neutral.¹⁸ Other papers were aware of the specifics of the Porte's diplomatic *faux pas*. *The Times*' legal correspondent's verdict that the sale was a 'transparent artifice designed to avert [the *Goeben* and *Breslau*'s] capture or internment' undertaken against the 'generally accepted rule as to the transfer of private vessels to neutrals' laid out in the Declaration of London seems to have been widely read, being directly quoted by several newspapers.¹⁹ These matters were, however, strictly theoretical, as the Foreign Office, which was suspicious of the press and consequently 'chary with its news',²⁰ ensured that newspapers were unclear as to whether the sale had even taken place. The Foreign Office informed *Reuters* that it had 'no confirmation' behind the vessels' presence in the Dardanelles, despite having received precisely this confirmation from Beaumont two days prior.²¹ Meanwhile, the Turkish Embassy in London professed complete ignorance of the transaction.²² In the confusion, Ireland's *Cork Examiner* withheld its commentary, considering it 'unfruitful to discuss the probable effects' of a sale which, as far as it knew, lacked official confirmation.²³ This uncertainty was shared across the examined newspapers, with only the *Edinburgh Evening News* stating definitively that the transaction had occurred.²⁴

¹⁶ Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War*, 125.

¹⁷ Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg to Baron von Wangenheim, 10/8/1914, quoted in Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War*, 117.

¹⁸ 'The Goeben and the Dardanelles', *The Times*, 14/8/1914, 7; 'The German Plan of campaign', *The Times*, 13/8/1914, 7.

¹⁹ E.g., 'The "Deal" in Warships', *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 14/8/1914, 5; 'Goeben and Breslau', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 13/8/1914, 2; 'Turkey's Purchase of German Warships', *Scotsman*, 13/8/1914, 3; 'Seizure of Vessels', *Western Mail*, 14/8/1914, 6.

²⁰ Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 2nd ed., (Basingstoke, 2003), 178.

²¹ *Reuters* report, 'Turkey and Goeben', *Western Mail*, 14/8/1914, 3; Henry Beaumont to Sir Edward Grey, 12/8/1914, in *Correspondences*, 3, no. 9.

²² *Reuters* report, 'The Cruiser Goeben', *Daily Telegraph*, 14/8/1914, p. 7.

²³ *Cork Examiner*, 14/8/1914, 4.

²⁴ 'At Last!', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 13/8/1914, 2.

This recalled the press' failure to adequately grasp the significance of Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassination which ultimately caused the First World War. Adam James Bones shows that, after brief interest in the assassination itself, 'no coverage of the escalating Austrian and Serbian crisis was evident across July' within British national dailies until Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July.²⁵ Bones attributes the press' apparent indifference partly to the Foreign Office's refusal to inform newspapers of these diplomatic developments, seen also in the *Goeben* and *Breslau* affair. They were also overshadowed by what were considered more pressing affairs, chiefly (although not exclusively) highly contentious partisan debates around whether Ireland should be granted home rule.²⁶ Similarly, though not overshadowed completely, the press only cared about the *Goeben* and *Breslau* affair insofar as it related to Britain's war with Germany, which had begun just 6 days prior.

Initial coverage was jubilant, celebrating the Royal Navy's success in cornering the German cruisers in the Dardanelles and apparently forcing Germany to 'sell the vessels [rather] than have them lying useless for the rest of the war.'²⁷ 'So great apparently is the fear which the British Fleet inspires', wrote the *Scotsman*, 'that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, before surrendering to Turkey, allowed themselves to be chased by two British cruisers, not equal to them in armament strength, rather than risk an engagement.'²⁸ The fact that the Ottoman fleet now greatly outclassed its Russian counterpart – *Reuters* warned that the *Goeben* was 'so superior to any ship in the Black Sea fleet of Russia that she could easily destroy any of the Russian vessels almost without danger to herself' – did little to dampen their spirits.²⁹ Press commentators were confident, given numerous reports stating (falsely) that the *Goeben*'s German officers and crew had departed at the Allies request and would instead be manned by Turks,³⁰ that the ships would cause the Allies no harm. For Hurd, it was a 'matter of small consequence' whether the Turks had acquired the *Goeben* because he found it 'difficult to imagine a strange crew of Turks taking such a monster triumph of mechanical science to sea and using it in the only effective way—in swift offence. It would be like giving a mischievous boy a box of fireworks.'³¹ Prime Minister Herbert Asquith was similarly dismissive. Upon learning of the sale in a Cabinet meeting, he wrote to his confidant Venetia Stanley that 'it

²⁵ Adam James Bones, 'British National Dailies and the Outbreak of War in 1914', *The International History Review*, 35:5 (2013), 975-992, quotation at 980. See also Powel, 'Welsh Press', 135-140.

²⁶ Bones, 'British National Dailies', 979-982.

²⁷ *Scotsman*, 13/8/1914, 4.

²⁸ *Scotsman*, 19/8/1914, 4; italics absent in original. See also 'Silent Victory', *Observer*, 16/8/1914, 4.

²⁹ *Reuters* telegram from Petrograd, 18/10/1914, in 'Turkey and the *Goeben*', *Daily Telegraph*, 20/10/1914, 11.

³⁰ See, e.g., 'Goeben Sold to the Turks', *Daily Mail*, 13/8/1914, 3; 'Goeben Sold to Turkey', *Irish Times*, 13/8/1914, 5; 'Goeben Under Turkish flag', *The Times*, 14/8/1914, 6.

³¹ 'British Navy and its Work', *Daily Telegraph*, 14/8/1914, 7.

doesn't matter much... as the Turkish sailors cannot navigate [the *Goeben*] – except on to rocks or mines'.³²

Despite its obvious racism, this assessment was not without basis. The Turkish navy was in a desperate state, having been disbanded by Sultan Abdul Hamid in the late-nineteenth century, while subsequent internal attempts to rebuild the fleet were hampered by corruption. Though the Young Turks did invite Britain, the world's premier naval power, to help reorganise their fleet, poor relations between the British Naval Mission and the Turkish Admiralty, coupled with numerous German attempts to undermine Britain's position, meant that for most of its duration it achieved very little.³³ The *Irish Independent* recalled that the Ottoman navy had refused an earlier offer to purchase the *Goeben* in 1912 because 'the Turkish naval officers and crew were not sufficiently trained to handle such a vessel.'³⁴ Though the Turkish sailors who had been trained in England to operate the *Reshadieh* and *Sultan Osman* were free to return to Constantinople after the dreadnoughts' requisition, it was considered doubtful 'whether even these men are sufficient in number or in experience' to manage 'so complicated a piece of machinery as the *Goeben*.'³⁵

By the end of August, it became apparent that the sale was more than a desperate attempt by Germany to mitigate a humiliating naval defeat. Reports that several hundred German troops had been sighted in Bulgaria *en route* to Constantinople convinced numerous outlets that an Ottoman declaration of war was imminent.³⁶ It then became apparent to a *Scotsman* correspondent that the press' hitherto jubilant and self-congratulatory discussion betrayed a fundamental 'misapprehension' of the sale's significance, which would 'never have been contemplated by Germany except as part of her plans for war.' He recalled that the possibility of the Ottoman navy purchasing the *Goeben* was widely discussed on his visit to Constantinople in mid-May, which he took as evidence that Germany had planned to use the *Goeben* to persuade the Porte into a military alliance in preparation for the coming conflict.³⁷ Turkish newspapers were indeed openly discussing this possibility at that time,³⁸ but it is unlikely that that *Goeben*'s visit to Constantinople in May 1914 carried any such plans. Leaving aside the supposition that Germany was preparing to instigate a general European war prior to

³² Asquith to Stanley, 12/8/1914, in Brock and Brock (eds.), *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, 168.

³³ Chris B. Rooney, 'The International Significance of British Naval Missions to the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34:1 (1998), 1-29.

³⁴ *Irish Independent*, 14/8/1914, 2.

³⁵ Press Association report, in *Cork Examiner*, 15/8/1914, 6

³⁶ E.g., 'The Choice of the Turks', *The Times*, 29/8/1914, 9; 'The Attitude of Turkey', *Observer*, 30/8/1914, 9; 'The Choice of Turkey', *Daily Mail*, 2/9/1914, 4.

³⁷ 'Turkish and German Intrigues', *Scotsman*, 3/9/1914, 5.

³⁸ Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War*, 35.

July 1914, a classic subject of debate,³⁹ it was Enver, not any German official, who first proposed the sale, and not until after the war had begun.⁴⁰ These errors aside, it is clear that the Ottoman acquisition of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* was of little interest in its own right and only concerned UK newspapers when, in late August, they began, like foreign officials before them, to situate it within a German plot to assume political dominance in Constantinople and force the Ottoman Empire into the war.

Between War and Peace

Unbeknownst to these commentators, the Ottoman Empire had already committed to an alliance with Germany. Ottoman statesmen saw in the ‘July Crisis’ of 1914 a unique opportunity to free the Ottoman Empire from its diplomatic isolation and establish a strategic alliance with one of Europe’s great powers and, having failed to secure an *entente* with Britain and France, the Porte formalised such an arrangement with Germany, after a series of negotiations from 22 July to 27 July, on 2 August.⁴¹ At the same time, they had no interest in jeopardising the Ottoman Empire’s political future by actually entering the war and, accordingly, kept their alliance with Germany secret from international observers. The *Daily Telegraph*’s Constantinople correspondent recalled that Interior Minister Talaat Bey and the Grand Vizier, alongside other notable Ottoman statesmen (with the important exception of Enver) had proudly resisted German propositions for an alliance, backed by concerted propaganda efforts, and declared the Ottoman Empire’s strict neutrality before Parliament.⁴² This farcical display took place on 2 August, the very day these supposed advocates for neutrality signed their alliance with Germany. It remained secret until September 1917 when finally revealed through a Greek ‘white book’. Included amongst the assorted diplomatic documents was a telegram from the Greek Minister at Berlin dated 4 August 1914, which informed King Constantine I that the German Foreign Minister had ‘confirmed to me, under the seal of absolute secrecy, the conclusion of an alliance between Turkey and Germany.’⁴³

³⁹ Most famously argued in Fritz Fischer’s *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, published in English as *Germany’s War Aims in the First World War* (London, 1967). For a recent historiographical discussion of Fischer’s thesis, see Annika Mombauer ‘The Fischer Controversy 50 Years On’, *Journal of Modern History*, 48:2 (2013), 231-240.

⁴⁰ Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War*, 103.

⁴¹ These negotiations are outlined in *ibid.*, 93-104.

⁴² ‘Turkey and the War’, *Daily Telegraph*, 25/8/1914, 3.

⁴³ Nikalaos Theotokis to King Constantine I, 4/8/1914, *The Greek White Book: Diplomatic Documents, 1913-1917* (New York, 1919 [1917]), 50, no. 20. Though made available in the UK in August 1917, the press only seems to have noticed this particular document in September: see ‘Constantine’s Treachery’, *Daily Telegraph*, 3/9/1917, 4.

The Porte's diplomatic manoeuvres reflected these interests. Mustafa Aksakal likens its actions during this period to Penelope's rouse with her suitors in the Greek epic the *Odyssey*. Just as Penelope promised to choose a new husband after she finished her burial shroud, which she unwove every night, so the Ottoman statesmen claimed they only needed a little more time before they could join the war on Germany's side, while taking every step to renege on their commitment. It was only when it became clear that Germany would not hold out any longer that the Ottoman Empire finally entered the war at the end of October 1914.⁴⁴ In the interim, it sought to both appease Germany and refrain from antagonising Britain and its allies, adopting a routine of accompanying their 'flagrant violations of international law' with repeated official affirmations of neutrality.⁴⁵ After the attack on Russia seemingly revealed the Ottoman Empire's true intentions, Dundee's *Courier and Argus* described the Porte's foreign policy as one of 'pseudo-neutrality'.⁴⁶ For Sir Edward Cook, formerly editor of the *Daily News* and later joint director of the Press Bureau, the diplomatic correspondence between the British Embassy and the Foreign Office during these months, which was published as a white book in November 1914, proved this analysis. They revealed 'a tale on the one hand of great patience and forbearance on the side of the Allies, and on the other hand of great duplicity, or at any rate of markedly double dealing, on the part of the Turkish Government.'⁴⁷

This was an accurate appraisal of the diplomatic situation, but it was not how these events were interpreted by press commentators as they unfolded between August and October 1914. Instead, journalists saw this discrepancy between the Porte's words and actions as evidence of an internal division within the Ottoman Cabinet regarding their foreign policy. On the one hand was an anti-interventionist 'peace party', comprised of seemingly every Ottoman statesmen of consequence, including Talaat, Finance Minister Djavid, Naval Minister Djemal, and the Grand Vizier himself. The one exception was Enver who, together with some nameless associates, made up the 'war party'. The Ottoman Empire's foreign policy was understood to be in a state of flux, favouring neutrality or intervention depending on which faction was dominant at a given moment.

Initially, Enver's faction was believed to be operating entirely independently of external German pressure. It was understood that Enver's ambitions were directed towards Greece for the recovery of Salonika, a city on the Aegean coast that had been part of the Ottoman Empire

⁴⁴ Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War*, 119-152.

⁴⁵ Edwin Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople: 1873-1915*, 3rd ed., (London, 1916), 343.

⁴⁶ 'Turkey Declares Herself', *Courier and Argus*, 30/10/1914, 2.

⁴⁷ Edward Cook, *Britain and Turkey: The Causes of the Rupture: Set out, in brief form, from the Diplomatic Correspondence* (London, 1914), 25-26.

for nearly 500 years before being ceded to Greece in 1912 after the First Balkan War. Salonika held particular significance for the CUP as the birthplace of the Young Turk revolution that saw their ascension to power. Enver having personally achieved his fame as the ‘Hero of the Revolution’ in Salonika, *The Times* reasoned that it would be ‘intolerable’ for him that this city should ‘remain in foreign and in Christian hands.’⁴⁸ The available evidence seemed to support this view. Ottoman forces had mobilised in early August as a ‘precautionary’ measure to defend against a potential Greek invasion, with 200-220,000 troops to be stationed at the Empire’s Thracian border.⁴⁹ The Ottoman Ambassador to Paris claimed that the purchase of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* was another such precautionary step, necessary to achieve step to achieve naval parity with Greece.⁵⁰ That the *Breslau* was renamed the *Midilli*, the Turkish name for the city of Mytilene, which had also been ceded to Greece after the Balkan Wars, was seen as a less-than-subtle hint of their intentions.⁵¹ Since these objectives were of no obvious German interest, the *Manchester Guardian* ‘did not suppose for a moment’ that they were ‘influenced by any sentimental sympathy with Germany’.⁵²

After press attention moved towards German efforts to disrupt Ottoman neutrality in late August, however, the war party and, especially, Enver himself, came to be seen as subservient instruments of German imperial ambitions. Germany’s guiding hand in its manoeuvres was identified most clearly in an article by the *Daily Telegraph*’s diplomatic correspondent, published on 1 October, warning of imminent Anglo-Turkish hostilities due to a ‘very critical situation’ concerning ‘certain British ships of war’.⁵³ Most likely this referred to the Porte’s request for Britain’s HMS *Odin* to leave the Ottoman-controlled Shatt-al-Arab river, its presence being declared by a violation of Ottoman neutrality. The Foreign Office’s unwillingness to acquiesce, pointing to the hypocrisy of the Porte’s sudden championship of the laws of neutrality, led the Vali of Basra to formally demand their removal on 3 October.⁵⁴ This was the latest in a series of ‘unfriendly’ acts undertaken by the Porte under ‘the ascendancy of Enver Pasha’ over the preceding months (following the purchase of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, the invitation of German troops into Constantinople, the mobilisation of the Ottoman army in Syria, and the closing of the Dardanelles) all of which, it was ‘perfectly obvious’ to the

⁴⁸ ‘Turkey and the War’, *The Times*, 19/8/1914, 7.

⁴⁹ Press Bureau communique, issued 11/8/1914, in ‘Official News’, *The Times*, 12/8/1914, 5.

⁵⁰ ‘Purchase of the Goeben’, *The Times*, 16/8/1914, 1.

⁵¹ ‘Goeben and Breslau’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 14/8/1914, 3.

⁵² ‘War and More war’, *Manchester Guardian*, 18/8/1914, 4.

⁵³ ‘Turkey and Great Britain’, *Daily Telegraph*, 1/10/1914, 9.

⁵⁴ The Vali of Basra’s formal demand is given in a correspondence between Mallet and Grey, 4/10/1914, in *Correspondences*, 35, no. 106. For their prior correspondences on the incident, see nos. 80, 101, 103, 106 in the same collection. See also Heller, *British Policy*, 147-148.

Telegraph, had been urged by German counsel, whose ‘malign influence’ could ‘be seen at every step’.⁵⁵ Similarly, the Porte’s abolition of the ‘capitulations’, a series of treaties granting additional rights to Europeans in the Ottoman Empire, struck *The Times* as especially Germanic as an ‘Oriental application of the “scrap of paper” doctrine’.⁵⁶ This referred to Germany’s violation of the Treaty of London through its invasion of neutral Belgium in August 1914 which, formally at least, brought Britain into the war.⁵⁷ The German Chancellor’s justification for this manoeuvre – that the treaty was a mere ‘scrap of paper’ – featured prominently in early British propaganda to show Germany’s disregard for not only international treaties but the legal underpinnings of European civilisation itself, before giving way to less abstract atrocity narratives.⁵⁸

In fact, no dispute between pro-German and pro-neutral factions over the Ottoman response to the First World War existed. Djemal’s memoirs reveal that leading members of the supposed peace party, Talaat and the Grand Vizier, had not only approved of the alliance with Germany but had in fact taken part prominently in the negotiations.⁵⁹ Likewise, Djemal, who was understood at one point to be the faction’s leader,⁶⁰ admitted to having voiced no opposition to the alliance and, ultimately, ‘entirely approved the new situation thus created.’⁶¹ An ardent Francophile who had unsuccessfully approached Britain and France for an *entente* in July 1914, Djemal saw no other course available for the ‘sick man of Europe’ to secure its national security and recovery to prosperity. When asked by Talaat for his thoughts on an agreement with Germany, Djemal replied: ‘I should not hesitate to accept any alliance which rescued Turkey from her present position of isolation.’⁶² The press was not simply mistaken as to who comprised the two factions. Following Yusuf Hikmet Bayur’s highly influential three-volume *Türk İnkılâbı Tarihi* (History of the Turkish Revolution), blame has traditionally been placed on the so-called Young Turk Triumvirate of Enver, Talaat and Djemal who supposedly acted against the knowledge or wishes of their colleagues. While this interpretation remains particularly attractive in Turkey, Mustafa Aksakal’s comprehensive analysis of Ottoman foreign

⁵⁵ ‘Turkey and Great Britain’, *Daily Telegraph*, 1/10/1914, 9.

⁵⁶ ‘Alternatives for Turkey’, *The Times*, 30/9/1914, 9. For the Foreign Office’s response, see Heller, *British Policy*, 143-144.

⁵⁷ On the legal issues surrounding this action, see Isabel V. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War* (Ithaca, 2014), 16-50.

⁵⁸ Nicoletta F. Gullace, ‘Sexual Violence and Family Honor: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War’, *American Historical Review*, 102:3 (1997), 720-729.

⁵⁹ Djemal Pasha, *Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919* (London, 1922), 107-110.

⁶⁰ Benjamin Wegner Nørregaard, ‘Russian Avalanche’, *Daily Mail*, 1/9/1914, 5, commenting on a Constantinople telegram received by the Russian newspaper *Novoye Vremya*.

⁶¹ Djemal, *Memoirs*, 115.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 108.

policy during this time suggests that support for an Ottoman-German alliance was much more widespread than conventionally assumed.⁶³

This confusion was actively encouraged by Ottoman statesmen themselves, whose desires to avoid conflict with Britain and its allies were well-served by blaming Germany for their antagonistic foreign policy. Thus, the Grand Vizier did nothing to correct Ambassador Mallet's belief that Constantinople was 'nothing more nor less than an armed German camp' where all 'were at the mercy of Liman Pasha and the Minister of War' but only deepened his convictions. He assured the Ambassador that 'more adherents were joining the peace party every day' and that measures were in place to prevent Enver's war party from leading the Ottoman Empire into war.⁶⁴ Why, though, were both foreign officials and UK newspapers so willing to accept these false claims when so much evidence existed to the contrary?

The Rationale

As noted, where historians have addressed claims of Ottoman subservience to Germany as more than simply nefarious propaganda, they have attributed them to Orientalist stereotypes of Turkish 'backwardness'. This casts the above press commentary as less a genuine (if misguided) interpretation of Ottoman-German relations than an expression of typical early-twentieth-century anti-Turkish racism. Though appealing, this reading ignores the identical claims made of Germany's European allies, which place the ostensibly Orientalist narrative of German domination within the press' Germano-centric conception of the Central Powers as a whole. As the *Daily Telegraph* explained, the alliance was believed to be under:

the single intense control of Berlin, unified to the highest degree... the "dear allies" are as much the vassals of the Kaiser as the Kings of Bavaria, Saxony, and Wurtemberg [sic]. There is but one will, one purpose, one design... minister[ing] to the grandiose designs of Germany.⁶⁵

Claims that leading political figures were but 'highly-placed agents' of Germany were also not unique to the Ottoman Empire. Cardiff's *Western Mail* laid similar charges against Queen

⁶³ Aksakal, *Ottoman Road to War*; Bayur's historiographical influence discussed at 10, 12-13. Aksakal's interpretation was anticipated by Ulrich Trupener's analysis of the German sources in *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918* (Princeton, 1968), ch. 2 and more recently affirmed in Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (New York, 2015), ch. 2.

⁶⁴ Mallet to Grey, 20/9/1914, in *Correspondences*, 27-28, no. 83.

⁶⁵ 'Unity of Direction', *Daily Telegraph*, 24/1/1916, 8.

Sophia of Greece, Empress Alexandria of Russia and Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, alongside various high-ranking politicians in these countries. It also suspected that ‘German agents of varying status are probably to be found in every country in the world’; this was an ‘essential feature of German tactics... in foreign countries.’⁶⁶

Nonetheless, the Ottoman Empire was certainly considered the most subservient partner, perhaps for Orientalist reasons. *The Times* explained that an Austro-Hungarian official, as ‘a mere agent’ of Germany without ‘a will of his own’, ‘might almost be a Turk’.⁶⁷ Additionally some evidence suggests that Orientalist stereotypes made claims of German domination more believable in the Ottoman case. The *Daily Telegraph* found it ‘just possible to believe’ that the naval attack on Russia occurred ‘without authority from the Sultan’s Ministers’ because the Ottoman Empire was ‘without any attribute of government but the name’.⁶⁸ Likewise, the European belief that the Turkish ‘oriental mind’ was particularly ‘susceptible to corruption and sloth’, as discussed by Jeremy Salt,⁶⁹ clearly influenced the novelist-propagandist E.F. Benson’s account of the Ottoman road to war. In his 1918 book *Crescent and Iron Cross*, written at the request of Britain’s War Propaganda Bureau at Wellington House, Benson explained that Germany ‘had thoroughly grasped the salient fact that to make any way with Oriental peoples your purse must be open and your backshish [sic] unlimited’, referring to the Eastern practice of alms-giving which was associated with bribery and political corruption.⁷⁰ Clearly, Orientalism played some role, although it was not the guiding consideration as previously assumed. Examining further aspects of the press’ narrative which lend themselves especially well to an Orientalist reading demonstrates this, while also elucidating the underlying rationale behind this narrative of German domination.

Firstly, while nearly all Turkish statesmen were considered sufficiently ‘wise’ and ‘enlightened’ to see that neutrality was in their best interests, these privileging terms were applied to them for recognising their own inferiority to Western powers and their consequent inability to meaningfully contribute to a German victory. The terror the Turks’ march to the

⁶⁶ ‘A Vassal in Revolt’, *Western Mail*, 25/5/1917, 4.

⁶⁷ ‘The Limits of American Patience’, *The Times*, 18/9/1915, 7.

⁶⁸ ‘The Turkish Imbroglia’, *Daily Telegraph*, 3/11/1914, 8.

⁶⁹ Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878-1896* (London, 1993), 17-22, quotation at 18. This source must be used with caution given the author’s problematic interpretation of the Armenian Genocide: Jeremy Salt, ‘Foreword’, in Mustafa Sedar Palabiyik, *Understanding the Turkish-Armenian Controversy Over 1915* (Istanbul, 2015), ix-xix. Nonetheless, his work influenced Ariotti’s Orientalist interpretation (Ariotti, *Captive Anzacs*, 33), and is, therefore, of historiographical value.

⁷⁰ E.F. Benson, *Crescent and Iron Cross* (New York, 1918), 142. On Benson’s connection with Wellington House, see Brian Masters, *The Life of E.F. Benson* (London, 1991), 202-204.

gates of Vienna had spread throughout Europe in the seventeenth century had long abided.⁷¹ By the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had become the ‘sick man of Europe’, a crumbling state which owed its continued existence as a political entity to the European powers who saw its collapse as a threat to their own international security.⁷² Racist language abounded within contemporary assessments of Turkish martial abilities. Commenting in 1913 on the Ottoman Empire’s disastrous defeat in the First Balkan War, the *Daily Telegraph*’s Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett argued that Turks, once a ‘fanatical and courageous race’ bred of the ‘blending of the warlike autocracy of the Mongols with the religion of the ascetic Arabs of the desert’, had dramatically declined in military prowess after settling in Constantinople, where they came into contact with ‘the most effete and corrupt civilisation the world has ever seen’, the Byzantines.⁷³ While Turks continued to show ‘astonishing courage and endurance’ when defending, this meant little, given the ‘cult of the offensive’ which dominated European military thought at this time. Ashmead-Bartlett noted that the Ottoman army had been easily defeated whenever it ‘essayed an offensive movement of any kind’, owing to poor training at both the enlisted and officer levels and a ‘general deficiency of any form of military organisation’.⁷⁴

The *Edinburgh Evening News* reiterated these sentiments in November 1914. It argued that while, theoretically, ‘the mischief which Turkey can inflict or will attempt to do is considerable’, being in a position to cut off Allied trade routes through the Black Sea and the Suez Canal, these ‘prophecies of evil have been much abated by the slowness of the Turk.’ Given the contemporary belief in ‘martial races’, which attributed military prowess (or, in the Turkish case, ineptitude) to racial characteristics, there was little possibility the Turkish army, under German instruction, would revise its military fortunes and threaten the Allied position in the future. ‘Even German officers’, the paper remarked, ‘will not pull this military rabble together.’⁷⁵ The Young Turks’ pre-war efforts to reform its forces on the Prussian model and

⁷¹ Aslı Çırakman, *From the ‘Terror of the World’ to the ‘Sick Man of Europe’: European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York, 2005). See also Larry Wolf, *The Singing Turk: The Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage from the Siege of Vienna to the Age of Napoleon* (Stanford, 2017) on similar shifts in European cultural depictions of ‘the Turk’.

⁷² See Marian Kent (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1984).

⁷³ Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, *With the Turks in Thrace* (London, 1913), 40.

⁷⁴ Ashmead-Bartlett, *With the Turks*, 32. On the ‘cult of the offensive’, see Stephen van Evera, ‘The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War’, *International Security*, 9:1 (1984), 58-107; Antulio J. Echevarria II, ‘The “Cult of the Offensive” Revisited: Confronting Technological Change Before the Great War’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 25:1 (2002), 199-214.

⁷⁵ ‘Turkey’s Military Brigands’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 2/11/1914, 4. For similar assessments, see ‘Turkey’s Mad Step’, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 31/10/1914, 4; ‘The Military Situation’, *Scotsman*, 3/11/1914, 7. On the notion of ‘martial races’, see Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester, 2004).

Occidentalise the Turkish army had even worsened its reputation for Ashmead-Bartlett. Defeat in the Balkan Wars proved that these ‘Oriental Occidentals’ had, through their secularising ethos, destroyed the ‘primitive fighting virtues of an Oriental race’ that had ‘so often saved the Empire from complete disaster and disruption in the past.’⁷⁶ Even Lancashire papers were complacent. Though the 42nd Division’s deployment in Egypt made ‘the imminence of Turkey’s participation in the war’ in early November a matter of ‘special interest for Burnley and East Lancashire’, the *Burnley Express* assured readers that ‘relatives of our Territorials need not be anxious’.⁷⁷ This was not merely to encourage public morale for, as discussed below,⁷⁸ Burnley papers were more than willing to fearmonger about the potentially catastrophic effect of Anglo-Turkish hostilities on the local economy. Within the examined sources, only an *Essex County Chronicle* columnist put any faith in the German military mission’s ability to improve the Turkish army, warning that Britons would ‘err... if we treat the military qualities of the Turks as a negligible quality.’⁷⁹

This warning seems prophetic. David French attributes Britain’s disastrous failure to best the Turks and capture Constantinople in Churchill’s infamous Dardanelles campaign partly to inadequate preparations owing to Asquith and his War Council’s ‘belief in the innate inferiority of Asiatic troops.’⁸⁰ This overlooks, firstly, that racist convictions in the necessary superiority of European forces had already been refuted a decade earlier when a European power was thoroughly defeated by a supposedly inferior ‘Oriental’ one in the Russo-Japanese War. *The Times*’ military correspondent, Charles à Court Repington, believed that the ‘vain and haughty rulers of the mighty Russian Empire’ were victims of their own racial prejudice since, by foolishly dismissing the Japanese as merely ‘yellow pagans’ and ‘monkeys with the brains of birds’, they had ‘failed to understand the character of her foe’ and the serious threat Japan posed to Russia.⁸¹ Patrick Porter shows that numerous senior British military officers, including the future commander of British forces at Gallipoli, General Sir Ian Hamilton, even sought to apply elements of Japanese military doctrine themselves.⁸² Secondly, Warren Dockter stresses that for Churchill, at least, it was not that the Turks’ ‘Oriental’ qualities rendered them necessarily inept in warfare (Churchill was himself a Turcophile), but rather that

⁷⁶ Ashmead-Bartlett, *With the Turks*, 50-58, quotations at 53, 56.

⁷⁷ ‘Territorials and Egypt’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 4/11/1914, 4.

⁷⁸ See below at 43-44.

⁷⁹ V. de S. Fowke, ‘Notes on the War’, *Essex County Chronicle*, 6/11/1914, 4.

⁸⁰ French, ‘Origins’, 220.

⁸¹ Charles à Court Repington, *The War in the Far East* (New York, 1905), 7-8.

⁸² Patrick Porter, ‘Military Orientalism? British Observers of the Japanese Way of War, 1904-1910’, *War & Society*, 26:1 (2007), 1-25.

Turkish forces *had* been easily defeated in their first engagements with Britain in late 1914 and early 1915.⁸³

In the recent Balkan Wars, too, the Ottoman Empire suffered approximately 340,000 casualties, over three times those of its adversaries in the Balkan League and, more humiliatingly, ceded all its land in Europe except for a small section of Eastern Thrace to the various Balkan states, amounting to 60,000 square miles and nearly 4,000,000 subjects.⁸⁴ This reflected especially poorly on the German military mission, which was so ridiculed in Britain for its role in training these forces that Field Marshal Colmar von der Goltz, Germany's chief military advisor in Constantinople, wrote to England's *Fortnightly Review* seeking to absolve himself and his colleagues of responsibility.⁸⁵ One such lampooning from September 1913 was reproduced in *Punch* shortly after the Ottoman Empire entered the war. Captioned 'the decisive defeat of the Turk by the Greeks and their Allies is a bitter blow to Germany', it depicted a smirking Greek King informing an embarrassed Kaiser that 'our success was, as you know, entirely due to you', referring, as the Kaiser explains to the reader, to 'our organisation of the *Turkish* army.' Through its title, 'Deutschland ueber Alles', it presented the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the Balkan Wars as a repudiation of Germany's own nationalistic boasts of greatness present in the *Deutschlandlied*: 'Deutschland über Alles, über Alles in der Welt' (Germany above all, Germany above all in the world).⁸⁶ The poor regard in which the above commentators held the Turkish army and their scepticism regarding the success of the German military mission, for all their clear and objectionable racist overtones, were not unreasonable in light of its recent military performance.

Importantly, it was believed that the predicted attack on Greece would amount to a renewal of the Balkan Wars in which the Ottoman Empire and the German military mission had been so humiliated. It was expected that numerous Balkan states, if not a fully reformed Balkan League, would join the Allies in order to prevent a resurgent Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and to seize the remaining Turkish territory in Europe.⁸⁷ It is impossible to know whether a Turkish incursion into the Balkans would have elicited this response, but, as very

⁸³ A. Warren Dockter, "A Great Turkish Policy": Winston Churchill, the Ottoman Empire and the Origins of the Dardanelles Campaign', *History*, 102 (2017), 85-86.

⁸⁴ Edward J. Erickson, *Defeat in Detail: The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912-1913* (Westport, 2003), 329; Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, 20-21. See Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London, 2000) for a concise overview.

⁸⁵ Handan Nezir Akmeşe, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* (London, 2005), 128-9.

⁸⁶ F.H. Townshend, 'Deutschland ueber Alles', *Punch*, 17/9/1913, 241, reprinted in 'Unspeakable Turk', Supplement to *Punch*, 16/12/1914, 22.

⁸⁷ 'Turkey and the War', *The Times*, 19/8/1914, 7.

little left of Turkey's European possessions remained to take, it seems unlikely. Bulgaria and Romania were, instead, concerned with national unification and were willing to join whichever side would give them the land required to consolidate their national borders. Thus, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers in October 1915 because they were offered the immediate annexation of all Macedonia, while Romania joined the Allies in August 1916 because the Romanian-populated lands of Austria-Hungary were more desirable than the economically-undeveloped region of Bessarabia held by Russia. Only for Greece, who desired the Greek-populated regions of Western Anatolia, did these nationalist ambitions oppose them to the Ottoman Empire, yet a powerful faction led by King Constantine I, nonetheless, opposed an alliance with the Entente and it was not until June 1917, following an Allied-backed, pro-Entente *coup*, that they declared war on the Central Powers.⁸⁸ Regardless, the *Daily Telegraph's* Constantinople correspondent believed that it was precisely this reasoning that prompted the Ottoman Government's initial declaration of neutrality: 'Experience has shown them that their Balkan enemies, for the moment divided among themselves, would probably end by reconstituting their alliance and falling on the Turks, and agreeing among themselves as to the partition of Turkey in Europe.'⁸⁹ In these circumstances, *The Times* advised neutrality as 'the only course [that] is possible' for the Porte, 'so manifestly and so imperiously do her interests dictate it.'⁹⁰ Its 'wanton intervention' on the side of the Central Powers could only end in the Ottoman Empire's 'dismemberment and ruin' and the expulsion of 'the Turk' from Europe.⁹¹ This was even more true in late October, when the Ottomans finally joined the war. Following a series of Russian victories in the East and the liberation of Antwerp in the West, Allied victory seemed all but inevitable. Joining the Central Powers at this juncture was 'a preceding of which words can scarcely describe the folly,' and one from which Germany was the only clear beneficiary.⁹²

Germany's success in bringing the Ottoman Empire into the war nonetheless was, supposedly, through a concerted propaganda conveying a false impression of the Central Powers' prospects for victory. On 7 September 1914, for example, the Northcliffe press discovered reports in Turkish newspapers of a speech by dissenting Liberal MP John Burns

⁸⁸ Richard C. Hall, 'Bulgaria, Romania and Greece', in Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H Herwig (eds.), *The Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, 2003), 389-414.

⁸⁹ 'Turkey and the War', *Daily Telegraph*, 25/8/1914, 3.

⁹⁰ 'Turkey and the War', *The Times*, 19/8/1914, 7.

⁹¹ 'Alternatives for Turkey', *The Times*, 30/9/1914, 9. See also 'The Choice of Turkey', *Daily Mail*, 2/9/1914, 4; 'War and More War', *Manchester Guardian*, 18/8/1914, 4.

⁹² 'Turkey Unmasks', *Daily Telegraph*, 2/11/1914, 8. See also 'Turkey—and Others', *Western Mail*, 31/10/1914, 4; 'The War', *Manchester Guardian*, 6/11/1914, 6; 'Turkey's Wild Plunge', *Burnley News*, 7/11/1914, 7.

expressing serious doubts about Britain's prospects for victory against German industrial might. *The Times* believed this was 'obviously composed for Turkish consumption' by Germany, having previously appeared in numerous German papers, and the *Daily Mail* quickly determined its fraudulence by simply questioning Burns himself.⁹³ The *Daily Telegraph's* Constantinople correspondent recalled hearing similar 'wild rumours' disseminating from the German embassy when the war began, including 'that M. Poincare had been assassinated, that civil war had broken out in France, that the Germans had entered Belgium triumphantly, and... that the German and Austrian armies would very soon be both in Paris and Warsaw.'⁹⁴ The *Manchester Guardian* believed these false stories created an environment wherein Turkey's foreign policy debates were conducted 'under a general impression that German arms were easily carrying the day and that there would be a bad time after the war for anybody who had not been Germany's friend'.⁹⁵ It was thought that any Turkish declaration of war would, given the apparently overwhelming likelihood of an Allied victory, be attributable to this German propaganda. 'It would be a curious tragedy', wrote the *Guardian*, 'if, after all the vicissitudes of its long, wonderful history, the Ottoman Empire in Europe were to die of false news.'⁹⁶

This did not, as might first appear, simply express further Orientalist stereotypes of Turkish credulity. Instead, they pointed to broader concerns, predating the war, about official German efforts to compete with London-based international news outlets like *Reuters* to ensure that pro-German narratives appear in foreign newspapers.⁹⁷ This included an attempt to arrange a deal with *Reuters* whereby all news pertaining to Germany would be obtained exclusively through a company established by leading German industrialists for the 'conveniently vague purpose' of 'furthering the German industrial prestige abroad'.⁹⁸ *Reuters'* allegiances were considered highly suspect during the war given its owners' German origins, even though its present owner, Baron Herbert de Reuter, had lived in Britain his entire life and supported the war unequivocally as necessary to destroy 'the unspeakable blight of German military tyranny'.⁹⁹ Ironically, its claims to objectivity in its wartime reporting were undermined in

⁹³ 'More German Lies', *The Times*, 7/9/1914, 6; 'German Fabrications', *Daily Mail*, 7/9/1914, 4; 'More German Lies', *Daily Mail*, 7/9/1914, 7.

⁹⁴ 'Turkey and the War', *Daily Telegraph*, 25/8/1914, 3.

⁹⁵ 'False News as a Weapon', *Manchester Guardian*, 14/9/1914, 4.

⁹⁶ 'Turkey and the War', *Manchester Guardian*, 2/10/1914, 4. See also 'Fantastic German News in Turkey', *The Times*, 5/9/1914, 9; *Scotsman*, 5/9/1914, 6.

⁹⁷ See The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *War with Germany: Despatches from His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin Respecting an Official Organization for Influencing the Press of Other Countries* ([Melbourne], 1914).

⁹⁸ *War with Germany*, 3-4.

⁹⁹ Donald Read, *The Power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989* (Oxford, 1992), 112-113.

precisely the opposite direction through its inclination to support official British narratives and its possible connections to government propaganda.¹⁰⁰ Unfounded though these criticisms were, they reveal broader fears concerning the influence such ‘fake news’ exercised over which faction these neutral powers were likely to join, including European nations. Only two days after the fabricated defeatist speech was found in the Turkish press, Lindsay Bashford, the *Daily Mail*’s Milan correspondent, found similarly false reports from Berlin of a ‘complete German victory’ over a British position in Belgium ‘in every edition of every newspaper in Italy.’ These were left unchallenged for four days before the correct account, wherein ‘the English troops had defended their position with superb courage against an enormously superior force’, was received from Britain, leading Bashford to fear that this ‘frantic campaign of lies’ might compel Italy, then neutral, to join the Central Powers. ‘Telegrams from England take four days to reach us’, a similarly concerned Italian newspaper recorded; ‘telegrams from Berlin take two hours.’¹⁰¹

For all the above rationale, it remains that the press accepted the Porte’s self-serving narrative with remarkably little critical reflection. Curiously, the correct, and perhaps more obvious, reading of the reports emerging from the Ottoman Empire, suggesting an Ottoman-German alliance, was given little consideration. There was doubtless an element of simple wishful thinking involved. Officials’ willingness to tolerate the Porte’s repeated violations of neutrality for three months shows how greatly they desired the Ottoman Empire to remain out of the conflict. These concerns were relayed to press editors and journalists by the Foreign Office, who emphasised, via the Press Bureau, ‘the diplomatic importance of allowing nothing to appear in the press which is likely to produce an unfavourable impression in Turkey.’ Reminding them that ‘the preservation of the neutrality of Turkey is... a paramount British interest’, the Foreign Office instructed newspapers to take a ‘friendly’ line in discussing Turkish affairs and, in particular, to express ‘sympathy... with Turkey in her efforts to cope with the pressure... with which Germany is attempting to influence the exercise of her free discretion.’¹⁰² This ‘suppression of matter likely to prejudice Turkish neutrality’, as the Press Bureau called it, remained in place for the remainder of the Ottoman Empire’s neutrality, being

¹⁰⁰ Read, *Power of News*, 126-130; Peter Putnis, ‘Share 999: British Government Control of Reuters during World War I’, *Media History*, 14:2 (2008), 141-165; Peter Putnis and Kerry MacCullum, ‘Reuters, Propaganda-Inspired News, and the Australian Press During the First World War’, *Media History*, 19:3 (2013), 284-304. Cf. Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb, ‘Foreign Office Control of Reuters During the First World War’, *Media History*, 16:3 (2010), 281-293.

¹⁰¹ Lindsay Bashford, ‘How Germany Lies to Italy’, *Daily Mail*, 9/9/1914, 4.

¹⁰² The National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew [hereafter TNA:PRO], HO139/43, D33, 11/9/1914. All references from the National Archives are courtesy of David Monger.

cancelled on 13 November 1914 when made redundant by the outbreak of Anglo-Turkish hostilities.¹⁰³

Newspapers were not always receptive to these notices, but they do seem to have taken this request seriously. They made remarkably little of an assassination attempt made on Liberal MP and President of the Balkan Committee Noel Buxton and his brother, Charles Roden Buxton, on 15 October 1914 by a Young Turk ‘political enthusiast’ (in co-ordination, Noel Buxton later suggested, with Ottoman and German officials who sought to thwart his mission of securing Bulgarian neutrality).¹⁰⁴ This occurred at a time when it was becoming especially clear that ‘the Turkish war party, in tow of the Central Powers, is taking a growing and active interest in the Pan-European struggle’, as the *Daily Telegraph* warned the next day.¹⁰⁵ Yet, while it certainly did not pass unnoticed – such a major event could not be completely omitted from the press and, consequently, it featured in every daily newspaper examined to some degree – coverage was confined to short *Reuters* telegrams. None mentioned the Buxtons’ attempted assassination in their numerous articles and editorials discussing the Ottoman Empire’s impending belligerence.¹⁰⁶ Though, any discussion of editors’ reasoning is necessarily speculative without access to their private deliberations, this curious oversight seems likely the consequence of the Foreign Office’s above instructions.

Lancashire papers were especially apprehensive about war with the Ottoman Empire. On 17 August, the *Manchester Guardian* cautioned the government against ‘press[ing] the whole strength of its case against Turkey’ after the illegal acquisition of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, for ‘forcing Turkey into war... would be a serious blow to Lancashire’.¹⁰⁷ The Ottoman Empire had long been a key importer of Lancashire cotton, including, by 1914, approximately one-third of all cotton produced in Burnley.¹⁰⁸ This was the backbone of the local economy. Charles Macara, founder of the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners and Manufactures, wrote in 1916 that he could not ‘too strongly emphasise the fact that cotton trade is the mainstay of all who make their living within a radius of 40 miles from

¹⁰³ TNA:PRO, HO139/43, D98, 13/11/1914.

¹⁰⁴ Noel Buxton and C. Leonard Leese, *Balkan Problems and European Peace* (New York, 1919), 74-75.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Turkey’s Policy’, *Daily Telegraph*, 16/10/1914, 12.

¹⁰⁶ The most substantial article appeared in the *Western Mail* next to their (unrelated) editorials, consisting of two *Reuters* telegrams, another short notice from an unspecified source and a photo of Noel Buxton: ‘Mr. Noel Buxton and His Brother’, *Western Mail*, 17/10/1914, 4. For indicative examples of the more typical shorter coverage, see ‘Mr. Noel Buxton Shot’, *The Times*, 16/10/1914, 8; ‘Mr. Cecil Buxton and his Brother Wounded’, *Irish Times*, 16/10/1914, 5; ‘Englishmen Shot by a Young Turk’, *Scotsman*, 17/10/1914, 7.

¹⁰⁷ ‘In Suspense’, *Manchester Guardian*, 17/8/1914, 4.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Mayor’s Day’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 11/11/1914, 3. From the Ottoman perspective, see Halil İnalcık, ‘When and How British Cotton Goods Invaded the Levant Markets’, in Huri İslamoğlu-İnan (ed.), *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy* (Cambridge, 1987), 374-383.

Manchester, no matter what their occupation may be.’¹⁰⁹ The *Burnley News* prophesied, even before Britain entered the war, that it would be ‘the most disastrous and far reaching in its effects’ on the cotton trade since the American Civil War.¹¹⁰ A perceived ‘cotton famine’ caused by the Union’s blockade of the Confederate States ensured that, by the end of 1862, employment in the cotton industry dropped from the customary six days per week to two and a third, requiring one-fifth of Lancashire’s total population to draw relief.¹¹¹ The crisis was so dire that Abraham Lincoln thanked the ‘workingmen of Manchester’ for their sacrifice, which he regarded as ‘an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country.’¹¹² When hostilities with the Ottoman Empire seemed inevitable in late October, the *Burnley News* gloomily reflected that ‘it would almost seem that everything that takes place, operates adversely to Burnley’s interests.’¹¹³

The *Scotsman* appears to have sought any evidence that the Ottoman Empire would remain neutral. Sir Edwin Pears, the *Daily News*’ famed former Constantinople correspondent and the UK’s leading expert on Ottoman affairs,¹¹⁴ recalled in 1915 that it was clear to all ‘by the middle of October that Turkey was drifting into war.’¹¹⁵ The situation certainly looked bleak. Following reports that the *Breslau* and *Goeben* had already entered the Black Sea with a ‘80 to 90 per cent’ German crew, *The Times*’ naval correspondent suggested that the ‘Turkish (ex-German) admiral’ hoped to engage the Russian fleet and ‘force the hand of the Ottoman Government and launch the Turks into the war.’¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, £1,000,000 worth of gold was said to have arrived in Constantinople from Berlin,¹¹⁷ and Turkish papers, ‘inspired by German diplomacy’, were publishing apparently false stories of British misrule in Egypt ‘for the purpose of blackening Great Britain in the eyes of the Moslem world.’¹¹⁸ Against all this looming evidence, a *Scotsman* correspondent took comfort in reports that Sultan Mehmet V had pronounced Prince Yusuf Izzeddin Generalissimo of both the army and navy in an effort

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Clarke, *Lancashire* 79.

¹¹⁰ ‘The War’, *Burnley News*, 1/8/1914, 16.

¹¹¹ Douglas Farnie, *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market 1815-1896* (Oxford, 1979), 149. For this perceived famine’s questionable reality, see E.A. Brady, ‘A Reconsideration of the Lancashire “Cotton Famine”’, *Agricultural History*, 37:3 (1963), 156-162

¹¹² Abraham Lincoln to the Workingmen of Manchester, England, 19/1/1863, in Don E. Fehrenbacher (ed.), *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* (New York, 1989), 432-433.

¹¹³ ‘Turkey’s Intervention’, *Burnley News*, 31/10/1914, 7.

¹¹⁴ A biographical sketch of Pears was provided by the *Daily Mail* upon his knighthood in 1909: ‘The King’s Birthday’, *Daily Mail*, 25/6/1909, 7.

¹¹⁵ Pears, *Forty Years*, 347.

¹¹⁶ ‘The Fleets at Sea’, *The Times*, 15/10/1914, 4. See also ‘London Correspondence’, *Irish Times*, 15/10/1914, 4.

¹¹⁷ ‘German Gold for Turkey’, *The Times*, 19/10/1914, 7.

¹¹⁸ *Reuters* telegram from Constantinople, 24/10/1914, in ‘German Intrigues in Turkey’, *Daily Telegraph*, 27/10/1914, 7.

to curtail the pro-German War Minister's influence, a 'welcome sign' that Enver's ascendancy was at an end.¹¹⁹ These hopes only increased over the coming days. Reports of anti-German demonstrations at Adrianople proved that 'the ordinary Turkish people, who are all Anglophil[e] and German haters are beginning to assert themselves.' Only three days before the attack on Russia, the correspondent proudly declared that 'there is a movement in Turkey which Enver Pasha has not yet succeeded in stifling, and that movement is Anglophil[e].'¹²⁰ The conflicting reports from the Ottoman Empire allowed press observers to overlook the correct, and perhaps more obvious, interpretation of an Ottoman-German alliance in favour of a more palatable conclusion.

There was, therefore, much more behind these arguments than simple racial prejudice, though this was certainly present. The apparent irrationality of the Ottoman Empire entering another war so soon after its catastrophic defeat in the Balkan Wars, broader suspicions surrounding German propaganda initiatives in neutral countries, and an overly generous acceptance of Ottoman officials' profession of neutrality against German intrigue all combined to suggest that the Porte entered the war, against its own wishes, as a subservient vassal of German interests.

* * *

When the Ottoman fleet finally launched its attack on Russia in late October, newspapers were primed to interpret it as an underhanded measure taken by Enver and his German backers who, having failed to persuade the Ottoman Parliament to issue a declaration of war, sought to force the Allies' hand into declaring war on the Ottoman Empire themselves. Though the moderate Ottoman statesmen, who 'worked hard to preserve neutrality', had succeeded for a time, the provocation signalled to the *Daily Mail's* Lovat Fraser that they had been 'swept aside by Enver Bey and the Committee of Union and Progress', who had 'been bought by German gold'.¹²¹ Accordingly, when the Grand Vizier issued a formal apology to Russia on 2 November the press was generally willing to accept it. Provided that Russia was adequately compensated for the damage done to their ports and all German influence – including the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, Liman von Sanders' German military mission, and Enver's pro-German war party – be expelled from Constantinople, the attack was not taken to preclude further cordial diplomatic

¹¹⁹ 'Improved Situation in Turkey', *Scotsman*, 21/10/1914, 7.

¹²⁰ 'Good News from Turkey', *Scotsman*, 26/10/1914, 7.

¹²¹ Lovat Fraser, 'The Doom of Turkey', *Daily Mail*, 31/10/1914, 4. See also 'Turkey in Two Minds?', *Manchester Guardian*, 3/11/1914, 6; 'Notes and Comments', *Rochdale Observer*, 4/11/1914, 2.

relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire nor to nullify Britain's commitments to upholding Ottoman territorial integrity. As late as 4 November, the day before Britain finally declared war, the *Irish Times* believed there was 'still time for the easy-going Turkish statesmen who have been dragged at the heels of this [German] intrigue to assert themselves' and return the Porte to its former state of neutrality.¹²² Its belligerence was only confirmed with the announced resignation of 'several of the more responsible members of the Turkish Government, who were understood to be strongly against the war.' The peace party thus defeated, Constantinople became 'wholly in the hands of the Young Turk Party and the German officers.'¹²³

This remarkable willingness to forgive the wholly unprovoked attack on Russia reinforces the points argued in this chapter. Clearly, claims of German dominance were more than either cynical propaganda or an unthinking application of conventional racist stereotypes regarding the presumed power imbalance between a 'backward' Eastern power and its European allies, as previously assumed. Rather, it was the culmination of a coherent narrative of German intrigue and Ottoman resistance, formed over the preceding months from an understandable (if misguided) reading of the available evidence, which blamed Germany for the Ottoman Empire's descent into war. False though it was, this interpretation carried important consequences. Supposedly, all opposition within the Porte had been either crushed or converted to mere servants of German interests. By November 1914, the Ottoman Empire had become a vassal state of the Kaiserreich with Enver as 'Germany's Pro-Consul in Turkey'.¹²⁴ Subsequently, the Young Turk leaders themselves faded into the background. Germano-centrism continued as the press' dominant interpretive framework throughout the war, as will be explored in the next two chapters.

¹²² 'Turkey's Choice', *Irish Times*, 4/11/1914, 4. See also 'Campaign Points', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 3/11/1914, 4; 'Germans' Awful Losses in Flanders', *Northampton Mercury*, 6/11/1914, 5.

¹²³ 'Prospects of Success', *Irish Times*, 5/11/1914, 4. See also 'Marching to Death', *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 4/11/1914, 6.

¹²⁴ Our Former Berlin Correspondent [Frederic William Wile], 'Germany Day by Day', *Daily Mail*, 6/7/1918, 2.

Chapter Two

Fighting ‘Like a White Man’: Genocide, Death Marches and the Curious Case of the Clean-Fighting Turk

His success we must acknowledge; he has massacred, pillaged, outraged for two years and a half[,] he has broken every convention, maltreated our prisoners, killed our wounded, held our women hostages, but he remains the ‘clean fighting Turk.’

So concluded a lengthy tirade against ‘the Turk’ and his ‘spurious reputation as a clean fighter’. Pointing to widely-documented Ottoman atrocities, this *Times* article, written anonymously by Sir Mark Sykes, sought to alter the Turkish soldiers’ chivalric image within the UK as part of Wellington House’s ‘Turk Must Go’ campaign.¹ As Justin McCarthy observes, the notion that ‘Turks were “clean fighters,” who fought well and treated their British captives properly’, was an ‘undesirable image for an enemy.’² McCarthy finds in such anti-Turkish propaganda initiatives evidence that British officials, whom he dismisses as promoters of ‘untrue or half-true history’, fabricated accounts of Armenian massacres to further their goal of ‘painting the Turks in the worst possible light’.³ In fact, ample evidence exists that the Ottoman Empire really did commit genocide against its Armenians, a reality challenged only within the ‘bad faith disputes’ of ‘deniers and obfuscators’.⁴ Combined with their brutal treatment of British and Indian prisoners, most infamously those captured at Kut-al-Amara, Robin Prior credits the Ottoman Empire with ‘the dubious distinction of carrying out the first genocide of the twentieth century and inventing the death marches as well.’⁵

¹ [Mark Sykes], ‘The “Clean-Fighting Turk”’, *The Times*, 20/2/1917, 7. For the article’s propagandist background and its authorship by Sykes (who identified himself only as ‘a distinguished authority on Oriental affairs’), see Justin McCarthy, *The Turk in America: The Creation of an Enduring Prejudice* (Salt Lake City, 2010), 219-222; McEvoy, ‘Construction of Ottoman Asia’, 122-125.

² McCarthy, *Turk in America*, 219.

³ Sykes’ article is discussed within a chapter seeking to establish the Armenian Genocide as propagandist fiction: *ibid.*, 208-248, quotations at 222.

⁴ Bloxham, *Great Game*, 20. For useful discussions of Armenian Genocide denial, see Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide* (Detroit, 1999); Fatma Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009* (Oxford, 2014); Geoffrey Robertson, *An Inconvenient Genocide* (Sydney, 2014).

⁵ Robin Prior, ‘The Ottoman Front’, in Winter (ed.), *Cambridge History*, vol. 1, 314. This is not strictly true: the first ‘honour’ belongs to Germany, who committed genocide against the Herero and Nama people of German South West Africa from 1904-1908. However, this does not detract from the atrociousness of Ottoman wartime conduct.

With the curious contradiction between the ‘representation’ and the ‘reality’ of Turkish military conduct in mind, this chapter analyses the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ from two perspectives. Firstly, it considers the evidence upon which this favourable image was based. Rather than continuing traditional nineteenth-century Turcophilism, its genesis is traced to the first-hand testimonies of rank-and-file soldiers, chiefly at Gallipoli, which were further distributed through local newspapers. This bottom-up dissemination into public discourse was crucial for the endurance of the Turks’ chivalry reputation despite their misconduct elsewhere. Given the reverence attached to the ‘soldiers’ story’ as the definitive account of the war,⁶ not even anti-Turkish critics were willing to doubt its veracity. Secondly, the chapter examines where these perceptions placed the Turkish enemy within the UK’s conviction that it was fighting a ‘just war’. This discussion is divided into two sections, examining Turkish ‘gentlemanly’ conduct and misconduct respectively. The frequent contrasts between chivalrous Turks and barbarous Germans in the sources suggest that the principle rhetorical and ideological effect of the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ was to highlight the comparative savagery of Britain’s primary enemy and reinforce the popular image of the German ‘Hun’ at the centre of its ‘just war’. Criticisms of Turkish misconduct served the same ends. Atrocities like the Armenian Genocide were mainly of interest insofar as they could be tied to Germany and provide further moral justification for Britain’s war in Europe. Like the diplomatic developments examined last chapter, the Ottoman enemy was viewed with remarkable Germano-centrism.

The Soldier’s Story

Nadia Atia suggests that the chivalrous image of the Turkish enemy had its roots in ‘long-entrenched attitudes’ of Turcophilism.⁷ This was certainly the case for Orientalists like Ellen Whishaw, an historian of Muslim Spain. Drawing on her pre-existing interpretation of Islam as a benevolent, peaceful religion and historical precedent from thirteenth-century Spain, Whishaw declared it a ‘very grave injustice’ to compare the ‘Saracen knights of the Age of Chivalry’ to the ‘German barbarians of to-day’, as the *New York Times* had done, for ‘the

⁶ On the ‘soldier’s story’ dominance during the war, see McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, 102. On its enduring legacy, see Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers’ Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York, 1997), 1-2; Janet S.K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge, 2004), 185-218.

⁷ Atia, *World War I in Mesopotamia*, 83. For discussions of this Turcophilism, see Reinhold Schiffer, *Turkey Romanticized: Images of the Turks in Early 19th Century English Travel Literature: With an Anthology of Texts* (Bochum, 1982) and Dogan Gürpınar, ‘The Rise and Fall of Turcophilism in Nineteenth-Century British Discourses: Visions of the Turk, “Young” and “Old”’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 39:3 (2012), 347-372.

armies of Mahomet did not make war on women and children nor destroy defenceless cities' like the Germans. She presented the Ottoman army, comprised predominantly of Muslim Turks,⁸ as following in the same tradition.⁹ This does not, however, account for the apparently broad appeal of the 'clean-fighting Turk'. Turcophilism was previously the purview of the political, particularly Conservative, elite.¹⁰ Much as rank-and-file soldiers seldom saw themselves as crusaders, an image 'closely associated with a very distinct, and very privileged, social group',¹¹ it is unlikely that this upper-class romanticism of 'the Turk' held much popular resonance.

The reception of William Gladstone's pamphlet exposing the 'Bulgarian horrors' of 1876, the brutal suppression of an uprising in which some 15,000 Bulgarians were massacred by Ottoman authorities, supports a disconnect between upper-class Turcophilism and broader anti-Turkish sentiments before the war. Gladstone's racist assertion that the Turks were 'upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the great anti-human specimen of humanity' was controversial in political circles, being condemned by one Conservative opponent as a 'caricature... without the shadow of a shade of foundation in fact' and opposed by leading members of his own party.¹² However, the widespread circulation of his pamphlet, which sold 200,000 copies in its first month alongside further distribution through newspapers and 'pirated copies',¹³ suggests that the UK public were more receptive to anti-Turkish racism than their political representatives. According to Victor Kiernan, Gladstone successfully 'revived half-forgotten memoirs of older Ottoman savagery' to be encapsulated in the popular phrase the 'Unspeakable Turk',¹⁴ recalling the enduring literary trope of the 'Terrible Turk'.¹⁵

⁸ Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, 2001), xv-xvi.

⁹ [Ellen M. Whishaw], Letter: 'Huns and Saracens', *The Times*, 13/8/1915, 7, responding to 'The Influence of Sea Power', *The Times*, 2/8/1915 6, which quoted from 'The Reckoning', *New York Times*, 1/8/1915, 14; on her pre-war views on Islam, see Bernhard and Ellen M. Whishaw, *Arabic Spain: Sidelights on Her History and Art* (London, 1912), where Muslim-Christian relations in Muslim Spain are characterised as one of 'the fullest measure of toleration' (17). Though the letter is signed only as 'One of the Authors of "Arabic Spain"', it must have been written by Ellen Whishaw since her co-author, Bernhard Whishaw, died the previous year.

¹⁰ Gürpınar, 'Rise and Fall'.

¹¹ Bar-Yosef, 'Last Crusade', 94. See also Kitchen, 'Khaki Crusaders'.

¹² William Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (London, 1876), 9; Henry Munro-Butler-Johnstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East: A Letter Addressed to the Right. Hon. W.E. Gladstone, M.P.* (London, 1876), 5; Marvin Swartz, *The Politics of British Foreign Policy in the Era of Disraeli and Gladstone* (London, 1985), 41-43.

¹³ H.C.G. Matthew, *Gladstone, 1875-1989* (Oxford, 1995), 31.

¹⁴ Victor Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to Other Cultures in the Imperial Age* (London, 2015 [1969]), 116.

¹⁵ Patrick Brantlinger, 'Terrible Turks: Victorian Xenophobia and the Ottoman Empire', in Marlene Trump, Maria K. Bachman and Heidi Kaufman (eds.), *Fear, Loathing, and Victorian Xenophobia* (Columbus, 2013), 208-229.

Even amongst political elites, Sultan Abdul Hamid's proclivity for massacring his Christian subjects rendered Turcophilism increasingly untenable. Roy Douglas asserts that, when the 'Red Sultan' ordered the massacre of some 200,000 Armenians twenty years later, 'a thrill of horror ran through the land, without distinction of party or social class.'¹⁶ Accordingly, Turcophilism, while not entirely eradicated, had become 'restricted to a few conservative circles' by the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁷ It did see a brief resurgence following the disempowerment and later dethronement of Abdul Hamid, the embodiment of the 'Unspeakable Turk', by supposedly modernising Young Turk reformers in 1908 and 1909, respectively.¹⁸ However, as Ashmead-Bartlett reflected in 1913, massacres of Armenians at Adana in 1909 and Albanians in 1911 revealed the Young Turk regime to be a disappointing continuation of the 'racial animosities' and 'government by "atrocities"' which characterised Abdul Hamid's misrule.¹⁹

Such was the dominant image of 'the Turk' upon the commencement of Anglo-Turkish hostilities in November 1914. Speaking at a recruiting rally at London's City Temple on 10 November, Lloyd George, then-Chancellor of the Exchequer, resorted to a characteristically Gladstonian denunciation of Britain's new Turkish enemy, which he declared a 'human cancer, a creeping agony in the flesh of the lands which they governed' who had contributed nothing to 'culture, art, or to any aspect of human progress'.²⁰ Similarly echoing pre-war anti-Turkish rhetoric, *Punch* republished 24 cartoons from 1876 to 1914 as a supplemental to its 16 December 1914 issue, seemingly to remind readers of who the Turks were, under the title 'the Unspeakable Turk'. This title did not accurately reflect the content of this collection (only 9 of these cartoons on the Ottoman Empire offered any commentary on Turkish misrule in Europe) but indicated that 'the Turk' continued to be defined by these atrocities.²¹

The *Irish Times* noted that the popular admiration for the Turkish enemy was instead a new phenomenon, entirely divorced from its decidedly negative pre-war reputation.

¹⁶ Roy Douglas, 'Britain and the Armenian Question, 1894-7', *Historical Journal*, 19:1 (1976), 117. His conclusions are supported by Michelle Tusan's more recent and in-depth study: Tusan, *British Empire*, 57-89.

¹⁷ Gürpınar, 'Rise and Fall', 364. Cf. Allan Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London, 1993), 230, who instead attributes Turcophilism's demise to a decline in Russophobic sentiments which, he asserts, were 'the true foundation of Turcophilism'.

¹⁸ See, for example, the Young Turks' depiction as enlightened liberal reformers throughout Charles Roden Buxton, *Turkey in Revolution* (London, 1909) and E.F. Knight, *The Awakening of Turkey: A History of the Turkish Revolution* (London, 1909).

¹⁹ Ashmead-Bartlett, *With the Turks*, 46-47.

²⁰ 'The Need for Recruits', *The Times*, 11/11/1914, 10.

²¹ See 'Unspeakable Turk', Supplement to *Punch*, 16/12/1914, 1, 5-8, 10-11, 13, 18. Though Richard Scully suggests that *Punch* supplements conveyed false impressions of the varied themes present within earlier cartoons, their use here is to demonstrate the prevailing negative stereotype of 'the Turk' in 1914. See Richard Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence* (Basingstoke, 2012), 309-315.

Previously, ‘the Turk’ was held to be ‘demoralised and unscrupulous, treacherous and cruel. With his mixture of Oriental and Western traits, he was, in the popular conception, something worse than heathen.’ By September 1915, however, images of a ‘modern Atilla’s horde’ had been replaced by that of ‘a doughty fighter, an honourable opponent in the field, and a chivalrous captor—in sum, to use a word which would appeal to those who are fighting him, a “sport.”’²² Press material reveals that this change was not facilitated top-down from traditional Orientalist circles but rather bottom-up from the testimony of rank-and-file soldiers who fought at Gallipoli. A pseudonymous letter to *The Times* claimed that ‘the men in the first landing on the [Gallipoli] Peninsula, north or south, the soldiers of Suvla, the heroic forces that attempted to relieve Kut as well as those men who held it, the men who fought against overwhelming odds at Katia’ all testified that ‘on the whole, the Turk has fought like a white man.’²³ Even Whishaw’s admiration for the Turk, though consistent with her pre-war views of Islam, was based specifically on letters from her nephews, serving at Gallipoli, ‘warning me not to believe all I hear about the “degenerate Turk, for he is a fine fighter.”’²⁴

The ‘clean-fighting Turk’ narrative’s dissemination into public discourse was facilitated primarily through provincial newspapers, which acted as a ‘communication network’ between soldiers at the front and their local communities at home.²⁵ These papers published copious letters from local soldiers and conducted interviews with those convalescing at home so that their readers would better understand what their loved ones at the front were experiencing. They formed a significant part of wartime provincial newspapers, which requested their readers forward any letters they received for republication. The *Bedfordshire Times* began its ‘Letters about the War’ section with a reminder that ‘the Editor will be glad to receive for publication news of Bedfordshire men serving in the Navy or Army’.²⁶ Helen McCartney notes that this communication network went both ways. In addition to providing civilians with information from the front, the local press also served as ‘a forum, through which soldiers could present their ideas to a wide audience.’²⁷ Some territorials, clearly bitter that their community dismissed them as mere ‘Saturday night soldiers’ and resented them for being allowed to remain home while their professional counterparts had to leave for Europe, sought

²² ‘Turks and Armenians’, *Irish Times*, 16/9/1915, 4. The significance of this sporting language is discussed below at 67-68.

²³ X., Letter: ‘The Clean-Fighting Turk’, *The Times*, 21/2/1917, 5.

²⁴ Ellen M. Whishaw, Letter: ‘Huns and Saracens’, *The Times*, 13/8/1915, 7.

²⁵ See McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, ch. 5.

²⁶ E.g. *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, 13/8/1915, 5.

²⁷ McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, 115.

to use their letters to improve the territorial force's reputation.²⁸ Others, like Private T. Jones, a Rochdale mill worker serving at Gallipoli, wanted to let 'the people of my native town ... know the sort of men we are fighting.'²⁹

Jones' letter was prompted by a cartoon in an unidentified English paper depicting 'a British Tommy giving a wounded Turk a drink of water, when, in return, the Turk shot him.' He found this an inaccurate and unfair characterisation of the Turks, who, in his experience, had been especially kind to UK soldiers. Jones claimed that some of his wounded comrades, rather than being captured or killed, were 'actually bandaged up' by Turkish soldiers and 'sent back into our trench unmolested' with their water bottles refilled.³⁰ He was not alone in making such remarkable claims of Turkish chivalry. Naval Lieutenant F.H.M. Savile, agent to the Marquis of Northampton, assured a *Northampton Mercury* reporter that the Turks were 'decent people' who 'fight very cleanly... like gentlemen', citing a similar, apparently typical anecdote: 'Suppose we took a trench and had not sufficient men to hold it, and were forced to retire to wait for our reserves, when we were reinforced and retook the position we should find our wounded attended to and bandaged.'³¹

Not all soldiers saw Turks so favourably. Private C. Smith of the Lancashire Territorials wrote home that he relished 'getting a shot at the swine, for they are a very cruel race, the Turks. I would shoot myself rather than be taken prisoner'.³² For others, Turks were practitioners of underhanded military tactics. A sailor on the *HMS Canopus* noted that 'one of their favourite tricks is for a fort to pretend to be out of action, and then, when the ships are least expecting it, break out afresh with a full broadside.'³³ Likewise, several soldiers, from the battles at Suez, through to Gallipoli and beyond into the campaigns in Mesopotamia, condemned Turkish soldiers for engaging in 'white flag treachery', the practice of feigning

²⁸ 'The Dardanelles Fighting', *Rochdale Observer*, 12/6/1915, 7; "'Never Better in My Life'", *Rochdale Observer*, 14/8/1915, 5. John Power, Letter: 'A Tribute', *Rochdale Observer*, 7/7/1915, 4, admitted to holding these views at the beginning of the war. On such domestic criticism of the territorial forces, see Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford, 2012), 157-162.

²⁹ 'Lord Rochdale at the Front Again', *Rochdale Observer*, 29/9/1915, 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ 'Facing the Turk at the Dardanelles', *Northampton Mercury*, 10/9/1915, 4. For similar accounts see: 'Sergt. H. Morris, R.E., and the Turks', *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, 22/10/1915, 7; 'Turks Fighting Fairly', *Western Mail*, 21/6/1915, 5.

³² 'Suffering from Dysentery', *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 26/6/1915, 11. See also 'Impressions of Gallipoli', *Rochdale Observer*, 17/7/1915, 9.

³³ 'With the Canopus' *Northampton Mercury*, 16/4/1915, 5.

surrender only to fire upon the approaching captors once their guard was down.³⁴ According to Simon Pople and Joe Kember, the Boers' reported use of identical tactics against Britain in 1900 became a staple of 'literary, pictorial and cinematic narratives which focused on British decency and the Boer abuses.'³⁵ In the First World War, however, anti-Turkish testimonies from British soldiers made little impact, being seemingly fringe sentiments. A Press Association correspondent who questioned numerous officers as to 'the alleged atrocities committed by the Turks' concluded that 'the majority aver that the Turks are fighting most fairly.'³⁶ Henry Nevinson, the *Manchester Guardian's* Gallipoli correspondent, made the same observation, finding 'no evidence of hatred between the [UK and Turkish] forces. Though never much of a Turcophil[e], I recognise the general opinion that the Turk is "fighting clean."³⁷

Critics of the 'clean-fighting Turk' narrative seldom referred to soldiers' accounts of Turkish misconduct on the battlefield and, instead, pointed to greater, systematic atrocities like the Armenian Genocide. For example, James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee's *Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, a parliamentary 'blue book' exhaustively documenting the Armenian Genocide, published in December 1916, was advertised in the *Burnley News* in October 1918 as revealing that the Turk was a 'gentleman' much in the same way that Edgar in Shakespeare's *King Lear* had called 'the Prince of Darkness', the devil, a 'gentleman'.³⁸ That it continued to be advertised in this manner nearly two years after its initial publication, and three years after the Armenian Genocide had supposedly become a 'national' cause through Bryce's October 1915 speech in the House of Lords exposing the atrocity,³⁹ indicates that the copious evidence of Ottoman atrocities towards Armenians had failed to alter popular pro-Turkish sentiments. Indeed, Toynbee complained shortly before this advertisement was published that 'it has been hard to kill the superstition that the Turk is a gentleman and his subject race curs',⁴⁰ a view the Armenian Bureau continued to challenge even after the war's

³⁴ Respectively, 'The Treacherous Turk', *Burnley News*, 3/4/1915, 7; 'White Flag Treachery', *Western Mail*, 13/9/1915, 9; 'From Bassouia [sic] to Baghdad', *Rochdale Observer*, 22/9/1917, 6. Lord Bryce's report on German atrocities in Belgium claimed that German soldiers employed the same tactics: James Bryce et al., *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (London, 1915), 59-60.

³⁵ Simon Pople and Joe Kember, *Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory* (London, 2004), 41.

³⁶ 'Incidents in Gallipoli', *Scotsman*, 21/6/1915, 8.

³⁷ H.W. Nevinson, 'Commonplaces of War in Gallipoli', *Manchester Guardian*, 20/8/1915, 6.

³⁸ *Burnley News*, 12/10/1918, 3.

³⁹ Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 103.

⁴⁰ Memorandum by A.J. Toynbee, 24/9/1918, quoted in James Renton, 'Changing Languages of Empire and the Orient: Britain and the Invention of the Middle East, 1917-1918', *The Historical Journal*, 50 (2007), 666-667.

conclusion through its pamphlet, *The “Clean-Fighting Turk”: Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow*.⁴¹

Though these contradictory examples of Turkish military conduct occurred simultaneously – the Armenian Genocide began the day before the Gallipoli landings and proceeded precisely when British soldiers were writing home about the Turks’ ‘gentlemanly’ conduct – news of the Armenian Genocide did not filter into public consciousness as quickly. ‘Quality’ papers like *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* reported on the initial Armenian deportations almost immediately, but only in passing and without any awareness of their significance until the Allied governments’ public condemnation of the crime on 24 May.⁴² The full weight of the available evidence, presented in Bryce and Toynbee’s *Treatment of the Armenians*, would not arrive for another year, a delay which allowed for a rigorous and exhaustive report, featuring 149 documents over nearly 700 pages, but also ensured that, domestically, Armenophiles were fighting an uphill battle against well-established pro-Turkish sentiments. Though much less impenetrable than the typical Foreign Office blue book – it was not ‘a mass of documents unsorted and without introduction or explanatory matter’, noted the *Manchester Guardian*, but ‘something that is capable of being read from cover to cover’ – such a dense tome had little hope in countering more positive testimonies of those actually fighting the Turks.⁴³ For ordinary people, the soldier’s story offered the most authentic account of the war and, when presented with a contradiction between the information relayed to them by their loved ones at the front and official narratives, those at home accepted precisely the sorts of first-hand testimonies from which the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ emerged.⁴⁴

The reverence attached to soldiers’ accounts and the role the bottom-up dissemination of the Turks’ chivalric image played in its resilience is perhaps most apparent in critics’ similar unwillingness to doubt the authenticity of soldiers’ experiences. Anticipating a hesitation to accept the Armenian Genocide for its apparent disagreement with these testimonies, the conservative *Edinburgh Evening News* explained that there was no contradiction: ‘the Turk’ had been ‘a clean fighter’ against UK soldiers, just as they had described, but ‘turned like a wild beast on the Armenians... simply because the Armenians, unlike our soldiers, are

⁴¹ Sir Harry Johnston (ed.), *The ‘Clean-Fighting Turk’, Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow* (London, 1918). Although no exact publication date is given, the inclusion of articles by the *Morning Post*, *The Times* and the *Daily News* from 21 and 22 November 1918 reveals that it was published after the armistice.

⁴² E.g. ‘Armenian Conspiracy in Constantinople’, *The Times*, 29/4/1915, 11; ‘Turks Severely Handled’, *The Times*, 5/5/1915, 10; ‘German Plan to Run the Gauntlet’, *Manchester Guardian*, 13/5/1915, 8; ‘The Dardanelles’, *Manchester Guardian*, 22/5/1915, 11.

⁴³ ‘Turkey and Armenia’, *Manchester Guardian*, 15/12/1916, 4.

⁴⁴ McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, 102.

helpless.⁴⁵ Even the liberal *Manchester Guardian*, perhaps the UK's most ardent Armenophile paper, helmed by a pro-Armenian editor who published appeals on behalf of organisations like the Armenian Relief Fund in his editorials,⁴⁶ sought to accommodate both the Armenian Genocide and soldiers' claims of Turkish chivalry into its condemnation of 'the Turk'. It did so with difficulty; 'the student of race characteristics', it opined, would struggle to find 'a knottier problem than the Turk.' He was 'a Jekyll to his equals and a Hyde to those he considers his inferiors', a man who would 'scorn to purloin a wounded British soldier's kit' but 'drown a shipload of Armenian women and children without a qualm.'⁴⁷ On balance, the Turk's Hyde was taken to overshadow his Jekyll. His chivalric qualities expressed themselves only in the personal, face-to-face dealings with the enemy that had become increasingly irrelevant in modern war, now comprised of 'collective forces, principles, and systems'. At this more abstract level, the Turk revealed himself through his 'bestial' solution to the 'Armenian military problem', born of his 'fundamental political incapacity and viciousness', to be 'the least scrupulous and most blood-thirsty of fighters.'⁴⁸ The *Guardian* ultimately rejected the broader 'clean-fighting Turk' narrative, but its refusal to doubt the soldiers' testimonies upon which it was based meant that it could only do so with a rather convoluted analysis of the Turkish character.

It is doubtful whether ordinary people sympathised with the Armenians enough to engage in such mental gymnastics. As Trevor Wilson observes, there was no shortage of humanitarian crises for Britons to support. The plights of Belgian, French, Italian, Polish and Serbian civilians all attracted numerous competing relief funds, including at least 69 different UK charities for Belgium alone.⁴⁹ Within the Ottoman Empire, too, the Armenian refugee crisis that resulted from the Genocide was preceded by humanitarian disasters in Baghdad, Jerusalem and Beirut.⁵⁰ Faced with these competing crises, Keith Watenpaugh suggests that humanitarian sympathies, during the First World War as today, were contingent on those giving aid (the humanitarian subject) believing those to whom they give aid (the humanitarian object) to be worthy of their help. This judgment was not based on objective measures of comparative suffering but on whether, the humanitarian subject identifies with the humanitarian object 'to

⁴⁵ 'Wiping Out a Nation', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 7/10/1915, 4.

⁴⁶ Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 48; Tusan, *British Empire*, 145-146; 'The Way to Help the Armenians', *Manchester Guardian*, 2/10/1915, 8; 'The Armenians', *Manchester Guardian*, 26/10/1915, 6.

⁴⁷ 'The Turk as Enemy', *Manchester Guardian*, 24/6/1916, 6. See also 'The Treatment of Turkey's Prisoners', *Manchester Guardian*, 11/9/1915, 8.

⁴⁸ 'The Turk as Fighter', *Manchester Guardian*, 21/2/1917, 4.

⁴⁹ Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918*, (Cambridge, 1986), 774-776.

⁵⁰ See Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones*, 30-56.

the point of being envisioned as an extension of the self or community of that subject.’⁵¹ For Armenophiles like Toynbee, the belief that the Armenians, despite residing in the East, were ‘in the closest personal touch with Western civilisation’ was based principally on the Armenians’ Christianity.⁵² They were following in the Gladstonian Liberal tradition which, since the Bulgarian horrors of the 1870s, had considered it Britain’s moral and religious duty, as the world’s premier Christian empire, to champion the cause of persecuted Christian minorities.⁵³ This was a thoroughly nineteenth-century worldview that survived only amongst a small group of Liberal elites and, Michelle Tusan argues, had limited purchase amongst the broader public in a time of ‘total war’.⁵⁴

Materially, David Monger shows that charitable donations to UK Armenian relief funds were minuscule compared to their American counterparts. While the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief raised nearly \$6.9 million, its largest UK equivalent, the Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor’s) Fund, had raised a meagre £88,400 by February 1918.⁵⁵ Additionally, there is evidence within the press of overtly anti-Armenian sentiments. According to the *Irish Times*, there were ‘men well versed in affairs of Turkey’ who responded to the widespread reports of Armenian massacres by ‘say[ing] quite bluntly that the Armenians as a race, have laid themselves open to ill-treatment from the Turks.’⁵⁶ In May 1918, a letter to the *Rochdale Observer* scorned the Armenians for offering an apparently un-Christian resistance to their Turkish assailants rather than allowing themselves to be properly martyred. Drawing on the popular British anti-Semitism of the time, he declared that the Armenians were ‘more Jewish than the Jew’.⁵⁷ His views did not go unchallenged, being lambasted by another reader as the height of hypocritical ‘Pecksniffianism’.⁵⁸ Neither, however, were they considered too reprehensible for the *Rochdale Observer* to publish.

For those without any humanitarian interest in the Armenians, like Charles Bean, it was, perhaps, easier to simply dismiss the genocide altogether. As Australia’s official Gallipoli

⁵¹ Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones*, 33-34.

⁵² A.J. Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (London, 1915), 30; Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 55-63.

⁵³ Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 33-44. See also Jonathan Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge, 2006), 323-386.

⁵⁴ Tusan, *Smyrna’s Ashes*, 113-143.

⁵⁵ Monger, ‘Networking’, 308. Christopher Walker gives an even smaller figure, claiming that ‘by the time of the armistice the total receipts for all the charities amounted to approximately £15,000.’ See Christopher J. Walker, ‘Armenian Refugees: Accidents of Diplomacy or Victims of Ideology?’, in Anna Bramwell (ed.), *Refugees in the Age of Total War* (London, 1988), 44.

⁵⁶ ‘Turks and Armenians’, *Irish Times*, 16/9/1915, 4.

⁵⁷ P.T.M., Letter: ‘How We Limit God’s Power’, *Rochdale Observer*, 22/5/1918, 2, in response to Walter A. Hill, Letter: ‘The Way of Folly’, *Rochdale Observer*, 15/5/1918, 2.

⁵⁸ E.J.W., Letter: ‘“P.T.M” and Non-Resistance’, *Rochdale Observer*, 29/5/1918, 4.

correspondent, Bean helped popularise the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ not only in Australia but also in the UK.⁵⁹ His brother, who also served at Gallipoli with the Australian Imperial Force, defended his impression of the Turks as ‘very chivalrous, good and clean fighters’ before a ‘crowded audience’ in Brentwood, Essex, with explicit reference to Bean’s reporting, which failed to find ‘one single authentic case of an atrocity committed by the Turks’ on British soldiers.⁶⁰ Bean was well aware of the Armenian Genocide, having reported on the ‘endeavour to wipe out the Armenian nation’ in Perth’s *West Australian* in December 1915.⁶¹ Yet in a 1916 poem about the Turks, entitled ‘Abdul’, he explicitly dismissed their cruelty to the Armenians because it did not agree with his experiences at Gallipoli:

So though your name be black as ink
For murder and rapine,
Carried out in happy concert
With your Christians from the Rhine,
We will judge you, Mr. Abdul,
By the test by which *we* can—
That with all your breath, in life, in death,
You’ve played the gentleman.⁶²

Both the cultural unimpeachability of these first-hand experiences, discussed above, and the Armenian Genocide’s apparent failure to reverse the Turks’ reputation suggest that Bean’s preference for anecdotes of Turkish chivalry over accounts of Armenian massacres would have been typical.

If the Turks’ ‘gentlemanly’ image was based primarily on their interactions with UK soldiers, its staying power is most remarkable given that, reportedly, nearly a third of the 16,483 British and Indian soldiers captured by the Turks died in captivity from horrific mistreatment.⁶³ The Armenian Bureau seemingly believed, not unreasonably, that these atrocities would

⁵⁹ On Bean’s role in popularising the admiration for ‘Johnny Turk’ in Australia’s Anzac mythos, see David Kent, ‘The Anzac Book’ and the Anzac Legend: C.E.W. Bean as Editor and Image-Maker’, *Historical Studies*, 21 (1985), 386-387. Kent errs, however, in claiming that those who fought at Gallipoli did not share Bean’s good will towards the Turkish enemy. Numerous examples to the contrary have been presented above.

⁶⁰ ‘A Brentwoodian with the Australians’, *Essex County Chronicle*, 12/11/1915, 5.

⁶¹ Jenny Macleod and Gizem Tongo, ‘Between Memory and History: Remembering Johnnies, Mehmetts and the Armenians’, in Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates (eds.), *Beyond Gallipoli: New Perspectives on Anzac* (Melbourne, 2016), 33.

⁶² C.E.W. Bean, ‘Abdul’, in C.E.W. Bean (ed.), *The Anzac Book* (London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, 1916), 59; emphases original.

⁶³ 25 October 1918 figure: *Report on the Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Turkey* (London, 1918), 5. Of the estimated 5,512 deaths, 3,290 were reported and 2,222 suspected.

capture the public imagination more successfully than the Armenian Genocide. Doubtless recognising the limits of British sympathies for the distant Armenians and, perhaps, recalling that a *Daily Mail* correspondent had previously determined that ‘the Turks are not naturally cruel, confining their atrocities to the Armenians only’,⁶⁴ the Armenian Bureau’s “*Clean-Fighting*” *Turk* pamphlet devoted considerably more space to the mistreatment of British prisoners than it did to the Armenians. This was despite its stated goal being to reveal ‘the true character of Turkish rule’ so as to prove the necessity of Armenian independence.⁶⁵ Curiously, however, Turkish atrocities towards British prisoners had also failed to alter pro-Turkish sentiments. When the *Report on the Treatment of British Prisoner of War in Turkey* detailing the cruel fate of those captured at Kut-al-Amara was published as a white paper on 20 November 1918, the journalist G. Ward Price hoped that it would finally dispel the inclination of Englishmen to view ‘the Turk as a clean fighter and not a bad fellow at heart’.⁶⁶ Given Price’s prominent association with and open admiration for Adolf Hitler later in his career,⁶⁷ his chastisement of the public for being insufficiently anti-Turkish might be attributed to presumed racist convictions on his part. However, the liberal *Manchester Guardian* drew the same lesson, titling its article on the report ‘Turkish Cruelty. Terrible Story of Kut Prisoners. No “Chivalrous Foe.”’⁶⁸ Indeed, this seems to have been the intended message of the report, which noted on its first page that ‘the rank and file [prisoners]... have had small reason in their helplessness to regard the Turk as the chivalrous and honourable foe of whom we have sometimes heard.’⁶⁹

Though Jones notes that there was ‘ample verifiable first-hand evidence’ of Ottoman mistreatment of British prisoners,⁷⁰ this was not available for some time; the ‘pitiable state’ of these prisoners was not, as the *Daily Telegraph* claimed on 25 July 1918, ‘abundant from the first’.⁷¹ As noted in the parliamentary report on the subject, for most of the war outside observers were forced to rely on ‘fortunate chances and the careful collation of news which

⁶⁴ The Daily Mail Correspondent Who Dined with the Kaiser, ‘German Locusts’, *Daily Mail*, 29/1/1916, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Johnston (ed.), *Clean-Fighting Turk*, 3. The Armenian Genocide appeared only as part of Sykes’ general rebuttal of the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ in *The Times*, reproduced at 49-50, with further brief mentions at 51, 53. Conversely, seven pages were dedicated specifically to the mistreatment of British prisoners at 54-61.

⁶⁶ G. Ward Price, ‘In the Hands of the Turks’, *The Times*, 22/11/1918, 10

⁶⁷ Karina Urbach, *Go-Betweens for Hitler* (Oxford, 2015), 166, 204, 234-235, 247; Franklin Reid Gannon, *The British Press and Germany, 1946-1939* (Oxford, 1971), 26, 34. See, for example, G. Ward Price, *I Know These Dictators* (London, 1937), where Price devotes a full chapter to ‘The Human Side of Hitler’ (16-38) and offers a suspiciously sympathetic account of Nazi anti-Semitism (47-50, 119-121).

⁶⁸ ‘Turkish Cruelty’, *Manchester Guardian*, 21/11/1918, 6.

⁶⁹ *Treatment of British Prisoners*, 1.

⁷⁰ Jones, ‘Imperial Captives’, 185.

⁷¹ ‘British Prisoners of War’, *Daily Telegraph*, 25/7/1918, 6.

filters through by various channels.’⁷² It was thus with great difficulty that the press first learned of the conditions of Kut prisoners. The story did not break until March 1917, eleven months after their capture, when a *Times* correspondent succeeded in penetrating ‘the veil of secrecy which envelops mysterious Turkey’ through ‘various underground channels, leading through several European countries, and through the capital of the United States’. He was suitably shocked by what he learned. The Apostle Paul’s ‘severe persecutions’, wrote *The Times*’ correspondent, ‘were slight in comparison with what the British prisoners have undergone. Hungry, insufficiently clad or sheltered, they have suffered unspeakably.’⁷³ Yet, the article was not nearly as damning as it claimed and was very light on specifics. In addition to vague remarks about the destitution of the Kut survivors like the above, it accused the guards of being generally ‘cruel’ and inflicting ‘countless humiliations’ upon the soldiers, with no elaboration as to what these were. Moreover, while it condemned the Turks for forbidding nearby American missionaries to share with the soldiers ‘the comforts of the Christian religion’, they do appear to have allowed them medical care. The article’s source claimed to ‘know one American who is himself in a hospital in Asia Minor as a result of his day and night labours for the British prisoners who were passing through.’ Though it noted that the captives had been ‘driven from Lower Mesopotamia to Anatolia, a distance of nearly 1,000 miles’, no mention was made of the horrific result casualty rate.

Information about the conditions of the Ottoman camps themselves were impeded by the Porte’s continued refusals to allow inspections by neutral observers. The first inspection was not conducted until October 1916 when delegates of the International Red Cross were permitted limited access to certain pre-selected camps.⁷⁴ Although their findings were summarised in a bulletin upon the inspections’ completion in January 1917, they were not published in full until April 1917.⁷⁵ The Red Cross report was, unsurprisingly, neither comprehensive nor especially critical. It did stress ‘the expediency of repatriating to Europe all sick persons’ because they were in poor health from ‘the marches across the desert’ and their recovery significantly hampered by ‘an insufficient diet’ and undertaking labour ‘not in proportion with their power of resistance’. However, it also attributed the prisoners’ poor

⁷² *Treatment of British Prisoners*, 2.

⁷³ ‘Prisoners of the Turks’, *The Times*, 9/3/1917, 7, which was also reprinted in the *Irish Times*: ‘Special Extra: Fate of Prisoners from Kut’, 9/3/1917, 5.

⁷⁴ Ariotti, *Captive Anzacs*, 81. Ariotti claims that the inspections began in early 1917; likely, she is mistakenly referring to their end date. According to *The Times*, inspections ran from October 1916 to January 1917 (‘Prisoners of the Turks’, *The Times*, 18/4/1917, 7).

⁷⁵ ‘Prisoners’ Camps in the Ottoman Empire’, *Scotsman*, 26/1/1917, 6; ‘Prisoners of the Turks’, *The Times*, 18/4/1917, 7; ‘Life at Prinkipo’, *Essex County Chronicle*, 20/4/1917, 5.

conditions to ‘exceptional circumstances’ which ‘implic[d] no blame upon the Turkish military authorities’. The report found no malice in their mistreatment of Allied prisoners since it accorded with the typical living conditions of Ottoman soldiers, who ‘are content with very little, endure the greatest privations, and are accustomed to the smallest amount of nourishment.’⁷⁶ Such observations were in perfect agreement with accepted international law. The Hague Convention of 1907 required only that prisoners ‘be treated... on the same footing as the troops of the Government who captured them.’⁷⁷ Naturally, these findings were treated with scepticism. The *Manchester Guardian* later remarked that the conditions of the remaining camps could be ‘judged sufficiently from the refusal of the Turkish Government to allow neutrals to inspect them.’⁷⁸ Yet the restrictions imposed on the inspections, as suspicious as they were, were not concrete proof of mistreatment. The *Scotsman* noted that it was until the white paper’s publication in November 1918 that the fate of these prisoners was told ‘with full and authentic detail.’⁷⁹

For most of the war, people relied on anecdotal evidence in the form of letters from the prisoners themselves. As with the accounts from the front that first formed the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ narrative, these letters were overwhelmingly pro-Turkish and suggested that the Turks were, in fact, treating their prisoners remarkably well. For example, Private S. Sutcliffe of the Lancashire Fusiliers wrote to his mother from captivity in Constantinople that ‘the Turks are very good to us, and you would not think we were prisoners. They treat us just like their own men.’ His positive assessment of his Turkish captors, published in both the *Rochdale Observer* and *Burnley News* in September 1915,⁸⁰ continued to be repeated in prisoners’ letters throughout the war. Later in June 1917, after both *The Times*’ exposé on the conditions of those captured at Kut and the Red Cross report, a Burnham woman received a letter from her son, published in the *Essex Newsmen*, assuring her that he and his fellow prisoners ‘are being very well treated, so please do not worry in the least about me.’⁸¹ Such testimonies were so ubiquitous that the government apparently sought to censor them. Whereas the Press Bureau

⁷⁶ Quoted in ‘Prisoners of the Turks’, *The Times*, 18/4/1917, 7.

⁷⁷ Richard B. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity* (Westport, CT, 1990), 31.

⁷⁸ ‘Prisoners of the Turks’, *Manchester Guardian*, 8/10/1917, 4.

⁷⁹ *Scotsman*, 21/11/1918, 4.

⁸⁰ ‘A Prisoner in Constantinople’, *Rochdale Observer*, 11/9/1915, 9; ‘Todmorden Soldier’, *Burnley News*, 11/9/1915, 5.

⁸¹ ‘Personal War notes’, *Essex Newsmen*, 9/6/1917, 3. For similar testimonies see, e.g., ‘Blunham’, *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, 7/7/1916, 3; ‘Personal War notes’, *Essex Newsmen*, 30/6/1917, 3; ‘Personal War Notes’, *Essex Newsmen*, 4/8/1917, 4; G.I.M. Alexander, Letter: ‘Kut Prisoners’, *Irish Times*, 15/8/1916, 3; James Sheridan, Letter: ‘Prisoners of War in Turkey’, *Irish Times*, 3/10/1917, 3; ‘With the Turks’, *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, 22/3/1918, 5.

published three separate D Notices – one in February 1915, another in June, and yet another in May 1916 – discouraging newspapers from reporting the maltreatment of British prisoners in German captivity for fears that this would provoke German reprisals,⁸² the *Manchester Guardian* claimed that censorship authorities had ‘recommend[ed] the suppression of many reports of chivalrous treatment of our soldiers [in captivity] by the Turks.’⁸³

There are two possible reasons for the inaccurate representation of Turkish captivity in these letters. Firstly, the fact that Turkish captors treated their prisoners cruelly as a rule does not mean there were no exceptions. Since the Porte was so concerned to keep the mistreatment of its prisoners out of the public eye (it was not until December 1917 that it bowed to international pressure and finally allowed full inspections of all its camps),⁸⁴ they undoubtedly would have prevented negative accounts from reaching home. In support of a possible selection bias, it is telling that the only account from the Kut prisoners featured in the provincial press was from an officer held at Kastamouni, where conditions were significantly better than the camps holding rank-and-file soldiers, who professed to be ‘quite well’.⁸⁵

Secondly, these soldiers might also have been self-censoring. Though McCartney argues that soldiers’ letters were not as sanitised as commonly believed, they were still prone to ‘exaggeration and even straight out lying’, as Glyn Harper’s examination of letters from Gallipoli reveals.⁸⁶ In particular, Edwardian conceptions of masculinity led British soldiers to conceal worrying details, such as danger or illness, from their mothers, identified by Michael Roper as the primary recipients of letters sent from the front by unmarried men. According to Roper, protecting one’s mother in this manner ‘was itself thought to be a sign of manliness.’⁸⁷ This appears to be the case in a letter received by a Wolverton mother describing her son’s experiences of Turkish captivity, summarised by the *Northampton Mercury*:

Mrs. Pass, Green-lane, Wolverton, has received a letter from Private Russell to say that they [he and her son, Private Alec Pass] are both prisoners of war with the Turks being captured on Easter Sunday [23 April 1916]. Private Pass was wounded in both hands

⁸² D158, 20/2/1915; D231, 15/6/1915; D419, 26/6/1916, quoted in Nicholas Wilkinson, *Secrecy and the Media: The Official History of the United Kingdom's D-Notice System* (London and New York, 2009), 491-492.

⁸³ ‘The Tattooed Man’, *Manchester Guardian*, 19/10/1918, 4.

⁸⁴ *Treatment of British Prisoners*, 1. On these negotiations, see Newton, *Retrospection*, 245-249.

⁸⁵ ‘In the Hands of the Turks’, *Rochdale Observer*, 23/8/1916, 3.

⁸⁶ McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, 95; Glyn Harper (ed.), *Letters from Gallipoli: New Zealand Soldiers Write Home* (Auckland, 2011), x.

⁸⁷ Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester, 2009), 59, 63-64.

and the shoulder by a bomb dropped by one of our aeroplanes, but is going on well. Private Russell says that the Turks are treating them more like guests than prisoners.⁸⁸

Though Pass claimed to be ‘going on well’, he was so seriously wounded that he was unable to write the letter himself. As medical personnel, both Pass and Russell would have understood the severity of his injuries. Pass, like many other soldiers writing home, likely deliberately misrepresented the reality of his situation.⁸⁹ Claims that Turks were treating him and his comrade benevolently might have been motivated by similar concerns. They are certainly suspect since Pass died in captivity on 2 August, less than four months after his capture.⁹⁰

Despite their representational issues, these positive accounts were generalised as typifying the experience of a prisoner in the Ottoman Empire. Even the *Manchester Guardian*, whose advocacy for the Armenians made them staunchly anti-Turkish, conceded in September 1915 that ‘the accumulating evidence’ from prisoners’ letters suggested that ‘the Turks are treating their prisoners from the Gallipoli fighting with humanity and even kindness.’ The paper believed that this evidence would ease the anxieties of the friends and relatives of the missing Manchester soldiers believed to be in Ottoman captivity.⁹¹ For most of the war, therefore, the typical experience of these prisoners was seen not to contradict the Turks’ chivalric image but rather to reinforce it.

When the cruel treatment they actually received became known later in the war, papers were much less willing to distinguish between Turks’ massacres of Armenians from their otherwise ‘gentlemanly’ conduct towards UK soldiers. On 3 August 1918, the *Irish Times*, which had previously written positively of the treatment of these prisoners, suggested that they were ‘to all intents and purposes... in slavery to the Turks.’⁹² Lord Newton, Controller of the Prisoners of War Department, was fiercely criticised for his failure to secure their repatriation back to the UK. For the *Daily Mail*, this was a matter of life and death:

⁸⁸ ‘Local Casualties’, *Northampton Mercury*, 30/6/1916, 6.

⁸⁹ Ariotti identifies a similar trend in letters sent home from Australian prisoners in the Ottoman Empire: Ariotti, *Captive Anzacs*, 105-106. On this phenomenon more generally, see Roper, *Secret Battle*, 64-68.

⁹⁰ ‘Local Casualties’, *Northampton Mercury*, 29/9/1916, 6.

⁹¹ ‘The Treatment of Turkey’s Prisoners’, *Manchester Guardian*, 11/9/1915, 8. Similar reassurances were expressed in letters from army officials to the parents of those taken captive, e.g.: ‘Welsh Vicar’s Son a Prisoner’, *Western Mail*, 16/9/1915, 7; ‘Biggleswade’, *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, 20/7/1917, 8; ‘War Casualties’, *Rochdale Observer*, 20/6/1917, 3.

⁹² ‘Turks and Armenians’, *Irish Times*, 16/9/1915, 4; ‘The Day of Remembrance’, *Irish Times*, 3/8/1918, 4.

‘They have been dying by scores and hundreds for more than two years... at least 70 per cent of the British rank and file who were taken at Kut are dead or untraceable. The winter is coming on. Are we to wait until they are all dead?’⁹³

Since the *Daily Mail* was the UK’s widely circulated newspaper, the public response to its leader provides useful insights into why this information apparently did not compel most of the public to revise their previously positive assessment of Turkish military conduct. While it did prompt significant reader engagement, with the paper receiving fourteen letters in September 1918 from throughout the nation, including Devon, London, Coventry, Liverpool and Edinburgh, they were primarily written by friends or relatives.⁹⁴ This was also true of 24 of the 35 letters published on the topic in *The Times* in 1917 and 1918.⁹⁵

In these papers, condemnation of Ottoman atrocities towards UK prisoners was correlated with a personal connection with the victims.⁹⁶ The *Rochdale Observer* noticed a similar phenomenon in Lancashire where these atrocities were reported to have ‘stirred the public mind’ in Lancashire because, the paper emphasised, they were committed ‘against... helpless fellow citizens.’⁹⁷ Major Arthur Haggard highlighted this personal component in a letter to *The Times*. Haggard found it unfair that advocates for repatriating UK prisoners in Ottoman captivity focused predominantly on those captured at Kut at the expense of others, like his son, who had been captured earlier in the Dardanelles campaign. ‘It is not only prisoners from Kut—though no doubt they have suffered terrible hardships—to whom consideration is due,’ he wrote, ‘but to all; and there are many, both officers and men, whose lot has been extremely hard since early 1915.’⁹⁸

It is unsurprising that their suffering was, seemingly, less important to most UK citizens, whose relatives were imprisoned in Germany, not the Ottoman Empire (43,719 against

⁹³ ‘Our Prisoners in Turkey’, *Daily Mail*, 9/9/1918, 2. For other criticisms of Lord Newton’s inaction, see ‘British Prisoners of War’, *Daily Telegraph*, 25/7/1918, 6; ‘Prisoners in Turkey’, *The Times*, 6/8/1918, 5.

⁹⁴ These letters were written between 11 and 25 September. 10 of the authors had friends or family in captivity, one had a brother who died at Kut and another was a Kut veteran who had escaped from captivity. The interest of the remaining two authors in the events is unclear.

⁹⁵ Of the remaining 11, three were by members of the Prisoners in Turkey Committee formed to protect the interests of UK prisoners in the Ottoman Empire, three were from soldiers sympathetic to their cause, and two were from political figures –the Conservative politician Ellis Hume-Williams and the former Official Secretary to the Commonwealth of Australia in London, Muirhead Collins. The backgrounds of the remaining two authors could not be identified.

⁹⁶ Likewise, in Australia, families of POWs formed ‘fictive communities’ to cope with their collective grief: Ariotti, *Captive Anzacs*, 103-114.

⁹⁷ ‘Nearing the End’, *Rochdale Observer*, 2/11/1918, 4.

⁹⁸ Major (retired) Arthur Haggard, Letter: ‘Prisoners in Turkey and Bulgaria’, *The Times*, 10/6/1918, 7.

2,299 according to a December 1917 estimate).⁹⁹ It was there that their attention would have been drawn: hence, F.T. Gardner, writing to the *Essex County Chronicle* to promote the Essex Regiment Prisoner of War Fund, only mentioned the prisoners in Germany (where all but one of the 560 Essex Regiment prisoners were held), whose pleas for aid stood as ‘the saddest of all the cries for help in this terrible war.’¹⁰⁰ In one disgruntled relative’s view, those in Turkish captivity were ‘apt to be forgotten by the general public’ because they were not captured in ‘the chief theatre of war’.¹⁰¹

Perhaps for the same reason, the *Daily Mail*’s fervent criticism towards Newton (and, less prominently, his colleague Sir George Cave) for mishandling the repatriations focused overwhelmingly on those in German captivity.¹⁰² This was seemingly typical of the vitriol Newton received. He followed the public response closely, concluding his diary entry for 5 June 1918: ‘Parting shot at [Director of the Prisoners of War Department Herbert] Belfield and myself in *The Times* this morning.’¹⁰³ On 29 May 1918, seizing ‘the opportunity of dealing faithfully with... the portentous and pretensions of the egregious Northcliffe’, Newton publicly charged the *Daily Mail* owner-editor and *Times* proprietor in the House of Lords with spreading false suggestions, with ‘mischievous intention’, that the plight of UK prisoners in Germany had been worsened ‘on account of the imbecility, incompetence, and callousness of his Majesty’s Government’.¹⁰⁴ After the war, Newton successfully sued the *Daily Mail* for libel for a false assertion that he had joked about ‘the tragic suffering of our prisoners’ in a wartime speech and was awarded £5,000.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, Newton gave special attention to this ‘trying time when I was assailed with great bitterness in the press and in other quarters’ in his memoirs,¹⁰⁶ yet failed to recall a single instance where he was criticised for his inability to

⁹⁹ ‘British Prisoners of War’, *Manchester Guardian*, 12/12/1917, 3.

¹⁰⁰ F.T. Gardner, Letter: ‘Essex Regiment Prisoners of War Fund’, *Essex County Chronicle*, 30/11/1917, 5; ‘Essex War Prisoners’, *Essex County Chronicle*, 26/1/1917, 5.

¹⁰¹ Interested, Letter: *The Times*, 28/5/1918, 7.

¹⁰² Apart from a snide aside that ‘the country has never wasted two minutes’ thought on Lord Newton... but has spent many anxious hours in thinking of its prisoners in Germany and Turkey’ (‘The Scandal of the Prisoners’, *Daily Mail*, 28/5/1918, 2), the above example was its only editorial criticising officials for their inaction regarding prisoners in the Ottoman Empire. By contrast, the *Daily Mail* published at least 15 editorials throughout 1918 which criticised official repatriation efforts with specific reference to those in Germany.

¹⁰³ Reproduced in Newton, *Retrospection*, 256. For the editorial in question, see ‘The Hague Negotiations’, *The Times*, 8/6/1918, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Newton *Retrospection*, 255; ‘House of Lords’, *The Times*, 29/5/1918, 8.

¹⁰⁵ ‘A Very Bad Bargain’, *Daily Mail*, 2/12/1918, 4. Newton cites this article specifically in his memoirs as motivating the law suit: Newton, *Retrospection*, 264. The proceedings are discussed at 267-273. His bitterness towards Northcliffe continued long after the war: see Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne: A Biography* (London, 1929), 469, where he attributes *The Times*’ denunciations of Lansdowne’s ‘peace letter’ to its ‘suffering under Lord Northcliffe’.

¹⁰⁶ Newton, *Retrospection*, 254.

repatriate the ‘heroes of Kut’ such as the *Daily Mail*’s above leader.¹⁰⁷ He cast the controversy as being entirely about the prisoners in Germany. Overshadowed by German crimes elsewhere, the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ remained (at least according to critics) the dominant image of the Turkish enemy in the popular imagination.

The ‘Clean-Fighting Turk’ and the German ‘Hun’

UK soldiers held a broadly similar view of their German enemy. The famous 1914 ‘Christmas truce’ was not a unique occurrence; Richard Holmes argues that those on the Western Front ‘generally had a high regard for the Germans’ and ‘rarely felt a high degree of personal hostility towards them’.¹⁰⁸ This was despite assertions by General Henry Horne and Sir John French that German atrocities had stirred an enduring anti-German bloodlust within the UK forces, especially those which occurred or were uncovered, in rapid succession, in late April and early May 1915.¹⁰⁹ Reports that the Germany used poisonous gas on UK soldiers at the Second Battle of Ypres bred widespread condemnation of Germany’s atrocious wartime conduct.¹¹⁰ This was shortly followed by the German navy’s sinking of a civilian cruise liner, the *Lusitania*, off the coast of Ireland on 7 May, killing some 1200 civilians. Only five days later, when details of the *Lusitania* atrocity were still emerging, the ‘Bryce Report’ was published, proving allegations of mass German atrocities during its invasion of Belgium.¹¹¹ Holmes concedes that Germany’s misconduct, particularly its use of poisonous gas at Ypres, did provoke reprisals from British forces towards German prisoners, but suggests that this was the exception rather than the norm and did not compel them to reject their otherwise favourable impression of their German adversaries.¹¹²

The pro-German sentiments Holmes ascribes to UK soldiers were, for a time, shared domestically. Malcolm Brown shows that those at home responded approvingly to the Christmas truce, citing, for example, Ashmead-Bartlett’s declaration in the *Daily Telegraph* on

¹⁰⁷ Note its absence in Newton, *Retrospection*, 263, which covers 5 September to 26 November.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (London, 2016 [2004]), 538. It also occurred within a wider pattern of fraternisation across Europe: see Marc Ferro et al., *Meeting in No Man’s Land: Christmas 1914 and Fraternization in the Great War*, trans. Helen McPhail (London, 2007).

¹⁰⁹ David Monger, “‘No Mere Silent Commander’? Sir Henry Horne and the Mentality of Command in the First World War”, *Historical Research*, 82 (2009), 355-356.

¹¹⁰ E.g. ‘War Methods’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 28/4/1915, 4.

¹¹¹ Emily Robertson identifies the *Lusitania* as the immediate context for the Bryce Report’s reception: Emily Robertson, ‘Propaganda and “Manufactured Hatred”: A Reappraisal of the Ethics of First World War British and Australian Atrocity Propaganda’, *Public Relations Inquiry*, 3:2 (2014), 260.

¹¹² Holmes, *Tommy*, 553-554.

New Year's Day, 1915, that the affair proved 'the assertion that the German soldier is a good-hearted peace-loving individual once he is outside the influence of the Prussian military machine.'¹¹³ Gregory notes that it was still possible as late as March 1915 to find 'laudable examples of German behaviour' in even the UK's most notoriously Germanophobic newspaper, the *Daily Mail*. By May 1915, however, Gregory argues that the above atrocities insured that the dehumanisation of the German enemy as the barbaric 'Hun', initially formed in response to their pillage of the historic Belgian town of Louvain and the destruction of Reims Cathedral in August and September 1914, became all-encompassing, with positive representations of Germans no longer publicly acceptable.¹¹⁴ The sinking of the *Lusitania* proved to be the final straw, coming, as noted in the *Manchester Guardian History of the War*, at a time when 'the tide of popular feeling in this country against Germany and German methods of war had been steadily rising to a height never before reached'.¹¹⁵ Regarded by UK contemporaries as the defining atrocity of the war,¹¹⁶ it provoked an especially visceral public response. Nation-wide riots against actual or suspected German residents, resembling, in Panikos Panayi's view, 'a Russian pogrom with the native population attempting to clear out aliens', caused hundreds of thousands of pounds in property damage and saw thousands of participants arrested.¹¹⁷

That pro-German testimonies from soldiers on the Western Front were rejected due to their incompatibility with Germany's broader military misconduct shows that the public's apparently sustained belief in the 'clean-fighting Turk' despite similar atrocities cannot be wholly attributed to its origins within soldier testimonies. Yet, paradoxically, the German atrocities that rendered pro-German sentiments so unacceptable also imbued tales of Turkish chivalry with special ideological significance. It is widely acknowledged that atrocities like the 'rape of Belgium' and the sinking of the *Lusitania*, occurring within what Catriona Pennell describes as 'a battle for the ideas that underpinned the Allies' and Central Powers' sense of identity and moral purpose',¹¹⁸ reinforced the perceived righteousness of the 'just war' between

¹¹³ Malcolm Brown, 'The Christmas Truce 1914: The British Story', in Ferro et al, *Meeting in No Man's Land*, 63-65, quotation at 63.

¹¹⁴ Gregory traces this development, with particular reference to the *Daily Mail*, in 'A Clash of Cultures', 27-39 and *Last Great War*, 57-63.

¹¹⁵ *Manchester Guardian History of the War*, vol. 2: 1914-1915 (London, 1915), 353, quoted in Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (New York, 1991), 231.

¹¹⁶ Gregory, *Last Great War*, 61. Horne and Kramer agree that this crime 'loomed large in British perceptions' (*German Atrocities*, 296).

¹¹⁷ Panayi, *Enemy in Our Midst*, 223, 229-253. More recently, see Nicoletta F. Gullace, 'Friends, Aliens, and Enemies: Fictive Communities and the Lusitania Riots of 1915', *Journal of Social History*, 39:2 (2005), 345-367.

¹¹⁸ Pennell, 'Why We Are At War', 98. See Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *1914-1918*, 113-158 for the broader European context.

‘civilised’ British values and the ‘barbarism’ of Prussian militaristic *Kultur*.¹¹⁹ In this context, the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ offered a foil to the barbaric German ‘Hun’, emphasising how Germany had abandoned the norms of civilised warfare by (occasionally racially tinged) contrast.

Comparisons between Turkish ‘gentlemanly’ conduct and German misconduct certainly abounded within the soldiers’ testimonies from Gallipoli featured in the press. Savile, the Northampton officer introduced above, emphasised that ‘one would not expect’ the gentlemanly conduct he witnessed at Gallipoli from German soldiers, while Second Lieutenant Leslie Grant of the 4th Royal Scots praised the Turks’ apparent refusal to adopt ‘German methods’ such as poison gas despite the presumed orders of their German officers.¹²⁰ Some even excused certain atrocities that they did see Turks commit on the basis that their conduct was still better than Germany’s. When Private J. Bowlett, wounded at Gallipoli and convalescing in Cardiff, told the *Western Mail* that the Turks were “‘clean” fighters”, he was promptly reminded by a comrade, also present at the interview, that the Turks had bombarded a hospital. Yet Bowlett retained his admiration for the Turks since ‘they were not guilty of the barbarities practised by the Germans elsewhere.’¹²¹ Private David Lock, convalescing in another Cardiff hospital at the same time, was not as dismissive of Turkish misconduct, but, nonetheless, attributed it to German compulsion rather than the Turks themselves: ‘They played the game till the German officers came on the scene. Then there was no mercy.’¹²² This was, apparently, a typical sentiment. William Ewing, a chaplain attached to the British forces in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, found that the ‘average soldier’ respected the Turk as ‘a stout and honourable foe’ while simultaneously reserving his ‘wrath and contempt’ for the Germans, the “‘Pigs” who do not “play the game”.’¹²³

These sporting allusions evoked ‘athleticism’, a ‘genuinely and extensively held belief’ within Victorian and Edwardian pedagogy that sporting games ‘inspired virtue’, ‘developed manliness’, and ‘formed character’.¹²⁴ J.A. Mangan notes that the above phrase, ‘play the game’, was ‘by far the most popular moralistic exhortation’ of athleticism, encapsulating, by

¹¹⁹ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 291-325; Gullace, ‘Sexual Violence’; Pennell, *Kingdom United*, 57-67, 92-107.

¹²⁰ ‘Facing the Turk at the Dardanelles’, *Northampton Mercury*, 10/9/1915, 4; ‘The Turk as a Fighting Man’, *Scotsman*, 2/8/1915, 9.

¹²¹ ‘Mid Shot and Shell’, *Western Mail*, 19/10/1915, 7.

¹²² ‘Rhondda Veteran’s Story’, *Western Mail*, 19/10/1915, 7.

¹²³ William Ewing, *From Gallipoli to Baghdad*, (London, 1917), 299.

¹²⁴ J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge, 1981), 9.

way of cricketing analogy, all the virtues of the public school gentleman.¹²⁵ The ‘clear relationship between militarism and sport in the British public schools’ evident through ‘the special value attributed to team games in training the essential qualities of the officer and leader’ ensured athleticism’s relevance during the First World War.¹²⁶ Recruiters sought to shame readers into voluntary service by insisting that those who did not ‘come forward with the Colours’ were ‘not playing the game of Englishmen’.¹²⁷ Athleticism was amongst the many aspects of British ‘civilisation’ with which Germany was deemed to be incompatible: it was asserted that German soldiers, unlike their UK counterparts, did not ‘play the game’.¹²⁸

As seen in the above quotations, UK soldiers made their claims that Turkish soldiers abided by this sporting ethos in pointed contrast to German misconduct; their admiration for the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ went hand-in-hand with contempt for the German ‘Hun’. These comparisons can seldom have been based on personal experience of German conduct. While there was a German presence at Gallipoli, A. Candan Kirişci notes that it ‘did not extend to the lower ranks’ and, consequently, ‘did not have much visibility in the affair’.¹²⁹ Moreover, within the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, only those in the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division and one of the 29th Division’s twelve battalions had fought against Germany previously.¹³⁰ Most of the territorial forces represented by the provincial papers examined in this study were, however, still in the UK during May 1915, the formative period of anti-German sentiment.¹³¹ The 42nd (East Lancashire) Division, which arrived in Gallipoli between 5 May and 14 May,¹³² precisely

¹²⁵ Mangan, *Athleticism*, 200-204, quotation at 200.

¹²⁶ Geoffrey Best, ‘Militarism and the Victorian Public School’, in Brian Simon and Ian Bradley (eds.), *The Victorian Public School: Studies in the Development of an Educational Institution* (Dublin, 1975), 142-143, quotations at 142. On militarism in working-class education, see J.A. Mangan and Hamad S. Ndee, ‘Military Drill—Rather More than “Brief and Basic”’: English Elementary Schools and English Militarism’, in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War without Weapons* (London, 2003), 67-99. On the connection between militarism and sport more generally, see Vassil Girginov, ‘Sport, Society and Militarism—In Pursuit of the Democratic Soldier: J.A. Mangan’s Exploration of Militarism’, in Scott A.G.M. Crawford, *Serious Sport’: J.A. Mangan’s Contribution to the History of Sport* (London, 2004), 90-117.

¹²⁷ ‘2/5th Batt. Essex Regt.’, *Essex County Chronicle*, 7/5/1915, 3.

¹²⁸ J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford, 1990), 136-137; W.J. Reader, *At Duty’s Call’: A Study in Obsolete Patriotism* (Manchester, 1988), 96-97; Monger, ‘No Mere Silent Commander’, 350-351.

¹²⁹ A. Candan Kirişci, ‘The “Enemy” at Gallipoli: Perspectives of the Adversary in Turkish, Australian and New Zealand Literatures’, in Frances and Scates (eds.), *Beyond Gallipoli*, 96.

¹³⁰ Major A.F. Becke, *Order of Battles of Divisions Part 1—The Regular British Divisions* (London, 1935), 122 notes that the 29th Division, formed between January and March 1915, was composed of battalions ‘collected from Asia (10), Africa (1), and Europe (1)’. For the 63rd Division see Major A.F. Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions Part 3b. New Army Divisions (30-41); & 63rd (R.N.) Division* (London, 1945), 117-128.

¹³¹ Scotland’s 52nd (Lowland) Division departed for Gallipoli between 18 May and 8 June 1915, while the 53rd (Welsh), 54th (East Anglia), and 10th (Irish) Divisions all embarked in July: see, respectively, Becke, *Order of Battles of Divisions Part 2A*, 114, 122, 130; Major Bryan Cooper, *The Tenth (Irish) Division in Gallipoli* (London, 1918), 34.

¹³² Frederick P. Gibbon, *42nd (East Lancashire) Division 1914-1918* (London, 1920), 20-22.

when most details of the German atrocities appeared in the press, still would have remained informed via their local papers, which were available (although doubtless with significant delay) at the front.¹³³ Thus, these soldiers appear to have been drawing upon, and constructing their admiration for the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ against, the popular image of the German ‘Hun’ outlined above.

The press, likewise, showed great interest in how the Turks’ supposedly gentlemanly conduct, both as soldiers and captors, emphasised German barbarity by contrast. Believing that those in Ottoman captivity had ‘in the majority of cases... been treated with chivalrous respect’, the *Daily Telegraph* stressed to its readers that ‘it is the German alone who has broken not only every Convention and Treaty bearing on the treatment of prisoners, but every dictate of humanity and every instinct of decent feeling.’¹³⁴ Likewise, when the Kut garrison was captured in April 1916, the *Burnley Express* was ‘thankful... that the heroes who survive have passed into the hands of captors who are at least humane and honourable by comparison with their temporary military masters, the modern Huns’. Unaware, of course, of the cruel fate which would befall these prisoners, the paper expected that the Turks, unlike the Germans, would give them ‘the honour which is their due’.¹³⁵

These assessments seem to have been less about praising Turks than offering a standard for gentlemanly conduct which Germany, Britain’s primary enemy both militarily and ideologically, had failed to match, presenting a variant of the common wartime trope of what Allen Frantzen calls ‘reverse chivalry’, whereby Germany was criticised for ‘claiming to be knights but failing to practice chivalry’.¹³⁶ This was certainly the case for one critic of the Independent Labour Party’s allegedly pro-German sympathies writing to the *Burnley Express*. To prove that ‘the typical Prussian is borne brute and bully’, the author noted not only the ‘terrible excesses’ of ‘German “Kultur”’ in both the First World War and the Boxer Rebellion but highlighted its contrast with the civilised military conduct of the ‘half-civilised or backward races’ who had ‘played the game’ in earlier conflicts Boer, Russo-Japanese and Balkan Wars.¹³⁷ Given the notorious record of atrocities that had hitherto defined the ‘Unspeakable Turk’, its new chivalric image was especially well-suited for this purpose. A.J. Hoover notes

¹³³ A Rochdalian in the Royal Horse Artillery claimed to ‘get two “Observers” weekly’ at the Mesopotamian front, that is, both issues of the bi-weekly *Rochdale Observer*: ‘The “Observer” in Mesopotamia!’, *Rochdale Observer*, 18/12/1915, 8.

¹³⁴ ‘Retaliation’, *Daily Telegraph*, 27/6/1916, 8.

¹³⁵ ‘A Glorious Tragedy’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 3/5/1916, 4.

¹³⁶ Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago, 2004), 172-176, quotation at 173. Stefan Goebel observes an identical image of *Unritterlichkeit* or ‘un-chivalry’ in German depictions of Britain: Goebel, *Great War and Medieval Memory*, 189.

¹³⁷ E.R., Letter: ‘The I.L.P. and the War’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 10/1/1917, 4.

that clergymen supporting a ‘just war’ against German barbarity drew particular attention to their ‘scientific animalism’ in Belgium.¹³⁸ For Reverend J.H. James, providing just such a sermon at a Methodist rally in Manchester in September 1915, the clearest evidence the First World War provided of modern science’s moral failure was that ‘the most scientific nation on the face of the earth had shown itself to be also the most brutal, so that even the unspeakable Turk was a gentleman compared with the “kultured” German.’¹³⁹

Ottoman Atrocities

The great irony of the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ as a justification for the UK’s righteous crusade against German barbarity through claims that even the ‘Unspeakable Turk’ would not resort to German-style atrocities was that Turkish conduct was, in fact, considerably more atrocious than the German ‘frightfulness’ against which it was measured. In particular, Horne and Kramer stress that the Ottoman Empire’s genocide of the Armenians ‘was by far the worst case of violence against civilians during the war, on a wholly different scale to the invasions of 1914.’¹⁴⁰ While Germany killed 5,521 civilians in its widely condemned ‘rape of Belgium’,¹⁴¹ the Armenian Genocide claimed over a million of the Ottoman Empire’s roughly two million Armenian inhabitants.¹⁴² The contemporary estimate given by Bryce in his address to the House of Lords was more conservative at a still astronomical 800,000.¹⁴³ Though only a ‘minority, current in the literature on enemy “atrocities”’ given a correspondingly ‘minor place in Allied accusations’ against the Central Powers,¹⁴⁴ it did not pass without considerable condemnation from the press. For Cardiff’s *Western Mail*, it was a crime ‘eclipsing in tragedy and in barbarism the worst that has happened in Belgium.’ ‘Tamburlaine the Great’, added the *Daily Telegraph*, ‘no longer must stand... as the superlative butcher of his or any other age’, for that honour now belonged to ‘those who carried out this policy of bloodshed.’¹⁴⁵ The *Scotsman* averred that the Armenian Genocide, ‘unprecedented... both in number and

¹³⁸ A.J. Hoover, *God Germany, and Britain in the Great War: A Study in Clerical Nationalism* (New York, 1989), 22.

¹³⁹ “‘Half a hell’”, *Burnley News*, 29/9/1915, 5.

¹⁴⁰ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 296.

¹⁴¹ As estimated in *ibid.*, 74. Including the French civilian deaths, often overlooked in the UK, their figure increases to 6,247.

¹⁴² The exact figures are disputed, but Hans-Lukas Kieser and Donald Bloxham suggest a death toll of 1.3 million: Hans-Lukas Kieser and Donald Bloxham, ‘Genocide’, in Winter (ed.) *Cambridge History*, vol. 1, 610.

¹⁴³ ‘Armenia’, *Western Mail*, 7/10/1915, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 538, n. 18; 297.

¹⁴⁵ ‘The Armenian Massacres’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9/10/1915, 8.

bloodshed’, must ‘feature prominently on international notice’ and ‘be kept in mind when the day of reckoning comes’.¹⁴⁶ While disgruntled anti-Turkish critics felt that neither these Armenian massacres nor the Turks’ mistreatment of UK prisoners had any noticeable domestic impact, it is still instructive to consider what place these Turkish atrocities were accorded within the UK’s ‘just war’. If praise for Turkish ‘gentlemanly’ conduct served mainly to criticise Germany, as suggested above, what about their misconduct?

According to Laycock, the Armenian Genocide operated as an ‘Ottoman atrocity’ which contrasted ‘civilised Britain, protecting innocent people, and a barbaric, amoral enemy, which massacred its own population without mercy.’¹⁴⁷ This was certainly true for the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*. Writing in September 1915 amidst criticism of the Gallipoli campaign’s value, the paper argued that the possibility of liberating the Armenians and other Ottoman minorities from Enver’s ‘intolerable tyranny’ presented ‘not the least cogent reason for extending the most strenuous support to the Dardanelles adventure.’¹⁴⁸ It also provided a useful moral argument for dismantling the Ottoman Empire against criticism from the left that doing so would turn the war from a noble endeavour to one of imperialist annexation. Such arguments from officials have been dismissed as a cynical attempt to mask their imperialism in a humanitarian façade, not an unreasonable interpretation given the British government’s swift abandonment of its commitments to upholding an independent Armenian nation state once the war was won.¹⁴⁹ However, they also had popular appeal amongst some conservatives in Burnley. Several letters appeared in the local conservative paper, the *Burnley Express*, criticising the ILP’s defence of Ottoman territorial integrity with explicit reference to the Armenian Genocide.¹⁵⁰

Yet the Ottoman Empire’s violent oppression of its Christian subjects was hardly a revelation. As the *Manchester Guardian* noted when they were made public, ‘it cannot be said that the massacres in Armenia... have come as a surprise.’ The Young Turks’ massacre of some 20,000 Armenians in Adana had already revealed that ‘the tyranny of Abdul Hamid did not

¹⁴⁶ *Scotsman*, 1/10/1915, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 100.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Twins in Cruelty’, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 24/9/1915, 4. See also ‘Gallipoli’, *Rochdale Observer*, 10/3/1917, 4.

¹⁴⁹ Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*. See also Bloxham, *Great Game*, 134-169.

¹⁵⁰ Explicit, Letter: ‘I.L.P. and the War’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 30/12/1916, 2; Explicit, Letter: ‘I.L.P. and the War’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 17/1/1917, 2; Dandy, Letter: ‘A Reply to the Peace Cranks’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 3/2/1917, 2; Explicit, Letter: ‘Labour Leaders and the War’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 3/2/1917, 2.

disappear with his deposition' but only 'become more open and cynical'.¹⁵¹ Though their unprecedented scale and systematic (what would now be described as genocidal) methods were shocking, these Armenian massacres were an unsurprising continuation of the earlier atrocities which had cast the 'Unspeakable Turk' from the 'civilised' world into the realm of 'barbarism' long before the First World War. As an 'Ottoman atrocity', its ideological value was limited. The Turks were but a 'junior partner' and, as Horne and Kramer observe, "atrociousness" denoted the importance of the enemy, not the crime.'¹⁵²

Thus, the most 'atrocious' aspect of the Armenian Genocide from the UK perspective was that the Ottoman Empire's Christian allies refused to intercede on the Armenians' behalf. H.A.L. Fisher explained the charge against Germany and Austria-Hungary in his endorsement of Bryce and Toynbee's *Treatment of Armenians*:

In view of the fact that the representations of the Austrian Ambassador with the Porte were effectual in procuring a partial measure of exemption for the Armenian Catholics, we are led to surmise that the unspeakable horrors which this volume records might have been mitigated, if not wholly checked, had active and energetic remonstrances been from the first moment addressed to the Ottoman Government by the two Powers who had acquired a predominant influence in Constantinople. The evidence, on the contrary, tends to suggest that these two Powers were, in a general way, favourable to the policy of deportation.¹⁵³

While neither power attempted to restrain their Turkish ally, Germany was believed to be 'the one Power which might have intervened effectively'.¹⁵⁴ According to the *Burnley Express*, 'the governing fact in the case' against Germany was stated most succinctly by Irish MP T.P. O'Connor: 'Germany is to-day the master of Turkey; she equips and commands the armies of Turkey; she finances Turkey, and she bribes Turkish ministers; and she has but to lift her little finger and there would not be another Armenian touched.'¹⁵⁵ Since 'a word from the Kaiser would have stopped all this carnage', he was 'as much responsible for the murder of these

¹⁵¹ 'The Armenians in Turkey', *Manchester Guardian*, 26/5/1915, 6. See also 'Reign of Terror in Turkey', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 17/9/1915, 4.

¹⁵² Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 297.

¹⁵³ 'Letter from H.A.L. Fisher, Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, to Viscount Bryce', in James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916* (London, 1916), xxix-xxx.

¹⁵⁴ 'Armenian Massacres', *Irish Times*, 9/10/1915, 4.

¹⁵⁵ 'The Kaiser's Responsibility', *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 9/10/1915, 7.

800,000 Armenians as he is for the unspeakable horrors that have been committed by his hordes in Belgium, in Poland, in France, and in Russia.’¹⁵⁶

It was claimed that Germany approved the Young Turks’ methods as they echoed its own disregard for civilian life in pursuit of military victory. Despite their noted precedent in Ottoman history, the press found something characteristically German in the execution of these particular Armenian massacres. In a detailed exposition of the atrocity, over three thousand words long and spanning six columns, a *Times* correspondent noted that whereas the ‘Red Sultan’ was content with mere massacre, the Young Turks followed this by ‘a crueller system of persecution’ characterised, most notably, by deportations.¹⁵⁷ ‘The idea of deporting people en masse’, wrote American Ambassador to Constantinople Henry Morgenthau, was considered ‘exclusively Germanic’, a staple of ‘the literature of Pan-Germany’.¹⁵⁸ Consequently, as soon as it became clear that the deportation of Armenian elites from Constantinople was part of a deliberate policy of extermination, the *Manchester Guardian* immediately found parallels with Germany’s own deportation of Belgian and French civilians to the front lines for forced labour. ‘The theory underlying this conduct’, it wrote, ‘is, of course, the same which governs the terrorist methods of the Germans in their occupied territories.’¹⁵⁹ In this respect, *The Times* claimed that the Armenian Genocide bore only ‘general resemblance’ to previous Armenian massacres and was, perhaps, better understood as an effort to ‘outdo’ Abdul Hamid by adopting ‘an act of policy, as deliberate as the exercise of German “frightfulness” in Belgium and France.’¹⁶⁰ These similarities were not considered coincidental. For the *Scotsman*, the Young Turks’ systematic massacre of (as contemporaries believed) 800,000 Armenians was only the ‘development of [Germany’s] own methods... the true and natural fruit of grafting the new plant of scientific frightfulness on the old stock of Turkish barbarism.’¹⁶¹ Thus, Ottoman atrocities did not only provide further opportunity to comment on German atrocities in Europe; they were considered yet another manifestation of the German *Kultur* against which Britain fought. In their atrocities, ‘the Prussian and the Turk are fit companions’ and ‘consistency would demand... that Prussia should regard her ally with admiration as the fine flower of Prussian Kultur.’¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ ‘The Balkans’, *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 13/10/1915, 4.

¹⁵⁷ ‘The Armenian Massacres’, *The Times*, 8/10/1915, 5.

¹⁵⁸ Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (New York, 1919), 365-366.

¹⁵⁹ ‘The Armenians in Turkey’, *Manchester Guardian*, 26/5/1915, 6. On these ‘terroristic methods’, see Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *1914-1918*, 54-64.

¹⁶⁰ ‘The Armenian Massacres’, *The Times*, 8/10/1915, 7.

¹⁶¹ *Scotsman*, 1/10/1915, 4. See also ‘Another Armenian Massacre’, *The Times*, 24/8/1916, 6.

¹⁶² ‘Armenia’, *Western Mail*, 7/10/1915, 4; ‘The Armenian horrors’, *Burnley News*, 9/10/1915, 7.

The press' presentation of the Armenian Genocide as a quasi-German atrocity has been previously dismissed as a cynical effort to distort the crime in coordination with official propaganda initiatives to convince the United State to enter the war on Britain's side.¹⁶³ This argument perhaps makes sense under the traditional presumption that UK wartime newspapers were propaganda mouthpieces, seemingly without any independent views of their own. Wellington House did, indeed, employ atrocity stories liberally in their efforts to convince American observers of its 'just war' narrative, presenting German 'barbarism' against shared Anglo-American values, which specifically targeted American newspapers.¹⁶⁴ Foreign Office records show that Germany's apparent role in the Armenian Genocide was also used for this purpose.¹⁶⁵ Yet, it is highly doubtful that the numerous provincial papers condemning Germany in this regard were doing so under the expectation that their words might be read by American opinion-makers.

Of course, this was also valuable for recruiting purposes in a society which did not yet have conscription. In October 1915, Lord Shuttleworth, Lancashire's Lord Lieutenant, reminded potential volunteers that they were:

face to face with new and horrible forms of that "frightfulness" of which we have seen far too much in this war. I need only, as recent examples, speak of those atrocious and vast Armenian massacres and of the shocking murder of Nurse Cavell. If those things do not stir us I do not know what will.¹⁶⁶

The later domestic propaganda of the National War Aims Committee, tasked with re-mobilising the public in the wake of plummeting support for the war, also drew attention to Germany's failure to intervene on the Armenians' behalf.¹⁶⁷ Some of this propaganda appears to have found its way into the press. On 2 November 1918, an article by author A.A. Milne criticising American President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points for not being sufficiently punitive towards Germany appeared in the *Essex Newsmen*. The proposed alternative, 'Civilisation's Fourteen Points', included 'Germany's complicity in the Armenian

¹⁶³ Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime*, 24; Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, 216-222; Bloxham, *Great Game*, 129, who cites articles by *The Times* and *Daily Chronicle* as examples of this propaganda at 263, n. 87.

¹⁶⁴ Jessica Bennett and Mark Hampton, 'World War I and the Anglo-American Imagined Community: Civilization vs. Barbarism in British Propaganda and American Newspapers', in Joel H. Weiner and Mark Hampton (eds.), *Anglo-American Media Interactions, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke, 2007), 155-175.

¹⁶⁵ Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 73-75.

¹⁶⁶ Lord Shuttleworth, speaking at a recruitment rally at Burnley's Mechanic's Hall, quoted in *Manchester Guardian*, 25/10/1915, 9.

¹⁶⁷ Monger, *Patriotism*, 128.

massacres.¹⁶⁸ This was one of only four times the *Newsman* made reference to the Armenian Genocide during the war. The remaining three were brief notices on local fundraising efforts; no details of the atrocity, nor any explanation of what it was, ever appeared in the paper.¹⁶⁹ Combined with Milne's employment with MI7(b), a branch of the Directorate of Military Intelligence responsible for preparing and distributing military information, including to the press,¹⁷⁰ this was likely placed propaganda content. However, this does not mean that the above criticisms, appearing mostly in newspaper editorials, carried similar propagandistic intentions.

Questions of propaganda are separate from the more important matter of whether these commentators genuinely believed Germany to be responsible, though the two are often erroneously conflated.¹⁷¹ For Donald Bloxham, the clearest evidence that these assertions 'emerged from a propaganda campaign' seems to be the lack of evidence that Germany had any role in forming the genocidal policy or that German influence over its Turkish ally was sufficient to prevent its execution, as the above wartime critics claimed.¹⁷² Arguments otherwise by Vahakn Dadrian and others are attributed to their failure 'to break down the rather rudimentary wartime propaganda of the Entente.'¹⁷³ That these historians could find ample evidence to suggest a German role, regardless of the validity of their interpretations, suggests, at least, that contemporary critics might also have been sincerely mistaken about German culpability. Indeed, as Hans-Lukas Kieser points out, German officials might not have been able to prevent the genocide, but neither did they make the effort. 'Once it understood the extermination', writes Kieser, Germany 'worked only to limit damage to prestige, to refuse accusations of guilt and, in the same perspective, to facilitate some humanitarian assistance.'¹⁷⁴

Press criticisms, if extreme, were hardly unreasonable given the unwillingness of the German press, under an oppressive system of government censorship, to condemn the

¹⁶⁸ Lieutenant A.A. Milne, 'Fourteen Points', *Essex Newsman*, 2/11/1918, 2.

¹⁶⁹ 'Chelmsford', *Essex Newsman*, 12/2/1916, 4; 'Romford', *Essex Newsman*, 3/2/1917, 1; 'Chelmsford', *Essex Newsman*, 10/2/1917, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Monger, *Patriotism*, 26, 56.

¹⁷¹ On wartime propagandists' belief in the truth of their material, see Strachan, 'John Buchan'; Monger, *Patriotism*, 269; Monger, 'Networking', 306.

¹⁷² Bloxham, 'Power Politics'; Bloxham, *Great Game*, 115-133.

¹⁷³ Bloxham, *Great Game*, 133. For examples of this view, see Vahakn N. Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity* (Watertown, MA, 1996); Christoph Dinkel, 'German Officers and the Armenian Genocide', *Armenian Review*, 44:1 (1991), 77-133; and, more recently, Wolfgang Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916* (New York, 2014).

¹⁷⁴ Hans-Lukas Kieser, 'Germany and the Armenian Genocide of 1915-17', in Jonathan C. Friedman (ed.), *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (London, 2011), 38.

Armenian Genocide.¹⁷⁵ As ample examples from *The Times*' column 'Through German Eyes' proved, German newspapers also frequently defended the official Ottoman narrative.¹⁷⁶ Most controversial was the widely quoted anti-Armenian diatribe of far-right journalist Count Reventlow. Aptly called 'Reventlow the Frightful' by the *Daily Mail*'s former Berlin correspondent, he affirmed 'not only the right but the duty' of Turkish authorities 'to proceed with violence against the unreliable, blood-sucking, and revolutionary Armenian element', for 'in war it would be nothing short of a crime to treat such an element with kid gloves.'¹⁷⁷ Reventlow's words convinced the press that 'the Kaiser and his Ministers are ready to acquiesce in and even to approve of cold-blooded murder.'¹⁷⁸ Bryce, on the other hand, doubted this particular article's representative qualities. He warned Toynbee about relying too heavily upon Reventlow, who was 'only the [Leopold] Maxse or "Globe" of Germany', referencing the far-right UK press.¹⁷⁹ Yet he still believed that Germany was culpable in the way the press described. Repeating his claim made in his House of Lords address of October 1915 that only Germany could compel the Turks to cease the massacres, also implied by Bloxham to be a propagandist move,¹⁸⁰ in private correspondence, he advised Toynbee to downplay any explicit suggestion of German responsibility in his forthcoming pamphlet, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation*, because 'we want to get the Germans to stop the massacres + to try to make them responsible is not the best way to do that.'¹⁸¹

For Sykes, the belief that the Armenian Genocide was, effectively, a German atrocity accounted for the longevity of the 'clean-fighting Turk' in the public imagination. It made it possible to distinguish the 'good old Turk' of romantic Orientalist literature from the 'Young Turk with a German uniform, a German parade voice, and German technical education' who had learned 'ruthless action and inflexible tyranny' from his 'German professors'. It was the latter, not the former, who mistreated UK prisoners and massacred Armenians.¹⁸² Lacking any study of UK public opinion on the Armenian Genocide, it is impossible to know how far these

¹⁷⁵ Tessa Hofmann, 'From Silence to Re-remembrance: The Response of German Media to the Ottoman Armenians', in Chabot et al. (eds.), *Mass Media*, 89-93. On Germany's press censorship more generally, see David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914-1918: The Sins of Omission* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2000), 27-36.

¹⁷⁶ See 'Through German Eyes', *The Times*, at 8/10/1915, 5; 11/10/1915, 7; 15 /10/1915, 7; 19/10/1915, 7; 1/12/1915, 7; 20/6/1916, 7; 13/9/1916, 7; 12/10/1916, 7; 16/2/1918, 5; 27/3/1918, 5.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Frederic William Wile 'Germany Day by Day', *Daily Mail*, 8/10/1915, 6.

¹⁷⁸ 'London News', *Scotsman*, 7/10/1915, 7. See also 'The Armenian Horrors', *Burnley News*, 9/10/1915, 7; 'The Armenian Massacres', *Daily Telegraph*, 9/10/1915, 8; 'Armenian Massacres', *Irish Times*, 9/10/1915, 4.

¹⁷⁹ TNA:PRO, FO96/205, Toynbee Papers, Bryce to Toynbee, 6/11/15.

¹⁸⁰ Bloxham, *Great Game*, 129.

¹⁸¹ Bryce to Toynbee, 19/10/1915, quoted in Monger, 'Networking', 300.

¹⁸² [Mark Sykes], 'The "Clean-Fighting Turk"', *The Times*, 20/2/1917, 7.

sentiments were shared, but a critical letter written by a veteran who fought against the Turks in response to Sykes only confirmed his point. While he accepted that the Armenian massacres were ‘as ruthless as anything that men have done for several hundred years’, he contested Sykes’ refutation of the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ narrative not only with reference to his personal experiences of Turkish chivalry, reinforced by the soldiers’ accounts discussed above, but by noting the apparent ambiguity as to who was responsible for the massacres: ‘History will decide how the blame is to be apportioned between Turk, German and Kurd.’¹⁸³ The press was not so willing to absolve the Turks from responsibility, yet the fact that the Genocide was perpetrated by the Young Turks was somewhat obscured within their Germano-centric criticisms. Its primary rhetorical and ideological significance was not in justifying the righteousness of Britain’s war not against the Ottoman Empire but against Germany. Paradoxically, therefore, accounts of both Turkish ‘gentlemanly’ conduct and atrocious misconduct served the same ends.

This provides further explanation for the surprisingly muted public response to the suffering of UK prisoners captured at Kut and elsewhere. Unlike the Armenian Genocide, there was no obvious German connection to warrant attribution to Prussian influence or acquiescence. The *Scotsman* was the only paper to blame Germany for the crime and it did so in only the most abstract sense: since the Kaiser had caused the war, he was the ‘arch-criminal’ responsible ‘for all the suffering that the war has caused’, including the deaths of UK prisoners in Ottoman captivity. This was merely an attempt to highlight the relevance of this atrocity, like all others that occurred during the First World War, to post-war discussions of how the Kaiser should be dealt with. Yet, the *Scotsman* was careful to stress that the UK’s ire should be directed principally at Ottoman officials. It was not, through these criticisms, absolving them of guilt or advocating ‘extenuating the punishment which they have richly deserved’.¹⁸⁴ As Horne and Kramer noted above, however, atrocities were valued based not on the atrociousness of the crime itself but on the significance of the enemy it condemned. Since the Turks were the exclusive culprit for this atrocity, the muted public response is, perhaps, unsurprising.

One readers’ response to the *Manchester Guardian*’s condemnation of Turkish officials is particularly revealing of the Germano-centric lens through which these atrocities were

¹⁸³ X., Letter: ‘The Clean-Fighting Turk’, *The Times*, 21/2/1917, 5. The letter originally read ‘...between Turk, German and Armenian’, but the author claimed this was a typographical error by *The Times* which he later corrected: X., Letter: ‘The Clean-Fighting Turk’, *The Times*, 28/2//1917, 5.

¹⁸⁴ *Scotsman*, 21/11/1918, 4.

viewed. Commenting on the recently published *Treatment of British Prisoners*, the paper wrote:

In part the explanation is utter indifference to human life and human suffering, but such indifference does not excuse, it merely stamps the Turkish government as outside the country of nations. In part it was deliberate, conscious wickedness, a brutal nature and a brutal system expressing themselves.¹⁸⁵

In a letter attacking George Bernard Shaw's claims of moral equivalency between the UK and Germany, Herbert Pike substituted 'German' for 'Turkish' in the above passage to describe German, not Ottoman, atrocities.¹⁸⁶ For Pike, the main value in these words was not in what they revealed about atrocities committed towards the Kut prisoners but in providing a general description which could be adapted to condemn Germany.

* * *

In stark contrast to the demonising image of the barbaric German 'Hun', Turkish soldiers apparently enjoyed a remarkably positive reputation as sporting gentlemen who upheld all the 'civilised' values which Germany so threatened. Constructed around claims that Turks did not commit German-style atrocities, its longevity despite widely documented atrocities against Armenians and UK prisoners was curious. Besides corroborating previous scholarly assertions as to the cultural impeachability of soldiers' testimonies, from which the 'clean-fighting Turk' emerged, this popular view of 'the Turk' provides useful insights into how Britain and Ireland viewed their war with the Ottoman Empire. Whether admiring the Turks' 'gentlemanly' conduct at Gallipoli or condemning their atrocities, the analysis was, at all times, focused on Britain's chief enemy both militarily and ideologically, Germany. As shown in the next and final chapter, this Germano-centrism was just as prevalent in determining the value of Britain's military campaigns against the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁸⁵ 'The Turk and British Prisoners', *Manchester Guardian*, 21/11/1918, 4

¹⁸⁶ Herbert Pike, Letter: *Manchester Guardian*, 26/11/1918, 4.

Chapter Three

‘For the Empire of the World’: The Ottoman Empire in British War Strategy

Lamenting the Gallipoli campaign’s failure, due, in its view, to insufficient government support, and fearing a similar fate for the Mesopotamian campaign, the *Manchester Guardian* prophesied in April 1916 that ‘to the future historian it will be one of the paradoxes of this war that the country as a whole was so strangely indifferent to the importance of the war in the East.’ Had Britain remained on the defensive in Western Europe in 1915 and fully committed to an assault on Constantinople, the paper argued, it would have not only brought the Ottomans to surrender but, in so doing, ‘ensure[d] the defeat of Germany’s Eastern ambitions’ and secured the British Empire’s position as the ‘greatest of Eastern powers’.¹ Historians have only recently begun to consider such imperialist arguments for an ‘Eastern’ strategy. Keith Jeffrey, for example, suggests that the strategic debates between so-called ‘Westerners’ and ‘Easterners’ was less about how to defeat Germany than a broader difference in perspective, pitting a ‘relatively limited, local and European mindset’ against ‘a more expansive, “imperial mind”, embodying an imperturbable sense of global reach’.² Fantauzzo’s recent analysis of press commentary on the captures of Baghdad and Jerusalem places the press firmly in the latter camp.³ However, the *Guardian*’s characterisation of Britain’s Eastern campaigns as an imperial proxy-war against Germany, though widespread in the press, has received only passing notice.

This chapter considers the Ottoman Empire’s place within Britain’s global strategy, as understood by the press. Chapter Two explored press discussions of Ottoman military conduct at length, and war correspondents’ reports on the battles themselves, especially at Gallipoli, have been well-covered elsewhere.⁴ Instead, this chapter discusses why the press believed fighting the supposedly ‘Turco-German’ enemy, established in previous chapters, was necessary. First, it establishes the perceived value of an Ottoman surrender through strategic debates surrounding the Dardanelles (later Gallipoli) campaign. This was greatly desired, although only insofar as it hastened, and did not jeopardise, the final victory in Europe against Germany. Though undoubtedly Britain’s most famous (and infamous) Eastern venture,

¹ ‘The War Against Turkey’, *Manchester Guardian*, 11/4/1916, 6.

² Keith Jeffrey, ‘British Strategy and War Aims in the First World War’, in Holger Afflerbach (ed.), *The Purpose of the First World War: War Aims and Military Strategies* (Berlin, 2015), 50.

³ Fantauzzo, ‘Finest Feats’.

⁴ E.g. Macleod, *Reconsidering Gallipoli*, 103-146, on Ashmead-Bartlett; John, *War Journalism*, 144-153, on Nevinson.

Gallipoli was anomalous in this respect. Campaigns against the Ottoman Empire were largely fought in the Middle East, where victory would not cause an Ottoman collapse and, consequently, promised little towards Germany's military defeat. Here, the imperialist interpretation, outlined above, took precedence. For the press, the Middle Eastern campaigns' main value was in thwarting Germany's empire, now stretching from 'Berlin to Baghdad', from reaching Egypt and India. Supposedly the principal object for which Germany went to war, this gave Britain's conflict with the Ottoman Empire hitherto unrecognised importance, although, once again, only insofar as it related to Germany.

The Dardanelles Campaign

On 22 February 1915, the *Manchester Evening News* saw 'the chief interest in this cruel war move from one quarter of the globe to another'—from the Western Front to the Ottoman Empire.⁵ Two days earlier, the Admiralty announced to the press that an Anglo-French fleet had commenced 'an attack upon the forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles'.⁶ The telegram gave no indication that this bombardment would be followed by further operations and, as Christopher Bell emphasises, certainly did not officially confirm that the Allies 'intended to force the [Dardanelles] Straits', as Lloyd George later recalled.⁷ This omission was, doubtless, intentional. The War Council had approved Churchill's plan for a naval attack on the Dardanelles on the premise that it could be easily retracted should the bombardment prove ineffective and success unlikely.⁸ Nonetheless, within the 'imagination of military and naval writers' the 'plain and simple tale' of 'comparatively small operations' contained in the Admiralty's telegram was read as 'the prelude to one of the greatest feats of arms in all of history'.⁹ As *The Times* explained, the Royal Navy was before 'the gates of the East' and, for British imperial prestige, 'whenever operations are begun in the East, there must be no failure and no going back.'¹⁰

Since the Admiralty's telegram did not officially announce the Dardanelles campaign, it obviously did not present the press with its rationale. Nonetheless, newspapers easily

⁵ 'Forcing the Dardanelles', *Manchester Evening News*, 22/2/1915, 3.

⁶ 'Dardanelles Shelled', *The Times*, 22/2/1915, 8.

⁷ Christopher M. Bell, *Churchill and the Dardanelles* (Oxford, 2017), 108

⁸ George H. Cassar, *Asquith as War Leader* (London, 1994), 58-59; Bell, *Dardanelles*, 70.

⁹ 'Forcing the Dardanelles', *Manchester Evening News*, 22/2/1915, 3.

¹⁰ 'The Attack on the Dardanelles', *The Times*, 22/2/1915, 9. Christopher M. Bell, *Churchill and Sea Power* (Oxford, 2012), 74, makes a similar observation.

discerned the strategic objectives of Churchill's plan.¹¹ *The Times'* military correspondent, Repington, later amongst the campaign's most fervent press critics, found it 'scarcely necessary to point out' the value of forcing the Dardanelles.¹² This was not primarily in the expected Ottoman surrender. Though certainly desirable, given how ineffectual their offensives had been thus far, suffering serious defeats against British forces in Mesopotamia and around Suez and against Russia in an unsuccessful winter offensive in the Caucasus,¹³ it hardly justified the *Observer's* assertion that 'reopening the Dardanelles' would 'transform the whole character of the struggle to the fatal disadvantage of the Central Empires.'¹⁴ Its importance was instead in its broader political and economic consequences. Forcing the Dardanelles would demonstrate Allied military prowess sufficiently to remove the Balkan States' apparent hesitancy to declare war on the Central Powers, originally expected to be an immediate consequence of the Ottoman Empire's belligerence, as previously discussed. 'With the possibility before them of another readjustment of boundaries at the expense of Turkey', the *Irish Independent* explained, the Balkan League would reunite behind the Allied cause.¹⁵ With the Dardanelles reopened, British and French ships would also regain year-round access to Russia' warm-water ports in the Black Sea. According to the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, its most 'immediate attraction' was in allowing Russia to export large quantities of grain to Britain through the Dardanelles, which would cause a substantial reduction in domestic food prices.¹⁶ Indeed, the *Essex County Chronicle's* only mention of the Dardanelles bombardment for February was in a market report.¹⁷ Militarily, however, it would decide the 'economic war' of blockades in the Allies' favour and grant Russia a reliable stream of much-needed supplies and, most importantly, munitions.¹⁸ With all this before them, the *Edinburgh Evening News* observed that 'hardly any other event of the war has been received so approvingly or aroused such interest in London as the fleet attack on the Dardanelles'.¹⁹ If the Dardanelles campaign were successful, Asquith expected the war in Europe to be won by July 1915.²⁰

¹¹ On the actual strategic thinking behind the Dardanelles and later Gallipoli campaign, see French, 'Origins'; Prior, *Gallipoli*; Bell, *Dardanelles*.

¹² 'Dardanelles Attacked', *The Times*, 22/2/1915, 6.

¹³ See Erickson, *Ordered to Die*, 51-73; Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, 75-128.

¹⁴ 'Can More be Done?', *Observer*, 21/2/ 1915, 8.

¹⁵ 'The War at Sea', *Irish Independent*, 22/2/1915, 4. See also 'Dardanelles Bombardment', *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 22/2/1915, 6.

¹⁶ 'London Letter', *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 22/2/1915, 7.

¹⁷ 'Market Reports', *Essex County Chronicle*, 26/2/1915, 7.

¹⁸ See esp. 'A Naval Counter-Stroke', *The Times*, 22/2/1915, 6, reproduced also in the *Manchester Evening News*: 'The Dardanelles', *Manchester Evening News*, 22/2/1915, 4; 'The Economic War', *Irish Independent*, 24/2/1915, 4; 'The Dardanelles', *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 24/1915, 4.

¹⁹ 'An Historic Exploit', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25/2/1915, 4.

²⁰ Asquith to Venetia Stanley, 30/3/1915, in Brock and Brock (eds.), *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, 520.

This consensus broke after the Gallipoli landings in April 1915, which coincided with the Second Battle of Ypres. For the *Daily Mail*, this was a ‘titanic battle for Belgium and the coast’ in which, the *Daily Mail* explained, ‘we are fighting for our very lives.’ Whatever victory at Gallipoli would contribute to Allied success in Europe, ‘Defeat at Ypres would bring Germans to Calais and Dunkirk. It would bring England to the bitterest extremity of peril.’²¹ Faced with this crisis in Europe, *The Times* charged Asquith’s government with ‘divert[ing] our strength... from the critical battlefields in the West’, while the *Daily Mail* called for all available men and munitions to be redirected from Gallipoli to Flanders on 27 April 1915, only two days after they had landed.²² These critics were soon vindicated when, on 9 May, British forces failed to capitalise on a breakthrough achieved at Aubers Ridge because ‘the want of an unlimited supply of high explosive was a fatal bar to our success’, as the *Times*’ military correspondent, Repington, famously declared.²³

These criticisms’ political ramifications are well-known. Repington’s exposé contradicted Asquith’s public declaration to Newcastle munitions workers that the advance in Europe was not impeded by insufficient munitions and, writes George Cassar, implied that the Prime Minister was ‘guilty of criminal deception.’²⁴ The resulting ‘shells scandal’, coupled with the First Sea Lord’s resignation from the Admiralty to protest the Dardanelles campaign the following day, forced Asquith to rapidly form a new wartime coalition for his own political survival. As one American journalist concluded of Repington’s article, ‘never before perhaps in the history of the world, certainly of war, have sixteen words in a newspaper produced such epoch-making results’, an assessment Repington happily reproduced in his own memoirs.²⁵ As a result, however, they appeared to many newspapers more as highly inappropriate efforts to discredit Asquith’s Liberal Government than genuine concerns over military strategy. Their substantive points were, accordingly, largely ignored. Even the Unionist *Irish Times*, which had previously expressed similar concerns that Gallipoli would jeopardise the Allies’ position in Western Europe, opted not to discuss ‘the wisdom, or otherwise, of the operations on which

²¹ ‘In the Dark’, *Daily Mail*, 26/4/1915, 4.

²² ‘Divided Forces’, *The Times*, 29/4/1915, 9; ‘Every Man Wanted for Flanders’, *Daily Mail*, 27/4/1915, 4.

²³ ‘Need for Shells’, *The Times*, 14/5/1915, 2.

²⁴ Cassar, *Asquith*, 93.

²⁵ Isaac F. Marcossan, *Adventures in Interviewing* (New York, 1920), 124; Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington, *The First World War 1914-1918: Personal Experiences of Lieut.-Col. C. à Court Repington*, vol. 1 (London, 1920), 36. For overviews of these political developments, see Turner, *British Politics*, 56-61; Cassar, *Asquith*, 91-110; for the press’ role therein, see Koss, *Political Press*, 274-282.

the *Morning Post* bases its criticism' and instead devoted its editorial response to condemning these 'unfair and unpatriotic' personal attacks.²⁶

Nonetheless, the substantive debate (where it existed) reveals much about the Ottoman Empire's perceived relevance within war strategy. This was one between 'Easterners' and 'Westerners', that is, between those who advocated redirecting the war effort towards Germany's weaker allies and those who favoured concentrating all forces, as far as possible, on the decisive point. David French rejects these conventional labels as obscuring the true division over British strategy which, he suggests, was not about geography but rather 'time'. For policy-makers, this was between supporters of a 'business as usual' approach, wherein Britain would play a largely supporting role and leave the actual fighting to Russia and France, and those who recognised that a greater military commitment on the Continent was necessary show support for Britain's allies.²⁷ Though the war's geographic direction might have been a peripheral concern amongst the policy-making elite, contemporary press observers clearly did not appreciate the distinction, writing explicitly of competing 'Easterner' and 'Westerner' schools of thought.²⁸

The *Manchester Guardian's* 'Student of War' supported the Dardanelles campaign on 'Easterner' grounds. The author suggests that the above political and economic factors would coalesce in a potentially decisive new Hungarian front opened by the newly belligerent Balkan States. The author regarded Hungary not only as the 'strategic centre' of the Eastern Front, but, as the 'weakest area in the German military system of defences', the 'key to the military deadlock' of the Western Front as well. Given Germany's strengthening of the Hungarian position through reinforcements and other 'counter-preparations' such as diversionary manoeuvres in East Prussia, the reopening of the Dardanelles would be essential for the presently ill-equipped Russian army 'to produce serious results against Hungary' and hasten Germany's defeat.²⁹ *The Times*, on the other hand, adhered to the 'familiar maxim that in war blows should be concentrated upon the decisive point' which defined 'Westerner' thought. Though suspicious of such offensives outside the decisive theatre in Western Europe, it agreed the Dardanelles offensive contained 'that touch of imagination which has of late been

²⁶ 'The Attacks on Mr. Churchill', *Irish Times*, 29/4/1915, 4. See also 'Mr Churchill's Critics', *Burnley News*, 1/5/1915, 7; 'Divided Forces', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 30/4/1915, 4; 'Mr. Churchill', *Northampton Mercury*, 30/4/1915, 4.

²⁷ David French, *British Strategy and War Aims, 1914-1916* (London, 1986), xi-xii, 120-121; 'Allies, Rivals and Enemies: British Strategy and War aims During the First World War', in John Turner (ed.), *Britain and the First World War* (London, 1988), 24; *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, 1916-1918* (Oxford, 1995), 1-12.

²⁸ E.g. 'The Ancre Battle', *The Times*, 21/9/1916, 6; 'London Letter', *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 6/3/1917, 3; 'The New War Council', *Manchester Guardian*, 15/11/17, 4.

²⁹ A Student of War, 'The Dardanelles', *Manchester Guardian*, 23/2/1915, 10.

conspicuously lacking in the war' because of its value to both the Eastern, and especially Western, theatres.³⁰

The liberal *Burnley News* was, therefore, inaccurate in charging critics with a parochial, British-centric conception of Allied strategy, blind to the Dardanelles' value.³¹ Indeed, the *Morning Post*'s chief charge against Churchill in its 23 April leader, which initially sparked the controversy over the Gallipoli campaign, was that a combined-arms offensive against the Ottoman Empire had not been launched sooner. His failing was in not recognising what was immediately obvious to the press, that 'the Straits could only be forced with a joint naval and military expedition in concert.'³² Forcing the Dardanelles remained a desirable objective. As Repington declared a week before initiating the 'shells scandal', 'no one denies or can deny the importance of the military and political objects which we have in view' at Gallipoli.³³ Nor did proponents deny Gallipoli's subservience to the war in Europe. For the conservative *Daily Telegraph*, it was 'no minor operation of the war' precisely because its 'political and economic results', outlined above, meant that success at Gallipoli was 'bound to effect the whole course of the war in Europe'.³⁴ This was also true for the *Manchester Guardian*, whose editor, C.P. Scott, had been personally convinced of the 'far greater possibilities of the Eastern Front' by Churchill and the self-described 'Gallipolist' Lloyd George.³⁵ Against the 'doctrine of concentration' espoused by Westerner critics, the *Manchester Guardian* asserted that 'sound strategy' required 'attack[ing] the enemy not where his lines are strongest but where they are weaker.' The perhaps '100,000 or 150,000 men' needed for success at Gallipoli would, therefore, be 'more usefully employed' there than in Belgium.³⁶ Its value was not, however, 'separate from the operations in the Carpathians and in Flanders', but as 'the beginning of the rolling up of the German flank in Austria and Hungary.'³⁷ Thus, 'the whole case for this Dardanelles campaign' assumed that it would not 'weaken our defensive strength in Flanders'.³⁸

³⁰ 'The Attack on the Dardanelles', *The Times*, 22/2/1915, 9.

³¹ 'The Critics Answered', *Burnley News*, 8/5/1915, 7.

³² 'The Dardanelles Blunder', *Morning Post*, 23/4/1915, 6, quoted in Bell, *Dardanelles*, 155.

³³ 'Flanders and the Dardanelles', *The Times*, 7/5/1915, 6.

³⁴ 'New Phases of the War', *Daily Telegraph*, 27/4/1915, 8.

³⁵ C.P. Scott, diary entry for 1/10/1915, in Trevor Wilson (ed.), *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott, 1911-1928* (London, 1970), 140. See also the entry for 26/10/1915 at 149.

³⁶ 'The Outlook', *Manchester Guardian*, 3/5/1915, 6.

³⁷ 'A Critical Time', *Manchester Guardian*, 7/5/1915, 6.

³⁸ 'The Outlook', *Manchester Guardian*, 3/5/1915, 6.

Though the Gallipoli campaign continued into early 1916, the basic strategic disagreements were established by May 1915.³⁹ Both ‘Easterners’ and ‘Westerners’ within the press agreed that an Ottoman collapse carried tremendous value. Their disagreement was in whether this was feasible without jeopardising success in Europe. As it was ‘impossible to conduct two large wars at once’, a choice had to be made between whether the East or the West would take precedence.⁴⁰ Likewise, neither desired an Ottoman defeat for its own sake, but for its potentially war-changing contributions towards the war in Europe and ultimate victory over Britain’s chief enemy, Germany. Even at its most strategically viable, therefore, the war with the Ottoman Empire was subordinated to the Anglo-German conflict.

As ‘the only eastern scheme’ to carry such war-altering promises, according to Briton Cooper Busch,⁴¹ or even reasonable prospects of an Ottoman collapse, Gallipoli was an anomaly. As Matthew Hughes explains of the later Palestine campaign, however, ‘short of [General] Allenby marching his army hundreds of miles across Palestine, Syria and the Anatolian heartland to threaten Istanbul, Turkey was going to stay in the war.’⁴² However, obscured by the more tangible steps towards Germany’s military defeat was an additional, imperialist objective of the Dardanelles campaign: ‘the final overthrow of Germany’s designs in the Near East.’⁴³ For the press, this was the principal consideration of Britain’s Middle Eastern campaigns, most evident through the curious, albeit brief, advocacy of a grand Middle Eastern offensive by *The Times*’ military correspondent. On 24 November 1915, Repington relayed to Conservative leader Andrew Bonar Law his plans for an ‘active war of attack upon the whole of the Turkish-Syrian coasts from the Dardanelles to the Sinai desert inclusive’, requiring 500,000 troops and to be directed by Kitchener himself. The plan was much against his strategic instincts as a self-proclaimed ‘confirmed Westerner’ who ‘believe[d] that the decision of the war is to be sought on the principal fronts.’⁴⁴ He did not hold this conviction lightly. In January 1918, when he heard rumours that the ‘Versailles soldiers’ of the Allied

³⁹ For identical ‘Easterner’ arguments in Gallipoli’s favour near its end, see ‘Mr. Churchill and His Future’, *Observer*, 14/11/1915, 10; ‘The Situation in the East’, *Manchester Guardian*, 24/11/1915, 6; ‘The Pledge’, *Observer*, 19/12/1915, 12.

⁴⁰ ‘Awake?’, *Daily Mail*, 19/5/1915, 4.

⁴¹ Briton Cooper Busch, *Britain, India, and the Arabs, 1914-1921* (Berkeley, 1971), 116.

⁴² Hughes, *Allenby*, 40.

⁴³ “‘Blockade’ and Bombardment”, *Irish Times*, 22/2/1915, 4. See also ‘Can More be Done?’, *Observer*, 21/2/1915, 8; A Student of War, ‘The Dardanelles’, *Manchester Guardian*, 23/2/1915, 10; ‘The Dardanelles and After’, *The Times*, 5/3/1915, 9.

⁴⁴ Repington to Andrew Bonar Law, 24/11/1915, in A.J.A. Morris (ed.), *The Letters of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington CMG: Military Correspondent of the Times, 1903-1918* (Stroud, 1999), 241. For further examples of Repington’s ‘Westerner’ outlook, see ‘The German Losses’, *The Times*, 9/2/1916, 10; Repington to Henry Wickham Steed, 11/10/1916, in Morris (ed.), *Letters*, 259

Supreme War Council intended to redirect the Allied offensive towards the Ottoman Empire, Repington implored Geoffrey Dawson, editor of *The Times*, to use his paper to ‘stop these mad Eastern schemes’ by ‘attack[ing] the War Cabinet without mercy’ or allowing him free rein to do so himself.⁴⁵ When Dawson refused his request, Repington resigned as military correspondent, ending his 15-year career at *The Times*.⁴⁶ Repington believed, at least for a time, that an extensive offensive in the Middle East was necessary nonetheless for matters of imperial defence: ‘the German *Drang nach Osten* must be met somewhere’.⁴⁷ Before turning to press commentary on the Middle Eastern campaigns themselves, it is, therefore, necessary to explain the perceived challenge *Drang nach Osten* posed to the British Empire.

Germany’s *Drang nach Osten* and the British Empire

Despite its German rendering, *Drang nach Osten*’s first attested use was by a Polish author, Julian Klaczko, to describe Germany’s aggressive eastward expansion in his 1849 polemic, *Die deutschen Hegemonen* (The German Hegemony). This was typical of its future use, too, the expression appearing most frequently in non-German sources, especially those of Central and Eastern Europe. Accordingly, Torsten Leuschner suggests that *Drang nach Osten* was less an expression of actual German policy than an articulation of ‘a feeling of being threatened by Germany on the part of the latter’s Eastern neighbours... suggesting a permanent dichotomy of impulse-driven perpetrator and victim’.⁴⁸ The phrase served a similar function in Britain, where Harry Hanak suggests it had entered standard political jargon by 1914, referring to an historical mission of German eastward expansion towards the heart of the British Empire, India.⁴⁹

The Ottoman Empire had been a battleground for competing interests between Europe’s great powers for decades prior to the First World War.⁵⁰ For its part, Britain sought to keep the ‘sick man of Europe’ alive despite considerable domestic criticism, discussed last chapter, as a bulwark against Russian expansion towards India, the proverbial jewel of its empire.⁵¹ By 1907, Britain had neutralised the historic threats to Egypt and India through an entente with

⁴⁵ Repington to Dawson, 11/1/1918, in Morris (ed.), *Letters*, 273.

⁴⁶ Repington to Howard Corbett, 16/1/1918, in *ibid.*, 275-276.

⁴⁷ Repington to Bonar Law, 24/11/1915, in *ibid.*, 241.

⁴⁸ Torsten Leuschner, ‘The German *Drang nach Osten*: Linguistic Perspectives on Historical Stereotyping’, *German Life and Letters* 65:1 (2012), 96-100, quotation at 97.

⁴⁹ Hanak, *Great Britain & Austria-Hungary*, 104.

⁵⁰ See Kent (ed.), *Great Powers*.

⁵¹ For a comprehensive account of India’s pivotal place within British foreign policy during this period, see Sneha Mahajan, *British Foreign Policy, 1874-1914: The Role of India* (London, 2002).

France and Russia, sectioning off mutually-agreed-upon spheres of influence; at the same time, Germany emerged as Britain's chief rival in the region, whose expansion not only competed with the British Empire but, arguably, directly sought to supplant it.⁵²

The apparent goal of *Drang nach Osten* was the establishment of *Mitteleuropa*. As a major topic of intellectual and political debate in Germany since the turn of the nineteenth century, the term denoted numerous different and often contradictory political projects. For liberals like Friedrich List, it meant a unified free-trade zone under German dominance (a *mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftszone*); for socialists like Rosa Luxemburg, it was an alternative to chauvinist nationalism which, through the absorption of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, promised a new Central European communist federation.⁵³ Its geographic boundaries were similarly contested. In its most conservative interpretation, *Mitteleuropa* referred to only a small region around the German states. For others, it extended to Estonia in the north and Constantinople in the south.⁵⁴ However, it was its use by German imperialists in connection with *Weltpolitik* that, alone, captured Britain's attention. For the press, *Mitteleuropa* was synonymous with the formation of a continuous empire stretching 'from Berlin to Baghdad'. Hence, Friedrich Naumann's book *Mitteleuropa*, which bore only a superficial connection to the imperialist interpretation,⁵⁵ was immediately misread as advocating the German Empire's expansion 'from Hamburg to the Persian Gulf'. When made available in English translation in 1916, the *Manchester Guardian* warned readers that the project Nauman supposedly advocated, if successful, 'would make Germany beyond all comparison the dominant Power of the world.'⁵⁶

German encroachment into the East was principally associated with Deutsche Bank's Berlin-Baghdad Railway. Its plans were more ambitious than its name suggests, extending

⁵² See John Albert White, *Transition to Global Rivalry: Alliance, Diplomacy and the Quadruple Entente, 1895-1907* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁵³ Bo Stråth, 'Mitteleuropa: From List to Naumann', *European Journal of Social Theory* 11:2 (2008), 172-178; Gerard Delanty, 'The Resonance of Mitteleuropa: A Habsburg Myth or Antipolitics?', *Theory, Culture & Society* 13:4 (1996), 99. Delanty admits that Luxemburg's was a minority interpretation, but it nonetheless emphasises the term's contested nature within German discourse.

⁵⁴ See Hans-Dietrich Schultz and Wolfgang Natter, 'Imagining Mitteleuropa: Conceptualising of "its" Space in and Outside German Geography', *European Review of history—Revue européenne d'histoire* 10:2 (2003); Patricia Chiantera-Stutte, 'Space, *Großraum* and Mitteleuropa in Some Debates of the Early Twentieth Century', *European Journal of Social Theory* 11:2 (2008), 88-193. As an ironic testament to its geographic indeterminacy, *Mitteleuropa* was appropriated by Eastern European countries in the 1980s to define a region which explicitly excluded Germany: Delanty, 'Resonance of Mitteleuropa', 95, 100-104; Rainer Eisfeld, 'Mitteleuropa in Historical and Contemporary Perspective', *German Politics & Society* 28 (1993), 42-43.

⁵⁵ Stråth, 'Mitteleuropa', 181-183. For one interpretation of Naumann as a 'modern, liberal and more humane' nationalist, see Moshe Zimmermann, 'A Road Not Taken – Friedrich Naumann's Attempt at a Modern German Nationalism', *Journal of Contemporary History* 17:4 (1982), 689-708.

⁵⁶ 'A German Europe' *Manchester Guardian*, 5/8/1916, 6. See also 'Magyar and Slav', *Manchester Guardian*, 26/8/1916, 6; 'The Decay of Austria', *Daily Telegraph*, 17/6/1916, 8.

from Hamburg, via Berlin and Baghdad, to the ports of Basra on the Persian Gulf.⁵⁷ British officials had long recognised the value of this route. In 1902, Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne advocated financing the Berlin-Baghdad Railway's construction with British funds so as to place the Baghdad Railway under British control in order to prevent Russian, rather than German, expansion towards India. Lansdowne's proposal was ultimately rejected by Arthur Balfour's cabinet on 22 April 1903 due to significant backlash from Viceroy of India Lord Curzon and several leading newspapers, grounded largely in suspicions of German intentions.⁵⁸ These were well-founded. In *Die Bagdadbahn*, published in 1911 to promote the Berlin-Baghdad Railway as well as general German economic investment in the Ottoman Empire, Paul Rohrbach asserted that Germany's efforts to gain influence over the Porte through such commercial ventures had 'no other object but the desire to effect an insurance against the danger of a war with England.' If Germany could secure an Ottoman attack on Egypt, it 'would mean for England not only the end of her dominion over the Suez Canal, and of her connections with India and the Far East, but would probably entail the loss also of her possessions in Central and East Africa.'⁵⁹ These were not fringe views. Sean McMeekin, echoing Fritz Fischer before him, places the Berlin-Baghdad Railway at the centre of German efforts to become a 'world power' at Britain's expense, for which he considers *Die Bagdadbahn* a 'classic pan-German primer'.⁶⁰

Everyman editor Charles Saroléa also saw Rohrbach as 'one of the most authoritative exponents of German foreign policy'.⁶¹ He therefore found in Rohrbach's book an official admission that the Berlin-Baghdad Railway was but a vehicle for Germany's *Drang nach Osten*, a 'gigantic scheme of commercial and political absorption of three empires, from the Upper Danube to the Persian Gulf' into an expansive German Empire which threatened 'the Imperial future of Britain' by providing Germany access to both India and Egypt. Thus, Saroléa expected that its completion would cause a conflict which, because of the many competing interests in the Ottoman Empire, 'must needs involve all the European powers, must force the whole Eastern Question to a crisis, and, once begun, cannot be terminated until the map of Europe and Asia shall be reconstructed.' In short, he predicted the outbreak of a general

⁵⁷ Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 34, 38.

⁵⁸ White, *Transition to Global Rivalry*, 18-24; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London, 1980), 260-262.

⁵⁹ Paul Rohrbach, *Die Bagdadbahn* (Berlin, 1911), 18-19, quoted in Charles Saroléa, *The Anglo-German Problem* (London, 1912), 277-278.

⁶⁰ McMeekin, *Berlin-Baghdad Express*, 48; Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions: German Policies from 1911 to 1914*, trans. Marian Jackson, (New York, 1975), 230-258.

⁶¹ Saroléa, *Anglo-German Problem*, 277.

European war beginning not in Sarajevo but in Baghdad.⁶² Rohrbach's remarks were also reported with concern in several newspapers and, in March 1911, brought before Parliament by Conservative MP Lawrence Dundas. For Dundas, the Berlin-Baghdad Railway's clearly stated challenge to the British Empire made it imperative for officials 'to do what they could to counter the advance of German influence... in the regions where our own interests were of paramount importance—the region south of Baghdad.'⁶³ For the press, this was also the guiding principle behind Britain's four-year-long military engagement with the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East in the First World War.

The Middle Eastern Campaigns

The Ottoman Empire's entry into the war as an apparent German vassal state, outlined in Chapter One, was considered a remarkable step forward in the *Mitteleuropa* project. It was believed that all Ottoman military activity in the East was directed by Germany towards its completion. The attack on Suez in January 1915 was attributed to 'the political prophets of Germany's all-world policy [*Weltpolitik*]', doubtless in reference to Rohrbach and Friedrich Bernhardt, another well-known Pan-German figure who advocated an Ottoman-German alliance for precisely this purpose.⁶⁴ Ottoman forces invading Persia were also 'undoubtedly acting under German instigation', with the apparent purpose of 'bringing the area of the war a little nearer Afghanistan and India, which is one of her [Germany's] objects.'⁶⁵ In reality, Germany exercised no such control over Ottoman military strategy, which was dictated nearly exclusively by Enver, whom Edward Erickson charges with the often-poor performance of the Ottoman Army for his 'amateurish strategic vision' and 'continual insistence on offensive operations and optimistic plans.'⁶⁶ Ottoman soldiers were, nonetheless, considered unwilling servants of German imperialism, 'shamelessly sacrificed ... to help realise Germany's dream of an empire stretching from the Baltic to the Persian Gulf.'⁶⁷

⁶² Saroléa, *Anglo-German Problem*, 252-255, quotations at 252.

⁶³ E.g. 'Germany & the Baghdad Railway', *Manchester Guardian*, 10/6/1912, 6; R. Said-Ruete, Letter, 'The Gulf section of the Baghdad Railway', *The Times*, 27/5/1913, 7; 'Egypt and Syria', *Daily Telegraph*, 2/9/1913, 12. Dundas' remarks are recorded in *The Times*, 24/3/1911, 12.

⁶⁴ Friedrich von Bernhardt, *Germany and the Next War*, trans. Allen H. Powles, (London, 1914), 95. On Bernhardt's notoriety, see Gregory Moore, 'The Super-Hun and the Super-State: Allied Propaganda and German Philosophy during the First World War', *German Life and Letters*, 54:4 (2001), 310-311.

⁶⁵ Lovat Fraser, 'German Schemes in Persia', *Daily Mail*, 18/1/1915, 4.

⁶⁶ Erickson, *Ordered to Die*, 213-215. On Enver's uncompromising relationship with his German colleagues, see Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire*, ch. 3.

⁶⁷ 'The Fall of Bagdad', *Manchester Evening News*, 12/3/1917, 4.

At the same time, however, this presented British forces with an opportunity to thwart Germany's designs in the East through military action. For the press, this was the principal value of Britain's capture of Basra on 21 November 1914. *The Times* admitted that it did 'not quite understand the motive of this particular campaign' from a purely military perspective beyond being a merely diversionary exercise to relieve pressure on Russian forces in Transcaucasia and assisting in the defence of the Suez Canal.⁶⁸ This was hardly a cause for much celebration since the Ottoman threat to Suez was routinely, and not unreasonably, dismissed at this time, as discussed previously. More important was Basra's place within *Mitteleuropa*. As the *Scotsman* reminded its readers, Basra was not only 'the chief Ottoman port and emporium of the lower Euphrates' but also 'the designated terminus of that much-discussed German enterprise, the Baghdad Railway' designed 'with the object of ousting our commerce and influence from the Middle East.'⁶⁹ From this imperial perspective, *The Times* heralded news of Basra's capture as a 'stirring announcement' which would be received with much regret in Berlin: 'It means that the dreams and schemes of twenty years, the ripening fruits of the "world-policy" which began when the Kaiser paid his memorable visit to Abdul Hamid, have crumbled to dust and ashes.'⁷⁰

It was expected that success at Basra would secure and even expand Britain's imperial reach in the region by increasing its 'prestige'. As French explains, 'prestige' referred to the belief that Britain's imperial position was based on Britons being perceived as 'morally, racially and military superior to those they governed'.⁷¹ Lovat Fraser, former editor of *The Times of India*, agreed that the popular view of the British Raj in 1911, 'visible in every grade of society, from the highest to the lowest', was one held together 'by bayonets rather than by the merits of our rule.'⁷² Thus, the *Times*' 'chief consideration' was the potential for the exemplary performance of Indian Expeditionary Force 'D' in the operation to rouse public opinion in India in support of the war. Additionally, as a demonstration of British military power, Basra would appeal more to an Eastern audience than 'vague stories of distant conflicts' in Europe for its renown 'in the annals of the East'.⁷³ 'From the point of view of prestige as affecting Afghanistan, the North-West Frontier hill tribes, and others,' the *Edinburgh Evening*

⁶⁸ 'War in Many Lands', *The Times*, 21/11/1914, 9. See also A Student of War, 'The War with Turkey', *Manchester Guardian*, 24/11/1914, 8.

⁶⁹ *Scotsman*, 24/11/1914, 4. This point was reiterated by its military correspondent: 'The Military Situation', *Scotsman*, 25/11/1914, 7.

⁷⁰ 'Main Factors in the War', *The Times*, 24/11/1914, 9. See also 'The Baghdad Railway', *Irish Times*, 30/11/1914, 6.

⁷¹ French, 'Dardanelles, Mecca, Kut', 57.

⁷² Lovat Fraser, *India Under Curzon and After* (London, 1911), 455-456.

⁷³ 'Main Factors in the War', *The Times*, 24/11/1914, 9.

News declared the victory at Basra ‘essential.’⁷⁴ The *Daily Telegraph* expected this increase in prestige to be permanent. While it was inevitable that Britain would suffer some reverses in the future, this would do little to alter its image in ‘Oriental lands’ where ‘it is the first hard hit which counts.’ For the *Telegraph*, the Ottoman Empire’s belligerence was a welcome opportunity for expanding British imperial influence throughout the East. Far from lamenting the recent expansion of *Mitteleuropa*, the paper actually found ‘reason for thankfulness that the Porte succumbed to the machinations of Germany’s agents.’⁷⁵

These celebrations were premature. Humiliating defeats at Gallipoli and, most especially, Kut, where General Charles Townshend was captured along with approximately 10,000 predominantly British-Indian troops after a 143-day-long siege, had supposedly shattered Britain’s prestige. Officials believed that further operations in the Middle East were necessary to atone for these failures and stave off potential rebellion from Muslim subjects, a particular concern given the Ottoman Sultan’s proclamation of jihad in November 1914.⁷⁶ Newspapers were equally concerned about Britain’s lost prestige.⁷⁷ However, their continued comparisons between the Palestine Campaign and the Crusades,⁷⁸ despite numerous D Notices stressing the danger such ‘references which might be interpreted as implying that this is a war of Christian versus Moslem’ could cause for Britain’s positions in India and Egypt, suggests that they gave much less credence to fears of a Muslim revolt.⁷⁹ More important for the press was the strength these failures supposedly gave to the *Drang nach Osten*. Prestige was a zero-sum game; as the *Irish Times* explained, it was not simply lost after Gallipoli, but ‘transferred to Germany.’ Thus, victory at Baghdad provided more than a general demonstration to the Eastern world of the martial prowess upon which Britain’s authority supposedly lay. It also offered ‘proof to all Asia that Germany’s pretensions were fraudulent, that she cannot now keep faith with any of her dupes, that she is dragging the Turkish Empire to certain downfall. British-Indians, not Turco-Teutons, now occupy Bagdad, and they have come to stay.’⁸⁰

⁷⁴ ‘British Exploits’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 24/11/1914, 4.

⁷⁵ ‘Turkey’s Error’, *Daily Telegraph*, 25/11/1915, 8.

⁷⁶ French, ‘Dardanelles, Mecca and Kut’, 47-50. For a detailed exploration of British officers’ concerns about maintaining prestige among their Indian soldiers, see Gardner, ‘British Prestige’.
see also, more recently, Gardner, ‘British Prestige’.

⁷⁷ Atia, *World War I in Mesopotamia*, 145-147; Fantauzzo, ‘Finest Feats’, 69-76.

⁷⁸ Bar-Yosef, ‘Last Crusade’, 88-89; James Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East: Morale and Military Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-1918* (London, 2014), 67-72; Fantauzzo, ‘Finest Feats’, 70-72.

⁷⁹ TNA:PRO HO319/43, D186, 13/3/1915. See also D122, 24/12/1914; D607, 15/11/1917; D727, 5/11/1918, in Wilkinson, *Secrecy*, 502, 506, 507.

⁸⁰ ‘The Fall of Bagdad’, *Irish Times*, 12/3/1917, 4.



Figure 1: "A Place in the Sun", *Western Mail*, 13/3/1917, 4.

Caption reads:

WILHELM: Tell me, Mehmed, that this is not true—that it is but a mirage in the desert!

SULTAN OF TURKEY: Allah is great! Alas! All Highest, there is no mirage about that flag.

This was not the only thread of press discussion, but neither was it simply one point among many, as Fantauzzo's brief paragraph suggests. As the titular terminus of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, the city's connections with German imperialism were well-known. Its historical splendour, though apparently undying in the East as the former global centre of learning during the Abbasid Caliphate, had declined considerably over time in the West. Even travellers drawn to the region for its romantic past were disappointed to discover its 'barbarous' contemporary state.⁸¹ According to one *Daily Mail* contributor, it was only because of its 'association with German schemes of conquest by railway' that Baghdad re-entered popular consciousness.⁸² Like most papers examined here, the *Mail* identified the significant reverse to Germany's *Drang nach Osten* as the most salient victory. Chandrika Kaul highlights the importance of headlines in the *Mail's* presentation, which 'introduced the topic and summed up its main features' for quick digestion by the reader.⁸³ For its editorial on Britain's capture

⁸¹ Nadia Atia, 'A Relic of its Own Past: Mesopotamia in the British Imagination, 1900-1914', *Memory Studies*, 3:3 (2010), 232-241.

⁸² One Who Knows It, 'In the City of Baghdad', *Daily Mail*, 12/3/1917, 4.

⁸³ Kaul, *Reporting the Raj*, 74-75.

of Baghdad, these were: ‘Maude in Baghdad. A heavy blow to German ambitions.’⁸⁴ A cartoon published in Cardiff’s *Western Mail* the following day (see figure 1) showed this point visually. Titled “‘A Place in the Sun’”, a quotation from Bernhard von Bülow’s famous articulation of *Weltpolitik* as Foreign Minister in 1897, it depicted Kaiser Wilhelm II looking aghast at the Union Flag raised over Baghdad, the plans for the ‘Great Baghdad Railway Scheme’ in hand and the ‘Germanisation of Asia’ discarded by his feet. The cartoon suggested that, by capturing the city, British forces had frustrated all these ambitions in one fell swoop. The lone reference to the Ottoman Empire was the presence of Sultan Mehmet V, who appeared only to assure the Kaiser that he was not witnessing a mirage.⁸⁵

German imperialism also featured prominently in other topics of discussion., Baghdad was steeped in historical memory, its ‘very name... open[ing] the portals of Eastern fancy and romance.’⁸⁶ It was prominently associated with the *Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, a text so widely circulated in Europe that its influence upon western literature is, according to Robert Irwin, akin to that of the Bible.⁸⁷ The *Scotsman* took pride that it would be Britain, not Germany, that would restore the ‘city of the “Arabian Nights”’ to its former glory and fully realise its commercial potential. By freeing Baghdad from supposed German suzerainty, ‘Germany will not be permitted to take, as she had planned to do, this development under her care. With her troops and Generals her influence is ebbing out of Asia.’⁸⁸ More interesting was the *Evening Express*’ analysis of Baghdad’s place within the Allies’ ‘just war’. It was for ‘his own selfish and ambitious aims... and particularly the Bagdad Railway project’ that the Kaiser had, since the 1890s, refused to condemn Armenian massacres. As shown last chapter, Germany’s alleged complicity in the Armenian Genocide was used to further claims that the Allies were fighting a ‘just war’ against Germany. At Baghdad, too, British forces were avenging the Armenians not only by ‘dealing a deadly blow at the foulest system of misgovernment to be found anywhere to-day’, the Ottoman Empire, but by repudiating the callous indifference to human suffering responsible for Germany’s present influence in Constantinople. Dismantling Germany’s *Mitteleuropa* scheme, therefore, went beyond ‘maintaining the “prestige” of Great Britain in the East’; it was also a moral imperative.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ ‘Maude in Baghdad’, *Daily Mail*, 12/3/1917, 4.

⁸⁵ “‘A Place in the Sun’”, *Western Mail*, 13/3/1917, 4.

⁸⁶ ‘Fall of Baghdad’, *Daily Telegraph*, 12/3/1917, 8.

⁸⁷ Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, 2nd ed., (New York, 2005), 237.

⁸⁸ *Scotsman*, 12/3/1917, 4.

⁸⁹ ‘Sweeping Onward’, *Evening Express*, 10/3/1917, 2.

Uniting this commentary was a conviction that the ‘heaviest blow which Turkey has received during the war’ would, the *Northampton Mercury* stressed, be felt ‘scarcely less in Berlin than in Constantinople.’⁹⁰ This continued to motivate press interest in the Middle Eastern campaigns until their conclusion, as Germany’s challenge to British imperialism in the East was not expelled wholesale by the capture of Baghdad. The *Rochdale Observer* warned against such complacency, reminding readers that ‘the German menace’ was not concentrated solely in Baghdad. Through the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, Germany also sought to encompass all lands in between. Baghdad was, in this respect, the beginning rather than the end of the proxy-war in the Middle East. The paper encouraged further operations under the principle that ‘neither Baghdad nor a single square mile of the desert between the city and the head of the Persian Gulf ought ever again to be surrendered to Turkish control now that the German plot to strike at India through Turkey in Asia has been revealed.’⁹¹ Thus, the victory in Palestine later that month ‘blasted the German hopes in that region’ while Damascus was claimed in October 1918 not ‘because we want it for ourselves’ but because ‘it was one of the stages of the German dream of advance towards the dominion’ of the Near East.⁹²

The Ottoman Empire and the ‘Great European War’

Establishing *Mitteleuropa* was considered Germany’s central ambition not only in the East. As contemporary historian George Prothero explained in 1916, it was also the ‘essential object’ of Germany’s entire military operations:

the attack on France and Russia was but a preliminary step, masking the real aim. This could not be attained without the overthrow of those Powers, but such a victory would be, after all, only a means to an end. The frontiers on either hand once secured, the forces of Germany – military, economical, and financial – could, without let or hindrance, flood the Nearer and Middle East. From this point of vantage, with enormously increased resources and heightened prestige, the final challenge might safely be issued to Great Britain for the empire of the world.⁹³

⁹⁰ ‘What Bagdad Means’, *Northampton Mercury*, 16/3/1917, 5.

⁹¹ ‘Notes and Comments’, *Rochdale Observer*, 14/3/1917, 2.

⁹² ‘The Victory in Palestine’, *The Times*, 30/3/1917, 7; ‘Damascus and the Kaiser’, *Daily Mail*, 3/10/1918, 2.

⁹³ G.W. Prothero, *German Policy Before the War* (New York, 1916), 09-111.



Figure 2: 'The Road to India', *Daily Mail*, 11/10/1915, 5.

Prothero's book was celebrated by Lovat Fraser for highlighting 'the fundamental fact that the ultimate object for which Germany went to war was *to gain control of the Near and Middle East*'.⁹⁴ There was, however, little novel in this observation. The *Irish Times* observed that there was 'no secret of these grandiose aims of German strategy', which had been openly espoused by Rohrbach and others before the war, as noted above. 'They were the avowed aims of her diplomacy in peace. They are, of necessity, the aims of her arms in war.'⁹⁵

Thus, military events elsewhere were viewed in similar terms. For example, the *Daily Mail* explained the Central Powers' invasion of Serbia in October 1915 through a map of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway's route, titled 'The Road to India' (figure 2), heralded by Fraser as a 'gallant attempt' to 'explain Germany's war aims to the populace'.⁹⁶ Bold borders around Germany and Austria Hungary, on the one side, and Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, on the other, presented the Central Powers as a single political unit, with Serbia as the missing link in

⁹⁴ Lovat Fraser, 'How to Shorten the War', *Daily Mail*, 4/9/1916, 4; original emphasis.

⁹⁵ 'Bremen to Baghdad', *Irish Times*, 9/10/1915, 4.

⁹⁶ Lovat Fraser, 'How to Shorten the War', *Daily Mail*, 4/9/1916, 4

Germany's *Mitteleuropa* scheme and its path 'to Suez & India'.⁹⁷ The *Irish Times* put the warning implicit in this map more directly: Serbia's defeat would amount to 'the extension of German supremacy from Hamburg to Bagdad, an attack on Egypt, the disruption of India – in short, the dissolution of the British Empire.'⁹⁸

Since *Mitteleuropa* was considered but a precursor to a future war for India and Egypt, it was obviously imperative for British imperial interests that it be destroyed. The *Manchester Guardian* accordingly criticised Wilson's 'Peace Note' for failing to appreciate 'what Germany's Eastern ambitions really mean.'⁹⁹ Following the US entry into the war in April 1916, Wilson rebuked other calls for negotiated peace on the same grounds. Addressing the American Federation of Labor in November 1917, Wilson noted that one only needed to consult a map to see 'the bulk of German power inserted into the heart of the world. If she can keep that, she has kept all that her dreams contemplated when the war began.'¹⁰⁰ The *Daily Mail*, who provided just such a map two years earlier, reported with great satisfaction that Americans were finally learning that 'Belgium might be freed and Alsace-Lorraine restored and still the Allies would have lost the war ... the political and economic ambitions of Germany in the Near and Middle East are... the kernel of the war.'¹⁰¹ The Western Front was, in this respect, a sideshow to the true question of the war: whether Britain or Germany would attain mastery of the East. It was a chiefly imperialist enterprise in which the Ottoman Empire played a central role, hitherto unappreciated by later historians, although, once again, solely through its perceived subservience to Germany.

The Ottoman Empire's centrality to press conceptions of the First World War reflected the press' faithful adherence to the 'ideology of empire'.¹⁰² Within the Conservative press, the influence of Alfred Milner, the former South African colonial administrator and 'embodiment of right-wing imperialism',¹⁰³ loomed large. James Startt finds Milner's influence upon *The Times*' editor especially 'difficult to overstate'. During his time in the South African Civil Service, Dawson belonged to Milner's famous 'kindergarten', where Milner's ideas about

⁹⁷ 'The Road to India', *Daily Mail*, 11/10/1915, 5.

⁹⁸ 'The New Phase', *Irish Times*, 12/10/1915, 4.

⁹⁹ 'The Meaning of the Note', *Manchester Guardian*, 27/12/1916, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Woodrow Wilson to the American Federation of Labor in Buffalo, New York, 12/11/1917, quoted in E.M. Earle, *Turkey, The Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway: A Study in Imperialism* (New York, 1966 [1923]), 292. See also Wilson's 'Flag Day' address, 14/6/1917, quoted in Earle, *Great Powers*, 291, and Fraser's similar criticisms of Lansdowne's controversial 'peace letter': Lovat Fraser, 'Why Offer Buns to a Python?', *Daily Mail*, 10/2/1917, 2.

¹⁰¹ 'America Learning', *Daily Mail*, 14/11/1917, 2.

¹⁰² For useful discussions, see Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire*.

¹⁰³ Wilson (ed.), *Political Diaries of C.P. Scott*, 26.

‘imperial consolidation, and the mission of Empire in world affairs’ were imparted upon him.¹⁰⁴ Undertaking military action in the Middle East to thwart Germany’s *Drang nach Osten* was a natural extension of Milner’s insistence that Britain’s ‘Dependent Empire’, such as India, be protected from any potential rivals.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Nigel Keohane suggests that, after 1916, many Conservative politicians came to support such operations not only because they had become dissatisfied with progress in Western Europe after the breakthrough promised by offensives like the Somme Offensive failed to materialise, but also from their belief in ‘Milnerite imperialism’.¹⁰⁶ Support for these Eastern ventures was not an exclusively right-wing phenomenon, however. As noted above, the liberal *Manchester Guardian* was perhaps the most fervent advocate for the East’s importance. Kaul shows that concern for India was widespread within the press, regardless of political affiliation.¹⁰⁷

The East’s primacy was also recognised by anti-imperialist critics like H.N. Brailsford, a prominent socialist journalist and leading member of the anti-war Union of Democratic Control (UDC).¹⁰⁸ In his 1916 pamphlet, *Turkey and the Roads to the East*, published by the UDC, he observed that:

as each month passes, the Eastern purposes, alike of the Entente and of the Central Empires, assume an overwhelming relative importance among the many issues of the war... We are less obsessed by the East than are Russia and Germany, but even to us the campaigns round Salonica and in Mesopotamia seem vital, because they touch “the road to India.”¹⁰⁹

Unlike his imperialist colleagues, Brailsford did not share these concerns. F.M. Leventhal notes that Brailsford’s anti-imperialism rendered him strangely sympathetic to Germany’s *Weltpolitik*, believing that ‘as long as imperialism was the name of the game, Germany had a right to be included among the players.’¹¹⁰ It was to the East’s primacy, however, that he attributed the war’s unfortunate and, supposedly, unnecessary prolongation. If the war were exclusively, or even primarily, about Western Europe, Brailsford believed that a reasonably

¹⁰⁴ Startt, *Journalists for Empire*, 28. See also John Evelyn Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (London, 1955), 35-46.

¹⁰⁵ J. Lee Thompson, *A Wider Patriotism: Alfred Milner and the British Empire* (London, 2007), 178-179.

¹⁰⁶ Nigel Keohane, *The Party of Patriotism: The Conservative Party and the First World War* (Farnham, 2010), 34-35.

¹⁰⁷ Kaul, *Reporting the Raj*, 54-95. On the *Manchester Guardian*, see 69-72.

¹⁰⁸ For his anti-war activity, see F.M. Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter: H.N. Brailsford and his World* (Oxford, 1985), 123-146.

¹⁰⁹ H.N. Brailsford, *Turkey and the Roads to the East* (London, 1916), 3.

¹¹⁰ Leventhal, *Last Dissenter*, 132-133.

amicable conclusion could be found ‘to-morrow’. Rather, ‘it is in the East that all is fluid and uncertain.’¹¹¹

Whether those outside the press shared this imperialist interpretation is doubtful. The *Manchester Guardian* decried the ‘apparent indifference of English people to our Eastern campaigns’, noting that ‘public opinion is in need of education on British Imperial interests in Asia.’¹¹² Though the public had apparently shown great interest in the fate of the besieged soldiers at Kut-al-Amara, even at the expense of the German Offensive at Verdun, this was supposedly atypical, reflecting the ‘dramatic interest which always belongs to a comparatively small beleaguered force holding out against heavy odds’ rather than an appreciation for Mesopotamia’s significance.¹¹³ Attempts to provide this instruction were apparently unsuccessful. As late as September 1918, after nearly four years of fighting in the Middle East, *The Times* claimed that the public was still ‘far from understanding’ the Palestine campaign’s relevance and found it necessary to spend nearly 600 words outlining it again at length. Though subordinate to the principal task of defeating Germany in Europe, such Eastern ventures were necessary for ‘the future security of our position in the East’.¹¹⁴

These papers offered no evidence for these assertions, making it difficult to judge the reasonableness of their comments on public opinion. Given, however, that the press usually credited itself with the ability to directly mould public attitudes,¹¹⁵ their atypical observations merit some consideration. The cause of this apparent indifference was disputed. The *Manchester Guardian* charged the War Office with deliberately limiting news from Mesopotamia, supposedly fearing that it would divert public attention from the Western Front. The ‘average Englishman’ was assumed to possess such ‘romantic and historical fascination’ with the region that any genuine lack of interest was inexplicable.¹¹⁶ Fraser felt that the *Daily Mail*’s above effort to explain the Berlin-Baghdad Railway’s importance had been similarly frustrated by public rebukes from Home Secretary Sir John Simon in the House of Commons.¹¹⁷ More likely was *The Times*’ suggestion that a popular preoccupation with Western Europe led

¹¹¹ Brailsford, *Turkey*, 3-4.

¹¹² ‘British Interests in the East’, *Manchester Guardian*, 21/3/1916, 4. See also ‘The War with Turkey’, *Manchester Guardian*, 11/4/1916, 6.

¹¹³ ‘Verdun and Kut’, *Irish Times*, 12/4/1916, 4. See also ‘The War in the East and West’, *The Times*, 14/2/1916, 9.

¹¹⁴ ‘The Victory in Palestine’, *The Times*, 21/9/1918, 7.

¹¹⁵ Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 1996), 87-97.

¹¹⁶ ‘The Veil of Palestine’, *Manchester Guardian*, 7/9/1917, 4.

¹¹⁷ Lovat Fraser, ‘How to Shorten the War’, *Daily Mail*, 4/9/1916, 4. For the *Mail*’s initial response, see ‘A Lawyer at War’, *Daily Mail*, 1/12/1915, 4; ‘Sir John Simon Overdoes It’, *Daily Mail*, 1/12/1915, 5.

the public to ignore events elsewhere. It commended the ‘sound general instinct of our people’ to ‘translate all these victories over Germany’s allies into the degree in which they weaken Germany’. Apparently lost on the public was the great meaning that newspapers’ Germano-centric interpretations, seen throughout this thesis, gave to the war’s Eastern events. The press was not simply presenting otherwise uninteresting news items in a manner more appealing to their readers. Stories of Ottoman chivalry and alleged German complicity in their atrocities contained significant implications for the perceived righteousness of the UK’s war against Germany, as did its supposed dominance in Constantinople for the necessity of defeating Germany, by proxy, in the East. By apparently dismissing the Eastern campaigns as irrelevant and harmful diversions from the Western Front, *The Times* charged the public with an overly parochial understanding of the First World War which overlooked the Ottoman Empire’s important place within it.¹¹⁸

* * *

The press ascribed campaigns against the Ottoman Empire great importance. If fully defeated, as promised by the Gallipoli campaign, profound consequences were expected for the war in Europe. With Russia adequately supplied through the Dardanelles and the Balkan States on the Allied side, final victory over Germany would come swiftly. Militarily dubious Middle Eastern campaigns were also considered highly significant for thwarting Germany’s *Drang nach Osten*, an historic mission of Eastward expansion designed at supplanting Britain as the ‘empire of the world’. Considered Germany’s central war aim, this placed the East – and the Ottoman Empire – at the heart of the conflict. It was, as the *Daily Mail* put it, the ‘kernel of the war.’ The preferred contemporary title for the conflict, the ‘Great European War’, implied more than the intra-European ‘civil war’ suggested by Hew Strachan.¹¹⁹ Neither, however, was press interest in the war beyond Europe an acknowledgement that the conflict was a ‘world war’, as recently claimed by Fantauzzo.¹²⁰ Where they were not believed to directly affect the balance in Europe, military operations in the region were seen as part an imperial conflict between European powers undertaken for the same reason that Asquith had justified fighting in Europe: to secure Britain’s pre-eminence among the Great Powers.¹²¹ If the press’ characterisation of the war

¹¹⁸ ‘The Victory in Palestine’, *The Times*, 21/9/1918, 7.

¹¹⁹ Strachan, ‘Global War’, 6.

¹²⁰ Fantauzzo, ‘Finest Feats’, 85.

¹²¹ Cassar, *Asquith*, 70.

was much less geographically Eurocentric than generally assumed, it remained thoroughly Germano-centric. As with previous chapters, the Ottoman Empire was important not for its own sake, but for its place within an expansive and imperialist interpretation of the Anglo-German conflict.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that the wartime UK press viewed the Ottoman Empire as an extension of Britain's primary enemy, Germany. Discussions of the political developments responsible for its entry into the war, its soldiers' supposedly 'gentlemanly' conduct, its wartime atrocities, and the strategic value of defeating the Ottoman Empire militarily were all remarkably Germano-centric. These were not simply cynical attempts to relate otherwise uninteresting news from a peripheral theatre to more important events in Europe, however. As this thesis has also shown, such Germano-centric discussions gave the Ottoman Empire tremendous importance within the press' broader conception of the First World War.

Chapter One argued for the sincerity of press claims that the Ottoman Empire entered the war as an effective vassal of Germany. Though such assertions have been recognised previously, their demonstrable falsehood has prevented historians from viewing them as anything more than deliberately deceitful propaganda or articulations of traditional racial prejudices regarding the necessary power imbalance between supposedly 'backward Orientals' and a 'superior' European power. Though such Orientalism was certainly present, it has received undue primacy, masking the more complex reasoning behind these claims, evident through the hitherto unexamined press reporting during the Ottoman Empire's months of 'pseudo-neutrality' before its intervention in late-October 1914. Apparent inconsistencies in Ottoman foreign policy following the July Crisis, whereby increasingly pro-German actions were accompanied by repeated public affirmations of neutrality, suggested to contemporaries a factional dispute within the Porte between a pro-German 'war party', backed by German gold and intrigue, against the more numerous and 'enlightened' statesmen in the 'peace party'. Though no such struggle against German domination in Constantinople actually took place, it was an understandable (if misguided) inference from the available information, situated within broader concerns over German propaganda in neutral nations and bolstered by the apparent irrationality of an Ottoman intervention. It was, additionally, an interpretation much encouraged by Ottoman statesmen themselves. Consequently, the Ottoman fleet's unprovoked attack on Russia on 29 October 1914 signalled to the press that the 'war party' had finally won this factional struggle. With all anti-German voices effectively expelled from Constantinople, Germany's political subjugation of the Ottoman Empire was believed to be complete.

With the strength of the press' belief in this narrative of German political domination, despite its falsehood, now recognised, its previously dismissed ubiquity within press commentary on wartime events in the East, discussed in Chapters Two and Three, was properly

situated within a broader Germano-centric picture of the Ottoman Empire. Chapter Two showed that praise for the ‘clean-fighting Turk’ served primarily to highlight German ‘barbarity’ by contrast. This does not, alone, account for the apparently widespread chivalrous regard for the Ottoman foe despite its widely-documented atrocities towards Armenians and Allied prisoners. The narrative’s origin within first-hand testimonies of rank-and-file soldiers from Gallipoli, rather than the nineteenth-century Turcophilism previously assumed, was the more likely explanation, given the well-known reverence attached to the ‘soldier’s story’ in the UK, both during and after the war, as offering the definitive, and unimpeachable, account. Yet, the frequent contrast between the ‘clean-fighting Turk’, who upheld ‘civilised’ British values of athleticism on the battlefield, and the ‘barbarous’ German ‘Hun’ in soldiers’ accounts, reproduced in the press, suggest that its primary significance was in reinforcing popular convictions that the UK was fighting a ‘just war’ against Germany. This was seen also in press discussions of Ottoman atrocities. Belief in Germany’s complete dominance in Constantinople led newspapers to believe that the Armenian Genocide must have occurred with German acquiescence, if not outright approval. It was, therefore, Germany, not the Ottoman Empire, which was most blamed for the crime. Operating as a quasi-German atrocity, it provided the same moral justification for the Anglo-German conflict as Germany’s ‘rape of Belgium’ and its sinking of the *Lusitania*. Other Ottoman atrocities which could not be similarly tied to Germany attracted an accordingly muted press response. As Horne and Kramer observe, ‘atrociousness’ in wartime discourse ‘denoted the importance of the enemy, not the crime.’¹ Like praise for the ‘clean-fighting Turk’, Ottoman atrocities were important only insofar as they demonstrated German ‘barbarity’.

Likewise, Ottoman military defeat was valued mostly for its contribution to the Anglo-German conflict, as shown in Chapter Three. Britain’s most significant Eastern venture, the Dardanelles (later Gallipoli) campaign, promised not only an Ottoman surrender but, subsequently, the entry of several Balkan states on the Allied side and a strengthened Russia, which could be adequately supplied via the Black Sea. While, initially, both ‘Easterners’ and ‘Westerners’ within the press supported this expedition, they did so because they believed it would hasten Germany’s defeat through a new Hungarian front and on the condition that it would not jeopardise success in Europe. Though this consensus diverged after the Gallipoli landings, the press remained convinced, regardless of strategic outlook, that defeating the Ottoman Empire was valuable, at least in principle, as an extension of the European theatre.

¹ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 297.

Support for the Middle Eastern campaigns was less Eurocentric, as they offered little towards Germany's military defeat, but still thoroughly Germano-centric. Present analyses of press discussions of these campaigns have greatly overlooked the region's prominent association with German imperial ambitions through ventures like the Berlin-Baghdad Railway. In doing so, historians have missed the true importance newspapers ascribed to the Middle East. Pan-German authors claimed the object of this eastward expansion was the conquest of Egypt and India and, ultimately, the usurpation of Britain as the global hegemon. Though numerous themes were present within press commentary on the Middle Eastern campaign, thwarting this *Drang nach Osten* was not simply one topic amongst many, as Fantauzzo recently suggested, but, for the press, their main purpose. Situating these campaigns within their previously unexamined Anglo-German context reveals their true significance. Conquest of the East was considered Germany's central war aim. Hence, newspapers interpreted its invasion of Serbia in October 1915 as an effort to secure a direct route to India by subsuming Serbia, into *Mitteleuropa*, as it had supposedly done with the Ottoman Empire and its other 'vassals'. The Western Front, though generally privileged over Eastern 'sideshowes' in terms of Germany's military defeat, was peripheral in this respect. For the press, steeped in the ideology of empire, the First World War, was, ultimately, about mastery of the East.

The Ottoman Empire, therefore, held a significant place within the UK press' conception of the war, hitherto unappreciated by historians who, too often, focus exclusively on Germany. In this respect, this thesis contributes towards broader desires to 'globalise' the scholarship and move beyond the Anglo-German conflict that remains so dominant. On the other hand, it shows that those who abandon this framework entirely when considering contemporary perceptions of the war's global events overlook Germany's inescapable dominance within the wartime imagination. Thus, for example, while charging Germany with any significant responsibility for the Armenian Genocide is unfounded and, moreover, 'detract[s] from the responsibility of the CUP as progenitors of the genocide',² such contemporary assertions must be analysed seriously, despite their falsehood, for the crime's significance to the 'just war' to be properly understood. This thesis' most important contribution towards the historiography of the Ottoman Empire is, therefore, in interrogating these claims as genuine (if inaccurate) contemporary interpretations, rather than deliberately false and manipulative propaganda, and to discern the Ottoman Empire's significance for the wartime press. At the same time, it also provides a new perspective through which to view

² Bloxham, *Great Game*, 133.

wartime characterisations of Germany by considering well-known, but seldom interrogated, claims of its dominance over the other Central Powers. Such claims were not cynical efforts to tie its otherwise inconsequential 'junior partners' to Britain's dominant enemy, as conventionally assumed. As argued throughout the thesis, this Germano-centrism was considerably more complex, presenting Germany as a truly global, rather than exclusively European, threat. This gave the Ottoman Empire great importance, but only as a subservient vassal of an expansive German Empire, stretching from Berlin to Baghdad, against which the press believed the British Empire's war was fought. The thesis highlights that, for contemporaries, the First World War was, at its core, an Anglo-German conflict. This is a fact which any future 'military history from the street' of this global war should take into account.

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