

7 Internment and destruction

Concentration camps during the Armenian genocide, 1915–16

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They arrived [in the Meskeneh concentration camp] by the thousands, but the majority left their bones there.

Auguste Bernau, German employee of the American Vacuum Oil Company, 1916.¹

[The Euphrates] had become the mute witness of Armenian suffering.

Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan.²

Father Arslanian was one of hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Armenians interned in concentration camps set up by the Young Turk leadership during the First World War. After the war, this is how he described his arrival in the Bab concentration camp, northeast of Aleppo (modern-day Syria) in November 1915:

In a field that rain has turned into a pond, thousands of tents are set on the mud and waterholes. By the tents lie dead and dying people, so many that undertakers the authorities appointed from the camp population can hardly keep up.³

Although he survived, most who went through the camp system died of starvation, disease, exposure and violence. And while the Armenian genocide has received rigorous scholarly examination over the past two decades, it has only recently been linked to the wartime internment of civilians. In what follows, I address this lacuna in the historiography, situating the deportation and destruction of Armenians in Ottoman Syria within the global history of concentration camps. Providing an overview of the structure, administration and life in concentration camps based on Armenian accounts, Ottoman archives, and western diplomatic records,⁴ I argue that this glaring manifestation of total war – one directed towards the empire's very own Armenian subjects – constitutes an important moment of transition in the use of internment as a weapon of annihilation.

Genesis

The forcible concentration of civilians in camps or fortified zones was first 'invented' as a military practice in the late nineteenth century, becoming a feature of highly destructive and asymmetric colonial wars fought by the Spanish in Cuba, the British in South Africa and the Americans in the Philippines.⁵ These early cases exhibited a two-pronged counter-insurgency strategy: the removal of civilians from areas of conflict and their internment in camps and fortified zones; and the use of scorched-earth tactics, depriving fighters of their support base, shelter and means of subsistence, and clearing the way for the brutal suppression of insurgencies. Scholars also emphasise that imitation was central to the global proliferation of concentration camps in this period and beyond.⁶ As sociologist Jonathan Hyslop has argued:

The concentration camp arose as the response of new, professionalized military cultures to the challenge of guerilla warfare. The instrumental logic of violence led to the coercive and callous reorganization of civilians on a mass scale, as a means of containing and controlling subject populations.⁷

Yet despite the heavy toll on civilians, the intention was not to destroy the interned population, but to suppress uprisings.⁸ A further motive was collective punishment of the ethnic group or tribe to which the insurgents belonged.⁹

Not to be outdone, the German army established concentration camps in German South West Africa (modern-day Namibia) during its genocidal campaigns against the Herero and Nama in 1904–07. The purpose was not to defeat tribal insurgencies, which had already been quelled when these camps were established. Instead, the aim was control of 'suspect' groups, exploitation of labour and destruction of lives.¹⁰ Thousands died of deprivation, disease and deliberate acts of violence, or were worked to death in these camps. Benjamin Madley sees the Herero and Nama genocides as a 'crucial precursor' to the Holocaust, and the concentration camps as a 'rough template for the Nazi camps'. Nikolaus Wachsmann disagrees: 'Any attempts to draw a direct line to Dachau or Auschwitz are unconvincing'.¹¹ Notwithstanding the debate on whether, and to what extent, this policy of internment and extermination served as precursors to the Holocaust, a fatal threshold was crossed, and a precedent was indeed set for the *Konzentrationslager* as a weapon of total war and genocide.¹²

Ottoman trajectories of civilian internment

The chickens came home to roost during the First World War as internment camps incarcerating millions of POWs and hundreds of thousands of 'enemy aliens' mushroomed in Europe and beyond. The growing literature on camps established in Britain, France, Russia and Germany, and outside Europe, in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Japan, stands testament to the globalisation of the internment phenomenon. '[T]he implementation of those

practices facilitated the shift to total war and also helped shape a new brutality displayed by European armies toward non-combatants during and after World War I, Klaus Mühlhahn argues.¹³ And yet by far the most nefarious manifestation of this ‘new brutality’ during the Great War, and hence the one that forcefully supports theories of war totalisation, occurred in the Ottoman Empire, and remains in the shadows. True, the destruction of Ottoman Armenians now features in many studies of the Great War,¹⁴ yet concentration camps set up during this genocide are hardly ever explored in the literature, with the rare exception of Joël Kotek and Pierre Rigoulot’s study *Le siècle des camps* (2000).¹⁵ Scholars of the Great War and civilian internment are hardly to blame for this glaring oversight. Armenian genocide scholarship itself has only recently started exploring the network of concentration camps where Armenian civilian were interned. Indeed, apart from a survey of these camps by historian Raymond Kévorkian in his monumental history of the Armenian Genocide, and a number of articles and encyclopaedia entries by the present author, one is hard-pressed to find any scholarly work on the topic.¹⁶

While the concentration camps established during the Armenian Genocide can be placed along a continuum of imperial military extremism and wartime totalisation, they also drew much from a centuries-old Ottoman experience of demographic engineering. John Keegan, for example, argues that the Armenian Genocide was a byproduct of Ottoman imperial policy more than a policy born out of the Great War. As he writes,

Above all, the war imposed on the civilian populations almost none of the deliberate disruption and atrocity that was to be a feature of the Second [World War]. Except in Serbia and, at the outset, in Belgium, communities were not forced to leave their homes, land and peaceful occupations; except in Turkish Armenia, no population was subjected to genocide; and, awful though the Ottoman government’s treatment of its Armenian subjects was, the forced marches organised to do them to death belong more properly to the history of Ottoman imperial policy than to that of the war itself.¹⁷

It is indeed important to underline the centuries-old Ottoman policies of demographic engineering, but divorcing the internment and destruction of Armenians from the context of the First World War and the influence of European military culture on the Ottoman Turkish leadership undermines any serious attempt to understand the genocide.

As the Ottoman Empire expanded and the central authorities tried to consolidate gains, control the newly acquired territories, and develop trade and agriculture, deportation and settlement became an important component of its policies.¹⁸ Historian Nesim Şeker discerns three phases of demographic engineering by the Ottomans: the consolidation effort (from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries), the settlement policies that followed as Muslim refugees from the Balkans and the Caucasus poured into the empire in the late nineteenth century, and

the deportation and settlement policies enacted during the First World War.¹⁹ The latter two are intimately connected. As Erik-Jan Zürcher has observed, the Muslim refugees pushed out of the border regions where South-Eastern Europe and Tsarist Russia met western Asia ‘strongly identified with the Islamic empire and this was to prove significant as their arrival in the empire also more or less coincided with the emergence of separatist nationalism among the Christian communities of the [Ottoman] empire’. Here, Zürcher had in mind ‘[t]he collision between the two types of community – Muslim refugees and Christian nationalists’, for example in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria.²⁰ Confronted with a great wave of refugees, the Ottoman authorities accumulated experiences of handling deportations, camps, epidemics and the challenges of settling refugees in new environments. Soon, the First World War provided the cover that the leadership of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) needed to expel or deport the empire’s Christian population, freeing up space to settle Muslim refugees in their villages and neighbourhoods.²¹ The systematic nature of the Ottoman Armenian deportations, often executed with ‘mathematical accuracy’,²² points to the fulfilment of a broader CUP plan of social and economic Turkification, beyond purported measures to ensure military security in border regions.²³ In this context, camps that produced death, sexual slavery, transfer of women and children to the dominant group, and sometimes forced labour, were an essential tool in the sudden infusion of an overdose of modernity into the Ottoman tradition of demographic engineering.

In the decades prior to the First World War, Armenian appeals to the sultan and to European powers for recognition of their rights, agrarian reform, protection from local chieftains and double taxation had ended in violent reprisals in 1894–96 and 1909, including large scale massacres, looting and destruction of property. The reprisals of 1894–96, known as the Hamidian massacres after the Sultan, led to the murder of up to 200,000 Armenians across the empire, while the violence of 1909, which was concentrated in and around the Adana province, cost 20,000–30,000 Armenian lives.²⁴ Thus, the internment and destruction of the Ottoman Armenians under the cover of the First World War had its roots deep within Ottoman tradition and recent practice *and* reflected a global trend towards military extremism leading up to history’s first total war.

The Armenian genocide: an overview

The CUP enacted the deportation of the Ottoman Empire’s Armenian population in the spring of 1915, in tandem with empire-wide arrests of Armenian intellectuals and leaders. Hundreds of communities were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands and marched in the direction of ‘the regions of southeastern Aleppo, Der Zor, and Urfa’.²⁵ The CUP’s decision to uproot, dispossess and destroy Armenian communities on the pretext of wartime security measures and military necessity was spurred by an exclusionist ideology and a drive to homogenise a crumbling empire. What was known as the Armenian Question would be resolved through a policy of expulsion, expropriation and extermination.²⁶

The Armenian deportees who survived the terrible journey and massacres along the route arrived in Ottoman Syria from the north or north-east, passing through a series of hastily erected rest areas and transit camps, before being interned in concentration camps near Aleppo, in Ras ul-Ain, and along the lower Euphrates, from Meskeneh to Der Zor. Although exact figures are impossible to ascertain without access to official Ottoman documents,²⁷ around 400,000 Armenians were interned for months in one or more of these camps. Most perished from starvation and disease,²⁸ or were massacred in the desert of Der Zor in the summer of 1916.²⁹

The groundbreaking work of historians Raymond Kévorkian and Taner Akçam, and recent publications by historians Hilmar Kaiser, Fuat Dündar, Hans-Lukas Kieser and Vahram L. Shemmassian, have challenged our understanding of the destruction of Armenians in Ottoman Syria, often referred to as the ‘second phase’ of the Armenian Genocide.³⁰ Kévorkian tackled the notion of a ‘second phase’ head on, and laid the foundations for the study of Ottoman concentration camps.³¹ Akçam established that assimilation constituted an integral part of the Genocide, and expanded our understanding of demographic policy in the region, first explored by Dündar.³² Kaiser, in turn, examined the policies of the local and regional authorities in Ottoman Syria in two recent works, while in an earlier publication he addressed Armenian humanitarian resistance in the region.³³ Kieser and Shemmassian wrote about humanitarian intervention by Armenians and missionaries working closely with them, thus filling a gap in the scholarship.³⁴

Drawing upon previously untapped primary sources as well as the above-mentioned insights from scholars, I build upon, and sometimes challenge, the existing literature on the ‘second phase’, arguing that despite the violent mechanisms of control and destruction, the genocide of the Armenians in the triangle formed by Aleppo, Ras ul-Ain, and Der Zor did not progress unhindered. Rather, Armenian agency proved an important factor in limiting the scope of the genocide.³⁵ Deportees organised and engaged in unarmed resistance, primarily through actions carried out illegally, or against the will of the authorities, to save fellow Armenians from annihilation. This is true both in a metropolis like Aleppo where thousands of Armenians disappeared into the urban fabric, often with the support of an underground network of resisters; *and* in the concentration camps, where the network’s clandestine efforts to provide funds, food and medicine to prisoners, and even attempt to smuggle some deportees out, saved the lives of many.³⁶

On paper and in practice

Ottoman officials charted the deportation to and ‘settlement’ in the regions of Urfa, Zor and Aleppo³⁷ in a guideline (*talimatname*),³⁸ which scrupulously laid out the administrative structure and command chain for the transit and settlement network. It also provided the rest and settlement sites with functionaries who were responsible for deportation, storage and distribution of supplies;

detailed salary ranges for officials; outlined the necessity and the modes of ensuring deportees' comfort and security, with particular attention to women, children and the sick; and called for temporary shelter (tents), housing, cultivable land, livestock and assistance for the poor. In painstaking detail, the ordinance outlined procurement and distribution processes (from securing flour in each locale, for example, to 'immediately' establishing bakeries and producing bread) in all the transit and settlement areas.

The ordinance was a far cry from what unfolded on the ground, where deprivation, exposure, abuse and danger to life and limb were staples of the deportation process, and where settlement was a euphemism for incarcerating hundreds of thousands of Armenians in guarded concentration camps in the desert with paltry – if any – food rations and no means of self-sustenance. In April 1916, an intermediary agent of Swiss missionary Beatrice Rohner witnessed the arrival of a convoy from Bab:

As I was in Meskeneh, there came a caravan of sick women and children from Bab. They are in indescribable condition. They were thrown down from the wagons like dogs. They cried for water, they were each given a piece of dry bread, and were left there. No one gave them any water though they remained a whole day under the sun.³⁹

The conditions did not improve upon arrival. In a letter of 28 June 1916 from the Hamam camp to Rohner, Armenian preacher Vartan Geranian reported:

There are many hundreds of poor deserted children, women and men here, weakened by hunger and sick, absolutely wretched figures, wandering aimlessly amongst the tents. At every meal at least 20–30 come to beg for a bit of bread. Many families have not eaten for days and do not have the courage to go begging.⁴⁰

Describing the camps he witnessed between Meskeneh and Der Zor, Auguste Bernau, a German employee of the American Vacuum Oil Company, wrote: “‘Camp’ is saying a lot, because the majority of this wretched people . . . are left in the open air like cattle, without shelter, almost without clothing, are barely supported by a completely insufficient diet”.⁴¹ Even when the authorities did distribute bread to deportees (mostly in cities like Aleppo and Raqqa), a starvation ration was set, distribution was irregular and often discontinued for weeks or stopped outright, and the distribution process was marred by corruption and abuse. As Bernau observed:

The Administration which took on itself to lead them through the desert does not care about feeding them. It even seems that it may be a principle of [the] government to let them die of hunger. A massacre . . . would have been more humane.⁴²

Desperation drove thousands to eat whatever they could, including dead animals. According to Andonian, inmates scratched meat from the animal bones with rusted metal. 'Many times they fought over the meat, and ate without cooking. Those who found they could make fire to heat or burn the rotten piece of meat were considered lucky'.⁴³

Control of movement

Concentration and transit camps were close enough to towns or outposts with telegraphs to ensure Ottoman administrative control. The Bab camp in Aleppo province, for instance, was twenty minutes from the town of the same name, while the Meskeneh camp, situated at the great bend of the southern Euphrates, had a telegram centre nearby.⁴⁴ Although most camps in Ottoman Syria were not surrounded by barbed wire or any other means of physical confinement, a series of measures prevented escape. Roads and bridges nearby were guarded, and gendarmes and camp guards made sure deportees did not leave the parameters. Guards inside the camps were mostly civilians, often Armenians drawn from among the camp population.⁴⁵ Moreover, camps were often in desert areas, bandits roamed freely, and villagers were instructed to kill or capture stray Armenians.⁴⁶ For a brief period in Bab, a permit and, inevitably, bribes were necessary to go to town to purchase food, visit the post office or attend to bureaucratic matters. With the spread of typhus in the camp, the authorities blocked the deportees' access to the city in the autumn of 1915. Typhus had to be contained. The Armenians alone had to die.

As an added measure, locals were emphatically instructed to turn in escaped deportees wandering into their towns and villages. Still, some managed to exit camps secretly and return with supplies, or escape to Aleppo and disappear into the fabric of the metropolis. Gurji Ananian from Marash, for example, arrived in Meskeneh in the summer of 1915, and escaped from the camp twice, trying to return to Aleppo. His first attempt, with thirty-four other inmates, turned into a weeklong ordeal during which they were robbed twice by Arabs in the desert, captured by gendarmes, and dragged back to Meskeneh. He succeeded in his second attempt and made it to Aleppo after being beaten, harassed and nearly buried alive by villagers along the way.⁴⁷

The camps were semi-porous, with locals generally allowed to enter to sell products, purchase children, or steal and abduct prisoners during night raids, with gendarmes often passively observing or, worse, aiding and abetting the perpetrators in return for a share of the booty. Accounts describe, for instance, how butchers came to the Bab camp to sell meat, and sometimes distributed usually discarded offal to needy deportees, but after some time, they started selling that too.⁴⁸ When deportee Hagop Arsenian arrived in the camp on 8 December 1915, 'entrance to the actual city of Bab was totally forbidden to us, although he managed to "sneak into town" twice'.⁴⁹ Those, like Arsenian, who managed to make forays into the city contributed to a camp economy that was otherwise tightly controlled by the guards and the city's merchants who had full control over prices of goods.

Sexualised violence

Sexualised violence and slavery was rampant. In the Ras ul-Ain concentration camp, for example, ‘The Circassians and Arabs from Ras ul-Ain took the prettiest girls home with them. . . . The policemen carried on a flourishing trade with the girls against payment of a few Medjidies, anyone could take a girl of his choice either for a short while or forever’, according to a German eyewitness account.⁵⁰ Not all perpetrators remained anonymous. For instance, a camp official, K r H seyin, raped many women at the Karlık transit camp near Aleppo.⁵¹ Survivor Setrag G. Matossian, who was in Karlık in late June/early July 1916, wrote a few weeks after the 1918 Armistice about the horrors committed by K r H seyin: ‘As 10 p.m. approached, deportation director [*sevkiyat muduru*] H seyin bey’s and his assistant Zeynel Chavush’s men, lamps in hand, would walk towards the beautiful girls they had selected during the day as appropriate to satisfy the cruelties of the bey and his assistant, and wake them up one by one. They were forcibly dragged to the bey’s tent, and were released after a few hours’.⁵²

More than thirty Armenian girls from Sivas were forcibly married to locals, according to survivor Yeranouhie Simonian.⁵³ Forced marriage was not the worst that could happen. In the cover of darkness, Bedouins attacked and raped with the tacit agreement of guards. ‘Every night there was yelling and screaming at the camp. . . . I saw with my own eyes the rape of little girls’, she noted in her memoir.⁵⁴ According to the German Consul in Aleppo, Walter R ssler, a woman was raped by a group of eight men. She tried to commit suicide by throwing herself on a railway line as a train approached. A German engineer saved her and brought her to Aleppo.⁵⁵ ‘The girls, often even the young girls . . . have been kidnapped all along the route of the deportations, sometimes violated and sold, if not killed by the gendarmes who drove the sad caravans’, observed Auguste Bernau.⁵⁶

Many children forcibly taken by locals or sold by destitute deportees trying to save their youngsters from death resisted their new ‘owners’ in any way they could.⁵⁷ Stepan G. Aghazarian was in his teens when he was deported from his home town Marash and abducted in Ras ul-Ain, ‘a hell-hole in the middle of the Syrian desert’, and taken to a nearby village:

I soon found that in that same Bedouin village there were about a dozen Armenian girls, ten to twelve years of age, who had been abducted by Arabs. The Arabs complained that these girls had refused to eat and would not talk to their ‘masters’. My new ‘father’ . . . asked me to talk to [the girls] and convince them to cooperate with the Arabs and give nobody any trouble. He said somberly that if they were obedient, they would more than likely not be killed. So I went to the sullen girls and, as I had been asked to do, sat down and talked to them. They finally gave me their word that they would cooperate.⁵⁸

Sexualised violence during the Armenian Genocide has been the subject of increased scholarly attention in recent years,⁵⁹ commensurate with growing historiography examining rape as a tool of genocide and a ‘life force atrocity’.⁶⁰ Yet in concentration camps and along deportation routes, the violation of women also served as a perverted manifestation of male bonding through control over the bodies of victims. It also took place within a broader context that encouraged sexualised violence (and looting) to incentivise popular participation in the genocide.⁶¹ Rapists like Kör Hüseyin and ‘suppliers’ of women like Zeynel Chavush’s thugs were part of an elaborate economy of sexual exploitation across the Ottoman Empire that was created in an environment of impunity, and fueled by individual initiative, peer dynamics and local power brokers.

Death and burial

More than 250,000 Armenians died of disease, deprivation, exposure and violence in Ottoman concentration camps during the First World War. In Meskeneh alone, the toll was somewhere between 60,000 and 80,000.⁶² In Bab, the figure was almost as high, despite the shorter lifespan of the camp. Rössler writes:

An Armenian who has the courage to go to Bab from time to time in disguise in order to bring the poverty stricken a support allowance (German Sisters have not been allowed any activity outside of Aleppo), reports that at the end of January [1916] during the 2 and a half days of his stay in Bab, 1,029 Armenians died.⁶³

When Father Dajad Arslanian learnt that all the priests in the Bab camp were either sick or had died, he took matters into his own hands, immediately appealing to the district governor for help in burying the 350 to 400 people dying every day of typhus, which had ‘encircled the camp like a fire’. The official provided the camp with fifty *mezarcis* (buriers) and a head burier to oversee the process, which Father Dajad described in detail. The buriers were divided into two groups. Every morning, one group toured the 5,000 tents with the priest, gathering the corpses placed outside,⁶⁴ while the other group dug graves in the cemetery outside the camp. In the afternoon, the corpses were brought to the cemetery and buried in the pits. ‘Between December 1915 and January-February 1916, some 36,000–40,000 people were buried [like this]’, observed Father Dajad.⁶⁵

In Meskeneh, the burial ground was a large area near the camp. ‘Every morning the number of dead reached hundreds due to the cold, filth, lack of hygiene, malnutrition and lack of medical care to treat the many diseases we were exposed to’, Arsenian recalled. He lost his mother on 22 December 1915. Father Arsen, a priest at the camp, conducted the funeral ‘and we buried her among all the other refugees there’. Internment was typically far less dignified. Many deportees waited for days for buriers to take the bodies from their tent. Buriers dug a huge pit, filled it with corpses, and then covered it with a mound of sand. ‘One counts by the hundreds

the anonymous burial mounds ... [for] these victims of a barbarism without name', wrote Bernau after his journey through Meskeneh and Der Zor. Not all were buried, and those who were sometimes did not remain interred. 'Oftentimes, the corpses would be dragged out and eaten by dogs', with the stench from scattered limbs and skulls filling the air. The deportees, who walked to the Euphrates to get water, had to pass these horrors every day, and at some point, 'our nose no longer picked up the smell'.⁶⁶

Resistance

A loose, unarmed resistance network fought back. It was comprised of a few dozen dedicated religious and secular Armenian community leaders based in Aleppo and several Western missionaries and diplomats. They served as the glue connecting a much larger constituency of Armenians (and, sometimes, Muslims and other local Christians) who pulled strings, bribed officials, volunteered medical services, raised funds, cooked meals, smuggled deportees out of danger, secretly distributed funds, medication and food to deportees in camps, and helped in any other way they could. The humanitarian resistance network, operating out of Aleppo, sent money, food and medicines to the concentration camps whenever possible. The emissaries were a few Armenians who often made the stopover under the cloak of darkness, or disguised as Muslim merchants during the day.⁶⁷ The network also helped many deportees escape internment, forced labour and sexual slavery, and provided safe houses in Aleppo for the escapees.

Women played a key role in the humanitarian effort. Beatrice Rohner, a Swiss missionary who was part of the resistance network, was crucial in providing material and moral support to deportees in camps.⁶⁸ In the Meskeneh concentration camp, a few of the women who had witnessed the destitute condition of children set up an orphanage on 11 March 1916. Three women from Nigde took on the responsibility of caring for the orphans, with support from priest Yetvart Tarpinian, who had arrived in Meskeneh only a week earlier. As word spread, more and more orphans came to the tent. What started as a shelter for a few children soon provided refuge to hundreds. The women frantically tried to secure supplies for the orphans: they pleaded with camp officials, asked deportees for donations, and tried to solicit outside help. They were not always successful. One of the women, Rakel Kirazian, was beaten up on several occasions by *anbâr memuru* (warehouse official) Ali Riza for repeatedly requesting food for the starving children. Some deportees at the camp gave from the little they had. Those who got married at the camp – and there were indeed dozens who did so in spite, or because of, the destitute conditions and the uncertain future ahead – made donations to the orphanage to mark the occasion. The most significant assistance came from two Evangelical Armenian women who were referred to as 'members of the *ruhci* sect'. They offered to provide bread to the orphans regularly, and did so, with funds from a German woman missionary based in Aleppo. After a confrontation with camp director Hüseyin, the two women and many of the orphans in the tent were deported to Der Zor.⁶⁹

In lieu of a conclusion

The liquidation of camps occurred in two distinct phases. The camps around Aleppo were shut down beginning in the winter of 1915, and the deportees were driven either towards Ras-ul Ain or the lower Euphrates, while the camps in Ras ul-Ain and along the river were emptied, often brutally, from the spring of 1916, with the survivors being marched to Der Zor. The emptying of the Dipsi camp is a case in point. In late April 1916, some twenty gendarmes were dispatched from Meskeneh to liquidate Dipsi. Considering the condition of most prisoners, emptying the camp and sending everyone downstream was not easy. The gendarmes set fire to tents and assaulted deportees to force them to move.

The wealthy and the poor had to be re-deported. . . . Within half an hour, the convoy was on its way to Abuharar. Horrible crimes were committed that day . . . many died of beatings and other were burned alive,

recounted Armenian survivor Krikor Ankut.⁷⁰ A ‘cemeterial silence’ reigned in Dipsi on 7 June 1916 when Ankut passed through on his way from Abuharar back to Meskeneh. Only the gendarme station stood there, amid a sea of scattered objects.⁷¹ Shortly thereafter, survivor Yeghisheh Hazarabedian journeyed through Dipsi and observed a ‘place that had once been a staging area for deportees but now stood abandoned’, with only a few orphans left behind, begging for food from travellers and deportees.⁷² The situation of children, many of whom were orphaned, was no less abhorrent in this camp than it was elsewhere along the Euphrates line. When pitching their tents, the Seropians were surrounded by children begging for food. Seropian also witnessed a group of emaciated children gathered around the corpse of a dead mule, tearing apart and eating its meat.⁷³

While in German South West Africa the shutting down of camps signalled an end of the genocidal violence against the Herrero and Nama, the liquidation of the Ottoman camps was followed by further massacres. Most of the deportees who survived the camp system perished in two waves of violence in Ras ul-Ain (March 1916) and Der Zor (August 1916). Estimates vary, but conservative figures indicate some 30,000 killed in the former, and up to 200,000 in the latter.⁷⁴ Thousands of others survived primarily through the efforts of an Armenian-led humanitarian resistance network that operated in the triangle formed by Aleppo, Ras ul-Ain, and Der Zor,⁷⁵ while thousands more, mostly women and children, were saved from the carnage by tribesmen in the region who forced them to become their wives, workers and sex slaves.

Many survivors wrote about their camp experience in newspaper articles and memoirs published in the years following the genocide, yet it took almost a century for the first scholarly examinations of their internment to appear. The massacres – and sporadic instances of armed resistance – overwhelmed the discourse, while scholarship focused on dispossession, deportation, death and denial. As a result, the gruelling, brutal ‘respite’ for Armenian deportees in

concentration camps between massacres was relegated to footnotes, often literally. In his *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (1995), Vahakn Dadrian, the pioneer of Armenian genocide studies, wrote that for survivors arriving in Syria the ‘authorities had created a string of waystations in the desert from which they were regularly dispatched to their ultimate death by a variety of methods’.⁷⁶ A footnote then directed the reader to an article which, compelling as it is in other respects, says little about the camp system and what we refer to today as the second phase of the Armenian Genocide.

Yet, as I have argued above, the camp system served an integral part of the genocidal process. While it is true that neither mass murder nor heroic acts of armed resistance occurred in these camps, deprivation and exposure that destroyed life constituted an extermination policy, and the *humanitarian* resistance of the Armenians was waged in reaction to it. The concentration camps in Ottoman Syria during the First World War bridged the colonial and modern histories of internment, and comprised the deadliest pre-Holocaust loci for civilians imprisoned in wartime simply for who they were. As such, the importance of addressing the Ottoman camp system, and the need for comparative research on the function and trajectory of internment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be overstated.

‘One counts by the hundreds the anonymous burial mounds ... [for] these victims of a barbarism without name’, wrote Bernau on his journey through Meskeneh and Der Zor in 1916.⁷⁷ The annihilation of the European Jewry was ongoing when Raphael Lemkin coined the term genocide in 1943–44, giving the barbarism Bernau refers to a name. But the Holocaust was not the first such crime, the KL system was not its first locus, and the line from German South West Africa to Auschwitz was not direct after all. It passed through Ottoman Turkey.

Notes

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1 Enclosure in a report from the German consul in Aleppo, Walter Rössler, to German chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, 27 September 1916. Reproduced in Wolfgang Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence From the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915–1916* (New York, NY, 2014), p. 653.

2 Zaven Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs* (Barrington, RI, 2002), p. 133. Yeghiayan, the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, passed through Meskeneh on the Euphrates on 9 September 1916 as he went into exile.

3 Aram Andonian Archives at the Bibliothèque Nubar, Paris (henceforth, BNU/Andonian), Folder 30: ‘The situation in Bab end of 1915’, in ‘Materials for the history of the deportations and massacres. Aleppo and its environs’, ‘The deportation of the Armenians of Aleppo’, p. 6.

4 Information on the administrative structure, arrival of deportees, internment, further deportation, collaboration, resistance and other aspects of life in the camps remains scattered in a wealth of survivor diaries, accounts, memoirs and sketches; some Ottoman records; and Western diplomatic and missionary documents. Chief among the sources I consult in this chapter are interviews and survivor testimonies gathered by chronicler

- Aram Andonian in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, and housed at the Nubar Library in Paris. Andonian's folders on camps in Syria (Bab, Meskeneh, Raqqa, Hamam, Der Zor and others), sometimes accompanied with sketches and maps, stand as an invaluable source. For a French translation of the accounts compiled by Andonian, see Raymond Kévorkian, *L'Extermination des déportés Arméniens ottomans dans les camps de concentration de Syrie-Mésopotamie, 1915–1916* (Special Issue of the *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine*), Vol. 2 (Paris, 1998).
- 5 Jonathan Hyslop, 'The Invention of the Concentration Camp: Cuba, Southern Africa and the Philippines, 1896–1907', *South African Historical Journal*, 63.2 (2011), pp. 251–76. Scholars emphasise that imitation was central to the global proliferation of concentration camps in this period and beyond.
 - 6 See, for example, Klaus Mühlhahn, 'The Concentration Camp in Global Historical Perspective', *History Compass*, 8.6 (2010), pp. 543–61, who argues that 'in the history of the concentration camp, overlays, transfers, and mimesis are discernable at many points'.
 - 7 Hyslop, 'The Invention of the Concentration Camp', p. 273.
 - 8 Iain R. Smith and Andreas Stucki stress the differences between these camps and those of the Nazis in their article 'The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps (1868–1902)', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39.3 (2011), pp. 417–37.
 - 9 Sibylle Scheipers argues that it would be 'misleading' and 'short-sighted' to ignore the collective punishment dimension and view these camps as a mere counter-insurgency measure. See Scheipers, 'The Use of Camps in Colonial Warfare', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43.4 (2015), pp. 678–98.
 - 10 As such, the camps in German South West Africa 'diverged from other colonial camps, as they were propelled less by military strategy than a desire for punishment and forced labour', as Nikolaus Wachsmann notes. See Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (London and New York, NY, 2015), pp. 7–8. For a critical narrative of the Herero Genocide see, Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 2005).
 - 11 See Benjamin Madley, 'From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe', *European History Quarterly*, 35.3 (2005), pp. 429–64; and Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*, p. 8.
 - 12 Isabel Hull argues that greater civilian oversight sets the earlier cases of civilian internment apart from the German military's suppression of the Herero uprising. See Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, pp. 184–5.
 - 13 Surprisingly, Mühlhahn barely even addresses the Armenian genocide, noting, in passing, 'between 1915 and 1923, more than 1 million Armenians left [emphasis mine] Turkish Asia Minor' – see Mühlhahn, 'The Concentration Camp in Global Historical Perspective', p. 548. The 'new brutality' that he refers to was not new for African colonies, where collective punishment was commonplace and 'entirely normal'. See Andrea Rosegarten, "'A Most Gruesome Sight": Colonial Warfare, Racial Thought, and the Question of "Radicalization" During the First World War in German South-West Africa (Namibia)', *History*, 101.346 (2016), pp. 425–47.
 - 14 See, for example, Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, Chapter 11; and Jay Winter, 'Under Cover of War: The Armenian Genocide in the Context of Total War', in Robert Gelately and Ben Kiernan (eds.), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 189–214.
 - 15 Joël Kotek and Pierre Rigoulot, *Le siècle des camps* (Paris, 2000). Despite a demonstrably genuine effort to incorporate the Armenian case into the narrative of the history of concentration camps, *Le siècle des camps* is testament to the dearth of literature the authors could consult for their oeuvre.
 - 16 See Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London and New York, NY, 2011), pp. 647–72; and Khatchig Mouradian, 'The Meskeneh

- Concentration Camp, 1915–1917: A Case Study of Power, Collaboration, and Humanitarian Resistance During the Armenian Genocide’, *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies*, 24 (2015), pp. 44–55.
- 17 John Keegan, *The First World War* (London, 1998), p. 8.
 - 18 İlhan Tekeli, ‘Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndan Günümüze Nüfusun Zorunlu Yer Değiştirilmesi Ve İskan Sorunu’ [‘The Issue of Forced Deportation and Settlement of Population From the Ottoman Period to the Present Day’] *Toplum ve Bilim*, 50 (1990), pp. 49–71.
 - 19 Nesim Şeker, ‘Demographic Engineering in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Armenians’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43.3 (2007), pp. 461–74.
 - 20 Erik-Jan Zürcher, ‘The Late Ottoman Empire as Laboratory of Demographic Engineering’, paper delivered at the conference ‘Le Regioni Multilingui Come Faglia E Motore Della Storia Europea Nel XIX–XX Secolo’ in Naples, 6–8 September 2008, www.academia.edu/5726057/The_late_Ottoman_Empire_as_laboratory_of_demographic_engineering
 - 21 Political scientist and demographer Myron Weiner refers to this process as ‘substitution’. See Myron Weiner and Michel S. Teitelbaum, *Political Demography, Demographic Engineering* (Oxford, 2001), p. 56.
 - 22 ‘Mathematical accuracy’ is the phrase used by Armenian intellectual Dikran Kelegian, himself a victim of the Armenian Genocide. It is often cited by historian Taner Akçam in the context of the Ottoman demographic policy during the genocide, and particularly the 5 and 10 per cent rule employed by the CUP leadership: Armenians exempted from deportation could not surpass the 5 per cent threshold in the Eastern provinces of the Empire (in most of these regions, deportation was in fact near total), and Armenians in designated settlement areas could not constitute more than 10 per cent of the local population. See, for instance, Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ, 2012), pp. xviii and 243.
 - 23 For an in-depth treatment of this policy, see Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime*; and Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question, 1878–1918* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2010).
 - 24 On the Hamidian massacres, see Ronald Grigor Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else’: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, NJ, 2015), pp. 105–40; Owen Robert Miller, *Sasun 1894: Mountains, Missionaries and Massacres at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Columbia University Academic Commons, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.7916/D8CF9PJS>; Jelle Verheij, ‘Die armenischen Massaker von 1894–1896: Anatomie und Hintergründe einer Krise’, in Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), *Die armenische Frage und die Schweiz (1896–1923)/La question arménienne et la Suisse (1896–1923)* (Zurich, 1999), pp. 69–132; Edip Golbasi, ‘The 1895–1896 Armenian Massacres in the Ottoman Eastern Provinces: A Prelude to Extermination or a Revolutionary Provocation?’, *Papers of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 25 (2015). On the Adana massacres, see Bedross Der Matossian, ‘From Bloodless Revolution to a Bloody Counter-revolution: The Adana Massacres of 1909’, *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, 6.2 (2011), pp. 152–73; and Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert*, pp. 165–73.
 - 25 Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives, Interior Minister Cipher Office (abbreviated BOA/DH.ŞFR) 52/188 Coded telegram from Minister of Interior Talat to provinces, 2 May 1915.
 - 26 For recent scholarship on the Armenian Genocide, see the works by Suny, Akçam and Kévorkian cited above. For scholarship on the expropriation of Armenian property in particular, see Uğur Ümit Üngör and Mehmet Polatel, *Confiscation and Destruction: The Young Turk Seizure of Armenian Property* (New York, NY, 2011); and Taner Akçam and Ümit Kurt, *The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide* (New York, NY, 2015).

- 27 The inaccessibility of key Ottoman documents accounts, in part, for the absence of thorough studies on camp life. We know from available Ottoman documents and Armenian accounts that authorities kept detailed records of deportation convoys and camp populations, yet these documents are not available to researchers. See, for example, Article 12 of the 56-article deportation and settlement guideline prepared by the Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Emigrants (IAMM) head Muftizâde Şükrü Kaya Bey: BOA DH. EUM. 2. ŞB, 68/88 From Şükrü Kaya to Talat on 8 October 1915. Armenian deportee Mihran Aghazarian, in an account published immediately after the war, describes his experience accompanying a Turkish scribe and a policeman tasked with preparing lists and gathering statistical information on convoys arriving in Der Zor. See Mihran Aghazarian, *Aksoragani Husher* [Memoirs of an Exile] (Adana, 1919). For an overview of the fate of Ottoman documents pertaining to this period, and issues related to researcher access, see the first chapter of Akcam's, *The Young Turks' Crime*.
- 28 By 1916, the death toll in several of these camps was in the tens every day, and in certain cases reached three digits. See Mouradian, 'The Meskeneh Concentration Camp', pp. 48–51.
- 29 For an overview of the Armenian Genocide, including a brief examination of the Der Zor massacres, see Raymond H. Kévorkian, 'Earth, fire, water: or how to make the Armenian corpses disappear', in Elisabeth Anstett and Jean-Marc Dreyfus (eds.), *Destruction and Human Remains: Disposal and Concealment in Genocide and Mass Violence* (Manchester, 2014), pp. 89–116.
- 30 Raymond Kévorkian has referred to the destruction of the Armenians in Syria and Mesopotamia from the autumn of 1915 to the summer of 1916 as 'the second phase' in his publications since the late 1990s. See, for instance, Kévorkian, *L'Extermination des déportés Arméniens ottomans*.
- 31 See also Raymond Kévorkian, 'Alep, Centre du dispositif génocidaire et des opérations de secours aux déportés', in Levon Nordiguian (ed.), *Mémoire arménienne: Photographies du camp de réfugiés d'Alep, 1922–1936* (Beirut, 2010); idem., *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London and New York, 2011).
- 32 See Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime*; and Dündar, *Crime of Numbers*.
- 33 See Hilmar Kaiser, *At the Crossroad of Der Zor: Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915–1917* (London, 2002); idem., 'Regional Resistance to Central Government Policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the Governors of Aleppo, and Armenian Deportees in the Spring and Summer of 1915', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 12.3 (2010), 214; idem., *The Extermination of Armenians in the Diyarbekir Region* (Istanbul, 2014).
- 34 Hans-Lukas Kieser, 'Beatrice Rohner's Work in the Death Camps of Armenians in 1916', in Jacques Sémelin, Claire Andrieu and Sarah Gensburger (eds.), *Resisting Genocide: The Multiple Forms of Rescue* (New York, NY, 2011), pp. 367–82; and Vahram L. Shemmassian, 'Humanitarian Intervention by the Armenian Prelacy of Aleppo during the First Months of the Genocide', *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies*, 22 (2013), pp. 127–52.
- 35 For a critique of the scant attention paid by Armenian genocide scholarship to resistance beyond armed struggle, see Khatchig Mouradian, "'The Very Limit of our Endurance': Unarmed Resistance in Ottoman Syria during WWI', in Hans-Lukas Kieser, Seyhan Bayraktar and Thomas Schmutz (eds.), *End of the Ottomans: The Genocide of 1915 and the Politics of Turkish Nationalism* (London, 2018), forthcoming.
- 36 See Khatchig Mouradian, 'Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance in Ottoman Syria, 1915–1916', *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, 7 (2016), pp. 87–103.
- 37 Ibid. The ordinance listed Aleppo, Katma, Müsliimiye, Suruç and Ras ul-Ain as transit centres (*merkez i tevakkuf*), Raqqa, Hauran and Der Zor as settlement areas, and Deyrul Hafr, Meskeneh, Abuharar and Hamâm as overnight rest areas along the road. As we

- shall see, several of these sites we overcrowded with deportees, and turned into *de facto* concentration camps.
- 38 BOA DH. EUM. 2. ŞB, 68/88, copy of 56-article, guideline sent by IAMM director Şükrü Kaya to Talat, 8 October 1915.
- 39 Report from the Ambassador on Extraordinary Mission in Constantinople to the German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg [enclosure], 22 July 1916. Reproduced in Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, p. 605.
- 40 Report from Rössler to Bethmann Hollweg [enclosure 4], 29 July 1916. Reproduced in Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, p. 612. Geranian's description of 'absolutely wretched figures, wandering aimlessly amongst the tents' evokes images of the 'Muselmänner' in Nazi concentration camps. See Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (Princeton, NJ, 1997), pp. 199–205.
- 41 Report from Rössler to German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, enclosure, 20 September 1916. Reproduced in Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, p. 652.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 BNU/Andonian, Folder 30: 'The situation in Bab before the last sevkiyat in 1916', in 'Materials for the history of the deportations and massacres: Aleppo and its environs', The deportation of Armenians of Aleppo, p. 3.
- 44 Mouradian, 'The Meskeneh Concentration Camp', p. 47.
- 45 See *ibid.*, pp. 45–6.
- 46 For examples of such instances, see BNU/Andonian, Folder 30: 'Sefire', in 'Materials for the history of the deportations and massacres: Aleppo and its environs', The Deportation of Armenians of Aleppo, p. 23; and BNU/Andonian, Folder 52b: 'On the Road to Meskeneh', pp. 61–4.
- 47 BNU/Andonian, Folder 52b: 'On the Road to Meskeneh', pp. 61–4.
- 48 BNU/Andonian, Folder 30: 'The situation in Bab before the last sevkiyat in 1916', in 'Materials for the history of the deportations and massacres: Aleppo and its environs', The Deportation of Armenians of Aleppo, p. 3.
- 49 Arda Arsenian Ekmekji (trans.), *Towards Golgotha: The Memoirs of Hagop Arsenian, A Genocide Survivor* (Beirut, 2011), pp. 105–7.
- 50 Report from Rössler to German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, 3 January 1916, enclosure 2. Reproduced in Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, p. 526. One *mejid* was equivalent to 23.5 *kurush*. One *lira* was equivalent to 127 *kurush* or US \$4.4 (with an approximate purchasing power of US\$100 today). In Aleppo in 1915, a kilogramme of bread cost 3.5 *kurush*, yoghurt 4.5 *kurush*, and cheese 12 *kurush*.
- 51 BNU/Andonian, Folder 52: 'The camp directors of Meskeneh', p. 74. IAMM would later assign Kôr Hüseyin as camp director at Meskeneh in late 1916. There too he distinguished himself by his brutality, raping, torturing and killing deportees. See also, Kévorkian, *L'Extermination des déportés Arméniens*, p. 129.
- 52 'Turkish brutalities in Karlık', *Hai Tsayn*, 13 December 1918.
- 53 Yeranouhie Simonian, *Im Koghkotas* [My Golgotha] (Antilias, Lebanon, 1960), p. 14.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 55 Report from Rössler to German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, 3 September 1915. Reproduced in Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, p. 345.
- 56 Report from Rössler to German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, enclosure, 20 September 1916. Reproduced in *ibid.*, p. 652.
- 57 BNU/Andonian, Folder 59: Deportation of Armenians of Ras ul-Ain, 'The massacres of Ras ul-Ain', pp. 3–4. See also, Kévorkian, *L'Extermination des déportés Arméniens ottomans*, p. 108.
- 58 Paren Kazanjian (ed.), *The Cilician Armenian Ordeal* (Boston, MA, 1989), pp. 35–6.
- 59 See, for example, Katharine Derderian, 'Common Fate, Different Experience: Gender-Specific Aspects of the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1917', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 19.1 (2005), pp. 1–25. For comparative research, see Kristin Bell, "Victims"

- Voices: Sexual Violence in the Armenian and Rwandan Genocides* (PhD dissertation, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, 2014).
- 60 Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, 'The Devil in the Details: "Life Force Atrocities" and the Assault on the Family in Times of Conflict', *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 5.1 (2010), pp. 1–19. For recent research on sexualised violence in Nazi-occupied Europe during the Second World War, see David Raub Snyder, *Sex Crimes Under the Wehrmacht* (Lincoln, NE, 2007); and various contributions to Dagmar Herzog (ed.), *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke, 2009).
- 61 As Henry Theriault argues, '[w]e must also recognize that genocide can be a tool of rape' – see Theriault, 'Against the Grain: Critical Reflections on the State and Future of Genocide Scholarship', *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, 7.1 (2012), pp. 123–44 (here p. 137). Matthias Bjørnlund, too, emphasises sadism as a factor in 'a thoroughly brutalized environment that left room for local initiatives when it came to the methods of killing and humiliation, initiatives that satisfied individual needs, not only for self-gratification but also for variation'. See Bjørnlund, '"A Fate Worse than Dying": Sexual Violence during the Armenian Genocide', in Herzog (ed.), *Brutality and Desire*, pp. 16–58 (here p. 29).
- 62 Mouradian, 'The Meskeneh Concentration Camp', p. 48.
- 63 Report from Rossler to German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, 9 February 1916. Reproduced in Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, pp. 542–3.
- 64 Another eyewitness remembered these buriers yelling 'ölüsü olan' (whoever has dead people). Sometimes no sound came because everyone in the tent was dead. BNU/Andonian, Folder 30: 'The situation in Bab end of 1915', in 'Materials for the history of the deportations and massacres: Aleppo and its environs', *The Deportation of Armenians of Aleppo*, p. 6.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Mouradian, 'The Meskeneh Concentration Camp, 1915–1917'.
- 67 See Mouradian, 'Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance'.
- 68 On Rohner's life and work, see Kieser, 'Beatrice Rohner's Work'.
- 69 Levon Mesrob (ed.), *1915: Aghed yev Veradzenount* [1915: Disaster and Rebirth] (Paris, 1952), pp. 459–61. Tarpinian does not mention the name of the missionary in his account. He admitted that 'I was against turning a nation that was being persecuted for their religion and ethnicity to be the plaything of sect members, but did not dare prohibit them, because they were providing bread'.
- 70 BNU/Andonian, Folder 57: Dipsi, 'The Deportations of the Armenians of Dipsi', p. 3. Hagop Arsenian talks about a similar practice of setting fire to tents in the next camp, Abuharar. See Arsenian, *Towards Golgotha: The Memoirs of Hagop Arsenian, a Genocide Survivor*, trans. Arda Arsenian Ekmekji (Beirut, 2011), p. 119.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Kazanjian (ed.), *The Cilician Armenian Ordeal*, p. 294.
- 73 See Hagop A. Seropian, *Yegherni husheres* [My Memoir of the Great Crime] (Beirut, 2005), p. 140.
- 74 For a narrative of the massacres in Der Zor, see Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, pp. 662–70.
- 75 For an exploration of humanitarian resistance during the Armenian genocide, see Mouradian, 'Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance'. For the efforts of Reverend Hovhannes Eskijian, the pastor of the Emmanuel Armenian Evangelical Church in Aleppo who contributed to this effort, see Hilmar Kaiser, *At the Crossroad of Der Zor: Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915–1917* (London, 2002).
- 76 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict From the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York, NY, 1995), p. 242.
- 77 Report from Rossler to German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, 27 September 1916. Reproduced in Gust (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide*, p. 652.