NETWORKS OF DENIAL AND JUSTIFICATION: SOUTH ASIAN RESPONSES TO THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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Abstract

The second decade of the 20th century saw two pivotal events from the Middle East and South Asia: the Armenian Genocide and the Khilafat movement. Both events were influential in setting into motion a cascade of events whose repercussions are still felt acutely to this day. Simultaneous interest in these two pivotal moments has generated considerable scholarship over the last few decades. However, the prospect that these two events could be interlinked in underlying ways is a proposition that has not yet found any traction. Using a range of sources, this article attempts an initial foray into a critically understudied area: the denial and justification of the Armenian Genocide that was integral to the Khilafat movement in South Asia. Arguably one of the most potent examples of denial perpetuated by a non-perpetrator, the South Asian version of this narrative was cobbled together through a convergence of interests between the Muslim and Hindu elite in the region. Unraveling this vast network of denialism and justification warrants attention to underlying motivations and power configurations across a kaleidoscope of identities and geography—which this article seeks to uncover.

Keywords: Armenian Genocide, Khilafat Movement, Genocide Denialism, South Asia, Mushir Hosain Kidwai, Gandhi.

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Introduction

In September 1919, I. S. Johannes, vicar of the Armenian Church in Calcutta, submitted an appeal on behalf of Armenians located within India to the Viceroy of India requesting the intervention of the British cabinet "urgently and respectfully" to stop the "further massacres and annihilation of Armenia." A second appeal was submitted in January 1920.[1] Discounting the bureaucratic *fait accompli* of both these appeals being transmitted to the British government's India Office in London, we do not know much about the official responses to these specific appeals from a prominent representative of the Armenian community in India.[2]

These fateful years coincided with the period when the Khilafat movement gained traction across India. Remembered as a critical junction in the history of South Asia, the main objective of the "famous Khilafat movement" was to save "Ottoman integrity and sovereignty."[3] The movement sought "to preserve the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire as they had been in 1914."[4]

How do these two singularly influential events of the 20th century connect? Having been neglected in scholarship up to the present, this article seeks to shed light on an essential element of the Khilafat movement that forms a bedrock of the South Asian post-colonial state-building project: the historical denial of the Armenian Genocide. Using a range of untapped sources, including archival materials sourced from multiple archives and libraries, political party documents, private papers, memoirs, religious periodicals, newspapers, and pamphlets, this article seeks to address four interrelated questions about Armenian Genocide denial that radiated from South Asia:

1) Why did one of the most vociferous non-perpetrator denialisms of the Armenian Genocide emerge from South Asia? What were the antecedents to this denialism that emerged post-1915, and how central was this denialist discourse to the Khilafat movement? How did prominent Khilafatists mount such a denial across geographies conversing in multiple ideological registers?

2) What centrality does the Khilafat movement hold within the elitist discourse and post-colonial South Asian statist historiography? How did Indian troops make sense of the tribulations they found themselves in alongside Armenians at Kut-al-Amarah?

3) How did the denialist narratives from multiple competing groups diverge or converge, and what warranted Islamic religious sects to front a united and calibrated denialism? What role did newspapers and journals play in raising, disseminating, or contesting the reportage on Armenian massacres?

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[1] Appeal from I.S. Johannes, Vicar of the Armenian church, Calcutta. Foreign and Political Department, September 1920, 531-534, National Archives of India.

[2] For more about the Armenian Genocide, see Raymond H. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*: *A Complete History* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011); Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity*: *The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[3] Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*: *Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain, 1877-1924* (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997), 189.

[4] Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*: *Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 1.

4) How was the assassination of Talaat Pasha covered in South Asia? And finally, did this non-perpetrator-sponsored denial have any consequences for Armenians at the Lausanne Conference?

For any reader, a cursory reading of the events leading up to the mobilization for the Khilafat movement, which radiated from South Asia to stave off the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the prospect of genocide denialism becomes easily discernible. As the war progressed and damning evidence emerged about the role of Turkish leadership in the perpetration of the genocide, for many, it became the *raison d'être* in the case of arguing for Turkish misrule. Accordingly, for those invested in salvaging the empire, denial was necessary. And for those who saw the Ottoman Empire as a surviving ember of religion and religious identity, especially the South Asian Muslim elite grappling with the loss of power and prestige within the Indian subcontinent after 1857, which brought the Mughal dynasty to an end,[5] denial of the genocide was a strategy of paramount importance. Denial of the Armenian Genocide and advocacy for restoring the Ottoman Empire to its pre-war status were intricately entwined and did not exist in isolation; in fact, the latter was predicated on the former.

This relationship, however, has not found space in scholarship in the last hundred years. Except for passing reference in a small body of research,[6] a broader, systematic examination of denialist discourse around the Armenian Genocide inherent to the Khilafat movement is practically nonexistent in Middle Eastern and South Asian historiographies.

An important notice is warranted here concerning the usage of the term "genocide denialism." While the coinage and conceptualization of genocide would materialize in the wake of the Second World War, denotative terms reflective of the import of the term "genocide" were widely known and wielded across the political spectrum within South Asia—including among imperial policymakers. Like the appeal of the Vicar from Calcutta, secret intelligence reports from colonial Delhi refer to the "annihilation of Armenia."[7] Telegrams dispatched from the British Commanding officer in Baghdad in September 1918 to the Director of Military Intelligence in London show how knowledge about the extermination of the "Armenian race" was marshaled for propaganda in which saving Armenians was the secondary objective; the primary objective involved influencing German public opinion towards anti-war attitudes, recognition of German state's complicity in massacres and, thereby Turkey.[8] By 1919, Army correspondence in South Asia shows us that the extermination of Armenians was used as a heuristic reference to make sense of similar attempts at the extermination of other groups. For instance, when calls for "practically direct extermination of Bashgul Kafirs" were issued by the "Amir," the British commanding officer in Chitral remarked, "as a sort of Armenian massacre,

[5] Khalid Ali, *Ali Brothers*: *The Life and Times of Maulana Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali* (Karachi: Royal Book Co, 2012), 16-18

[6] Simone Panter-Brick, *Gandhi and the Middle East*: *Jews, Arabs and Imperial Interests* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 55.

[7] Weekly Report of the Director, Central Intelligence, 15th March 1920. Home Department Proceedings, National Archives of India.

[8] War Diary, Force D, Volume 50 Part 1, From 1st to 15th September 1918, National Archives of India.

on our door-steps as it were, would be most undesirable."[9] South Asian missionaries, through their contacts from the Middle East, also mention the methods of extermination used during the Armenian Genocide, in which entire towns were depopulated.[10] Similarly, prominent reports by the German missionary Dr. Johannes Lepsius, written on the large-scale massacres of Armenians, were extensively used and cited by German missionaries in South Asia, such as Weitbrecht Stanton.[11] Finally, prominent newspapers, where elite discourse was disseminated, such as *The Leader*, *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Andhra Patrika*, and *Civil and Military Gazette*, ran multiple reports in both English and Indic languages from late 1915 that invariably captured the imported concepts behind the contemporary term of "genocide."

To be precise, this article is less about the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and more about what came to pass afterward. It is an inquiry into how a systematic and coordinated denial was mounted from South Asia, embodied by South Asian actors. As such, South Asian denial of the genocide is one of the most prominent non-perpetrator denialist narratives to have a discernible impact on the victims themselves—manifesting in the Lausanne settlement of 1923. It is also one of the most understudied cases of this phenomenon; it would not be farfetched to state that the scholarship on the Khilafat movement has not yet captured its true connection to the Armenian Genocide. Most of the members of the Khilafat movement, which also saw participation and advocacy from the Hindu elite as well, are now part of the "Modern India" canon of figures foundational to the freedom movement and the very conceptual idea of contemporary India. Most biographies and autobiographies of the leaders who participated in the Khilafat movement maintain a studied silence or completely evade the massacre of Armenians. In some cases, there is a subtle rationalization for this practice among particular figures, the most prominent being Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru had an unstated admiration for Mustafa Kemal for his ability to break with the past and steer the Turks towards nationhood. In the process of charting out modern Turkey's development in one of his proverbial works, Nehru deployed the denialist trope of Armenians being "used," resulting in "bloody massacres."[12] In addition to being punctuated by silences, this framework essentially informed the INC's (Indian National Congress) rendition of its involvement in the "freedom movement," which translated into the statist historiography. In AICC (All India Congress Committee) pamphlets distributed from 1970, the Khilafat movement is considered part of the "Nehru worldview." The pamphlets note that it was the first time that "Indian leadership took a direct interest in a foreign event" to "settle the Turkish question in accordance with the just and legitimate sentiments of the Indian Musalmans."[13]

This article is divided into four segments. The first part addresses the state of current scholarship on the Khilafat movement, its place in the historiography, and a brief encapsulation

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[9] Collection of Army Department correspondence relating to The European Crisis, 1914. Volume 710. 1919, National Archives of India. Since the correspondence is dated June 1919, the "Amir" referred to here is Amanullah Khan, who proclaimed himself Emir in February 1919.

[10] "At the hand of the Turk," India's Women and China's Daughters. December 1915. No.354, 233. Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham.

[11] The Church Missionary Review. December 1920. No.832. Church Missionary Society, Crowther Mission Studies Library.

[12] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1934), 783.

[13] "Congress Approach to International AffairsSharma, Shanker Dayal, and Indian National Congress. All India Congress Committee Publication, 1970, 6. Senate House Library, University of London.

of how denial of the Armenian Genocide was central to it. The second part traces the antecedents of South Asian Muslim engagement with the Ottoman Empire and the institution of a culture of "soft denial." This is followed by a detailed exploration and discussion of the denialist discourse through the writings of Khilafatists and prominent supporters of this ideology, such as Moshir Hosain Kidwai and Gandhi. The third segment is a foray into the role of religious sects in confronting the denialist discourse, followed by a brief snapshot of how Indians engaged with the Armenians at Kut-al-Amarah, including an analysis of contending societal narratives and responses to the assassination of Talaat Pasha. The fourth part constitutes an evaluation of the implications of South Asian denial of the Armenian Genocide at the Lausanne Conference.

Contextualizing the Khilafat Movement

As the article explores the nodes through which genocide denial was mounted within this context, it is vital to contextualize how the Khilafat movement is remembered and disseminated today.

Two contrasting narratives gel together within this historical moment: (1) this was an unprecedented event that saw the forging of unity between Hindus and Muslims, and yet, this religious comity is (2) a symptomatic trait of Indian society at large. This narrative dichotomy was simultaneously ever-present, yet it could also be torn apart when subjected to the slightest trial or interrogation. While the forging of this purported unity was fragile,[14] Gandhi saw an unprecedented opportunity in the Khilafat movement.

Following the partition of South Asia and the violence it spawned, this moment acquired greater importance for the newly independent Republic of India—as exemplified by Rajendra Prasad in 1949, almost a year before he became India's first president, in his foreword to the book "Communal Unity."[15]- encompassing a collection of articles written by Gandhi. Stressing the need for unity, these leaders looked back at the Khilafat movement as the apotheosis of an ideal: it was seen as a historical moment India "should aspire for" and strive to reach—regardless of how it was realized in actuality- partially or unsuccessfully.

As Krishna Kumar notes, "For the Indian school historian, the Khilafat marks the high point of Hindu-Muslim unity and hence the triumph of secularism as a guiding value of the nationalist movement."[16] Textbooks also further a dual-pronged argument that the movement reflected a religious-political consciousness that did not materialize at the higher plane of secular political consciousness. Simultaneously, the movement is depicted as a manifestation of anti-imperialistic feelings among Muslims.[17]

However, among prominent Khilafatists such as Mohamed Ali and Mushir Hosain Kidwai, this movement sought the perpetuation of the Ottoman Empire and, by extension, the British Empire. It was a movement for the imperial *status quo*, returning to the pre-war era.

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[14] Shabnum Tejani, *Indian Secularism*: *A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 145.
[15] Mahatma Gandhi, *Communal Unity* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1949), 3-5.
[16] Krishna Kumar, *Prejudice and Pride*: *School Histories of the Freedom Struggle in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Viking, 2001), 131.
[17] Ibid., 149.

Rumbold notes, "What most of them preferred was not so much the end of the Raj, as its support."[18] Inherent to framing the Khilafat movement as an anti-colonial or anti-imperialistic mobilization is a tacit understanding popular within the post-colonial critique that saw colonialism as synonymous with Western empires.

It does not help that one of the dominant modes of historical thinking in South Asia, Subaltern Studies, while focused on investigating the "ills of colonialism," has largely ignored a dominant, non-Western empire. Deringil writes in a footnote: "Witness the fact that there is no mention of the politics of pan-Islamism in Subaltern Studies vols. 1–10 (1982–1999)."[19] Monika Albrecht diagnoses this tendency to exclude the Ottoman Empire from postcolonial scholarship as having originated from Edward Said, who cast the Ottoman Empire as a "mere victim of Western imperialism or colonialism."[20] An extremely influential and widely cited figure across disciplines, Said is well known for deconstructing the colonial discourse and the imbrications of power/knowledge.

Within Turkey, the foundations of the modern Turkish state are premised on the denial of the Armenian Genocide. Any questioning of those ideological foundations may be perceived as abrupt to the very founding ideas of the Turkish state.[21]

If denialism is foundational to modern Turkey, the affirmation of the Khilafat movement in South Asia (especially within India) has had its complicated relationship with state-building. The institutionalization of denialist discourse within Turkey would only actualize in the 1970s, giving rise to a peculiar idiom: 'Sözde soykırım,' or the "so-called genocide/alleged genocide."[22] Simultaneously, the Khilafat movement occupies a similar status in crafting the foundational narrative of modern India. It is vital in fashioning an epistemic reservoir of self-perpetuating knowledge through education, remembrance, and commemoration.

While this element of denial itself warrants an extensive examination, this article is by no means a comprehensive study of how the process unfolded across newspapers, speeches, resolutions, and documents. Instead, the aim is to capture a snapshot of the zeitgeist underpinned by this denial narrative and discuss how invested figures marshaled and coordinated it. Accordingly, the article focuses on individuals at the forefront of footing the denialist discourse, such as Mushir Hosain Kidwai, Yakub Hasan Sait, the Ali Brothers, and others. While elites from different ideological/religious dispositions partook in denialist discourse, this article will focus on the Muslim Khilafatist elite since they engendered and championed this narrative vociferously with a disproportionate influence relative to society at large. While some Hindu elite also saw political value in vindicating the Khilafatist stand, the rationale and terms of the movement itself were primarily dictated by the Muslim elite.

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[18] Algernon Rumbold, *Watershed in India, 1914-1922* (London: Athlone Press, 1979), 196.
[19] Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (2003): 311-342.
[20] Monika Albrecht, ed., *Postcolonialism Cross-Examined*: *Multidirectional Perspectives on Imperial and Colonial Pasts and the Neocolonial Present* (London, New York: Routledge, 2020), 186.
[21] Paul Behrens, Nicholas Terry and Olaf Jensen, eds., *Holocaust and Genocide Denial*: *A Contextual Perspective* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 185.
[22] Doğan Gürpınar, "The Manufacturing of Denial: The Making of the Turkish 'Official Thesis' on the Armenian Genocide Between 1974 and 1990," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 18, no. 3 (2016), 217-240.

Seema Alavi's study on Muslim cosmopolitanism concluded that the Ottoman Empire nurtured a cosmopolis,[23] and that "Indian Muslim cosmopolitans who traversed this cosmopolis put up a fight to save it." Additionally, "the fight to protect the temporal power of the caliph, who had a global reputation of being the sultan of an ethnically and religiously diverse population that stretched across Asia and Europe, is often ignored in the Khilafatists' story. The movement's support for the caliph, per Alavi, represented a fight to save an important investor in the cultural empire of Muslims."[24]

However, this assessment is untenable for several reasons. Simplistic at best, it mirrors the perspective Muslim imperial proselytizers from South Asia offered. Furthermore, the Khilafat movement was an *anti-cosmopolitan* project. Deeply inattentive to history and lived experiences, the movement's prominent entrepreneurs, such as Abul Kalam Azad, sought to flatten identities and geographies to impose a monolithic character on a demographically complex region.[25] This was best exemplified in the relentless marshaling of the idea of *Jazirat-al-Arab*, which catered to the "exclusive rights of Muslims" throughout the movement.[26]

Similar sentiments, often conspiratorial and instrumentalized for this denialist discourse, were echoed by other Khilafat leaders such as Mohamed Ali at the All-India Khilafat Conference (AIKC) held in July 1921, who claimed that Armenians in Mesopotamia "would take advantage of their nearness to the holy places and revive their old enmities towards Islam. This Conference, therefore, demands that the above country be immediately vacated."[27]

At the 10th session of the AIKC in December 1923, Shaukat Ali would speak with a condescending tone towards Arabs for the revolt that had begun years before; Arabs in this Khilafatist worldview were dubbed as "quite ignorant of religion and worldly affairs, and their moral condition is hopelessly bad."[28]

One hallmark of the Khilafat movement was its support and dismissal from the Hindu elite, who acceded to a demand for unconditional subscription to particular religious precepts as prescribed and positioned by the Muslim elite. Leaders such as Motilal Lal Nehru adopted this frame of praxis, evident in the INC presidential address of 1919: "Muslim opinion alone to decide."[29] Nehru's speech is also essential for marshaling the logic of self-determination through religious majoritarianism in contexts such as Palestine and Armenia, favoring Muslims (and Turks) in both settings—something that the Khilafat elite had been demanding for years while eschewing the same belief in India. The "Muslim opinion" is evident from the Khilafat

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[23] Alavi's formulation defines the cosmopolis positively as a zone that transcends political, cultural, and territorial particularities.

[24] Seema Alavi, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 404–405.

[25] John M. Willis, "Azad's Mecca: On the Limits of Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanism," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 3 (2014): 574-581.

[26] Aijaz Ahmad, *Lineages of the Present*: *Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia* (London, New York: Verso, 2000), 69.

[27] Khursheed Kamal Aziz, *The Indian Khilafat Movement, 1915-1933*: *A Documentary Record* (Karachi: Pak Publishers, 1972), 186.

[28] Ibid., 276.

[29] Resolution 8 of the All-India Muslim League session, 1918 stated that the question of Khilafat is the prerogative of Muslims alone to decide. It strongly noted that any departure from such policy would lead to resentment and ill feeling amongst Muslims. This was a widely held opinion among Muslim elite.

delegation's letter to British Prime Minister Lloyd George, dated 10 July 1920, which explicitly denied the massacres and termed them as "interested propaganda."[30]

These narratives of denial became more acute and candid as time passed. As newspapers of various political and ideological persuasions within India had widely covered the massacres of the Armenian Genocide from late 1915 onwards, this coverage would include incontrovertible evidence that had been public from 1919 onwards.[31] Additionally, the Sultan issued an edict on December 14, 1918, that set legal measures into motion to hold the perpetrators responsible for the Armenian Genocide to account. However, the tribunals came to an end amid the rise of Mustafa Kemal in the early 1920s.[32]

Devoid of consensus-building measures concerning Khilafatist demands, the proceedings of INC and Khilafat meetings alike betray a display of non-negotiable claims regarding the denial of the Armenian Genocide drawn from religious precepts. The acceptance of these claims and the subsequent mobilization of large masses under this context by figures such as Gandhi would have detrimental consequences for the Armenians at the Lausanne Conference of 1923.

Precedents

From 1857 onwards, as the South Asian Muslim elite saw the manifestation of the last remaining Islamic imperial power in the form of the Ottoman Empire, they imbued their perception of the Empire with a wholly "Islamic" lens. In their view of the Empire, the emergence of a Turkish identity was merely incidental. Amid such a framing, defending the caliphate meant, by extension, denying any wrongdoing on the part of the empire. To implicate the empire is to implicate Islam and Muslim identity.

Most of the core members of the Khilafat movement were deeply invested in the Ottoman Empire before WWI began. After the subscriptions[33] raised by Zafar Ali Khan's newspaper Zamindar for Turks were submitted in 1912, Khalid Bey, the Turkish Consul General, visited the Badshahi mosque in Lahore in early 1914 to present a carpet. In the ensuing meeting, Abul Kalam Azad noted that "after the lapse of six centuries, Muhammadans, who were one family, had been brought together again; nothing could destroy this brotherhood."[34] Eager to forge a fellowship between the Muslims of India and Turkey, in 1913, Zafar Khan announced that a committee comprising himself, Mohamed Ali, and Talaat Bey had been established to actualize the proposal of setting up colonies in the names of "Zamindar" and "Comrade" in Anatolia.[35]

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[30] Khursheed Kamal Aziz, *The Indian Khilafat Movement, 1915-1933*, 145.
[31] Eugene L. Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*: *The Great War in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 389.
[32] Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide*: *Humanitarianism and Imperial Politics from Gladstone to Churchill* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 191.
[33] Subscriptions here refers to the funds raised by the newspaper Zamindar. Zafar Ali Khan had travelled to Constantinople to deliver these funds, probably to the Grand Vizier. Such subscriptions for the Ottoman cause were raised multiple times during the Khilafat movement as well.
[34] Chief Commissioner's Office, File no 54/1918, Delhi Archives.
[35] *Zamindar*, 28 April 1913, Selections from the Indian Newspapers published in the Punjab, Vol.26, No.1., Uttar Pradesh State Archives.

In an article from 1913, Zafar Ali Khan argues that the fortunes of Muslims and their trans-territorial brotherhood were best exemplified in the last remaining empire: the Young Turk-governed Ottoman Empire. He noted that his Ottoman acquaintances told him that they were Muslims first and only Ottomans later. Co-operating and standing by the Empire was crucial and meant the difference between destruction and existence for Indian Muslims. Accordingly, they (Indian Muslims) "have made up their mind to stand by Turkey through thick and thin." Khan found an endorsement for this stand from the Prophet, arguing that "A Moslem is unto another Moslem as a wall which is propped up by its various parts."[36]

From such a standpoint, the denial of the Armenian Genocide inherent to the Khilafat movement may not strike readers as a surprising development. It reflects the extension of a worldview that saw fraternal bonds inscribed through religiosity as paramount in importance. This becomes even more palpable later in this article, in which Mushir Hosain Kidwai's advocacy during the movement is explored. Additionally, there existed a culture of soft denial and justification of violence against Armenians from the late 19th century onwards, specifically proliferating among Muslim elites; voices in support of Armenians existed within this context, but the Khilafatist establishment far outnumbered them.

For instance, Mirza Hairat, writing in *Akhbar-i-Islam* (published from Agra) in 1896, stated that the "alleged Armenian atrocities" were untrue because the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople had publicly announced that "Armenians themselves were at fault" and, therefore, "the Turkish soldiers could not be blamed for massacring the rebels."[37]

Tangentially understood through this temporal framework, this interpretation of denialism from the late 19th century hews closer to that offered by Kevorkian's extensive scholarship on the Armenian Genocide.[38] The "collective thought process" that eventually culminated in the destruction of Ottoman Armenians "went back a long way."[39] Similarly, the genocidal process drawn out over the decades saw the state complicit in the "legal" robbery of the Armenians through laws that demonstrated the "eliminationist intent of successive Ottoman and Turkish governments."[40]

Germany, too, was impacted by widespread denial and justification of the Armenian Genocide.[41] But the most potent proliferation of non-perpetrator denialism and justification for the atrocities stemmed from South Asia—which has so far seen a surprising historiographical silence. A crucial and qualitative difference makes this element of South Asian denial more potent and detrimental than other types. As a détente power and one on the losing side of the war, German denialism did not have similar implications to South Asian denialism situated within the rubric of the British empire. South Asian denial translated to tangible diplomatic, strategic, and policy implications at a global scale.

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[36] "Indian Mussalmans and Pan-Islamism," *The Comrade*, 14 June 1913, 480.
[37] Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Received up to 8th January 1896. IOR L/R/5/73, British Library.
[38] Raymond H. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*: *A Complete History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).
[39] Ibid., 808.
[40] Taner Akçam and Ümit Kurt, *The Spirit of the Laws*: *The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 192.
[41] Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide*: *Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 272.

Within specialized scholarship on the Khilafatist movement, in addition to neglect and inattention, the issue of Armenians had been nullified by frequent regurgitation of Turkish denialism. One of the most comprehensive works on the Khilafat movement refers to the genocide of 1915 as "alleged Armenian massacres."[42] Qureshi cites Salahi Sonyel as his source; Dyer refers to Sonyel as a Turkish apologist for his "extremely partisan stance" on the matter.[43] Gandy remarked that Sonyel was using inverted commas to engender disbelief about the Armenian massacres.[44] Gurpinar critiques Sonyel for having made a career through the propagation of denialist literature.[45] Other extensive works on the Khilafat movement written in the late 20th century barely make any reference to the Armenian Genocide.

Within the Genocide Studies discipline, in tracing genocide denialism, Hovannisian identifies four different phases of denial that overlap with one another: "(1) absolute denial, (2) suppression, (3) rationalization, and (4) relativization."[46] It is interesting to note that all these phases existed simultaneously within South Asian discourse on the massacres of Armenians.

Mapping the Denialist Discourse

As scholarship investigating South Asian denialist discourse on the Armenian Genocide remains practically nonexistent and lacks any inherent theorization, this article should be viewed as an initial foray into figures and writings little understood and written about within this context.

A *taluqdar* who belonged to a prominent family, Mushir Hosain Kidwai had long been a proponent of the proliferation of the Ottoman Empire. A proselytizer of sorts, he viewed himself as a *Pan-Islamist* whose ideals were most evidently visible within the Ottoman Empire. In April of 1909, referring to the deportation of Indians from the Transvaal, he would advise in "Telegraph" that, if not for the unfavorable situation, Hindus and Muslims facing persecution should opt to settle somewhere in the Ottoman Empire since the Turkish government was "the most tolerant under the sun."[47] Incidentally, at the time of this comment, the infamous Adana massacres would ensue shortly afterward.

Earlier research on Kidwai had framed him as a "champion" of the Ottoman cause.[48] Recent scholarship has characterized Kidwai as one of the "most significant Indian communist intellectuals"[49] or possessing a "sympathy for Bolshevism."[50] For Aydin, Kidwai and his pan-

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[42] M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics*: *A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918–1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 139.
[43] Gwynne Dyer, "Turkish 'Falsifiers' and Armenian 'Deceivers': Historiography and the Armenian Massacres," *Middle Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (1976): 99-107.
[44] Christopher Gandy, "Clio with One Eye: A New Book on the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 120, no. 2 (1988): 370-377.
[45] Dogan Gurpinar, "The Manufacturing of Denial,"
[46] Richard G. Hovannisian, "Denial of the Armenian Genocide 100 Years Later: The New Practitioners and Their Trade," *Genocide Studies International* 9, no. 2 (2015): 228-247..
[47] "Advice of a Mahomedan," *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 April *1909*.
[48] Syed Tanvir Wasti, "Mushir Hosain Kidwai and the Ottoman Cause," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 2 (1994): 252-261.
[49] Kris Manjapra, *M. N. Roy*: *Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 46.

Islamic thought "contained powerful and universalist ideals such as the demands for dignity and justice for religious, civilizational, and racial groups."[51] Stephens has sought to paint Kidwai as a figure who sought to critique capitalist exploitation from an anti-colonial and Islamic lens and simultaneously propose an alternative system endemic to Islamic socialism.[52]

In an earlier influential work, Aydin cites Kidwai's works "The future of the Muslim Empire" and "İslama çekilen kılıç, yahut, Alemdaran-ı İslamı müdafaa: Osmanlı heyet-i murahhasasının sulh konferansına takdim ettiği muhtıra ve Paris sulh konferansı onlar meclisi tarafından aldığı cevaba nazaran Osmanlı devlet İslamiyesi meselesinin tenkidi"[53]—published by The Central Islamic Society, London, calling it "an articulate expression of both the early pan-Islamic embrace of Wilsonianism and pan-Islamic disillusionment with the Paris Peace Conference."[54] Founded in 1886, the Central Islamic Society had prominent denialists, many of whom held high office.[55] Incidentally, the works cited and utilized by Aydin as symptomatic of Kidwai's thought indulge in Armenian Genocide denial and justification; both of these phenomena will be explored later in this article.

Even if we are to hazard the idea that these interpretations stem from an "emic" reading of the texts, the conclusions derived from such readings are untenable. This is especially telling when the numerous claims in Kidwai's works can easily be identified as falsifiable. Within the existing scholarship on Kidwai's role and influence in this respect, perhaps only Lerna Ekmekcioglu has referred to Kidwai's propagandist booklets and denialism for what they are.[56]

Kidwai's overarching motivation, through his letters, articles, books, pamphlets, and speeches from 1905 to 1935, ensured the propagation of Pan-Islamism.

Similarly, colonial intelligence would idiomatically "miss the forest for the trees" when assessing Kidwai and Yakub Hasan, another prominent Khilafatist from Madras presidency. Both were dubbed as "pro-Bolsheviks" in intelligence reports.[57]

Kidwai's overarching motivations become more discernible as we trace his views to all the ideological camps he sought to inhabit.

As a member of the National Liberal Club, Kidwai wrote to Lord Curzon and Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, in May 1921, suggesting that Britain should revert to

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[50] Cemil Aydın, "The Ottoman Empire and the Global Muslim Identity in the Formation of Eurocentric World Order, 1815-1919," in *Civilizations and World Order: Geopolitics and Cultural Difference*, eds. Fred R. Dallmayr, M. A. Kayapınar and İsmail Yaylacı (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 144.

[51] Cemil Aydin, "Globalizing the Intellectual History of the Idea of the "Muslim World"," in *Global Intellectual History*, eds. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 180.

[52] Julia Anne Stephens, *Governing Islam*: *Law, Empire, and Secularism in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 157.

[53] This is the Turkish translation of Kidwai's book. The full title of the book in English goes thus— "The Sword Against Islam or A Defence of Islam's Standard- Bearers: A Close and Critical Study of the Question of the Muslim Ottoman Empire with Reference to the Memorandum of the Ottoman Delegates and Its Reply by the Council of Ten at Paris."

[54] Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*: *Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 133-134.

[55] For instance, see the members listed. *The African Times and Orient Review*, February 1918.

[56] Lerna Ekmekcioglu, "Republic of Paradox: The League of Nations, Minority Protection Regime and the New Turkey's Step-Citizens," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 4 (2014): 657-679.

[57] Report on Bolshevik activity in India, File no 5(a), CCO, December 1920, Delhi Archives.

"her traditional friendship" with the Turkish "empire"[58] and "regain the goodwill of Islam" since that would nullify any necessity for Muslim states and people to look elsewhere for friendship. In this six-page letter to Montagu, Kidwai expresses the Khilafat delegation's viewpoint concerning the modifications to the Treaty of Sevres. Divided into two parts, the letter dwells on the Turkish population, which would become contemporary Turkey and the Arabic-speaking populations of the Ottoman Empire. A notable absence of any reference to Armenia or Armenians also marks it. The urgency in Kidwai's writing is palpable when he remarks that "319 million people felt deeply irritated at these repeated rebuffs,"[59] referring to the whole population of India.

Writing in "Muslim Outlook," a letter titled "Bolshevism in the East," Kidwai noted how the Turkish empire reflected a bulwark against advances by the Czars. He opined, "With Britain now destroying Turkey and alienating Islam, it is effectively unchecking the Russian domination of the East. And as things stand, people in India, Asia Minor, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Afghanistan would welcome Russia even if it is Bolshevik."[60]

Very often, the urgency of action that Kidwai sought to extract from Gandhi in support of his Pan-Islamic priorities (Khilafatism and Ottoman Empire) pitted him against other movements that sought to facilitate Indian society, evident from a letter he wrote to the newspaper *The Leader*.[61] His frustration with Gandhi's emphasis on *charkha*, for example, is also evident in his letter to Seth Chotani: "In the head of our brothers no other thing except charkha (spinning wheel) comes. May the curse of God be on this charkha." [62]

As a motivated investor in the preservation and propagation of Islam and Islamic identity, which (according to Kidwai) had entered a state of crisis due to the looming disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, he employed all cards at his disposal to restrain and roll back these developments. If genocide denial was one metaphorical "arrow in the quiver," speaking on behalf of British interests to the British in British newspapers was another: "The greatest bulwark of the British rule in India were Muslims." If the Khilafat movement's demands were not heeded, India could become "an Ireland."[63] He warned audiences that "Englishmen should not wreck the British Empire in the East for "any alien people, whether they be Greeks or Armenians, Bulgars or Serbians."[64]

Kidwai wrote to prominent stakeholders and politicians worldwide, including US President Woodrow Wilson, as part of his advocacy work.[65] He attached his pamphlet "The Future of the Muslim Empire," with Marmaduke Pickthall writing the preface. In his endorsement, Pickthall remarked that these views were "held by a population" more significant

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[58] The Turkish Empire in Kidwai's worldview stood as an Islamic power furthering the cause of Islam. Much of the subcontinent's Muslim elite saw Mustafa Kemal as a "Ghazi" championing the cause of Islam. The abolition of the Caliphate was an unexpected shock to many. In his later writings, Kidwai severely chastised Mustafa Kemal.
[59] Turkey. FO 800/151, The National Archives. UK.
[60] Weekly Report of the Special Bureau of Information, October 1920, FO 262/1459, The National Archives. UK.
[61] *The Leader*, 14 May 1922.
[62] Afzal Iqbal, *Life and Times of Mohamed Ali: An Analysis of the Hopes, Fears and Aspirations of Muslim India from 1878 to 1931* (New Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I-Delli, 1978), 291.
[63] "Disaffection in India," *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 27 August 1920.
[64] "The Claims of Greece to Thrace," *The Westminster Gazett*e, 24 September 1919.
[65] Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 5 Peace Conference Correspondence and Documents, 1914-1921, Subseries D Unofficial Correspondence, 1919 March, Library Of Congress. Washington, D.C.

than that of the British Isles. Including several excerpts in this article for analysis is necessary to understand the Khilafatist worldview present within this work fully.

Kidwai notes that "My interest, like that of other Muslims, in the Ottoman Empire is religious." For him, the Ottoman Empire was the only "non-Christian Empire" within the international order. As a true Muslim, he has "no community of interest with Turks" except for a religious affinity. Accordingly, the interests of Islam transcend the "limitations of narrow nationalism or local patriotism," and non-Muslims "fail to appreciate this unique characteristic" of this relationship fully. In trying to make a strong case for supporting the Turks and their "civilizing genius," Kidwai would end up conjuring and purveying essentialized images for consumption: that the Turks got tainted by that part of certain "nationalities" which had once been great but had "completely degenerated." The Turks gave "full liberty to the Arabs," but they "robbed and murdered the pilgrims" of the Empire. They gave the same liberty to Jews and the ones who settled in Palestine, who "were mostly the scum of foreign countries." As a nation, Kidwai notes that the Turks did not contribute as much in terms of civilization, culture, the progress of humanity, and the cause of Islam as the Arabs and Persians did. In the civilizational hierarchy, the Turks as a nation have "no claim to equality with the Arabs or Persians," but Islam does not accord legitimacy to nationality. If the Turks can claim allegiance today from other Muslims, per Kidwai, it is solely because they kept the banner of Islam flying high.

Kidwai had a distaste for pan-ethnic ideologies such as Pan-Turanianism and Pan-Arabism. These ideas were deemed "tolerable" if they aided Pan-Islamism but not if they militated against it. The Turks "deserve[d] to be given a fair trial" not because they were Turks—but only because the grandness of Islam is actualized through them. This is where Wasti's assessment of Kidwai falters, as though this line of thought is an Ottoman cause *only* as long as Islam holds a central binding component to this movement: "If the Turks gave up Islam and their sovereign became a heretic, then the Muslims would no longer recognize him as their Khalifa and would do their best to retake from him the Banner of Islam. They might even seek the help of non-Muslim powers in their task, but all this should be left to Muslims themselves."

If it was denialism that was championed elsewhere, here we see a justification for the massacres in question: "It is not a matter of surprise if on rare occasions the Turks lost their self-control and committed some excesses which were trumpeted in the world as atrocities." Attached as an appendix is M.A. Ansari's speech delivered to the All-India Muslim League Session in Delhi in 1918. In contrast to Aydin, if Kidwai's works proved to be a testament to denialism and justification of the Armenian Genocide, Ansari's references to Jerusalem and Palestine sought to appeal to Wilson's racial prejudices and the raw logic of conquest:

> Just as President Wilson would refuse to hand over the government of the United States to the head of some forgotten Red Indian tribe or just as the whites in the European colonies would decline to withdraw in favor of the native locals, or even just as we would oppose a revival of the Bhil and Gond Empire in India, Palestine cannot be handed over to the Zionists, whose sole claim to that land is, that centuries before the birth of Christ, the ancestors of the wandering sons of Israel had once lived in it. The achievements of

> Salahuddin Ayyubi and the blood of millions of mujahideen did not flow, in the days of the Crusades, to lose it to a people who cannot put forward any recognizable claim to it.[66]

Kidwai and the views of Khilafatist advocacy can be broadly summed up in an article that Kidwai would attach to the pamphlet as capturing the sentiment: *"The Indian Mahommedan attitude towards Turkey is not one of reason but of strong religious feeling and passionate sentiment. It takes no account of the hard facts of the situation brought about by Turkey's participation in the war on the side of Germany and the treatment of races like the Armenians."*[67]

Other members of the Khilafat delegation, including Mohamed Ali, Sulaiman Nadvi, and Syud Hossain, also sent cables to President Wilson. The cable insinuates an acknowledgment of the Armenian massacres—but does not directly refer to it: *"The delegation urges that protection of Christian populations in Asia Minor does not necessitate or justify an affront to the conscience of Islam."*[68]

This is the closest that the Muslim members of the Khilafat movement would ever come to acknowledging the genocide, and it should be understood within the context of how the Armenian Genocide was primarily understood and accepted as an indisputable fact in the United States. It ends with warning the Allied powers that pursuing such a course would result in "unfortunate consequences in India."[69] Similar messages were addressed to the "Premiers and leading men of England, France, Italy" and Japan.[70]

A couple of weeks later, the same trio would float the demand for the formation of an inquiry commission on the "alleged massacres" with representatives selected by the All-India Moslem League. It would accuse the reports about Armenian massacres as "propagandist" produced by partisans of the Armenian cause. The commission, the delegation demanded, should include men acquainted with the "laws of war" and those initiated into the "peoples and languages" of Anatolia. According to the trio, the candidates that fit the bill are Indian Muslims. And so, there ought to be a certain number on the inquiry commission.[71]

Among the significant, influential newspapers, one of the most discernible turnarounds concerning coverage around the Armenian massacres was the *Bombay Chronicle*—primarily through the editorship of Marmaduke Pickthall. In the initial years of the war, the Chronicle covered the massacres extensively as the battle ended. As measures seen as debilitating to the existence of the Ottoman Empire were inflicted within treaties and legislation, denialism took root. Pickthall, an Anglo convert to Islam, had worked with Indian Muslims through the Islamic Information Bureau (IIB), which produced a weekly newspaper titled "Muslim Outlook." The IIB was an "active center of pro-Turkish propaganda," and Yakub Hasan would go on to found

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[66] Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 5 Peace Conference Correspondence and Documents, 1914-1921, Subseries D Unofficial Correspondence, 1919 March.
[67] "Moslems' Concern for Caliphate," *The Times*, 20 January 1919.
[68] Cable to President Wilson. Central File: Decimal File 867.00/1173, Internal Affairs of States, Turkey, Political Affairs. Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-1929., National Archives (United States).
[69] Ibid.
[70] "Khilafat Deputation's Appeal to Allies," *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 March 1920.
[71] "Letter to Daily Herald," *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 April 1920.

its French equivalent, "Bureau Islamique," and its journal, the "Echo de l'Islam."[72] Kidwai had invited Pickthall to work on the weekly newspaper "Muslim Outlook," although the two had divergent viewpoints.[73]

1920 brought about a serendipitous alignment of interests between the Khilafat delegation in Britain, which needed a public figure to champion their cause, and Pickthall's need for financial security: Pickthall was invited by Omar Subhani, the spokesperson for the Bombay Chronicle's management team, to take over the mantle upon the departure of its "Radical pro-Turk editor," Benjamin Guy Horniman. Horniman had earlier insisted that solely Muslim viewpoints mattered in the Ottoman Empire, referring to any non-Muslim contestation as "absurd and perverse."[74]

Pickthall's mandate at the Bombay Chronicle included explaining the "Turkish problem" to readers and working to "co-operate with the Ali Brothers and Mahatma Gandhi" as editor.[75] In April of 1920, Gandhi cited Pickthall's article in the influential British weekly magazine "The New Age" to perpetuate the denial of Armenian massacres in response to Edmund Candler's open letter to Gandhi on the "plight of Armenians" during the genocide.[76]

By 1921, Pickthall became close to Gandhi, opting to share platforms with him.[77] Necessary to our understanding is that Pickthall had held deep-seated animus against Armenians years before he had begun to work with IIB or the *Bombay Chronicle*.[78] In December 1915, contesting reports of Armenian massacres, Pickthall remarked in one of his letters to the editor of "The New Age" that "the Christianity of the Armenians is not the Christianity of an enlightened Englishman."[79] In May 1919, almost a year before Pickthall's article was cited by Gandhi, Pickthall rationalized and justified the massacre of Armenians in an article in "The New Age." For Pickthall, the "hot-blooded" Christians of the Turkish Empire were enamored by the "hopes" held out by the "Russian agents" and began "to plan rebellion with the simple object of despoiling and exterminating the non-Christian Turk." This invited the anger of the "wilder sort" expressed in "wild ways"- deportation of Armenians was a means of "vengeance on a race of traitors." The article also extended this rationalization and justification to the 19th-century massacres.[80] Writing a couple of weeks later in a letter to the editor of *The New Age*, Pickthall remarked that "in the eyes of Asia," Armenians were a "race of traitors, spies, blacklegs, perjurers, lickspittles, liars, utterly devoid of shame or honor."[81]

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[72] Kenneth Mcpherson, *"How Best Do We Survive?"*: *A Modern Political History of the Tamil Muslims* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 106.
[73] K. Humayun Ansari, "Pickthall, Muslims of South Asia, and the British Muslim Community of the Early 1900s," in *Marmaduke Pickthall: Islam and the Modern World*, ed. Geoffrey P. Nash (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 23-46.
[74] Milton Israel, *Communications and Power*: *Propaganda and the Press in the Indian Nationalist Struggle, 1920-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 226.
[75] Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), 75.
[76] *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*: *Vol 17* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1977), 456–460.
[77] Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*: *British Muslim* (London, New York: Quartet Books, 1986), 57.
[78] Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 133.
[79] Marmaduke Pickthall, "Letters to the Editor. The Armenian Massacres." *The New Age*, December 1915, 141-142.
[80] Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Cause of Massacres," *The New Age*, 1 May 1919, 4-7.
[81] Marmaduke Pickthall, "Asia and the Armenians: Letters to the Editor," *The New Age*, 15 May 15, 1919, 49-50.

Contrary to several arguments made within existing scholarship, as Congress and Khilafat resolutions from this period demonstrate, endorsement for Gandhian non-violence was often paired alongside the championing of a contrasting zeitgeist that supported both permissive violence and "violence as resistance." We get a snapshot of this worldview alongside an attempt at underplaying Armenian massacres from a Khilafat-sponsored event that took place in 1920—which Gandhi and Kidwai both attended. Gandhi's message while advocating for a resolution during the event hints at his enumeration and understanding of his religion, Hinduism—and that of Islam, mediated and informed by collaborations with the Muslim elite. While his religion taught him to resort to non-violence by default, there were no such criticisms for Muslims if they were to follow their religion. If the Turkish settlement was in dissonance with the efforts of the Hindu-Muslim coalition, Muslims had a carte blanche to "follow the law of Shariat" to achieve their goals. Implicit to this framing and distinction was a permissiveness for a display of strength and, if the situation warranted, one of violence; Kidwai supported the resolution and remarked on the "exaggerated stories of Armenian massacres" during the event.[82] Gandhi's rationale for joining the Khilafat movement, which started in April 1920, would hinge on this denialist narrative.[83]

In May of 1920, a particularly influential liberal newspaper, *The Leader*, would remark on Gandhi's doubts surrounding the massacres of Armenians. Noting that the Turkish delegates had admitted their role in massacres in 1919, the publication also pointed out the widely publicized and influential work by the American ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, titled "Secrets of the Bosphorus."[84] In the same issue, extracts from Morgenthau's work were published, which detailed the massacres that took place during the genocide. Knowledge about the massacres was widely known, yet the practice of engaging in denial had its utility for Gandhi and other elites.

Another resolution, passed in 1922 at the Indian National Congress 37th session at Gaya, congratulated "Ghazi Kemal Pasha and the Turkish nation on their recent successes," alluding to the military victories. Sarojini Naidu, who moved the resolution, remarked that Kemal Pasha "had broken once for all the bondage of Asiatic peoples." One of the speakers, G.H. Rao, provided the reasoning for this stand: though Satyagraha (i.e., non-violence) is the supreme and the highest of the methods in achieving the objectives, there are other imperfect yet legitimate methods to achieve legitimate ends—such as the deployment of violence.[85]

Sects and Denialism

Integral to this denialist discourse was the coalescence of the Muslim elite from various sects to mounting a collective denial of the massacres despite having been driven apart by unpalatable disagreements in the past.

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[82] "The Khilafat Day at Bombay," *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24 March 1920.
[83] *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 349–52.
[84] "Armenia's Agony" *The Leader*, 15 May 1920.
[85] "The Indian National Congress- Thirty-Seventh Session at Gaya," *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28 December 1922.

While Aga Khan's involvement in the Khilafat movement has been covered elsewhere,[86] his role in furthering genocide denialism is yet to be studied. Similarly, the Ahmadiyya Community's role in denial and justification has received no attention. Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, then the head of the Ahmadiyya Community, would write to the All-India Moslem Conference, held at Lucknow on the 21st of September 1919: his position, in short, was that Ahmadis would not accept the Sultan as the Khalifa—but would support the Khilafat movement. This issue is also crucial because Ahmad denied the veracity of reports about massacres yet goes on to note that even in the unlikeliest case of them being genuine, similar and more severe killings have taken place elsewhere.[87]

As the leading publication of the Ahmadiyya movement, the *Review of Religions* sheds valuable light on the community's positions on Turkey and Armenians' fate. It published multiple articles spread across a range of topics that trivialized the massacres through the use of systematic juxtaposition,[88] in which it simultaneously rationalized and denied the massacres.[89] The movement saw any mention of Armenian massacres as "unfounded" and as deliberately tarring Islam and, by extension, as a gross impediment to the proselytizing efforts it was leading, especially in England — "But the invitation to Islam is not confined to selected people and learned societies only. The masses are invited to Islam in open-air lectures in Hyde Park three days a week, and hundreds of English men and women attend our lectures."

And so, Mubarak Ali, the Imam of the mosque at Southfields, London, argued that—"Questions regarding the intolerance of the Turks and Armenian massacres are often raised, and we have to answer these charges unfounded."[90]

This is also evident from other ancillary publications of the Ahmadiyya movement, such as "The Light and Islamic Review." The December 1922 issue would carry a story from the "Moslem world" wherein a young Turk, after witnessing many atrocities on Armenians, deserts and ultimately converts to Christianity. The publication would see this as representative of an onslaught on Islam by proselytizing "Christian literature" and would strongly emphasize the necessity of disseminating "Islamic literature" to combat this trend.[91]

Khalid Sheldrake would also pen an article challenging the death toll of Armenians during the genocide, asking, "Where do these people come from? We are told that time after time, they are massacred, yet they still claim numerical superiority."[92] This would be an oft-repeated line of rhetorical questioning about the genocide employed to call into question the severity and impact of the massacres.

The September 1925 issue of "Islamic Review" trivialized the issue by claiming that "stories of atrocities often get largely magnified, and I have heard it said that if less than half of

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[86] Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics*, 110; Soumen Mukherjee, *Ismailism and Islam in Modern South Asia*: *Community and Identity in the Age of Religious Internationals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 82; B. R. Nanda, *Gandhi*: *Pan-Islamism, Imperialism, and Nationalism in India* (Bombay, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 366.

[87] "The Future of Turkey," *The Review of Religions* Vol 28 (Oct & Nov 1919): 289-316.

[88] "The Turkish Peace and the Muslims' Duty and Cross as a Symbol of Meekness and Love: A Study of Facts," *The Review of Religions* Vol 19 (June 1920), 161-192.

[89] "Jewish Massacres," *The Review of Religions* Vol 21 (October 1921), 401.

[90] Mubarak Ali, "Islam in England," *The Review of Religions* Vol 21 (March & May 1922), 187-189.

[91] "How Muslims Become Christians," *The Light*, 1 December 1922, 1.

[92] "More 'massacres,'" *The Islamic Review* 10, June-July 1922, 267-271.

all the massacres of Armenians had taken place, there would not now be a single Armenian left!"[93]

Far from being only pro-Turkish propaganda, these efforts constitute a deliberately calibrated skepticism of the reality of massacres, which were seen as an impediment to proselytization efforts. The remedy to this concern was a resounding denial of the atrocities.

From the Madras Presidency, denial, coupled with disinformation efforts, would be spearheaded by Yakub Hasan Sait. In his address as the chairman of the reception committee of the Madras Khilafat Conference, Hasan claimed that "Armenian bands massacred more than one million Muslims previous to the measures of deportation."[94]

An Urdu-speaking Muslim who had settled in the Madras presidency, Hasan would gradually gain the support of the local mercantile community. Largely Urdu-speaking, these wealthy merchants were "well suited to provide leadership." They had performed the *haj* and had a "reputation for piety."[95] During the Khilafat movement, Yakub Hasan engaged in a patronage relationship with Abdul Hakeem, Vice President of the Muslim League of Madras, who had made his fortune in the "skin and hides trade." Hasan, in turn, would patronage "Muslim Outlook" through the dissemination of Khilafat-affiliated funds. While navigating these relationships, Hasan would be accused of embezzlement of Khilafat funds, leading to differences with another Pan-Islamist from the Madras Presidency, Abdul Majid Sharar, the proprietor and Editor of "Qaumi Report."[96]

Within the Madras Presidency, as McPherson notes, there were divergences between Tamil and Urdu Muslim worldviews.[97] Hasan's advocacy towards Turkey was strengthened further through his marriage to the daughter of Turkish diplomat Ahmad Attaoullah Bey, a former Turkish consul in Singapore.

As a strong advocate of mercantile interests, Hasan's commitment to non-cooperation and *swaraj* appears to have only extended so far: it did not ask for political *swaraj*.[98] Hasan's commitment to *Swaraj* was merely an extension of the mercantilist interests. It did not possess the intellectual and multi-dimensional heft Gandhi had developed in his conception of *swaraj*. At its bare minimum, *swaraj* meant "self-rule."[99]

To contextualize this, Hasan was backed by Muslim businessmen and traders affiliated with the Madras Presidency—many of whom were "goaded into support of the [K]hilafat movement," not from a concern for the Turkish Sultan's fate, but more for the post-war "contraction of piece goods, skin and leather trades."[100]

The Andhra Provincial Conference also passed a resolution "promising every possible [means of] support to Turks" if war were to break out with Britain. While the new Secretary of

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[93] "The Islamic Reverence for Women," *The Islamic Review* 28, September 1925, 314-319.
[94] "The Khilafat Question," *The Leader*, 21 April 1920.
[95] Mcpherson, *"How Best Do We Survive?"*, 46.
[96] History of Freedom Movement, NO 81, 1919, Tamil Nadu State Archives.
[97] Mcpherson, "How Best Do We Survive?", 75.
[98] "Indian Reforms: A Symposium," *The Indian Review*, October 1919.
[99] Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power, Indian Politics 1915-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12.
[100] David Arnold, *The Congress in Tamilnad*: *Nationalist Politics in South India, 1919-1937* (Columbia: South Asia Books, 1977), 41.

State would express apprehensiveness and concern at the resolution and its impact, the British Home Department would brush away any consequences this action could have, terming it "hot air." However, a concern existed that the Turks might use the resolution as a "moral support" for their aims at the Lausanne Conference. Eventually, the Home Department handled the issue by starving the resolution of any attention or action.[101]

In contrast, the influential non-Brahmin movement in the Madras Presidency—consisting of landowning castes—would cover the plight of Armenians in multiple issues through its chief publication, "Justice," while simultaneously opining on the issue of self-determination.[102] In doing so, the movement appeared to support its aims and concerns selectively. This sociopolitical contrast demonstrates a superficial, if not incongruent, juxtaposition in which the non-Brahmin stood for the Armenian—and the Brahmin for the Turk.

Broadly, South Asian denialist discourse may be understood as radiating from two sources: those within India and those outside India. Interestingly, this disinformation campaign took the form of a "circular" flow of information where information relayed from local sources would be printed as part of publications elsewhere—only to be replicated back in India and published again at the regional level, thus giving these reports a veneer of corroboration and objectivity. This circular relationship is candidly demonstrated in the "Muslim Outlook" case, published from London—yet funded through Yakub Hasan from the Madras Presidency.

The Debacle at Kut-al-Amarah

Three developments would substantially inform and alter the worldviews of many as World War I raged: the Armenian Genocide, the Arab Revolt, and the debacle for the Indian and British army troops at Kut-al-Amarah. While the Arab Revolt has received some treatment within the existing Khilafat scholarship,[103] Discussion on the other two events has been largely absent. With regard to diplomacy and policy formulation, strong reactions to the treatment of prisoners at Kut-al-Amarah would produce some movement. This same pattern, however, did not happen with the Armenians, as the outcome of the Lausanne Settlement would attest.

After the Ottoman siege of General Charles Townshend's troops at Kut-al-Amarah, British and Indian troops held on from December 7, 1915, to April 29, 1916, surrendering amid 2000 Allied soldier deaths—and resulting in the capture of 12,000 men.[104] The surrender would

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[101] Resolution passed at the Andhra Provincial Conference, Home Political, file no. 14, 1922, National Archives of India.

[102] "The Armenians," *Justice*, 20 December 1918, 6.

[103] Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*; Ali A. Allawi, *Faisal I of Iraq* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Conor Meleady, "Negotiating the Caliphate: British Responses to Pan-Islamic Appeals, 1914-1924," *Middle Eastern Studies* 52, no. 2 (2016), 182-197; Timothy J. Paris, *Britain, the Hashemites, and Arab Rule, 1920-1925*: *The Sherifian Solution* (London : Frank Cass, 2003); John Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj, 1865-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); A. C. Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India, 1919-1924* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972).

[104] In 1916, Kut al Amarah, situated 250 miles from Baghdad, saw the surrender of the British-Indian army. The debacle at Kut was one of Britain's first major military disasters in the Middle East. It is also widely believed among military historians to be one of the worst humiliations ever faced by the British army.

place prisoners of war (POWs) in conditions of severe humanitarian crisis, leading to human suffering on an enormous scale.[105]

However, the debacle at Kut is essential for another interrelated reason: it was here that British and Indian troops encountered Armenians—in a qualitatively different state from the context of the deportations during the atrocities and massacres, but in a harrowing and deplorable state. While both groups were subjected to death marches, the Ottoman interplay between design and nonchalance constituted a key difference: the Armenians were driven across the Syrian desert in a "coordinated policy of extermination" while the Kut prisoners were not "slated for killing"—but no attempt was made to rescue them.[106] The troops of the Maratha Light Infantry, hidden under the appellation of 1/17th Infantry in the Welsh division, consisted of a large part of the body of POWs at Kut-al Amarah in Mesopotamia in 1915.[107]

Indian and British troops would frequently find themselves marching in the opposite direction of the deported Armenians. Krikoris Balakian, a priest, wrote:

They wore short pants that came down to their knees; their legs were covered in wounds and sores; they were dirty and desiccated … their cheekbones were protruding, their eyes withdrawn deep into the sockets. The Indians were practically naked, some with just a few rags on their heads, according to custom; in the darkness, there was an illusion of moving ghosts. 'Are there any Armenians among you? … Give us a piece of bread … We haven't had anything to eat for days.' We were dumbfounded that they spoke English … that they were British … distant friends sharing our fate, asking us for bread … What an irony indeed.[108]

Indian troops such as Sisir Prasad Sarbadhikari of the Bengal Ambulance Corps, a survivor of the death marches and imprisonment, would later write in 1918 of how Armenians were massacred—and how Indians helped in concealing Armenian children from Turkish officers.[109] Newspapers in India would also cover stories of prisoners in Kut-al-Amarah returning and being celebrated for their perseverance in the face of such a crisis.

Despite this, the humanitarian crisis at Kut would be systematically denied by Khilafatists, and the much later development of the exchange of wounded prisoners would be touted as an affirmation of Turkish "humaneness and bravery." Writing from London in 1919, Kidwai hailed the "heroes of Gallipoli and Kut" while leaving absent any reference to Indian troops and the trials they faced. Years before, *Resalat* published from Calcutta that a "still greater sorrow" was that "some of the lying journals always falsely charge the Turks with oppression and cruelty."[110] M. N. Roy would also note that Indian troops captured at Kut were

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[105] Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *The Last Treaty*: *Lausanne and the End of the First World War in the Middle East* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 30.
[106] Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*, 272.
[107] John D. Grainger, *The Battle for Syria, 1918-1920* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 38.
[108] Grigoris Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha*: *A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 295.
[109] "Sisir Prasad Sarbadhikari, "Thirty Months a Prisoner in Turkey," *The Calcutta Review*, 1918, 150-159.
[110] Report on Indian Newspapers and Periodicals in Bengal for the week ending the 1st of January 1916, No. 27 of 1915, Uttar Pradesh State Archives.

exposed to "anti-British propaganda" at the behest of the Berlin committee through a group of Indians.[111]

The Berlin committee's function "was to advise the German Foreign Office and to devise methods of damaging the prestige of England."[112]

Roy is also one of the few revolutionary communists from India who was acquainted with the Turkish elite and did not rationalize, deny, or justify the massacre of Armenians. Roy noted in his memoirs that Djemal Pasha "shared Enver Pasha's fear of assassination, with a greater warrant, having been personally responsible for the massacre of Armenians."[113]

These developments should be placed within a larger contextual canvas of denial that was intricately linked to the proliferation of both Turkey and Turkishness. A culture of denial intricately linked to the positive affirmation of Muslim identity through the Ottoman Empire was already in place. Likewise, as demonstrated through the Khilafat desire to establish colonies in Anatolia to forge a fraternal bond, imperial proselytization by actors such as Kidwai is interconnected on behalf of the Ottoman Empire. In short, most South Asian elite and activists of the Khilafat movement saw "Muslimness" as inherent and inextricable to Ottoman/Turkish identity—even if the Turks themselves did not necessarily reach this same conclusion. The fact that these elites could marshal and disseminate these views relentlessly through speeches and the press led to such notions percolating to the masses and ensconcing themselves within popular opinion.

At the societal level, contending symbols and narratives surrounding the outcome of Kut-al-Alamah led to deep social friction. Maratha sepoys stationed in Belgaum protested the use of Turkish flags during the Khilafat demonstrations, as "many of their comrades met a cruel death at the hands of the Turks."[114] Reports from the Special Department in Mahabaleshwar mentioned the above exchange, in addition to stating that Juma Masjid at Belgaum (in the present day state of Karnataka) also flew four Turkish flags—which would result in a complaint from an officer, an enquiry and eventually hauling down of the flags.[115]

In December of 1918, prisoners rescued from Kut would hold a meeting in Bombay with Risaldar Ajab Singh Sarkaria, the 7th Lancers, narrating their ordeal at the hands of the Turks and dubbing the two and half a year captivity they endured as "a period of untold suffering."[116]

Another interlinked facet to the denialism is the response to the assassination of Talaat Pasha, one of the architects of the Armenian Genocide.[117] Responses to his assassination offer an

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[111] M.N. Roy, *Memoirs* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications/Ajanta Books International, 1987), 322.
[112] Tilak Raj Sareen, *Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad, 1905-1921* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1979), 121.
[113] M.N. Roy, *Memoirs*, 399.
[114] Belgaum Samachar and Indu Prakash, Report on Newspapers published in the Bombay Presidency for the week ending 15th May 1920, Uttar Pradesh State Archives.
[115] Montgomerie to McPherson, Fortnightly report May 1920, Home Department, National Archives of India.
[116] "Kut Prisoners in Bombay," *Justice*, December 6, 1918, 8.
[117] Vahakn N. Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul*: *The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011); Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide*; Marc David Baer, *Sultanic Saviors and Tolerant Turks*: *Writing Ottoman Jewish History, Denying the Armenian Genocide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020); Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha. Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* (Lawrenceville: Princeton University Press, 2018); Joachim J. Savelsberg, *Knowing About Genocide*: *Armenian Suffering and Epistemic Struggles* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021); Alp Yenen, "The Talat-Tehlirian Complex: Contentious

insight into how the denial and justification was normalized within Khilafatist circles. Pasha's assassination immediately resulted in orations at the cemetery; one prominent speech was given by the noted activist and revolutionary Chempakaraman Pillai, who had been appointed vice-president of the Berlin Oriental Club by Talaat earlier,[118] who created it in the name of "all oppressed nations."[119]

Within India, The *Bombay Chronicle* ran an unsigned paean titled "Shaheed Talaat Pasha."[120] The cruelties inflicted upon Armenians, per this piece, took place without his own will and knowledge, for "Talaat never told a lie… […] he had done desperate things which he considered for his country's good, and he avowed them proudly. All that he ordered with regard to the Armenian people in Turkey was their deportation from all regions near the frontier and the coast to concentration camps in the interior. The rest was the result of public indignation."

In short, this narrative projects Talaat as an unwitting victim of "staying true to himself." Pickthall in his opening speech in the March condolence meeting would refer to the assassination as a "blow to Islam." Talaat led a "life of simple devotion" and "no man in his life was more calumniated than Talaat Pasha." Shaukat Ali appreciated the "imperishable services to the cause of Islam" and considered Talaat's death to be "an irreparable loss to the Islamic world."[121]

In April of 1921, the All-India Khilafat Conference passed a resolution at Meerut bemoaning the assassination of Talaat Pasha, noting that "The Mussalmans of India feel that Turkey and Islam has lost a brave son, a noble patriot and an able organizer and administrator."[122]

The Settlement at Lausanne

Minassian and Matiossian show how the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne buried the Armenian question permanently, with Turkey using its veto to refuse the Armenians a seat at the conference.[123] From undermining the Treaty of Sèvres to gaining such strategic advantages at Lausanne, this shift marked quite an exchange in fortune for the Turkish delegation. The settlement at Lausanne decidedly relegated the massacres of Armenians to a mnemonic "black hole." It led to the silencing of the issue "internationally and in official Turkish discourse."[124] At Lausanne, the

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Narratives of Martyrdom and Revenge in Post-Conflict Societies," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 64, no. 2 (2022): 394-421.

[118] IB Weekly Report, May 1921, National Archives of India.

[119] "Praising the Terrible," *The Times of India*, 11 May 1921.

[120] "Shaheed Talaat Pasha," *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 March 1921.

[121] "Tributes to Memory of Talaat Pasha," *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 March 1921.

[122] "Late Talaat Pasha. Indian Muslims' Tribute," *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 April 1921.

[123] Gaïdz Minassian, *The Armenian Experience*: *From Ancient Times to Independence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 60; Vartan Matiossian, *The Politics of Naming the Armenian Genocide*: *Language, History and Medz Yeghern* (I.B. Tauris, 2022), 6.

[124] Jennifer M. Dixon, *Dark Pasts*: *Changing the State's Story in Turkey and Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 38.

Turkish delegation had a "selective and entirely self-serving definition of self-determination, one that did not extend to the Armenians or the Kurdish people."[125]

This brings us to an important question: What was the impact of the Khilafat movement and the Government of India, by extension, on the outcome at the Lausanne conference? For Aydin, the "triumph at Lausanne," which saw Turkish diplomatic victories, was effectively enabled by Indian support.[126] Conversely, Niemeijer's detailed work on the Khilafat movement argued that the Khilafatist influence at Lausanne was exaggerated. In marshalling the evidence, Niemeijer concludingly points to Mohamed Ali's speech at Cocanada—where Ali downplays any influence of England or Indian Muslims in charting out the settlement at Lausanne.[127] However, the Ali Brothers would go on to claim otherwise in the following years: while Mohamed Ali credited the battle exploits of Mustafa Kemal Pasha to the outcome achieved at Lausanne, he also notes the "no[n-]inappreciable contribution from the force generated among Indian Musalmans by the Khilafat Movement."[128] Shaukat Ali would directly credit Edwin Montagu, the previous Secretary of State for India, in a letter to Sir Harry Haig in 1933 for the revision of the Treaty of Lausanne.[129] Materially, the Khilafat movement was also deeply invested in the success of the Turkish national struggle; to this extent, the Indian fund contributed £125,000 to this effort, part of which was used to pay for the army.[130]

Nevertheless, the desire to amend the Treaty of Sèvres and secure an outcome on palatable terms—to avoid a rebellion or a conflagration in India that complicated the British position at the conference—was widely prevalent in imperial and strategic circles. While Montagu would champion this cause, Curzon would offer the same reflection in 1919.[131]

The India Office would write to the Undersecretary of State for India requesting that the agreement generated from Lausanne be amended in favor of the Turks, attaching a letter from the London Muslim League.[132] The League was founded in 1908 by Syeed Ameer Ali,[133] another pro-Turk denier of the Armenian Genocide. Ameer Ali would also employ denialist discourse in his address to the Grotius Society in 1919.[134]

That an unfavorable deal for Turkey would turn out to be unpalatable for India is a refrain that appears in discourse from many meetings and speeches that took place years before the conclusion of the issue at Lausanne. At the Paris Peace Congress of 1919, the Indian

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[125] Jay Winter, *The Day the Great War Ended, 24 July 1923*: *The Civilianization of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 44.
[126] Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*: *A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 136.
[127] Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India*, 154.
[128] "Before All Muslim Parties Conference," *The Comrade*, 10 July 1925, 32-33.
[129] Shan Muhammad, *Unpublished Letters of the Ali Brothers* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1979), 289.
[130] Lord Kinross, *Atatürk*: *The Rebirth of a Nation* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), 298.
[131] Papers written by Curzon on the Near and Middle East, Mss Eur F112/278, British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers.
[132] Sean Oliver-Dee, *The Caliphate Question*: *The British Government and Islamic Governance* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 126.
[133] Syed Razi Wasti, *Memoirs and Other Writings of Syed Ameer Ali* (Delhi: Renaissance Publishing House, 1996), 74-75.
[134] Syed Ameer Ali, "Address by the Right Hon. Syed Ameer Ali on Islam in the League of Nations," *Transactions of the Grotius Society 5* (1919): 126-144.

delegation—comprising Montagu, the Maharaja of Bikaner, Lord Sinha, the Aga Khan, Aftab Ahmad, and Yusuf Ali—all expressed similar views.[135]

With India home to many Muslims, there existed a strain of thought within British imperial circles that sought to calibrate and marshal Pan-Islamism: as Mark Sykes noted in a letter, "After the Indian mutiny we invented the caliphate of the Ottomans, the title up to then had been no more than honorific; but as an Anti-Russian move, we boomed the Caliphate until we actually invented [P]an-Islamism".[136]

Multiple attempts would be made to instrumentalize this phenomenon further. When the Emir of Afghanistan proclaimed a holy war against the British in 1919, the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford wrote to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George and Lord Balfour suggested that the event gave the Sultan of Turkey "a great opportunity of proving his sincerity by forbidding jehad and denouncing those who proclaim it."[137]

This was a concern shared by administrators from other regions of the British Empire. The Governor General of Australia would argue to the Secretary of State for Colonies in November of 1922 that "the Treaty of Sèvres will affect Moslem world and so India and Egypt. If it affects India, it will not leave Far East as it is".[138]

Writing from an Asianist and anti-imperialist perspective, Taraknath Das would recount that the "real diplomatic victory" at the Treaty of Lausanne was largely due to Britain's attempt at trying to "curry favor" with the Indian Muslims.[139] In February 1924, Sir Maneekjee Dadabhoy presented a resolution in the Council of States recommending Aga Khan for the Nobel Peace Prize—arguing that one key reason was the "prominent part" he played at the Lausanne Conference that brought about the "final settlement of the Turkish question."[140]

Conclusion

Broadly speaking, South Asian responses to the Armenian Genocide and the survival of the Ottoman Empire could be dubbed as an interplay and extension of South Asian "political ventriloquism." Each group/subset of the Muslim and Hindu elite sought to interject its own objectives onto the larger canvas of empire and imperialism—including the Khilafat movement. One of the unstated features of the Khilafat movement was the ambiguity that was central to its appeal. Within certain presidencies and provinces, it had fluctuating traction, while it failed to make any inroads elsewhere. The Khilafat movement also saw its objectives and claims fused into other movements at this time, such as the "non-cooperation movement." In Surat, for instance, this fusion of movements with palpable differences produced "serious psychic strains

[135] The Dominions and the Peace Conference, CAB 29/80, The National Archives. UK.
[136] Papers of the late Sir Mark Sykes, FO 800/ 221, The National Archives. UK.
[137] Private Telegram for the Prime Minister and Mr Balfour, FO 800/199, The National Archives. UK.
[138] The Dominions and The Lausanne Conference, CAB 24/139/98, The National Archives. UK.
[139] "England's War Against China- a Lesson for Indian Nationalists," *Modern Review*, April 1927, 423-424.
[140] "Nobel Peace Prize. Council of State's Recommendation," *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 February 1924.

among the most active of participants," in which “militant Islamic rhetoric” was dichotomously wedded to the Gandhian principle of *ahimsa*.[141]

In such an atmosphere, efforts for the Khilafat elite to mount genocide denial as a component of resuscitating an empire and, by extension, salvaging, structuring, and disseminating their model of religious identity required well-coordinated networks that included political societies, journals, and newspapers. Complementing the efforts engaged by the Muslim elite, key actors of the influential Hindu elite, such as Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, and Lala Lajpat Rai, provided additional traction for the perpetuation of these views. While they participated in this denial as a political exercise, interpolating their aims and objectives through engagement with this discourse, their understanding of the Ottoman Empire, Turks and Islam was effectively mediated by the Muslim Khilafatists—who recognized the importance of projecting strength through purported unity and numbers. The leadership routinely projected numbers of “319 million” etc. to suggest huge popular support and unison of voices in context when that certainly was not the case.

While publications such as *The Leader*, *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, and *Justice* (to a limited extent) took a sympathetic view of the Armenians and raised their issues, this impact was minimal and did not have any consequences on Armenian political security—as the Treaty of Lausanne showed. South Asian denialism also raises uncomfortable questions of how colonized peoples may indulge and instrumentalize denial of genocide against other colonized populations to further their objectives. As such, the South Asian case, unique as it is, demonstrates a clear social marshaling of genocide denial in the service of anticolonialism and strengthening of religious bonds.

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[141] Douglas E. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India*: *The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852-1928* (Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras: Oxford University Press, 1992), 271.

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