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***Le Haiiasdan, L'Arménie, Armenia & Hnch'ak:*
Language choice and the construction of
a Cosmopolitan Armenian Diasporic Identity in London & Paris (1888-1905)**

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The history of the Armenian-language press has always largely been transnational and exogenous to Armenia as a political region/space, a trend which was tragically accelerated by the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the dispersion of the Armenian diaspora. For instance, the first-ever Armenian-language periodical *Azdarar* (The Monitor) was published in British-controlled Madras in 1794, under the editorship of Harutyun Shmavonian. *Azdarar* only ran for eighteen monthly issues (1794-1796), with only about 40 subscribers and a fierce local opposition from part of the Armenian Madras community. Despite its short life, *Azdarar* has been central in the history of Armenian-language publishing as it articulated questions of language and national identity. The last issue of *Azdarar* included an engraving of an air-balloon, which metaphorically sketched the forthcoming historical journey of the Armenian-language press.¹ By making the Armenian-language press a vector for the development of an Armenian identity, the engraving presented *Azdarar* as a forerunner both for Armenians in the Ottoman Empire (where most Armenians lived at the time) and in the diaspora.

And yet, having a press organ in the language of an immigrant/exile community is often less straightforward than is assumed, as this volume shows. Armenian editors based in London at the turn of the twentieth century pondered over the issue of having organs in Armenian there.

In so doing, they fuelled the debate over which language to use in their organs. This contribution will thus further probe into the bond between the Armenian language and Armenianness at a time when Armenian nationalism entered a new phase and when some European theories of nationalism – like that of Ernest Renan in France – looked to language as the cement of nations, including of nations in the making. In combining local and more global perspectives, this chapter will take the example of the three main Armenian periodicals published in London at the time – namely *Le Haïasdan*/ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ (bilingual French-Armenian, 1888-1892), *Armenia* (English version of *L'Arménie*, 1889-1905) & *Hnch'ak* (The Bell, Armenian, 1894-1905) – to reflect on the attraction of London as a hotbed for Armenian political publishing, whereas the size of the community over the period remained small (a few hundred at the most). After a brief review of how diasporic periodicals contributed to fostering Armenianness and the Armenian nation during the 19th century, the second section will pay attention to debates within those London-based papers over language use for serials that embraced cosmopolitanism. Focusing more specifically on *Le Haïasdan*, the third section will address the technical constraints to publishing in Armenian, as more or less inherent to non-Latin script periodical printing. Finally, the last section of this contribution will discuss the benefits and setbacks of publishing an Armenian-language periodical in London in that high time of Armenian nationalism. It will position editors and organs within the broader context of Ottoman-British surveillance of the foreign political press and against the backdrop of late-nineteenth-century British Armenophilia.

Articulating Armenianness through diasporic periodicals

After the unfulfilled promises of a representative Ottoman polity, the development of a more exclusive form of Ottoman nationalism under the reign of Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II from 1876 strengthened a burning feeling for an all-Armenian nationalism on the part of a

younger generation of Armenian nationalists in the 1880s. This was particularly strong in the diaspora, so that the 1880s saw urges for an Armenian nation not only in Ottoman Armenia, but also in Persia, Russia, as well as elsewhere, especially in Britain and in the United States. As historian Aram Arkun contended, ‘within each of the three empires [Ottoman, Persian, Russian], a standard [Armenian] written language, schooling, books and newspapers created a new type of unity’.ⁱⁱ The Armenian periodical press published across the three historical empires that had an Armenian population and in the larger world played a crucial role in that process, as Lisa Khachaturian’s *Cultivating Nationhood in Imperial Russia* (2009) demonstrates for Armenian-language serials appearing in Tsarist Russia.ⁱⁱⁱ

Born out of Armenian political activity and of intellectual exchanges between Armenian nationalists and sympathetic networks throughout the world, Armenian nationalist periodicals flourished in Russia, Georgia, Austria. This was also the case to a lesser extent in the United States, France and Britain in the 1880s, where leaders of political formations eventually found refuge. Most well-known is Mkrtitch Portugalian (1848-1921), founder of the Armenakan party in Van in 1885, whom the Ottoman government exiled to Marseilles the same year, where he published an irregular weekly *Armenia: Iragir azgayin qalaqakan arevtrakan ew ayln* (1885-1923). The paper was secretly distributed in Ottoman Armenia and actually gave the party its name. It advocated the liberation of Armenia by force, as well as the return of migrant Armenians (including economic migrants to Constantinople) to provinces of Ottoman Armenia (Van, Sivas, Bitlis, Harput, Diyarbekir, Erzurum) conceptualised as ‘homeland’ and which are currently in Eastern Turkey. Portugalian’s hesitation in forming a revolutionary party drove certain of *Armenia*’s contributors, especially Armenian poet and political activist Avetis Nazarbekian (1866-1939), to quit what they perceived as the too moderate Armenakan and found the Marxist-leaning Hunchakian party in Geneva in 1887.^{iv} By late 1894, Nazarbekian

relocated the seat of the party to East London, where he lived and from where he published several organs of the party, especially *Hnch 'ak* (The Bell).

Whereas the diasporic space facilitated the formation of an Armenian national identity – because it could be easier to vent such ideas outside the Ottoman Empire and bypass Sultan Abdul Hamid's censorship –, lack of consensus over the political project for Armenia (*Hayastan*), as well as over strategies to secure autonomy or independence for Armenia (through propaganda, or armed struggle in particular) nonetheless came to be recurrent features of turn-of-the-century Armenian nationalism and the Armenian-language press. In such a context, the preservation of Armenianness (*hayapahpanum*) and the preservation of a nation (*azgapahpanum*) fuelled imaginations of Armenia, especially for editors in exile, who also found themselves reflecting on what the exile country could represent for them and their readerships. As in the case of the rife debate between *Le Haiiasdan* and *Armenia*, such conjectures implied reflecting on which language to publish in and which readership(s) to address.

Armenianness in cosmopolitan periodicals: which language for which identity?

Language choice was thus central to the construction of an Armenian diasporic identity in the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries, but did not only revolve over which variety of Armenian to use – increasingly, diasporic titles had given up on Grabar (Classical Armenian, used especially in liturgy) for Ashkharhabar (New Armenian) which seemed more appropriate for fostering the political project of an Armenian nation. Exchanges between editorial teams of *Le Haiiasdan* and *L'Arménie/Armenia* powerfully bring this to life, showing how they endeavoured to construct a distinct Armenian national identity in languages other than Armenian, while still ensuring that Armenia was mapped out as part of an imagined cosmopolitan Christian Europe, especially through the choice of literary references. The

London a particularly welcoming resort for Armenian political exiles and their publications in the 1880s.

By contrast to *Le Haïasdan*, *L'Arménie* and *Armenia* were one-man journalistic ventures, those of Ottoman Armenian publicist Minas Tchéraz (1852-1929), who used to teach French in Constantinople before settling in London, apparently in 1889.^{vi} It is precisely the year in which *L'Arménie, journal politique et littéraire* started appearing in London on a monthly basis. An English version was added in November 1890 and with both versions appearing twice a month for a few years. *Armenia* appeared until 1898, on and off though (only 2 issues in 1893), mostly due to the lack of funding.^{vii} Content-wise, it was more and less a translation of the French edition – with the former being distributed in English-speaking countries (Britain; the British Empire including India, Egypt and Cyprus; the United States) and the French edition being primarily circulated elsewhere (Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Russia, Servia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Turkey, Barbary, Massowah, Persia and Oceania).^{viii} In the meantime, the French version sometimes included article titles in English to catch the eye of those interested in the lot of Armenians, who might not yet have been completely fluent in French.^{ix} In 1898, editor-in-chief Minas Tchéraz decided to relocate his publication to Paris. Only the French edition was published there, until 1905.

Reading *Le Haïasdan/ L'Arménie/Armenia* alongside reveals the centrality of cosmopolitanism for these journalistic ventures. In the minds of editors, this comes with a choice of priority languages – French and English, rather than Armenian – and of main targeted readerships, who were cast as readers of these *lingua francae*/diplomatic languages (including educated Armenians). On the surface, the cosmopolitan option might seem incompatible with the defence of Armenianness, but these two papers tell us otherwise. They surfed on the vibrant cosmopolitanism of fin-de-siècle Britain, whereby intellectual figures in Liberal and progressive circles frequented invited ‘individual[s] to imagine themselves as part of a

community that reache[d] beyond the geographical, political and linguistic boundaries of the nation'.^x Beyond a common goal – the implementation of article 61 of the 1878 Berlin Treaty, which promised reforms to guarantee the security of Ottoman Armenians –, *Le Haïasdan* and *L'Arménie/Armenia* offer different varieties of cosmopolitanism that translated their political projects and in turn, justified their language policy.

Le Haïasdan upholds moral cosmopolitanism and frontstages an ethical cosmopolitan doctrine that 'entails first and foremost the equal and fundamental moral status of individuals and obliges us to consider the good of all humankind in our actions'.^{xi} Put differently, *Le Haïasdan* resorted to moral cosmopolitanism to remind readers that 'all persons stand in certain moral relations to one another' and that everyone, as 'citizens of the world', had a responsibility in international treaty provisions being fulfilled.^{xii} Such citizens needed to be 'enlightened' on Ottoman Armenians' plight. This was *Le Haïasdan's* role, as the first issue on 1 December, 1888 made clear: 'it sought to act as an intermediary between Armenia and Europe, between statesmen, publicists and European bodies, in order to enlighten public opinion about the sufferings and aspirations of the poor Armenian people and eventually win over the sympathies of the civilised world'.^{xiii} *Le Haïasdan* projected that the security of Ottoman Armenians would be best guaranteed by the political and local autonomy of Ottoman Armenia, which the organ advocated and for which the Armenian Patriotic Committee banked on a cosmopolitan, transnational solidarity. The first issue published the Committee's charter, which invited to set up an international Armenian association gathering Armenian writers, as well as learned people and publicists throughout Europe who would regularly meet up in neutral cities such as Brussels or Geneva and would do their utmost to win autonomy for Armenia. By stressing that all shared a common humanity – and that in the name of humanity, violence against Armenians was intolerable –, *Le Haïasdan* tapped into the global citizenship register: the lot of Ottoman

Armenians was to be improved through the mobilization of individual citizens, who in turn would force governments to act.

The editorial team's cosmopolitan strategy gave *Le Haïasdan* its format. Each issue was composed of two editions presented together and sold as one issue, with the edition in French coming before the edition in Armenian. The bilingual presentation in two separate editions, rather than the juxtaposition of dual-language columns in a single edition made the separate circulation of one or the other edition easier – for instance, when free issues were distributed to sympathetic parties for propaganda purposes (for instance, the British Liberal daily *The Daily News*). The taking over of *Le Haïasdan* by the Anglo-Armenian Association in April 1891 confirms that the targeted readership was meant to be fluent in reading French, rather than Armenian. From 1891 on, the periodical mostly covered British Liberal endeavours towards securing a solution for Ottoman Armenia in keeping with the terms of aforementioned article 61 (1878 Berlin Treaty) and tended to eschew references to Armenian nationalists' activities throughout the world, as before. Amongst others, disagreements between the Anglo-Armenian Association and former editorial members over means to achieve an autonomous Armenia – especially over physical force as a legitimate political means – led to *Le Haïasdan*'s closing down in 1892.

Indeed, *Le Haïasdan*'s rather vindictive moral cosmopolitanism and open attacks against Ottoman governance split the Anglo-Armenian movement and community. In particular, the older generation of Ottoman Armenian merchants established in Manchester thought that *Le Haïasdan* did more harm than helped the cause. As a case in point, they quoted the embarrassment the circulation of the paper inflicted to the Armenian patriarch with Ottoman authorities in Constantinople and urged Bryce to use the AAA's influence to tone down *Le Haïasdan*'s virulence – in vain.^{xiv} The older generation proposed a different mediatic strategy resting on cultural cosmopolitanism, as that sported by Tchéraz in *L'Arménie/Armenia* and

which supporters of Tchéraz suggested was missing in *Le Haïasdan*. A fairer assessment may be that the latter privileged moral cosmopolitanism – i.e. humanitarian and legal arguments (common humanity) – over a more classical cultural cosmopolitanism that would stress common cultural heritage.

By contrast, *L'Arménie/Armenia* systematically tried to infuse readers with a better knowledge of Armenian literature, in particular poetry, and folklore. The quasi absence of Armenian (none up to issue 17 of *L'Arménie* in 1891) and the selection of French and English indicate that he targeted 'friends of Armenia', rather than Armenian readers. Tchéraz's new appointment as chair of Armenian at King's College, London, from 1891 enabled him to pursue his objective of diffusing and mediating Armenian culture to a broader audience, through conferences organised in Britain, like at the Royal Asiatic Society. To Tchéraz, the promotion of Armenian culture as of foundational importance to Europe's Christian history was to bring home that European powers that had signed the 1878 Berlin Treaty (France, Britain, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy) could not let down Armenia – or they were letting themselves down. To secure support from fellow Christians, Tchéraz constantly sought to make a rapprochement between Armenian and European literature. 'The Unpublished East' series section served this purpose: classics of Armenian literature were discussed side by side with European classics – showing how there could be recuperation, cross-contamination, etc. and how most Armenian classics had been sources of inspiration for Renaissance/Enlightenment European productions.^{xv}

Tchéraz was not just passing on traditions to a largely non-Armenian readership who might not have been familiar with Armenian culture – *L'Arménie* had a circulation of 2,000 issues and was almost immediately banned from the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Rather Tchéraz intended to show that despite the Asiatic location of Armenia, 'Armenians belonged in the wider world'.^{xvi} On several occasions – as with Tchéraz's 1896 paper on 'Homer and the

Armenians’ in which he argued that Armenians were Greeks, including in manners –, Tchéráz made reference to comparative philology and anthropology to demonstrate that Armenians were Indo-Europeans, who thus shared linguistic, if not ethnological origins with Europeans, especially the British.^{xvii} As historian Joan Laycock in *Imagining Armenia* (2009) reminds us: ‘The Indo-European connection thus strengthened the claim that Armenia was culturally, if not territorially, part of Europe, a claim – she insists – fully exploited in Armenophile and diaspora propaganda’.^{xviii}

Awaiting the report of an international investigation by France-Russia-Britain into the Sasun massacre that killed several thousands of Armenians following the brutal repression of a tax protest (August 1894) –,^{xix} Tchéráz reverted to the association of Armenia as Eden on 1 May, 1895 edition of *L’Arménie*, to arouse sympathy in Britain.^{xx} In a formulation that resonated with James Bryce’s 1877 travelogue statement that Armenia was ‘the cradle of the human race’,^{xxi} Tchéráz voiced a poignant appeal to British politicians to take action and prevent the furtherance of massacres. At the time, a mass campaign (mostly in Liberal newspapers) had been ongoing since November 1894 and now resulted in many public petitions to Parliament and the Foreign on behalf of Ottoman Armenians. As a former delegate for Armenia at the 1878 Berlin Congress, Tchéráz had always had high hopes that his stance would help him foster the Armenian cause with the British government fighting for the implementation of article 61.

Conversely to *Le Haïasdan*, which had moral and financial support from the AAA and Liberal politicians (especially the family of long-standing Liberal Premier W. E. Gladstone), Tchéráz had always maintained an independent course and banked on cultural cosmopolitanism as the means to secure his political objective. Nonetheless, the return of a Conservative government in late July 1895 was a source of disappointment for Tchéráz – one which accrued as the Conservative Premier, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, declared that not even the British

navy could protect the Armenians. Against the backdrop of the 1894-1896 Armenian massacres (eventually causing about 250,000-300,000 victims), Britain's avowed powerlessness in the European diplomatic game left Tchéraz bitter. A close study of *Armenia* betrays Tchéraz's complete disarray with British Liberals and Conservatives alike. Over the course of a few months, reports about British parliamentary sessions on what was known as 'the Armenian Question' gave way to a sharper focus on the French Armenophile movement, with which Tchéraz now placed his hopes. As a consequence, he relocated the paper to Paris in 1898. By then, the paper only appeared in French and Tchéraz moved closer to French Armenophile circles, especially figures involved with the Paris-based *Pro-Armenia* monthly (1900-).

The cosmopolitan ambitions of *Le Haïasdan*, *L'Arménie* and *Armenia* implied privileging diplomatic languages (French/English) over Armenian. To a certain extent, all three serials managed to meet their targeted readerships – friends of Armenia – and get some representation in European newspapers. Nonetheless *Le Haïasdan*'s recurrent financial difficulties (due to the AAA's diminished supported and limited subscriptions) remind us that *L'Arménie/Armenia* owed their longevity to Tchéraz's affluence. Realizing this, Tchéraz thought more economically viable to keep Armenian to a congruous portion of *L'Arménie/Armenia*, as he believed that educated Armenians would have been taught French, and possibly English (in French, British and American missionary colleges in Asia Minor) and thus could still be reached in a French-language only organ. One could ask: Why did *Le Haïasdan* stick to its bilingualism and pursue with the Armenian edition despite difficulties?

Meeting the challenges of composing in Armenian in late-19th century London

A competitor in the field, Ottoman Armenian publicist Minas Tchéraz was bewildered at the language strategy of *Le Haïasdan*. For him, Armenians wanting to read Armenian would turn to good quality periodicals in Armenian rather than opt out for a bilingual serial whose

Armenian section was poorly composed. While upfront and severe, Tchéráz's remark addressed a sensitive issue: the complex linguistic articulation of identity in exile and technical difficulties of composing texts in non-Latin scripts. Put differently, the question raised here is whether the language(s) of diplomacy could be reconciled with the languages of the home land – Armenian, which itself was one of the languages of the Ottoman Empire, but not the official one (Osmanli) – and the host country? Tchéráz and *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team held divergent views. Tchéráz would argue that single-issue periodicals with a diplomatic plank should use *the lingua franca(e)*. Sévasly and others at *Le Haïasdan* intended to contribute to strengthening the Armenian national awakening by adding the Armenian-language section: publishing in Armenian was therefore central to their own political agenda. No surprise then that *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team refused merging with Tchéráz's ventures in 1890-1891 to form a single pro-Armenian paper in London.^{xxii} The Armenian-language edition is not only telling of the difficulties at composing in a non-Latin alphabet, but also of the ideological anchorage of *Le Haïasdan* as a radical paper, which Armenian served to inscribe in a dense network of Armenian(-language) serials published within and without the Ottoman Empire.

Le Haïasdan celebrated Armenian from its very title, which literally translates as 'the country of Haïk', Haïk being the mythical patriarch and founder of the Armenian nation. Everything across the two editions spoke to the pride and development of Armenianness, starting with the choice of calendar in Armenian. Indeed, the first issue was published on 1 November 1888, which was surprisingly translated as '11 Sahmi 4380'. Rather than select the Armenian calendar, *Le Haïasdan* followed the ancient Armenian calendar of the pagan period (known as *Haïka-schirtchan*, or 'cycle of Haïk'), which retained 11 August 2492 BC as the founding date of the Armenian nation. 2492 BC was meant to refer to Haïk's victory over giant Belus (*Dyutsaznamart* in Armenian, 'the battle of giants') around the Lake Van region, then located in Ottoman Armenia.^{xxiii} Systematically printed across the French and Armenian

editions of *Le Haïasdan*, the choice of the ancient Armenian calendar was very unusual. Not even the Armenian-language periodical *Haik* published in New York from 1891 and distributed in England made any reference to the Haïk calendar whatsoever.^{xxiv} Turned into a key component of *Le Haïasdan*'s nationalist repertory, *Haïka-schirtchan* served to remind Armenians throughout the world of the antiquity of the Armenian nation and to demonstrate the righteousness of *Le Haïasdan*'s pressing for the autonomy of Ottoman Armenia, where ancient Armenians had long preceded Turks.

Armenianness was more fully extolled in the Armenian-language edition of *Le Haïasdan*. Although the two editions (French/Armenian) were usually overall similar – with letters of friends of Armenia (British, French, Italian, Belgian, Swiss, German mostly), articles about the general situation of Armenia and discussions of treaty obligations (often with reference to international legal scholars), a digest of Armenian news in European newspapers, a digest of Armenian newspapers throughout the world, and local news of Ottoman Armenia –, the Armenian text regularly included extra elements. For instance, while the French-language edition reproduced Armenophiles' letters in their original language and published a translation in French, the Armenian edition only included a translation in Armenian. It freed space in the Armenian edition, which was taken up by poems and signatures of Armenian nationalist figures, as ways of emboldening readers' faith in *Le Haïasdan*'s political programme.^{xxv} This forced competitor Tchéráz to include Armenian script in both *L'Arménie* and *Armenia* from 1891 to celebrate major contemporary Armenian poets who chanted a free Armenia (like Sayat-Nova, 1712-1795) and to insert poems specifically written for the review, such as 'To Gladstone' by Russian-born contemporary Armenian poet Raphael Patkanian (1830-1892). Nonetheless, Tchéráz's inclusion of passages in Armenian failed to overturn the preference given to *Le Haïasdan* by Armenian diasporic newspapers. In the end, *L'Arménie* and *Armenia* still read too moderate.^{xxvi}

Out of political convictions, *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team stuck to printing in Armenian, whereas they experienced practical difficulties from the onset (by contrast to the immaculate French edition). After the first two issues were printed in Paris (for the director jurist Jean Broussali lived in France), printing was taken to London as early as December 1888. It was entrusted to Gilbert and Rivington, who were then the only London printers with Armenian types. Although there had been a tradition of scholarly, philological publishing in England (at Oxford and Cambridge) since 1736, Armenian printing was extremely limited in that country. Only 35 titles in Armenian were printed there until 1914 – versus c. 90 published in Paris in between 1812 and 1866.^{xxvii} This rarity placed *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team at the mercy of Gilbert and Rivington. Collaboration with that printing house ceased in February 1890, due to exorbitant rises in printing costs. The exceptional issue of December 1889, which had culminated at 20 pages and included the sole illustration ever (a coloured folding map of the administration divisions of Ottoman Armenian provinces), caused the fallout between *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team and Gilbert and Rivington. The latter charged £30 for printing, including £10 solely for the map, which were costs that *Le Haïasdan* could not really meet, especially on account of many late subscription payments and a stable subscription price. The first issue had originally been four pages altogether and the second issue totalled eight pages (with separate numbering for the French and Armenian sections, each 4-page long), before the number of pages more or less stabilised at twelve (with both sections equal in length). The augmented number of pages (to 16 for the June-August-October 1889 issues, and to 20 for the December 1889 serial), together with the lack of sufficient Armenian types at Gilbert and Rivington, and the difficulty in having a composer proficient enough in Armenian at hand forced *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team to drop the fortnightly publication and opt out for a monthly one in December 1888. The sizeable increase in content/ pages meant spiralling expenditure for the serial, with a swollen budget for production and despatch, as well as salary costs.

This resulted in quixotic choices for the editorial team, such as reducing the font of the printed text to keep costs manageable (as with the August 1889 issue), or devolving the task of composing the French section on another printer (like Ranken, Ellis & Co.), despite the fact that only about 100 copies seemed to have been printed of the Armenian edition (meant for the Ottoman Empire) and about 1,000 in English.^{xxviii} With tensions irremediably escalating between *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team and Gilbert and Rivington from late 1889, the former actively sought to buy enough Armenian and French characters to compose the serial itself, in vain. Because of that situation, the editorial board recurrently found itself apologising for the poor quality of the text in Armenian. In the February 1890 issue, the editorial committee eventually announced that it was resorting to stereotyping as a durable solution and promised that delivery to subscribers would be made to date. Switching to this particular process enabled the editors to reuse their own characters to compose one page after the other, once perfect facsimiles in type-metal of the previous page had been made. It even permitted the new printer, Ranken, Ellis & Co, who was later asked to produce the whole periodical, to print longer issues and still meet the delivery schedule.

For *Le Haïasdan*'s editorial team, publishing in Armenian was a political statement that was perfectly compatible with (their) cosmopolitanism. But it was not the case of Ottoman authorities, which increasingly kept an eye on Ottoman Armenian publishing within and without the Ottoman Empire and always regarded the use of an Ottoman community language in overseas publishing as under the purview of national censorship. Put differently, *Le Haïasdan*'s bilingual strategy should also be considered as a way to navigate Ottoman censorship and transnational Ottoman surveillance.

The Cosmopolitan Political Armenian-Language Press and State surveillance

Often described as 'the asylum of nations', Britain had a long tradition of welcoming

political exiles. Throughout the nineteenth century, Britain saw many launching political newspapers as means of expressing political dissent and of formulating political projects for the countries they had left behind. Some of these titles are evoked in this volume. Directly relevant here is Russian political exile Alexander Herzen (1812-1870)'s *Kolokol* (The Bell). His serial appeared in London from 1857-1867 and then in Geneva (1868-1870), where it formed a source of inspiration for Armenian Hunchakians like Avetis Nazarbekian, who in their turn would transfer their *H'nchak* (Bell) to London in the 1890s, as discussed below.^{xxix}

The radicalism of these publications was a source of worry – and surveillance – for foreign governments that underwent attacks, but sometimes also feared for their lives. Such was the concern voiced by the Ottoman ambassador at St James' Court, Musurus Pasha, in January 1870 when a political newspaper published in London in Osmanli (Ottoman Turkish written in a version of the Arabic alphabet) under the title *Hürriyet* (Freedom, 1868-1870) called Ottoman Muslims to sedition and even encouraged them to assassinate members of the Ottoman government to end misgovernance. Musurus Pasha seized on the British Home Office for them to take legal action against *Hürriyet*, for copies to be seized, figures behind the newspaper to be arrested and sentenced, and for *Hürriyet* to be stopped altogether. To justify his intervention and to placate possible accusations of foreign interference in British politics, Musurus Pasha pressed that '*Hürriyet* being printed in Turkish, it was withdrawn from the sanction of British public opinion'.^{xxx} Musurus Pasha legitimised his undertaking on the grounds that what mattered was the language in which the newspaper was circulated – and the nationality of figures behind the paper –, not the country of publication. The Ottoman ambassador's argument was that *Hürriyet* was meant to be circulated in the Ottoman Empire – not so much in Britain – and that as such, the Ottoman government's demand about *Hürriyet* was grounded. The Home Office paused as such a step contravened free speech, which had vehemently upheld by British reformers in the preceding years, resulting in 'taxes on knowledge' (stamp, advertising, and

paper duties placed on British newspapers since 1712) coming to an end in 1861. Before settling on the case, the Home Office brought up the Orsini Affair (1858) as a parallel. The latter had led to the downfall of the Palmerston government in late February 1858 after it considered revising British Criminal Law (Conspiracy to Murder Bill) to facilitate the arrests and prosecutions of contacts of Italian revolutionary Felice Orsini (1819-1858) as the assassination attempt on Napoleon III in Paris ('the Orsini plot') had been prepared in England and as Napoleon III threatened to break diplomatic ties with Britain. Finally, after inquiries – and a more or less independent translation of recent copies of *Hürriyet* –, the Home Office decided that *Hürriyet* should be prosecuted on two grounds: that the anti-Sultan, pro-constitutional tone of the reforming Young Ottomans had become more aggressive since the previous *Mukhbir* (The Informer, 1867-1868) and that it could pose a threat to British safety, as Musurus Pasha had intimated. To avoid a repetition of the Orsini affair, the case was nonetheless passed on to a libel court, rather than be treated as a diplomatic affair. It seemed that for the time being, the British government was favouring a prudent course with such cases.

Successive Ottoman governments took cue, although Musurus Pasha – on behalf of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (reigning since 1876) – did try to have *Le Haiasdan* offices close, citing a threat to the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, this did briefly happen in 1889 as the Prime Minister/Foreign Secretary, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, was eventually convinced by Musurus Pasha that the offices harboured revolutionary, possibly terrorist activities, which did not only jeopardize Ottoman governance, but threatened British security. The case was taken to Parliament by James Bryce, who denounced false accusations – as he himself was blamed for partaking in such revolutionary activities.^{xxxii} He made a strong case that this was an unacceptable interference of a foreign power on British soil and an intolerable attack on the freedom of the press in Britain. He recounted how, after weeks of harassment by the Ottoman Embassy, Scotland Yard was eventually allowed by Salisbury to search the paper's premises,

asking whether ‘the Metropolitan Police [was] at the disposal of a foreign Government’.^{xxxii} Bryce surfed on the memory the House had of the Orsini affair to press his point, while insisting that *Le Haiasdan* was only seeking to expose the Musa Bey affair, which appeared in the British press in just as crude terms.^{xxxiii} He quoted passages of the French edition to show that *Le Haiasdan* merely sought to record instances of violence against Armenians for Europe to act and have Ottoman governance fulfil international treaty obligations. In early 1889, near Mush in eastern Anatolia, a local Kurdish warlord named Musa Bey had kidnapped, raped, and forcefully married Gulizar, a teenage Armenian girl, whom he forced to convert to Islam.^{xxxiv} Protests in the local community arose and rapidly were voiced in diasporic newspapers, especially in Marseilles and London, as Musa Bey got acquitted.^{xxxv} In Britain, Gladstone himself led a media-savvy campaign on behalf of Gulizar and Ottoman Armenians for immediate justice and the implementation of article 61.

The intensity of the Armenophile campaign in Britain forced Salisbury to backtrack and to allow the publication of *Le Haiasdan* anew. From that moment, a patronage committee including Anglo-Armenian Association members and chaired by Bryce, was formed and was to serve as some form of moral warranty, but also as a legal buttress against future Ottoman censorship (as it strengthened the Englishness of *Le Haiasdan*). Pressures built up again in 1892 when the Ottoman embassy in Britain crusaded against all radical London-based printed press by former Ottoman subjects.^{xxxvi} In that context, *Le Haiasdan* quickly ceased publication, only to be resurrected as *The Anglo-Armenian Gazette* a few months later (it seems to have lasted until 1895). By then, it was as the AAA’s organ and its editorial line was much more moderate in wording. Although former London members of *Le Haiasdan*’s editorial team were part of the AAA, their input in the *Gazette* was now contained and no Armenian edition was produced.

The Ottoman government’s political intimidation was not limited to pressures on the British government in London. Rather, it made use of its worldwide surveillance network to

collect information about publications and try and stop their distribution. Even a few months before *Le Haiasdan* appeared, there was fidgeting at the Ottoman Interior Ministry concerning the Armenian Patriotic Committee's alarming representations to the British Premier Salisbury about the situation in Ottoman Armenia. Consequently, as soon as the first issue was out in November 1888, the following communication was sent to the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior:

The translation of the telegram, which came in response to the notification made to the London Embassy, was presented in a letter dated November 29, 1888, as required by the Sultan's will to make an effort to ban the publication of the newspaper called *Haiasdan*, which is published by the Armenian Patriotic Association founded in London under the chairmanship of a person named Agopyan [sic]. A translation of letter n° 275, dated 15 November 1888, from the Vienna ambassador, mentions that the first issue of the *Haiasdan* newspaper posted to him was sent for information. According to its contents, it was published in Paris, but its administrative office is in London. Necessary recommendations to the Ottoman Embassy in Paris have been given for sound attempts before the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ban the printing and publication of this newspaper. It is supplied.^{xxxvii}

There had indeed been an attempt by the Ottoman ambassador in France for some months already to have Jean Broussali, the paper's director, sued for sedition under Ottoman law, as the Ottoman Empire didn't recognize Broussali's French citizenship as valid.^{xxxviii} Though early attempts at ending *LeHaiasdan* failed, the Ottoman Ministry of Interior also tried to act on the Ottoman soil. Indeed, the 1864 Ottoman Press Code had proscribed the import of 'foreign' newspapers published by Ottoman dissenters abroad, and controls had been reinforced under the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II within a few months of his arrival to the throne in 1876, through the Ottoman Press Bureau. Publications often surreptitiously made their way into the Empire nonetheless – and the British Embassy's postal service was often incriminated for letting through Ottoman dissidents' publications, which caused recrimination. Ottoman censors could check on parcels, including those coming through foreign embassies. If in early years of

the Ottoman Press Bureau, printing in another language than those used in the Ottoman Empire could be an asset, inspectors acquired notions of French/English and were provided a list of banned titles, so that censorship could not be so easily circumvented. Still, when there was contest over a periodical sent through the British Embassy and the periodical was either printed in English and/or published in Britain, ambassadors could play on extraterritorial jurisdiction to at least negotiate for publications to be available in social resorts frequently by the Anglo-American community. In the case of *Le Haïasdan*, *L'Arménie* and *Armenia* however, British ambassador at Constantinople William A. White (1885-1891) did not wield extraterritoriality to defend London-based Armenian papers and contest the distribution ban. But they still circulated in the Ottoman Empire, well beyond the number of print-out issues, as oral reading of key passages *Le Haïasdan* was often given – much to the alarm of local Ottoman administrators who feared that it would incite Armenians in the Ottoman Empire to rebel.^{xxxix}

Ottoman surveillance spared no publication and editors knew it. *H'nchak*, the organ of the Hunchakian party, was another case in point. Avetis Nazarbek and the team behind *H'nchak* frequently relocated publication of the paper over the years, to escape Ottoman censorship (Geneva 1887-1892, Athens 1893, London 1894-1904, Paris 1905-1914).^{xi} To cover their traces, but still reach out to their readers, they often used pseudonyms – for instance, the correspondent of *H'nchak* in Geneva was named Beniard, a bare play-on-words on the newspaper's title 'The Bell' and a reference to Big Ben.^{xli} They also avoided clearly indicating where the administration offices of the paper were. Rather, they mentioned a series of *poste restante* addresses using pseudonyms, as well as a place of publication thought safe, but not necessarily squaring with reality. This was a way to buy time, during which editors sought protection of international powers. So was the strategy used by *H'nchak* for a couple of years. In 1888, issues of the paper mention London, sometimes Montpellier beguiling Ottoman authorities into believing the administration of the paper was there, though it was probably not

the case till the early 1890s, when Nazarbek settled in London – at least temporarily – before the headquarters of the Hunchakian party officially moved there in 1894.^{xliii} By then, London was the seat of the main two party’s periodicals *H’nchak* and the satirical journal *Aptak* (The Slap), which had originally appeared in Athens. In moving to London, *Aptak* changed styles several times as its calls for the advent of ‘Armenia’ through revolution (as the European concert had failed them) became more pressing.^{xliiii} The editorial teams took with them to London a printing press and Armenian fonts, thereby making sure they would elude difficulties met by *Le Haïasdan*’s team.

While Hunchakians tried to alert European powers of the deteriorated situation in Ottoman Armenia – sometimes resorting to violence to do so, especially in the context of the 1894-1896 Armenian massacres –, British governments of those years stood aloof to pressure from the Ottoman embassy to have these serials suppressed. The mass agitation in Britain on behalf of Ottoman Armenians in those years – about 5,000 petitions had been sent to the Foreign Office to denounce the massacres and to a certain extent, call for British action^{xliv} – had made revolutionary Hunchakians less suspect – even to British authorities.

Indeed, just as Ottoman authorities were seeking to suppress *H’nchak*, the Hunchakian party underwent internecine, inter-personal and ideological tensions in 1896 leading the anti-Nazarbek faction to establish its own paper, also entitled *H’nchak*. Nazarbek then took the case to a London court over title ownership and British Liberal friends tried to use their influence for Nazarbek to retain the paper – arguing over ownership, but also over the fact that though revolutionary, the paper was not advocating terror.^{xlv} After a few months of litigation, Nazarbek won the case *Nazarbek v. Sevasly*, forcing dissidents to find another title for their paper. *Mart* (March) was chosen, after the paper illegally appeared without a title for the few months of the legal contest. The coverage the case got in the British press highlighted Nazarbek’s rights as a newspaper proprietor, treating the case as it had done with other similar affairs. In a way, ‘the

gentle art of revolution' mocked by *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* in 1894 then seemed sufficiently mainstream for Nazarbek to be part of the cosmopolitan London scene, which characterized that fin-de-siècle.^{xlvi} To the Liberals and Radicals at least, *H'nchak* and *Aptak* embodied the legitimate expression of revolutionary ideas and action in the face of the situation in the Ottoman Empire.

Conclusion

This study of British-Armenian serials emphasizes the role of language in the construction of a cosmopolitan diasporic Armenian identity in the heyday of Armenian nationalism. Armenian is given a heightened role in more radical papers (*Le Haiiasdan/H'ntchak*), for which a cosmopolitan Armenian paper cannot do without that language – thereby recalling how modern Armenian was central to the articulation of Armenianness. The proportion of Armenian used depended on the main targeted readership and on the political vision of Armenia they proposed. Despite contrasting strategies, *Le Haiiasdan*, *H'ntchak* and Tchéráz's *L'Arménie/Armenia* shared a common ambition of making Armenia European in the minds of readers, especially of non-Armenian friends of Armenia. Even *L'Arménie/Armenia*, which infrequently resorted to Armenian on the ground that educated Armenians could read French or English, did not go the whole way of producing a cultural review for a diasporic cosmopolitan Armenian elite – i.e. 'cosmopolitan' in the sense of at ease, outside of their country – and had to include discussions of Armenia's future, despite its claims of not being strictly political.

When Nazarbek won the ownership suit, Tchéráz used *Armenia* to express regret that beyond ideological differences, Armenian exiles failed to unite and speak in a single voice to find pragmatic solutions for Armenia and transform their periodicals in a fund-raising platform for survivors of the massacres and reconstruction.^{xlvii} In that it followed *Mart*, which also called

for reunion between all Armenian political parties in the name of an autonomous, if not independent Armenia. Notwithstanding Tchéraz's rather harsh words for *Le Haiïasdan* and *H'ntchak*, all serials studied here suffered the same pressures from the Ottoman State and wielded their cosmopolitanism (especially in the context of extraterritorial jurisdiction) to continue living on. Again, beyond their different understandings of cosmopolitanism (moral/cultural), *Le Haiïasdan*, *H'ntchak* and Tchéraz's *L'Arménie/Armenia* all engaged with the creation of a supra-European identity of which Armenia was part and parcel and which envisaged cosmopolitanism in a constructionist perspective.

Put differently, all attempted the *tour de force* of reconciling Armenian nationalism and cosmopolitanism, not merely in the domain of ideas, but also of praxis as they argued for a fairer governance for Armenia –and by extension, for humanity. Ultimately, these periodicals were a laboratory for re-creating their nation, but also for rethinking stalemated European governance, which is quite visible in the double-page high quality *Aptak* engravings. While such an ambition placed Armenian periodicals on the margins of the British political, but also mediatic spheres in the 1880s, this was not the case anymore after the Armenian massacres... at least until 1903.

In the autumn of that year, the rivalries between the two Hunchakian factions culminated in the assassination of an Armenian Nazarbekian leader, Sagatiel Sagouni, by members of the other group (the Alfaris) in Nunhead, an area of East London. Both out of support for the Nazarbekians, but also baffled by the extreme violence within Armenian revolutionary circles in London, the tabloid daily *The Daily Express* printed an excerpt of the *H'ntchak*'s front page news coverage of the Sagouni murder as part of its own article on the *fait divers*.^{xlviii} This inclusion of an Armenian periodical snapshot within a mainstream English-language daily is extraordinary in itself and attests to the cosmopolitanism discussed here. Less candidly however, it should also serve to remind us that the foreign-language element was at the time,

and perhaps still is, always at the risk of being appraised and downgraded as ‘foreign’ and seditious – a risk that the turn-of-the-century Home Office sought to contain by keeping a record of most, if not all foreign-language serials published in Britain.

ⁱ ‘Untitled’, *Azdarar*, 1796 (issue 18), 47. National Library of Armenia Periodical Collections, Erevan.

ⁱⁱ Aram Arkun, ‘Into the Modern Age’, in *The Armenians: Past and Present in the Making of National Identity*, eds. Edmund Herzig & Marina Kurkchian (London: Routledge, 2004), 73.

ⁱⁱⁱ Lisa Khachaturian, *Cultivating Nationhood in Imperial Russia: The Periodical Press and the Formation of a Modern Armenian Identity* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 3.

^{iv} Ronald G. Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 73.

^v Several complete collections survive at: the Bibliothèque universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (Paris), the AGBU Nubarian Library (Paris), the British Library (London) and the National Library of Armenian (Erevan).

^{vi} The most complete collection seems to be that of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris).

^{vii} ‘A nos Compatriotes’, *L’Arménie*, 1 October 1893, 1.

^{viii} ‘Avis’, *Armenia*, 1 November 1890 (issue 13), 2.

^{ix} For instance: ‘Struggles for life’, *L’Arménie*, 15 juin 1890, 1.

^x Stefano Evangelista, *Literary Cosmopolitanism in the English Fin de Siècle: Citizens of Nowhere* (Oxford: OUP, 2021), 1.

^{xi} Adam E. Etinson, ‘Cosmopolitanism: Cultural, Moral and Political’, in *Sovereign Justice: Global Justice in a World of Nations*, eds. Diogo Pires Aurélio, Gabriele De Angelis, Regina Queiroz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 27.

^{xii} Thomas W. Pogge, ‘Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty’, *Ethics* 103, no. 1 (1992): 49.

^{xiii} Translated by the author of this article. The original reads: ‘Notre principal rôle sera de servir d’intermédiaire entre l’Arménie et l’Europe, entre les hommes d’Etat, les publicistes, et les organes européens, pour éciarer l’opinion publique sur les souffrances et les aspirations du malheureux peuple arménien, afin de lui gagner les sympathies du monde civilisé.’ ‘Bulletin’, *Haiasdan*, 1 November 1888, 1.

^{xiv} Joan George, *Merchants in Exile: The Armenians in Manchester, England, 1835-1935* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2002), 56.

^{xv} The series was later published in book form as: Minas Tchéraz, *L'Orient inédit: légendes et traditions arméniennes, grecques et turques* (Paris: Leroux, 1912).

^{xvi} Joan Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (Manchester: MUP, 2009), 55.

^{xvii} This point was only hinted at by scholars whom Tchéraz presents as Armenologists, especially Friedrich Max Müller & Angelo de Gubernatis, whereas Armenian was but one element in their comparative philology.

^{xviii} Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 58.

^{xix} For a broader historical perspective, see: Owen Miller, 'Rethinking the Violence in the Sasun Mountains (1893-1894)', *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 10 (2018): 97-123.

^{xx} 'Au Très Hon. W.E. Gladstone', *L'Arménie*, 1 May 1895, 1; 'To the Right Hon. W.E. Gladstone', *Armenia*, 1 May 1895, 1.

^{xxi} James Bryce, *Transcaucasia and Ararat: Being Notes of a Vacation Tour in the Autumn of 1876* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1877), 281.

^{xxii} 'To our countrymen', *Armenia*, 15 October 1892 (issue 46), 1.

^{xxiii} Cesare Tondini de Quarenghi, 'Étude sur le calendrier liturgique de la nation arménienne', *Bessarione - Rivista di Studi Orientali* 90-92 (1906): 5.

^{xxiv} Cf. *Haik* (New York), 1 January 1891 (issue 1).

^{xxv} See for instance p.2 of the Armenian edition of *Haiasdan*, 1-15 January 1889.

^{xxvi} *Ara: A Journal of Literature, and of Armenian Politics and History*, Dacca. Copies in the Gladstone Papers, Hawarden Library, 11C/16-21. This consultation was made possible thanks to the Drew Scholarship awarded by the Gladstone Library (2019).

^{xxvii} Ara Sanjian, *Celebrating the Legacy of Five Centuries of Armenian-Language Book Printing, 1512-2012*, Exhibit Booklet (University of Michigan: Dearborn, 2012), 5.

^{xxviii} Print run in secret letter from the Ottoman Embassy in London to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 March 1889, BOA, Y. A. HUS, 224/44. Quoted in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-İngiliz İlişkileri, Volume 1 (1845-1890)*, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı. Yayın Nu: 58, Ankara, 2002, 159.

^{xxix} Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat*, 72.

^{xxx} Musurus Pacha to Home Office, 19 January 1870, quoted in 'Case', Home Office Papers, The National Archives, Kew, London, HO 45/94721/A38025, unnumbered folio. The original is in French and reads: 'cette publication écrite en langue turque et par conséquent soustraite au contrôle de l'opinion publique en Angleterre'. The rest of this paragraph builds on the whole dossier (folios unnumbered).

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- ^{xxx} James Bryce, 'Armenian Christians', House of Commons Debate, 3 March 1896, vol. 38, § 111.
- ^{xxxii} James Bryce, 'Foreign Journalists', House of Commons Debate, 21 March 1889, vol 334 § 408-409.
- ^{xxxiii} 'New in Brief: The Turkish Armenians', *The Times*, 7 May 1889, 5; 'Turkey', *The Times*, 27 May 1889, 5.
- ^{xxxiv} Arménouhie Kévonian, *Les noces noires de Gulizar*, Paris : Editions Parenthèses, 2005.
- ^{xxxv} Owen R. Miller, 'Back to the Homeland" (Tebi Yergir): Or, How Peasants Became Revolutionaries in Muş', *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 4, no. 2 (2017): 287.
- ^{xxxvi} The whole volume FO 78/4591 (Foreign Office Papers, The National Archives, Kew, London) is about such pressures, against *La Turquie Libre*, *Armenia*, *Haiasdan* and *H'nchak*.
- ^{xxxvii} Letter to the Grand Vizir, 1 December, 1888, Ottoman State Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, BOA) BOA, Y.A. HUS, 219/61. Quoted in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-İngiliz İlişkileri*, 22.
- ^{xxxviii} Said Pasha to Esad Pasha, 14 August, 1888, BOA. HR. SYS. 2781-1/12, 13. Quoted in *Osmanlı Belgelerine Göre Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri, Volume 1*, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı. Yayın Nu: 67, Ankara, 2004, 150-151.
- ^{xxxix} Fehti (from St Petersburg) to Said Pasha, 9 August 1889 and enclosure of the Ottoman Consul at Batum of 30 July 1889, BOA, HR. SYS, 2761/13. Quoted in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-İngiliz İlişkileri*, 190-191.
- ^{xl} Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1963), 211.
- ^{xli} Publication information, *H'nchak*, n° 3 (1888), 8.
- ^{xlii} FO to Sir Clare Ford, Confidential, 'Print_Asiatic Turkey', 23 May 1892, FO 78/4591, folio not numbered.
- ^{xliii} Claire Mouradian, 'La Caricature dans la presse arménienne du Caucase, d'un Empire l'autre', in M. Quarez, *Russie, URSS, 1914-1991, Changements de Regards* (Nanterre: BDIC, 1991), 40-47.
- ^{xliv} Stéphanie Prévost, 'L'opinion publique britannique et la Question arménienne (1889-1896) Quelles archives pour quel récit?', *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 8 (2016), DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/eac.1170>.
- ^{xlv} Henry Sidgwick to James Bryce, 4 December 1896, Bryce Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, f. 168-169.
- ^{xlvi} 'The Armenian Exposure', *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 9 September 1896, 5.
- ^{xlvii} 'Le Scandale Hentchakiste', *Armenia*, 1 January 1897, 4.
- ^{xlviii} 'The Assassination in a London Suburb', *The Daily Express*, 29 October 1903, 6. Quoted in Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian, 'The Peckham Armenian Martyrs', *The Armenian Institute News* 7 (2009), 10.