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“A Crime Too Terrible for Contemplation:” Samuel Ralph Harlow and Missionary Influence on the History of the Responsibility to Protect

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“A Crime Too Terrible for Contemplation:” Samuel Ralph Harlow and Missionary Influence on
the History of the Responsibility to Protect

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

the Department of History
of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts, with University Honors
and Honors in History

by

Shelby Kendrick

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Abstract

As a prominent and influential missionary in Turkey in the early 20th century, Samuel Ralph Harlow offers a new perspective that should be included in historical literature on foreign missionaries and human rights. Through his correspondence and academic works, Harlow's story unveils internal conflict among United States officials and missionaries in regard to Turkish treatment of Greeks and Armenians in the interwar period. Samuel Ralph Harlow represents the position in support of American intervention to rescue Greeks and Armenians from massacre and deportation, but as his superiors' views on the matter changed, Harlow was silenced. The U.S. may have decided not to intervene after all, but missionaries certainly played a role in the decision. Harlow was an early advocate for foreign intervention for the sake of protecting human rights, and his story shows how American missionaries helped mold U.S. support for protecting vulnerable populations abroad. The Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers at Amistad Research Center are virtually untouched by academics; thus, Harlow deserves a study in his own right. This study involved extensive research on Harlow's original papers, the United States Government Official Foreign Relations Documents, and the historiography of human rights and missionaries in the Middle East, particularly Turkey.

Keywords: missionaries, Turkey, human rights, intervention, Armenians

Preface

In February of 2013, I participated in a foreign exchange program at Yeditepe Üniversitesi in Istanbul, Turkey. Traveling abroad for the first time in my life brought about an excitement that led me to discover my interest in Turkey and the Middle East. I studied in Turkey for four months, during which I had a goal of finding a compelling topic on which to write my senior honors thesis.

The semester prior to my departure to Turkey, I took a capstone course for history majors called Historical Thought and Writing. This class exposed me to using primary sources from an archive for the first time. In the class I also learned that in order to write my thesis, I needed to find accessible primary sources that stimulated my interest enough for me to dedicate the time and effort needed to produce a successful academic work. I thought, surely, studying abroad in Turkey would give me some ideas for where to start at least. Two months after my arrival I began to worry, for I had yet to find a lead.

Constantly keeping my eyes peeled and my ears attentive for topic ideas, however, eventually paid off. My professor for Ottoman History in the Modern Period, Dr. Vehbi Baysan, who happens to specialize in Ottoman education systems and reforms, mentioned American missionary influence on education in Turkey. I nearly jumped out my seat when I realized a connection between this fact and the American Missionary Association collection that I worked with for my capstone course at Amistad Research Center in New Orleans. I knew Amistad did not contain every bit of information about the AMA, but I knew that it was one of the largest collections they possessed. Following Dr. Baysan's lecture, I went to Amistad's online record of their collections to search for anything regarding Turkey, the Middle East, or the Ottoman

Empire. Only one collection appeared in the results of my search: The Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, which contained nearly ten feet of documents.

Harlow fit the description of the missionaries Dr. Baysan described in his lecture. He spent his first years in Turkey working closely with Armenians, mainly providing relief and, what missionaries do best, trying to convert. He then became a professor and chair of the Sociology department at the International College of Smyrna.

After several hours of searching, I found virtually nothing written about him, particularly about his time in Turkey, save for a few digital copies of academic articles. As I approach the end of my research phase for this thesis, I have yet to find his name in any work but his own or his colleagues at the ICS. Perhaps what he has to say is not particularly important, I thought, but I still explored his papers when I returned. What I found in his collection at Amistad was so much more than I expected to find. Harlow's writings and correspondence from Turkey touch on subjects still relevant and controversial in historical arguments and global discussion on human rights today. He provides a unique perspective on international intervention that highlights the changing role of the United States in world affairs.

Introduction

Samuel Ralph Harlow, an American missionary from Boston, Massachusetts, sailed for Turkey in 1912 after receiving an invitation to become chaplain and head of the Department of Sociology at the International College at Smyrna, henceforth referred to as the ICS. The ICS opened in 1891 as a secondary school with a majority Greek student body.¹ In addition to his academic work in Smyrna, Harlow volunteered to teach English at the YMCA, headed three Boy Scout troops and worked closely with Armenian Christians.² The Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, housed at the Amistad Research Institute in New Orleans, Louisiana, has over 5,000 items consisting of correspondence, notes, photos, and manuscripts. Harlow's writings on the state of Turkey and his missionary work, while plentiful, have so far escaped the eyes of academics. The reason for this may be due to his most controversial work on the subject, "The Outstanding Opportunity in the Near East," which was rejected for publication and resulted in his disaffiliation with his sponsoring organization, the American Board of Commissioner on Foreign Missions (ABCFM), altogether.

Harlow's story, though obscure, illuminates important aspects and perspectives on grander themes in Turkish, American, and missionary histories that are under-analyzed or overlooked. First, however, obtaining a general knowledge of American foreign missions, the Greco-Turkish conflict of the early twentieth century, and Harlow's employment history at the International College at Smyrna is necessary for understanding Samuel Ralph Harlow's experiences and how they fit into the scope of history, a general knowledge of American foreign

¹ Joseph Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 26.

² Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Jack and Tad, November 13, 1913, box 1, folder 2, Coll. 167, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

missions, the Greco-Turkish conflict of the early twentieth century, and Harlow's employment history at the International College at Smyrna.

The United States was a mere thirty-four years old when the ABCFM established itself in Boston and when the first overseas Protestant missions began in 1810.³ American missionary goals in the Near East were initially set on the conversion of the region, the fall of Islam and the Catholic Pope, and the restoration of Palestine to the Jews. These events were perceived to be the conditions needed for the establishment of God's Kingdom on Earth.⁴ In the mid-nineteenth century, the ABCFM decided to take on more practical strategies, such as focusing on the "revival" of Armenians in Anatolia and other Oriental Christians. These efforts led to the establishment of Ottoman Protestant communities known as millets. Missionary strategies changed yet again in response to the Young Turk revolution of 1908; their hopes centered on the conversion of Turks.⁵ Throughout their time in Anatolia, Protestant missionaries had a positive image due to the successful missionary schools, factories, and hospitals.⁶ These missionaries were so influential they often mediated and determined U.S. foreign policy concerning the Middle East until the interwar period.⁷ Missionaries have influenced the region in such significant ways that traces of their former presence are still felt in the present.

The prosperity of the missionaries in the Ottoman Empire and their hope for Turkish conversion were soon crushed, however, when the Young Turk regime commenced the violent removal of all Christians in Anatolia during and after World War I. This group primarily consisted of Armenians, a people whose homeland resided in Turkish territory. The Armenian

³ Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Nearest East: American millennialism and mission to the Middle East*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 2.

⁴ Kieser, *Nearest East: American millennialism and mission to the Middle East*, 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷ Mehmet Ali Doğan and Heather J. Sharkey. *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2011), x.

and Russian massacring of eastern Anatolian Muslims and a rise in attention toward minority rights and reform threatened the Turks.⁸ Russia invaded the shrinking Ottoman lands with the support of Armenian revolutionaries. Thus, the Turks felt justified in ridding Anatolia of any sizable Armenian presence.⁹ More importantly, the new Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) emphasized Turkish identity to gain popularity and authority. Therefore, they needed to cut any barriers that would hinder the development of the national identity. "What [the CUP] wanted was one strong Empire in which Armenians would forget their racial pride, where Greeks would no longer want to speak Greek, and where Bulgars would become more Turkish than Bulgarian."¹⁰ As these events unfolded, however, Turkey became increasingly preoccupied with World War I and the losses that ensued from it.

In May of 1919, Greek armies stormed and occupied Smyrna, a port city along the Aegean Sea with a large population of Greeks located in modern Izmir, Turkey, as a post-war victory prize for allying with the Entente powers. This imperialistic agreement to divide up Ottoman lands led to an excess of violence and stimulated the expansion of the Turkish nationalist movement under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, known today as the father of the Republic of Turkey.¹¹ During the Turkish occupation of Smyrna, which began around September 13, 1922, about 75% of the city burned to the ground and 30,000 Greeks and Armenians died. Approximately 400,000 of the victims forced from their homes and pushed to the Aegean waterfront with the choice of being killed by the Turks, jumping into the water, or burning in the

⁸ Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S. Arab Relations: 1820-2001*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 118.

⁹ Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S. Arab Relations: 1820-2001*, 119.

¹⁰ Manuscript, Samuel Ralph Harlow, *Turkey Faces West: The Social Revolution in Turkey*, box 10, folder 9, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, 284.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 291.

rapidly spreading fire.¹² The survivors of the Smyrna incident were then ordered to leave Turkey within one month.

The international response to these events was minimal, particularly on behalf of the United States. Britain, however, wanted to give Turkey an ultimatum involving war threats. France and Italy were willing to stand behind this threat in the beginning, but only with America's help. Yet the U.S. remained cautious and chose not to interfere, a recurring choice that frustrated Britain immensely as it had much to lose in terms of access to South Asia. While a shallow look into the Smyrna incident shows that the U.S. sent ships to rescue Americans only and remained neutral, a closer look into the U.S. Turkey Foreign Relations documents shows that government officials were divided in what they thought the U.S.'s response should have been. Samuel Ralph Harlow put forth the less popular argument that America should not stand idly by as innocent people are killed.

Samuel Ralph Harlow & The Congregationalist Article

When the Turks occupied Smyrna in 1922, the International College at Smyrna was looted and partially razed, the president, Dr. Alexander MacLachlan—who shall be introduced shortly—was stripped and beaten, and the American College Institute was set ablaze.¹³ At this time, Harlow was relocated to Boston where developed a position of support for the Greeks, in contrast to the ABCFM's pro-Turkish stance, and he underwent a speaking tour of the U.S. on

¹² Lester Sullivan, "Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers Finding Aid," Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, 43.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

behalf of the Near East Relief for the Student Volunteer Movement in favor of U.S. intervention on behalf of Christian Greeks and Armenians in Turkey.

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On March 8, 1923 in response to the Smyrna incident, Samuel Ralph Harlow wrote an article to *The Congregationalist*, an academic journal for missionaries, urging the ABCFM and the entire Christian Church to focus its efforts and funding on aiding the Christian Armenians and Greeks that were hurt or exiled, rather than helping the Turks. He also blamed Mehmed Talaat Bey, a figure deeply cherished by the Turkish people and government, for being solely responsible for the massacring of Armenians in the 1910s.¹⁴ Harlow even controversially added that the Treaty of Lausanne meant “the handing back to the Turks of all the Christians in Asia Minor, save those in some places where it is to the personal interest of the allies to keep them in their own hands.”¹⁵ The article also quoted the Chairman of the Near East Committee at the peace conference said, “the greatest opportunity to serve humanity in a national way came to our doors, and we refused to assume the responsibility: we, who lost so little and promised so much.”¹⁶ The article, “The Outstanding Opportunity in the Near East,” was denied publication by ABCFM executive James L. Barton and was said to be “a stab in the back of the Turkey missionaries.”¹⁷ Although the article’s rejection was a blow to Harlow, the reasoning behind the decision is easy to identify as the article was incredibly contentious.

Even though Harlow’s article was not published, it received public notice. The *New York Times* wrote an article on Harlow’s pro-Greek position, which he called “a fearfully gobbled

¹⁴ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to *The Congregationalist*, March 8, 1923, box 1, folder 9, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷ Memorandum, Brewer Eddy to Samuel Ralph Harlow, March 8, 1923, box 1, folder 9, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

report" in a letter to his colleague, Luther. Harlow sent a rebuttal to the *Times* immediately after reading the article and after each false statement, he wrote, "I did not say this." He also demanded that the *Times* publish his original article as an apology for misquoting him. The *Times* begged Harlow to withdraw his demand and said they would issue their own statement of

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apology. His letter would "hurt the *Times*."¹⁸ Harlow must have withdrawn, for the next day the newspaper printed its own apology.

He was met with much opposition, particularly from ICS missionaries Dr. Alexander MacLachlan, the college's first president, and Cass Reed, another prominent faculty member.

The consensus among missionaries who opposed Harlow's position was as follows:

[W]e who have remained at our posts in Turkey and who feel that our duty to the College, the Bo[a]rd and the cause of Christ demands that we remain just as long as we can, regret very much that you have felt compelled to allow your name, and that of the College, to be associated with articles containing some statements which can fairly be questions, and which practically call on the United States to make war on Turkey....My own feeling is so strong that I have written to Dr. Barton, in a letter copy....suggesting the desirability of your severing your official connection with the College....¹⁹

The dispute between Harlow, MacLachlan, and Reed was particularly fiery, however, due to pre-existing tensions relating to Harlow's disagreement with MacLachlan and Reed's management of the ICS. In a letter to his parents, Harlow describes Dr. MacLachlan's unfairness towards a student and anger every time his authority is questioned. "He simply raved. He said 'There is just one authority on this campus, Mr. Harlow, and I am that one. Don't you dare cross my wishes.'...I wanted to [resign] then and there but I didn't, and for the sake of this college and the big work

¹⁸ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Luther, January 5, 1923, box 1, folder 9, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

¹⁹ Letter, Cass Reed to Samuel Ralph Harlow, November 26, 1922, box 1, folder 8, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

here I intend to stay right here till the last gun fire, if possible."²⁰ This aspect of Samuel Ralph Harlow and Alexander MacLachlan's relationship may have contributed to MacLachlan's readiness to ask for Harlow's resignation.

Both MacLachlan and Cass Reed published letters that Harlow claimed were "anti-Greek and pro-Turkish to the core." "A Near East Relief worker who saw one of Cass Reed's letters

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said, 'if this is published it will cost the Near East Relief thousands of dollars for starving Greeks and Armenians.'²¹ One man even suggested to Harlow that statements such as Dr. MacLachlan's had influenced Britain to withdraw its support for Greece, which led to the final decision and execution of Greek deportations and killings.²²

One of Harlow's biggest complaints about Cass Reed and Dr. MacLachlan was their hypocrisy. According to Harlow, Reed had referred to the Grecian government as "a better government than France was giving in Cilicia or Great Britain in Constantinople." Yet with the coming of the Smyrna incident, Reed and MacLachlan publicly denounced the Greeks and tried to silence Harlow's favor of them.²³ Harlow believed it was not right "to permit the innocent and helpless to be ravaged and murdered rather than stop the hand of the oppressor, even by force of arms." In other words, he wanted the U.S. to step in even if it meant resorting to violence. "God forbid that force should be used against Turkey,"²⁴ Cass replied. "The College and the American Board are committed to the gospel, not of the gloved fist, but of the pierced hand."²⁵ Harlow

²⁰ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Brewer Eddy, March 16, 1921, box 1, folder 7, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

²¹ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to King, January 3, 1923, box 1, folder 9, Col. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

²² Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Cass Reed, December 27, 1922, box 1, folder 8, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to King, January 3, 1923, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers.

²⁵ Letter, Cass Reed to Samuel Ralph Harlow, November 26, 1922, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers.

disputed this claim, however, by pointing out that Cass had placed his wife and children under the protection of guns and destroyers, contrary to his anti-war statements.²⁶

Near here was one of the most notorious Turks in the district. He has murdered at least a dozen Greeks and had outraged Greek girls. When the Greeks came in someone shot him. His body was left about half a mile from our campus. Cass loaded the Ford car up with Turkish students and searched for the body. Took a picture of it and sent it to America with a bitter attack on the the Greeks. Dr. Moscou, the pastor of the Protestant Greek church told me this, tho [sic] I heard it right and left from the Greek boys. They asked why, when more than a dozen Greeks were massacred near our campus had he taken no interest in that affair.²⁷

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Harlow acknowledged the faults of the Greeks, but "maintain[ed] by the light of 500 years of history...and even more the past five weeks that to give the impression that the Greeks and Armenians are as cruel, as guilty and blamable for the present situation in the Near East is utterly false."²⁸ Harlow believed that the Muslims throughout the Near East are important and were the mission's main goal for conversion, but he could not forget those who were already Christian and suffering.

Harlow believed that Americans in charge of the nation's funds thought in terms of governments, but not the individual or the average civilian; multitudes of people suffered as a result.

I do not intend here to go over the political aspects of this case. I merely want to say that in the face of a catastrophe [sic] of blood, fire, massacre, outrage, exile, and death, such as the people of our day have been staggered by, when the evidence from all over Asia Minor and Greece points to a crime too terrible for contemplation, no word of protest comes from the International College of Smyrna. On the other hand, bitter attacks on the Greeks and Armenians have come from Dr. McLachlan, and severe indictments of them from Cass. In those letters the Turks, wherever there has been even the inference of wrong-going, have been excused from and their crimes passed over lightly.²⁹

²⁶ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to King, January 3, 1923, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Tulane University.

²⁷ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Brewer Eddy, March 16, 1921, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Tulane University.

²⁸ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Minnie Mills, December 26, 1922, box 1, folder 8, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

²⁹ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to King, January 3, 1923, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers.

Harlow stated that all letters from "you International College people" seemed to "utterly ignore nearly two million starving, helpless, terror-stricken Christians driven from their homes, to ignore crimes which had they been committed on your wives and children, would make it unendurable, and to raise no protest against the continuation of such a situation."³⁰ He was clearly passionate and outspoken about protecting Anatolian Christians, but his arguments did not stop there.

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Samuel Ralph Harlow was primarily ashamed of the U.S.'s neutrality and the priorities of his superiors. "In Cass's letter asking for my resignation here are some of the phrases he used; - 'You are putting us to no little inconvenience.' 'The future of the college and the college interests are at stake' and 'for the sake of the college interests.'"³¹ The interests of the college "looms so big that actually Paul [Nilson of the ICS] would have us keep quiet so he can save the miserable property of some fifty of his Greek and Armenian friends, while we are trying to save 300,000 people by our protests, from being driven from their homes in Constantinople."³² Harlow was further indignant towards the ABCFM and ICS's complete lack of response to the entire Smyrna incident, even though their properties were severely damaged.

Harlow claimed the best missionary work can be done through educational institutions, but he believed that the ICS had been losing its sight of its missionary purpose for some time.³³ "With Smyrna in flames, with thousands being struck down by cruel blows, Dr. MacLachlan's first cable to his Board read that he himself as recovering and that his family were on a British

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Luther, January 5, 1923, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers.

³² Ibid.

³³ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to James Barton, May 5, 1913. box 1, folder 2, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

battleship and that the 'property and plant at Paradise were safe.' Not one word to arouse American indignation and awaken American sympathy in the days of that awful crime at Smyrna."³⁴ Many other missionaries did not view the Smyrna incident as a crime, however, but as retaliation for Greeks taking over Turkish land and committing similar acts. While they disapproved of the violence as Christians, their missionary goals seemed to take priority over protesting against their host country.

Despite such strong negative feedback from the two organizations he had devoted much of his life to, Harlow was not without equally passionate support from elsewhere. The American

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College Institute, through the words of missionary Olive Greene, showed great enthusiasm towards Ralph's work to help the Anatolian Christians. "We are all with you heart and soul! You can imagine how much when I tell you Miss Pinneo bursts out of her own accord in eulogies of Ralph! A.C.I. and the Harlows and Gertrude at least seem to be one solid united -- What shall I call us?"³⁵ Another woman by the name of Mary Kuiney sent her approval as well: "It is true that the Greeks have been very much to blame. No one knows that better than I do, because I saw what they did in Ismid, but at the same time what they did was done in retaliation and only a very small fraction of what the Turks have done."³⁶ This is but a small sample from at least fifty letters to Samuel Ralph Harlow in support of his work for the refugee cause.

ABCFM Inner Conflicts

³⁴ Letter, Samuel Ralph Harlow to Luther, January 5, 1923, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers.

³⁵ Letter, Olive Greene to Samuel Ralph Harlow, January 18, 1923, box 1, folder 9, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

³⁶ Letter, Mary E. Kuiney to Samuel Ralph Harlow, February 13, 1923, box 1, folder 9, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

Despite his opposition to Harlow's demand to save Anatolian Christians in the 1920s, Dr. James Barton, the Secretary of the ABCFM at the time, was an advocate for aiding Christians in the region. He led the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief and played a significant role in the Near East Relief organization. In March 1918, Barton recommended placing American troops to cut the Berlin-Baghdad railway to preserve the remaining Armenian population and establish an American presence in the region.³⁷ In order to keep missionary operations successful, Barton had to keep a steady flow of donations and ensure American missionaries remained in the favor of the Turkish government. These responsibilities are the essence of Harlow's problem, for Barton could not allow him, a representative of the ABCFM, to jeopardize the entire missionary operation with his words. At the same time, Barton could not

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simply abandon the persecuted Christians and upset a large portion of his supporters. Instead, in the words of historian Ussama Makdisi, he had to "play a delicate balancing act."³⁸

In order to increase the flow of donations, Dr. Barton encouraged American public outrage at Turkish atrocities, but not missionary outcries, for he and other missionaries knew that the ABCFM needed the approval of the Turkish government to continue their mission.³⁹ To preserve what Barton and the ABCFM considered the greater good, outspoken missionaries such as Harlow had to be silenced and missionary relief had to focus on areas that were Turkish-approved. One particular missionary named Paul B. Nilson wrote to Barton to express this popular opinion, "America's neutrality helps us to continue quietly." From his perspective, the Greeks and French committed worse atrocities than the Turks, and he saw Barton's initial encouragement of American outrage as placing his "missionaries in the field in a precarious

³⁷ Makdisi, *Faith Mislplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S. Arab Relations: 1820-2001*, 120.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

situation.”⁴⁰ Nilson also claimed that other anti-Turkish or pro-Greek and Armenian articles caused headlines in Turkish newspapers such as "American missionaries are the leaders in propaganda against Turkish interests.”⁴¹ With Harlow’s resignation as a prime example, this position was popular and won out over all. The Lausanne Conference, however, reignited the opposition.

At the Lausanne Conference of 1922 and 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne replaced the Treaty of Sèvres and Turkey regained control over Constantinople under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Most controversially, the Turks were also granted permission to expel its non-Muslim population, i.e. Armenians, as part of implementing Turkish nationalism. Following the conference, James Barton made a speech at a meeting for the Commission on International Justice and Good-Will

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of the Federal Council of Churches. He claimed “we must acquiesce in the findings of this conference as the conclusion of a superior court of nations which there is no appeal, however much we may rebel against the conclusion.”⁴² The speech was later published in *The Christian Work*, but the publication was annotated by the editors who stated,

We disagree most earnestly with some of Dr. Barton's conclusions. It is impossible to accept the decisions of Lausanne meeting on minorities and denying any sort of justice to the Armenians. The Church must make her voice heard in Washington, declaring that we will sign no treaty with Turkey, which does not grant justice to the oppressed and wronged.⁴³

The widespread outcry of Christians against the conference caused Barton to relax his position once more. He was “doubtful whether in all the history of the United States there has ever been an appeal to the Government so generally endorsed and backed up by the religious and

⁴⁰ Copy of Letter, Paul B. Nilson to Dr. James Barton, November 24, 1922, box 1, folder 8, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Scrapbook clipping, James Barton, "What Happened at Lausanne?", *The Christian Work: March 17, 1923*, box 15, folder 6, Coll. 167, Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, 339.

⁴³ Ibid., 338.

philanthropic and moral interests of the nation."⁴⁴ While Barton had to be careful not to offend the Turks under whose protection his missionaries lied, he also had to maintain the support of the American Christians he represented.

The task became increasingly arduous as the arguments became more complex. In his speech, Barton raised the question "whether that is not a dangerous precedent to set—to say that a nation that wants to rid itself of any part of its population should have the right to send them out with no warning and no place to which they can go."⁴⁵ While he pronounced his personal opposition to the forced evacuation, Barton felt there was nothing he could do. Only two things could be done: send an international commission to look into condition and needs of refugees and provide what funds the missionary organizations could spare.⁴⁶

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Throughout his years of involvement with the Turkish and Ottoman governments, Barton assured his audiences that American missionaries did not play politics, which was entirely contrary to fact. If anything, "American missionaries inevitably intruded in politics to a degree they never had before,"⁴⁷ claims Ussama Makdisi. Barton even contradicted himself in 1917 when he and his supporter Cleveland Dodge persuaded President Wilson not to declare war on Turkey to protect missionary interests.⁴⁸ Although lobbying for the opposite outcome, in 1922, Barton wrote a letter to President Warren Harding and Secretary of State Charles Hughes saying, "The rights of Americans and of minorities are held in contempt and all civilized laws are defied...as we must always expect from a distinctly Mohammedan Government. We are witnessing what promises to be the beginning of another European war, in which barbarianism

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 339.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S. Arab Relations: 1820-2001*, 121.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 120.

will be arraigned against civilization."⁴⁹ Because these leaders represented a country with a largely Christian population, leaders in the Christian community often influenced the U.S. government.

United States Government Internal Conflict

United States government officials' positions on the matter more often than not affected missionary standings as well. These officials were confronted by many (e.g. British ambassadors and missionaries) who wanted to send aid to Anatolian Christians or prevent the Turks from harming them further. Little action ensued, however, due to Congress and the American people disapproving of the U.S. declaring war on Turkey when the first World War had just recently ended. Without public and financial backing, neither the U.S. government nor the ABCFM could do anything substantial to protect the Greeks and Armenians in Turkey.

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On November 1, 1922 Turkish authorities ordered all Greeks and Christians to leave within one month under penalty of deportation. The U.S.'s first reaction to the order came six days later from Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol, the American High Commissioner of Turkey. His main concern was finding more information about the penalty and discerning whether the order was an invitation for Greeks to leave if they desired, or if the order was compulsory. Consequently, he told the troops under his command, "We have assumed no obligations and do not intend to assume in the line of protection, patronage, or assistance to non-American refugees in Black Sea area. Discourage any attempt or suggestion to involve naval forces in any commitment, ... in favor of refugees."⁵⁰ The decision was soon approved by Secretary Hughes.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927*, 261.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, Telegram 310, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1922, Volume II: Turkey* (Washington: GPO, 1922), 950-951.

⁵¹ U.S. Department of State, Telegram 245, *FRUS, 1922, Volume II: Turkey* (Washington: GPO, 1922), 951.

Yet just a few days after this statement, Britain and France stated their interest in taking military action against Turkey and helping the remaining Greek and Armenian populations to leave from Turkey safely, but the U.S. was still reluctant to join their cause.⁵² Congress had to approve such an action, an unlikely outcome, even if some U.S. officials wanted to assist.

Americans preferred to let Britain and France handle the issue on their own, but British Ambassador Auckland Geddes was uncertain Britain could depend upon the French. If France backed out, Britain would ultimately assume all responsibility and increase the chances of actually going to war with Turkey. Geddes believed that “if the American Government stood with the British Government... the French would feel that they must join in taking the same position, but ...if the American Government stood aloof the French might stand aloof also.”⁵³ He

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proposed the U.S. make an ultimatum to the Turks that America would declare war if they continued with the deportation of Christians, a proposal that was not far off from Harlow’s own.

Secretary Hughes told the Ambassador, however, that the government could make no such claim without assuming Congress’s approval, and Congress would not meet for several days.⁵⁴ Even if Congress did approve, he argued, it would bring about a “very deep feeling throughout the country” due to probably another draft and a special military organization to fulfill the necessary requirements for success. Hughes stated that President Harding was also very much against proposing an empty threat or anything of the sort. Geddes thought that filling the Turks with fear would make them not want to proceed. The British ambassador was finally silenced, however, when Hughes said, “...this Government was not in a position to threaten a war

⁵² U.S. Department of State, Memorandum by the Secretary of State of a Conversation with the British Ambassador (Geddes), *FRUS, 1922, Volume II: Turkey* (Washington: GPO, 1922), 955-958.

⁵³ U.S. Department of State, Memorandum by the Secretary of State of a Conversation with the British Ambassador (Geddes), 952.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 952-955.

of vengeance against the Turks which would be a war of indefinite extent against an aroused Moslem population threatening the entire Near East.”⁵⁵ Geddes could not argue with Hughes’ claim, but when Turks’ targeting the removal of all Christians of Anatolia was confirmed, the U.S. could not remain idle. President Harding agreed to a proposal that would send American representatives to work with others in the Allies and the International Red Cross.⁵⁶ The collaboration resulted in providing relief via the International Red Cross and putting diplomatic pressure on Turkey to extend the one month time limit for the forced evacuations.⁵⁷

The United States held firm in its policy on war with Turkey throughout the entire conflict, even if the internal disputes on the matter were plentiful. In an interview with Washington prior to the Conference of Lausanne, American government representatives promised the U.S. would assume zero responsibility for any outcome of the conference, no

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matter what happened there. The interview also stated that the U.S. “would join no demonstration against Turkey nor make any other arrangement whereby the representatives of the United States should assume any responsibility for the conclusions of the conference.”⁵⁸ The American representatives at the conference were only there to advise, not to partake in any decision-making. For example, while the U.S. representatives made a case for creating an Armenian national home, they made no offer to help putting such a project into action. The most the U.S. would do was devote American destroyers to assisting with the evacuation of refugees.⁵⁹ When it became clear during the conference that France and Italy would not help England with implementing ultimatums or other coercive measures, the Turks became less negotiable in their

⁵⁵ Ibid., 957.

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, Letter from the Secretary of State to President Harding, May 25, 1922, *FRUS, 1922, Volume II: Turkey* (Washington: GPO, 1922), 922-295.

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, Circular Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Herrick), October 2, 1922, *FRUS 1922, Volume II: Turkey* (Washington: GPO, 1922), 939-940.

⁵⁸ Scrapbook clipping, James Barton, "What Happened at Lausanne?", Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, 338.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, Telegram 275, *FRUS, 1922, Volume II: Turkey* (Washington: GPO, 1922), 965.

demands knowing that no force would be used against them. Thus, all Armenians were forced to leave Turkey. The Greeks, or what was left of them, were technically allowed to stay in exchange for Turks being allowed to remain in Thrace, but they were also invited to leave.⁶⁰

The Treaty of Lausanne replaced the Treaty of Sèvres on July 24, 1923, ridding of all mention of prosecuting the Turks for crimes against Armenians, Greeks, and British. David Lloyd George, former British Prime Minister, referred to the treaty as an “adject, cowardly, and infamous surrender.”⁶¹ The United States’ actions, or the lack thereof, during the Lausanne Conference is but one of many instances where the US preferred neutrality, “diplomatic niceties”, and shipping humanitarian aid over sanctions and prosecution of a suppressor.⁶² In her book *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, Samantha Power argues that “The United States’ decisions to act or not to act have had greater impact on the victims’ fortunes than

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those of any other major power.”⁶³ Samuel Ralph Harlow was one of the first voices making this claim, however, and an early supporter of foreign intervention to protect vulnerable populations.

Historical Development of the Responsibility to Protect

Most narratives of mass murder and war crime in the modern period begin with the Armenian massacres by the Ottomans in the late 1800s and Young Turks following 1915. Many major genocidal or violent maltreatments of a population by its ruling power such as these resulted in U.S. involvement, or the request for it by other parties. This explains Samantha Power’s argument about U.S. influence on victims of war crimes. International interest in

⁶⁰ Scrapbook clipping, James Barton, "What Happened at Lausanne?", Samuel Ralph Harlow Papers, 339.

⁶¹ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 16.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 504.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, xx.

preventing, or at least reprimanding, mass murder and war crimes started many years prior to Samuel Ralph Harlow, but missionary influence on the transformation of international feelings toward the Responsibility to Protect should be included in the historiography of human rights. The missionaries who shared Harlow's opinion on U.S. intervention represent early signs of change in the U.S.'s position long before the phrase "Responsibility to Protect" was coined in 2001 by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. Knowing the development of terms such as "sovereignty," "self-determination," "genocide," and "sovereignty as responsibility," however, is crucial for understanding the Responsibility to Protect and how it became such a notable aspect of contemporary international relations.

Today's concept of sovereignty was born in 1648 in the treaties of Westphalia, though the term itself existed before. The Peace of Westphalia defined sovereignty in terms of equal states agreeing to not intervene on the internal affairs of all member states, but weaker nations not included in the discussions were still subjected to imperialism, at least until U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's advocacy of self-determination. The issue with self-determination,

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however, is that it "fails to specify which nationality or group should end up being favored over another when their claims conflict."⁶⁴ Then, some of the earlier developments of secular, international expectations on human rights took place at the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949. These conventions collectively established the first international standards and laws for war, including the treatment of prisoners of war, protection of civilians, and war crimes. In 1919, the Allies' Committee of Enquiry into the Breaches of the Laws of War issued a report that recommended establishing an International Criminal Court, but the U.S., a vital element for the court's success, was unwilling to participate.

⁶⁴ Micheline Ishay, *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient times to the Globalization Era*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 10.

The next phase in the progression towards international desire to protect victimized groups took the form of the 1948 Genocide Convention following the atrocities of World War II. The convention defined the term genocide and aimed to “modify international law so that the U.S. or the nation-state facing the prospect of genocide and mass murder in another nation, will devise strategies to stop or intervene quickly, and provide justice for the victims and the perpetrator who planned and ordered the genocide.”⁶⁵ It also reintroduced the topic of establishing a permanent International Criminal Court, but the U.S. continued to oppose the idea. Therefore, the ICC was not implemented until 2002 with the Rome Statute; even then, however, the U.S. was reluctant. Also formed in 1948 as a result of WWII was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which defined the inherent entitlements of all human beings and set the stage for international protection of these rights.

The 1990s brought about a new concept after horrors committed and witness at Rwanda and Srebrenica: the right to intervene. These happenings stimulated discussion on how to do more than bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes after the crimes were committed. United

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Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan challenged Member States in his Millennium Report of 2000, “If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica, to gross and systematic violation of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?”⁶⁶ At the World Summit of 2005, sovereignty was redefined to include the Right to Protect: sovereignty gives a state the right to control its own internal affairs without international intervention, but it also comes with the responsibility of ensuring citizens’ welfare. If a state fails to do so, the responsibility shifts to the

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Robertson, *Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice*, (New York: New Press, 2000), 220.

⁶⁶ “Background Information on the Responsibility to Protect,” last modified March 2014, Department of Public Information, <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/pdf/Backgrounder%20R2P%202014.pdf>.

larger international community. The Responsibility to Protect has consistently evolved since, for even in August 2013 it was molded to include preventative measures for protecting victimized groups.⁶⁷

Conclusion

The United States may have opted out of intervening in Turkish affairs in the end, but analyzing and noting the development and complexity of the decision is important for understanding the roles missionaries played in American, and therefore international, politics. Presenting all aspects leading up to a historically notable decision such as that is crucial for presenting history accurately and as objectively as possible. Ussama Makdisi mentions that in order “to appreciate the complexity of American missions, however, it is imperative to distinguish between the larger history of mission and the narrower travails of missionaries, and between a transnational history and a less ambitious national story.”⁶⁸ Makdisi also claims that scholars on missionaries in other countries primarily focus on the American aspects and interests

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of a story that is much more multifaceted than it seems.⁶⁹ Erez Manela, author of *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, pointed out that “far less has been written about the perceptions and actions of the peoples in large swaths of the colonial or non-European world.”⁷⁰ The peoples he mentions do not exclude missionaries.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 7.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁰ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), ix.

Missionaries may be outsiders, but they have an entirely unique perspective and type of influence on the world that unbinds historians from the limitations of binary interpretation. Studying official documents, such as the minutes of the Lausanne Conference or federal U.S. foreign relations telegrams, makes it easier to chronicle events and isolate critical turning points in history. Limiting our studies to these types of sources leads to holes and unintended silences when writing history (e.g. scholarship on the U.S.'s role in WWI primarily focuses on the interactions between the United States and its principal Allies).⁷¹ This limitation makes history appear to be a story about “Us versus Them” when it is not. “Obscure histories, however, can illuminate those we think know,”⁷² says Makdisi. The story of Samuel Ralph Harlow can play this important role in the explanation of the U.S.'s decision to stay out of Turkish affairs and why the world watched idly as Armenians and Greeks were murdered and unwillingly deported from Anatolia. Harlow's “obscure story” helps to see the importance of missionary influence on U.S. decision makers and the conflicts that occurred among both groups. His collection and experiences also shed light on the unvictorious side of the arguments leading up to decisions regarding foreign intervention in the Turkish, Armenian, and Greek conflicts.

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⁷¹ Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, 5.

⁷² Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 8.

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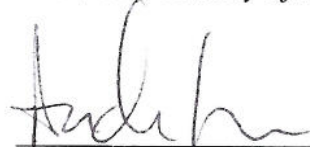
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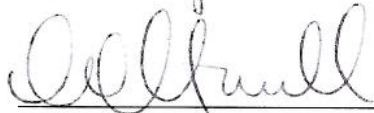
This is to certify that Shelby Renae Kendrick has successfully completed her Senior Honors Thesis, entitled:

"A Crime Too Terrible for Contemplation:" Samuel Ralph Harlow and Missionary Influence on the History of the Responsibility to Protect



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