

# **POLITICIZATION OF THE UK ARMENIAN DIASPORA: TO WHAT EXTENT DID WAR CAUSE A TRANSFORMATION IN THE POLITICAL IDENTITY OF ARMENIANS IN THE UK FROM 1913-1920**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Trade diasporas are generally seen as apolitical, with limited exceptions. This paper will study the unexplored dynamics of the process by which trade diasporas become political under the stimulus of war. In doing so the research reveals that politicization occurs via a conversion of the trade diaspora network toward a structured communal hierarchy, led by a communal elite, which allows a stronger contribution to a national patriotic cause.

## **THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL INTRODUCTIONS**

The research conducted on trade diasporas and other transnational commercial phenomena generally points toward the trade diaspora as an apolitical entity which in rare cases can become political and attempt to achieve ethno-national political goals. A study into the UK-Armenian diaspora during WWI gives us valuable insight into the trade diaspora's political properties and how it can develop as a consequence of the stimulus of war. The paper shows the utility of Anthony Smith's diaspora nationalism concept as a framework for studying diaspora politicization, highlights the significance of financial community elites as political entrepreneurs, sheds light on the 'western point' of Armenian identity in the period, and reveals that the key element of this trade diaspora's politicization is the conversion from a trade diaspora network to a communal hierarchy. This case study's discoveries are not absolute, yet its research and frameworks contribute to a conceptual arsenal which can assist in future studies of diaspora politicization.

In order to be able to analyze the UK Armenian Diaspora from 1913-1920, historical and theoretical contexts must be established. This section will seek to define key concepts before establishing a framework into which the historical context can be inserted

## **DIASPORA**

To conduct a study on a diaspora and its processes, a working definition of diaspora is necessary. Recent global trends have resulted in a major 'rethinking' of diaspora.<sup>1</sup> The conceptions of transnationalism, diaspora and migrant community have become intertwined due to the rise of economic migrants and multi-cultural states. Armstrong developed the basic framework for an analysis of diaspora by

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<sup>1</sup> Sukanya Banerjee et al., *New Routes for Diaspora Studies*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 2012, pp. 1-2.

separating them into archetypal and situational categories: the archetypal category is the starting point for understanding the Armenian diaspora.<sup>2</sup>

The categorization of diaspora studies has allowed the field to develop into a debate between constructivist and essentialist schools. Those in the constructivist school, such as Baser, argue that the politicization of a community is the process of diaspora construction.<sup>3</sup> Constructivism is limited in the study of diasporas with wide-spanning histories, such as Jews or Armenians, as it becomes difficult to identify the key diaspora-construction moment. Nonetheless, the constructivist school, in focusing on diaspora-formation as a socio-political process, establishes useful concepts for a study of diaspora politicization, such as Adamson's 'political entrepreneur' concept, which assists with an understanding of the leaders of diaspora-construction.<sup>4</sup> In this paper entrepreneurs and community elites are interchangeable terms to describe the patriotic community leaders, who tended to be financially prominent.

The variety of diaspora definitions led Smith to state that new scholarship 'threatens to empty the term of any meaning'.<sup>5</sup> In response, Smith furthers his concept of an 'archetypal diaspora' by defining the 'classical diaspora' as Jews, Armenians and Greeks, whose study demands a historical context free of anachronisms from current diaspora studies debates.<sup>6</sup> The classical diasporas are distinguished by their 'ability to inspire and mobilize their members on the basis of a variety of deep cultural resources which do not have to be constructed'.<sup>7</sup> He defines diaspora in the classical context as 'ethno-cultural communities whose members are presently located in more than one state'.<sup>8</sup> The classical diaspora concept was designed to facilitate research of diaspora nationalism in a variety of different contexts in *'The Call of the Homeland'*. This paper will contextualize diaspora and define it by utilizing Smith's classical diaspora category.

## POLITICIZATION

In order to define 'politicization' as a process we must be aware of the start point of the process, which will be henceforth explored with a theoretical lens. The start point must be understood within the context of the 1913 UK-Armenian community; an application of the trade diaspora concept will assist in the analysis by explaining the prominence of certain individuals. Cohen originally defined trade diaspora before Curtin furthered the concept, tracking trade diasporas through history as 'cross-

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<sup>2</sup> John A. Armstrong, "Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas", *The American Political Science Review* 70(2):1976, p. 393. For criticisms of his ideas see William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", *Diaspora* 1(1):1991, pp. 83-99.

<sup>3</sup> Bahar Baser, "The Awakening of a Latent Diaspora: The Political Mobilization of First and Second Generation Turkish Migrants in Sweden", *Ethnopolitics* 13 (4):2014, pp. 355-76. For more on Constructivist Diaspora see Martin Sokefeld, "Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora". *Global Networks* 6(3):2006, pp. 265-84.

<sup>4</sup> Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (2nd ed.), Routledge, London, 2008; Fiona Adamson, "Constructing the Diaspora Identity" in Lyons et al, *Politics from Afar*, Hurst & Co., London, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Smith et al., *The Call of the Homeland*, Brill, Leiden, 2010, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 22

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 4

cultural brokers'.<sup>9</sup> Curtin primarily argues that the trade diasporas were apolitical networks in their host countries, choosing to avoid a merging of business and politics.<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this paper a network will be defined as a system of interconnected people, in contrast to a hierarchy, which is a structured system with authority-based ranking. Subrahayman and Bayly challenge Curtin's notion, arguing that generalizing all trade diasporas or circulation societies as apolitical is inaccurate.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately Safran's calls for subjectivity in understanding diasporas are relevant in the trade diaspora field also.<sup>12</sup> Curtin also argued that trade diasporas were phased out after the Industrial Revolution; however, the trade diaspora category is useful in understanding the UK-Armenian diaspora as a group which prioritized commerce and functioned in networks.<sup>13</sup>

This paper will utilize the concept of diaspora nationalism as the 'political' element within the diaspora.<sup>14</sup> Anderson outlined the concept of 'long-distance nationalism' to assist in the understanding of diaspora politics.<sup>15</sup> However, long-distance nationalism is a concept forged in the context of modern technology, not in the context of a classical diaspora.<sup>16</sup> Smith's concept of diaspora nationalism is suited to this paper, which seeks to track a process, rather than a moment. Smith defined diaspora nationalism as 'an ideological movement to secure for a self-defined ethno-cultural population collective autonomy, unity and identity by restoring its members to their historic homeland'.<sup>17</sup>

Smith's process of diaspora nationalism entails establishing the unity of the community, reuniting the community with the homeland, inspiring the community via ethno-history and the creation of a national destiny to chart the way forward.<sup>18</sup> This paper will utilize Smith's 'diaspora nationalism' concept to help a comprehension of politicization.

## HOMELAND

In a study of diaspora and its response to events in the homeland, it is vital to shed light on the concept of homeland and define it within the Armenian context.<sup>19</sup> Baser

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<sup>9</sup> Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [Cambridgeshire], 1984.

<sup>10</sup> Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, California World History Library, [California], 2011,

<sup>11</sup> S. Subrahmanyam, and C.A. Bayly, "Portfolio Capitalists and the Political Economy of Early Modern India", *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 25(4):1988, pp. 401-24.

<sup>12</sup> William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1(1):1991, pp. 83-99.

<sup>13</sup> Curtin, pp. 230-51.

<sup>14</sup> For further study of diaspora nationalism and diaspora nationalism in a comparative context see Smith et al.

<sup>15</sup> Benedict R. O'G, Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 1991.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Smith et al., p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> For wider discussion of the Armenian Homeland see Simon Paylasian, "Imagining Armenia" in Smith et al.

argues that diasporas sustain a ‘strong sense of belonging’ to their homeland.<sup>20</sup> The Armenian homeland from 1913-1920 was a territory which existed in the Russian and Ottoman Empires. The ‘bank of symbolism and the root of Armenian cultural and national identity’ were centered in Russian Armenia and the six Ottoman-Armenian vilayets (regions).<sup>21</sup> The Armenian term *hairenik* encompasses both the territorial and ideological importance of the homeland to the Armenian diaspora, translating as both homeland and fatherland. The term homeland will substitute for the Armenian language term *hairenik*, thus encompassing both the territorial and ideological nature of the term. Panossian’s multilocality concept, which emphasizes Eastern and Western points of Armenian awakening, will aid a conception of the homeland in this period.<sup>22</sup>

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The following section will provide the historical context necessary to understand the UK-Armenian diaspora. The Armenian Kingdom existed in different forms until 1375, during which time there was the development of a strong Christian religious element in the Armenian identity along with the development of a unique language, which assisted the survival of the Armenian diaspora.<sup>23</sup>

The Russian-Ottoman border after 1813 acted as the line between Panossian’s eastern and western Armenian identities. The Armenian ‘awakening’ took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on both sides of the border, with a new wave of writers, artists, intellectuals and revolutionaries armed with political fervor.<sup>24</sup> The conditions of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire worsened throughout the century, peaking with the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-6.<sup>25</sup> After this the situation in the vilayets became unbearable, resulting in greater European calls for reform until, in 1914, two commissioners were sent to the Ottoman Empire but failed to fulfil their roles due to the outbreak of war.<sup>26</sup>

It is important to discuss the role of the Armenian Genocide in this paper. The Armenian Genocide took place under the guise of war, with deeper narratives of Turkic nationalism.<sup>27</sup> The Genocide has become a heated debate in modern

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<sup>20</sup> Baser, “Stateless Diasporas and Their Long Distance Nationalist Activism in Host Countries,” *paper presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> ECPR Conference, 23-26<sup>th</sup> June 2010* hosted by University of Oporto and University Fernando Pessoa, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Khachig Toloyan, “Beyond the Homeland: From Exilic Nationalism to Diasporic Transnationalism” in Smith et al., p. 35. For more on Constantinople Armenians see Richard G. Hovannisian, and Simon Payaslian, *Armenian Constantinople*, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, Calif., 2010. For a focus on Constantinople Armenian economics see Bedross, Der Matossian, “The Armenian Commercial Houses and Merchant Networks in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire”, *Turcica* 39(0):2007, pp. 147-74.

<sup>22</sup> Razmik, Panossian, *The Armenians*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. 130.

<sup>23</sup> David Marshall Lang, *Armenia, Cradle of Civilization*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1978, p. 209.

<sup>24</sup> Ardag Movsisyan, *Hamarod Badmootyan Hayots* [Brief Armenian History], Zangak, Yerevan, 2014, pp. 179-83.

<sup>25</sup> For more info on the Hamidian Massacres see Arman J. Kirakosian, *The Armenian Massacres, 1894-1896*, Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan, Dearborn, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> “Reforms in Ottoman Armenia,” *Times* [London, England] 9 Feb., 1914, p. 5. *The Times Digital Archive*, Web. 19 Apr. 2016.

<sup>27</sup> For more information on the Armenian Genocide and Turkish Nationalism see Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, Zed Books, London, 2004.

historiography and politics: in this research a detailed analysis of the Genocide historiography is not necessary. The Genocide will be seen as one of the catalysts of diaspora politicization within the context of WWI.<sup>28</sup>

Within the UK, the Armenian community became established in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Armenian merchants from the Ottoman Empire established 'trade representations'.<sup>29</sup> A common practice was for wealthy Armenian families in Constantinople to send family members to the UK to open business branches.<sup>30</sup> The Manchester-Armenian Community founded a Church in 1870 and proceeded to start social organizations such as the Armenian Committee of Manchester (ACM), which at times engaged with political figures but existed more for social purposes.<sup>31</sup> The Armenian population of Manchester grew following the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-6, with an increase in Armenian firms from 29 in 1894 to 85 in 1901.<sup>32</sup>

The Armenian population of the UK in November 1914, naturalized and non-naturalized, was stated as 1500 by a London-Armenian periodical.<sup>33</sup> An examination of the Armenian firms in Slater's Directories of Manchester, Salford and Suburbs 1901-1903 reveals that, with the exception of 4 families, all the Manchester Armenians were listed as merchants.<sup>34</sup> The London Armenian Community was smaller, reaching approximately 400 people by the end of WWI.<sup>35</sup> The pre-1913 London Community was not as organized or as old as the Manchester community, yet London's status attracted political activists such as socialist Hunchak Party leaders, who organized the 1896 Hunchak Party Congress in Shepherd's Bush.<sup>36</sup> These political activists gradually left London due to infighting and an attraction to other European cities such as Geneva or Paris.<sup>37</sup> Thus, we can conclude that the 1913 UK-

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<sup>28</sup> The history of the Armenian Genocide has been deeply investigated in works such as Raymond H. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, I.B. Tauris., London, 2011 and Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2006. Counter-arguments have been put forward in Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press, London, New York, 1961. Primary sources conclusively show the existence of a Genocide: Ara Sarafian, *Talaat Pasha's Report on the Armenian Genocide*, Gomidas, London, 2011, and Grigorios Balakian et al., *Armenian Golgotha*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2009, and, Arnold Toynbee, and James Bryce, *Armenian Atrocities*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1915. Nonetheless, the historiography has developed into whether the Genocide can be classified as a genocide, which is a politically contentious topic for the modern Turkish Republic, which currently denies the Genocide.

<sup>29</sup> For a wider discussion on the early UK-Armenian Community see Joan George, *Merchants in Exile*, Gomidas Institute Books, Princeton, 2002, pp. 9-17 and Kapriel Papazian et al., *Merchants from Ararat*, Ararat Press, New York, 1979.

<sup>30</sup> George, *Merchants in Exile*, p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 23-25.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>33</sup> London, British Library, AUAL, *Ararat: A Searchlight on Armenia: Volume 2*, 1914, London, p. 154.

<sup>34</sup> George, *Merchants in Exile*, pp. 235-37.

<sup>35</sup> Joan George, *Merchants to Magnates, Intrigue and Survival*, Taderon Press, London, 2009, pp. 16-17 & p. 66.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> G.S. Stepanian, "The Peckham Armenian Martyrs" *Armenian Institute News*, 7:2009. For more on Armenian Political Parties, Dikran Mesrob Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology Under Ottoman Rule*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, N.J., 2009.

Armenian community was predominantly merchants who disassociated themselves from the young revolutionaries, putting their trust in diplomatic efforts instead.<sup>38</sup>

The Armenian Diaspora of France has been studied by Dedeyan.<sup>39</sup> These studies, however, are in the French language; therefore, to better understand the global Armenian diaspora a brief comparative context will be explored by looking at the US-Armenian diaspora. Robert Mirak pioneered this study revealing that unlike their British compatriots they started out as migrant laborers before rapid economic advancement.<sup>40</sup> Armenian political parties were very popular in the USA in the pre-1914 period, establishing population bases and training camps to assist in financing revolutionary efforts.<sup>41</sup> The political activeness of the US-Armenians is due to their status as a migrant community rather than a trade diaspora. Understanding the context of the American-Armenian diaspora reinforces the hypothesis that diaspora politicization is a subjective process which reflects the nature of the diaspora.

## HISTORIOGRAPHY

A discussion of the relevant historiography shall seek to review the secondary sources available for the study. Panossian's book *The Armenians* evaluates and tracks the creation of the Armenian national identity, from the 'ethnic' into a nation state.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Zekian's work helps us understand the jigsaw of Armenian identity and historiography<sup>43</sup>. A debate between Aivazian and Aslanian highlights the difficulties with Armenian historiography with Aivazian arguing that Armenian nationalism was inherent within Armenians for millennia.<sup>44</sup> Isolated from these debates, Joan George, a third-generation Manchester Armenian, produced two books on the UK-Armenians in Manchester and London respectively.<sup>45</sup> The facts and narratives she establishes are the essential background to the study of the politicization of the community. The principal limitations of her works are their genealogical nature and her self-confessed 'mistakes and inaccuracies'.<sup>46</sup> Akaby Nassibian's study focuses on 'Britain's attitude towards the Armenian people'.<sup>47</sup> This study scrutinizes FCO documents to reveal a

<sup>38</sup> George, *Merchants to Magnates*, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> For more on French-Armenian diaspora history see Gérard Dédéyan, *Histoire du Peuple Arménien*, Privat, Toulouse, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> US immigration Commission, Reports, Vol. XXIV, p.634 in Robert Mirak, *Torn between Two Lands*, Harvard University by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1983.

<sup>41</sup> Mirak, pp. 205-54; Paylasian, p.114.

<sup>42</sup> Panossian, p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> Boghos Levon Zekian, *The Armenian Way to Modernity: Armenian Identity between Tradition and Innovation*, Armenian Monastery of San Lazzaro, Venice, 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Panossian, p. 17fn 32; Sebouh Aslanian, "The Treason of the Intellectuals: Reflections on the Use of Revisionism and Nationalism in Armenian Historiography", *Armenian Forum*, (2):2002, pp. 1-38.

<sup>45</sup> George, *Merchants in Exile*; George, *Merchants to Magnates*; Bishop Mushegh Seropian, *Manchesdri Hay Kaghoote* [The Armenian Community of Manchester], Azg, Boston, 1911; Benyamin Boghossian, *Hayanbasd Sharjoome Medz Britanyayoom* [The Pro-Armenian Movement in Britain] 1914-1923, Hayots Tzeghasbanootyan Tankaran Institute, Yerevan, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> London, CAIA Library Archives, -Letter to Tutto, 2002, in *Joan George Personal Letters*, GEO/3/9.

<sup>47</sup> Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question, 1915-1923*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1984.

pragmatic British foreign policy toward the Armenian question, providing historical context to the nature of diplomatic events at this time. The book, published in 1984, predates George's studies, which pioneered in the field of the UK-Armenian diaspora; thus, Nassibian's book takes no account of the influence that the Armenian community of the UK had on policy and Armenophilic pressure groups. Similar to Nassibian, Bogosyan conducted research in the Armenian language on key British pro-Armenian figures and political groups, mostly ignoring the relevance of the British Armenians.<sup>48</sup> Somakian's study expands Nassibian's scope to focus on other European powers in addition to Britain.<sup>49</sup> The key historiography mentioned here laid down a vital foundation to further studies on UK-Armenians. The lack of sources or studentship ready to engage with the relevance of the community has left a void in analytical approaches to the UK-Armenian diaspora.

## SOURCES

The following section will provide a summary of the key sources this paper will use to expose new analysis on the UK-Armenian diaspora. '*Ararat: A Searchlight on Armenia*', was a monthly magazine which acted as the official narrative of the Armenian United Association of London (AUAL) and was subscribed to by Armenians in the UK and worldwide.<sup>50</sup> The magazine is a key source for understanding the development of political and cultural views in the UK community. George utilized this source to establish a brief chronology of events and learn about key figures in the community, yet the vast majority of its pages remain unanalyzed. The source, being a mouthpiece for official views, is limited in its interpretation of non-public activities; nonetheless the lack of sources for this period compels an over-usage of the source. To counter-act the official nature of the source, the paper will analyze the relatively unknown *Boghos Nubar's Papers and the Armenian Question: 1915-1918*.<sup>51</sup>

Boghos Nubar, the wealthy son of Egyptian prime minister Nubar Pasha, was the head of the Armenian National Delegation, a group established at the initiative of the Catholicos, the head of the Armenian Church, to conduct diplomatic activities in Europe. The letters include unexamined correspondence and references to the UK-Armenian community which provide an unofficial view of Armenians in the UK. The compiler, Vatche Ghazarian, states in the introduction that many letters were removed from the original collection by Boghos Nubar, a common limitation of personal archival sources.<sup>52</sup> The case study lacks sources to understand the views and mentalities of the community at large, limiting its social history lens. The paper will embrace an events-based methodology, identifying key events in the time period and tracing the subsequent individual and collective responses by looking at the actions of the elites-cum-entrepreneurs and the community at large.

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<sup>48</sup> Boghossian, pp. 171-73.

<sup>49</sup> Manoug Joseph Somakian, *Empires in Conflict*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 1995.

<sup>50</sup> AUAL, '*Ararat: A Searchlight on Armenia*', 1913-1920 Vol 1-6.

<sup>51</sup> Boghos Nubar et al, *Boghos Nubar's Papers and the Armenian Question, 1915-1918*, Mayreni Pub., Waltham, Mass., 1996.

<sup>52</sup> Nubar, p. xviii.

## THE UK-ARMENIAN DIASPORA ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR I

This section will explore the UK-Armenian Diaspora on the eve of World War I, examining the starting point of the politicization process before the stimulus of war. This section will suggest that the community on the eve of war was an apolitical network with the exception of a small group of community elites.

Curtin defined trade diasporas as 'communities of merchants living among aliens in associated networks'.<sup>53</sup> The category is useful in this context due to its emphasis of networks, which the pre-1914 community structure constituted. The AUAL, presided over by Lt. Col. Gregory Markar from 1913-19, stated that its aims were twofold: to draw together Armenians in London and assist with national questions relating to Armenia.<sup>54</sup>

An article from the *Evening News* on the foreign clubs of London Armenians in early 1914 gives us valuable external insight into the apolitical structure of the Armenian community. The author describes a 'cosmopolitan' group whose monthly social gatherings are mocked as 'tea drinking'.<sup>55</sup>

He also describes a 'general feeling of cordiality and friendship' using the adage 'blood is thicker than water' to describe the network which the AUAL facilitated providing 'enjoyable conversaziones' for the community.<sup>56</sup> In Manchester the ACM fulfilled a political role; the Manchester Young Men's Club (MYMC) acted as a social network. The commercial nature of the UK-Armenians and their prominence in commercial activities with the Ottoman Empire is highlighted by a 1916 protest to the British Home Office which states:

"The Armenians in England are mostly engaged in commerce and have in their hands an important proportion of the British trade with Turkey".<sup>57</sup>

This network had primarily apolitical properties. In June 1914 *Ararat* quoted Gregory in saying at a monthly gathering: "The engrossing calls of business are apt to create an aloofness from national affairs".<sup>58</sup> This is an example of the community elite acknowledging that the business-oriented nature of the community was a barrier to politicization. The MYMC reinforces this apolitical nature declaring its purpose as a social club for Armenians, explicitly stating no connection with political parties as a priority.<sup>59</sup>

Despite this, the community elites were engaged in political activities and attempted to mobilize the community with little success. Establishing the unity of the community was seen as an aim of the AUAL in their constitution and in the language of their press. *Ararat* quotes Gregory in an update on yearly events: "It is a united

<sup>53</sup> Steve Gosch, "Cross-Cultural Trade as a Framework for Teaching World History: Concepts and Applications", *The History Teacher*, 27(4):1994, p. 427.

<sup>54</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 1, March 1914, p. 272; "Lieut-Col. Gregory. V.D.", *Times* [London, England], 3 Feb. 1920:15. *The Times Digital Archive*, Web. 19, Apr. 2016.

<sup>55</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 1, February 1914, pp. 261-264.

<sup>56</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 1, March 1914, p. 308.

<sup>57</sup> London, National Archives - Rassim Husni Effendi, former Turkish Consul in Manchester: permission for his repatriation to Turkey; petition from the Representative Armenian Committee of Manchester requesting that he should not be allowed to return to Turkey, 1916, FO 383/233.

<sup>58</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 1, June 1914 p. 417.

<sup>59</sup> George, *Merchants in Exile*, p. 140-53.

body we need here”.<sup>60</sup> Balian, an intellectual, in October 1913 stressed the need for unity in an AUAL meeting.<sup>61</sup> In April 1914, he saw it necessary in his speech at an AUAL gathering to address the ‘resentment’ that his last speech on unity inspired:

“This Association of ours is not a mutual admiration society. If its members are not to be at liberty to point out the weak spots in our armor, it is manifestly obvious we shall never successfully meet our opponents”.<sup>62</sup>

This address highlights the fundamental difference in attitudes between the elites and the community at large, with the community seeing the Association as the means of ‘mutual admiration’, which sarcastically implies a social nature and a friendly vibe. Attempts to inspire the community via ethno-history are only demonstrated by community elites. Gregory translated a book by Tchobanian that glorifies Armenian history and culture: *The People of Armenia*.<sup>63</sup> The AUAL also regularly published articles on Armenian history.<sup>64</sup> Attempts to re-unite the community and the homeland are exemplified by the AUAL’s support for MP Noel Buxton and Reverend Harold Buxton’s trip to Armenia. The trip was utilized by the elites to inspire the community via articles in *Ararat* and a lecture by the Buxton brothers.<sup>65</sup>

Balian reveals the pro-reform viewpoint in his October 1913 speech at an AUAL meeting: “Our best and ultimate interest lies in our continuing to be subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan”.<sup>66</sup> This official endorsement of reforms is further highlighted by books and pamphlets supported and distributed by the AUAL. *Travel and Politics in Armenia*, the book documenting the Buxton brothers’ travels to Armenia, sees Aram Raffi, a prominent London-Armenian and son of the novelist Raffi, write a section in the book describing Armenian history and culture before quoting the ‘Scheme of Reform of the Armenian Delegation 1913’.<sup>67</sup> This book is also endorsed and advertised by *Ararat*, reinforcing the notion of reforms for the homeland as the official aim of UK-Armenian community organizations.<sup>68</sup>

This section has argued that the pre-war UK-Armenian diaspora were a trade diaspora, an apolitical network, conforming to Curtin’s arguments. Community organizations such as the AUAL facilitated the diaspora network, simultaneously acting as political channels for community elites. This dual purpose is demonstrated through Gregory’s March 1914 meeting address: “It is only through the means of such an association that units of our nationality can get to know each other and combine for national purposes”.<sup>69</sup> This section has also shown that the official aim of the elites

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<sup>60</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol 1, March 1914, p. 304.

<sup>61</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol 1, April 1914, p. 329-354.

<sup>62</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Arshak Tchobanian and G. Marcar Gregory, *The People of Armenia*, Dent, London, 1914.

<sup>64</sup> For *Ararat* articles on Armenian history and the nation see: AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol 2, July 1915, p. 34, Vol. 2, September 1915, p. 91. For *Ararat* article on Armenian Revolutionary Federation party see AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, December 1914, p. 196.

<sup>65</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, October 1914, p. 130.

<sup>66</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol 1, October 1913, p127-8

<sup>67</sup> Noel-Buxton, Noel Noel-Buxton, Harold Jocelyn Buxton, and Aram Raffi, *Travel and Politics in Armenia*, Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1914.

<sup>68</sup> For *Ararat*’s endorsing book review of the Buxton Brothers’ book see AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, October 1914, p. 161.

<sup>69</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 1, March 1914, pp. 303-306.

and the community was reforms for the homeland, a goal which would also change on account of the war.

### THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I AND THE UK-ARMENIAN DIASPORA

The entrance of the Ottoman Empire into the war in October 1914 directly affected the UK-Armenians as the Home Office classified Ottoman citizens, including many non-naturalized Armenians, as enemy aliens.<sup>70</sup> This section will explore the response of the UK-Armenian diaspora to these changes and how it contributed to the politicization process.

The initial period of the 1914 Alien Restriction Act saw a lack of understanding of Ottoman Empire subject races.<sup>71</sup> Consequently many Armenians experienced adversity in British society, such as an impairment of financial activities.<sup>72</sup> Those who traded with the Ottoman Empire also would have experienced a change in lifestyle due to the Ottomans becoming an enemy of Britain.

In November 1914, December 1914 and January 1915 *Ararat* produced three articles detailing the issue of Armenians as alien enemies. These articles provide an understanding of the community response. The November 1914 article stresses the need for the Home Office to recognize that Armenians were an allied population and were facing financial disabilities due to the Alien Act:

‘Many have lost their means of livelihood, while the influential colony of Manchester, whose dealings in the cotton trade run into millions, are seriously hampered in their financial transactions on account of the Bank of England declining to assist in connection with bills of exchange.’<sup>73</sup>

This excerpt alludes to the destruction of the previous order for UK Armenians. In dealing with the issue of enemy aliens the AUAL assumed a significant role, declaring itself as: ‘representing the Armenians here’.<sup>74</sup> The necessary response to the Alien Act was only possible via community organizations, thus instilling a new sense of hierarchy into the trade diaspora network. The AUAL applied to the Home Office for concessions and prepared a list of Armenians in the UK to assist the process of de-alienation.

The December 1914 article tells the community that its attempts were unsuccessful, detailing a troubled month for non-nationalized Armenians by reiterating the commercial damage of the Home Office inaction:

‘And when we view the aspect of the commercial position of Armenians in the thriving colony of Manchester, we are filled with dismay as to the financial outcome affecting a body who have carried on for the good of that country ... The transactions of this colony reach the colossal figure of about four million sterling annually, and how do we find so useful, industrious and peaceful a body treated?’<sup>75</sup>

This exhibits a change in the traditional community network as many Armenians, despite years of commercial activity in the UK, are shunned by the Home Office and

<sup>70</sup> “Turks Enter the War,” *Times* [London, England], 30 Oct., 1914: 8. *The Times Digital Archive*, Web. 19, Apr. 2016, Aslanian.

<sup>71</sup> J. C. Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918*, Garland Pub., New York, 1986, pp. 50-52.

<sup>72</sup> George, *Merchants in Exile*, p. 146.

<sup>73</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, November 1914, Pp. 154-5.

<sup>74</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, December 1914. Pp. 189-191.

banks alike. This indicates a centralization of community functions in organizations rather than individuals, suggesting the prioritization of hierarchical functions over the network as necessary in dealing with the alien issue. The article proceeds to detail the lobbying activities which were conducted by the organizations in pressing the pro-Armenian MPs to raise the issue with the government.<sup>76</sup> The January 1915 article details the realization of UK-Armenians' hopes in an amendment of the 1914 Aliens Restriction Order requiring Armenians to register to remove alien status. In complying with the order, *Ararat* states that it proceeded to organize the community for de-alienation:

'With the ready approval of the Home Office and Police authorities, two representative Armenian Committees were formed, one for London and the other for Manchester, which were empowered to grant Certificates of Nationality to all Armenians applying for them, with whose antecedents and loyalty the Committees were satisfied.'<sup>77</sup>

In compelling Armenians to register, the organizations unconsciously established a hierarchy and authority to them. The hierarchy is further clarified in the letter sent out by the Committees to Armenians which suggests the Church as the ultimate political authority:

'The Representative Armenian Committees for London and Manchester are approved by His Grace, Kevork Utudjian, Archbishop of Armenians in Western Europe.'<sup>78</sup>

This moves the Armenian Church's authority to the top of the hierarchy with the organizations as the intermediaries and the community at large at the bottom. Despite this change, the network is still relevant and visible as depicted by the letter instructing Armenians on de-alienation:

'When the party so applying is not personally known to the Secretary, or to any member of the Committee, he or she should produce a personal reference from a responsible member of the Armenian Community who is known to the Committee.'<sup>79</sup>

This excerpt indicates a recommendation system where Armenians are verified by other Armenians who are known to the community, suggesting that the trade diaspora network was being absorbed and utilized by the community elite. Furthermore, the extract reveals a degree of co-ordination between the London and Manchester communities. In light of new political challenges, the communities coordinated their activities under the auspices of the archbishop, demonstrating a level of structure not present before the war. The alien issue culminates in the presentation of a token of appreciation on behalf of the 'London and Manchester Armenians' to Gregory for his efforts in settling the enemy alien issue at an AUAL meeting, reminding us that the patriotic work was still centralized with the elite.<sup>80</sup> *The Times* in Gregory's obituary labelled him an 'adviser to the Home Office on Armenian Questions' signifying the relevance of the alien issue in activating the community elite.<sup>81</sup> Whereas previously

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<sup>76</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2 January 1915, pp. 237-238.

<sup>78</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, January 1915, p. 255.

<sup>81</sup> "Lieut-Col. Gregory. V.D.," *Times* [London, England] 3 Feb. 1920: 15. *The Times Digital Archive*, Web. 19, Apr. 201-6.

the UK-Armenian diaspora functioned in trade diaspora networks, the consequences of the enemy alien issue compelled the Armenians to function within the new centralized, *hierarchicized* structure.<sup>82</sup>

This section has aimed to explore the first wave of politicization, initiated by the outbreak of World War I in 1914, by analysing the politicization via the enemy alien issue and a general change in mentality due to new wartime attitudes. The war amplified the sense of unity and the nationalist calls of the community elites and provided them more influence via centralization in the community, which was further accentuated by the eradication of many traditional commercial roles. War-induced change in UK-Armenian mentality is demonstrated in more nationalistic articles in *Ararat* and more patriotic debates in the YMCM meetings.<sup>83</sup> This hierarchicization of the community is further augmented in the following sections which see other wartime events politicizing the community to such an extent that communal collective action became possible.

## THE UK-ARMENIAN RESPONSE TO THE INITIATION OF GENOCIDAL POLICIES

The following section will explore the impact of the Armenian Genocide on UK-Armenians. April 1915 saw the beginning of the Genocide with the organized rounding up of Istanbul prominent Armenians seen as the starting point of the massacres.<sup>84</sup> To analyze the community response to the Genocide, individual action and collective action will be analyzed separately to emphasize the differences between the elite and the community.

### INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

This section will explore the individual actions of the entrepreneurs in response to the Genocide. To do this the section will examine the organization of the community elite within a national hierarchy before looking at their individual actions to influence public opinion and the government. The letter collection of Boghos Nubar, the head of the Armenian National Delegation, gives a valuable insight into the political activities of the community away from the limelight, showing a significant divide between the actions of the elite and the community.

The onset of the Genocide allowed a further strengthening of ties between British politicians and Armenian political entrepreneurs, demonstrated by a joint telegram sent to the US by MP Aneurin Williams and Gregory.<sup>85</sup> Correspondence between MP Williams and MP Buxton shows Gregory applying political pressure onto the MP's.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Hierarchicized* and *hierarchicization* are new terms to be utilized by this paper defined as: the process of a social or organizational system becoming hierarchical.

<sup>83</sup> For nationalistic articles in *Ararat* see: Article on ARF - AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, December 1914, pp. 196-205. Article on Armenian freedom fighter Hamazasp - AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, January 1915, pp. 239-41. For article promoting independence and self-government see AUAL *Ararat*, Vol. 2, January 1915, p. 255. For article detailing MYCM nationalistic debate titles see AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, January 1915, pp. 257-58.

<sup>84</sup> Movsisyan, pp. 193-98.

<sup>85</sup> "Lieut-Col. Gregory. V.D.", *Times* [London, England] 3 Feb. 1920, p. 15. *The Times Digital Archive*, Web. 19, Apr. 2016. Obituary: 'adviser to the Home Office on Armenian Questions during the war'.

<sup>86</sup> Nubar, p. 41.

The relationship between elites and politicians and the increased lobbying are examples of individual actions by the elite.<sup>87</sup>

Prominent Armenians from London, Paris and Manchester conducted a meeting to attempt to create a document declaring the aspirations of the Armenian nation; however, they decided against creating and submitting a document for reasons summarized in a letter from the ACM to Nubar on May 13, 1915:

“[Manchester Armenian Delegates] agreed to avoid such a serious move without the consent of the Catholicos or of your Excellency the official representative of His Holiness. The delegates of London and Paris expressed their consent about the agreed.”<sup>88</sup>

This letter is explicit evidence for the existence of a hierarchy within the diaspora political movement, with the communal elites taking direction from Nubar, who was perceived as a figure of authority due to his appointment from the Catholicos, the head of the Armenian Church. This meeting was confidential and not publicized in *Ararat*. In early July Nubar travelled to the United Kingdom to conduct a variety of meetings with British politicians, further reinforcing the concept of the hierarchy with him as senior representative and local elites working under his ‘supervision’.<sup>89</sup>

A letter from Dr. Zavriev, who was a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, to Nubar Pasha from August 10 describes Zavriev’s discussion with the Russian embassy’s First Interpreter, Sablin, in London and gives us vital insight into the community dynamics.<sup>90</sup> Sablin says to Dr. Zavriev that various London-Armenians feel and work antagonistically to Nubar Pasha:

“It seems to me that not all Armenians have confidence in Boghos Nubar Pasha. Even here, in London, a group of influential Armenians (these are not insignificant people; some of them are millionaires) told me they do not trust Boghos Nubar”.<sup>91</sup>

He goes on to state that: “They all say that Nubar cannot be considered as the representative of all Armenians”.<sup>92</sup> Sablin’s remarks allude to a divide within the UK-Armenian community between those who support and oppose the activities of Nubar. It is revealed that the dissenting have links with Persian Armenians who also oppose Nubar, suggesting that the opposition are traditional members of the trade diaspora network with mercantile links to Persia.<sup>93</sup> Dr. Zavriev suggests the ‘character of well-to-do Armenians’ as the cause of opposition to the Armenian National Delegation, insinuating that the wealthy members of the trade diaspora are naturally inclined to oppose hierarchical structures.<sup>94</sup> The opposition represents a backlash to rapid hierarchicization under Nubar, a rival wealthy Armenian giving direction. The source exposes the tensions that arose with the accelerated transition from a network to a hierarchy.

In response to the Genocide, the elite also engaged in activities to influence public opinion. They were pushed to do this by Nubar:

<sup>87</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, September 1915, p. 95.

<sup>88</sup> Nubar, p. 38.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 110. For Nubar’s activities in London see Nubar, pp. 120-29.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

‘Before taking leave, I [Boghos Nubar] insisted that it was necessary to engage in active propaganda, presently only through the press and speeches in support of our cause’.<sup>95</sup>

The public opinion campaign saw the August 1915 *Ararat* initiate a new section titled ‘Parliament and Press on Armenia’ which stated as its intent the need for a press ‘awakening’ to the ‘heartrending trials of Armenians’ under the Ottoman regime.<sup>96</sup> Other attempts to influence public opinion include the AUAL’s promotion of works on Armenia, including Williams’ book which was published in 1916 and describes Armenian history, the ‘Turkophilic Press’ and Britain’s duty to help Armenia.<sup>97</sup> The book is dedicated to A.P.H, Avetis Parsoom Hacobian, a London-Armenian elite.<sup>98</sup>

This dedication to him suggests a certain level of individual courting from Hacobian to assist Williams in writing his book. Furthermore, in promoting the book *Ararat* states:

‘The recent output of literature dealing with Armenia is, doubtless, largely due to the publication, some three years ago, of *Ararat*, which circulating as it does among the more educated and responsible sections of the public, has enabled them to inform themselves for the benefit of those with less leisure and fewer opportunities’.<sup>99</sup>

This re-iterates *Ararat*’s role in influencing public opinion; however, in indulging in self-promotion, *Ararat*’s reliability suffers. Hacobian wrote his own book for the purpose of influencing public opinion in 1917.<sup>100</sup> A protest letter from the MCM to the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs also reveals that UK-Armenians had been providing ‘communications to the press’.<sup>101</sup> In attempting to influence public opinion the elite were carrying out individual activities under Nubar’s directive, further reinforcing the concept of the political hierarchy and organization among the elites.

This increased organization can also be witnessed in attempts to influence government policy on local matters. The aforementioned Manchester-Armenian protest letter states that Rassim Husni, the former Ottoman consul in Manchester, threatened UK-Armenians for supporting the Allies and held ‘anti-Armenian feelings’ including supporting the Turkish policy of massacring Armenians:

‘Rassim Husni... must be possessed of considerable information likely to be of value to the Turkish Government in any campaign against the Armenians and in particular in the persecution of the relatives of pro-Ally Armenians in England’.<sup>102</sup>

The Committee thus petitioned the Government to disallow the possibility of him returning to the Ottoman Empire. The letter is signed firstly by Archbishop Utudjian of Manchester and then by the President and Members of the Committee reiterating

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>96</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, August 1915, p. 75.

<sup>97</sup> W. Llewelyn Williams, *Armenia: Past and Present*, P.S. King & Son, London, 1916, p. 165; *Ararat* promotion of the book – AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, November 1915, p. 246.

<sup>98</sup> Williams, p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, July 1916, p. 44. For evidence of circulation of *Ararat* among ‘influential circles’ see fund appeal letter AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, p. 569.

<sup>100</sup> Avetoon Pesak Hacobian, *Armenia and the War*, George H. Doran Co., New York, 1917.

<sup>101</sup> London, National Archives - Rassim Husni Effendi, former Turkish Consul in Manchester: permission for his repatriation to Turkey; petition from the Representative Armenian Committee of Manchester requesting that he should not be allowed to return to Turkey. 1916, FO 383/233.

<sup>102</sup> FO 383/233 Ibid.

the previously discussed hierarchy. The Manchester Armenians elite were compelled into action to safeguard themselves; to do this they developed greater organization through the Representative Armenian Committee of Manchester, which observed Husni in the months preceding the petition.

### COLLECTIVE ACTIVITIES

This section will explore the collective activities and conversion of community functions before analysing readers' letters to *Ararat* which provide an insight into communal opinions.

There was a great sense of patriotism among the community who had strong ties to their kin in the homeland as well as 'assets and property there'.<sup>103</sup> This bond along with patriotic feelings explains the cause of the politicization in this period as they would have felt sympathy for their compatriots in the homeland. The July 1915 *Ararat* claimed that it had 'doubled the list of subscribers and contributions come in much more freely', suggesting that the massacres stimulated the communities' interest and patriotism.<sup>104</sup> The January 1916 *Ararat* also stated success in the relief funds with more contributors than ever. Aside from humanitarian generosity, in October 1915 the AUAL saw a change in its function with 'the expansion of the work of the association' to 'accommodate the new political situation'.<sup>105</sup> The 'At Home' section of *Ararat*, which published news on events within the local community and social activities, ceased in November 1915 due to the need for political publishing space.<sup>106</sup> In December 1916 the AUAL completely ceased social functions stating that the:

'Cessation of its social functions has given place to a far greater vitalizing power which is being utilized towards the nation and the individual, and such activity was bound to spring to the surface in so colossal a struggle on the outcome of which hangs the destiny of Armenia and Armenians, nay their very existence'.<sup>107</sup>

This declaration is further evidence for the deprioritizing of the trade diaspora network in favor of patriotic activities, directly stating the ceasing of social efforts for patriotic efforts in light of the situation in the homeland. On April 29 1917 following a restart of social functions with a 'renewal of hope for better days', a social function took place at the new AUAL center purchased with funds collected during the war.<sup>108</sup> The reception witnessed a patriotic explosion as the future Armenian national anthem was sung:

'Miss Gulbenkian's sweet and sympathetic voice ... was particularly brought out in the old Armenian song, *Mer Hairenik*, which touched the hearts of all Armenians present and culminated in a roar of applause when she unfurled the Red, Green and Blue, the Armenian flag'.<sup>109</sup>

The reaction suggests that the community had in response to wartime events been politicized to such a degree that these social events had been transformed into occasions igniting patriotism.

<sup>103</sup> FO 383/233 *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, July 1915, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, October 1915, p. 137.

<sup>106</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, November 1915, p. 198.

<sup>107</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, December 1916, p. 264.

<sup>108</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, May 1917, p. 502.

<sup>109</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, May 1917, p. 505.

This patriotism culminated with the proceeding of ‘Flag Day’, also known as ‘Armenia Day’, on June 13<sup>th</sup> 1917.<sup>110</sup> This day saw a mass selling of Armenian flags by the community to raise money for charities assisting Armenians. This was a landmark due to the collective and co-operative nature of the activity with the community at large partaking. Communal patriotism was so popular that individuals such as Ye[t]wart, a Manchester-Armenian businessman, even sought to profit from it by selling the Armenian Coat of Arms.<sup>111</sup>

In August 1916 *Ararat* inaugurated a ‘Correspondence’ section, publishing readers’ letters. The first letter from A.B.C proposes a national ‘parliament’ initiated by Manchester and London delegates; the proposal reveals an ignorance of the real workings of the Armenian cause at this time, which had these two communities working under the guidance of Nubar.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore he argues that democracy should replace the Church as the authority in Armenian matters. A.B.C’s suggestions generally point towards community members with heightened political consciousness and patriotic desire.<sup>113</sup>

The readers’ letters from the following month take a different approach with ‘An Invalid Officer’ arguing that all Armenians who are fit to fight should be volunteering to fight in Armenia.<sup>114</sup> He criticizes the trade diaspora political ethic when he states: “The giving out of a few ‘fivers’ or a few hundred pounds is a mere apology for patriotism.”<sup>115</sup> This suggests a changing mentality within the community away from purely financial patriotism and towards active participation in a patriotic movement. In October 1916 A.B.C wrote a critical letter in response to the Invalid Officer: “Finance has played, is playing and will play a most importance part in... the resuscitation of Armenia.”<sup>116</sup>

In creating this debate, A.B.C and the Invalid Officer represent two different opinions within the community. The fact that they both wrote in and expressed these opinions, which see an independent Armenia as their end goal, suggests politicization and heightened political consciousness within the community with events in the homeland catalyzing their nationalism.

In response to the genocidal Ottoman policy, politicization was accelerated in a major way. The community was transformed from a trade diaspora network to an increasingly hierarchical community centered on the community elite, with the Church and National authority above them and the community at large below them. The climax of the diaspora nationalism concept was a concrete transformation of Armenian demands from reforms to independence.<sup>117</sup> Simultaneous to this demand for independence was an appreciation of the Armenian political parties, which the community had originally stayed away from, highlighted in the ties established with Dr. Zavriev. The variety of opinions within the community adds to the richness of the political culture, while opposition to politicization verifies the existence of

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<sup>110</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, June 1917, pp. 540-42 & Appendix A

<sup>111</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 5, July 1917, Advertisements XV.

<sup>112</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, August 1916, pp. 84-85.

<sup>113</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, September 1916, p. 130.

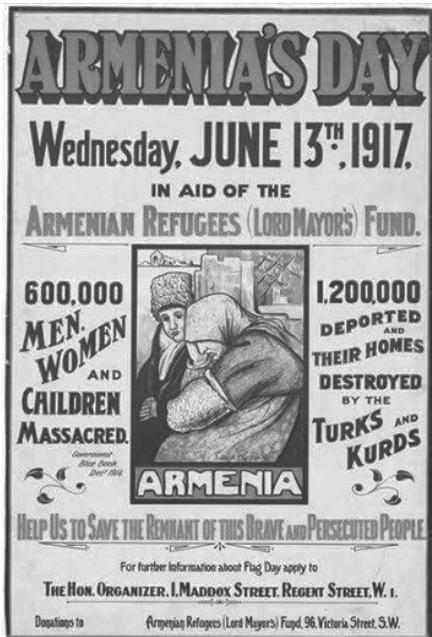
<sup>115</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, October 1916, p. 182.

<sup>117</sup> Nubar, p. 45.

hierarchization. Adhering to the hierarchy allowed a UK-Armenian campaign to influence public opinion and assist the homeland.

#### UK-ARMENIANS IN THE AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR I



"Armenia." *Times* [London, England] 3 July 1916, p. 3. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 19 Apr. 2016

will look at the direct actions taken to help attain autonomy. In response to the war's end organizational strength increased. The 1919 January AGM's report delivered by Hacobian stressed that 1918 had seen the highest number of meetings by the Council who were voted to lead the AUAL, suggesting a more active role for the elites.<sup>118</sup> This improved organization allowed the AUAL to undertake actions, including the initiation of the Anglo-Armenian Economic Association with the co-operation of the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>121</sup> The AUAL also saw expansion beyond the UK, solidifying wartime bonds of brotherhood with Armenians in the British Empire by appointing a representative in the Straits Settlement and Hong Kong.<sup>122</sup>

A key element of the post-1918 politicization is the greater sense of unity demonstrated and promoted by the elite. The post-war politicization wave saw an even

May 1918 saw the establishment of the Republic of Armenia in the previous Russian Armenia. However, the UK-Armenians, in line with Nubar, were not very supportive of this independence due to the Republic not including Western Armenia.<sup>118</sup> The end of the war in November 1918 and the subsequent Paris Peace Conference saw the eventual shunning of Armenian independence despite wartime promises.<sup>119</sup> The following section will analyze the responses to these events by the UK-Armenians. This period acts as a showcase of wartime politicization in addition to revealing a further accentuation of it. This split politicization will be explored by analysing calls to unity, the strengthened community organization and efforts to gain autonomy for Armenia.

#### INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS

This section will look at action taken by the elites to foster better unity and organization. The final part of this section

<sup>118</sup> For evidence of Nubar's ignoring of Eastern Armenia see map in: "The New Armenia," *Times* [London, England] 31 Dec., 1918: 7. *The Times Digital Archive*, Web. 19 Apr. 2016.

<sup>119</sup> Movsisyan, pp. 224-29.

<sup>120</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, January 1919, pp. 306-315.

<sup>121</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, January 1919, p. 309 & AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6 cont. January-May 1920, p. 15.

<sup>122</sup> Representative in the Straits Settlement: AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol., 6 December 1918, p. 210. For representative in Hong Kong see AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6 cont. January-May, p. 16.

greater progress of unity with the two UK communities sharing costs on the hiring of a secretary and with the London community showing solidarity with the Manchester-Armenians by electing the representative they nominated for the National Delegation. The excerpt from Yeretzian, an Armenian present at this election, highlights the unity rhetoric:

“Our own general conviction that we Armenians cannot unite and act in harmony in our own national affairs has once more been disproved by the fact that we London Armenians meeting here today have unanimously endorsed the choice of our compatriots at Manchester”.<sup>123</sup>

This period saw an unprecedented courting of official figures ranging from the Russian Prime Minister Kerensky to the Italian Prime Minister Orlando.<sup>124</sup> In response to the lack of Armenian success at the Peace Process and a renewal of massacres, the AUAL ‘in co-operation with the British Armenian Committee’ lobbied the Foreign Office and protested to the Prime Minister.<sup>125</sup> This lobbying effort culminated in a Pro-Armenian Meeting at Central Hall in June 1919, which featured Armenianophile speakers and is credited as the creation of Aram Raffi, one of the UK-Armenian elites.<sup>126</sup>

Aram Raffi had previously been involved in the production of *Ararat*, and in 1918 he assumed the role as head of the Armenian Information Bureau, an organization established in May 1918 to assist with the flow of information to British and Armenian people.<sup>127</sup> The Information Bureau published various patriotic materials in pamphlets such as ARF politician Mikayel Varandian’s address to the Labor Party Conference and had a section in *Ararat* publicizing the latest news on Armenia.<sup>128</sup> The Bureau’s existence pays homage to continued politicization and organization of the community.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNITY

Like in the post-Genocide period the organizations continually required funds to assist their projects. The community collectively responded ‘generously’ to many funds in this period including new charity projects such as the General Armenian Fund and the Armenian Refugee’s Clothing Fund.<sup>129</sup>

Collective fundraising activities continued as it did in the post-Genocide period.<sup>130</sup> This period was pioneering due to its political collective action. On two occasions the elites organized a demonstration which the community collectively partook in. The first demonstration took place on February 8, 1919 with the Greeks to protest for a pro-Greek-Armenian settlement at the Peace Conference.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, October-November 1918, p. 195. Hacobian states ‘cordial and close relations’ between UK-Armenian organizations in: AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, January 1919, p. 307.

<sup>124</sup> Courting of Kerensky: AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, Jan-Feb 1919. p. 311. Courting of Orlando: AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, December 1918, p. 209.

<sup>125</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, January 1919, p. 310.

<sup>126</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, April-September 1919, p. 413.

<sup>127</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, October-November 1918, p.157 and Nassibian, 1984, p. 46.

<sup>128</sup> Mikael Varandian, *The Tragedy of the Caucasus: Memorandum presented to the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of British Labour Party*, Cassell & Co., London, 1918.

<sup>129</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6 cont., January-May, pp. 60-68.

<sup>130</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, June-July 1918, pp. 54-57.

<sup>131</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, January 1919, pp. 262-63.

The second demonstration took place on March 14, 1920 without the co-operation of the Greeks. It featured speeches from notable Armenophiles and the passing of a resolution advocating independence for Armenia at large.<sup>132</sup> The demonstrations signify direct action, something the UK-Armenians rarely undertook before the war began. To conduct such an activity, a sense of hierarchy is required to organize and call upon the collective community to be present, in addition to the necessary organization, to organize the 'Armeno-Hellenic Co-Operation Committee'. This new collective action exhibits the community's frustration with the situation and the lack of progress with the previous patriotic methods. Collective action took place less than individual action by the elite, yet the increase of collective action implies a politicization process which saw a change in the very ethos of the diaspora away from a network and towards a politically conscious hierarchy.

This section looked at efforts taken by the community to alter this eventuality. The community elite engaged in ever more action and co-operation, to attempt to unite and achieve an independent Armenia. Likewise, the community took part in unprecedented collective direct action rather than just humanitarian action. Despite the newfound patriotism within the community, the loss of an independent Armenia in 1920 to the Soviet Union led the community to become indifferent to political matters.<sup>133</sup> *Ararat* stopped publishing in 1920, probably due to financial factors representing rising costs and reluctance of Armenians to continue contributing financially and politically to a seemingly dead cause. Appendix A demonstrates

ARMENIAN REFUGEES (LORD MAYOR'S) FUND, 96, VICTORIA ST., S.W.1.

## APPEAL FOR ARMENIA

The success of Armenia's Flag-Day in London on June 13th was greatly diminished by the German Air-Raid upon the City of London. The amount obtained was thus less than had been anticipated, and quite insufficient to meet the many fresh calls upon the Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor's) Fund. The Committee, therefore, urgently appeals for generous contributions to supplement the London Flag-Day Collections.

\* \* \*

The need of further help for the stricken Armenian Refugees in the Caucasus, Syria, and Mesopotamia is great and urgent.

\* \* \*

Mr. Edmund Candler's dispatch from  
Baghdad, printed in *The Times* of June 21st, confirms the terrible information received from other sources.

" . . . I visited one of these institutions (homes provided at Baghdad by the British Government). The inmates were all young, many of marriageable age, and there were a great number of children under six who have already forgotten their language and their faith. . . .

" . . . men were separated from the women and killed at a distance, shot or cut down with the sword. . . ."

" . . . were taken into the desert and formed up in line, as in a Chinese execution, to be dispatched with the sword. . . ."

" . . . The desert is a non-conductor. What is done there leaves, only vague rumour."

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Contributions should be made payable to the Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor's) Fund, and sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Lieut.-Col. Gregory, at the Committee's Offices, 96, Victoria St., London, S.W.1.

"Appeal For Armenia." *Times* [London, England] 28 June 1917, p. 4. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 20 Apr. 2016

<sup>132</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, January-May 1920, pp. 6-9.

<sup>133</sup> Movsisyan, pp. 224-29.

the change in Armenian attitudes over time. In November 1918 the optimism for independence caused Armenians to contribute massively to the 'General Armenian Fund', established to help the homeland and the local community. However, by May 1920, the same fund collected less than half what it originally raised; the people who donated both years also generally donated less in 1920, revealing a reverse politicization effect in response to patriotic apathy.<sup>134</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper depicted a chronological process which allows for a comparative lens to evaluate the process of politicization. When one compares the community and their actions in 1919 to those of 1913, we see an activated, organized community, willing to contribute time, effort and finances towards an organized patriotic cause.

The linear process depicted in the paper has assumed that war is the only cause of politicization. Of course there are other factors, such as global socio-political trends or the arrival of Armenian refugees from war in the UK.<sup>135</sup> However this study seeks to look at the effect of war on a diaspora. The research has revealed that a patriotic bond and sympathy to the homeland, a fear for relatives and financial property and a heightened desire for independence were the ways in which war impacted the UK diaspora. This study has shown the relevance of Smith's diaspora nationalism concept as a framework for analysing diasporan political elements.

The discoveries of this work are the dynamics of the politicization process, which reinforces Adamson's political entrepreneur concept, as key components of diaspora politicization. They politicized the community by leading the organizations and informing them of relevant political updates. The brutal events of war on the Armenian homeland allowed these entrepreneurs to unite and organize the community to create a strong sense of diaspora nationalism to strive for independence. The importance of these entrepreneurs is highlighted by Malcolm, AUAL president after Gregory, who stated in reference to the Zionist movement:

"When a people begin to produce and recognize leaders for themselves, they become a nation".<sup>136</sup>

The significant relevance of the political entrepreneurs category is shown by the link between the entrepreneurs and strong financial status demonstrated in 1916 by a letter of appeal for funds to AUAL members and various fundraising data: 'The annual deficits have also been partly covered by private donations by members of the General Council, but the burden in the past has fallen on the very few'.<sup>137</sup> The study suggests that the linkage of financial status to political status is an element of the trade diaspora politicization.<sup>138</sup>

Akin to this, the paper has ultimately explained that Curtin's assertion of the apolitical trade diaspora is true in this case study. This paper showed that in becoming

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<sup>134</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>135</sup> Evidence of the existence of Armenian Refugees in London: AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol 6, October 1919, p. 526.

<sup>136</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol 6, October 1919, pp. 466-467.

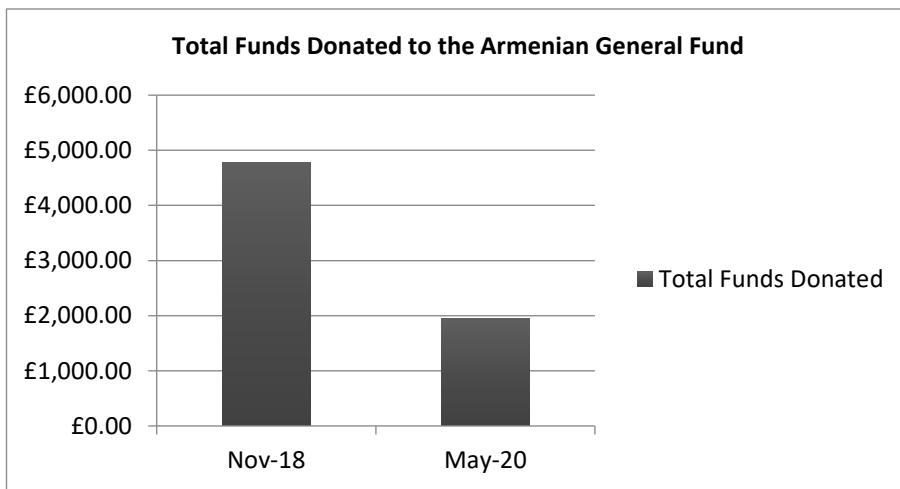
<sup>137</sup> AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol 5, 1918, p. 568.

<sup>138</sup> Many of the community elites demonstrated financial prominence via humanitarian activities: AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 2, October 1914, p. 130 and AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 3, December 1916, p. 282 and Appendix see Hacobian, Gregory, Benlian and Mosditchian as major donators. For Manchester, AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 4, December 1916.

political, the trade diaspora lost its defining component, the trade diaspora network. The revelation of the conversion of a network to a hierarchy is evidence of war transforming the identity of UK-Armenians at this time. The network was a free-flowing structure and suited the Armenian businessmen; the hierarchy on the other hand suited Armenian patriots in attempts to assist the national destiny. The events of the war steadily compelled centralization around community organizations and necessitated organized action in order for the community to assist with the national cause. The conversion also explains the specific political structure emerging from the politicization, which still emphasized individual over collective action and respected the positions of financially strong community members.

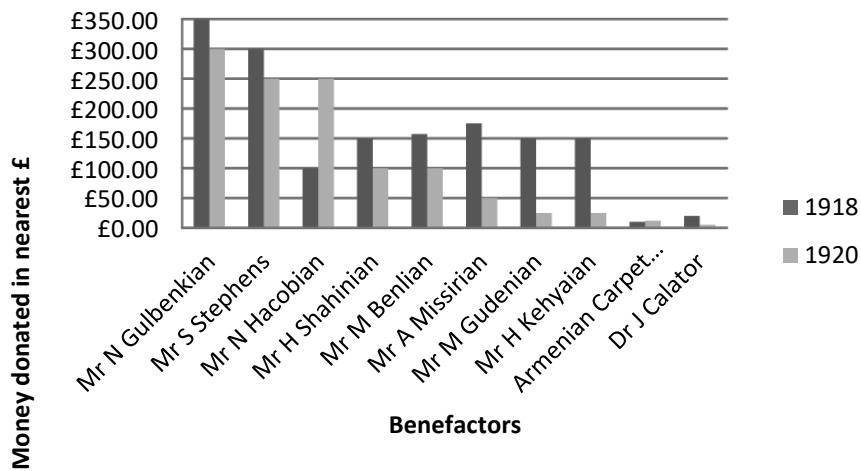
From an Armenian historiographical point of view, this paper has shown that nationalism is something that is developed in response to stimuli, not an inherent entity within Armenians as Aivazian would argue. The paper also contributes to our understanding of Panossian's multilocality argument as it shed light on the western aspect of Armenian identity and diasporan political ideologies.

Ultimately the study of diaspora is subjective; it is difficult to apply any sort of generalizing formulae to the field. Each specific study, however, adds a piece to the jigsaw which is the diaspora concept. The implications of this research are not true for all trade diasporas. Yet the mechanisms of politicization of the UK-Armenian diaspora case study, such as the conversion of an existing network to a hierarchy, the significance of the homeland in war and the relevance of political entrepreneurs, can assist in future studies of trade diasporas in a unilateral or comparative perspective. Through subjective studies the field adds to its conceptual arsenal, which ultimately can assist in extrapolating diaspora studies concepts and methodologies to improve our analysis of past, present and future diasporas.



AUAL *Ararat*, 6:1918, pp. 185-87; AUAL, *Ararat*, Vol. 6, January-May 1920, pp. 67-68

**Donations to General Armenian Fund November 1918 and May  
1920 by the same benefactors**



ԱՆԳԼԻԱՀԱՅ ԳԱՐՈՒԹԻՒՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆԱՑՈՒԽԸ.  
ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԸ ԻՆՉ ՏԱՐՈՂՈՒԹԵԱՄԲ ՓՈԽԱԿԵՐՊԵՑ  
ԱՆԳԼԻԱՀԱՅԵՐՈՒՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆԻ ԻՆՔՆՈՒԹԻՒԽԸ 1913-1920 ՇՐՋԱԼԻՆ  
(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

ԿԱՀԵ ՊՈՂՈՍԵԱՆ  
v.bohgos@hotmail.co.uk

Ի. դարասկիզբին, յոնտոնահայ գաղութը լոկ առետրական հաւաքանութիւն մըն էր: Անոր թիվ, Ա. աշխարհամարտի աւարտին, հազի 400ի կը հասնէր, նուազ կազմակերպուած եւ ծեւատրուած էր քան Մանչեսթրողի հայ գաղութը:

Հիմնուելով 1913-20 շրջանին լոյս տեսած անգիտահայ Արարադ պարբերաթերթի նիւթերուն վրայ, յօդուածը կ'ուստամնասիրէ պատմական այն գործօնները, որոնք պատճառ դարձան անգիտահայ գաղութի քաղաքականացման, ցանցային եւ նուիրառանուական կառոյցի վերածման որով եւ գաղութը աւելի զօրաւոր ու արդինաւէտ մասնակցութիւն ունեցաւ ազգային խնդիրներու:

Իբրեւ ուսումնասիրութեան արդինք, հեղինակը կը հաւաստէ որ գաղութին քաղաքականացման հիմնական գործոն հանդիսացած է համաշխարհային առաջին պատերազմն ու հայկական ճակատագիրը: