Defining Communal Identity in the Ottoman Empire: Hagop Gagosian and the Mormon Armenians, 1890–1910

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Christian Missionaries in Armenia. TopFoto.

Paper

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FOR MUCH OF THE OTTOMAN HISTORY, THERE WERE NO ETHNIC OR religious requirements for Ottoman subjects to be categorized as Ottoman, or view themselves as such.[1] This speaks to the administrative ability of the Ottomans, given the diversity of peoples over which they reigned and the lack of inter-communal violence for most of Ottoman history. Ottoman expansion in the fourteenth century began with armies composed of Christians and Muslims alike.[2] Until the conquest of the Arab regions by Selim I in 1517, the Ottoman population was majority Christian. At its geographic peak, the Ottoman Empire reached across northern Africa and far into mainland Europe, encompassing a vast array of peoples who spoke countless different languages and practiced a plethora of religions. By 1831, census records show that the Anatolian and Rumeli provinces were 61 percent Muslim and 31 percent Christian, with a sizeable Jewish minority.[3] Within each of these religious

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1. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull, "Introduction Dealing with Identity in the Ottoman Empire," ed. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull, *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2016), 1–6.

2. Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 10.

3. Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1985), 21.

classifications, however, are further divisions, between Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox Christians for example. The Ottoman Empire was also incredibly ethnically diverse. In the Balkans for example, Muslims could be Turkish, Albanian, or Bosnian while Christians could be Greek, Slavic, Albanian, or Armenian.[4] Even these categories fail to account for all the complexities associated with categorizing religion and ethnicity.

In the nineteenth century, international pressures, territorial losses, and the rise of nationalism not only increased the importance of categorizing individuals and communities in the Ottoman Empire but also made the process more difficult. Although communities saw it as increasingly important to categorize individuals in the nineteenth century, the politicization of religious conversion and anti-Mormon sentiment within Protestantism created a set of individuals unable to be truly classified as belonging to any one group. This problem was exacerbated by the rise of nationalism, which caused further division within religious groups and ethnic communities, thus resulting in the rejection of individuals by the very groups they identified with.

The principal sources consulted are memoirs of Armenian converts to Mormonism, journals from Mormon missionaries, newspaper publications from the United States, as well as official statements from the Mormon church, Ottoman administration, and Hunchak Party. The memoirs of the Armenian Mormons warrant more extensive discussion. Hagop Gagosian completed his memoir in 1939, which was then translated by his son into English. While excerpts from his original diaries do survive, they remain untranslated from the original Armenian. By its very nature, the memoir is a limited source. Hagop gives an overview of his early life, but the majority of this memoir focuses on events which occurred while Hagop was in his twenties and thirties. Therefore, information about how the nationalist upheavals or Ottoman reforms affected Hagop's early life is simply unavailable. Furthermore, the memoir is subject to the bias of having been written down after the Armenian Genocide during World War I. This likely impacted what events Hagop chose to write about and how he chose to present those events. This is certainly true of the memoirs of Nishan Krikor Sherinian (written down 1936) and Arick Sherinian Kezerian (written down 1963), who frequently deviate from their respective narratives to harangue the Turks for the events of 1915–17, which they did not witness firsthand. However

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4. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914,* 22. This list is in no way exhaustive. The intent is not to list every possible religion or ethnicity within the Ottoman Empire but merely to demonstrate the level of diversity which existed.

problematic, these memoirs provide an essential Armenian perspective, allowing for a thorough analysis of the situation of the Armenian Mormons in the Ottoman Empire.

Selim Deringil's scholarship on Ottoman efforts to legitimize their rule, and the interplay between western missionaries and the Ottoman government in the nineteenth century has come to provide the foundation for more recent works on the subject. While Deringil's work focuses on the Protestants as a general group, Seçil Karal Akgün and Karen M. Kern have written specifically about Mormon missionaries in the Ottoman Empire. Both focus on how the conflict between Mormons and Protestants affected the interactions between Mormon missionaries and the Ottoman government, with Kern analyzing the role of polygamy in particular. Information on the nineteenth century Armenian nationalist movements in the Ottoman Empire comes largely from the work of Louise Nalbandian, whose research, although outdated, is still the seminal work on the subject. This study builds off the complexities presented by each of these scholars and focuses on how the situation of a few individual Armenians, as well as their self-perceived and assigned identities, fit within the framework these scholars have analyzed.

The Nineteenth Century: A Shift in Ottoman Identity

In the beginning of a century-long effort to westernize, the government issued the Hatt-i Serif of Gulhane in 1839, which laid out aims of religious equality throughout the empire. No longer would Christians be exempt from military service in exchange for paying the jizya tax. In order to "achieve effective administration of the Ottoman Government and Provinces," a "regular system of assessing taxes" and an "equally regular" method of military conscription would be established.[5] The reforms were, in part, the product of nationalism which had taken hold in various provinces in the empire, particularly the Christian provinces. A series of Serbian revolts between 1804 and 1817 had resulted in a de facto independent Serbian state.[6] After nine years of fighting, with the

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5. "Hatt-I Serif of Gulhane," *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record Vol 1 European Expansion, 1535–1914*, ed. and trans. J. C. Hurewitz (New Haven: Yale University, 1975), 269–71.

6. Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 55.

help of Russia, Great Britain, and France, Greece was officially recognized as independent with the Treaty of London in 1830.[7]

In 1856, Sultan Abdulmecid issued another decree, reaffirming the privileges of the non-Muslim's within his rule and expounding on how the policies established in 1839 would be put into place.[8] The reaffirmation of Christian privileges in 1856 may well have been a direct product of the Crimean War, and its resulting territorial loss, during which Czar Nicholas I claimed to be the protector of all Orthodox Christians. This included the large number of Orthodox Christians living within the Ottoman Empire. Prior Russian intervention in Greece and Serbia made it clear that this was not an idle threat. In the face of foreign intervention on the behalf of the Ottoman Christian provinces as well as unrest in these provinces, the reform decrees represent the Ottoman government's renewed effort to make all its population feel Ottoman, regardless of religion.

To implement this new system, the government undertook a census of all the Ottoman provinces. Although the empire had a history of census taking, the censuses of the late nineteenth century were the first to register every member of a household. Such a record would ensure that each community was levied the appropriate taxes and that males could be properly registered for conscription. By the 1870s, the Ottoman government considered these registers a major priority.[9] A report from the Council of State, established in 1867, explains,

> To know the exact number of its own population is a great achievement in matters of order and regularity for a government interested in law, property safeguards, financial stability, and municipal order and security. The European States attach great and continuous care to the collection and distribution of information on the [entire] population. It is imperative, urgent, and essential for us to accomplish this important task [census and registration] in a perfect fashion.[10]

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7. Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922*, 56.

8. "Sultan 'Abdulmecid's Islahat Fermani Reaffirming the Privileges and Immunities of the Non-Muslim Communities, 18 February 1856," *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record Vol 1 European Expansion, 1535–1914,* ed. and trans. J. C. Hurewitz, (New Haven: Yale University, 1975), 315–18.

9. Council of State in Kemal H. Karpat, "Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82–93,*" International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9, no 3 (Oct. 1978), 246.

10. Karpat, "Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82–93," 242.

The system of registers implemented by the Council of State included the need to designate which *millet*, or administrative unit, each subject belonged to.[11] The term "millet" was initially used in the Qur'an to mean religion, without denoting any specific confession.[12] Evidence shows that in the Ottoman case, specific religious communities within the empire were often referred to as millets, including Muslims communities.[13] It was in the late eighteenth century that the Ottomans began to refer to sovereign nations as millets. Ebubekir Ratib Efendi, the Ottoman ambassador to Vienna during the French Revolution, first equated millet and nation state while trying to explain what was happening in France to his superiors.[14] In a similar fashion, following the independence of Serbia and Greece, these states were often referred to in Ottoman documents as the Serbian millet or Greek millet.[15] Thus, the rise of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire politicized the designation of millets more than ever before.

The delineation of nineteenth-century millets was further complicated by the introduction of Protestant Christian sects via missionaries who began proselytizing within the empire around 1820. Among these missionaries were the Mormons, a controversial Christian sect established in New York in 1830 by the young prophet Joseph Smith.[16] These missionaries entered the Ottoman domains intending to convert both Muslims and Christians. Despite Sultan Abdulhamid's insistence to Sir A.H. Layard that any Muslim was welcome to convert to Christianity, "be he the sheik al Islam himself," the government repeatedly restricted Christian missionaries' ability to preach to Muslims.[17] A Mormon missionary noted that "[Zeverhi] Efendi of the Department of

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11. Karpat, "Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82–93," 148.

12. M.O.H. Ursinus, "Millet," In *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, P.J. Bearman (Volumes X, XI, XII), Th. Bianquis (Volumes X, XI, XII), et al., 1.

13. Ursinus, "Millet," 1.

14. Yesil, Fatih, "Looking at the French Revolution through Ottoman Eyes: Ebubekir Ratib Efendi's Observations," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 70, no. 2 (2007), 301–2.

15. Ursinus, "Millet," 1.

16. "Mormon" was a nickname given to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although originally derogatory slang referencing the religion's holy book, the Book of Mormon, in more recent decades the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has co-opted the nickname, giving it a more positive spin. For the sake of brevity, the term will be used throughout this paper in lieu of the church's full name.

17. Jeremy Salt, "A Precarious Symbiosis: Ottoman Christians and Foreign Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 3, no. 2 (1985), 57.

Justice said he thought it would be best to begin [preaching] and see if there were any here that would believe, adding the government would not interfere if we did not convert Turks."[18]

The Ottoman government argued that preaching Christianity to Muslims fell under the prohibitions of Article 6 of the 1856 reform decree which prohibited hindering anyone's profession of faith.[19] Musurus Bey, the Ottoman ambassador to London stated that the government "retained the right and was under the necessity of preventing the propagation of any opinions insulting to the feelings of those who professed the religion of the State."[20] In private, Sultan Abdulhamid II shared his concerns about Protestant missionary efforts.

> In England, Russia, and France, there exist Bible Societies which become exceedingly rich through the donations of rich and fanatical Christians . . . Although the [governments] seem not to be involved in their activities, they secretly aid and abet them in sending missionaries. . . . By increasing the numbers of their followers this religious influence is then transformed into political leverage. . . . Although it is obviously desirable to take firm measures against them, if open opposition is brought to play, the Sublime Porte will suffer the vexing interventions of the three powers' ambassadors. Thus, the only way to fight against them is to increase the Islamic population.[21]

This statement is emblematic of the changing nature of Ottomanism in the late nineteenth century. Following the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–78 and the Congress of Berlin, the Ottoman Empire lost the eastern provinces of Kars, Batoum, and Ardahan to Russia, most of its European holdings to independence, and Cyprus to Great Britain.[22] Thus, having been stripped of a large portion of the empire's predominantly Christian provinces, under Sultan Abdulhamid II (r. 1876–1909) the projected state identity became increasingly Turkish and increasingly Muslim.[23] "The Turkish Government was never more

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18. MSS 2262, F.F. Hintze papers, 19th Century Western & Mormon Manuscripts, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

19. Salt, "A Precarious Symbiosis," 58.

20. Salt, "A Precarious Symbiosis," 58.

21. Sultan Adbulhamid II to his private secretary in Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains,* 114.

22. "The Treaty of Berlin 13 July 1878," *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record Vol 1 European Expansion, 1535–1914,* Ed. and Trans. J. C. Hurewitz, (New Haven: Yale University, 1975), 413–414.

23. Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains,* 19–46.

determined than it is now to prevent all defection from Islam . . . It is now a political rather than a religious principle, designed to maintain the strictly Mohammedan character of the Turkish Government, and to retain all political power in the hands of the Turks."[24] Whereas the decree of 1856 was intended to ensure that the entire population of the empire felt "united to each other by cordial ties of patriotism," by the late nineteenth century, Muslims felt their superior status being threatened and the empire's remaining Christians felt frustrated when the equality professed by the 1839 and 1856 decrees turned out not to be what they expected.[25]

The Rise of Armenian Nationalism

As Christians began to feel excluded by the changing indicators of Ottoman identity and independent Christian nations in the Balkans served as extant ideals, more nationalist movements took root, particularly among the Armenians. The Hunchak Party was founded in 1887 by Armenians in Switzerland who hoped to free their fellow Armenians from the grip of Ottoman rule. The Hunchaks quickly made a name for themselves as the most violent Armenian nationalists and dominated the nationalist movement until 1896 in the Armenian provinces of both Russia and the Ottoman Empire, continually reaffirming their goal of an independent, socialist, Armenian state.[26] A party publication reads: "The Armenians must recover their independence no matter what. All is permitted in order to achieve this goal: propaganda, terror, merciless war of the partisans . . . Kill Turks wherever you find them and in whatever circumstances you find them! . . . Take revenge!"[27] In response to the rise of violent Armenian nationalist groups, Sultan Abdulhamid II reportedly shouted in an outburst of

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24. An Eastern Statesman in Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 115–16.

25. "Sultan Abdulmecid's *Islahat Fermani* Reaffirming the Privileges and Immunities of the Non-Muslim Communities" *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics*, 315–18; Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains,* 47–8.

26. Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1963), 104–131; Although outdated, this is the seminal work written on the Armenian revolutionary parties in the Ottoman Empire.

27. *The Hunchak* in Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians 1878–1896* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 61. *The Hunchak* was a series of pamphlets published by the party.

anger, "I have abstained till now from stirring up a crusade and profiting from religious fanaticism, but the day may come when I can no longer curb the rights and indignation of my people at seeing their co-religionists butchered in . . . Armenia."[28]

The Hunckaks saw the western powers as key to the creation of an independent Armenian state, and spent much of their energy attempting to secure western intervention on their behalf.[29] They appealed to, and found a body of support among, the Protestant missionaries proselytizing to the Armenian people.[30] These missionaries wrote home about the condition of the Armenians and championed the Armenian nationalist cause both within the Ottoman Empire and outside of it. In the United States, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the Evangelical Alliance lobbied to the U.S. State Department, seeking government assistance for the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire and more radical humanitarians formed the Friends of Armenia.[31] Western intervention in the Armenian cause posed a serious threat to Ottoman rule.

The threat of the Armenian rebels within Ottoman borders was compounded by the many Armenian migrants who emigrated to the west. In the United States, the Ottoman ambassador Alexandros Mavroyeni spent much of his ten-year appointment focused on monitoring Hunchak activities among Armenians in the United States.[32] Beyond securing public support in the United States, these Armenian migrants posed an additional threat. Those migrants who opted to return to the Ottoman Empire after having obtained United States passports could claim special privileges granted to foreigners, including exemptions from certain laws. This would allow the nationalists to terrorize the government without fear of legal repercussions. To prevent this from happening, the Ottoman government placed a total ban on Armenian emigration

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28. Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 46.

29. Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, 127.

30. Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, 114; Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 46, 125; Ann Marie Wilson, "In the Name of God, Civilization, and Humanity: The United States and the Armenian Massacres of the 1890s," *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 227 (Apr.–Jun., 2009), 31.

31. Wilson, "In the Name of God, Civilization, and Humanity: The United States and the Armenian Massacres of the 1890s," 32–6.

32. Gutman, "Migrants, Revolutionaries, and Spies," 288–96. Mavroyeni served as the Ottoman ambassador to the United States from 1886–96.

in 1888.[33] The ban was enforced through the use of identification cards, which were issued using the census records.[34] Despite this, over thirty-five thousand Armenians emigrated to the United States between 1888 and 1908.[35]

In addition to seeking European and American support, the Hunchak party appealed to Protestant Armenians, Orthodox Armenians, Kurds, Assyrians, and non-Turkish Muslims within the Ottoman Empire for help achieving their goals. Yet, defining what characteristics, ethnic, religious, or otherwise, made up the Armenian national identity proved problematic.[36] Whereas Greek nationalism had arisen within a single millet, the Armenian case was unique. Prior to the nineteenth century, all Armenians were categorized as a single millet within the Ottoman Empire, regardless of whether they were Armenian Orthodox or Armenian Catholic.[37] In 1830, the Armenian Catholic millet was recognized as separate from the Armenian Orthodox millet and in 1846 the Armenian Protestant millet followed suit.[38] In trying to unite Armenians against the Ottoman government, the Hunchaks were confronted by three different Armenian religious groups, or millets, and therefore in some sense by three different Armenian nations. The facets which made up personal and communal identity in the late-nineteenth century made categorizing an individual as belonging to a single nation impossible.

Hagop Gagosian: A Case of Conflicting Identity

One example of such an individual is Hagop Gagosian. "I, Hagop Tumas Gagosian . . . was born an Armenian."[39] Born in Zara in 1868, the life Hagop led

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33. Gutman "Agents of Mobility," 48–50. The ban was lifted in 1908 following the ousting of Sultan Abdulhamid II.

34. Karpat, "Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82–93," 249–50; Gutman, "Agents of Mobility," 50–51.

35. Gutman, "Agents of Mobility," 48.

36. Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, 111.

37. The distinction between Armenian Orthodox and Armenian Catholic became official in 1742.

38. Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2012), 7.

39. MSS 7785, Hagop Gagosian collection, 19th Century Western & Mormon Manuscripts, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Various spellings are given for the names of the Armenians, the result of both transliteration

would not have been unfamiliar to most Armenians in the nineteenth century.[40] As a youth he worked in Istanbul to pay off his late father's debts, training as a barber before returning to Zara to marry at age eighteen. Hagop and his wife Arake Setigian Gagosian were married in an Armenian church, both belonging to the Armenian Catholic denomination.[41] In 1883, when the Mormon missionary F. F. Hintze arrived in Zara, the Armenian community already belonged to a plurality of religions, including Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic, and Armenian Orthodox.[42] Hagop's distant relative, Nishan Krikor Sherinian was one of Hintze's first converts, being baptized into the Mormon Church in 1886. Hagop was converted two years later. It is at this point in Hagop's autobiography that he mentions his involvement with the Armenian nationalists for the first time. While it is unclear how long Hagop had been working with the Hunchak Party, following his conversion he sought to distance himself from Armenian nationalism. Concerned for his safety following death threats from other members of the party, Hagop left his wife and children and made his way to British-controlled Cyprus. In Cyprus, he worked to earn enough money to emigrate to the United States, despite the ban placed on Armenian emigration, hoping to find a place among the Mormons in Utah.[43] It was also in Cyprus that Hagop was finally baptized as a member

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and spelling errors on the part of the authors; for the sake of continuity, the first spelling given in the original documents will be used throughout this paper.

40. For examples of others with similar work and migration experiences see David Gutman, "Agents of Mobility: Migrant Smuggling Networks, Transhemispheric Migration, and Time-Space Compression in Ottoman Anatolia, 1888–1908," *InterDisciplines* 3, no. 1 (2012), 48–84 and David Gutman, "The Political Economy of Armenian Migration from the Harput Region to North American in the Hamidian Era, 1885–1908," in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities, and Politics*, ed. Yasar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 42–61.

41. MSS 7785, LTPSC; Hagop refers to this church as the "Armenian Orthodox Church" but goes on to say "which was under the Catholic Church." Following the split in 1742 the Armenian Catholic Church joined the larger Catholic Church but the Armenian Orthodox Church remained independent. Therefore both statements cannot be true.

42. MSS 7647, Nishan Krikor Sherinian papers, 20th Century Western & Mormon Manuscripts, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

43. "The Cyprus Convention: Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, 4 June 1878–3 February 1879," in *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record Vol 1 European Expansion, 1535–1914,* Ed. and Trans. J. C. Hurewitz, (New Haven: Yale University, 1975), 411–13. For information about Armenian emigration during the Ottoman

of the Mormon Church after convincing another Mormon Armenian of his conversion. During his stay there, word arrived in Cyprus about the Hamidian Massacres of 1895–1896. These massacres were in part a result of the increasingly Islamic nature of Ottomanism, exacerbated by suspicion of Armenian nationalism. Estimates place the death toll at up to three hundred thousand, with both Kurds and Turks the primary perpetrators according to eyewitness accounts.[44] While others in his home town were not as lucky, all of Hagop's immediate relatives in Zara survived.[45]

After making stops in Egypt, Paris, and London, Hagop finally arrived in the United States in 1900. Soon after, he was asked to return to the Ottoman Empire. Church leadership had tasked a few Mormon missionaries, including F. F. Hintze and Anthony H. Lund, with purchasing land in the Ottoman Empire where the Armenian Mormons could establish a colony and they insisted that Hagop join them. Despite the dangers posed by returning to the empire due to the tense political situation and his illegal emigration, Hagop agreed.[46] After stopping at multiple ports, where Hagop was not allowed off the boat for lack of a valid passport, the missionaries finally purchased him viable documentation and they set off for Zara, where he lived until emigrating to the United States with his family and the rest of the Armenian Mormons at Zara in 1910.[47]

Government-Perceived Armenian Identity

The relationship between the Armenians and the government during this period was one of mutual aggression. Groups such as the Hunchaks perpetrated acts of terror that could not go unpunished. It is true that not all Armenians, or even

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travel ban see: David Gutman, "Migrants, Revolutionaries and Spies: Surveillance, Politics, and Ottoman Identity in the United States," *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centurie*s, ed. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 284–296; Gutman, "The Political Economy of Armenian Migration"; Gutman, "Agents of Mobility."

44. MSS 129, Arick Sherinian Kezerian: Personal record and autobiography, 20th Century Western & Mormon Manuscripts, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; Wilson, 30.

45. MSS 129, LTPSC.

46. See footnote 20.

47. MSS 7785, LTPSC. Three Mormon Armenians stayed in Zara because of old age and illness. All three died in the massacres of 1915–17. For more information see MSS 129, LTPSC.

a majority, were involved in terrorizing the government, but the nationalists' violence brought suspicion upon the whole population. Hagop describes the following attack, which occurred just before he was set to leave for Cyprus:

> Some Armenians held up the governor of [Karahisar] while he was travel-ing with his wife and secretary. They took him and his secretary out of the coach, and after taking them a little way off, killed them both. This gover-nor had been the cause of the death of many Armenians. All the pleading, begging, and reasoning [of] the Armenians had done no good, so it was decided to get rid of him. . . . This killing happened close to my home town of Zara. Every person was under suspicion. The Governor's men figured that even if one did not commit the real crime, he could have been in on the plot; so they watched everyone very closely. The criminals were caught and punished, but still everyone was under suspicion. I would have to be very careful and get my travelers permit checked every place possible if I left now.[48]

Hagop was questioned in multiple cities during his trip and frequently warned by local Armenians that he ought to keep moving as strangers were being arrested.[49] Hagop found himself closer to the murder of the governor than he bargained for:

> [In Govdoon] I met Father Murad, a Priest. He told me that there was a young man there from Zara that was trying to organize the young people against the government and asked if I would talk to him and try to persuade him. I consented and did my best, but to no avail. This young man was one of the gang that had held up the governor. He was recognized by the eye glasses he was wearing. I told him to be careful, but he paid no attention to me. Later, I heard that he was captured and punished. On this account, I had a much harder time when they found out I was from Zara. I was watched closely and they were more strict with my passport.[50]

In Mersin, Hagop "learned that someone had held up the ammunition warehouse at Zatum, killed some soldiers and escaped with much ammunition. Once again I had to get my passport registered and was told that they were

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48. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

49. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

50. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

arresting all strangers."[51] Although Hagop had been involved in the Hunchak Party, he had not personally taken part in these attacks. Yet Hagop's experiences show that he, and every other Armenian, were suspected by the government as a result of the party's activities.

The events in Serbia and Greece had proved the threat that the Armenian nationalist movement posed to the Ottomans. Compounded by other territorial losses in the Balkans and eastern Anatolia, it was clear to the Ottoman government that further losses were a legitimate threat. For this reason, the Armenian nationalists would not be tolerated. Hagop's experience is emblematic of the suspicion which resulted. There was no efficient way for the government to distinguish between Armenians who posed no threat and those who did. Because of this, Armenians were arrested, sometimes for no other reason than their ethnicity, and subjected to violence. In explaining why the Mormon missionaries taught almost exclusively Armenians, F. F. Hintze said that "the Turks . . . were willing we should convert any Christian Armenians . . . hoping thereby to sow dissension among the Armenians. They felt that such work would break up Armenian unity and thus make it easier to govern them."[52] Hagop was categorized as an Armenian by the Ottoman state, because he was born ethnically Armenian. To the government, ethnicity was the only requirement to be considered part of the Armenian nation, and being categorized as an Armenian carried with it the stigma of being a nationalist and therefore anti-Ottoman.

The Entanglement of Religion and Nationalism

While the Ottomans viewed Hagop as a threat because of rising Armenian nationalism, following his conversion to Mormonism, Hagop no longer fit the Hunchaks' requirements for belonging to the Armenian nation. Shortly after converting to Mormonism, Hagop approached the Hunchak party about withdrawing from their ranks and the resulting conversation led to his fleeing the empire:

> I had been active in the [Hunchak] Party. This party secretly worked against the Government because the Government had mistreated the Armenians.

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51. MSS 7785, LTPSC.
52. MSS 2262, LTPSC.

> I went to the chairman of the Party and asked him to release me of my
> duties on account of my new religion. I could not carry on because I did
> not believe as I used to. He held a meeting with the other members. They
> decided they could not release me. If they did they feared I might reveal
> some of our secrets to the government. Some advised the leader to get rid of
> me. They figured it was better for one man to die than the whole party lose
> their lives. The leader was a good friend of mine. He told them he'd never
> do that, but he could not convince many of the others that that course of
> action was not best because many were afraid for their own lives. My friend,
> the leader, came to me and advised me to leave the country as soon as pos-
> sible because he did not know how long he could stop the party from doing
> something drastic.[53]

Hagop felt that he could not continue with the Hunchak Party because of
his new religion. Historian Selim Deringil explains the significance of conver-
sion during this period and its relation to nationalism: "What makes conversion
. . . different in the nineteenth century Ottoman context is that [it overlaps]
with the rise of ethnic nationalism and the age of National Revival movements.
. . . Conversion [was] seen as particularly dangerous in the nineteenth-century
Ottoman empire because [it was] perceived as de-nationalism." This is true
of the way that Hagop viewed his own identity as well as the way that the
Hunchaks viewed Hagop's new identity. The Hunchaks equated Hagop's con-
version, and de-nationalism, with Hagop's assumption of a more Ottoman
identity. Most of them seemed to assume that Hagop would now report on the
party's activities to the government. Though Hagop made no mention of feel-
ing more closely tied to the government following his conversion, he too con-
nected conversion to Mormonism with de-nationalism. While the Hunchaks'
fears of Hagop reporting on them were never realized, Hagop was nonetheless
no longer fit to be part of the Armenian nation that they desired a state for. He
was in fact seen as a threat to that nation. Although the government considered
Hagop an Armenian, and therefore anti-Ottoman, the Hunchaks considered
Hagop anti-Armenian-nation and consequently pro-Ottoman.

Yet, Hagop's separation from the party following his conversion to what
the Ottomans considered a Protestant Christian sect is inconsistent based on
the groups who tended to support the Hunchaks. According to Armayis Var-
tooguian, an Armenian writing from the United States: "The Protestants were

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53. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

soon in sympathy with the Hunchak. . . . All [Orthodox] Armenian clergy and the children of the National Church were in antipathy to these rascals. . . . But the Protestants, those converts of the missionaries, liked the Hunchak very much."[54] There is significant evidence that not only were Protestant Armenians involved in the Hunchak Party, but so were Protestant missionaries. British national Reverend George Knapp was implicit in the Sasun Rebellion and accused by the Ottoman government of inciting "the credulous Armenians to attack the mosques during Friday prayers and to kill the faithful, and to assassinate Mussulman officials and notables whom they meet in lowly places."[55] The government even found evidence that Knapp was involved with inciting revolutionaries to kill Christians "in order that the crime might be attributed to Mussulmans."[56] Thus, Hagop's conversion from Armenian Orthodoxy to Mormonism, a subset of Protestantism, ought to have made Hagop more likely to sympathize with the Hunchak. This disparity can only be understood by considering the internal conflicts within Protestantism in the United States.

The Complexities of Protestant Identity

From its genesis, the Mormon Church was controversial in Protestant Christianity. The Church was so unpopular in the United States that an extermination order was issued in Missouri in 1838. The Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith was killed by a mob in 1844, but the Church continued to grow under the leadership of successive prophets. Despite other points of dispute, by the late nineteenth century, the conflict between Protestantism and Mormonism had coalesced on the issue of polygamy, one of the Mormon Church's more controversial practices. Indeed, the United States government demanded that polygamy be made illegal in Utah before it be admitted as a state. This conflict came to a head in the late nineteenth century with the United States seizing Church property in 1887 in order "to punish and prevent the practice of polygamy in the Territories

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54. Armayis P. Vartooguian, *Armenia's Ordeal. A Sketch of the Main Features of the History of Armenia; An Inside Account of the Work of American Missionaries Among Armenians and its Ruinous Effect; And A General Review of the Armenian* Question (New York: NA, 1896), 147–8.

55. Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians, 1876–1896*, 115–17. On the Sasun Rebellion see Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, 120–4.

56. Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians, 1876–1896*, 115.

of the United States."[57] Facing immense pressure, the current president of the Mormon Church, Wilford Woodruff, issued a manifesto in 1890, ending polygamy as a practice within the Church.

Despite the policy change, the damage was done, and the reputation of the Church's members as polygamists stuck. Tucked into a San Francisco newspaper article about railroad construction in the Ottoman Empire is a condemnation of Mormon polygamy: "Might not the Mormon whose residence in America is being made too warm for him, find a new home among neighbors who would not be shocked by his matrimonial propensities? There is plenty of room, and the transfer to the Asiatic soil of Turkey of those citizens of Utah who find that they cannot conform would be a great boon to both countries."[58] An article in the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* decrying polygamy referred to the Mormons as "America's own Turks."[59]

As a result of such prejudices, when the Mormon missionaries arrived in the Ottoman Empire and began teaching among the Armenians, they were not well received by the other Christian missionaries. Hagop Gagosian complained that the Protestant missionaries circulated anti-Mormon propaganda. The polygamous reputation of the Church spread within the empire.

> This publicity attracted many [people's] attention to our religion. . . . Some were sincere, but others were interested only for personal gain. For example, one man heard that Mormons practiced polygamy. He did not have any children. He wanted to know if he joined the church if he would be allowed to marry his sister-in-law. Of course he was told that the church did not now practice polygamy.[60]

Hagop spent a few nights in jail after a Protestant minister reported him for preaching a religion that was not registered with the government. Hagop was released after discussing Mormonism, and polygamy in particular, with the local governor. Hagop reported that the governor said, "My son, you are honest, and a lot of the things you believe in are similar to ours. Your religion sounds like it is closer to ours than any other I have heard about. I am going

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57. 24 Stat. 635 1883V1887; also known as the Edmunds-Tucker Act.
58. Galigani's Messenger, "A Trunk Line in Turkey," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, September 16, 1887. Accessed January 30, 2017.
59. "America's Own Turks," *Milwaulkee Daily Sentinel,* December 6, 1879.
60. Hagop papers.

to send you home, but do be careful and don't talk about your religion since it is not registered."[61] Jacob Spori, the first Mormon missionary in the Ottoman Empire complained that although "the Turkish authorities are indifferent about our doctrines . . . the [European preachers] already spread some nonsense about us."[62] In a letter to the *Deseret News*, a Utah newspaper, the missionary Fred Staufer described a Protestant minister in Merzifon who broke from his sermon in order to harangue the Mormon Church when he saw Mormon missionaries present in the audience. In a report to the church, Staufer noted that "Our enemies, the sectarian churches or rather their ministers have made great efforts to destroy out work."[63] This complicated the situation of the Armenian Mormons within the empire. The government considered them part of the Armenian Protestant millet, and thus Protestant leaders acted as intermediaries for them with the government. However, because of this anti-Mormon prejudice among Protestants, the Armenian Mormons were either left unrepresented by their Protestant administrators, or were actively persecuted by those leaders which the government saw as the head of their community.

This anti-Mormon prejudice within Protestantism, both in the United States and the Ottoman Empire, was embraced by the Hunchaks as well. Thus, when Hagop approached the Hunchak Party after converting to Mormonism, they did not view him as a Protestant. The conflict between Mormons and Protestants in the United States spilled over into the Ottoman Empire, with Armenian Protestants seeking to distance themselves from Armenian Mormons just as the American Protestants had. To the Hunchaks, Hagop was not converting from an Orthodox sect to a Protestant one; he was instead removing himself from the acceptable sects. He was no longer fit to belong to the Hunchak Party "on account of [his] new religion."[64] Although classified by the Ottoman government as part of the Armenian Protestant millet, the

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61. MSS 7785, LTPSC. See also Karen M. Kern "'They Are Not Known to Us': The Ottomans, the Mormons, and the Protestants in the Late Ottoman Empire," *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters* ed. Mehmet Ali Dogan and Heather J Sharkey, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2011), 122–63.

62. Jacob Spori, "The Mission in Turkey," *Deseret News*, February 25, 1885. Accessed February 28, 2017.

63. Fred Staufer, N.A. *Deseret Weekly News*, July 19, 1890. Accessed February 28, 2017. For more information on the Mormon-Protestant conflict see Secil Karal Akgun, "Mormon Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire" *Turcica* 28 (1996), 347–58.

64. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

Protestants rejected Hagop, as he did not fit their qualifications to be considered Protestant.

The Armenians' Place in Mormon Identity

No longer an Ottoman, rejected by both the nationalists and the Protestants, the final categorization left for Hagop was as a Mormon. He certainly considered himself Mormon. In leaving the Hunchaks, he was conforming with Mormon teachings. Mormon publications in the United States regarding Armenian nationalism made it clear that they saw the two groups as incongruent: "[The Mormon Armenians] have been peaceful, industrious, and loyal; no friends to political intrigue against the sultan."[65] A report in the *Deseret Evening News* stated, specifically regarding Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, that "it is one of the principles of the Church to encourage obedience to civil governments as well as to God."[66] In a display of religious dedication, when Hagop returned to the Ottoman Empire from the United States, it was because the missionaries asked him to assist in forming an Armenian Mormon colony in the old world:

> F. F. Hintze came to me and said that he, Anthony H. Lund, and I were going back to the old country to buy land in Jerusalem on which to colonize the Armenian Mormons. Oh, my! How I did resist. I had just reached the holy land [Utah]; now they wanted me to go back. I intended to send for my family as soon as I could earn enough money. I even had destroyed all of my passports and all of my identification papers so that I would not be tempted to go back. Also, I wanted my family to enjoy this land of the free and plenty. But after much debating, F. F. Hintze convinced me that I should go back with them because if they colonized the Armenian Mormons over there, I would be here alone.[67]

By returning to the empire after emigrating illegally, Hagop put himself at great risk. While the missionaries' journals say little more on the matter than

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65. London Daily Telegraph, " American Missionaries in Turkey—Why They Get along so Well with the Authorities." *Daily Evening Bulletin*, February 22, 1879. Accessed February 10, 2017.

66. "A Mission to Palestine," *Deseret Evening News*, December 29, 1897. Accessed February 10, 2017.

67. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

"Hagop's passport gave us trouble," Hagop's writings are filled with worry about the repercussions his passport troubles caused.[68] "I told [Hintze] my passport would not be accepted in Turkey," Hagop said, "but he would not listen to me. When we reached . . . Turkey, they would not let me get out of the ship. . . . We found a man that would give me a passport for a price. Hintze decided it was cheaper than going to jail, so he got one without me appearing."[69]

Hagop was not the first Armenian to emigrate to Utah and then be asked to return to the Ottoman Empire. Levon Sarkis had been baptized into the Mormon Church in Antep in 1890, emigrated to Utah, and then been called as a missionary to the Ottoman Empire in 1898.[70] He began the journey with other missionaries destined for the Ottoman Empire but after spending a day visiting family who had recently emigrated, Sarkis changed his mind.[71] Joseph W. Booth, one of Sarkis' travel companions writes that he was "surprised to receive a letter from Brother Sarkis stating that it was impossible for him to go with us on account of recent events in Turkey."[72] Rather than understanding Sarkis' apprehension, given the recent Hamidian Massacres, Booth wrote a letter chastising Sarkis' lack of religious commitment.[73] Sarkis' parents, still living in Antep, approached Booth during his stay in the Ottoman Empire and complained that asking their son to return after emigrating had been insensitive. Booth described the incident in his journal: "They seemed to entertain the idea that the Church had mistreated him . . . The Brethren explained to them that the Church had done a great deal for Levon and that in leaving Utah he was well provided for the journey."[74] The Church was clearly aware of the precarious situation of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire, less than two years after the Hamidian Massacres, which had forced the evacuation of all

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68. MSS 2262, LTPSC; MSS 7785, LTPSC.

69. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

70. *Missionary Department Missionary Registers, 1860–1959*, Vol. 3, p. 78, line 582. Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

71. Joseph W. Booth journal, MSS 155, Joseph W. Booth diaries and poems, 19th Century Western & Mormon Manuscripts, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. August 10, 1898.

72. MSS 155, LTPSC, August 12, 1898. For studies on Joseph W. Booth's diaries, see James A. Toronto, "Early Missions to Ottoman Turkey, Syria, and Palestine" In *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century,* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 339–62.

73. MSS 155, LTPSC, Aug. 12, 1898.

74. MSS 155, LTPSC, Jan. 6, 1899.

Mormon missionaries between 1895 and 1897.[75] The Church's insistence that Hagop return despite the legal repercussions he faced having left the Ottoman Empire illegally, as well as general indifference to Sarkis' apprehensions about his safety, show that the Mormon Church was less than sensitive to the Armenians' situation.

Once Hagop, Hintze, and Lund reached Jerusalem, Nishan Krikor Sherinian, Hagop's distant relative, was fetched from Zara to help locate a suitable tract of land on which to settle the Armenian Mormons. The team scoured Syria-Palestine and did in fact find a "1000 acre tract of land which they would buy," located a few miles outside of Jerusalem.[76] Here, sources differ as to what exactly happened, but the project was scrapped. F. F. Hintze's journal and official Church publications note that the site was too expensive and unsuitable for the project.[77] The Armenian Mormons describe it differently. Ottoman law forbade foreigners from owning land and the missionaries realized the land must be in the name of a local. Hagop said that "it was decided to buy in the name of [Nishan] Sherinian, but F. F. Hintze wanted to buy it in his name so he could take his three wives there and live like a king, since plural marriage was against the law in Utah. . . . Anyhow, he talked Lund out of buying the ground."[78] Nishan Krikor Shernian was also perturbed by the proceedings:

> We did find some good places at reasonable prices. However, it seems that Brother Hintze convinced brother Lund not to buy, because the Turkish government would not allow the sale of any property to foreigners, except to citizens under their subjection. Brother Hintze did not like the idea of [illegible] any land in an Armenian name, but wanted the land to be deeded in his name in order to rule over the poor Armenian people.[79]

It is true that Hintze was facing persecution back in Utah; his own journals mention that he hoped to bring his family to live in the proposed colony so that the US government would not separate them.[80] However, the Armenians felt

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75. Rao H Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Near East, 1884–1929" (MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958), 62–66.

76. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

77. MSS 2262, LTPSC; Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Near East, 1884–1929," 203–23.

78. MSS 7785, LTPSC.

79. MSS 7647, LTPSC.

80. MSS 2262, LTPSC.

that prejudice robbed them of the opportunity to live in their own colony. The missionary did not see the Armenians as his equal, despite their shared religion, and refused to let the land be purchased in an Armenian name, even if that Armenian was Mormon.

The rejection of Armenians from the Mormon community can also be seen in the initial propositions for the colony. In 1889, George Q. Cannon, a prominent church leader, explained the need to establish the Armenians within the Ottoman Empire rather than encouraging them to come to Utah:

> If we were to bring the people of the Orient to our land . . . the cry which has been raised against polygamy would, it is probable, be much stronger against such a movement, and we would be accused of bringing in polygamous hordes from Turkey . . . to perpetuate our system of marriage and to fasten it upon the United States. It is probable, in view of this, that when the converts in the Orient become sufficiently numerous to make it necessary for them to gather together, a place will have to be selected probably in Palestine itself.[81]

This statement was given in 1898, shortly after the Hamidian Massacres (1895–1896) that had resulted in the death of up to three hundred thousand Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.[82] These massacres brought the already brewing 'Armenian Question' to the forefront of international politics, even bringing Gladstone out of retirement in Britain.[83] Combined with decade's worth of missionary reports on the mistreatment of the Armenians, the massacres solidified an image of the Armenians as "Christians in peril" who desperately needed assistance from the western world.[84] Groups such as the Armenian Relief Committee, founded by former Protestant missionary Frederick Davis Greene, raised funds for their suffering coreligionists.[85] Articles about the vast numbers of Christian Armenians who "died for their belief" flooded American

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81. George Q Cannon in Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Near East, 1884–1929," 206.

82. Wilson, "In the Name of God, Civilization, and Humanity: The United States and the Armenian Massacres of the 1890s,"30.

83. Selim Deringil, "'The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed': Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895–1897," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 2 (Apr. 2009), 345.

84. Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains,* 127.

85. F. D. Greene, *The Armenian Crisis in Turkey,* (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1895).

newspapers.[86] Bills and resolutions designed to help the Asiatic Christians were brought before the US Congress, and in 1895 President Grover Cleveland sent US Navy cruisers into Turkish waters at the request of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.[87] Thus, the fact that Armenians within the Ottoman Empire were Christian, and not polygamous, was no secret to the American people, who were seeking to come to their aid for that very reason. In light of this, George Q. Cannon's argument that the Mormon Church "would be accused of bringing in polygamous hordes from Turkey" should they encourage the converted Armenians to emigrate is ungrounded.[88]

Beyond polygamy, Mormon publications cite heritage as a reason to settle the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire rather than Utah. One missionary noted that the Armenians are descended from Japheth, and therefore ought to remain in Palestine as heirs of the land, to help usher in the gathering of Israel.[89] Although not a view unique to Mormonism, it nonetheless demonstrates the complexities of developing a communal religious identity.[90] The Mormon missionaries wanted the Armenians to convert, but they did not necessarily want them to emigrate to Utah. They saw them as culturally different and ethnically designated to remain in the Ottoman Empire's territories, despite their religious conversion.

Cannon and the Mormons were not the only nineteenth-century westerners to speak in orientalist terms about the Ottoman Empire. However, Cannon

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86. "died for their belief: The Rev. Dr. John P. Peters on the Armenian Outrages two months of slaughters Sultan, He Declares, Is Responsible for the Massacres—Efforts of the Brooklyn Committee for Armenian Relief," *New York Times*, Jan. 26, 1896.

87. Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1963), 119–33; Wilson, "In the Name of God, Civilization, and Humanity: The United States and the Armenian Massacres of the 1890s," 32.

88. George Q Cannon in Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Near East, 1884–1929," 206. While the ban on Armenian emigration enforced by the Ottoman Empire may have been a factor in the decision to start a colony rather than encourage migration, no LDS sources mention the ban in relation to the colony.

89. C. U. L, "Among the Armenians," Deseret *News*, July 6, 1899. On the Mormon interest in Palestine see Kern, "'They Are Not Known to Us.'"

90. J. L. Barton, "Anent [*sic*] Armenians," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, June 12, 1892; see also Tolga Cora, "Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostalic Armenians in Khnus in the Mid-Nineteenth Century" in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, ed. and trans. Yasar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipah (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 109–132.

either failed to realize or intentionally neglected to mention the fact that Armenians occupied a unique place in nineteenth-century thought. Certainly, imperialist aims and an image of Armenians as simple people were factors in western interest in Armenia and the Armenians, but as Christians, the Armenians straddled the boundary between civilization and barbarism in the minds of westerners.[91] This is exemplified in the verdict of *United States v. Cartozian*. "Although the Armenian province is within the confines of the Turkish Empire . . . the people thereof have always held themselves aloof from the Turks, the Kurds, and allied peoples, principally, it might be said, on account of their religion."[92] To the United States, the religion of the Armenians superseded skin color as indicators of race. The court went on to note that "it may be confidently affirmed that the Armenians are white persons, and moreover that they readily amalgamate with the European and white races."[93] Thus, while the Armenians were not thought of in entirely orientalist terms in the nineteenth century United States, the Mormon Church maintained a sense that the Armenians ought to remain separate. In the minds of church leaders, Hagop Gagosian and the rest of the Armenian Mormons would ideally have stayed in the Ottoman Empire, living in a separate colony administered by the Church in faraway Utah. However, the very prejudice that inspired this plan, also destroyed it with F. F. Hintze refusing to accept the possibility of Armenians owning the land he sought to colonize them on. Although committed to their new faith, Hagop and the Armenian Mormons did not fit with what the Mormons saw as the requirements for fully part of their group.

A Crisis of Identity

While Hagop Gagosian's experiences as a Hunchak who converted to Mormonism may be unique, the issues that he faced post-conversion are representative of the difficulties of forming identity in the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. The empire was reforming both in response to outside pressures, such as the intervention of Russia, Great Britain, and France in the Balkans, as well

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91. Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, ambiguity and intervention* (Manchester: Manchester University, 2009), 28–30.

92. *United States v. Cartozian* in John Tehranian, *Whitewashed: America's Invisible Middle Eastern Minority* (New York: New York University, 2009), 53.

93. *United States v. Cartozian* in Tehranian, 53.

as internal resistance in the form of nationalism. The equality espoused by the reform decrees of 1839 and 1856 lost its appeal as the Muslim position on the world stage was threatened, meaning the decrees were never fully implemented. Whereas Christians had long felt Ottoman, there were now many who felt rejected by Ottoman state identity. Millets provided the ideological framework around which nationalism arose within the Ottoman empire. This pitted religious and ethnic communities against the government whether individuals wanted to separate or not, creating a set of individuals categorized by the government as enemies, or potential enemies, of the state because of their millet designation. In the Armenian case this is especially true, as the examples of Greece and Serbia had already proved the threat that nationalism posed to the empire's borders.

Yet, within the seemingly clearly defined millets there were divisions. Although the Mormon situation is not entirely unique, the Armenian Mormons are an illustrative example of misfits within the Armenian Protestant millet. Although categorized and administered by the government as Armenian Protestants, the Mormons were rejected by the Protestants. Furthermore, even though one belonged to a certain religion did not mean that their identity hinged on religion or even that their religion fully accepted them, as the example of Hagop and the Mormons shows. Although threats to imperial control mandated the categorization of individuals and communities in order to administer effectively and retain control of the provinces, the rise of nationalist identities, politicization of religious conversion, and the complexities within Protestantism in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, created a set of individuals who did not fit neatly within any particular group.

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