THE LIVING STONES OF THE HOLY LAND TRUST

Registered Charity No. 1081204

'An ecumenical trust seeking to promote contacts between Christian Communities in Britain and those in the Holy Land and neighbouring countries.'

editor@livingstones.ngo

Living Stones Yearbook 2015

LIVING STONES
YEARBOOK
2015

Martyrdom and Christian response to conflict in the Middle East

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Note

It is appreciated that articles derive from authors in a range of disciplines and demonstrate a variety in approach. The spelling of some specialised terms, local place-names and proper names in particular may vary considerably according to the contributor and discipline. These variations, however, should cause no problems to readers.

Submissions for inclusion in the *Yearbook* are welcome and papers for consideration should be sent to editor@livingstonesonline.org.uk. Notes for submission of papers and house style are available upon request from the editor.

EDITORIAL

This edition is published at a time when Europe is feeling overwhelmed by a tide of refugees from a variety of conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. The major protagonists battling for the soul of Syria where Muslim and Christian alike are fleeing the death and destruction perpetrated by a variety of actors, principally the activities of the self-proclaimed Islamic State and the defence of his realm by Assad's military might bolstered by Russia, Iran and the Hezbollah. We also recognise that Israel and Palestine are now engaged in another confrontation that, in all but name, looks very much like a third Intifada.

This edition takes us on an historical and yet hauntingly contemporary journey across Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East tracking the tragedy of an Armenian Genocide and, in general, the relationship of Christian communities with Muslim states and Islam, the roots of the Jewish State and the interpretations of Zionism and Semitism as they interplay with the lives of Palestinians and Israeli citizens alike.

How much is this a story of tribal conflict, religious conflict, or of power struggle to establish the boundaries of nation states in a world which picked international borders out of a potpourri of political options? What is the contribution of a global Christian community to a region of the world where Christianity is diminishing to a mere shadow of its former self in a place where its tenets were, for a moment in history, supreme? Is there a possible compromise between two major religious world views which seem to be increasingly at loggerheads in this century?

I can't think of a more challenging period in world history nor of a more relevant commentary in our times than can be found in these pages.

The first section of this edition focuses on the foundation of the State of Israel and looks at it through political, sociological and theological lenses.

Ilan Pappé introduces us to the competing pressures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries between secularism, nationalism and Judaism. The recreation of a biblical legacy for a Jewish nation state arises as a tool to play the political games that helped create its reality. Ilan argues that only the return to a theology which rejects the necessity of a Jewish nation state can contribute to a secularised society in Israel that can accommodate difference and live at peace with itself and others.

Michael Marten broadens the context by identifying Michael Prior's contribution to the debate in the use and abuse, for example, of the Exodus story by liberation movements worldwide and by those supporting a Jewish state. The Exodus story sidesteps the ruthless displacement of an indigenous people in the land east of Jordan. Michael Prior, it is argued, takes the moral high ground and hopes for an interpretation of the Bible that is as much based on linguistic analysis as personal morality and engagement with the structures of oppression.

Mary Grey leads us appropriately through to the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which had its origins in Zionism, both Christian and Jewish, and in British imperial ambitions. Mary Grey reminds us that the Balfour Declaration was made deliberately to enlist Jewish support for the imperial intentions of the British government which did indeed represent 'Perfidious Albion'. The government made every effort to hide their support for a Jewish nation state from the Arab leadership in the Middle East and ignored respect for 'the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities' in the plan for the 'return' of European Jews to Palestine. Mary, in rooting her concern in Gospel-inspired vision, equally emphasises the morality of decisions by seeking today to persuade Her Majesty's government to heal the hurt that they created thus making a contribution to justice, peace and reconciliation.

From the history of the establishment of the State of Israel this edition moves to the realities of the present day. **Duncan Macpherson**

addresses the use of emotive labels in the battle of ideas we describe as the Israel/Palestine debacle for both parties. Duncan looks at the motivation of people who use labels such as Zionist, anti-Semite, Jew-hater and racist in the description of those who support or oppose their ideas. The labels have a history too and that can be traced through the political, economic and social history of a Christian Europe—the origins of prejudice being found in the interpretation of the Gospel accounts. The pedigree of some labels is used to good effect to silence criticism of the State of Israel today. These same labels are used to denigrate and show contempt for Palestinians in an 'ecumenical bargain' trading Christian guilt for silence on the Palestinian catastrophe.

So, what can be expected from a Palestinian community which so often has found itself ignored or side-lined in an international conspiracy of support for Israel? **Naim Ateek** brings his experience of Palestinian Liberation Theology to the table. Again we are reminded of parallels in South Africa and Latin America in Christian responses to oppression. We are encouraged to revisit and reclaim a historical Jesus developing a theology of love and justice that can embrace Christian, Muslim and Jew alike.

Alwyn Knight ends this section of the *Yearbook* in a record of the practical experience in Hebron of accompaniment in both the Christian Peacemaker Teams and in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. Alwyn Knight reminds us of the theological basis for 'accompaniment' and concludes this section with a contribution to the search shared by all contributors for a path to peace.

Israel/Palestine is physically a very small part of the land mass that is the Mediterranean and the Middle East and yet has a central place in the politics and religious significance of the area. The territory is haunted by the tragedy of the lives of the six million Jews which were lost as part of Hitler's 'final solution'. It is important, contextually at least, not to forget that in that same period of history that encompassed two world wars, the lives of an estimated 90 million civilians and military personnel were lost in conflict. 2015 is also the 100th anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide in Turkey where over 1.5 million people were massacred. We have much to recall, lest we forget.

Leonard Harrow introduces the second section of the *Yearbook 2015* as Leonard steps back and summarises the history of the Christian communities in the Middle East. We explore the origin of

the Armenians and their adoption of Christianity as a people and as a nation. We catch a glimpse of the Christian peoples of the mandated territories of Iraq and Syria. The British and French stewardship of these mandated territories at the end of the First World War was as shabby a record as that of the British mandate of Palestine. The story of the Christian Churches in these regions is often one of 'internal squabbling and questionable governance and customs'. This fact alongside the centuries of *dhimmi* status assigned under Muslim rule left these communities weak, fractious and vulnerable. It was not just Armenians who suffered in the brutal Turkish massacres at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Christian communities of the Assyrians and the Chaldeans also suffered at the hands of the Turks, Kurds and Yazidis. The political upheaval caused by the ambitions of European powers at the end of the First World War has it legacy in the present day turmoil within the region.

The question arises again, how can we restore peace between Christians communities, other minority groups and dominant Islamic authority in the region that has had such a history for significant periods of time in most of the Muslim communities in the Middle East. What do we share in terms of theology and understanding of jurisprudence that might re-establish greater respect for each other, a greater tolerance of each other and increased safety and prosperity for all.

Vrej Nerses Nersessian writes specifically about the history of the Armenian Christian community leading up to and including the massacres of Armenians dating from 1895 in Turkey. Nerses reflects upon the Armenian nation, the dispersal of its peoples and the various exigencies that befell this Christian community as it fought for survival in a land dominated by Islam. He considers the attempted alliances with Russia against its neighbours and the political struggles with Russia that followed but in particular he recounts the impact of the Armenian Genocide in 2015 on the Church community, on its monasteries, its churches, its schools and all its people as they were swept from Turkish soil.

Harry Hagopian examines the story of the Armenian Genocide itself and it brutality and crippling banality recognising that it continued through to 1922 although its major political thrust was in 1915. Harry considers the reasons for the Republic of Turkey having such difficulty in acknowledging the massacre of 1915 as an act of genocide when

much of the rest of the world has finally come to this conclusion. A formal agreement to normalise Armenian Turkish relations was agreed in Switzerland as late as 2009 but was not ratified by the Turkish government. Is this moral cowardice, political exigency or historical obfuscation? Harry looks forward to a time when both Turks and Armenians are together able to place this act of genocide as a fact of history and, in solidarity with all victims of genocide everywhere, determine to play their part so that it shall never happen again.

Ian Latham, who died in January, 2007, made it his lifetime vocation to understand the relationships between Christianity and Islam. In his paper 'Christian encounters with Islam in History and Modern Times: Some theological reflections', Ian considers the different understandings of revelation and inspiration in our experience of God and how and why that impacts on the possibilities of dialogue. Ian reminds us that working together and building trust is a necessary first step. We are reminded of the article in the *2013 Yearbook* by Hugh Boulter on 'Dialogue. What is the Point of It' and it might be worth returning to it after reading Ian's article.

Peter Colwell then brings us up right to date again with the contributions of two scholars, the Muslim scholar, Sayyid Qutb and the Archbishop of Canterbury emeritus, Rowan Williams. Peter Colwell looks at the very different approaches of these two writers to questions of accommodating secularism and religious pluralism in society today which reflects two influential voices in their respective faith communities. With these two very different perspectives, Peter searches for commonalities and again we are presented with a possible approach to such a necessary accommodation if we are to live at peace with our neighbours in faith and the door is nudged open again for dialogue.

This edition considers something of the history of conflict in the Middle East and has reflected on the interplay of politics, social history and religion. It is hoped that is has made its contribution to the continued search for signposts towards peace and reconciliation.

The Editors
November 2015

CONTRIBUTORS

Naim Ateek was born in the Palestinian village of Beisan in 1937. He is a Palestinian priest in the Anglican Church and founder of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem. He has been an active leader in the shaping of the Palestinian liberation theology. He was the first to articulate a Palestinian theology of liberation in his book, *Justice, and only Justice, a Palestinian Theology of Liberation*, published in 1989The book laid the foundation of a theology that addresses the conflict over Palestine and explores the political as well as the religious, biblical, and theological dimensions. A former Canon of St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, he writes and lectures widely. His latest book, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, was published in 2008.

Peter Colwell is an ordained minister of the United Reformed Church, in which he has served local congregations in inner London, and also, for 5 years as Deputy Director of the London Inter Faith Centre. He is currently the Deputy General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, with responsibility for inter-religious and Faith and Order matters. He is also undertaking research at Heythrop College, London into aspects of a Theology of the Land in Israel and Palestine.

Mary Grey, emeritus Professor of the University of Wales, Lampeter, and Visiting Professor at St Mary's University, Twickenham until 2013, is a patron of Friends of Sabeel UK, Chair of Trustees of Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust, and a core member of the Balfour Project (www.balfourproject.org). Her most recent books include a trilogy,

linking the Gospel story with political realities in Israel/Palestine, namely, *The Advent of Peace:a Gospel Journey to Christmas*, SPCK, 2010; *The Resurrection of Peace: a Gospel Journey to Easter and Beyond*, SPCK, 2012, and *The Spirit of Peace: Pentecost and Affliction in the Middle East*, Sacristy Press, 2015. With Rabbi Dan Cohn Sherbok she has published *Pursuing the Dream: Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, Darton, Longman and Todd, 2015, and *Debating Israel/Palestine*, Impress books, 2014. Her earlier work focused on feminist liberation theology and ecology when she held a Chair in the Catholic University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Harry Hagopian is a qualified lawyer with a Doctorate in Public International Law and an LL.M in Alternative Dispute (Conflict) Resolution. He is also Middle East Consultant for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales. Formerly CEO of Campaign for Recognition of the Armenian Genocide (CRAG), he helped secure recognition by Edinburgh City Council. A public speaker and writer, his academic works are published internationally and his articles on Middle Eastern and Armenian issues are posted on numerous websites. You can read him on www.epektasis.net.

Leonard Harrow studied Perisan and Arabic at Edinburgh University and London SOAS. Earlier published material includes work on Islamic architecture and the carpet knotting tradition of Iran and Turkey. Articles include 'The Tomb Complex of Abu Sa'id Fadlallah b. Abi'l-Khair at Mihna, *Iran* XLIII, 2005; 'Historical Aspects of Catholic-Shi'a Dialogue in Iran' in *A Catholic-Shi'a Engagement*, A O'Mahony, W Peterburs and M A Shomali (eds), London, 2011; 'Notes on Catholic-Shi'a Relations during the Safavid Period', *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, 63 (1-2); and 'Jerome Xavier and two Persian gospels (mss. Cod. 7964 and cod. 7965) in the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal at Lisbon', in Nicolas Balutet, Paloma Otaola and Delphine Tempère (eds), *Contrabandista entre mundos fronterizos, Hommage au Professeur Hugues Didier*, Paris, 2010.

Alwyn Knight is a retired minister of the United Reformed Church and a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). He writes from his experience of living and working in the West Bank city of Hebron,

initially as a member of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (A programme of the World Council of Churches), then with Christian Peacemaker Teams - working in both Hebron and in the Palestinian village of At Tuwani in the South Hebron hills.

Ian Latham, Ian Latham Little Brothers of Jesus (LBJ), went to study in 1959 at Saint-Maximin in south-west France where he became acquainted with the circle of Louis Massignon including Fr Louis Gardet, and lived for many years in Asia and the Middle East. Brother Ian, through his familiarity of the life and milieu of Charles de Foucauld who inspired the founding of the Little Brothers of Jesus, was drawn into an awareness of Islam and the importance of the Christian encounter with Muslims. He wrote on this in his 'Charles de Foucauld (1898-1916): Silent witness for Jesus in the face of Islam', in *Catholics in Interreligious Dialogue: Studies in Monasticism, Theology and Spirituality,* Leominister, Gracewing, 2006. Br Ian was a highly gifted man he went with a scholarship to Rugby School and to Balliol College, University of Oxford. During his national service he served for some time in east Africa. On his return he went to study of ordination in the Church of England at Kelham; however, after for four years he decided to became a Catholic. Conversion was the theme of his wonderful essay 'The Conversion of Louis Massignon in Mesopotamia in 1908', *Aram: Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies,* Vol. 20 (2008), pp. 245-267. Simple manual work was very much part of Br Ian's life as a religious—he worked as part of the cleaning team at Imperial College, University of London. Br Ian was asked by his community to be ordained as a priest so he could celebrate Mass for them. As Fr Thierry Jacques noted at Br Ian's funeral: 'The ordination took place with relative discretion. On a weekday, after a day at work, Ian was consecrated by the area bishop in the parish of Brixton. The following day he went back to cleaning the toilets at Imperial College.' Br Ian had a gifted intellect and knowledge given space by a series of invitations from the Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Relations at Heythrop College, the University of London, to reflect upon the fraternity's engagement with the world in the context of Catholic spirituality and theology. The lecture published here are an expression of this engagement. Always a man of prayer he wrote on this for the Shi'a Muslim participants in the Catholic-Shi'ite dialogues which took place between 2001-2008:

'Christian Prayer' in *Catholics and Shi'a in Dialogue: Studies in Theology and Spirituality*, London, Melisende, 2004. Brother Ian was living in a community of followers of Charles de Foucauld London before he died in January 2007.

Dr Duncan Macpherson taught Theology from 1967 to 2000 at St Mary's University College (now St Mary's University) Twickenham where he is now visiting Senior Research Fellow. His publications include *Pilgrim Preacher: Palestine, Pilgrimage and Preaching* (London: Melisende 2004 and 2008) and *The Splendour of the Preachers: New Approaches to Liturgical Preaching* (London: Saint Paul's Publishing, 2011). He is honorary president and a founder members of Living Stones. As literary executor to his late friend and colleague Father Michael Prior he has edited and provided an introduction to *A Living Stone: Michael Prior CM* (London, 2006) and *Remembering Michael Prior: Ten Years On* (London, 2014) both published by Living Stones**.** He is a Permanent Deacon in the Roman Catholic Church.

Michael Marten is at present a Lecturer in Postcolonial Studies with Religion at the University of Stirling. He has published widely on European involvement in the Middle East and in particular the role of missionaries in the early stages of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; in 2015 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in recognition of his work in this area. He has a particular interest in questions of gender, transnationalism and postcolonial interpretation, and is currently working on a book that links these themes.

The Revd Dr Nerses (Vrej) Nersessian was born in Tehran in 1948. He was educated at the Armenian College in Calcutta, the Gevorgian Theological Academy in Holy Etchmiadzin (Armenia),and King's College, University of London. He has a degree in theology and a doctorate in Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies. After graduation in 1975 he joined the British Library as curator responsible for the manuscripts and printed books of the Christian Middle East section, a post which he held until his retirement in August 2011. Among his British Library publications are: *Catalogue of Early Armenian Printed Books. A history of Armenian Printing (1512-1850)* (1980), *Armenian Illuminated Gospel Books* (1987), *Treasures from the Ark, 1700 years of*

Armenian Christian Art, a catalogue of the British Library exhibition marking the 1,700th anniversary of the conversion of Armenia to Christianity, *The Bible in the Armenian Tradition* (2001) and most recently *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Library acquired since the year 1913 and of collections in other libraries in the United Kingdom* (2012), described as 'a fitting culmination to the long and distinguished career'. He is the author of the articles on the Armenian Church tradition in *Jesus in History, Thought, and Culture. An Encyclopedia*, *In the Beginning. Bibles before the year 1000*, *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, *Sacred Books of the Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*, *Byzantium 330-1453*, *The Orthodox Christian World*. He was ordained a priest in 1983, elevated to archpriest in 1991 by Vazgen I Catholicos of All Armenians of Blessed Memory, and in October of this year he was awarded the distinguished medal of Saint Nerses Shnorhali by His Holiness Garegin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, for his distinguished career in the British Library and devoted services to the Armenian Church.

Ilan Pappé is Professor of History at the University of Exeter, and Director of the University's European Centre for Palestine Studies. Professor Pappé obtained his BA degree from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1979 and the D. Phil from the University of Oxford in 1984. He founded and directed the Academic Institute for Peace in Givat Haviva, Israel between 1992 to 2000 and was the Chair of the Emil Tuma Institute for Palestine Studies in Haifa between 2000 and 2006. Professor Pappé was a senior lecturer in the department of Middle Eastern History and the Department of Political Science in Haifa University, Israel between 1984 and 2006. He was appointed as chair in the department of History in the Cornwall Campus, 2007-2009 and became a fellow of the IAIS in 2010. His research focuses on the modern Middle East and in particular the history of Israel and Palestine. He has also written on multiculturalism, critical discourse analysis and on power and knowledge in general.

RECLAIMING JUDAISM FROM ZIONISM

Ilan Pappé

In Memory of Michael Prior

When the Zionist movement appeared in Eastern Europe in the 1880s, it found it very difficult to persuade the leading rabbis and secular Jewish thinkers of the day to support it. Many traditional rabbis in fact forbade their followers to have anything to do with Zionist activists. They viewed Zionism as meddling with God's will that the Jews should remain in exile until the coming of the Messiah.

The leading rabbis saw the political history in the Bible and the idea of Jewish sovereignty on the land of Israel as very marginal topics and were much more concerned, as indeed Judaism as a religion was, with the holy tracts that focused on the relationship between the believers themselves and in particular their relations with God.

Secular liberal or socialist Jews also found the idea of Jewish nationalism unattractive. Liberal Jews hoped that a far more liberal world would solve the problems of persecution and anti-Semitism, while avowed socialists and communists wished peoples of all religions, not just the Jews, to be liberated from oppression.

Even the idea of a particular Jewish socialist movement, such as the Bund, was a bizarre one in their eyes. 'Zionists who were afraid of seasickness' is how the Russian Marxist, Georgi Plekhanov, called the Bundists when he doubted the credibility of the notion of an international Jewish socialist movement when the Bund wanted to join the international communist movement.

Jews who subscribed to more pragmatic liberal ideas regarded the prophet of the movement, Theodor Herzl, as a charlatan whose ideas were far removed from reality. Leaders of Jewish communities took him more seriously but feared his ideology. They were disturbed by

his call for Jewish sovereignty in a foreign land with an equal status to other sovereign states in the world. For the more established sections of central and Western European Jewry, Zionism was a provocative vision that called into question the loyalty of English, German and French Jews. Ever since the Napoleonic Code had been accepted in France, the latter made its influence felt in other countries. Jews felt themselves more and more assimilated into, and confident within, vast areas in Europe. The horrific fate of these communities and their leaders half a century later explains the magnetic force that the arguments of people such as Herzl exerted on Zionist thinking, and particular on Israelis, after the Second World War. Herzl came to be seen as a prophet of truth, unheeded by a blind assimilation, a saviour who had been rejected.

A less Zionist interpretation of this event does not focus only on the millions of Jews who were massacred in Europe but also recollects the brutal death of over 60 million people in the Second World War—2.5 percent of the world population. Not only Jews were unable to escape this horror, everyone who lived in Europe was a victim including 30 million Russians. The humane answer to that past rampant and fanatic nationalism of the Germans was a far less nationalist, anti-colonialist and receptive world.

But of course at the time when Zionism appeared in Palestine in the late nineteenth century, this debate was not yet acute. What mattered was how did Judaism relate to the settler colonialist project of Zionism? Jews who fell under the spell of Zionism gradually convinced themselves and others that there were no moral dilemmas involved and began to brand Judaism as an ideology of romantic nationalism akin to that developed a bit earlier in Italy, Germany and France.

From this perspective, Zionism followed suit of those Christian Zionists, which were so brilliantly and severely criticised by Michael Prior, in appropriating the Jewish sacred texts as a colonialist blueprint. The secular Jews who founded the Zionist movement wanted paradoxically both to secularize Jewish life and to use the Bible as a justification for colonizing Palestine; in other words, they did not believe in God but He nonetheless promised them the land.

This precarious logic was recognized even by the founder of the Zionist movement himself, Theodor Herzl, who therefore opted for Uganda, rather than Palestine, as the promised land of Zion. It was the pressure of Protestant scholars and politicians of the

Bible, especially in Britain, who kept the gravitation of the Zionist movement towards Palestine.

For those who can be called Christian Zionists as well as biblical scholars the project of re-orientating Zionism to Palestine carried with it more than one dividend. It offered to get rid of the Jews of Europe in general, and those intending to immigrate to Britain in particular by sending them to Palestine. The immigration of the Jews to the Holy Land, and even their settling there was imagined as 'The Return of the Jews' and thus a chapter in the divine scheme that would precipitate the second coming of the Messiah. Other chapters may have been less appealing to the Zionist movement but did not seem to bother its leaders at the time, such as the subsequent conversion of the 'returning' Jews to Christianity or their roasting in hell should they refuse.

From that moment onwards, the Bible became both the justification for, and the map of, the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Hard core Zionists knew it would not be enough: colonizing the inhabited Palestine would require a systematic policy of ethnic cleansing. But portraying the dispossession of Palestine as the fulfilment of a divine Christian scheme was priceless for galvanizing global Christian support behind Zionism.

Traditionally, the Bible was never taught as a singular text that carried any political or even national connotation in the various Jewish educational systems in either Europe or in the Arab world. What Zionism derogatorily called 'Exile'—the fact that the vast majority of Jews lived, not in Palestine but communities around the world—was considered by most religious Jews as an imperative existence, and the basis for Jewish identity in modern times.

In the conventional and Orthodox pre-Zionist Jewish view: the faithful were not asked to do all they could to end the 'Exile'—this particular condition could have only been transformed by the will of God and could not be hastened or tampered with by acts such as the one perpetrated by the Zionist movement.

One of the greatest successes of the secular Zionist movement was establishing a sister religious Zionist movement that found rabbis willing to legitimize this act of tampering by claiming that the very act itself was proof that God's will has been done.

These rabbis accepted the secular Zionist idea of turning the Bible into a book that stands by itself and conceded that a superficial

knowledge of it became a core of one's Jewishness even if all the other crucial religious imperatives were ignored.

These were the same rabbis who after the June 1967 War used the Bible as both the justification and roadmap for the Judaization and de-Arabization of the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem. (That is, the Rabbis Kook, father and son.)

The reinvention of Judaism as a romantic nationalist movement led the Zionist organization, during the formative period in the emergence of the Jewish Community in Mandatory Palestine, into associations and connections with anti-Semitic ideologies and groups for two reasons. One was that both sides were united in their wish to transfer Jews from Europe to Palestine and secondly, there was in some Zionist factions, and among Zionist leaders, admiration for romantic, and even fascist, national movements that developed in Europe between the two World Wars.

It began with an early admiration in some Zionist circles of Fascism and Nazism; to the point that a youth movement emulated Mussolini's black shirts movement. It continued with an attempt to establish a strategic alliance with Nazi Germany against the British rule in Palestine and ended with the infamous articulation by Ben-Gurion on the priorities of the Zionist movement. When asked in 1938 to support a British government initiative to save the Jewish children of Germany by not demanding their despatch to Palestine but consenting to their safe resettlement in Britain, the Zionist leader stated very clearly that if he had to make choice between saving only half of these children by bringing them to Palestine or saving all of them by settling them in Britain, he would prefer the former option.

When the full horror of the Holocaust was revealed, the Zionist movement detached itself from Nazism and regarded it as the archenemy of the Jewish people. But it did not end there—in the most un-Jewish manner possible it transferred this animosity to the victims of its colonisation in Palestine. The Palestinians were nazified in the Zionist images and perceptions, in particular in 1948, when the movement ethnically cleansed the land of the Palestinians and in the process then, and to this very day, committed war crimes and atrocities that were perpetrated by the worst enemies of the Jewish people throughout history.

The constant need to oppress the Palestinians and the vision of maintaining Palestine as an ethnic Jewish State with as few Palestinians in it as possible, equated Judaism in the eyes of many people in the world with these criminal policies. Only those who did not succumb to Zionism and those still planted deeply in the ultra orthodox religiosity bravely demanded to brand Israel as a non-Jewish State. But theirs were the voices in the wilderness.

The inevitable fusion of Zionist interpretation of Judaism and the lack of clear Jewish alternatives and opposition was fully exposed in the aftermath of the 1967 war. In the distorted version of Zionism was now clearly a romantic nationalist movement that has returned to the heart of its ancient homeland, and act ordained by God—even if you still did not believe in him—and one, which would ensure that the nation would now thrive and prosper.

So at that moment in time, the two flanks of the Zionist movement—the one that did not believe in God and the one that impatiently decided to do His work—have merged into a lethal mixture of religious fanaticism with extreme nationalism. This alliance formed in the Israeli crucible is mirrored among Israel's Jewish supporters around the world.

Few decades later it turned out that in order to celebrate this merger Israel had to become a supremacist ethnic state despite branding itself as the only democracy in the Middle East. The romantic nationalist vision of Zionism required the Palestinians to disappear from Palestine, or at least not to be counted as members of the nation state. It meant that the occupied territories had to be maintained as a huge prison while the Palestinians in Israel had to be kept under an Apartheid regime. The price the Palestinians paid was obvious and high. The price the more liberal and secular Jews paid was the increasing confidence of messianic Jewish circles in Zionism that the time has come not only to complete the Zionisation of Palestine but also to impose their own interpretation of Jewish sovereignty on the secular Jews. Judaism never dealt theologically with the running of a state, but historically there were periods where Jews formed a political community. One such particular period, around the Roman times, was taken as an example for imposing a distorted version of how life was lived then as a template for the future. It is a cruel vision of a theocracy that eliminates anyone who is not 'Jewish' according to a very narrow definition of the term.

Secular Jews are still struggling against it and have created a kind of division of labour—allowing this version to spread in Jerusalem and the settlements while leaving Tel-Aviv as a secure haven, so far.

The only reason this crack has not imploded and destroyed the whole Zionist project from within was the issue of security. The nation state became an army with a state that constantly needed unity to fight its enemies. This is why peace in the eyes of Zionism is a non-Jewish concept.

And yet this development has not completely eclipsed the very same Jewish groups that rejected Zionism when it first appeared in the late nineteenth century: those who are called in Israel the Ultra-Orthodox Jews—abhorred and detested in particular by liberal Zionists—and purely secular Jews who feel alien in the kind of 'Jewish State' Israel has become.

A small number of the former—for example Neturei Karta—even profess allegiance to the Palestine Liberation Organization, while the vast majority of the Ultra-Orthodox express their anti-Zionism without necessarily offering support for Palestinian rights.

Meanwhile, some of the secular Jews try to relive the dreams of their European and Arab grandparents in the pre-Zionist era: that group of people made their way as individuals, and not as a collective, in the various societies they found themselves in; more often than not injecting cosmopolitan, pluralist and multicultural ideas if they were gifted enough to write or teach about them.

This new, and I should say inevitable, religious-nationalist mixture that now informs the Jewish society in Israel has also caused a large and significant number of young American Jews, and Jews elsewhere in the world, to distance themselves from Israel. This trend has become so significant that it seems that Israeli policy today relies more on Christian Zionists than on loyal Jews.

It is possible, and indeed necessary, to reaffirm the pluralist non-Zionist ways of professing one's relationship with Judaism; in fact this is the only road open to us if we wish to seek an equitable and just solution in Palestine. Whether Jews want to live there as Orthodox Jews—something that was always tolerated and respected in the Arab and Muslim worlds—or build together with like-minded Palestinians, locals and refugees, a more secular society, their presence in today's Palestine is not by itself an obstacle to justice or peace.

Whatever your ethnicity is, you can contribute to the making of a society based on continued dialogue between religion and secularism as well as between the third generation of settlers and the native population in a decolonizing state.

Like all the other societies of the Arab world this one too would strive to find the bridge between past heritage and future visions. Its dilemmas will be the same as those which are now informing everyone who lives in the Arab world, in the heart of which lies the land of Palestine.

The society in Palestine and present-day Israel cannot deal with these issues in isolation from the rest of the Arab world, and neither can any other Arab nation-state created by the colonialist agreements forged in the wake of the First World War.

For the Jews in today's Israel to be part of a new, just and peaceful Palestine, there is an imperative to reconnect to the Jewish heritage before it was corrupted and distorted by Zionism. The fact that this distorted version is presented in some circles in the West as the face of Judaism itself is yet another rotten fruit of the wish of some of the victims of nationalist criminality—as the Jews were in central and Eastern Europe—to become such criminals themselves.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are what believers choose them to be. In pre-Zionist Palestine, the choice was for living together in the same towns and villages in one complete existence. At the turn of the twentieth century, it was even moving faster towards a more relaxed way of living. But alas, that was the path not taken.

We should not lose hope that this is still possible in the future. We need to reclaim Judaism and extract it from the hands of the 'Jewish State' as a first step towards building a joint place for those who lived and want to live there in the future.

MICHAEL PRIOR, THE PROFESSIONAL AND THE AMATEUR: *THE BIBLE AND COLONIALISM.* A MORAL CRITIQUE

Michael Marten

Introduction[1]

Michael Prior was the kind of person you could know quite well before you met him.

My first serious introduction to Michael Prior's thought came through reading his 1997 book *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique*, which is why I was delighted when Anthony—who I am sure did not know this—asked if I would present something at the 2014 Memorial Conference on precisely this text. I had bought and read it the year it came out, and then later also read *Zionism and the State of Israel*, which can be seen as a continuation of the themes in *The Bible and Colonialism*.[2] This invitation has given me the opportunity to re-read Michael's book and reflect upon it afresh, almost 20 years after it first appeared. It was reading his work, and perhaps particularly reading this book, that leads me to say he could be known without meeting him, as my first encounter with Michael demonstrates.

In about 2003 I attended a talk in Somerset House in London on something related to Christians in the Middle East. The talk itself was not particularly memorable: I felt that a number of unsubstantiated and ill-informed statements were made by the speaker, and I could not let this go by without challenge, so when the time came for questions, I duly asked what I presumably thought was a probing question. The speaker gave a lengthy but wholly inadequate response, and the next

1 I am grateful to Anthony O'Mahony and Duncan Macpherson of the Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust for the invitation to speak on this topic at the 2014 Michael Prior memorial conference. The text here is only slightly changed from the spoken version that was used at the conference.

2 Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism. A Moral Critique*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1997.

question came from a rather large, white-haired man sitting a little bit along the row from me, who picked up on my question and developed it. Despite a lengthy response, the speaker also failed to answer *his* question, and after that the chair wrapped things up pretty quickly. On the way out, the other questioner waited for me and said, 'I liked your question—he *really* needed to be asked that!' So I thanked him politely, and said, 'Well, I liked your question too—and I assume from the way you asked it, that you've read Michael Prior's work too.' He smiled and said that yes, he was, as it happens, 'acquainted with Prior's work.' We chatted for a little while, and as we were about to go our separate ways, I finally introduced myself properly: 'I'm Michael Marten, and I'm just in the process of finishing my PhD, which is all about early Scottish missions to Palestine.' He grinned mischievously, and replied: 'I'd guessed that already: I'm delighted to finally meet you, Michael—we've corresponded by email in the past: my name is also Michael, Michael Prior.'

Of course, I felt a bit of a fool, but he was a gracious individual and was highly amused by the whole episode, and we carried on talking for quite a long time after that. He was flattered that I had recognised his work and could point to it in the way he had framed his question—this is what I meant when I said I felt I *knew* him, even though we had never met before. I met him again a couple of times after that, although I cannot claim to have known him particularly well.[3]

So: *how* did I know him? I want to show that here by trying to give a sense of what was important to me about his 1997 book, *The Bible and Colonialism*, and whilst Anthony O'Mahony explicitly asked for this to be in relation to the Holy Land, I am going to cheerfully ignore that and point to the wider context that Michael himself discussed in the book, because I think that is an important part of what the book itself is about and how we can understand it. Whilst, of course, Michael is most well-known for his engagement in relation to the Holy Land—we might call this his professional interest—his engagement here had a wider context: he clearly saw the conflict in Palestine as part of a global colonial struggle, and recognised that it could be impacted upon using similar tools to those deployed elsewhere—this, if you like, was his amateur interest. In using the terms 'professional' and 'amateur', I am

3 It was a privilege, therefore, to hear much more about him at the 2014 conference from friends and colleagues who knew him well.

picking up on reflections by Edward Said in his 1993 Reith Lectures, published the following year as *Representations of the Intellectual*.[4] The reason for doing so lies in the subtitle of *The Bible and Colonialism*, which I think is as important as the main title: *A Moral Critique*. This is, of course, similar to his later book focussing just on Zionism, subtitled *A Moral Inquiry*.[5] As will become apparent, for Michael, these were not just questions of academic scholarship, but questions of morality and integrity, of right and wrong, and that is where Said's arguments will become important.

I will begin with an overview of *The Bible and Colonialism*, in order to introduce it to readers unfamiliar with the text.

The Bible and Colonialism—an overview

The book begins with an examination of the Biblical traditions on land, with a strong focus on Old Testament/Hebrew Bible texts,[6] before moving on in Part II to an examination of the use of theology and the Bible in Latin America, South Africa and Palestine, a chapter on the fabrication of colonial myths (with a particular focus on Zionism), and in Part III developing attempts at reinterpreting and rehabilitating the Bible.

Michael's purpose was to discover, for himself and for others, how the Bible could inform a theology that could be applied to the contemporary context and aid in decision-making. In his eyes, a purpose in reading the Bible had to be found in informing moral judgements. He wrote: 'Responsibility for moral judgement and action rests with the individual and cannot be exercised vicariously. Moral responsibility may not be shifted even to others more gifted, learned and morally upright than oneself.'[7] He goes on to say,

4 Edward W Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, Vintage Books, London, 1994. The BBC has made the recordings of Said's lectures freely available online. Listening to them is a delight: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00gmx4c/episodes/guide (last accessed 4.5.15).

5 Michael Prior, *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry*, Routledge, London, 1999.

6 Prior tends to use the term Old Testament rather than Hebrew Bible (my preferred nomenclature). To avoid unnecessary confusion, I will adopt his usage here.

7 Prior, 1997, p. 14.

> I contend that theology should concern itself with the real conditions of people's lives, and not satisfy itself with comfortable survival in an academic or ecclesial ghetto … I understand theology to be a discourse which promotes a moral ideal and a better future for all people, oppressed and oppressors alike … [Whilst this study] might be regarded as an instructive academic contribution by any competent scholar, to assume responsibility for doing so is for me the order of a moral imperative.[8]

The first part of the book proceeds to offer a reading of the Biblical texts concerning land at 'face value', whilst noting right away that there 'is no single, coherent view of "the land" in the Bible … '[9] necessitating some form of interpretative framework for the reader. Noting that the taking of land as outlined in the Exodus story had been used on countless occasions by liberation theologians from every region of the world, he also noted that the devastation of existing communities that the first books of the Bible discuss was frequently ignored: this he calls reading 'with the eyes of the "Canaanites", that is, of any of several different cultures which have been victims of a colonialism fired by religious imperialism'.[10] Pointing to the work of Naim Ateek and others, he alerts readers to the inherent problems with a face value reading of the Biblical narrative:

> Many theologians sensitive to issues of human rights, especially those whose traditions depend heavily on the Bible, face a dilemma. While they revere the sacred text, they see how it has been used as an instrument of oppression. They seek refuge in the view that it is the misuse of the Bible rather than the text of the Bible which is the problem … This 'solution' evades the problem … It will be seen that several traditions within the Bible lend themselves to oppressive interpretations and applications precisely because of their inherently oppressive nature.[11]

8 Prior, 1997, p. 14.
9 Prior, 1997, p. 17.
10 Prior, 1997, p. 39.
11 Prior, 1997, p. 45-6.

And that is what he spends the remainder of the book uncovering. Part II, with the historical examples, develops this.

His first example, the European conquest of Latin America, highlights the role of theology (coupled with racism) in the subjugation of the indigenous peoples, whilst highlighting the role of dissenters such as Bartholomé de Las Casas (1474-1566) who famously described the horrors visited upon the local populations,[12] culminating in what he described as 'the greatest genocide in human history, and the end of the indigenous world order.'[13] He returns to the theme noted above: the difference between an Israelite and a Canaanite reading of the Bible, and outlines attempts to, for example, develop processes of conscientisation from Paulo Freire, prioritising experience as God's first book, and the Bible as the second, that then helps us to read the first properly. The priority here is to read the Bible as a liberatory text, including those sections that were originally used as oppressive tools by the Europeans—even though the Bible is an ambivalent text in this regard, more inclined to the oppressor than the oppressed.[14]

His second example picks up on apartheid South Africa. Here, Biblical interpretations were primarily used to justify and explain past history, and certain texts such as Deuteronomy were very important in the key period from 1930-1960.[15] The Dutch Reformed Church played a key role in propagating and justifying apartheid as an ideological movement[16] based on ideas of Christian Nationalism, with the *Volk*—the nation—at the core of this belief:[17] God supposedly acted in relation to *nations*, and this was developed into an exclusionary ideology of racial superiority. Opposition took various forms, including the 1985 Kairos Document, which, learning from Latin America, took the experience of the disadvantaged population as its starting point. It might therefore seem that this example would appeal to Michael, but, as he points out, even the Kairos Document simply used texts it preferred, rather than addressing

> the divinely mandated conquest of the promised land and the treatment to be meted out to the Canaanites and

12 Prior, 1997, pp. 58ff.
13 Prior, 1997, p. 61.
14 Prior, 1967, pp. 69-70.
15 Prior, 1997, p. 71.
16 Prior, 1997, p. 76.
17 Prior, 1997, pp. 91ff.

> others … the biblical hermeneutic of *The Kairos Document* is a form of proof-texting, with an emphasis on those traditions which support the case of the Israelite poor. It does not rise to the challenge of reading the Scriptures with Canaanite eyes.[18]

Michael's third example is from his 'home turf' of Palestine, and is, unsurprisingly, the most extensively outlined example in the book. Much of this chapter was later developed and became the early section of *Zionism and the State of Israel*, though here his emphasis is slightly different because he is trying to examine ways in which 'the concept of fabrication of national myths of origin helps to understand the nature of the biblical text itself.'[19] As he points out, although Theodor Herzl was not overly interested in Jewish religion, he did make the connections to Palestine, and to the concepts of the *chosen people* and *return*,[20] emphasising these to his audiences and readers. Others were less reticent: Michael cites a number of Zionists in different periods who read the expulsion narratives in the Bible and saw them as a way of dealing with the local Palestinian population.[21] Noting different approaches in what he calls 'religious Zionists' (such as Ahad Ha'am), 'secular Zionists' (such as Theodor Herzl) and those who synthesised the two to produce a fusion of secularism and Orthodoxy (such as Rav Kook)[22] ultimately resulting in the creation of the 'Jewish state' in 1948, he highlights the later dominance of religious political parties in Israel, especially after 1967. The takeover of the land, and the harm inflicted on the indigenous Palestinian population, is given sacred purpose,[23] though such an ethnocentric dystopia is hardly a persuasive argument for the Palestinians to give up their land.

Michael concludes this section with a chapter pointing to four fabricated colonial myths that apply to a greater or lesser degree to the situations he has described:

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18 Prior, 1997, p. 103.
19 Prior, 1997, p. 106.
20 Prior, 1997, p. 108-9.
21 Prior, 1997, p. 151 cites Israel Zangwill: 'we must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the tribes in possession [of Palestine] as our forefathers did, or grapple with the problem of a large alien population …'
22 Prior, 1997, p. 155.
23 Prior, 1997, pp. 171-2.

1. the land was in a virgin state or irregularly inhabited;
2. the people to be conquered were inferior, and opposition from them could be resisted;
3. there was a mission to civilise or evangelise; and
4. unchallenged ideological motivations supported the entire enterprise.[24]

The chapter compares the contexts, with a particular focus on Palestine and the gradual drive to settler colonialism as manifested in Zionism, sanctioned by a particular reading of the Bible. This is what Part III, the most important section of the book, proceeds to analyse.

'Reinterpreting the Biblical Evidence' begins with a close analysis of the Abrahamic, Pentateuchal, and 'Israelite' conquest-settlement narratives, showing that these cannot in any meaningful way be described as historiographical, which in turn means that interpreting the 'promises' to Abraham and other key 'events' as anything more than ideological markers of identity construction becomes extremely problematic.[25] Without reference to external sources, the biblical texts *cannot* be read as anything other than Israelite texts that propagate a particular worldview—one not shared by the Canaanites, who are automatically excluded. Wherever the Bible has been used to support colonial enterprise, it has been from an Israelite perspective, and the Canaanites, the indigenous victims, have not been considered. These, then, are myths of origin texts, not history.

How then, can the Bible be rehabilitated?

This is Michael's key concern. A singular problem in this regard is that many scholars do not even recognise there to be a problem here, automatically excluding any moral critique of the Bible. Discussing Walter Brueggemann and W D Davies' work on land, he is scathing in his analysis (it is worth noting that Brueggemann later said he had changed his views as a result of Michael's work).[26] Their failure to see that they are not dealing with 'objective scholarship in search of an elusive past, but that one is enmeshed also in discussion about the legitimacy of developments in Palestine in our own time' is crucial.[27]

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24 Prior, 1997, p. 177.

25 Prior, 1997, pp. 248-9.

26 Duncan Macpherson, 'Introduction', in *Remembering Michael Prior Ten Years On. Selected Essays and Addresses* edited and introduced by Duncan Macpherson, The Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust/Melisende, London, 2014, pp. xiv-xxx, xxi.

27 Prior, 1997, p. 260. Here he refers to Keith Whitelam's *The Invention of Ancient Israel*.

Michael notes:

> At one point he [Brueggemann] affirms, 'What is asked is not courage to destroy enemies, but courage to keep Torah' (p. 60), avoiding the fact that in the biblical narrative 'keeping Torah' involves accepting also its xenophobic and destructive militarism … He evades the moral issue, however, by assuring us that that is how the [land of] promise comes.[28]

Land—or we might say, ownership of the land—is a moral problem, and the narratives and meta-narratives of the Bible need more serious unpicking, addressing issues of divine inspiration, conceptions of truth and so on. Liberation theologians, including, for example, Gustavo Gutiérrez, who selectively use the Exodus story as a paradigm for the liberation of the oppressed are naïve for ignoring the Canaanite side of the Exodus narratives.[29] The Bible does not, Michael argues, unequivocally demonstrate a concern for the poor and the weak, and so it is to the more nuanced reading of the Exodus offered by Naim Ateek that he turns, a reading that emphasises a God for whom justice is paramount and who does not wish ill upon the Israelis. He asks rhetorically,

> Should the victims of oppression, such as Amerindians, black South Africans and Palestinians, not find themselves more naturally on the side of the Canaanites and others than on that of the Chosen People, mandated to cleanse the land of its indigenes, a fate to which their own experience corresponds?[30]

The silencing of Palestinian history, Routledge, London/New York, 1996.

28 Prior, 1997, p. 254; the reference is to Walter Brueggemann's *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977.

29 Prior, 1997, p. 279-280.

30 Prior, 1997, p. 281-2. Ateek argues that a story such as that of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21) becomes more relevant than the Exodus narratives, without, of course, wanting the retribution visited upon Ahab and Jezebel to befall Israelis.

Having looked at the interpretative uses of the Bible in different Jewish and Christian contexts,[31] Michael moves on to finding a way to rehabilitate the Bible narratives. This can happen through the Old Testament, as he briefly points to with reference to Is 55: 2-13 and other sources, but his focus moves quickly to examples of reinterpretations of these texts through the New Testament, noting that

> the Christian Church reads the Old Testament in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ … A christological and messianic interpretation of the Old Testament allows these books to show forth their full meaning in the New Testament (*Dei Verbum*, pars. 15-16).[32]

Such a theological statement could, of course, be read in classical supersessionist terms, but I would argue that the context, coming directly after the reference to Isaiah and other interpretative approaches based upon Jewish tradition and Old Testament reading, precludes such a facile interpretation of Michael's aims.

In conclusion, Michael hopes that his work 'contributes to a rise of moral indignation at what has been perpetrated on indigenous people by colonizers, with the support of the biblical paradigm of alleged settler colonization at the behest of divinity.'[33] However, beyond being simply 'diagnostic' he hopes his 'moral-literary analysis'[34] will help because 'a scholar of the Bible must not [just] be satisfied with an unearthing of the past, but must enquire into its significance and place in contemporary society.'[35] Academics are not 'justified in maintaining an academic detachment from significant engagement in real, contemporary issues … [because there is] no circumstance in which such activity is not incumbent on a Christian exegete, *qua* Christian.'[36]

Two key themes emerge here that can be understood under the headings of contextual theology and Orientalism, and will help us better understand Michael's thinking and purpose in *The Bible and Colonialism*.

31 Prior, 1997, p. 260.
32 Prior, 1997, p. 284.
33 Prior, 1997, p. 295.
34 Prior, 1997, p. 294.
35 Prior, 1997, p. 295.
36 Prior, 1997, pp. 295-6.

Contextual theology and Orientalism

Karl Barth, probably *not* one of Michael's daily sources of theological inspiration, famously told young theologians 'to take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both, but interpret your newspaper from your Bible.' Michael, however, has gone quite a bit further than this in *The Bible and Colonialism*: not only has he sought to read the newspapers from his Bible, but he has sought also to read the Bible from his newspapers, doing exactly what contextual theology argues for. It is this external referentiality that makes his work significant: rather than being just another text about the Bible, as, rather disparagingly, he suggests the likes of Davies, Brueggemann and countless others have produced, he is doing something more, something that has a much greater significance. In doing so, despite his criticism of elements of Latin American liberation theologians noted above, he is carrying out a kind of liberation theology himself: relating experience and understanding to his interpretation of the Bible.

Robert Carroll argues that the Bible represents a problem for theology. Writing in a chapter about European Christian perceptions of Jews,[37] he argued similarly that the Bible needed external referentiality in order to properly understand it. Such an understanding has obvious consequences for a European theology—whether Catholic and Protestant—that for centuries has understood the Biblical texts to be its foundation stone, with a certain kind of literalism still persisting in contemporary theology, despite the advances of historical criticism in the nineteenth century. Carroll elaborates on the impossibility of using the Biblical texts for historical purposes due to their lack of 'referentiality *outside* themselves', in other words, there is no external point of verification of anything in the texts.[38] This means they serve purely mythical or ideological functions rather than historical ones—a similar argument to Michael's.

Victor Kiernan explained that Europe's image of other lands in the colonial era can be described as 'an amplifier, or a long shadow, making their own sensations more audible or visible to them … [with] room for all kinds of fantasy, credulity, deception and self-deception,

37 Robert P Carroll, *Wolf in the Sheepfold. The Bible as Problematic for Theology*, SCM Press, London, 1991, ²1997.

38 Carroll, 1991, 1997, p. 101 (Carroll's emphasis).

and the development of stock responses'.[39] The colonial discourses that Michael wrote about fit this pattern perfectly: identifying with the 'Israelite' narrative whilst ignoring the 'Canaanite' narrative created a fantasy of chosenness and divine accompaniment, whether that be in Latin America, South Africa, or Palestine. Certainly, self-definition and narration by indigenous Latin Americans, black South Africans, or Palestinians was not and is not seen as either necessary or desirable when the 'Israelite' perspective dominates.

What both Carroll and Kiernan are describing, is, of course, classical Saidian Orientalism: creating an image of a group for purposes related to domination and exploitation. Under such circumstances, knowledge can be seen as an instrument of power, indeed, in these contexts, knowledge *is* power. Said talks about 'second-hand abstractions'[40] of groups that might have wishes and desires, but do not have the power or authority to bring these to fruition—and here I find myself reminded of Michael's desire to also read the Bible from the perspective of the 'Canaanites'.[41] Said uses the language of conversion to describe how the 'Israelite' reading of the 'Canaanites' takes place—replacing 'Westerner' with 'Israelite' and the 'Oriental' with 'Canaanite' in this passage makes perfect sense:

> all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge. The problem is not that conversion takes place … To the Westerner, however, the Oriental was always *like* some aspect of the West … the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental.[42]

At no point, of course, can the Oriental, the 'Canaanite', have a view of their own that might be worth hearing or reacting to. The

39 Victor G Kiernan, *Imperialism and its contradictions*, edited and introduced by Harvey J Kaye, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 146.

40 Edward W Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin, London, 1978, 1995, p. 252.

41 Said, 1997, 1995, p. 251

42 Said, 1997, 1995, p. 67; (Said's emphasis)

Westerner, the 'Israelite', not only knows best, but as Michael shows, has the Bible and God on their side. Re-reading Michael's book now, I therefore find I am somewhat surprised that there is no explicit mention of Said's *Orientalism*, published almost two decades earlier. As Keith Whitelam argued when discussing the context for Biblical studies:

> Biblical studies has been part of, and in many ways an extension of, Orientalist discourse. At no point is the intended reader shown to be Palestinian or any other non-Western reader; they are European, American, and Israeli … Biblical studies as a discipline, has evolved a rhetoric of representation which has been passed down without examination, which has dispossessed Palestinians of a land and a past.[43]

Rehabilitating the Bible narratives, to use Michael's language, sounds remarkably close to Whitelam's aim of unpicking the Orientalist layers behind Biblical studies and the representations that these engender. Reading Whitelam in the context of *The Bible and Colonialism* reminds me also of Said's point about the struggle for 'the permission to narrate'—and I wonder if Michael (who includes Whitelam's book in his references) might not have found these kinds of analytical tools useful to further develop his 'Israelite' and 'Canaanite' motifs, which explicitly and implicitly demonstrate the importance of power relationships.

Edward Said—the 'professional' and the 'amateur' academic

I want to return to my opening: the importance for Michael of an individual's moral engagement in academic study, and his willingness to involve himself in contexts that he was not an expert in. These are, of course, closely linked: it was the fact that he emphasised the importance of morality in his scholarly writing that gave it a distinctive edge that many other writers on 'the land' lack (needless to say, this is a cause of considerable concern). That, I think, is what I recognised in him at the

43 Whitelam, 1996, p. 234-5.

talk in Somerset House. There are many people who knew Michael well who can describe his engagement as a priest, as a Catholic, and as a colleague, but what I want to point to here is his embodiment of the engaged academic, the intellectual, a topic that Edward Said discussed in his Reith Lectures.[44]

Said argued that amongst other things, professionalism induces specialisation. One very clear way in which this manifests itself in the contemporary context is in governmental assessment exercises. In the UK, for example, academics are required to write several pieces of work that can be entered into the RAE, or REF, or whatever Orwellian term the government of the day decides to use for its arbitrary quantification of academic 'output'—as if scholarly writing of an article or a book is much the same as a factory producing goods. These 'outputs' are assessed by other academics in 'the same field', the idea being that political scientists are best placed to peer review and assess the work of other political scientists, religion scholars can best do the same for other religion scholars, and so on. Of course, there is an inherent managerialist logic here, but one of the problems with this system is that it fosters increased and divisive specialisation,[45] and this, Said argues, leads to shutting out other disciplines; from the perspective of a literary scholar he says:

> Specialization means losing sight of the raw effort of constructing either art or knowledge; as a result you cannot view knowledge and art as choices and decisions, commitments and alignments, but only in terms of impersonal theories or methodologies. To be a specialist in literature too often means shutting out history or music, or politics.[46]

44 Said, 1994, p. 73-4.

45 The other significant problem I have with this form of assessment is that it takes away from the discussion that occurs in academic contexts: there is an expectation of disciplinary conformity. This is elegantly summarised by Christopher Beedham in a letter headlined 'A vote to leave the market' in the *Times Higher Education*, 3.7.2014, p. 30-31, available at http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/comment/letters/a-vote-to-leave-the-market/2014272.article (last accessed 4.5.15).

46 Said, 1994, p. 77.

The production of 'impersonal theories or methodologies' fits the stereotype of the academic in the wider public, but this is an enormous problem. What happens to the disciplines that have been shut out? Or, in the context that Michael found himself in, what happens when contemporary understandings are excluded from a discipline such as Biblical studies? The consequence is atomisation, and whilst this makes control by university administrators and management much easier, it tends to stifle scholars and deaden wide-ranging intellectual and public engagement. And it is precisely engagement—in the academy *and* the wider world—that Said argues for and that Michael pursued. Michael was a 'professional' in the context of the Holy Land—this is what he had spent many years of his life working on—but his engagement with land issues in Latin America and South Africa was as an 'amateur': in Said's language, he was engaging in 'an activity that is fueled by care and affection rather than by profit and selfish, narrow specialization'.[47]

However, the profound difficulties that might be involved do not obviate the necessity of such engagement, as we can see in Michael's example. Of course, if it is impossible to see how one's academic life might relate to the wider world, it will be very difficult to see how it could relate to other academics, and in turn, how other academics could relate to it. Michael's work did not fall into that trap: the great appeal of his academic work lies in substantial measure in the *breadth* of his interests, and not just in their *depth*. As a 'concerned individual' he saw that interpreting the Bible was not just about, for example, literary or linguistic analysis, but about personal morality and engagement with situations of oppression.[48] His willingness to engage across and beyond the boundaries of what many saw as his area of specialism—the Holy Land—is one of the aspects of this book that makes it so significant.[49]

47 Said, 1994, p. 82. Said is not suggesting that this is easy, far from it! A later book discusses further some of the immense difficulties involved: *Humanism and Democratic Criticism,* Columbia University Press, New York/Chichester, 2004 (see especially the fifth chapter). He is, of course, not the only one to deal with these issues; Pierre Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* (English translation: Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1988) stands out as another example of such thinking.

48 Prior, 1997, p. 14.

49 Duncan Macpherson notes that it was not Michael's original intention in writing *The Bible and Colonialism* to also write about South Africa and Latin America. However, the editors at Sheffield University Press urged him to do so; the book is undoubtedly richer for the inclusion of these examples: 2014, p. xxiii.

Whilst Michael's other work demonstrated in meticulous detail the problems inherent in narrow Biblical readings of the land in relation to the Holy Land, it is the *breadth* of *The Bible and Colonialism* that exemplified the universal applicability of what he was trying to argue: that profound moral engagement needs to characterise how we think about and work with the context we are in, whether this be Latin America, South Africa, Palestine, or by extension, anywhere at all where the Bible is used to justify and argue for colonial dominance, as has happened so often in the past and still happens today. It is notable that towards the end of his life, he was beginning to explore ways of developing this line of enquiry in relation to the colonisation of his home country of Ireland[50]—a further broadening of his academic horizons.

Engagement, as Said calls it, has multiple levels, and interdisciplinarity is a key aspect of this: Michael Prior's work on Latin America and South Africa as well as the—to him—more familiar territory of the Holy Land, is clear evidence of this. In Said's terms, he was an 'amateur' reaching out into these new (to him) areas, of study and human struggle, but it is precisely *this* that marks him out as the consummate professional academic (and, as his conclusion shows, engaged Christian): he was someone unafraid to explore something new, to learn from—and if necessary critique—the work of others, whether Biblical scholars such as R S Sugirtharajah,[51] or Latin American and Asian liberation theologians such as Leonardo Boff, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and Kwok Pui-lan, feminist scholars such as Julia Esquivel or Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, and many more. Wary as I am of role models,[52] in this regard, I think we can regard Michael as a role model: both as an academic, and, indeed, as a Christian.

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50 Macpherson, 2014, p. xxiii.

51 Sugirtharajah's edited volume *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, SPCK, London, 1991/1995 is cited in *The Bible and Colonialism*, and other works by him are used in later writings by Prior; see, for example his essay in the first issue of the journal he founded with Nur Masalha: 'Ethnic cleansing and the Bible: A Moral Critique', in *Holy Land Studies*, 2002, 1, p. 37-29.

52 I have written on the problems with role models elsewhere, see, for example, Michael Marten, '"The loneliest woman in Africa"—missionary biography as a form of Scottish Protestant sainthood', in *Saints and Cultural Trans/-mission*, eds. Michael Marten/Katja Neumann, Anthropos/Academia, Sankt Augustin, 2013, p. 61-81.

PERFIDIOUS ALBION: BRITAIN'S BROKEN PROMISES AND THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Mary Grey

Introduction

In Northumberland, near the historic site of the famous battle, it is impossible to forget the bloodshed of the Battle of Flodden in 1513,[1] not to mention centuries of border raids, preceded by Viking invasions and so on. In our own times, 2014, the centenary of the Great War is being marked in a variety of ways right across the globe. Many countries involved are remembering and honouring those millions who made the ultimate sacrifice during the 'war to end all wars'. Through plays, TV, films, documentaries and services of remembrance the British people are being reminded of the horrors of the trenches, the slaughter of a generation by artillery, machine gun and disease, as well as the ultimate victory of the Allies, and the moral ambiguities of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which in hindsight contributed directly to the rise of Hitler, the Holocaust, and the use of nuclear weapons by a civilised country. Many involved in the process of 'remembering' will have had families involved and numerous personal tragedies. In both world wars, the British emerged as victors. As nations and as individuals, there has been a clear preference to reflect more on our successes than our failures, yet acknowledgement of the latter is a source of wisdom, and should never be seen as a sign of weakness. In 2014—and in the years following up till 2018, there could be a unique opportunity for British people to take an honest look at both the positive and negative of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century imperial experience and its long-term impact on certain parts of the world.

1 This paper is adapted and developed from the Annual Peace lecture given in the URC Church Peace Centre at Crookham, in Northumberland in September 2014.

But there is another dimension to the Great War which is mostly overlooked. And this is a dimension which has had serious consequences on one part of the world, namely Israel/Palestine —a conflict festering up to our own times. This is the cluster of events around the Balfour Declaration (2 Nov 1917) and their consequences. The vast majority of British people are, like we in the Balfour Project were[2]—before we began our research—mostly ignorant as to our imperial history, and to much of the suffering and humiliation we caused during it. A former Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, in an interview in 2002 with *The New Statesman*, observed:

> A lot of the problems we are having to deal with now … are a consequence of our colonial past. … The Balfour Declaration and the contradictory assurances which were being given to Palestinians in private at the same time as they were being given to the Israelis … present an interesting history for us but not an entirely honourable one.

So, this paper first asks, what was this Balfour Declaration and why did it have such serious consequences? In the second part, it develops elements of a Christian Spirituality of Reconciliation that tries to respond to the gravity of the ongoing crisis.

The Balfour Declaration

To answer the first question we take a step backwards. In 1895, the question was: how to find a solution for a suffering people, namely the Jews, after two thousand years of anti-Semitism? Was the creation of a Jewish State the answer? There would be no easy solution: recognising the evil of anti-Semitism, the long suffering of the Jewish people, and responsibility of Christians for contributing to it through the centuries, what was the right course of action at the first Zionist Congress of 1895?

2 The Balfour Project reflects the efforts of a small group of people, working through a variety of educational means to stimulate awareness as to events in 1917. See www.balfourproject.org.

Many people might have been in favour of a Jewish homeland and even have taken the somewhat idealized stance of the novelist, George Eliot, who, in her last novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876), created a hero who recognizes his Jewish identity, and feels his vocation to sail to Israel 'to restore a political existence to my people'.

Earlier still, Lord Shaftesbury's support for the Jewish restoration was influential in the development of Christian Zionism which wanted the Jews to return to the Holy Land in preparation for the second coming of Christ. Even if his enthusiasm was permeated by Christian Zionist and political motives, Shaftesbury did represent a counter-current to anti-Semitism. But why did he and subsequent leaders ignore the Arabs already living in the land for centuries? This is the crucial question that returns again and again in the recent book *Debating Israel-Palestine*, by myself and Rabbi Dan Cohn Sherbok:[3] a solution for a suffering people at the expense of the people already living in the land, is the frequent accusation.

Was the solution to anti-Semitism to remove the victimised population to another country? This was not the preferred option in South Africa or in the United States, even at the height of the race riots of black Americans dating from 1919 to a climax in the 1960s. The assimilationist argument was also powerful—put forward by Jewish leaders like Edwin Montagu, the only Jewish member of the cabinet, when the crucial Balfour Declaration was passed.

So, what was the Balfour Declaration and what was motivation behind it? This is what the Balfour Declaration (2 Nov 1917) actually said:

British Foreign Secretary
Arthur James Balfour

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

3 Mary Grey and Dan Cohn Sherbok, *Debating Palestine-Israel*, Impress Books, Exeter, 2014.

Thus a homeland to the Jews was offered—in Palestine.[4] But, the second half of the sentence should be noted carefully, as this refers to the rights of the indigenous people, namely the Arab people who constituted 90 percent of the population at the time. This is the first aspect to which the title of this paper refers—*Perfidious Albion*. The rights of the existing population were never respected and in fact this has contributed to the festering of the conflict up till the present.

The motivation for the Balfour Declaration was complex: it includes the government's imperial thinking: for example the needs of empire included the securing of the route to India, which was still Britain's *jewel in the crown*: this meant guarding the Suez Canal. The War context was very serious. According to James Renton, Senior Lecturer at Edge Hill University and author of *The Zionist Masquerade: the Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance: 1914–1918* (2007), Prime Minister David Lloyd George supported the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine because 'it would help secure post-war British control of Palestine, which was strategically important as a buffer to Egypt and the Suez Canal.'[5] The failure on the Western Front—particularly the disaster in Gallipoli, the losses on the Somme and the trench warfare—gave rise to exploring a new theatre for the war: the East.

Factor in also, the situation of the Russians who were in the midst of their revolution. There was genuine sympathy for the plight of the Jews in the nineteenth century—especially because of the severe persecution in Russia: here the influence of Chaim Weizmann, a Russian Jew from the Pale, played a vital part. [6]

Several of the most prominent revolutionaries, including Leon Trotsky, were of Jewish descent. Could they be persuaded to keep

4 There had been previous attempts to found a homeland for the Jews, for example in Uganda and Cyprus.

5 James Renton, 'The Balfour Declaration: its origins and consequences', Jewish Quarterly, Spring 2008, Number 209, http://www.jewishquarterly.org/issuearchive/articleea91.html

6 Chaim Weizmann was born in Russia in 1874, in Motol, now Belarus, but then in the 'Pale of Settlement', that area of Russia to which the Jews had been confined since the time of Catherine the Great. From an early age he became interested in chemistry, studying in Berlin and then Freiburg where he met his future wife Vera Chatzman. All the time he sought for ways to realise the Zionist dream. Theodor Herzl's death was a huge blow to him and he left for England in 1904 where he became a biochemistry lecturer at the University of Manchester and soon became a leader among British Zionists.

Russia in the war by appealing to their latent Jewishness and giving them another reason to continue the fight? These include not only those already mentioned but also Britain's desire to attract Jewish financial resources, as James Gelvin has written.[7]

Britain's relations with Turkey had radically changed. By the 1880s Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm had replaced France and Great Britain as friend and military advisor of the Ottoman empire: new ideologies were challenging Ottomanism. Sultan Abdul Hamid embraced Pan-Islamism but his opponents, known collectively as Young Turks, were drawn to a secular Ottoman pseudo-nationalism and some to Pan-Turkism. The despotism of Abdul Hamid was ended by the Young Turk Revolution(1908-09) and replaced by constitutional, parliamentary government under the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Their policies reflected a growing sense of Turkish nationalism. But in the five years preceding World War I, two Balkan wars and a war with Italy, which had invaded Libya, brought the military element of the Young Turk movement to the fore and resulted in the domination of the Istanbul political scene by the Young Turk Triumvirate (Enver, Talat, and Jemal Pasha). Thus, under their leadership, the Ottoman Turks entered World War I on the side of Germany. We cannot forget also that in the background, contemporaneously, from 1915, was the Ottoman government's systematic extermination of its minority Armenian subjects from their historic homeland within the territory constituting the present-day Republic of Turkey. [8]

The documentation of this genocide is immense, and included a report from the British diplomat, Gertrude Bell.[9]

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7 James Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005, pp. 82 and 83.

8 The starting date is conventionally held to be 24 April 1915, the day Ottoman authorities rounded up and arrested some 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople. The genocide was carried out during and after World War I and implemented in two phases: the wholesale killing of the able-bodied male population through massacre and subjection of army conscripts to forced labour, followed by the deportation of women, children, the elderly and infirm on death marches leading to the Syrian desert. See http:/en. wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide.

9 'The battalion left Aleppo on 3 February and reached Ras al-Ain in twelve hours … some 12,000 Armenians were concentrated under the guardianship of some hundred Kurds …These Kurds were called gendarmes, but in reality mere butchers; bands of them were publicly ordered to take parties of Armenians, of both sexes, to various destinations, but had secret instructions to destroy the males, children and

In addition the motives of empire, the role played by both Jewish and Christian Zionism meant that there was now in fact a global Zionist movement. The Christian Zionist Restoration Movement owed its background to the efforts of Lord Shaftesbury in the early nineteenth century—as already mentioned.[10] In fact, the Christian Zionist dimension among Cabinet members was strong and growing—especially with Balfour himself who was the oldest and most influential member of the Cabinet and Lloyd George—but also Henderson, Barnes. Edward Carson (representing Ulster) was silent. Bonar Law's views are unknown.

Conflicting views as to the motivation of the Declaration

David Fromkin in *The Peace to end all Peace*—supports the imperialist interests motif: As of 1917, Palestine, according to General Smuts, a member of the Cabinet, (together with General Botha) was the key missing link that could join together the parts of the British empire so that they could form a continuous chain from the Atlantic to the middle of the Pacific.[11] Broadly speaking, what seems to have been the issue was that with the addition of Palestine and Mesopotamia, the Cape Town to Suez stretch could be linked up with the stretch of territory that ran through British-controlled Persia and the Indian empire to Burma, Malaya and to the two great dominions in the Pacific—Australia and New Zealand.[12]

Moreover, as mentioned, the British thought a declaration favourable to the ideals of Zionism was likely to enlist the support of the Jews of America and Russia for the war effort against Germany. In contrast Adam Verete—another historian—concludes *that Zionist lobbying played a negligible part in the process.* Tom Segev in his book on

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old women ... One of these gendarmes confessed to killing 100 Armenian men himself: ... the empty desert cisterns and caves were also filled with corpses …'. Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization: The Conquest of the Middle East*, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 2005.

10 See Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, IVP, London, 2004.

11 David Fromkin, *A Peace to end all Peace*, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1989, p. 282.

12 Fromkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282.

the British Mandate in Palestine, *One Palestine: Complete*, [13] provides another interpretation—namely, the prime movers behind the letter were neither the Zionist leaders nor the British imperial planners, but Prime Minister David Lloyd George, whose support for Zionism, he argues, was based not on British interests, but on ignorance and prejudice. Segev concludes: the British entered Palestine to defeat the Turks; they stayed there to keep it from the French; and they gave it to the Zionists because they loved 'the Jews' even as they loathed them, at once admiring and despising them. Thus the Declaration

> was the product of neither military nor diplomatic interests but of prejudice, faith and sleight of hand. The men who sired it were Christian and Zionist and, in many cases, anti-Semitic. They believed the Jews controlled the world.[14]

But the most shameful aspect of this is that the British never indeed planned to honour the clause in the Declaration which committed them to respect the rights of the 'non-Jewish population'. Balfour, no longer Foreign Secretary, but still President of the Council till his retirement from the House in 1922, wrote to his successor as Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, in 1919:

> in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country… .The Four Great Powers[15] are committed to Zionism.

On 11 August 1919, Balfour had stated that the four Great Powers were committed to Zionism, and that 'Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land …'[16]

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13 Tom Segev, *One Palestine: Complete*, Henry Holt, New York, 1999.

14 Avi Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations*, Verso, London, 2010, p. 10.

15 That is: Britain, America, Russia and France.

16 Memorandum by Balfour, 11 August 1919. See W Khalidi, *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute of Palestinian

Most people have been inclined to believe in the good intentions of Balfour and his colleagues. But the government set out to deceive the Arabs in Palestine as to their real intentions. Balfour already envisaged a wider outcome: he made it clear that a Jewish home would become a state 'in accordance with the ordinary laws of political evolution'. The protests of Edwin Montagu and Lord Curzon were ignored: the British government never intended to allow the Arab majority any voice in shaping the future of their country. By the time the Balfour Declaration was signed, Montagu was in India as Secretary of State, his advice ignored. It is impossible to deny that the British government practised a web of deceit.

But there is another reason for the title, *Perfidious Albion* and these are the contradictory promises that Britain made.

First, Mark Sykes, the 5th Baronet Sledmere, a key figure, together with the French diplomat, George-François Picot, was responsible for an Anglo-French-Russian agreement in May 1916 in which the Middle Eastern countries were divided up between Britain and France, (known as the Sykes-Picot agreement).

Yet another earlier promise had been made: in 1915 Britain promised Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca, in a letter deliberately ambiguous, from Sir Henry McMahon, High Commissioner in Egypt, that Britain would support an independent Arab kingdom under his rule in return for his mounting an Arab revolt against the Ottoman empire.[17]

This is a colonial past that has acted dishonourably to both Jewish and Arab communities and we want to say that very clearly. England had acted very cruelly to the Jewish community in expelling Jews in 1200 and through a long history of anti-Semitism, even more recently, when we limited Jewish immigration into Palestine during the Second World War, turning away Jewish Holocaust refugees from the home we had promised their people.

Even after the Declaration was passed both the British government and the Zionists did everything possible to conceal their true intentions.

Studies, 1992, p. 226. Also Cabinet Papers: PRO.FO371/5124.

17 The ambiguity of this letter has been extensively discussed. See James Barr, *A Line in the sand: Britain, Palestine and the Struggle that shaped the Middle East,* Simon and Schuster, New York, 2012. More recently, the details of the McMahon letter are discussed by William Mathew, *The Palestine Deception,* Institute of Palestine Studies, Washington DC, 2014.

A Zionist commission, headed by Chaim Weizmann, was sent to the Middle East to pull the wool over the eyes of the Arabs and in particular to secure the co-operation of Emir Feisal, whose authority among his Arab fellows was thought to be paramount, in the policy of large-scale Jewish immigration into Palestine without which the Jews could never have hoped to realize the Zionist aim of ultimately ruling the country. (Weizmann's tactics were modelled on those laid down by a leading Zionist, Max Nordau, as long ago as 1897 who, speaking to a Zionist conference in Basle, had emphasised the need to 'find a circumlocution that would express all we meant, but would say it in a way so as to avoid provoking the Turkish rulers of the coveted land.')

So, Weizmann set about the task of winning Feisal's[18] and the Arabs' confidence. 'It is not our aim', he told a meeting of Arabs and Jews in Jaffa in May 1918, 'to get hold of the supreme power and administration in Palestine, nor to deprive any native of his possession.' Rumours and sayings to this effect were, he said, 'false and unfounded'. All that he wanted, and his fellow Jews throughout the world agreed completely about this, was that Jewish immigrants should be 'comfortably accommodated' in a land which could 'contain many times the present number of its inhabitants.'

On another occasion Weizmann also assured his Arab listeners that 'a Jewish Government would be fatal' to his plans and that it was simply his wish 'to provide a home for the Jews in the Holy Land where they could live their own national life, sharing equal rights with the other inhabitants.' He had, he added, 'no intention of taking advantage of the present conditions caused by the war by buying up land,' but rather to 'provide for future immigrants by taking up waste and crown lands of which there were ample for all sections of the community.' Likewise, to Feisal himself Weizmann denied categorically that the Zionists intended to set up a Jewish government. All that they wanted to do was to help in developing the country 'without encroaching on other legitimate interests'.

And of course, as we know the story did not end there. The UN Mandate for Palestine in 1922 took account of the controversial Balfour Declaration in its Preamble which declared that the Mandatory Power should be responsible for putting into effect the Balfour Declaration, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the

18 Feisal was the second son of Sharif Hussein.

Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine.[19]

The Mandate gave full power of legislation and administration to Great Britain. The Mandatory was required to develop self-governing institutions, safeguard the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants, encourage local autonomy, ensure complete freedom of conscience and worship and prohibit any discrimination of any kind between the inhabitants on grounds of race, religion or language.

However, the administration of Palestine was controversial and unhappy. Conflict and violence between the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine characterized the inter-war years and Britain found it difficult to administer the territory in a fair and even-handed manner. For one thing, the army was against the Balfour Declaration —and found it difficult to implement, due to—understandable—Arab hostility. Britain did, however, succeed in producing an Anglophile Palestinian elite instilled with British values and committed to the creation of a democratic Palestine on the termination of the Mandate.

On 26 June 1945 the Charter of the United Nations was signed. A new international Trusteeship System was created by the Charter which was to apply to 'territories now held under mandate'. Both the United Nations and the League of Nations anticipated that mandated territories would be placed under trusteeship but no obligation was imposed on mandatory states to do this. On 14 May 1948, David Ben Gurion formally proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel, and was the first to sign the Israeli Declaration of Independence, which he had helped to write. He then led Israel during the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, called by the Arabs the *Nakba*.[20] The struggle continues to this day.

To summarise: both Arabs and Jews have profound reasons for believing that we British broke our promises to them. So what we in the Balfour Project are doing is trying to find courage to face

19 Nineteenth Session of the Council Thirteenth Meeting Held at St James' Palace, London on 24 July 1922, at 3.p.m. See more at http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/2FCA2C68106F11AB05256BCF007BF3CB#sthash.iIv5MBDy.dpuf

20 *Nakba* means catastrophe. To this day it is remembered by the Arabs as catastrophe, when people were driven from 533 villages and 800,000 were forced into becoming refugees.

our past, indeed, to try and redeem it. We are asking the question if acknowledging our history could set in motion a healing process. What effect would it have for the British government, for Churches and communities to apologise to both Palestinians and Jews? This would mean marking the centenary of the Balfour Declaration in 2017 as a contribution to justice, peace and reconciliation in the Middle East.

The Balfour Project believes that the approaching centenaries should be marked in our nation with awareness and honesty. We believe British people need:

- to learn what our nation did a hundred years ago, and understand how those actions are perceived today by all concerned.
- to acknowledge, with honesty and humility, where reprehensible attitudes and unethical behaviour in our nation contributed to the ensuing impasse. In responding to Jewish aspirations, Britain deliberately ignored the rights and expectations of the Palestinian Arabs who inhabited the land. Without questioning the right of Israel to exist, the Balfour Project believes it is time for the British people to express our shame at this unacceptable double standard.

There is evidence that healing and reconciliation can flow from acknowledging the wrongs of the past. For example, the Northern Ireland Good Friday Peace Agreement in 1998 was preceded by years of talks to facilitate reconciliation between Sinn Fein and the Unionist Party. In Australia there was a powerful movement called the 'Sorry Campaign' in acknowledgment of wrongs against aboriginal Australians, in particular the deportation of children: on Sunday 28 May 2000 more than 250,000 people participated in the Corroboree 2000 Bridge Walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge. This walk was in support of Indigenous Australians and was organised by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (now known as Reconciliation Australia), a Federal Government initiative to promote greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The event highlighted the issue of a lack

of an apology by the Commonwealth Government to the Stolen Generations.[21]

Conclusion

How do we know that the Balfour declaration continues to have influence today? One example is that recently—in 2013—the British High Commissioner for the Palestinian Occupied territories, Sir Vincent Fean, was attacked by young Palestinian protesters in Ramallah: *They said their chief grievance was over Britain's support for a Jewish homeland in what was at the time still Palestine.* And they cited specifically, the Balfour Declaration. In addition: in the conflicts of the Middle East today—in Iraq and Syria—we see the Sykes-Picot agreement unravelling around us!

Of the many issues around the Declaration, I want to quote the words of Canon Naim Ateek, founder and Director of Sabeel in Jerusalem, who when I told him of our project, said:

> Whereas I am very pleased about this project and want to encourage it, what matters mostly is what effect and consequences your work will have for the people on the ground today in the Holy Lands, both Jews, Christians and Muslims.

That is our focus—peace with justice. We draw upon

> —the Church's long experience of repentance and reconciliation—especially the South African experience under the leadership of the former archbishop, Desmond Tutu.
> —the fruitful and positive impact that a process of acknowledgment might mean;
> —that apology might be the end of the process rather than the beginning.

21 One of the members of the Balfour Project, John Bond, was crucial in organising the successful 10-year Sorry Campaign.

Hence the invocation of *reconciliation* as the key to hope, change and transformation.

So, what would the steps of a spirituality of reconciliation look like?

A Spirituality of Reconciliation—as part of a Palestine Liberation Theology[22]

Ingredient 1—Remembering

> You may kill as many people as you want, but you cannot kill their memory. Memory is the most invisible and resistant material you can find on earth. You cannot cut it like a diamond, you cannot shoot at it because you cannot see it; nevertheless it is everywhere, all around you, in the silence, unspoken suffering, whispers and absent looks.[23]
>
> (Philippe Gaillard)

'Memory' is crucial for Liberation Theology in all its global contexts, as it is for the lived reality of any Christian spirituality. The memory of who you once were, an identity that you may have lost, the 'dangerous memory' of both suffering and freedom, fuels resistance and determination not to give way to what seems like the inevitability or impasse of the present situation of suffering. In many contexts and cultures there may be a suppressed or subjugated past. There may be silenced voices only dimly remembered. *How* to remember is the issue. How can the anguished memories of suffering, loss of land and loved ones, be changed into the kind of remembering that works towards reconciliation with those who have inflicted the wrongs. For Palestinians the issue is not so much remembering, but how to live with the memories of the lost homes and land: the symbol of the key in the refugee camps speaks loudly of the longing for home and right of return.

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22 Palestine Liberation Theology is usually considered to have begun with the publication of Naim Ateek's *Justice, Only Justice,* Orbis, Maryknoll, 1989. The many writings of Michael Prior, co-founder of *Living Stones*, also blazed a trail.

23 Philippe Gaillard, 'Memory Never Forgets Miracles', in Carol Rittner *et al.*, eds, *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?*, Paragon House, St Paul MN, 2004, p. 111. At the time of the genocide Philippe Gaillard was the head of the delegation of the International Red Cross.

Secondly, what both Christians and Jews rely on in our respective theologies of remembering, is both the discipline of repenting and the vision of the peaceable Kingdom, recognising that both the repenting and the envisioning take very different forms in each faith.

Hence the important place that religion plays: without the kind of trust Archbishop Tutu was able to inspire in South Africa, there would have been no possibility of even listening, day by day, to the unfolding of painful stories in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Deep-seated faith may offer the strength for the remembering to take place, and the justice process to begin. And in addition, religions offer disciplines for personal transformation. They do not separate political from social and personal transformation but at their best offer an integrated notion.

Two points offer hope. Firstly, remembering is exactly that: *re-membering*. It is putting together the painful fragments, the broken connections, in a new way, a way that makes just and healed relationship possible. Secondly, the challenge is: are those of us who have been part of colonial history, or any form of oppression, ready to be part of the journey of repentance, to hear the stories that implicate us in the shame of the past—like the Broken Trust of the Balfour Declaration—or the responsibility for unjust systems of the present: are we prepared to take any action in response? Re-membering in this case is painful in a different way because it involves coping with the claims of guilt, the need to make restoration where this is possible. This is *metanoic* memory, a re-membering that needs humility and a willingness to bear witness to the truth.[24]

Ingredient 2—Truth-telling

It is easier to live with the half-truths and lies that seem to form the fabric of society. When taken around the dispossessed villages in Galilee by Palestinians, with their painful memories of being evicted from their homes, it was even worse to hear that Jewish settlers believed that the original people 'just went away'. Truth seems an unattainable goal. Palestinians are living with massive Nakba denial.

24 See M Grey, *The Wisdom of Fools?*, SPCK, London, 1993, p. 116.

How to decide what is 'objective truth' amidst the confusion of competing contradictory narratives that are central to the identity of Israelis and Palestinians in this conflict situation? It seems a verdict of despair to believe what Michael Ignatieff says, namely that all one can hope is to limit the number of lies. The first step is to create the safe spaces for the stories of suffering to be told. This is a well-tested tool in women's spirituality: the experience of 'being heard into speech' is a poignant one. And this is happening, for example, in the Forum for the Bereaved Families in Israel-Palestine. And in Machsom Watch—the Israeli women who monitor what happens at the checkpoint. The second step is to try to 'inhabit the truth of the other'. The South African judge, Albie Sachs, has worked on the idea of dialogical truth. This is not the truth than can be documented and verified, but is social truth, truth of experience that is established through interaction, discussion and debate.[25] In my dialogue with Rabbi Dan Cohn Sherbok,[26] the issue of truth was crucial and our claims were conflicting. Truth was so integral to Gandhi that he did not merely say, 'God is Truth', but 'truth is God'.

Ingredient 3 Justice-making

The very word 'reconciliation' can disguise assimilation, forced agreement, imbalance of power, hypocrisy, or imply a mere temporary cessation of arms. In Gaza, in the recent conflict of 2014, all that could be achieved was a truce for five hours. All too often in church contexts reconciliation is individualised with scant recognition of structural issues. Yet there can be no genuine reconciliation that is not based on structural justice. This is the blockage in Israel-Palestine—so many well-meaning groups and efforts: but unless the basic issue of Occupation is faced, there is no justice.

But justice for whom? For Christians, the clue lies in the redemptive actions of Jesus whose great work of reconciliation occurred under the Occupation of the Romans. In continuity with the mission of the Jewish prophets, where reconciliation and justice are inextricably interwoven, Jesus blazed a trail for non-violent resistance.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 290.
26 See *Debating Palestine-Israel 2014*, cited above.

There is something both revolutionary and mystical about the process of forgiveness. Donald Shriver, in his book, *An Ethic for Enemies*, sees forgiveness as

> an act that joins moral truth, forbearance, empathy, and commitment to repair a fractured human relation. Such a combination calls for a collective turning from the past that neither ignores past evil nor excuses it, … and that values the justice that restores political community above the justice that destroys it. [27]

This is far easier to say than to do. Mary Blewiit Kayitesi, a Rwandan survivor and founder of SURF, the Rwandan Survivors Fund, in her story, *You Alone May Live*, describes how she has worked tirelessly for the survivors, heard their stories, helped with burying members of their families, (including her own) and was almost broken by the process. And she, a Christian who believes in reconciliation and forgiveness, finds it difficult to forgive.

> I have spent time counting my losses and those of the survivors … .The pressure to heal and move on is a burden for many. The international agenda demanding reconciliation from them continues to grow. However, it fails to protect the memories of the victims, and in the case of the survivors in Rwanda, they still have too many reminders of their past to be able to do so. No nation has come forward to truly help. Without due process for social, as well as political justice, any reconciliation is delayed justice for survivors.[28]

She is a truly important voice. Hannah Arendt, who had every reason not to forgive, yet stresses the need for forgiveness which she balances by the notion of promise. She knows the irreversibility of the wrongdoing, but looks to the future:

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27 Cited in Alex Boraine, *A Country Unmasked*, OUP, Oxford, 2000, p. 440.

28 Mary Blewitt Kayitesi, *You Alone May Live*, Biteback Publishing/Dialogue, London, 2010, p. 307.

> The remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainly of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises. [29]

This offers hope that things could be different: it recognises that full justice is impossible, and that, if we offer nothing beyond punishment and revenge, there is very little hope for the restoration and healing of societies. There are many examples of courageous and forgiving individuals on both sides of the struggle. Within this understanding of reconciliation as the vision of the structural healing of the world, it is possible to recover a Spirituality of sacrifice (the last ingredient).

Spirituality and sacrifice

The kind of sacrifice we speak about is based on accompaniment, voluntary simplicity, bridge-building and identification in love. A voluntary culture of austerity in the name of the crucified peoples of the world is a similar to that which Mahatma Gandhi made for over twenty years, in his work for sustainability in Indian villages in a context of non-violence inspired partly by the teaching of Jesus.

The focus now is not so much on sacrifice, asceticism, renunciation but the deliberate adoption of a Gospel-orientated simpler life-style of non-violence—and in the Palestinian case, the offering of non-violent resistance. Justice-making is inseparable from truth and they are both embodied in a lifestyle of suffering love, in shared non-violent struggle. What gives strength is the power of truth, the heart already reconciled and reconciling to this truth.

To struggle with a reconciling heart

This paper originates from a lecture given not far from the site of a terrible battle. The context facilitated making the links with the present crisis—the bitter bloodshed and suffering in the lands we call holy, on the brink of the commemoration of the centenary of the Balfour Declaration.

29 Cited in Boraine, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

This paper suggests keeping the focus on reconciliation as both a symbol of healed creation, a vision that enables and inspires action for a future state of being, but something that can be already tasted and lives from in the present. Something that touches humanity's deepest yearnings. To struggle with reconciling hearts is the focus. But the struggle always begins with ourselves. If we are committed to reconciliation and justice it means bearing the pain of the wounded memories of the victims and survivors, their need for justice and restoration of hope, even their very humanity, in our own flesh and bone. (Hence the theme of re-membering). In a society bent on self-destruction through war, our resources lie in building counter-cultural communities based on Gospel-inspired visions of truth, simplicity and acknowledgment of our own historical responsibilities; that we move from denial to truth-telling; from exclusion to embrace; that our inspiration in doing so is the biblical call to reconciliation based on a vision of justice and flourishing of the most vulnerable people and the earth herself. Even if that vision eludes fulfilment at the moment, faith in a God of reconciliation is what holds our hope firm. As Canon Naim Ateek, founder of Sabeel in Jerusalem writes:

> Ultimately justice will prevail, the occupation will be over, and the Palestinians, as well as the Israelis, will enjoy freedom and independence.
> How do I know this will take place? I know because I believe in God. [30]

30 Naim Ateek, 'Suicide Bombers: what is theologically and morally wrong with suicide bombers?' *Cornerstone*, Sabeel, Issue 25, Summer 2002, p. 16.

ZIONISM, ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE BIBLE

Duncan Macpherson

In the July 2004 the eighteenth International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee met in Buenos Aires and released a joint statement which included a section equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. In an article published posthumously in *The Tablet*, Catholic biblical scholar and Liberation Theologian, Father Michael Prior, noted that the World Zionist Congress (WZC), meeting in 2002, had 'called upon its supporters everywhere to press the equation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism and racism.' He characterised this as a 'clever tactic' that would mean that 'Zionism—unlike any other political ideology … would be above reproach, and, by extension, so would the State of Israel.'[1] Michael went on to catalogue the anti-Zionism of all of the institutions of nineteenth-century religious Judaism and to protest that those Jews who are 'most disturbed by the human cost of the implementation of Zionism … should not be dismissed as 'self-hating Jews', nor should those gentiles who share their concerns, for either theological or humanitarian reasons, be accused of being 'Jew haters'.

In this paper I will set out to show that, whilst there is no way to deny that that some 'Jew haters' can be found using the cloak of being pro-Palestinian, other 'Jew haters'—maybe even more—can be found among the advocates of Zionism. For religious believers it is a matter of particular concern that some of the purveyors of anti-Semitic and Zionist ideologies make use of religious texts, Zionism focusing on texts concerning the promise of land and anti-Semitism focusing on texts denouncing apostasy. It is noticeable that those who wrestle with apostasy texts in the Old and New Testaments are seldom the same

1 'A Disaster for Dialogue' reprinted in *A Living Stone: Michael Prior CM : Essays and Addresses*, edited with a biographical introduction by Duncan Macpherson, Living Stones, London, 2006, pp. 297-300.

people who perceive problems with the land traditions—or indeed the other way round! The Jew haters exploit texts of the Hebrew Bible that speak of God's judgement on the apostasy of ancient Israel and—more significantly—they use passages in the New Testament that seem to suggest that the Jewish people are under a curse for their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Similar uses of texts from the Qur'an and Hadith are often advanced by some Muslims. Meanwhile the religious advocates of Zionism advance God's promise to Abraham and the land traditions of the Hebrew Bible so as to trump any arguments based on principles of justice and peace.

At this point I should perhaps declare that in my understanding—although ideas and ideologies take on a life of their own—they are always rooted in specific material economic and social realities. Thus neither anti-Semitism or Zionism are ideological constants. In particular, I would argue against historically abstract arguments suggesting a common thread of anti-Semitism across the centuries that ignores these specificities. Nevertheless, I will examine the way in which the Bible has proved a valuable resource for those wishing to promote a 'culture of contempt' against both Jews and Palestinians. I will next set out to demonstrate that anti-Semitism and Zionism have a symbiotic relationship; that not only is anti-Semitism in its nationalist form the parent of Jewish nationalism[2] but that both ideologies not only feed on each other but that they, actually need each other, in order to survive.

Cultures of Contempt

1 Contempt for the Jews: Replacement Theology

Following the full realization of the enormity of the crimes committed against the Jews in the Nazi extermination camps a number of Jewish and Christian thinkers began to discern the roots of anti-Semitism in allegedly anti-Judaic verses in the Gospels, particularly in Matthew and John, where the Jews seem to be represented as responsible for the Crucifixion.

2 See Michael Prior, *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry*, Routledge, London, 1999, pp. 67-102.

The term 'Jew' *(Ἰουδαῖος)* in the New Testament refers primarily to an inhabitant of Judaea or to someone originating from Judaea.[3] By extension it also came to refer to those who identified with the temple cult in Jerusalem as opposed to the Samaritans whose focus of worship was at Mount Gerizim.[4] However, the term came to refer to opponents of Jesus during his ministry. This is particularly the case in the Gospel of John where the 'Jews' *(οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι)*, are referred to no less than 39 times in a clearly pejorative sense.[5] Since all the characters in John's narrative are Jews it seems anachronistic to charge the New Testament authors with anti-Semitism, but John's use of the term 'the Jews' in this sense reflects the growing antagonism between the synagogue and the early Christian church. This in turn contributed to a polemic which New Testament scholar, James Dunn, insists is neither anti-Judaic or anti-Semitic.[6] Catholic biblical scholar, Raymond Brown, too, maintained that, although the details of the trial of Jesus are not to be taken as literal historical truth, they nevertheless reflect a real event misconstrued by later interpreters as laying the blame on all of 'the Jews'.[7] Such interpretations and the related emergence of a replacement theology certainly helped to pave the way for anti-Judaism in subsequent Christian theology and preaching and this in turn contributed much later to the development of racial anti-Semitism.[8]

Rejecting anti-Judaic and replacement interpretations of Scripture, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate,* denied that the Jews were collectively cursed for the crucifixion of Christ and stated that blame could not be laid 'against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive,

3 For example as in Acts 2: 5 and 10.

4 See John 4: 9 and 22.

5 E.g., John 7:1-9.

6 'The Fourth Evangelist is still operating within a context of intra-Jewish factional dispute, although the boundaries and definitions themselves are part of that dispute. It is clear beyond doubt that once the Fourth Gospel is removed from that context, and the constraints of that context, it was all too easily read as an anti-Jewish polemic and became a tool of anti-Semitism. But it is highly questionable whether the Fourth Evangelist himself can fairly be indicted for either anti-Judaism or anti-Semitism,' James D G Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, SCM Press, London, 1991, p. 209.

7 See Raymond E Brown, 'The Narratives of Jesus Passion and Anti-Semitism,' *America* (April 1, 1995).

8 Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2008.

nor against the Jews of today.' Furthermore, 'Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures … . Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend mutual understanding and respect.'[9]

Meanwhile some Jewish, Christian and post-Christian critics have identified the New Testament itself as the source of the problem, seeing the role ascribed to the Jews in the New Testament as part of a 'culture of contempt' leading directly from John's Gospel to the gas chambers. Among these critics, John Dominic Crossan, of De Paul University, Chicago, ex-Catholic priest and former co-chair of *The Jesus Seminar,* praised Raymond Brown's disavowal of anti-Semitism but expressed regret at his acceptance of the historicity of the passion stories, which Crossan believes fuelled centuries of Christian anti-Semitism.[10] The radical feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether also saw hostility to Judaism as an early development in Christian thinking related directly to the growth of belief in the Divinity of Christ.[11] In a debate with Messianic Christian theologian David Stern, and Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt, following Paul Van Buren and others, argued that in order to reject Christian anti-Semitism, traditional Christological doctrines should be rejected.[12]

Summarizing the views of biblical scholars who identify an anti-Judaic tendency in modern historical-critical scholarship, Clark M. Williamson sees the root of this tendency in the way in which Jesus was depicted 'over-and-against' the Judaism(s) of his time. Williamson breaks this tendency down into four main areas. The first of these is the concept of 'late Judaism': a degenerated Judaism, 'preparatory for and inferior to Christianity.' The second is the characterization of late Judaism as blindly legalistic in its interpretation of the Scriptures so

9 Section 4 of Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate,* October 28, 1965: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html, accessed 30 June 2015.

10 John Dominic Crossman, *Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus*, Harper, San Francisco, 1995.

11 Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, Seabury, New York, 1974.

12 H Hegstad, 'Savior of the Gentiles or Israel's Messiah?' *Theology Digest* (Summer 1997), p. 112.

that only the Church can read the scriptures (legalistic Jews were 'deaf to the gospel': for example, Joachim Jeremias).[13] The third area consists of the historical misrepresentation of the Pharisees as the enemies of Jesus. The final area is seen as an affirmation of guilt for the death of Jesus by his Jewish contemporaries,[14] and it was the radical difference between Jesus and the Pharisees that explains Jesus' tragic end.[15] Against this anti-Judaic tendency among historical critical scholars Williamson urges the view of Sanders that first-century Judaism 'kept grace and works in the right perspective,'[16] emphasising grace as paramount. For Williamson, supersessionism has been responsible, directly or indirectly, for 'too many unconscionable assaults upon Jews. History's slaughter-bench is drenched with the blood of those slain because they 'obstinately' refused in their 'blindness' to see that the Christian alternative was better.'

Against this perspective it should be noticed that the polemical language used against 'the Jews' in the New Testament is no more ferocious than the language used by Old Testament prophets against the Israel of their own times and that rabbinic Judaism provides many examples of an apologetic of contempt for Christianity. The Talmud apparently teaches that Jesus Christ was illegitimately conceived during menstruation, was a fool, a magician, a seducer; that he was crucified, buried in excrement in hell and worshipped as an idol by his followers. Although the identification of Jesus as the person referred to in these verses has been contested it is admitted by some Jewish scholars[17].

13 Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*., trans. John Bowden, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1971, p. 227.

14 'Karl Rahner, in his 'Meditations on St. Ignatius' Exercises,' states: 'The crucified Lord is betrayed and abandoned by his friends, rejected by his people, repudiated by the Church of the Old Testament', cited in Charlotte Klein, *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology*, Edward Quinn trans., Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1978.

15 James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, Meridian Books, New York, 1961.

16 E P Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, SCM Press, London, 1977, p. 247.

17 For example: 'The Talmud contains a few explicit references to Jesus … . These references are certainly not complimentary … . There seems little doubt that the account of the execution of Jesus on the eve of Passover does refer to the Christian Jesus … . The passage in which Jesus' punishment in hell is described also seems to refer to the Christian Jesus. It is a piece of anti-Christian polemic dating from the post-70 CE period.' Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, Littman, London, 1982, pp. 26-27. And David Kraemer, professor of Talmud and rabbinics at the Jewish Theological Seminary, calls for honesty about hostile Jewish texts about Jesus. Stephen Greenberg, 'Jesus Death Now Debated by Jews', *The Jewish Week,* New

However since it was the Christians who had the power, Jewish hatred of Christianity could not—with one possible exception—be translated into persecution.[18]

It is evident that, repeatedly down the centuries, the Gospel story was invoked to justify the persecution of those Jews who would not accept the Christian Gospel and that this played a part in the development of anti-Semitism. Cardinal William Henry Keeler argued in 1965; 'Christian anti-Judaism alone cannot account for the Holocaust. Semi-scientific racial theories and specific historical, ideological, economic and social realities within Germany must also be taken into account.' Supporting in passing the growing, if gratuitous, opinion that anti-Zionism might be emerging as the 'new anti-Semitism', Keeler observed that in the juxtaposition of biblical texts in the lectionary it was difficult 'to distinguish between a theological relationship of fulfilment, which is the Church's teaching, and supersessionism, which clearly is not.'[19]

A key text that encouraged supersessionist or replacement theology hermeneutics is the parable of the tenants in the vineyard (Mark 12: 1-12, Matthew 21: 33-46 and Luke 20: 9-19). When Jesus tells the parable, the temple priesthood realises that the parable is told against them (verse 45), but Saint Jerome is just one of the Church Fathers for whom it is 'the Jews' who are the wicked tenants: 'Hard as the hearts of the Jews were in unbelief, they yet perceived that he spake of them.'[20] Centuries later, Luke 20: 18 ('everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces … .') was interpreted as predicting the punishment and dispersal of the Jews; 'For so were the Jews winnowed throughout the world, as the straw from the threshing floor. And mark the order of things; for first comes the wickedness committed against Him [Jesus], then follows the just vengeance of God' (Theophylact of

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York (10 March 2003).

18 There is a possible exception to this with the massacre of Christians by Jews in Jerusalem in 614 as alleged by the seventh-century monk Antiochus Strategos.

19 Cardinal William H Keeler, 'Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: A Developing Agenda' (June 7, 2004), address at a Jewish-Catholic dialogue sponsored by the Brazilian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Salvador, Brazil. www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/Keeler_agenda_June04.htm, accessed 30 June 2015.

20 J H Newman, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected Out of the Works of the Fathers by Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Volume 1, Saint Matthew, The Saint Austin Press, Southampton, 1997, first published in English in 1941, p. 736.

Ochrid (1050-1107).[21] This theme of vengeance developing directly from that of replacement reaches perhaps its most vitriolic with Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies and On the Holy Name and the Lineage of Christ*, published in 1543, a text exploited by the Nazis in their campaign of persecution and genocide against the Jewish people. However it was twentieth-century New Testament scholars of the calibre of Gerhard Kittel, Professor of Evangelical Theology and New Testament at the University of Tübingen, who encouraged Christian acquiescence with Hitler's race laws, lending their considerable expertise in Biblical Studies to feed hatred of Jews and Judaism.[22]

2 Contempt for the Palestinians

So do we blame the text or its interpreters for the centuries of suffering inflicted on the Jews? Is the Bible a charter of liberation or of oppression? But it is not only the Jews who need to ask this question. In 1948 and again in 1967, Palestinians—Muslim and Christian—suffered expropriation and occupation and this has continued until now, feeding widespread hostility not only against Israel but against Jews in general. This was done in the name of an initially secular Jewish nationalist, ideology[23] that the Christian world was unwilling or unable to oppose. Indeed, the earliest advocates of a Jewish return to Zion were Christians motivated by a combination of romanticism, anti-Semitism and apocalyptic.[24]

Another brand of Christian Zionism can be found among mainstream Christians, less interested in supporting the Jewish State as fulfilment of end-time prophecy as in restorative justice for the victims

21 J H Newman, *Catena Aurea,* Volume 3, *Saint Luke*, The Saint Austin Press, Southampton, 1997, p. 659.

22 Robert P Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emmanuel Hirsch*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1987).

23 Religious Jewish Zionism developed significantly under the influence of Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935), the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of the British Mandatory Palestine (founder of the Religious Zionist Yeshiva Merkaz) and his son Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. Like the Christian Zionists, they too saw the Zionist project as the fulfilment of biblical promise and considered secular Zionists to be the instruments of God's purposes.

24 See Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History*, Zed Books, London, 1983.

of the Shoah and the earlier centuries of pogroms and persecution. Despite the wisdom of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews that 'The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged not in a perspective which is in itself religious, but in their reference to the common principles of international law'[25], a number of Catholic writers have argued otherwise.

German Benedictine monk, the late Bargil Pixner, tells how he had, in his youth, served as a medical orderly, having refused to take the oath of loyalty to Hitler. He describes how he was challenged for his faith by an SS officer who asked,' How can the Son of God belong to this inferior people! They are the enemies of the German people. Tell me do you love the Jews as well?' At the possible risk of his own life Pixner replied, 'Yes, I love the Jews, they are the people of Jesus.' Decades afterwards, living in Israel, Pixner comments 'The people of Israel returned to their homeland, resurrected in the moment of greatest darkness.[26] What is surprising, and perhaps typical of mainstream Christian Zionists, is that this holy man does not think it worth a mention that the resurrection for one people was a 'moment of greatest darkness' for another.

We can find similar sentiments from other Catholic writers. Thus, Monsignor John Oesterreicher: 'The living reality of the State of Israel should evoke the respect and admiration of the Christian theologian. How could the renewal of the land be anything to the theologian but a wonder of love and vitality, and the reborn state be anything but a sign of God's concern for his people?' And the late Father Edward Flannery 'Christians should 'rejoice in the return of the Jewish people to a small sliver of their ancient homeland—if not from compassion and a sense of justice at least from a sense of guilt and repentance' [27]

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25 Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews: Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church (1982), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19820306_jews-judaism_en.html

26 *With Jesus in Jerusalem: his first and last days in Judaea*, Corazin Publishing, Rosh Pina, Israel, 1996 and 2005, p. 9-10.

27 In *Twenty Years of Jewish-Catholic Relations*, Eugene Fisher, ed., Paulist Press, New York, 1986): Oesterreicher, p. 35; Flannery, p. 76. Flannery also claims that Zionism is 'a sacred word' with an 'honorable history', and that hence support for the state is a *sine qua non* of the dialogue ('the Jewish-Christian Embrace', p. 79). For a fuller discussion of the proclivities of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, see Michael Prior, *Zionism and the State of Israel*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999, pp. 123-31.

However, Flannery was not silent on the issue of justice for the Palestinians. He took the opportunity to recycle all the standard myths of Israeli propaganda: that Judaism had always been essentially Zionist; that there was no Palestinian identity prior to 1948; the Palestinians were in any case largely nomads and that many were recent immigrants to Palestine and that 'in no sense can it be said that the Jewish people expelled the Arab Palestinians from their homes to make room for themselves.'[28]

For some of those who are involved in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, the price for Christian guilt is uncritical support for Israel. Anti-Zionism, or even negative criticism of Israeli policies, is seen as the new anti-Semitism. Pro-Palestinian Jewish American writer Marc Ellis calls this 'the 'ecumenical bargain,' trading Christian guilt for silence on the Palestinian catastrophe.[29]

Michael Prior (1942-2004), repeatedly drew attention to the fact that 'Despite the clear evidence for the intended and planned 'ethnic cleansing' of the indigenous population, the Zionist conquest is hailed by some as a miraculous act of God and a victory for freedom and civilised values. Indeed, the foreseen and planned forcible displacement of an indigenous people from its homeland continues to be supported from abroad, financially, politically, and even theologically. Frequently, the Palestinian *Nakbah* is ignored, suppressed, or denied, and this tendency is clearly detectable in the mainstream Churches, as well as in theological institutions and university academies.'[30]

For Prior, the Bible was part of the problem rather than the solution. 'This book should carry a health warning!' was his frequent comment. His support for the Palestinians led him to feel increasingly uncomfortable with those parts of the Old Testament that seemed to provide the precedent, and thus to justify, the modern expulsion and oppression of the Palestinians, as well as other European colonialist enterprises.[31]

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28 *Ibid.*, 80-81,

29 *The Tablet* (20 January 1988). In 'the Palestinian *Nakba* (catastrophe) of 1948-49 the country was occupied by a foreign minority, emptied almost entirely of its indigenous people and more than 400 of its villages were destroyed.'

30 Unpublished paper delivered at the conference, 'The Holy Land and the Challenge to the Churches', London, 28 June 2003.

31 'In 1993 I felt obliged to revisit the biblical narrative from the perspective of 'the land'. What struck me most was that the divine promise of land was integrally linked

Jewish Zionism and anti-Semitism

From the beginning the Zionist colonialist enterprise was not only a response to anti-Semitism. It also frequently accepted the anti-Semitic negative stereotyping of the Jews. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Theodor Herzl, usually regarded as the founder of the Zionist movement, not only argued that European anti-Semitism was never going to go away, he also 'accepted the anti-Semitic trope that Jews were an economic burden and thus, that much of the odium they received was indeed deserved. In June 1895, after witnessing anti-Jewish riots in Paris at the time of the Dreyfus affair, Herzl wrote in his diary: ' … I achieved a freer attitude toward anti-Semitism, which I now began to understand historically and to pardon. Above all, I recognized the emptiness and futility of trying to 'combat' anti-Semitism.'[32]

Even more accepting of anti-Semitism, Vladimir Jabotinsky, the founder of revisionist Zionism, argued that 'the Jewish people is a very bad people; its neighbours hate it, and rightly so. Its end in exile is a general "St Bartholomew's Night", and its only salvation lies in a general immigration to the Land of Israel.' Extreme Jewish nationalism shares the same mystification of blood kinship found in the ideology of racist anti-Semitism. In a letter written in 1914 Jabotinsky wrote that 'the source of national feeling … lies in a man's blood … in his racio-physical type, and in that alone … a man's spiritual outlooks are primarily determined by his physical structure … For that reason we do not believe in spiritual assimilation. It is inconceivable, from the physical point of view, that a Jew born to a family of pure Jewish blood … can become adapted to the spiritual outlooks of a German or a Frenchman … He maybe wholly imbued with that German fluid but the nucleus of his spiritual structure will always remain Jewish

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with the mandate to exterminate the indigenous peoples. The implications of the existence of such moral dispositions, presented as mandated by the divinity, within a book which is canonised as Sacred Scripture, invited the most serious investigation' (Michael Prior in 'Zionist Ethnic Cleansing: The Fulfilment of Biblical Prophecy?' in Duncan Macpherson (ed.): *A Living Stone: Selected Essays and Addresses, Michael Prior CM*, Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust, London, 2006, pp. 19-20.

32 N Israeli, 'Zionism and Anti-Semitism,' in Arie Bober, *The Other Israel*, Anchor Books, Garden City, 1972, pp. 167-68. Ralph Schoenman, *The Hidden History of Zionism*, Veritas Press, Santa Barbara, 1988, p. 47.

… The spiritual assimilation of peoples whose blood is different is impossible.' Later in the 1920s and 30s, Mussolini's Fascist movement excited Zionist Revisionist admiration as a model for the Zionist project. Italy 'under Mussolini was seen as a historical reminder of the roots of the Jewish people and as a contemporary example of a once glorious culture reclaiming its role in the world through the affirmation of power and national pride.'[33]

It is unsurprising—although little known—that during the 1930s the Zionist movement opened channels of communication with the German state with a view to channelling anti-Jewish sentiment into co-operation in the resettlement of German Jews in Palestine. Zionist groups were allowed to hold 'Kibbutz training camps' in Germany in preparation for emigration to Palestine. In addition 'Zionists were encouraged to take their message to the Jewish community, to collect money, to show films on Palestine and generally to educate German Jews about Palestine. There was considerable pressure to teach Jews in Germany to cease identifying themselves as Germans and to awaken a new Jewish national identity in them.' [34] This led to the *Haavara* or Transfer Agreement, of 1933 concluded by Chaim Arlosoroff of the Jewish Agency enabling tens of thousands of German Jews to migrate to Palestine with their wealth.[35] In 1937, Labour Zionist, Feivel Polkes, invited Eichmann to Palestine where he visited a kibbutz. Realizing he was a German agent, the British deported him to Egypt.[36] As the persecution of Jews in Germany increased the World Zionist organisation resisted calls for a boycott of Germany, believing that this would undermine the Transfer Agreement. The same order of priorities was evident when David Ben Gurion told the Mapai's central committee on December 7, 1938: 'If I knew it was possible to save all

33 Eric Kaplan, *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionist Zionism and Its Ideological Legacy*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison WI, 2005.

34 F Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (1985), p. 60. See also: F Nicosia, 'The Yishuv and the Holocaust', *The Journal of Modern History* (Chicago), Vol. 64, No. 3, Sept. 1992, pp. 533-540.

35 'The Transfer Agreement was the most far-reaching example of cooperation between Hitler's Germany and international Zionism. Through this pact, Hitler's Third Reich did more than any other government during the 1930s to support Jewish development in Palestine.' Mark Weber, *The Journal of Historical Review,* July-August 1993 (Vol. 13, No. 4).

36 David Cesarani's 'Becoming Eichmann', reviewed by Lenni Brenner, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Spring 2007, 6-23-7

the children in Germany by taking them to England, and only half of the children by taking them to Eretz Israel, I would choose the second solution. For we must take into account not only the lives of these children but also the history of the people of Israel.' [37]

With the advent of the Second World War the Nazis gradually realised that Jewish emigration to Palestine would not ensure their project for a Jew-free Europe. Perhaps for his reason there is no record of any response to the Lehi (Stern Gang) communication of January 1941 to German diplomats in Beirut proposing a military-political alliance with wartime Germany. Britain, had put a bloc on further Jewish settlement in Palestine and was regarded as the main enemy of Zionism.[38]

Jewish Marxist historian, Lenni Brenner, in his *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*,[39] catalogues numerous examples of Zionist collusion with the Nazis and provides compelling evidence for callous Zionist disregard for the fate of European Jewry. Commenting on the appointment of the former Stern Gang leader, later prime minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir as minister of foreign affairs in March 1980 Brenner argued that "There can be no better proof than this that the heritage of Zionist collusion with the Fascists and the Nazis, and the philosophies underlying it, carries through to contemporary Israel."[40]

A more recent example of Zionist collaboration with anti-Semitism is the case of Argentina under the Junta.[41]

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37 Yvon Gelbner, 'Zionist policy and the fate of European Jewry', in *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. XII, Jerusalem, p. 199.

38 Meanwhile American immigration policies worked against Jewish immigration at a time of greatest need. In the late 1930s only a fraction of Jewish refugees were given visas to enter the United States. In May-June 1939, over 900 Jewish refugees who had sailed from Hamburg, on the *St Louis* were denied permission to land in the United States and of the 908 who returned to Europe, nearly 28 percent are known to have died in the death camps. After the war restrictive limits on Jewish immigration continued and proved perfectly compatible with the decisive American support for the setting up of a Jewish state in Palestine in 1948.

39 Croom Helm, London.

40 Brenner, *op. cit*., p. 236

41 Tony Greenstein, 'Zionist-Nazi Collaboration and the Holocaust-A Historical Aberration? Lenni Brenner Revisited', *Holy Land Studies*, Volume 13, Issue 2, pp. 187-212

Gentile and Christian Zionism and anti-Semitism

It is not only Jewish Zionists who have put the welfare of Jews second to the Zionist interest, often incorporating anti-Jewish racist thinking into their ideology. As is well known, the first Zionists were not Jews but Christian millenarians who believed in a last time scenario in which the return of the Jews to the land would serve as a presage of the Second Coming of Christ. This apocalyptic Christian Zionism first found expression among the New England Puritans but it was John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), the founder of the Plymouth Brethren, who pioneered the dispensationalist brand of Christian Zionism that was to find so many supporters among American Evangelicals. A number of nineteenth-century British Evangelicals were engaged in advocacy for Jewish restoration in Palestine and it was William Hechler (1845–1931), an Anglican Evangelical clergyman of German descent who became a personal friend of Theodor Herzl and a key figure in the Zionist movement.

These early Christian Zionists valued the Jews only for their role in the fulfilment of prophecy in presaging the Second Coming of Christ. In 1839, Lord Shaftesbury advocated a Jewish homeland in Palestine urging that, ' … the Jews must be encouraged to return in yet greater numbers … though admittedly a stiff-necked, dark hearted people, and sunk in moral degradation, obduracy, and ignorance of the Gospel … [They are] … not only worthy of salvation but also vital to Christianity's hope of salvation.'[42]

Along with the apocalyptic motive for encouraging Jewish migration to Palestine there were other, secular, ambitions in which the welfare of Jews was subordinate to political ends. A homeland for the Jews in Palestine was originally seen as a potential beachhead for British influence in the heart of the Ottoman empire. It was also seen as an alternative to the acceptance of large numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing the Tsarist pogroms in Russia. Arthur Balfour, lionised by Zionists for his promise of a Jewish homeland in his 1917 Balfour Declaration shared Christian Dispensationalist beliefs but his main concern was to attract Jewish support for the Allied Cause in the First World War. Moreover his earlier speeches

42 Earl of Shaftesbury, 'State and Prospects of the Jews', *Quarterly Review*, 63, London, January/March (1839), pp. 166-192.

in support of the 1905 Aliens Act reveal a racist hostility to Jewish immigration into Britain:

> it would not be to the advantage of the civilization of the country that there should be an immense body of persons who, however patriotic, able, and industrious, however much they threw themselves into the national life, still, by their own action, remained a people apart, and not merely held a religion differing from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen, but only inter-married among themselves.[43]

Keeping Jews out of Britain and packing them off to Palestine were just two sides of the same anti-Semitic coin.[44]

Evangelical Christian Zionists were often motivated not so much by sympathy for the plight of the Jews as by the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. Indeed some of their modern representatives have expressed outrageously anti-Semitic opinions. John Hagee, perhaps the most well known and influential of modern dispensationalist preachers, who recently insisted that Christian Zionism is anti-Semitic, and that the reason for supporting Israel is not of concern for the Jews—who will be damned if they do not convert anyway—but because we are living at the end times and the Bible commands it. Notoriously Hagee once described Hitler as a 'hunter sent by God': because God said, 'my top priority for the Jewish people is to get them to come back to the land of Israel.'[45]

Hagee is not the only Christian Zionist to combine support for Israel with disdain for the Jewish people. Revd Dan C Fore, former head

43 Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 149, col. 155.

44 Alarmed by the role of Jews in the Marxist and other Socialist movements of the early twentieth century, Winston Churchill found still another secular motive for offering support to a Zionist project which might draw Jews to an alterative pole of attraction from that of revolution arguing that 'There is no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and the actual bringing about of the Russian Revolution by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews' and that it was important to 'develop and foster any strongly-marked Jewish movement' that could 'lead directly away from 'the 'worldwide conspiracy' of 'the International Jews for the overthrow of civilization.' Winston Churchill, 'Zionism versus Bolshevism', *Illustrated Sunday Herald,* 8 February 1920, p. 5.

45 https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/John_Hagee, accessed 30 June 2015.

of the Moral Majority in New York, once professed, 'I love the Jewish people deeply. God has given them talents He has not given others. They are His chosen people. Jews have a God-given ability to make money. They control the media; they control this city.' The sentiment was echoed by Gerry Falwell, who remarked during one sermon that 'a few of you don't like the Jews, and I know why. They can make more money accidentally than you can on purpose.' Others, such as Rev. Donald Wildman, founder of the American Family Association, have adopted the view of evangelical leader R J Rushdoony's conviction that the mainstream television networks promote anti-Christian values because they are mostly controlled by Jews.

A Symbiotic Relationship

In the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in February 2015 and the synagogue attack in Copenhagen in March, Benjamin Netanyahu was hammering home his 'move to Israel' message arguing that Europe was no longer a safe haven for Jews, arguing that Israel is now the only country in the world where Jews can feel safe. Clearly, for Netanyahu, the Zionist project feeds off anti-Semitic outrages. Outrages against Jews in Europe today are largely motivated by anger at Israeli treatment of the Palestinians. Failing to make any distinction between Jews and the policies of the Israeli government, ignorant and often socially marginalised Muslim youths are unwittingly serving the purposes of the Zionist ideology they hate.

The equation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism and racism remains as Michael Prior suggested 'a clever tactic' but it is not a new one. Zionism like anti-Semitism comes in different shapes and sizes. Supporters of Palestinian rights are not necessarily even anti-Zionist or anti-Israel, although it is hard to maintain advocacy for an oppressed people without opposing the ethno-religious nationalism that is the root cause of their oppression. However those who do so are accused of 'delegitimizing Israel'—an imprecise crime that begs all the questions. In international law Israel has the right to exist[46] and its citizens have the right to remain. UN resolutions also give the Palestinians the right

46 11 May 1949, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 273 admitting Israel to membership in the United Nations.

of return[47] and the right to a state of their own.[48] Israeli government obduracy makes both of these rights remote. The right to return would threaten the character of Israel as a Jewish State and the surrender of the territories occupied in 1967 runs counter to the prevailing Zionist ideology. It is convenient to label all who question this state of affairs as anti-Semitic if they are gentiles and as self hating if they are Jews. A closer study indicates that anti-Semitism is completely compatible with Zionist ideology and that many of its proponents have accepted the hate-filled caricature of Jews propounded by ideologues of anti-Semitism. Unfortunately the Bible has provided ammunition for both.

47 11 December 1948: UN General Assembly Resolution 1948: resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.

48 United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on 22 November 1967, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War. It was adopted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

PALESTINIAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Naim Ateek

Introduction

Palestinian liberation theology is one of the latest liberation theologies to be articulated almost 20 years after Liberation Theology appeared on the world scene.

I am often asked whether there is a relationship between Palestinian Liberation Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology. I usually answer, yes and no. If we are talking about an emphasis on justice which all liberation theologies have in common, then there is a relationship. Indeed, justice and truth are the hallmarks of all liberation theologies. On the other hand, if we are comparing contexts then the answer is no, because there is a great difference between the context described in Latin America and other contexts, and that of Palestine-Israel.

When I was in theological school in the mid 1960s, Liberation Theology (LT) had not been fully articulated and I was not aware of it. Years later I found out that Gustavo Gutiérrez was already active in theological reflection and writing in the 1960s but his first book did not appear until 1971 in which he coined the name liberation theology.

Towards the end of the 1980s, I was privileged to meet Gustavo at Maryknoll in New York. From the first few minutes we were able to connect because both of us were talking about the need for justice. He was sharing with me the situation in Latin America while I was sharing with him the situation in Palestine. We were talking about two different contexts thousands of miles apart but both of us were describing situations of injustice and the suffering of our people. He was talking about economic injustice. I was talking about political injustice. Both of us were emphasizing that the solution to our problems must

begin by achieving justice. Yet in each case it is important to define what we mean by justice and how it can be achieved.

Both of us were trained as pastors in the Church of God and servants of the people of God. Both of us were keenly sensitive to the needs of our people. I felt so privileged to meet him and we became friends. The next time I saw him was at the 1988 Lambeth Conference when he was invited to address the Anglican bishops and we spent some good time together.

I do not remember Gustavo's background and how he came to articulate a theology of liberation for the poor, but in my case, I did not start with a conscious decision. I can only testify that as far back as I can remember I wanted to be a pastor. That feeling and that call never left me and I am thankful that I was able to become one.

Be that as it may, as many of us know, when we accept God's call, we accept to be guided by the Spirit of God in whatever way God chooses. This is what I believe had happened. It has been a wonderful journey so far. But when I consider the movement towards a Palestinian theology of liberation, I can identify with the words of Amos when he said, 'I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet but the Lord called me and said go speak.' I believe that Amos said also, 'the Lord has spoken who can but prophesy?' (Amos 3:8)

Jesus Christ liberator

The beginnings of Palestinian Liberation Theology

I started my ministry at the end of the summer of 1966 as a pastor of a small Anglican church in lower Galilee that had not had a resident priest since the 1948 war. Approximately 20 years later, my bishop asked me to come to Jerusalem and serve at St George's Cathedral. I resisted the move but I had to go. My wife went to Jerusalem very reluctantly. Two years later in December 1987 the Intifada started and that led to the development of what became known as Palestinian Liberation Theology (PLT). It all started in the small parish hall at St George's Cathedral where Palestinian Christians of different Church backgrounds met every Sunday after worship to discuss the sermon which intentionally addressed one aspect of the Intifada, its impact on our people, and what should be our faith response in light of the Gospel.

Contextual and liberational theology

PLT is basically both a contextual and a liberational theology. By contextual I mean that it started in a specific context and addressed and continues to address that context, i.e. the Palestine-Israel context, but it is also a liberation theology because it has implications that are wider and broader than that one context. In other words some of its fundamentals can be used in other contexts that are marred by injustice and oppression; as well as marred by inherited biblical interpretations and understandings that continue to be politically damaging to the Palestinian people.

This needs more elaboration. PLT is crucially needed because of the way the Bible has been used by the Zionists and later by the government of Israel as an instrument of oppression against the Palestinians. In this case, Palestinian theologians must address the local context.

But more than that, PLT is also needed to challenge western Christian theology because, generally speaking, the Bible has been used as a Zionist document. In other words, it is not used only by religious Zionists it is used today by secular and atheist Zionists who have political power. They consider the Bible as their title deed to the whole land. Furthermore, many western Christians, and not only fundamentalists, in our mainline Churches including Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox as well as Protestants have 'naturally', and innately accepted Zionist interpretation of the Bible. If my analysis is correct, this means that we have a responsibility to liberate western Christian theology by 'de-Zionizing' it. Many Christians have been reading the Bible as a Zionist document. Millions of Christians come every year to visit and are exposed to the land by mainly Jewish guides that consciously or unconsciously 'indoctrinate' them or at least point to the success of Zionism and connect it with the Bible. Such indoctrination influences people's minds and psyche and affects people's Biblical understanding and interpretation. PLT is needed to undo the theological, spiritual, and political harm that results from indoctrinations.

I believe, in 2013, that the Church of Scotland had taken the right theological leap and has led the way in its report on 'The inheritance of Abraham?'. I believe that the Church of Scotland has liberated its biblical theology and by liberating its theology it has liberated its politics regarding the 'the Holy Land' and the implications for justice

and peace for its people. I am sorry to say that I cannot say the same about the Anglican Consultative Council Report, 'Land of Promise? An Anglican exploration of Christian attitudes to the Holy Land with special reference to Christian Zionism' (2012), though admittedly the Anglican report made important changes.

What is Palestinian Liberation Theology (PLT)?

Palestinian Liberation Theology is, therefore, the response that results when faith meets context. It is the outcome of one's view of God's justice confronting the dreadful injustice of human beings against their fellow humans. PLT has three components: faith, context, and response; or faith, situation in life, and action. The important question is: what does God expect me to say and to do about the injustice I see before me?

Let me reiterate it in a different way: There are three elements that must come together to produce a theology of liberation: The first is one's faith in the God of love and justice. For me, love and justice are two sides of the same coin. If you love you do justice. When love is absent, injustice can ensue. To be committed to justice is to be committed to love of neighbour and vice versa. An important dimension of this faith is one's view of God's vision for the world. God wills that people live in justice and love, in mercy and forgiveness, in peace and reconciliation.

Second, the vision of God's love for all people must be followed by a truthful and honest analysis of the situation at hand; in other words, a careful assessment of the context of injustice and oppression.

Third, the importance of asking the theological question, what does God expect me to say and do; or in the words of Micah, what does God require of us? The result is a theology of liberation.

The Great Discovery, reclaiming the historical Jesus

I mentioned earlier that initially PLT developed as a response to the first Intifada of 1987. It is important to emphasize that at that time, the PLO had no official presence in Palestine. Yasser Arafat and the

PLO leadership were in exile in Tunis. Furthermore, Israel and most western countries considered the PLO a terrorist organization. The Gaza Strip at the time was not an isolated entity; people were able to go back and forth more freely. The Intifada erupted among the Palestinian masses as a reaction to the cruelty and heavy handedness of the Israeli occupying forces. Whenever the Israeli army was deployed to squash the Intifada in a given place, the resistance erupted in another. The Intifada started in Gaza but soon the West Bank was actively involved. In spite of the brutal measures of the Israeli army, and the suffering of the Palestinians, people felt a sense of exhilaration. The years of waiting for the UN and the international community to redress the injustice had been futile. It was time for the Palestinians themselves to rise up and through nonviolent resistance to demand the end of the illegal occupation of their country. That is why people were enthusiastic and excited hoping that they could bring a drastic change to their situation. Most of them did not realize that they were up against a stubborn settler colonialist group that is not easy to uproot.

At St George's Cathedral the Sunday gatherings of people became more popular and attracted both Palestinians and internationals. The discussion usually started with the sermon preached but soon the discussion branched both theologically and politically towards addressing the situation on the ground. The most profound theological ideas came from the local Christians who were reflecting on the meaning of their faith under the oppressive occupation and their responsibility before God and their community.

The discussion became more viral and stimulating when it dawned on them that the person they call saviour and Lord was himself a victim of an oppressive occupation. We did not have to go far to look for a liberator. Jesus Christ was a Palestinian as we are. He lived in the same land we live in. He breathed the same air we breathe. His language and thought patterns were Semitic as ours. The Palestine he lived in was always a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-religious society whether during his lifetime or ever since. Moreover, the political situation of his day with its multi-political and religious parties showed great similarities to our political parties we have today.

Once that discovery was made, Jesus Christ was viewed as the paradigm of faith and our liberator. It is true that other liberation theologians had appropriated Jesus as liberator (*Jesus as liberator*, Jon

Sobrino, Orbis, Maryknoll, 1993), but for Palestinian Christians he was more uniquely theirs. In fact, people saw him as a Palestinian who lived all his life under the Roman occupation and was eventually killed by the occupation forces in collaboration with the religious leaders of his day. Such a discovery had important theological implications for most people and a great incentive for engagement.

Reflecting on this fact in 2014 does not seem as a ground breaking discovery but in 1988, a few months after the Intifada, it was significant. It must be remembered that the early theological Christian controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries ended with the affirmation of the divinity of Christ. And although the early creeds affirmed both Jesus Christ's full humanity and full divinity, the great emphasis was on his divinity. The Nicene creed says clearly about Christ '… eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father, through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man' etc. Our Eastern Christian liturgies are pregnant with the emphasis of Christ's divinity and many of our people take pride in stressing it. PLT, however, brought back the balance by reclaiming Jesus Christ's full humanity. It was a rediscovery of the historical Jesus who lived under occupation similar to today's Palestinians. For some Palestinian Eastern Christians it might have seemed sacrilegious at the time. Yet when our people recognized and accepted his full humanity, it became a turning point that drove us directly back to the Gospels to study Jesus' life and teachings. Such an exercise inspired and encouraged us to work for justice and peace.

Moreover, there were important questions that needed to be asked: how did Jesus live under occupation? How can he help us in our life under the Israeli occupation today? What does Jesus say about resistance? What lessons do we deduce from the Gospels that can help us in relating to the occupation forces? and many others.

A key Gospel Text is Luke 4:18-19

One of the first obvious key texts was the Luke passage which Jesus used in the Nazareth synagogue.

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' Luke 4:18-19. Jesus appropriates this text for himself and in the ensuing discussion with worshipers at the synagogue he confronts their racist attitudes toward foreigners. He did this in Nazareth before his own town folks.

I remember inviting Michael Prior to speak on 'Jesus the Liberator' at St George's Cathedral using Luke's text. His analysis and exegesis of the text was good but some of us Palestinians present felt that the application to our Palestinian situation in life was not as satisfactory as it could have been. His exegesis of the text was stronger and more satisfying than his contextualization of it. However, the more Michael Prior identified with the oppressed Palestinians the more did he become relevant in his interpretation and application of the biblical texts.

Another key Gospel story is Luke 18:1-8

I would like to believe that the story of the widow standing before the unjust judge and saying, 'give me justice' was more than a parable. It is likely that it reflects a real life story that Jesus was aware of. It is also likely that he used it on different occasions and gave it different emphasis. In Luke it is placed in the context of persistence in prayer; but it can equally have the justice emphasis.

This story is very relevant to the Palestinian condition. The judge represents empire and the people of power, hence injustice and oppression; the widow represents the vulnerable, the poor, and the oppressed. Right before their eyes stands the oppressor and the oppressed. And Jesus' commentary, as far as I see it sums it all, 'And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him, day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?' (Luke 18:7-8). Will we who care about the oppressed have the courage to take a stand and advocate for justice on their behalf? Will we be able to stand before the unjust powers of this world and insist that justice be done? Only true faith can produce such courage.'[1]

1 N S Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation,* Orbis Books, Maryknoll,

For Palestinian Christians, liberation theology is anchored in Jesus Christ liberator and in its justice agenda. This is the basis on which we have been able to build our liberation theology.

A theology that imitates Christ

What are some of the main features of this Christ-centred theology that relate directly to the Palestine-Israel conflict?

1. PLT is a theology of love and justice. Love of God and neighbour and love of enemies. It does not seek the destruction of the enemy but their transformation. Love of enemy means the liberation from hate and animosity.
2. PLT is a theology of justice and mercy. Justice on its own can be hard and harsh. It must be tempered with mercy. In the conflict over Palestine, we must do justice in accordance with international law. This means giving the Palestinians their rights as international law prescribes; but we must be sure that all the people of the land—Palestinians and Israelis—will live in security and peace. There should be no revenge or retaliation. This means taking the higher moral ground and implementing justice with mercy. This is the way of Jesus.
3. PLT is a theology that has a commitment to truth. 'You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free' Jesus said. Through the truth one can confront falsehood and deception. The first casualty has always been the truth in the conflict over Palestine. The way of Jesus is the way of truth and integrity. Very often Jesus confronted some of the religious leaders of his day with the truth. One time he said, 'you hypocrites you tithe the herbs but you neglect the more important laws of God, namely, justice, mercy, and faith' (Matthew 23:23).
4. PLT is a theology of nonviolence. We must resist everything that is evil but we must use nonviolent methods. This we do because we believe it is the way of Jesus. In the conflict over Palestine, we promote Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against the settlement products because we believe that this is a nonviolent way of resisting the evil of occupation.

NY, 2008, p. 21.

5. PLT is a theology of peace and reconciliation. To be a peacemaker is a mandate from Christ himself. To live in peace and reconciliation is to experience liberation. Reconciliation must precede worship–'… first be reconciled to your brother or sister …' (Matthew 5:24). Justice first then peace and afterward the long process of reconciliation.
6. PLT is a theology that is committed to champion the oppressed, the poor, the marginalized, and all those who are disadvantaged in the land.
7. PLT is a theology that is expressed through regular prayer and worship of God. Every week Sabeel Jerusalem sends out a Wave of Prayer to its friends and asks them to pray for us and with us using this short prayer that touches on relevant events of that week not only in the life and work of the Sabeel community but in the land and society. We ask them to pray at 12 noon according to their time zone on Thursday so we have friends praying with us around the clock.
8. PLT looks to Jesus' life and teachings because they offer us important guidelines that are essential to our everyday life.

The above features of PLT make Jesus Christ the model and paradigm of faith to the Christian. More than that Christ becomes the hermeneutic that examines and tests the authentic word of God and differentiates it from what is unauthentic and not binding to the life of the Christian.

Christ as hermeneutic

One of the most useful hermeneutics I have found is Jesus Christ himself. With the use of a simple formula it is possible to determine the relevance of the text to our life today: Is what I am reading in line with the spirit of Christ and does it agree with the knowledge, nature, and character of God that has been revealed to me in and through Jesus Christ? Put differently: Is this text in harmony with the love of God for all people that I have come to know in Jesus Christ? I believe that such a simple formula can be of help to many Christians in determining the authenticity and usefulness of the text to people's life today.

Areas that PLT must impact

First: PLT and the Bible

For the last 25 years, Sabeel has been able to address a number of relevant themes to the life of our Palestinian people living under occupation.

In one of his parables, Jesus likened the Kingdom of God to a fisherman whose net caught all kinds of fish; he kept the good and discarded what he did not need. (Matt. 13:47-50) I would like to paraphrase the parable and to liken it to reading the Old Testament. It is a big book that contains all kinds of material—legends, folklore, myths, history, poetry, proverbs, politics, stories, laws and regulations, religious material, and a variety of many other things. The material it contains is of different value and worth. We have a responsibility to use what is worthwhile and put aside what is not. There are some religious pearls in it. But Christians need a criterion that can help them evaluate its contents.

Here I remember the words of Michael Prior about the Bible when he observed its misuse and abuse by the Israeli government, by settlers, and by Christian Zionists. He often talked about the need for a warning label that the Bible can be harmful to your health.

For PLT, therefore, there are a few dominant themes that are essential from a biblical and theological perspective. In essence they all have to do with the 'de-Zionization' of the Bible.

1. The tribal vs. the universal or the exclusive vs. the inclusive because in my study I have concluded that Zionism has negatively influenced Judaism and caused it to regress to the most primitive and tribal period of its bygone history. It is a retrogression that reflects a very exclusive religious understanding of God and people. The texts that are used reflect a violent and bigoted god which later Hebrew prophets themselves critiqued and rejected.
2. It is important to point out that in my study of the OT I have discovered an amazing fact where the same biblical writer vacillates between an exclusive and an inclusive theology of both God and people. It is possible, however, to say that after the Exile the movement towards greater inclusivity becomes increasingly stronger and clearer though not always dominant in the community.

In fact, I believe that the movement towards inclusive theology was a dynamic development that gave courage to those writers after the Exile to critique the exclusive, narrow, rigid, and even the more nationalist views of God, land, and people and opened up for them a new inclusive theology.[2]

3. Connected with this is the important theme of the theology of land. In many ways, the theology of land is crucial to PLT. An exclusive theology of land is a recipe for violence and perpetual conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians; while an inclusive theology of land can create the right atmosphere for peace and the sharing of the land and can open the way for a just resolution of the conflict.
4. Christian Zionists: There are millions of Bible believing Christians around the world who believe that the creation of the state of Israel was a sign for the imminent Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world. For many others such a theology is false and a gross misinterpretation of the Bible. Due to their uncritical literalist reading Christian Zionists commit grave injustice against the Palestinians and justify Israel's oppressive policies.[3] I have placed Christian Zionists in this section because they seem to be more OT Christians than NT, though one can address their theology from both O as well as NT.

Some examples: I would like to mention three.

Every one of the following examples has relevance to the situation on the ground in Palestine-Israel and impacts the life of our people.

- The promise of the land: According to the Books of Numbers 33:51-56 and Deuteronomy 20:16-18, God asks Moses to expel or annihilate the people of the land. After the Exile, God tells Ezekiel that the land must be divided as an inheritance among all the people who live in it regardless of their racial or ethnic backgrounds, Ezekiel 47:21-23. The first two Torah texts reflect

2 N S Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, ch. 5.

3 N S Ateek, C Duaybis, and M Tobin, *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict,* Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, 2005, Jerusalem.

a tribal and exclusive theology of God and land, while the Ezekiel text reflects an inclusive theology of God and land. In essence, Ezekiel is critiquing and rejecting the tribal and exclusive theology of the Torah. The tribal texts do not lend themselves to peaceful living in a multiethnic society while the inclusive text of Ezekiel reflects justice and equality for all the people of the land and can contribute to peace and harmony in society.

- Jerusalem theology, Nehemiah 2:20 vs. Psalm 87: Nehemiah's position is that Jerusalem belongs exclusively to Jews. Non-Jews have 'no share or claim or historic right' in it. This is also the policy of the Israeli government and is supported by many Israelis including rightwing settlers. They are adamantly against the sharing of Jerusalem. Such a view is an obstacle to peace. The Psalmist position is totally the opposite. He sees Jerusalem as an open city where God welcomes into it people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, even the enemies of ancient Israel—the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Philistines and others. All are welcomed as full citizens of the city. This inclusive vision of Psalm 87 critiques the exclusive position of Nehemiah. Sharing Jerusalem between Israelis and Palestinians can be a major contributor to a life of peace and well-being not only for those who live in Jerusalem but for the whole country.[4]
- Jonah, the climax of OT theology and the first Palestinian theologian: The short story of Jonah in its simplicity and yet profundity makes the writer of Jonah a very insightful liberation theologian. The writer critiques three major exclusive theologies of the day, namely, theologies of God, people of God, and of the land. The Book of Jonah challenges the reader to reject such exclusive theologies and to cling to a faith in God whose inclusive love and mercy embrace all people irrespective of their ethnic or racial background. That is why, from a Palestinian perspective, I have considered the theology of Jonah to be the climax of Old Testament theology, and, therefore, the first Palestinian liberation theologian.[5]

Our primary focus has been on the OT because of the way it has been used to justify an exclusive Jewish right to the land of Palestine. But the

4 Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, pp. 140-150.
5 *Ibid*., pp. 67-77.

NT is used continuously to strengthen and cement our faith in God's love in Jesus Christ our liberator. At the same time, the NT helps us to see that in the coming of Christ—in his life and teachings, and in his death and resurrection and throughout the NT—the movement towards inclusive understanding of God, people, and land developed much further and found a more solid foundation.

Furthermore, the NT challenges us with many other themes that need to be addressed and researched for PLT, especially in the areas of nonviolence, peace, and reconciliation; and I hope that they can be explored more deeply in the future.

Second: PLT and the ecumenical agenda

Our PLT strategy has been to work ecumenically (i.e. inter-denominationally) rather than to just preach ecumenism. There are no denominational programs at Sabeel whatsoever. We have been conducting local programmes in both Jerusalem and Nazareth that have been bringing Christians together from the various Churches of the land. Over the last 25 years we have witnessed a significant shift in ecumenical relations among Christians. The ecumenical spirit has penetrated the psyche, emotions, hearts, & minds, of many (probably in this order). It has brought people closer to one another and has led people to accept and respect the other. This ecumenical spirit has also touched some of the bishops; and certainly no bishop or archbishop or patriarch has refused to work or respond to the invitations of Sabeel. Moreover, on a number of occasions Christians, regardless of their denominational backgrounds, have received Communion together when it was celebrated by a priest of another Christian denomination. It is possible to summarize the ecumenical work of Sabeel in the following points:

1. Sabeel is totally ecumenical. It is not affiliated with any particular denomination.
2. Sabeel respects the integrity of every Church tradition and prays for the unity of the Church. We believe that in this world and due to human diversity our aim has been to work ecumenically and to break down the denominational barriers and to contribute

to the increase of love and acceptance between the brothers and sisters. We understand unity not as uniformity but as diversity within the unity.

3. We thank God that Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew are aware of the importance of working ecumenically and that they can bridge the historical gaps and bring closer the two major Churches—Catholic and Orthodox. I am afraid change must come from outside the country. This is not only true politically, it is true religiously.
4. The foundation for ecumenical work has been strongly laid down by Sabeel. It is possible to build on it in the future. We must not stop.
5. There is a long ecumenical agenda that needs to be tackled. We have barely scratched the surface. In fact, the small number of Christians in our country places a great responsibility on bishops, pastors, and people. The agenda must include what it means to be salt and light in our communities today.
6. There is a huge need to encourage Christians to remain in their country through spiritual nourishment of the small Christian community. They also need help overcoming challenges and getting their needs met, including the education of their children, housing for young couples, and even employment.
7. There is a great need for the hierarchy of the Churches to be more engaged and involved in issues of human rights as well as to speak out prophetically against injustice and oppression.

Third: PLT and the interfaith agenda
Christian/Muslim Relations

Although Sabeel related to some Muslim academics and religious leaders and invited them for an *iftar* during the month of Ramadan, its interfaith programmes were intermittent. But I was always aware of the importance of the interfaith agenda and its indispensable relatedness to Palestinian Liberation Theology.

To begin with, Christians and Muslims are one people. We have the same language, the same culture, and the same aspirations but we belong to two different religions. There was a time when, generally speaking,

it was difficult to differentiate between us religiously. However, since the establishment of the state of Israel a number of political, religious, and social factors began to mar the relationships between the two religious communities. Not least among these factors has been the rise of religious extremism in our country. It started with Jewish religious settlers and then was followed by the upsurge of militant Islam. The need for better interfaith relations became much more vital and fundamental.

We have, therefore, identified three important ascending goals to our relationship with our Muslim brothers and sisters: 1. Personal encounter and better understanding of the other. 2. Respect of the other. 3. Acceptance of the other.

Sabeel's ministry and theology are not complete without this important dimension. In this interfaith work, Sabeel is in partnership with Al-Liqa Center, with Dr Jeries Khoury as director. We have conducted conferences together, regional meetings, and workshops. One of the projects that we have been working on together is village meetings that bring together Muslim and Christian leaders including priests and sheikhs to get to know each other and to create greater understanding and respect among them and the inhabitants of those villages.

We started doing this in the villages that have a mixed population of Christians and Muslims. Concurrently we started university meetings with Muslim and Christian students. We have conducted a number of conferences together where not only priests and sheikhs participated but where Christian patriarchs and bishops took part including the Grand Mufti and other prominent Muslim leaders.

Recently, we published a book in Arabic on the theme of 'Nonviolent resistance in Christianity and Islam.' The chapters were written by prominent Christian and Muslim scholars and activists. Unfortunately, the war on Gaza forced us to postpone the launching of the book. Eventually it will be launched in a number of places both in Palestine and Israel. Interfaith relations between Christians and Muslims have become absolutely essential these days due to Islamophobia as well as the rising number of Islamic political extremists. We at Sabeel and Al-Liqa believe that it is one of our most important ministries.

In fact a liberation theology for Palestine cannot be complete unless it touches the various areas and aspects of life. It has to impact people's life comprehensively. From the beginning of the ministry of Sabeel, we recognized the importance of relating to Jews. We have been relating to a good number of Jews of conscience, i.e. those who believe that the occupation must end and there needs to be a just solution to the political conflict. We relate well to Jewish organizations that have taken a stand for justice and have been critical of Israeli government policies.

We have been aware of the interfaith activities between some Jews and some Israeli Arabs, Christians and Muslims. Our observation is that these groups have been hijacked by a pro-Zionist agenda and their relationships have lacked the prophetic edge. It has become an ecumenical deal as Dr Marc Ellis called it where the Jewish participants control the agenda and the non-Jewish participants cannot be critical of Israeli government policies and must silence the prophetic.

The Sabeel Nazareth branch has related to some Jewish groups and has invited a few Jewish speakers to give lectures in Nazareth; and they have been well received and continue to develop relations with Jewish groups in the Galilee.

It is important to note that Friends of Sabeel in North America (FOSNA) have a strong partnership with Jewish Voice for Peace in the United States. They have been working together for a number of years. At the same time, we have always had American Jews as members of FOSNA. Their active involvement has strengthened the work of advocacy for justice and peace.

Fourth: Sabeel and PLT

PLT preceded the establishment of Sabeel. In 1992/93, Sabeel came into being so as to translate our liberation theology into programmes and activities on the ground. We have been careful not to interfere in the different Churches' calendar. We have tried not to plan any activities during major Church holy days. I have always encouraged our multi-religious staff to be active in their Churches. We have

trained our staff to lead Bible study and prayers and they have been able to use that at Sabeel as well as in their own Churches. In this section of this paper, I would like to mention a few programmes and activities of Sabeel.

Sabeel organizes ecumenical programmes for clergy and people on a regular basis. It conducts ecumenical retreats every year. Sabeel holds ecumenical prayer services periodically at St Stephen's Dominican Church in Jerusalem, especially whenever there is a crisis in Palestine-Israel or in our region such as the situation in Syria, Iraq, Gaza, as well as for prisoners and for Jerusalem etc. The homilies have been given by various bishops and patriarchs as well as others.

At Christmas every year it has become a tradition to celebrate with an ecumenical Christmas dinner and Christmas music and carols. We usually invite one of the patriarchs or bishops to give a short Christmas greeting.

Over the years Sabeel developed two contemporary ways of the cross. One is usually conducted for tourists and pilgrims. It is a contemporary Via Dolorosa. A Sabeeler accompanies a bus of tourists on a visit to a destroyed village, a demolished home, a checkpoint etc. In every contemporary station of the cross, an appropriate reading, prayers, reflection, and songs are used. The liturgy has been translated into a few languages.

During Lent, Sabeel conducts an ecumenical contemporary Via Dolorosa in Arabic. We have been building it up and an increasing number of men and women, and especially young adults have been participating every year.

We have an active programme of welcoming and speaking to visiting groups. In 2013 we welcomed 700 people from 50 different groups who came to Sabeel to hear a lecture on PLT and to be updated on the political situation.

We also welcome a number of delegations from abroad that come to Sabeel as well as Sabeel witness visits that are usually led by one of our friends from abroad.

There are at least ten Friends of Sabeel groups abroad. The work is done on a largely voluntary basis. Most of our friends are active in the promotion of justice and nonviolence and are mainly concerned about the resolution of the political conflict through nonviolent means.

Sabeel's main publication is *Cornerstone*. It comes out 4 times a year. Over the last 25 years, Sabeel has organized nine international conferences (including, 'The Bible and the Palestine-Israel Conflict', 'Challenging Empire', 'Challenging Christian Zionism', 'The Forgotten Faithful', 'Jerusalem', 'Holy Land, Holy Jubilee' and 'Faith and the Intifada') Sabeel has published a number of books both in English and Arabic. Sabeel issues statements occasionally to address various subjects that relate to Palestinian life under occupation.

If Sabeel did not exist it would be important to invent it. It is needed because it attempts to stay on the cutting edge theologically as it addresses the concerns of the Christian community of the land.

In many ways, Sabeel feels the pulse of the community and from a Christian perspective tries to address those issues that impact people's life. Its agenda spans centuries old concerns that continue to challenge the life of our people today. Therefore, Palestinian Liberation Theology is an essential tool that, by the grace of God, can bring liberation whether religious, spiritual, political, and or that is needed in the twenty-first century. We continually need the prayers and support of all our friends for the task ahead.

BEING THERE/BEING WITH: REFLECTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT IN PALESTINE

Alwyn Knight

What follows is based upon my experience of living and working in the Palestinian city of Hebron and the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani in the South Hebron Hills, as a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

Hebron, this difficult place

The ancient Palestinian city of Hebron (Al-Khalil in Arabic) has a current population of about 120,000 and is situated some twenty miles south of Jerusalem. It has a long history as a commercial and industrial centre. Traditional industries include glass-making and ceramics—both still practised on a small scale; shoe-making (which is in terminal decline: most shoes are now imported), limestone quarrying, and agriculture. Hebron is famous for its grapes, but also the fertile fields and moderate climate produce a wide variety of crops.

The Palestinian population is almost exclusively Muslim: there are thought to be no more than two Christian families living in the city. The only place of Christian worship is a Russian Orthodox monastery, where a small community preserves the traditional site of the Oak of Mamre.[1]

Until 1929 Hebron had a thriving Jewish quarter, which was established in the sixteenth century by Jews fleeing from persecution in Spain. In 1929 sixty-seven Jewish men, women and children were killed by an Arab mob. At least four hundred Jews were saved by their Muslim

1 So Abraham moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord. Genesis 13.18 (NRSV).

neighbours—a measure of the friendship which existed between the two communities—but the story of the massacre still lives on in the collective memory of both Jews and Muslims and continues to affect relationships between the two communities. Following the massacre some Jewish families did move back to the ruined Jewish quarter, but were eventually evacuated by the British authorities.

The 1967 Six Day War and the subsequent occupation of the West Bank by Israeli military forces brought the opportunity to re-establish Hebron as what the then Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion called 'Sister of Jerusalem'.

> It should not be forgotten that the greatest of Israel's kings started his public life in Hebron, the city to which the first Hebrew, Abraham, had come some eight hundred years before King David. We should be guilty of the most fearsome error if we failed to establish a large and growing Jewish settlement in the shortest possible time in Hebron, neighbour and predecessor of Jerusalem. This will also bring blessings to its Arab neighbours. Hebron is worthy of being sister to Jerusalem.[2]

The association of Hebron with 'the first Hebrew, Abraham' and with 'King David' makes Hebron a holy city for many Israelis: in fact the second holiest, after Jerusalem itself. There is a tradition that Abraham and his wife Sarah,[3] Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah—and some say Adam and Eve too!—are buried in the Cave of Machpelah, which lies beneath the Ibrahimi Mosque. But Muslims revere Abraham too, and the Ibrahimi Mosque is—for many Muslims—the fourth holiest site in Islam, after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. The association with David is based on the tradition that David held his first court in Hebron when he was anointed king of Judah.[4]

The quotation above makes it clear that settlement activity was envisaged from the start of the occupation in 1967.

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2 Moshe Dayan, *Living with the Bible*, William Morrow and Company, New York, 1978, p. 109.

3 Genesis 23.

4 2 Samuel 2. 1-4.

Work began on building Kiryat Arba on an abandoned military site in 1970. By 2010 it had a population of 7,600. Since then four smaller settlements, with a combined population of about 500, have been established in the heart of the city. To accommodate the settlers, Shuhada Street—once the commercial heart of Hebron—is closed to Palestinians. Hundreds of Palestinian shops, two wholesale markets and the bus-station have been closed, and some of the few Palestinians who still live in Shuhada Street are forbidden access to the street itself, and have to resort to circuitous routes to enter and leave their homes.

The settlers are thought to be protected by at least five hundred members of the Israeli Defense Force, but at major Jewish religious festivals, when tens of thousands of Jews visit Hebron, that number is greatly increased. It is important to remember that the Israeli military are present to protect the settlers, and not Palestinians, and that settlement activity of this kind is illegal under international law.[5]

One incident illustrates the tension within the city. On the 24 February 1994, Baruch Goldstein, a Brooklyn-born physician who had emigrated to Israel and who, following military service, lived and worked in Kiryat Arba, entered the Ibrahimi Mosque, took out a gun, and shot and killed twenty-nine Palestinians while they were at prayer, wounding a further 125. More Palestinians were killed by the Israeli military in the clashes which followed the massacre. Goldstein was a follower of an extremist rabbi, Meir Kahane. Some of Kahane's followers still live in Hebron, though the political party he founded—Kach—is proscribed by the Israeli government as being racist, and a terrorist organisation. Goldstein's tomb in Kiryat Arba has become a place of pilgrimage, despite the efforts of the Israeli authorities to discourage such activity.

5 See Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which *inter alia* states that 'the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own population into the territory it occupies'. Israel disputes this on the grounds that the Convention was intended for a quite difference purpose, and that in any case 'the movement of individuals to these areas is entirely voluntary while the settlements themselves are not intended to displace Arab inhabitants, nor do they do so in practice' (see: http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Archive/Peace+Process/1996/ISRAEL). The view of B'Tselem—the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Territories—is that by 'using a complex legal-bureaucratic mechanism, Israel took control of 50 percent of the West Bank, primarily for the establishment of settlements and preparation of land for their expansion'. See http://www.btselem.org/settlements/taking_control [Accessed 24 March 2015].

Following the massacre, Palestinians in Hebron were placed under curfew for two months, adding collective punishment to the trauma of the massacre.

In 1995 the then Palestinian mayor of Hebron, Mustafa Al Natshe invited Christian Peacemaker Teams to:

> … accompany the people here as they struggle with the daily violence caused by the Israeli occupation. We hope that the team will report the truth of what it sees to the people in Canada and the United States. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.[6]

The terms of that invitation are significant: 'to *accompany* the people here as they struggle with the daily violence caused by the Israeli occupation', and to '*report* the truth of what it sees'.

Note that the invitation came from one 'side' in the Palestine/Israel conflict. The Hebron settlers in particular do not welcome the presence of internationals, whether they are committed to non-violence or not; and the Israeli state regularly denies entry to members of accompaniment programmes. This is a reminder that this is an asymmetric conflict, and that limits the scope for peacebuilding. As we shall see accompaniment programmes in the West Bank are mainly concerned with supporting and complementing local grassroots efforts to resist the dominant power.

But before we turn to the Christian Peacemaker Teams, we need to make a brief *excursus* to the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani in the South Hebron Hills.

About 150 people live in the village, most of them members of four extended families. Until recently, water was from the well, or cistern. Now it is 'on tap' thanks to concessions made by the Israeli authorities. Note 'concessions'—for as vital a resource as water. This part of the West Bank—Area C according to the Oslo II Accords—is under Israeli military and civil control. Electricity until recently was available for four hours a day, courtesy of a generator, but after a number of set-backs is now 'on the mains' from a supply carried on pylons from a Palestinian town more than a mile away.

6 Kathleen Kern, *As Resident Aliens: Christian Peacemaker Teams in the West Bank, 1995-2005,* Cascade Books, Eugene, Oregon, 2010, p. 19.

The climate is semi-arid, and farmers practice 'dry farming': sowing and ploughing (in that order!) following the first winter rains in October or November, harvesting—mainly by hand—in the following April or May. No rain, no crop. Irrigation is not an option. Neighbouring hillsides are grazed by flocks of sheep and goats. Many of the families who live in At-Tuwani have small flocks to meet domestic needs for milk and meat; those who live in the more remote villages that have survived years of violence and intimidation have much larger flocks upon which they depend for a livelihood.

The hills above At-Tuwani, as they roll south towards the Negev, are spectacularly beautiful. Wildlife abounds: gazelles, tortoises, porcupines, foxes, hyenas—as well as snakes and scorpions. In the spring wild flowers carpet the hillsides. Throughout the year herbs can be gathered for traditional Palestinian cooking. On hot summer days the air is heady with the scent of thyme.

It might be a rural idyll, but it is not.

A few hundred yards from the village is the Israeli settlement of Ma'on—established in 1981 with Israeli government approval, but in contravention of international law.

Nearer still is the illegal—even under Israeli law, because it was established without government approval—outpost of Havat Ma'on. In 2005 the Israeli High Court ordered its evacuation. It is still there. Its inhabitants in particular have a propensity for violence towards their Palestinian neighbours. Masked and armed (usually with heavy wooden clubs, or stones) they attack Palestinian farmers and shepherds with apparent impunity. The nearby villages of Kharouba, Sarura and Humra have been evacuated as a direct result of settler violence.

Hebron has been described as a microcosm of the occupation—a 'small world' which illustrates many of the problems faced by the larger world of the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Any future peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority will have to take careful note of the special situation of Hebron. As an Israeli general said: 'Hebron, this difficult place, whose frictions could ignite the whole of Judea and Samaria.'[7]

7 Lieutenant General Shaul Mafaz, former Israeli Chief of Staff and former Minister of Defense.

Christian peacemaker teams

In 1984 theologian and social activist Ronald Sider addressed Mennonites at an international conference in Strasbourg. Under the title 'God's People Reconciling' Sider challenged Mennonites to move from what he called the 'back lines of isolationist pacifism', to the 'front lines of non-violent peace-making'. He shared his vision of a 'new non-violent peacekeeping force of 100,000 persons ready to move into violent conflicts and standing peacefully between warring parties'. 'Making peace'—Sider asserted—'is as costly as waging war. Unless we are prepared to pay the cost of peacemaking, we have no right to claim the label (peacemaker) or preach the message.'[8]

Sider's call to active peace-making led to study groups on the theme in Anabaptist churches throughout North America. Two years later Christian Peacemaker Teams were established under their first director: Gene Stoltzfus.

Mennonites belong to the Anabaptist tradition. Anabaptists—the epithet used by their opponents: it means, literally, 'those who baptise again'—have their origins in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and represent a third type in the Reformed tradition. More even than their contemporaries they tried to recover the pattern of the early church. Their warrant was scripture, and the practice of infant baptism, they argued, lacks 'scriptural warrant'. They dismissed infant baptism as no more than 'dipping in a Romish bath'.[9] But the same scriptures *did* appear to provide warrant for the other characteristic of Mennonite spirituality: non-resistance—to the extent that many Mennonites and some outsiders regarded non-resistance as the defining characteristic of Mennonite faith.

The Sermon on the Mount provided many of their proof texts, some of which have become proverbial: for example, 'turning the other cheek', 'going the second mile'. But they also found there the injunction to 'love your enemy', 'pray for those who persecute you', and perhaps most controversially, 'do not resist the evildoer.'[10] This led to the rejection of all forms of force and coercion, and in particular,

8 For the full text of the speech, see www.cpt.org>Resources>Writings [Accessed 24 March 2015].

9 Quoted by Roland Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century,* Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1963, p. 99.

10 Matthew 5.39 (NRSV).

the rejection of military service. For many Mennonites non-resistance meant having as little to do with the 'world' as possible. They espoused a two-kingdom theology: Church and state are separate, and persecution was to be expected:

> Considered religious heretics and political insurgents by civil and religious authorities alike, Anabaptists faced persecution and torture. Thousands died for their faith—burning at the stake, drowning in rivers, starving in prisons, and losing their heads to the executioner's sword.[11]

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many Mennonites emigrated to North America, where, typically, they established small farming communities which tended to became sectarian enclaves. Think of the Amish—another Anabaptist movement—who strive to maintain a traditional way of life in the face of modernity. Though a recent visitor to an Amish community bought an attractive candlestick. It was only later that she saw the label on the base: Made in China!—a reminder that it is increasingly difficult to maintain those 'plausibility structures' which render a belief believable, and a particular way of life liveable.

From quietism to activism

Leo Driedger and Donald Kraybill[12] show how in the second half of the twentieth century, as more Mennonites 'drifted into mainstream waters', the 'Mennonite sacred canopy had to be stretched—indeed reconstructed—to face the challenges of modernization in the twentieth century.'[13]

'Plausibility structures' and the 'sacred canopy' are of course major concepts in the work of sociologist Peter Berger. Plausibility structures, Driedger and Kraybill suggest, 'consist of the conversations, the networks of interaction, and the other social factors in a particular

11 Leo Driedger and Donald Kraybill, *Mennonite Peacemaking: from Quietism to Activism*, Herald Press, Scottdale, 1994, p. 22.
12 *Ibid.*
13 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

setting that render a belief believable,'[14] and sacred canopies are the 'human societies people build to protect, stabilize and give meaning to their world view.'

> The vibrations of industrialization and the jolt of World War II shook Mennonites out of their rural shelters. Uprooted from rural homesteads, seeking higher education, entering professions and engaging in worldwide service activities, many Mennonites joined the mainstream of social life in the last half of the twentieth century … in the mid-1950s the quiet and meek of the land began debating their responsibilities in the larger social order.[15]

They suggest that a number of 'brokers' were needed to 'construct an ideological bridge across the gulf between historical non-resistance and the new world'.

First of all there were the 'change agents'—often individuals who had already embraced a more activist stance. Stoltzfus, for example, was one of a number of Mennonites who had been actively involved in the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam war demonstrations.

Then there were the ideological brokers, among them the theologians.

Driedger and Kraybill suggest that the ideological task is to 'negotiate between traditional convictions and new social realities' and the specific theological task 'to 'make old scriptures say new and meaningful things in the face of different circumstances … following change agents who have already blazed new trails.'[16] Though, of course, ideological brokers can also be change agents, 'trail-blazers': one thinks of many of the early proponents of liberation theology, who were both change agents and ideological brokers.

One of those Mennonite ideological/theological brokers was John Howard Yoder. When he published his *The Politics of Jesus* in 1972, with its claim that Jesus was 'a model of radical political action',[17] Stoltzfus

14 *Ibid*., p. 43.
15 *Ibid*., p. 14.
16 *Ibid*., p. 44.
17 John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus,* William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972.

is said to have responded: 'I'm glad you put in writing what some of us have been practising for some time.'[18]

It is important to recognise the magnitude of this 'paradigm shift' in Mennonite practice and theology, a shift which divided Mennonite communities then and now. There are echoes here of the 'World Sets the Agenda' theme of the World Council of Churches 1968 Assembly in Uppsala.

Christian peacemaker teams in Hebron

When CPT began its work in Hebron in 1995—just a year after the massacre of Palestinians in the Ibrahimi Mosque at the hands of Baruch Goldstein—Sider's 'standing peacefully between warring parties' was translated into the slogan, 'Getting in the Way'.

CPTers Dianne Row and Wendy Lehman had been accompanying Palestinian children at the Qurduba school in Shuhada Street when Dianne was pushed to the ground and kicked by a number of Israeli settler women. When she spoke about her experience back home in the United States a woman asked, 'why didn't you get out of the way so you didn't get hurt?' It hadn't occurred to Dianne to 'get out of the way' for her personal safety. Later she created a banner which in turn became the logo of CPT for many years. It depicted a pair of sandaled feet walking along a barbed-wire strewn path. Above was the slogan, 'Getting in the Way'. That, of course, is a *double entendre*. For Christians it also means travelling the path Jesus trod, given that Jesus' ministry is increasingly understood as non-violent resistance to the powers-that-be, religious and political, of his own day.

CPT's challenge is to 'devote the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war'. It still bears the marks of its Mennonite founders, expressed in simple living and a commitment to peace and justice, but its members are now drawn from many Christian traditions. There are also Muslim and Jewish members, and those with no religious faith, but who are committed to CPT's values; and inspired by CPT, a Muslim Peacemaker Team[19] is currently active in Iraqi Kurdistan.

18 Driedger and Kraybill, p. 149.
19 See: http://reconciliationproject.org/2012/muslim-peacemaker-teams/.

In what follows I will make several references to the work of Liam Mahony, author of *Proactive Presence: Field Strategies for Civilian Protection*,[20] which is based upon extensive research into non-violent peace-making initiatives in a number of conflict zones.

Mahony refers to the three functions of effective presence:

1. *Deterrence*—by constraining abusers from carrying out attacks.
2. *Encouragement*—by encouraging civil society's capacity to protect itself
3. *Influence*—by supporting progressive voices inside abusive or negligent institutions and promoting reforms[21]

I have used Mahony's 'three functions' as a framework for my own reflections on the effectiveness of accompaniment.

Accompaniers seek to deter abusers through protective presence

CPTers still 'get in the way', sometimes in the tradition of non-violent direct action, but more often in the way any friend would place themselves between a vulnerable victim and someone intent on harming them physically. This can arise in the case of direct accompaniment, which in Mahony's words, 'involves literally walking or travelling with a threatened individual, living in threatened communities …'[22]

Both Hebron and At-Tuwani are such threatened communities. Both experience the general effects of prolonged occupation, but also the particular effect of living in close proximity to Israeli settlements. The settlers in both places are from the twenty percent of settlers who are described as 'ideological'—as opposed to the larger proportion who are 'economic' settlers; attracted to settlement life by subsidised housing, employment, and easy access on Israeli-only roads to major cities such

20 Liam Mahony, *Proactive Presence: Field strategies for civilian protection,* Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, 2006.
21 *Ibid*., p. 16.
22 Mahony, p. 68.

as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. With the ideology of the minority comes a propensity for violence, protection by the Israeli Defense Force, and almost total impunity.

CPTers in Hebron live in the Old City, yards from Shuhada Street; with IDF soldiers posted on the roof of the derelict building opposite, within sight of the settlements, but, crucially, able to respond quickly to news of house invasions by the military; arrests, especially of children; clashes at vital checkpoints, and protests by Palestinians—which invariably result in the use by the Israeli military of tear-gas and percussion grenades, often escalating into the use of rubber-coated bullets, and even live ammunition. And all in an urban setting where children are trying to get to school, and adults are trying to go about their everyday lives. The *being there* is important: sharing as far as possible the heat and burden of the day, but never taking for granted the privilege of carrying an international passport.

The *being there,* in At-Tuwani, living in a simple block-built, tin-roofed dwelling, drawing water from the well; relying on no more than four hours electricity a day; accompanying children from the remote cave villages of Tuba and Maghayir al-Abeed to school; spending hours on the hills with Palestinian shepherds—eyes and ears alert to the ever-present threat of attack by masked and armed settlers, who like the settlers in Hebron, appear to act with impunity: *that* is accompaniment in its most basic sense.

Mahony provides a theoretical explanation of the deterrent effect.

He points out that 'every decision is affected by a series of calculations and perceptions' and that a field mission 'can influence these decisions by creating circumstances in which perpetrators recalculate the consequences and make a different choice.'[23] In every situation there is the possibility of actions with unacceptable consequences, and actions with acceptable consequences—which he describes as actions which can be carried out with 'impunity from harsh consequences'; or more colloquially, what a perpetrator believes he or she can 'get away with'.

Mahony quotes an OHCHR field officer working in Colombia:

> If a community is completely abandoned, the political cost of abusing someone's rights is nil. If a local official denounces the abuser, the cost is a little higher. But if

23 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

> the international community makes its presence directly known there, the perceived cost is much higher. It doesn't eliminate the risk, but it lowers the probability of the abuse.[24]

'International presence moves the border' and tends to shrink the space in which the perpetrator feels he or she can 'get away with' his actions. And the very fact that no one knows where those borders are introduces a note of uncertainty which, Mahony suggests, can 'actually increase the impact of international presence'.[25] So Kamal, a shepherd from Maghayir al-Abeed, calculates that with international accompaniment he can graze his flock nearer Havat Ma'on than would normally be possible. The Palestinians who own land in At-Tuwani calculate that with the presence of internationals, and peace activists such as members of Ta'yush, Rabbis for Human Rights and perhaps Combatants for Peace, they will be able to harvest their wheat, barley, lentils and olives. It is important to recognise that this does not necessarily reduce the risk of violence, but it can shift the focus of that violence from the Palestinians to others. I remember picking olives in Hebron, near a settlement. Arik Ascherman, co-founder of Rabbis for Human Rights, was there with colleagues. In our pre-picking briefing Arik was quite emphatic: 'You—Palestinians and internationals—pick the olives. We will deal with the settlers, the IDF and Israeli police.' It was surreal: picking olives, symbol of peace, surrounded by scuffles between settlers and rabbis! That day a rabbi was arrested, but the olives were picked and the Palestinians were safe. Fortunately an international had videoed the incident which led to the arrest. It showed beyond doubt that the rabbi was innocent of the charge, and he was released.

Most people will moderate their more excessive behaviour when they are being watched. Cameras and video-recorders are powerful tools for monitoring and recording, say, the behaviour of young Israeli soldiers at checkpoints. Videos are especially useful as they can record a sequence of events, and are an important source for evidence of the abuse of human rights.[26]

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24 *Idem*.

25 *Ibid*., p. 20.

26 See for example the YouTube video of an incident at the Qurduba School in May 2005 when settler girls attacked the then head teacher, her staff and students as they left school at the end of the morning. The video was made by Terje Carlsson.

The presence of international observers at checkpoints—a large proportion of the work of accompaniers—has undoubtedly limited the flagrant abuse of power assumed by the Israeli Defense Force and the so-called Border Police. It is not a perfect instrument. Most accompaniers will wonder at times if their presence has exacerbated a situation, or simply deferred an act of aggression until the observers have left. But on the whole Palestinians are grateful that we, and others from the international community, are there when a house is demolished, or a child is detained without his or sometimes her parents' knowledge. It seldom prevents the demolition of a house, or a detention—even of a child—but may limit the gratuitous violence by the military that can accompany such acts.

Ideological settlers, sadly, appear to be impervious to moral persuasion. Arguments about the legality of their presence are invariably countered with the argument: 'But God gave us this land.' They are prepared to use violence in defence of this 'God-given' gift. Accompaniment may then make accompaniers as vulnerable to physical attack as Palestinians, and there are many instances of CPTers and members of other international accompaniment programmes being attacked and sometimes hospitalised. If Mahony is right that 'every decision is affected by a series of calculations and perceptions,' most ideological settlers have clearly calculated that there will be no consequences for their actions, and that is borne of experience. They can 'get away with it'.

But, *the being there*, and seeing and sometimes experiencing at first-hand what is happening, is a vital resource for what Mahony calls 'the most traditional tool of protection':[27]

Advocacy. 'Public exposure is a political cost to an abuser,'[28] he suggests. Accompaniers plead the Palestinian cause, not because Palestinians are voiceless, but because the world community has largely chosen to ignore their cause since the State of Israel was legitimised by the United Nations in 1948. Accompaniers have privileged access to the world's governments, media and to ordinary men and women. Though we are still far from the tipping point, there is no doubt that

Search: YouTube, Qurtuba Students Attacked, Police Do Nothing [Accessed 24 March 2015]. The attack was featured in Peter Kosminsky's Channel 4 series *The Promise*—shown on British TV in 2011.

27 Mahony, p. 91.

28 *Idem*.

the Palestinian cause is now more widely understood. At the same time there is evidence that Israel is becoming conscious of its growing isolation within the world community, and with that the hope that there will be a new resolve to bring to an end the longest military occupation in recent history. Occupation damages both the occupied, and the occupier.

Accompaniers *monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.* The gathering of information and reporting to such agencies as Amnesty International, The International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations, and to specialist agencies such Defence for Children International, is a vital task. Though one is bound to express frustration that so much monitoring—these must be the most monitored square miles on the face of the earth—has so far made so little difference. In my more despairing moments I remind myself that at least there is a growing and permanent record of what has happened. In the future no one will be able to say, 'we didn't know'.[29]

However, one success story illustrates the need for concerted and co-ordinated collection of information about the abuse of human rights.

Israeli military brigades vary enormously in the way they conduct their operations in Hebron. One, whose reputation preceded it, was causing so much harassment and there were so many human rights violations that CPTers together with members of other international teams and other agencies compiled a dossier of breaches of human rights. The effect was startling. The brigade was withdrawn before the end of its tour of duty! While the behaviour of members of the brigade may not have been affected, that of the 'powers that be' was, and the Palestinians had a reprieve from some of the harsher aspects of occupation.

The second function of effective presence, Mahony suggests, is **Encouragement—by encouraging civil society's capacity to protect itself.**

29 As Kathleen Kern argues 'this acceptance of CPT's documentation contains an undercurrent of racism—because it implies that—for example—Palestinians are not as credible as internationals'. Kathleen Kern, *In Harm's* Way: *A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams,* Cascade Books, Eugene, Oregon, 2009, p. 552.

After a few months living and working in Hebron, most accompaniers will have come to admire Palestinian steadfastness in the face of oppression, and their many strategies for keeping safe without accepting the normalisation of the occupation, with its checkpoints, restrictions on travel, martial law, and regular acts of harassment and humiliation. Palestinians are adept at employing what James Scott calls the 'weapons of the weak'—those strategies of evasion and resistance which are such an irritant to the dominant power.[30]

Steadfastness[31] is often expressed in the decision to 'stay put', despite the violence of settlers, and their protectors. F A H lives in Tel Rumeida, the site of the first Bronze Age settlement. 350 Palestinian families used to live in Tel Rumeida, now there are 50.

Her home is heavily protected against attacks by her settler 'neighbours'. Her olive and almond trees have been burnt, and much of her land is now the subject of an illegal archaeological dig—all part of an obsessive attempt by ideological settlers to find evidence of David's first court.[32]

After one attack, a not unfriendly Israeli policeman suggested that perhaps it was time to move—as most of her Palestinian neighbours had done. To which she replied: 'What would I tell the almond trees if I left my house; what would I tell the Tel Rumeida moon.' The policeman admitted he had no answer to that. Neither have I, beyond the observation that for most Palestinians the relationship with the land is part of their identity.

Here, international presence can have an encouraging effect. Yanoun—Upper and Lower—is a small Palestinian community a few miles south-east of Nablus. In 2002 settler violence had reached the point when the whole community was forced to leave their homes and livelihoods—mainly olive production and sheep rearing.

In 2003, largely through the intervention of Israeli peace activists, the villagers were encouraged to return to their homes with the promise of a permanent international presence. Since 2004 EAPPI has provided that presence.

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30 James C Scott, *Weapons of the Weak,* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985.

31 *Sumud* in Arabic. See the Wikipedia entry for a fuller account of this important concept.

32 2 Samuel 2.1-4.

The head of the village council is quoted as saying: 'Harassment has decreased … the reason is that foreigners are in the village. The presence in Yanoun of people from peace groups is what changed the situation.'[33]

Here, rather literally, international presence has enlarged what Mahony calls 'the recuperated space' of the Yanoun community. Being the eyes and ears of the world does seem to have been effective.

The third function of effective presence, Mahony suggests, is **Influence–by supporting progressive voices inside abusive or negligent institutions.**

There are many progressive voices within Israel, including a number of organisations which include Israelis and Palestinians, such as Ta'yush,[34] and Combatants for Peace.[35] Perhaps the most progressive of all, given the high cost of membership, is the Bereaved Families' Forum, sometimes known at the Parents' Circle.[36]

The story of the founding of one particularly effective organisation is interesting.

In the late 1990s members of the Hebron team were concerned at the number of house demolitions carried out by the Israeli military and their civilian contractors. At the time it was regarded as an effective form of deterrence—a policy later questioned by the IDF itself—but which is being employed again, but with less regard for deterrence than for collective punishment.

In response the team agreed to take part in a fast in solidarity with those whose homes had been destroyed, and to this end set up a 'fasting tent' in Hebron. The tent was intended to symbolise the tents supplied by the Red Cross/Red Crescent when family homes had

33 See: http://www.electronicintifada.net/content/protecting-yanoun/7778 [Accessed 24 March 2015].

34 *Ta'yush* (Arabic for 'living together') is a grassroots movement of Israelis and Palestinians working to break down the walls of racism and segregation by constructing a true Arab-Jewish partnership. See: www.taayush.org/

35 Combatants for Peace was started by Israelis and Palestinians who had taken an active part in the cycle of violence; Israelis as members of the military (IDF), Palestinians as members of paramilitary groups. 'After brandishing our weapons for so many years, and having seen one another only through weapon sights, we have decided to put down our guns, and to fight for peace.' See: http://cfpeace.org/

36 The Parents' Circle is a grassroots organisation of bereaved Palestinians and Israelis. It promotes reconciliation as an alternative to hatred and revenge. See: http://www.theparentscircle.com/.

been demolished. People whose homes had been demolished were encouraged to visit the tent to share their stories. Other Palestinians, Israelis and internationals visited in solidarity. One of the visitors was an Israeli woman, who stayed with the team, joined the fast, and actually saw a house being demolished. Later she mobilised Israeli groups around the issue and—in the words of CPT's archivist, Kathleen Kern—'sowed the seeds'[37] for what became the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. ICAHD, under the indefatigable leadership of its director is a major Israeli partner for peace in the region. It provides practical help to rebuild demolished homes, tours for those wanting to see for themselves the impact of occupation, reliable monitoring of the political situation, and extensive advocacy.

The young conscripts of the Israeli Defense Force represent the face of the occupation for most Palestinians living in the Old City of Hebron. They detain young men, and sometimes children; they enter Palestinian homes, where they sometimes take up residence for days; they patrol through the Old City; they control the checkpoints; they are seen protecting the settlers, and sometimes taking their orders from settlers. Some clearly revel in the power they have; many resent 'call up' and would rather be pursuing their studies, or beginning a career. Few want to be working in Hebron: 'this difficult place'.

CPTers have never agreed on a common policy with regard to soldiers. When you have just seen an eighteen year old Israeli soldier humiliate a seventy-year old Palestinian, it is difficult to just 'pass the time of day' and ignore what has happened. It is at times like these that Quaker CPTers remember George Fox's saying, about 'answering that of God in every person'.[38] And all CPTers will agree with Joseph Liechty's stricture 'that those who practise violence must not be demonized and ignored … how will there be peace if no one talks to the violent.'[39]

Relating to the Israeli military remains one of the greatest tests of any accompaniment programme's claim to impartiality. CPT subscribes, in essence, to EAPPI's 'Statement of Principled Impartiality':

37 Kathleen Kern, *As Resident Aliens*, p. 65.

38 George Fox. See *Quaker Faith and Practice,* Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, 19/32.

39 Quoted by Christopher Mitchell, in Cynthia Sampson and John Paul Lederach (eds), *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 226.

> We do not want to take sides in this conflict and we do not want to discriminate against anyone, but we are not neutral in terms of principles of human rights and international humanitarian law. We stand faithfully with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised. We want to serve all parties in this conflict in a fair and unbiased manner, in word and action.

Desmond Tutu described the dilemma succinctly—and colourfully:

> If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.[40]

Yehuda Shaul served with the IDF in Hebron in 2002. He and some of his colleagues had many conversations with CPTers, in which they shared their growing distaste for what they were being asked to do. Shaul went on to mount an exhibition of photographs depicting the effects of occupation in Hebron, entitled 'Breaking the Silence'. Later he formed an organisation of the same name, which collects the testimonies of many Israelis, women and men, who have served in the Israeli military, and who, in their own words 'have taken it upon ourselves to expose the Israel public to the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Territories. We endeavour to stimulate public debate about the price paid for a reality in which young soldiers face a civilian population on a daily basis, and are engaged in the control of that population's everyday life.'[41]

I am not claiming a direct link between those conversations and what happened subsequently, but a relationship was established in those conversations in Hebron which has lasted to this day. But remembering what Yehuda has achieved, and at what cost, I do regard every conversation with an Israeli soldier as an opportunity to 'sow the seeds' which might lead to a change of heart. But as the parable

40 As quoted in: William Quigley, *Ending Poverty as we know it: Guaranteeing a Right to a Job at a Living Wage,* Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2003, p. 8.

41 See: http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/about/organization [Accessed 24 March 2015].

of the sower reminds us, the thing about sowing seed is you can never be quite sure about the outcome. But unless the seeds are sown …

Part of the programme of Breaking the Silence is to conduct tours of Hebron and the South Hebron Hills—mainly for Israeli visitors. I was there one day when the tour bus arrived near the Ibrahimi mosque. Yehuda was the first to leave the bus. He strode over to a nearby Palestinian shop and greeted Abed the shopkeeper with a kiss. The Sons of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael; a vision of what Hebron could, and might yet be!

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

EAPPI is a response to the Second Intifada (a word which we now roughly translate as 'uprising') and could be regarded as the outcome of a seed sown by Christian Peacemaker Teams in what often appears to be infertile soil.

The catalyst for the Intifada may have been the provocative action of Ariel Sharon, then leader of Israel's opposition party, Likud. On the 28 September 2000 Sharon, accompanied by an estimated 1,000 Israeli police, visited the Haram al-Sharif—the third holiest site in Islam—which houses the Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock. That in itself would have enraged many Muslims, but many will also have remembered a speech made by Sharon in 1967, at the end of the Six Day War: 'The Temple Mount is in our hands, and will remain in our hands. It is the holiest site in Judaism and it is the right of every Jew to visit the Temple Mount.' No wonder there was a reaction by Muslims. The violence that followed cannot be condoned, but can be understood (I hope the difference is clear) in the light not only of Sharon's '67 speech and his actions that day in September 2000, but also the frustration felt by Palestinians following the failure of the Oslo process, and the even more recent failure of the Camp David negotiations in July 2000.

So widespread was the violence that there was an attempt to introduce a United Nations monitoring mechanism. The history of the attempt is interesting, and salutary. George Mitchell in his *Sharm*

El-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Report[42] into the violence reports that the possibility of deploying an 'international protection force' had been raised during discussions with the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government. The Palestinians had welcomed the possibility of having such a force to protect Palestinian civilians and their property from the Israeli Defense Force and the settlers. Israel had opposed the idea, arguing that such a force would not have Israel's security needs as a prime objective: another reminder of the asymmetry of the conflict. Nevertheless, there were still hopes that a UN sponsored presence in the region might be possible.

The first attempt—27 March 2001[43]—called for, *inter alia*, 'an immediate cessation of all acts of violence', and 'the establishment of a United Nations *observer* force'. The United Kingdom, France, Ireland and Norway abstained. The United States used its veto.

The second attempt, on 14 December 2001,[44] again called for 'the immediate cessation of all acts of violence', and for the establishment of a '*monitoring* mechanism to help implement the recommendations of the Mitchell report and to help create a better situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.' On this occasion there were two abstentions: the United Kingdom and Norway. Again the United States used its veto.

Enter the World Council of Churches.

In language and format reminiscent of a United Nations resolution, the Executive Committee of the WCC, meeting in Geneva in September 2001, expressed its 'alarm and dismay at the escalation of violence associated with the Second Uprising', and recommended, *inter alia,* the development of 'an accompaniment programme that would include an international presence based upon the experience of the Christian Peacemaker Teams.'[45]

This was in response—in a rare moment of unity—to an appeal for international support by leaders of thirteen Eastern and Oriental

42 See: http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/3060.htm [Accessed 24 March 2015].

43 See: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/veto7040.html [Accessed 24 March 2015].

44 See: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Un/veto12_14_01.html [Accessed 24 March 2015].

45 Resolution on ecumenical response to the Palestine-Israeli conflict. Document date: 11 September 2001. See: http://www.oikumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commission [Accessed 24 March 2015].

Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches of Jerusalem, dated 9 November 2000. The appeal included this statement:

> The Church believes that it is the right as much as the duty of an occupied people to struggle against injustice in order to obtain freedom, although it also believes that non-violent means of struggle remain stronger and far more efficient.

In response the Public Issues Committee of the WCC called upon its General Secretary and staff 'to accompany the churches of the Holy Land and their members, and advocate their rights …'

So EAPPI was born.

You may have noticed the fleeting reference to Christian Peacemaker Teams in the WCC resolution: 'an accompaniment programme … based upon the experience of the Christian Peacemaker Teams.'

EAPPI began working in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in August 2002. A CPT reservist, Rebecca Johnson, was asked to co-ordinate the work of the first twelve EAs. Since then over 1,400 accompaniers, from sixteen countries, have spent three months or more in seven locations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, providing protection by presence, advocacy and monitoring of human rights abuse. Each accompanier is committed to public speaking when they return. Many have written about their experiences; others have advocated on behalf of the Palestinian people at the highest levels of government. In November 2014, for example, nine Ecumenical Accompaniers, from as many countries, and each with their own stories to tell, met with some sixty officials of the European Union, including parliamentarians and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, as part of an advocacy initiative in Europe.

The being there in threatened communities; the walking with threatened individuals; the 'speaking truth to power'; and the steadfast refusal to demonize the other, may fall short of an accompanier's aspiration to be a peace*maker* in as asymmetric a conflict as that between Israel and Palestine, but arguably they do make a contribution to peace*building,* and especially to the creation of *space* for justice and peace to flourish.

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YouTube: search: Qurtuba Students Attacked; Police Do Nothing.

A REFLECTION: ARMENIANS AND OTHER CHRISTIANS AT THE END OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND 100 YEARS LATER

Leonard Harrow

Preamble

The general course of events we will be considering is, by and large, not in dispute.[1] Not so the interpretation of events.

As we stand towards the end of 2015 the erosion of the Living Stones, the indigenous Christian communities of the Holy Land, continues. A hundred years after its most notorious massacres, how can we begin to understand the confusing tragedy being played out before us today?

The aspect from which this paper is viewed is that of history, and in a Western context out of the oriental faculty, not that of theology. What we hope to present as an historical summary should be based primarily on facts. This paper, however, is called a 'reflection' where the reflective element is really to try and gauge how in a broad context, beyond the machinations of international politics, modern Christians might understand what is happening to their co-religionists in ancient centres of the faith, indeed, places where so much of the basic ideas and understanding of the faith were enacted and first worked out.[2] Sometimes the ideas in this paper might take us into some uncomfortable places.

1 The general course of events is available from many sources, particularly on-line, but as usual they need to be treated with the usual caution. Furthermore, in considering historical opinion the two sides—usually Armenian and Turkish—are often so partisan as to make their judgements suspect. The greater effort seems to be to win the argument rather than heed facts.

2 I also write this at a time when Western media would have us think we are about to be swamped by hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees fleeing from conflict, marching along the highways and railways into Western Europe.

1915-2015: behind us already lie the extraordinary fields of poppies at the Tower of London, whose massed ranks recall the dead and those forgotten fields mainly near and sometimes far away. The numbers and extent of combatants fallen expressed by the poppies on the side of Britain and its empire is a shock. But the whole extent of the loss caused by the conflict is beyond any normal intellectual grasp and understanding. Too often our Eurocentric perspective helps us forget and ignore how the conflict a century ago was also dealing brutally with a cultural and political heritage in distant lands which was not resolved by the heady mix of post-1918 peace conferences and their lofty aspirations. Too often we choose not to remember the extraordinary numbers of lives lost casually to cruelty, disease, maltreatment and straightforward massacre. In this the sufferings of the Living Stones, notably of the Armenian communities in the region, need to be remembered.

Many of the struggles of the First World War outside of the Western Front can be seen as part of the demise of the Ottoman empire. However, the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire among the European 'Great Powers' had been taking place for much of the nineteenth century. The Sick Man of Europe was a long time dying. His inheritance still troubles us. Let us not forget, the *casus belli*, the murder of Archduke Ferdinand, took place in a city that had been part of the Balkan provinces of the Ottomans not long before. These old battlefields still haunt us; they are still soaked in the blood of the innocent and are constantly replenished where the desiccated hand of Ottoman power had once reached.

Both space and competence mean that whole areas are excluded from our discussion: Turkey and Greece, North Africa (the former French territories of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia), Libya, Egypt, bits of Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa, the Yemen; the ever seething Balkans, parts of the Caucasus, the Crimea, Ukraine; Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel/Palestine. Other lands have names now known only to specialists. How convenient that obscure names mean we do not have to recall that they are homes and lands to a body of abused, fragile and impoverished humanity.

Historical perceptions do vary with time and respond to the aspect from which they are viewed. However, any review of events a hundred years ago in our area of interest cannot avoid seeing in the actions

of the 'Great Powers' the shameless exercise of self-interest, bullying, arrogance and ineptitude. I would argue also that this is matched by incompetence among the Muslim states and myopia, internecine squabbling and self-interest among the Christian communities.

Although we must not ignore the sufferings of other local Christian communities, 1915 has come to mark the Armenian massacres. However, the abuse predated and postdated this particular year. The enormity of what happened to this community also serves as a template, an example from history, which haunts us today.

The faithful presence of the Armenians

Linguistic studies suggest Armenian origins out of the Balkans, and that speakers of early Armenian were in Anatolia by the first millennium BC.[3] Armenians are known from Assyrian inscriptions and later are listed among the provinces of the empire of the Persians.

Armenians notably became Christian early, and along with other Christian communities (what we might conveniently refer to as the Syriac-speaking Churches of the East), became surrounded and politically dominated by Muslim states, especially from the eighth century onwards. This was not necessarily a swift process although Muslim armies and their attendant 'government' impinged on and dominated Armenian lands from the eighth century.

The Armenian community was and remains distinguished by a vibrant culture with its own language and an ancient Christian faith of non-Chalcedonian views. It is its Christian heritage and language which remain at the core of its identity. Where the political environment from time to time was hostile to the community their religious 'otherness' was a ready and simple target for accusations of treachery, disloyalty and subversion. Muslim rulers would see the minority as a convenient embarrassment for neighbouring Christian powers and at times as a potential source of revolt and sympathy on behalf of Christian states.

3 Armenian is an Indo-European language heavily influenced, particularly in its vocabulary, by the adjacent Iranian languages at various stages in its history. See Benjamin Fortsan IV, *Indo-European Language and Culture: An Introduction*, Oxford, 2009, p. 382ff.

The national Church, perhaps the first in the Christian world, was established by early fourth century. Tradition ascribes the bringing of Christianity to the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. It had developed its own alphabet and gospels in the vernacular by the early fifth century.[4] The Armenian Church in due course became divided into the Apostolic and smaller Armenian Catholic Churches (from the 1740s). The Apostolic Church retains its mother see at Etchmiadzin, within the modern state of Armenia.

It is almost easier to say who the Armenians are than answer the simple question where were and are they? 'Where' is a moveable feast; any answer has to be considered with regard to when. Anciently the Armenian community was more extensive. It was predominant in the area of Lake Van, around Mount Ararat, and the 'modern' state with its capital at Erevan. In the late Classical period, the Romans spoke of the provinces of upper and lower Armenia; 'Armenia' expands from the tenth to thirteenth centuries, partly due to a check on Muslim expansion from a resurgence of the Byzantines which created some semblance of independence, especially under the Bagratids (861–1118); emigration to Cilicia (Little Armenia) was encouraged and facilitated by the Crusaders with whom political and economic links were facilitated. As the whole region reeled under the impact of the Mongol attacks in the thirteenth century, the Armenians as non-Muslims found themselves in a favourable position and a conduit for the rather exotic schemes of Western European Christians to unite against the Muslims in an alliance with the Mongols. With the growing power of the Ottomans, notably after the invasions of Timur, the Armenian lands became largely absorbed into the Ottoman empire with significant areas disputed with Persia to the east and later by the Russians as the last named expanded into the Caucasus. Many Armenian communities, with their special skills, were encouraged by the Ottomans; they formed their own *millet* in the empire until the *Tanzimat* reforms of the nineteenth century, and sizeable communities became part of a wide diaspora in many parts of the Ottoman domains, especially in Istanbul. As the Armenian community was in the nineteenth century a *millet*, like Christians under Muslim rule elsewhere, it had *dhimmi* status. A major concern is what has *dhimmi* status over the centuries done to

4 Usually accepted as having been developed around 405 AD by Mesrop Mashtots; it originally contained 36 letters.

the Christian communities within Muslim control? It is an immediate badge of being 'second class' and in its classical form may even deny those parts of it what Westerners would regard as basic human rights.

The Armenians were great traders, with communities in many of the great cities of the world, from Constantinople, Tabriz, Caffa, east to Afghanistan and India etc., even the Far East. In the artistic sphere the contribution of the Armenians is steadily coming to light. Its manuscript and illustration tradition is of importance for the West, along with architectural innovation and a major role in the history of textiles.[5] They had developed a great tradition as craftsmen, especially in rugs and carpets, textiles and metalwork. The rugs created as late as the twentieth century (often then 'off-shore' on 'Greek' islands, perhaps even in Paris and London) remain unsurpassed in quality.[6]

Armenians played an important role in Muslim administrations, especially among the Ottomans. Many famous Armenian families served the sultans for generations at the highest levels of the administration.

The borderlands between Persia and Ottoman Turkey, part of Armenia's ancient homeland, were frequently battlefields.[7] With the

5 See R B Sergeant, *Islamic Textiles*, Beirut, 1972, esp. pp. 35-6, 64-69. It has been argued that the word 'carpet' has Armenian origins, see Lucy der Manuelian and Murray L Eiland, *Weavers, Merchants and Kings*, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, 1984, p. 18, *apud* H Kurbian; also in the first millennium BC, Armenian prowess in mining may have played a major role in the development of the *qanat* irrigation systems, common in many areas of the Middle East (see Fereydon Rahimi-Laridjani, *Die Entwicklung der Bewässerungslandwirtschaft im Iran bis in sasanidisch-frühislamische Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1988, p. 442ff.). For some indication of the wealth of the manuscript tradition, see Nerses Nersessian, 'The Impact of the Genocide of 1915 on the Armenian Orthodox Apostolic Church', *Living Stones Yearbook 2015*, in this volume., pp. 57-74.

6 Aficionados of the modern drum kit might note the Armenian ring to many of the names of the finest manufacturers of cymbals—e.g. Sabian, Ziljian, heirs to the great tradition of Ottoman military bands.

7 A regular battlefield was on the plain of Chaldiran, notably the battle in 1514 where the Safavids were defeated by the Ottomans. In the plain within Iran is also located the church/monastery of St Thaddeus, the apostle of the Armenians. It is close to the Turkish border and the peak of Greater Ararat is visible from the site. An ancient foundation, much restored through the patronage of the local Qajar prince, 'Abbas Mirza, Fath 'Ali Shah's oldest son and heir, in the nineteenth century, it remains unused for most of the year apart from the festivities in honour of Thaddeus which take place in late July and which still attract thousands of devotees. It is ironic that the responsibility for looking after the buildings is in the hands of the local village which is Kurdish. The church complex (also known as the Qara Kilīsa) and a number of other Armenian religious sites in Iran are now a

expansion of the Safavid dynasty in Iran, it greatest, and certainly most famous monarch, Shah 'Abbas I, took steps in 1605 to deny the skills of the Armenians to his traditional enemy and transferred perhaps 150,000 skilled Armenian workers, merchants and their families, totalling some 400,000;[8] they were moved from the area of Julfa (presently separated by the Aras River from Julfa in the Republic of Azerbaijan) to Iran, mainly to work on the shah's expanded capital of Isfahan. Across the Zayanda Rud, New Julfa in Safavid Iran became, and to some extent remains, an Armenian town. Most important towns in Iran had an Armenian community. The area around Salmas, west of Lake Urmia also had many Armenian villages along with other Christians.[9]

The core of the modern state of Armenia, with its capital at Yerevan, and Nakhchivan and Talish, had for centuries formed part of the Persian domains along with much of the Caucasus, including Persia's variable grip over Georgia. In fact Persian Bakhtiari khans were appointed over Yerevan by the early Qajars. It was the disastrous wars of Persia with Russia in the early years of the nineteenth century (1804-13 and 1826-28) which were formally ended by the treaty of Turkmanchai (now a suburb of modern Meyaneh in east Azerbaijan, Iran) in 1828 that saw the loss to Russia of Persia's Caucasian territories and its Armenian provinces. Its unchallenged position in the Caucasus and Armenia meant it was able to flex its military muscle and simply invade parts of north western Persia as it saw fit. The Qajar government of Persia in the nineteenth century was too weak to offer any effective opposition. Persia became an indirect colony of Russia (in the north) and Britain (in the south), an arrangement that was formalised with the entente of 1907. Persia was generously granted a sort of 'buffer' zone between the two. Thus by the time of its war with Ottoman Turkey in 1912 Russia had casually stationed many troops in Persian territory[10] and much of

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World Heritage Site and thus have, in theory, some measure of protection.

8 *Encyclopedia Iranica*, art. 'Armenia and Iran vi. Armeno-Iranian relations in the Islamic period, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/armenia-vi, accessed 13 October 2015.

9 See *EIr*, art. 'Armenians of Modern Iran', http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/armenians-of-modern-iran, accessed 13 October 2015. The community in Iran has probably endured a less hazardous time than that of its co-religionists in other lands.

10 The Russians also managed to bombard the Shrine of Imam Riza at Mashhad in 1911, supposedly in an effort to drive out a number of 'robbers', who were rebelling as part of the long-running constitutional dispute. (See D M Donaldson,

this force was still there at the outbreak of the First World War. Many elements never returned home in the wake of the Russian Revolution.

In most areas of the Middle East and the Ottoman empire the nineteenth century saw a growth of nationalism among its constituent communities. It is usual to mark the beginning of this process by the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt when Muslim states were shocked by an attack of a modern European state. Western European political interference, trade and financial interests in Ottoman lands were reciprocated by an interest in things Western. Young men would be sent to Europe for their education. New Western ideas were disseminated, the secret of Western 'success' sought. Most regions developed their nationalist movements and Armenians sought to develop their own national aspirations. Nineteenth-century nationalism also had its violent aspect, 'terrorism', for example in the case of the Armenians with the Dashnak movement. Dashnaktsutyun members also formed the *fedayi* groups that defended Armenian civilians through armed resistance. Russian expansion south through the Caucasus was seen as a support, its ambitions to serve local nationalist hopes; the earlier oppression of Armenians and other Christian groups were all factors encouraging Armenians to look to the West. The Armenian community was more ready for and open to ideas of nationalism, modern education, reform and democracy that had been developed in the great European centres, especially France. In Ottoman Turkey itself the move for reform crystallised in the Young Turks and the revolution of 1908.

The Armenians and their aspirations were one of many similar problems facing Young Turks. Before the First World War there were numerous urban clashes and riots. The Armenian community had suffered abuse in a number of towns in the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the run-up to the First World War. Armenians were driven by a mixture of envy, suspicions of disloyalty, support for Russia and some 'terrorist' activity. When Armenians sought more rights within the Ottoman empire, Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II, in response, organized state-sponsored massacres against the Armenians between 1894 and 1896, resulting in an estimated death toll from 80,000 to 300,000

The Shi'ite Religion, London, 1033, p. 177, and photo on frontispiece for some idea of the material damage inflicted.) In the east and south of the country Britain in the early twentieth century also had its own forces whose significance was to grow as the oil industry blossomed. See Antony Wynn, *Persia in the Great Game*, London, 2003, which is mainly a biography of Maj-Gen Sir Percy Sykes.

people. These became known as the Hamidian massacres.[11] The events of 1915 were not without precedent.

Too often in the West too few are aware that in the First World War there was a major campaign in Anatolia fought between the Russians and Ottomans. It proved to be as awful, bloody and futile as any on the Western Front. The Russian invasions in the east (troops were already there from the casual invasion of Persian Azerbaijan during the Russo-Turkish war of 1912) were supported by the Armenians. The general course of events which culminated in the great massacres of 1915 is well established in outline. In effect the Ottomans undertook an extensive policy of ethnic cleansing. This saw the massive displacement of populations, sickening massacres (often carried out by irregular Kurdish Hamdiyya units); a half to 1.3 million Armenians perished. There seems to have been two phases: the wholesale killing of the able-bodied male population through massacre and subjection of army conscripts to forced labour, followed by the deportation of women, children, the elderly and infirm on death marches from eastern Turkey into the Syrian desert. Deportees were deprived of food and water and subjected to periodic robbery, rape, and massacre. We have no need to remind ourselves of the fate of many Christians in Syria in recent months in almost the same places and under similar circumstance. It is mainly eastern Anatolia, north Syria and Iraq that were the killing grounds—as they have become today. There were forced marches, starvation, robbery and murder in which not only the Turks were involved but also the Kurds;[12] other Christian groups, notably the Assyrian Ancient Church of the East, suffered enormously.

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11 See Wikipedia entry, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamidian_massacres, accessed 9 September 2015.

12 Ancient tensions between Kurds and local Christians meant the Kurds were willing to participate in local militias (notably the Hamidiyya regiment, 1891) which were responsible for much of the murders perpetrated. Kurdish aspirations to some sort of statehood seem at present to have reached some maturity. However, these sentiments are not new. There were numerous Kurdish uprisings, notably the revolts in the 1920s and 30s. A further confusion is the short-lived Kurdish Republic of Ararat, which lasted from 1927 until snuffed out by Turkey in 1930. As Kurdish territory was spread across several national borders, rebels would usually seek refuge in 'another' country. These revolts continued and perhaps have never come to an end. See E O'Ballance, *The Kurdish Revolt: 1961-70*, London, 1973.

The Turkish view has never conceded the term 'genocide', a legal category propounded by Raphael Lemkin in the 1930s as a result of the Armenian experience around the First World War and Eastern Christian massacres in 1933 at Simele (north west of Mosul) (see below). Learned legal opinion has no doubt that the Turks committed genocide in the First World War.[13]

Turkey usually counters with the argument that such are the fortunes of war and that Turkish losses exceeded those of the Armenians.[14] The Turkish massacres also extended to the other Christian communities in south east Turkey and in what is now northern Iraq.[15] For these communities, the various Syriac-speaking Christian groups, especially the Assyrians, this is the period of the *Sayfo*—the sword, one term among several used for the evil fate they endured. The displacement of whole communities was taking place in the very regions that saw a similar fate a hundred years later as a result of the Syrian civil war and the dislocation of central government in northern Iraq. The valley of Nineveh became a vale of tears during the genocide of the First World War as much as it was to be a centre of misery in recent times. The disregard of the national integrity of Persia meant Russian and Turkish troops in particular occupied much of Persia's north west, the very areas where there was a concentration of Christian villages, both of Armenians and other Eastern Christians. Persia became a battlefield; many Christian villages in northwest Persia (Assyrian and Chaldean) around Lake Urmiya suffered as their co-religionists in Ottoman Turkey had. Many Assyrian communities fled to other parts of Persia from around Urmiya. Villages were abandoned and have remained so.[16]

The new Turkish Republic's attitude to the massacres/genocide was denial and a continuing refusal even to acknowledge an 'Armenia' within Anatolia. Reaction in Western Europe and USA to these events

13 Geoffrey Robertson, *Was there an Armenian genocide? Geoffrey Robertson QC's opinion with reference to Foreign & Commonwealth Office documents which show how British ministers, parliament and people have been misled*, 9 October 2009 (PDF: http://groong.usc.edu/Geoffrey-Robertson-QC-Genocide.pdf. Accessed 28 September 2015).

14 Turkish losses in the Anatolia theatre were considerable. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasus_Campaign (accessed 17 September 2015).

15 Perhaps 150,000 to 275,000 deaths. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide#Reports_and_reactions etc. (accessed 28 September 2015).

16 See in particular David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*, London, 2011, chap. 10.

during the war was noisy and vivid. There was much huffing and puffing and cries of horror at the outrages in the Western press and from the great and the good. The extent of the outrages was investigated even whilst it was in progress.[17]

In the immediate post-war period Britain (and to some extent France) and Russia occupied the Caucasus and northern Persia. Russian and Ottoman armies still faced each other in the north west of Persia, a situation further confused by the fall of imperial Russia and the ensuing chaos. Britain had forces in the region and the Caucasus. Both the British and French made some attempts to support the Whites in Russia's Civil War and all combatants regularly abused the sovereignty of both Turkey, emerging from its post-war trauma under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), and that of Persia.[18]

Hostilities between Ottoman Turkey and the allies ended with the armistice signed on 30 October 1918 at Mudros Bay on the Greek island of Lemnos; Constantinople was occupied and the victors relished carving up what remained of the Ottoman empire. The Treaty of Sèvres (10 August 1920) sought to formalise this dismemberment but its harsh terms were rejected by the Nationalists under Mustafa Kemal. The subsequent Turkish War of Independence and the Turks' victory over the Greeks meant the Sèvres treaty was supplanted by that of Lausanne (24 July 1923). This period also saw the horrific exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey. The mandates were established and chunks of the Ottoman empire handed out among the victors. Other inconveniences of the war's aftermath included, as part of French Syria, Hatay province which briefly became independent in 1938 before joining Turkey the

17 The Westminster parliament commissioned Viscount James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee to investigate the events of 1915-16 which became the Blue Book, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916*. Toynbee carefully compiled and verified dozens of eyewitness accounts from different parts of the Ottoman empire.

18 There was a British 'flotilla' on the Caspian at the end of the war and into 1919, overseeing the Turkish withdrawal and having the odd skirmish with a nascent Bolshevik 'navy'. See *Operations in Persia, 1914-1919*, HMSO, London, 1987, p. 422; we should not forget either the amazingly incompetent 'Dunsterforce' (*op. cit.*, p. 364ff.) which fought in Baku pending the establishment of the brief Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, and the North Persia Force (*op. cit.*, p. 356), among whose commanders were Brigadier General Hugh Bateman-Champain (an England cricketer); these units were operating into 1919 and 1920.

following year after a referendum. This move was one that Syria has always contested.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917 the old imperial regions of the Caucasus, including the rump of Armenia formed the short-lived Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic in the first part of 1918. The Dashnaktsutyun government of Armenia then declared its independence on 28 May 1918. This First Republic was short-lived and fraught with war, territorial disputes, and an influx of Armenian refugees from Ottoman areas.

At the end of the war the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) promised to maintain the existence of the Armenian republic and to attach former territories of Ottoman Armenia to it. Also, just before, on 5 August 1920, the Armenian National Union, the *de facto* Armenian administration in Cilicia, declared the independence of Cilicia as an Armenian autonomous republic as a French protectorate. The treaty was rejected by nationalist Turkey which moved against the new Armenian Republic. In the ensuing hostilities the Turks were victorious and regained all the territories Sèvres has sought to concede to the Armenians. At the same time Soviet forces invaded the 'Russian' areas of Armenia and the republic collapsed. In spite of uprisings in 1921 Soviet control was complete by 13 July. Armenia became part of the Transcaucasian SFSR on 4 March 1922 which was dissolved 1936 when Armenia became a Soviet Socialist Republic.

In recent years, after the end of the USSR, an independent Armenia has emerged, in little more than the rump of its historical homeland. Armenia has fought its neighbour, Azerbaijan (1988-94).[19] The disputed region of Ngorno Karabagh is Armenia's West Bank. An

19 Modern Azerbaijan is almost a cartographic construct. It declared its independence from the Russian empire in 1918 but found itself part of the Soviet empire by 1920. Historically Azerbaijan refers to the province of that name in north west Persia, whose capital was usually Tabriz. The modern Azerbaijan Republic occupies the areas known in Persian history as Arran and Shirvan (perhaps more properly Sharvan) and bits of traditional Azerbaijan. It remains a source of propaganda and vilification against Armenia, not least because of the ongoing dispute over Ngorno Karabagh. See a partial view in Rouben Galichain, *The Invention of History: Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Showcasing of Imagination* Printinfo Art Books, Gomidas Institute, London and Yerevan, 2009; also see http://asbarez.com/114872/armenian-cartographer-sheds-light-on-azeri-propaganda/, and http://www.countercurrents.org/chorbajian070710.htm [both accessed 4 September 2015].

area predominantly Armenian, 'independent' but recognised by few other states, it is notionally within Azerbaijan.

In Iran after the First World War the Armenian community seemed to prosper, especially in Tehran and Isfahan. In recent years because of the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution the relationship with the government has not always been comfortable.[20]

Mandates—Syria and Iraq

The French administrative divisions of Syria (mandate notionally lasted 1923-46), including Lebanon, was a cynical exercise in divide and rule.[21] French mandate rule was no less shabby than that of Britain in Iraq and Palestine.[22] The mandatories were seen for a while as saviours by the local Christian populations but hopes were rarely fulfilled. Syria

20 There is an anomaly of the size of the Armenian community in modern Iran: in the last forty years the population has apparently risen with 0.5 percent, perhaps 300,000, being Armenians; census returns suggest a reduction with emigration to post-soviet Armenia, but many returned in the 2000s and other Christian groups sought refuge from Saddam's Iraq and the attendant wars. The community today is essentially urban. It is still ferociously proud of its own history and the events of 1915 are always commemorated in a permanent exhibition at the museum opposite the cathedral (Holy Saviour, also known as the Kalīsā-yi Vānk) in New Julfa, Isfahan. The Armenians remain the largest religious minority in Iran. Under present arrangements they have five of the fourteen seats reserved for non-Muslim groups (others are Zoroastrians, Jews and Assyrian Christians) out of 290 in the parliament (the Islamic Consultative Assembly). They are the only minority with official observing status in the Guardian and Expediency Discernment Councils. Today about half of the Armenians live in the Tehran area. A quarter live in Isfahan, and the rest are mainly in north west Iran. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Armenians, accessed 10 September 2015.

21 For a recent study, see James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East*, London, 2012. France had had a long-term connection with the Levant. This stemmed not just from the Crusades but also its longstanding support of the Maronites. France saw the region as one of special interest to itself.

22 The French mandate lasted from 1923 until 1946. In 1920 Faisal b. Husain had been declared king of an independent Syria but France and Britain insisted on implementing the Sykes-Picot agreement and also ignored the 1919 King-Crane Commission. Faisal was obliged to leave and the French took control. They created six 'states' including Lebanon in a classic policy of divide and rule. Britain decided Faisal was of the right stuff to take over as king of Iraq in 1921. The Iraq mandate ended in 1932 with Iraq's 'independence'. Faisal died in 1933 aged 48. The monarchy lasted until the military coup of Qasim in 1958, followed by the Baathist coup of 1963.

had received many refugees from the genocide to supplement the Armenian community that had long been established there. As well as Armenians there were many Assyrian refugees. Christians came to make up a large part of the population of Aleppo.[23]

The suffering of Christians in northern Iraq continued under the British mandate (1920-32). The Assyrians, the largest group, had been located mainly in the Hakkari region (now Turkey) and were quite tribal in structure. They had supported Russia during the war but were let down after the Revolution. Many fled to Urmiya (perhaps 50,000) in north west Iran. However, large numbers returned, with many in Mosul and the Kurdistan area in the new Iraq. They aspired to some sort of autonomy, but this was not part of British policy for the new Iraq. During the Mandate, Assyrian levies were formed. With a fearsome reputation there were some breakdowns of discipline and antagonism and resentment from Kurds and other local communities. The Christian Assyrians had long had a historical feud with the Kurds. In 1915 this had culminated with the *Sayfo*. In Mandate Iraq the levies British officers raised among the Assyrians were used to help put down Kurdish revolts. The Assyrians' aim of 'a national home' was an inconvenience for the mandatory and, of course, for Iraq itself. As Britain ended the Mandate, the Assyrians held out for autonomy.

In 1933 there was a clash at Dayraboun between Assyrians who had sought refuge in Syria and the Iraqi army. Survivors fled back to Syria; the prisoners were apparently shot. The reaction in Iraq saw Kurds as well as other groups attack and loot Assyrian villages; this led to the Simele massacre *(Madhbaḥat Sumayl)* mainly at the hands of the Iraqi army. The massacres proper began in August with Kurdish, Yazidi and Arab tribes participating. A lot of buck-passing as to who was responsible followed. There were triumphal receptions for the army in Iraq but horror outside especially in the Western media.[24] Not only Simele, but 63 Assyrian villages in the Dohuk and Mosul

23 The Armenian community in Syria grew during the nineteenth century. The renowned Baron Hotel was founded by the Mazloumian family. Local Armenians also produced some superb rugs; see *Weavers, Merchants and Kings*, pp. 200ff. In 1925 a very fine carpet made by orphans of the genocide, albeit in Ghazir, Lebanon, was presented to President Coolidge. It was presented to the White House in 1982.

24 Sami Zubaida, 'Contested nations: Iraq and the Assyrians', *Nations and Nationalism* 6 (3), (July 2000), pp. 363–382, p. 366ff.

districts were involved with estimates varying between 600 and 3,000 Assyrian deaths.[25]

The conclusion of the British mandate of Iraq caused considerable unease among the Assyrians who felt betrayed by the British and even harked back to some sort of *millet* system they had known under the Ottomans. In the long term, however, the British backed the Iraqi government and rejected an international inquiry into the killings, fearing that this would provoke further massacres against Christians. The change in British attitude towards the Assyrians gave rise to the notion of the British betrayal among some Assyrians. Under the subsequent monarchy and the Baathist regime, Christian minorities enjoyed some respite but the precariousness of their situation was exposed in the Gulf Wars and the disturbing events we see today.

The disruption of the Christian communities clearly did not cease with the end of the First World War. In the USSR Armenia was anaesthetised by the Soviet system, which was no more inclined to tolerate any hint of opposition than the imperial Russian bear of the tsar.

So much of the present situation and the misery endured by the Christian minorities is located in the very areas where lines in the sand were made which derived from the casual arrangements made by the likes of Sykes-Picot, compounded by the McMahon correspondence and the Balfour Declaration. The killing fields of the plain of Nineveh were still in use in the early 1930s as the Simele massacres show. The old province of Hatay is racked by the turmoil of the Syria conflict, and the so-called Islamic State appears to control large areas where ancient eastern Churches had their most vibrant communities. These are the same social groups that suffered so much in and around the time of the First World War and in the same regions. For them the Great War solved nothing. Rather it maintained the misery and stored up resentment, bitterness and anger that have produced the scenes we have become familiar with today. There seems an almost continuous re-assignment of nations, ethnic cleansing, displacement, refugees, murder, robbery and misery for hundreds of thousands.

25 *Ibid*., p. 370.

Familiar themes

For the indigenous Christian communities 2015 echoes problems which were thrown into sharp relief in 1915 but which were themselves far from being without precedent. Vast numbers of people were and are abused and driven from their homes by conflict and warfare.

Modern Western policy, not only of the US and Europe but also of Russia, in Iraq and Syria is to say the least confusing. Perhaps it is more appropriate to think of it as bankrupt. The Western powers are responsible for much of the current political turmoil and the many confusing alliances and strange bedfellows constantly forming and dissolving would seem to offer little immediate comfort or prospects for peace.

As noted, this horrifying scenario is taking place in familiar areas of conflict seen in and around the time of the First World War: eastern Turkey, northern Syria and northern Iraq. It is small solace that the Armenian community has not been as involved as a century ago although, of course, the sizeable community in Syria has been severely affected by the current crisis and may be on the way to obliteration.

The First World War was the twilight of the old empires, the lords of human kind, with the concomitant and insolvent ongoing foreign policies of the 'Great Powers'. No better treatment came to the region either from Bolshevik Russia, as it descended into its own civil war and the eventual triumph of Stalinism. For our region, the war did not solve the problems it was fought over. But the treatment of the Christian minorities in the region by the 'Great Powers', whilst it might be tainted, inadequate and indeed is often shameful, is only one of the factors in their decline. This decline is a slow process which has been going on for perhaps fourteen centuries.

So often the local states of modern times can only be seen as failed states, whether they were the creations of imperial ministries in Europe or of indigenous origin. This is the context in which the minority Christian communities of modern times have had to live. For the lands of the Middle East, certainly in recent times, the political and economic paradigms to which they—and indeed most of the world—have aspired is that of the West. Western democracy, in which form exactly it is not always clear, and Western capitalism, again apparent in a range of guises, have been the models whose success and resilience has been those pursued by most states.

None of the local Arab states based on Muslim precepts in particular can be regarded from a Western point of view as particularly wholesome and desirable. Apart from failing to deliver economic benefits, in spite of considerable natural advantages, states such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt, have been characterised by dictatorship, repression and violence. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have natural resources and trade required by the West but are run by governments that would otherwise be severely criticised as oppressive, bigoted plutocracies. We would seem to find much to criticise in Turkey and Iran also. In these contexts Christian minorities were persistently weak, or seen as of unreliable loyalty, or supporters for selfish reasons of unpopular dictatorships.

The indigenous Christian Churches have themselves a history of internal squabbling, questionable governance and customs that other Western Christian groups find difficult to accommodate. Perhaps also the assertion of local nationalisms by some Christian groupings was a step too far for many local Muslim governments.

Christian communities in the region under Muslim control have nominally also endured the debilitating effect of *dhimmi* status for centuries.[26] The degree to which this has been applied by Muslim rulers with any great rigour has not been consistent. However, this was the formalisation of a second-class citizenry with a sort of inbuilt redundancy whose effects have never been properly explored. But is the slow demise of local Christian communities caused by such factors? They have clearly also been battered like their friends and neighbours by Muslim governmental failures to provide an acceptable level of social prosperity and growth and in too many cases to fulfil the first duty of the state to defend its people.

Is not 'Islam', those states where Muslims are in the great majority, the common context (from Ottomans to sundry modern jihadists) of today? It is an inconvenient truth that the common factor within the areas of these ancient Christian communities is that they have struggled for survival for almost fourteen centuries in a context of growing and assertive Muslim control? Of course, there is no single Islam, rather a collection of local Muslim cultures, each one varying from place to place and also from period to period. However, it is local Muslim communities who say what Islam is. The 'varieties' of modern

26 See C E Bosworth, 'The Concept of *Dhimma* in Early Islam', *Living Stones Yearbook 2012*, pp. 143-64.

Muslim societies, their adherence in large sectors to *salafi* ideas, and thus their militancy and 'fundamentalism' is far from uniform. Every religion responds to its social and contemporary needs. There is constant evolution in action. Islam too has many colours in its Sunni guise in both the geographical and chronological contexts. Sunni Islam in particular is not uniform.[27] But every now and again a level of fanaticism arises among Muslims which seems irrational to the West. What is disturbing today is the degree to which there is an apparent sympathy for, and often a direct acceptance of, what many Muslims would regard as extreme views.

Do we just watch with a shrug of the shoulders the end game of this long process of Christian retreat and slow death? Are we looking at a sort of Darwinianism, the evolution of Christian groups slowly moving toward oblivion in a process of survival of the fittest? The Western Christian tradition seems almost indifferent to the suffering of the Living Stones of the region. Is it not just beyond the experience of most policy-makers and decision-takers in the West?

Since the demise of any formal imperial presence in the area, it may be argued that the appeasing, irenic and 'ecumenist' reactions of Christians in the West towards many Muslim groupings in Iraq and Syria in particular, as well as to the views of local Muslim groups, have been ineffective. Perhaps the Christian response is too often based on false assumptions and on a deep desire to be 'charitable'.[28]

It is misleading to view Islam as a sort of Christianity with minor differences, and thereafter that the two are in a sort of beauty contest. There are, apart from doctrinal gulfs and practices, serious systemic differences. Any attempt at comparison which originates from such different starting points means that any conclusions function in different time-space dimensions—a dialogue of often wilful mutual incomprehension.

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27 This stands in contrast to modern *Ithna 'ashari* Shi 'ism which in an Iranian context has something much like a hierarchical structure familiar to Western experience.

28 The Church's view for many years, although cautious, even viewed Islam as a 'heresy'. See, for example, Andrew Unsworth, 'John Paul II, Islam and the Christian-Muslim encounter', in (eds) A O'Mahony, W Peterburs and M A Shomali, *A Catholic-Shi'a Engagement, Faith and Reason in Theory and Practice*, London, 2006, pp. 253-303. Among the early proponents of the 'heresy' idea was St John Damascene, *c.* AD 749, *Heresies*, paras. 99-104; see http://orthodoxinfo.com/general/stjohn_islam.aspx, accessed 9 September 2015, and, F H Foster, 'Is Islam a Christian Heresy?', *The Muslim World* (1932), 22, pp. 126–133.

I do not think it is helpful that much Western thinking seems to have been attracted by the argument that Judaism, Christianity and Islam form the three Abrahamic faiths, that what divides is small and there is some greater unity at work. There have been many elegant apologists for this view. But can all the three faiths be 'right'? Isn't one going to be proved right in the end? Although we do share the same burden of struggling to accommodate humanity's relationship to God which is the gift of the Semitic monotheisms, I think this concept of the Abrahamic faiths is an unhappy one and does not bear much scrutiny. A common historical background is no more demonstrative of the need for some sort of union than the common history of the German and English languages has meant a happy history in recent years. Do arguments stressing our common humanity as more important than any differences really only re-state that good, altruistic elements and norms are shared in all societies?

Islam (and thus the Muslim state) is notionally a theocracy. It cannot be 'democratic' in a Western sense. Its theory does not seem to support any ascending theory of government. Its governmental structure does not ascend from the people through an elected system to those charged with running the state at the top of a pyramid of power. Authority is from God, from above, and sent down, interpreted and put into practice by its scholars and religious authorities.[29]

Islam is a first and foremost a legal system; it is dominated by its jurisconsults. It has little theology as the West would recognise it and little philosophy (its intellectual energies diverted often into its mystical traditions). These intellectual traditions were relegated within mainstream Islam by the twelfth century.

Rooted in its scripture (as against Christianity's roots in the person of Christ) lies strength and weakness. In spite of the prowess of its traditional grammarians its core texts have not been subjected to the sort of historical-critical method that assailed Christian scripture, especially in the nineteenth century. I would argue that as its important religious texts have not been subjected to any historical critical method

29 Although not in a Sunni context, it is worth noting that Iran had heated debates at the time of the revolution about whether it should call itself a 'republic'. See also Nazih N Ayubi, Nader Hashemi and Emran Qureshi. 'Islamic State' in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*. May 2, 2015.http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0394 [accessed 9 September 2015].

so there is really no critical discussion of its seminal texts in a modern sense, not least for the Qur'an. There seems an irrational fear, a response beyond reason, of any criticism of its sacred text.

It is almost a commonplace to say that Islam imposes its 'way of life' on adherents far more than modern Christianity does. It deals with aspects of the conduct of the faithful, behaviour and life that would seem an intrusion into personal liberties in the West.

Muslim interpreters of religious law, like lawyers everywhere, have been quite capable over the years of subtly spinning ideas in whatever direction seemed expedient. However, typically there are many Muslim traditions that Christians find difficult to accept. Often Muslim traditions have often remained more honoured in theory than practice but there are plenty of examples of some practices in modern times that are of concern to Western norms, other than the barbarities of what passes for jihadism today. Islam is not a pacific religion.[30]

Examples of behaviour ascribed to the Prophet are accepted and understood to be without blemish; they are examples for all time, not a convenient historicism. Hence traditional Muslim views and behaviour, its whole legal tradition, are very much reliant on ancient precedent and opinions, especially of the early heroes and exemplars of Muslim history. These views are very difficult views to shift and challenge. They have become significant aspects of what makes Muslims Muslim. If they could be changed, it may be that Islam would cease to be Islam. We should note that many Muslim states have never ratified, or even signed, many of the various international agreements on human rights[31] mainly because no concession can be made to any other law which might override tradition and imply its limitations.

30 We might also mention that in the strict application of *shari'ah* law, there remain strangely ancient features such as retaliation *(lex talionis—qisas)*, blood-wit *(diyah)*, and the now familiar brutal punishments. Moreover, Muslim tradition has often been anti-capitalist (joint stock companies have been questionable in many Islamic states; where there is any hint of 'gambling', financial sophistry has been applied to justify such systems and we have seen how 'Islamic banks' avoid any suggestion of income through interest, etc.). Other more familiar areas where we can never meet if the traditional interpretations are maintained include: the status of women, polygamy and marriage, divorce inequalities for men and women, inheritance laws, the second class status of the *dhimma* and its many notional restrictions, sexual attitudes (which often seem hypocritical or ambivalent) of men towards women and homosexuality and the performing arts; perhaps even slavery … .

31 See https://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/ratification-saudikingdom.html, accessed 10 September 2015.

Islam sees itself as the 'last' and final revealed monotheism. It looks down its nose on its predecessors from the viewpoint of a God-given superiority. It has a different historical perspective from Christianity and its initial historical experience was quite different from that of Christianity. It did not have to struggle to survive and grow in secret; Islam's early military and political success was quick and near complete—a sign of divine approval.[32] The problem for the Muslim imagination is reconciling its miserable political performance of recent times with its initial scintillating success.

Whilst many Muslims remain appalled by so-called Islamic State many of its aspirations find an echo throughout the history of the Islamic world. They are part of what it is to be a Muslim: ideas of caliphate, the strict application of *shari'ah* law, the unassailable faith in the Qur'an, Hadith and the Sunnah, the reliance on jurisprudence and its exponents, an uncomplicated view of *jihad*. Where the beliefs require being actualised, extreme movements seem to find at the present time a ready audience. We should not be surprised that a recent survey found an uncomfortable level of support for extremists even among UK Muslims.[33] Ideas of *jihad*, the caliphate, martyrdom, the application of Islamic law, for example, are being 'tested' in the field, in spite of moderate Muslim voices trying to ameliorate this Muslim 'puritanism'. These ideas have been part of the history of the faith. For many young people, pained or disgruntled at the bleakness of their lives, they also see it as their future.[34]

Yet Muslim societies since the nineteenth century have struggled to come to terms successfully with the adaptable and flexible successful model of the West. They have been baffled by their political and

32 It is also worth considering whether Muslim society has ever really developed an effective way of dealing with finding itself in a minority situation.

33 BBC poll, 25 February 2015, see http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31293196 (accessed 9 September 2015) and http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11434695/Over-a-quarter-of-British-Muslims-have-sympathy-for-the-Charlie-Hebdo-terrorists.-That-is-far-too-many.html (accessed 9 September 2015).

34 Perhaps one way Westerners can make sense of this is to think of it as a sort of 'nationalism' at work here. It is a vague irrational support for an imagined ideal. I know from personal experience that during the 'Troubles' in Ireland, among the Nationalist community there was always widespread horror at random killings, murders and bombings; however, although the same communities had a very good idea who the perpetrators were, there was rarely a thought to tell the authorities—a sympathy for the ideal and the mythology of the nationalists for a united Ireland had taken over.

economic failure. Perhaps the militancy of today is better seen as a desperate response to challenge the Western model whose outlook, intellectual curiosity and godlessness otherwise seem unchallenged.

Is today's Christian response to the institutional degradation of the Living Stones in the Muslim lands of the Middle East an appropriate one? Is the burden of responsibility shifting now from a guilt-ridden Christian West to a Muslim society whose only response to its chronic political and economic problems is one of violence?

THE IMPACT OF THE GENOCIDE OF 1915 ON THE ARMENIAN ORTHODOX APOSTOLIC CHURCH

IN MEMORIAM OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

1915-2015

Nerses Vrej Nersessian

The approximately two million Armenians in the Ottoman empire had a sizeable presence in Constantinople although the majority were dispersed in the coastal cities, and in Cilicia, the fertile south-eastern region along the Mediterranean Sea, where an Armenian kingdom had held sway from the eleventh century through to 1375. Yet, despite this broad distribution, most Turkish Armenians still inhabited their historic plateau lands: Adana, Aintab, Baghesh, Bitlis, Edesia (Urfa, Edessa), Erznka (Erzinjan), Evdokia (Tokat), Hadjn, Karin, Erzerum, Kharpet (Kharput, Harput), Kesaria (Kaiseri, Caesaria), Marash, Mush, Sivas (Sebastia), Van, and Zeitun forming six *vilayets* (provinces).

Persian Armenia lay in the *khanates* of Erevan, Nor Nakhijevan, and Kharabagh. In 1826-27 the Armenians lent military and political support to the Russians in anticipation not only of liberation from the rule of the Persians, but also of achieving a base for an autonomous Armenian state. In 1826 Archbishop Nerses Ashtaraketsi, when primate of the Dioceses of Nor Nakhijevan and Bessarabia (later Catholicos of All Armenian as Nerses V, Ashraraketsi Shahazizian, 1843-57), in a famous 'Appeal to the Armenian Nation', reminded Armenians that the Russians were coming not in their own self-interest but for the peace, security, and well-being of the Armenians. He asked Armenians, in the name of their glorious forefathers, for the sake of God and Christianity, not to spare either their goods or their lives for the success of the Russians. The archbishop himself led a detachment of Armenian volunteers against the Persians. Those Armenian leaders who had played their part in the execution of the Russian conquest of Transcaucasia were now ignored.[1] For the Armenian leadership only its minimal

1 N B Sarukhanian, 'Արեվելյան Հայաստանի միացումը Ռուսաստանին ժամանակակից հայ գործիչների գնահատումով' ('The union of Eastern

demands had been realised. Armenians in Transcaucasia had been freed from the rule of the shah and his vassal khans. In such circumstances, most Eastern Armenian religious and lay leaders, both in Russia and abroad, though disillusioned, accepted the reality of Russian colonial rule, hoping to make Russian Armenia a secure ground for nation building. Others, however, felt betrayed and frustrated that their high aspirations to create self rule in Armenia had been abandoned.[2]

From the rise of the Arab domination in 640 to the rise of the Armenian Bagratuni kingdom in 884 freedom of religion was assured by a contemporary agreement between the Arabs and the Armenians cited by Armenian and Arab historians.[3]

The Byzantine empire as a social and political institution ended on 29 May 1453. The fall of Constantinople on that day completed the process of transition from a Christian Roman empire to a Muslim Ottoman empire. The unification of the Armenian people was formally legitimated by the institution of the *Ermeni millet*.[4] In 1461, the Ottoman government invited Bishop Yovakim of Bursa (1461-78) to Constantinople and bestowed upon him the title of patriarch, entrusting him with the ecclesiastical and civil government of all the Armenians living in the Ottoman empire.[5] The investiture, initially involving only the Armenians, was extended and very soon covered other ethno-religious groups: Copts, Syrians, Jacobites, and Ethiopians. Thus, along with the Greek patriarch, who looked after all the Chalcedonian Christian communities, there emerged the Armenian patriarch who

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Armenia with Russia in the evaluation of contemporary Armenian activists'), *Lraber* 7 (1967), pp. 52-67.

2 Aleksandr G Eritseants, *Ամենայն Հայոց կաթողիկոսութիւնը եւ Կովկասի Հայք XIX—րորդ դարում: Մասն Ա (1800-32 թ.)* ('The Catholicate of All Armenians and the Armenians of the Caucasus in the 19th century. Part I [1800-32]'), Tiflis, 1894.

3 Nina G Garsoian, 'The independent Kingdoms of Medieval Armenia' in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern times*, Richard G Hovannisian, ed., New York, 1997, vol. I, pp. 143-185.

4 R N Frye, 'The political history of Iran under the Sasanians', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Cambridge, Ehsan Yarshater, ed., vol. III, pt. I, p. 132; C E Bosworth, 'The concept of *dhimma* in early Islam', *Living Stones Yearbook* (2012), pp. 142-64; Hagop Barsoumian, 'The dual role of the Armenian *Amira* class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian *Millet* (1750-1850)', in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman empire*, New York, 1982, vol. I, pp. 171-84.

5 Kevork B Bardakjian, 'The rise of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople', in Braude and Lewis, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 89-100.

represented all the non-Chalcedonian Christians. The *millet* was a fairly typical institution in the Ottoman empire. It gave the ethno-religious minorities in the empire a juridical status and a specific form of organisation that on one hand sanctioned the difference between Armenians and Ottoman citizens, permitting non-parity and possible discrimination; on the other hand, there was a link and a bond that guaranteed a minimum of protection and representation within the state structure. The Armenians did not meet insuperable obstacles in preserving their national identity, and, although some were constrained to embrace Islam and more were subjected to economic exploitation, they learned to live with their Muslim overlords and neighbours. This situation changed radically by the nineteenth century as a consequence of the gradual demise of the Ottoman empire.

Since the emergence of the Ottoman empire, over the years many Armenians had adopted the Turkish language (the entire Bible in Turkish in Armenian script was available as early as 1842),[6] culture, and Islam to escape their second-class status within the ethno-religious administrative system, the *Ermeni millet*. The Armenian Patriarchate had jurisdiction over all the Armenians of the empire, except the Catholicate of Cilicia (Sis/Kozan), Aght'amar, and the Armenian Patriarchate of St James' Jerusalem. In 1827 Sultan Mahmud II, in a gesture of defiance against the Holy See and France, banished the Catholic Armenians who were part of the Armenian *mille*t from the capital. As a consequence thousands suffered, many perishing from the cold and rigours of the journey. The Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, provided not only for the return of the Catholic Armenians but also, due to heavy diplomatic pressure from the French, supported by the British, Mahmud II was obliged to grant the status of a separate *millet* to Armenian Catholics and eventually raised it to the status of patriarchate on 17 April 1834. Shortly after, the Evangelical Armenians announced on 1 July 1846 the formation of the First Evangelical Armenian Church of Constantinople. Those who chose to maintain their national religious identity were required to pay heavy taxes, comply with orders regarding the *devshirme* and the forced collection of children to serve in the Ottoman *janissary* corps and submit to restrictions under imperial and religious laws, despite the fact that the *devshirme* method of recruitment had been

6 T H Darlow and H F Moule, *Historical catalogue of the printed editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, London 1911, pp. 1634-48.

abandoned in 1648 and *janissary corps* had been disbanded in 1826 as a consequence of the process of 'Islamisation'.

Sultan Abdül Mejid (*r.* 1839-61), responding to domestic and European pressures for structural reform, introduced the *Tanzimat* ('Reorganization' or 'Reform') in the Ottoman empire, which consisted of the *Hatt-i-Sherif of Gulhane* ('Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber') promulgated on 3 November 1838, followed by the *Hatt-i-Humayun* ('The Imperial Rescript') on 18 February 1856, in the aftermath of the Crimean War. Under these reforms, the sultan promised equality for Muslims and non-Muslims regardless of sect and creed. His Muslim subjects, however, viewed the principle of equality before the law for non-Muslims as a violation of 'Islamic law and tradition'. In parallel, the Sublime Porte in 1847 ratified the establishment of the Armenian Spiritual Council (religious) and the Supreme Council (laymen), both under the directorship of the Armenian patriarchate at Constantinople. In 1863 the government also issued an imperial decree ratifying the Armenian National Constitution (Ազգային Սահմանադրութիւն).[7]

The thought of taking arms for self-defence was the last resort in the process of the Armenian cultural and political revival, with personal and collective emancipation being at the core of the movement. The example set by the Greeks and other Balkan peoples and their success in gaining freedom was inspiring, and the allegorical admonition of Archbishop Mkrtitch Khrimian, known as *Hayrik*, meaning 'Father' (b. 1892-d. 1907, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople from 1868-79 and Catholicos of All Armenians, assuming the title Mkrtitch I Vanetsi Khrimian *Hayrik*, 1892-1907), called on Armenians to follow the path of armed struggle instead of continued petitions of supplication. Mkrtitch Khrimian *Hayrik*, shortly after returning in deep despondency to Constantinople from the Berlin Congress of 1878, which he had attended as head of the Armenian delegation, preached a memorable sermon filled with metaphors in the Armenian cathedral in Kum Kapu. He told his congregation the following parable:

7 H F B Lynch, *Armenia. Travels and Studies in two volumes*, London, 1901, vol. II. Appendix I, 'National constitution of the Armenians in the Turkish Empire', pp. 445-67; *Հրանտ Ասատուր, Կոստանդնուպոլսոյ Հայերը եւ իրենց Պատրիարքները* ('The Armenians of Constantinople and their Patriarchs'), Istanbul, 2011, pp. 237-64.

> In Berlin [Congress] the requiem meal of *harisa* was being distributed to all the subjugated nations, you send me as well to take and bring to you the portion reserved for us Armenians and I took the pan and ran … You gave me in place of a ladle a piece of paper, and the more I dipped that piece of paper into the *harisa,* the wetter it got; eventually it crumbled, and I left it and returned empty handed … I forgot to take with me a couple of Zeituntsis, they had ladles, they would have scraped the bottom of the pot, the sides and come away with something.[8]

The Balkan peoples had come to Berlin with their iron ladles *(erkat'e sherep)* and ate of the tasty *harisa* (oat and meat porridge). But the Armenians had only paper petitions, and when they timidly placed their paper ladle *(t'ught'e sherep)* into the *harisa* pot, the paper crumbled and the Armenians received nothing. Despite Khrimian's generally conservative disposition, his message came to be regarded by many as a revolutionary call to forge an 'iron ladle' through self-reliance and self-defence. In 1879 he resigned and returned to Van as primate of the diocese of Vaspurakan. There he encouraged the formation of several secret voluntary groups called 'Black Cross' (Սեւ Խաչ) in Van, 'In defence of the Homeland' (Պաշտման Հայրենեաց) in Karin and several similar organisations in Evdokia and Marzvan. In 1855 he began the publication of a periodical called *The Eagle of Vaspurakan (Արծիւ Վասպուրականի)*, the goal of which was to sensitize the elite community in Constantinople to the plight of their compatriots in the provinces. In 1885 he was suspended by government order and sent to Constantinople; later in 1890 he was exiled to Jerusalem under the pretext of being on a pilgrimage. In 1892, when he was elected

8 «Պերլինի մեջ հոգեճաշ [wake] հարիսա կցրվեին բոլոր հպատակ ազգերին,ինձի ղրկեցիք,որ հայերին ընկած մասը առնեմ բերեմ,ես ալ պտուկն առի ու վազեցի...Դուք ինձի շերեփի տեղ թուղթ տվիք ,այդ թղթի կտոր որչափ որ խոթեցի տաք հարիսային մեջ,թուղթ թացացավ ,լխկեցավ,մեջն ընկավ,ես ալ պարապ թողի,ետ եկա.մոռցա առաջուց մի քանի հատ զեյթունցի տանեի հետս, անոնք շերեփ ունեին,կարելի է ամանին տակեն, քովերեն բան մը փրցուներին» in Bagrat Ulubabyan, *Զրուցարան* ('Conversations'), Erevan, 1991, pp. 544-45. Zeitun was one of the few provinces whose inhabitants took arms against the Turks to defend their province. Cf. Mkrtitch Khrimian, *The Meeting of the Kings*, English trans. Laurence Binyon, London, 1900.

Catholicos of All Armenians, the Ottoman government would not free him from his Ottoman citizenship and exile. It took thirteen months of intense Russian pressure before the Turks relented and allowed him to leave Jerusalem for Armenia. Seventeen months after his election on 25 September 1893 he was consecrated Catholicos of All Armenians on the feast-day of the Holy Cross of Varag.[9]

The literature of witness has had a significant impact on our understanding of the twentieth century. Bishop Grigor Balakian's memoir, *Armenian Golgotha*,[10] belongs to this genre of literature. Grigor Balakian, a graduate of the Theological Seminary of Armash, a priest and later a bishop in the Armenian Orthodox Church, was among the Armenian intellectuals rounded up on the night of 24 April 1915 and deported. He was one of the very few that against all odds survived the ordeal; in his *Armenia Golgotha* he brings together a survivor's account, eyewitness testimony, historical background and context, and political analysis. In a crucial chapter, 'Plan for the Extinction of the Armenians in Turkey', Balakian gives an eleven-point outline of the Young Turks' 'final solution', which remains an invaluable source for our understanding of the unfolding events of 1914-18. 'Law of Deportation' and the 'Temporary Law of Confiscation and Expropriation' resulted in organised, as well as *ad hoc*, acts of plunder and theft of Armenian property. Balakian makes clear that deportation 'was synonymous with murder' and that the 'relocation' of Armenians was merely a charade—as the Constantinople post-war court-martial trials would confirm from Turkish testimony.

The absorption of Armenians into Islamic Turkish life through forced conversion and abduction is a recurrent theme of the genocidal process. In a moving scene in the chapter 'Gazbel to Hajin' Balakian tells the story of him sitting at a dinner table with a family of

9 Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary movement*, Berkeley, 1963, pp. 28-29; Rubina Peroomian, 'Kars in the Armenian liberation movement' in R G Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Kars and Ani*, Costa Mesa, CA, 2011, pp. 245-46; M G Nersessian, «Խրիմյան Հայրիկի դիմումը Նիկոլայ երկրորդին (1907թ) եվ արխիվային այլ նյութեր հայկական հարցի ու հայ կամավորական շարժման մասին (1912-1915 թթ» ('The letters of Khrimian *Hayrik* to Czar Nicholas II (1907) and other archival materials on the Armenian question and the Armenian voluntary movements'), *Patma-Banasirakan-Handes*, 2 (1993), pp. 165-80.

10 Grigoris Bishop Balakian, *Հայկական Golgotha* = *Armenian Golgotha. A memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-18*, trans. Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag, New York, 2009.

Islamized Armenians who beg him to bless their table, give them Holy Communion and hear their confessions. The pan-Turkic ideology of the ruling CUP (see below)—its advocacy of a homogeneous Turkey, free of Christian minorities especially Greeks, Assyrians, and Armenians—was not only a racist and xenophobic platform but a motivating factor in the final solution for the 'Armenian Question' which emerged out of the much wider 'Eastern Question'. Balakian hears German soldiers referring to Armenians as 'Christian Jews' and 'bloodsucking usurers of the Turkish people'. Such remarks demonstrate the ideological relationship Germans and Turks were forging in their shared view of Armenians, to whom the Germans extended and applied anti-Semitic notions. He observes that Turkish government officials often justified their violence against all Christians as 'just retribution' for their dominance in Turkey's economic life, characterising Armenian Christians as 'ferocious leeches'.[11]

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11 Hilmar Kaiser, 'A Review essay on Vahakn N Dadrian's *German responsibility in the Armenian Genocide. A review of the historical evidence of German complicity*', Watertown, 1996 in *J. Soc. Armenian Stud*. 8 (1995), pp. 127-42; Hilmar Kaiser, 'Germany and the Armenian Genocide, Part III, Reply to Vahakn N Dadrian's response', *ibid.,* 9 (1996, 1997 [1999]), pp. 134-40; Vahakn N Dadrian, 'Germany and the Armenian Genocide: A response to Hilmar Kaiser', *ibid*., pp. 143-58; Christoph Dinkel, 'German Officers and the Armenian Genocide', *Armenian Review* 44, no. 1-173 (Spring 1991), pp. 33-77. None of these authors mention the work of Rene Pinon, *La Suppression des Arméniens. Méthode Allemande—Travail Turk*, Paris, 1916, the Armenian translation of which: *Հայերու բնաջնջումը: Գերմանական մէթոտ-թրքական գործելակերպ: Թարգմ. Եդուարդ Հոբուրեան (Մատենաշար «Ազատ Միտք»թիւ 1)*, Constantinople, 1919, p. 60. For further evidence on German complicity, see: Peter Hart, *The Great War 1914-1918*, Profile Books, London, 2014, quotes 'Max Erwin von Schenbner-Richter was instructed by Berlin to intervene against massacres but warned, however, not to do so in such a way as to create the impression as though we want to exercise a right of protection over the Armenians or to interfere with the activities of the countries.' In *The Great War Diaries. Accompanies the astonishing BBC TV series*, BBC Books, London, 2013, p. 275, 'Without our help the overinflated frog [Ottoman Turkey] will collapse in on itself. In the end what is more important for the German government is the need to support Turkey. It is strategically vital that Germany preserves this ally rather *than avert the massacres of the Armenians* with a clumsy intervention. Our only goal is to keep Turkey on our side until the end of the war *whether Armenians perish or not* should the war last longer we will have been greater need of the Turks' (letter by Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann). Sean McKeekin, *The Berlin-Bagdad Express. The Ottoman Empire and Germany's bid for World Power, 1898-1918,* Penguin Books, London, 2000. 'I will help the Zionists'—Baron von Wangenheim, German ambassador at Constantinople, is reported to have said to Henry Morgenthau 'but I shall do nothing to help the Armenians'; cf. G H Paelian 'The situation in Armenia',

In 1828 Eastern Armenia came under the rule of Tsarist imperial Russia. To consolidate its power over Armenia, in 1836 Tsar Nicholas I instituted the *Polozhenie* (Statute), which restricted the activities of the Armenian Church in political matters and required that the Catholicosate at Ejmiadsin conduct its relations with the outside world through the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Russian authorities greatly appreciated the role of the Church in Armenian community life and sought to utilize its influence to promote and protect Russian interests in the region.[12] By 1885, in its six dioceses of Russia (Erevan, Karabagh, Tbilisi, Shemakh, Astrakhan, and New Nakhijevan) and in the region of Kars, the Armenian Church controlled some 330 schools, 247 of which were for boys and 83 for girls. In 1903 the Tsarist government decided to curtail the dominant socio-economic position of the Armenian Church. In 1903 an imperial decree ordered the transfer and control and administration of all Church properties, both movable and immovable, to the Ministry of Agriculture and Public Domains and to the Ministry of the Interior. In this act the Armenians in the homeland and in the diaspora saw clearly the intention of the Russian authorities to undermine their cultural and religious autonomy. The mass active resistance, occurring at the same time as the outbreak of the 1905 Russian Revolution, forced the Tsarist regime to reconsider its policies in its effort to stabilise the situation in Transcaucasia and annul the decree and Armenians were allowed to re-open their church schools in which the number of pupils had reached 34,845.[13]

Ararat: A searchlight on Armenia, vol. III, no. 35 (May 1916), pp. 503-508.

12 Vartan Gregorian, 'The impact of Russia on the Armenians and Armenia' in *Russia and Asia: Essays on the influence of Russia on the Asian peoples*, Wayne S Vucinich, ed., pp. 195-97; Tiran Nersoyan, Archbishop, 'Laity in the Administration of the Armenian Church' in *Armenian Church Historical Studies: Matters of Doctrine and Administration*, Revd Nerses Vrej Nersessian, ed., New York, 1996, pp. 248-49.

13 Maghakia Ormanian, Archbishop, *Ազգապատում* ('National History'), Beirut, 1961, vol. III, Pt. 3, pp. 5156-62; [Maghakia Ormanian], *Les biens de l'Église Arménienne en Russe. Memorandum,* Druck von Maz Schmersow vorm. Zahn & Baendel, Kirchhain N-L, 1/14 January 1904. The hidden author of this *Memorandum* is Archbishop Maghakia Ormanian, printed in Vienna by Hovhanes Masehian *khan*. Translated into English as 'The Property of the Armenian Church in Russia' with a commentary by Nerses V Nersessian (forthcoming).

The destruction of the Church's religious and cultural stewardship

'Armenia is our victim'
David Lloyd George

David Lloyd George described Armenia as a land 'soaked with the blood of innocents', and declared that it was one of the countries which 'would never be restored to the blasting tyranny of the Turk.' Lloyd George was one of the prominent proponents of British Turcophile policy, who sacrificed the Armenian question on the sacrificial altar of imperialism. After retiring from politics he had the courage to confess the truth: 'If it was not for our unholy interference', he wrote in his memoirs, 'the majority of Armenians in compliance with the demands of the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878 would have passed under Russian protection.' He admits 'Armenia is our victim' and that 'Armenia was sacrificed on the altar of the victory created by us.' British policy had fatal consequences and led to the inevitable massacres of Armenians in 1895-97 and 1909, and 1915. 'We gave the Turks the possibility of implementing their heinous crime.' In the summer of 1918 the same voluble premier proclaimed that Britain would 'not forget its responsibilities' to the Armenians.[14]

In 1908, a revolution occurred in Turkey, headed by the so-called 'Committee of Union and Progress' (CUP) or 'Young Turks'. The Committee proclaimed an end to the oppressive policy of Abdul-Hamid II (r. 1878-1908, the 'Red Sultan'), and a new deal for racial minorities in the Ottoman empire. The Armenians loyally supported the Young Turk movement, and participated in the formation of a new government. The revolution was ill-received in Adana: the Turks who felt that their dominance, unquestioned for centuries, was suddenly eroded in April 1909, at the same time that a counter revolution was

14 Galust A Galoyan, 'The Armenian Question and International diplomacy after World War I' in Nicholas Awde, ed., *Armenian Perspectives*, London, 1997, p. 311; Christopher J Walker, *Armenia The Survival of a Nation*, London, 1980, pp. 263-64; The speech of Lloyd George delivered in the House of Commons on 20 December 1917 was translated into Armenian by Enovk' Armen: *Լօյտ Ճօրճի հռչակաւոր ճառը եւ Հայկական խնդիրը Անգլիական Խորհրդարանին մէջ* ('The famous speech of Lloyd George which he delivered to the British House of Commons on the Armenian Question') and most unwisely published in Constantinople in 1918 and again in 1919.

being organised in Constantinople, massacred 15,000 Armenians in Adana. Within the Young Turk movement, a ruling junta soon came into being headed by Enver Pasha, Minister for War, Talaat Pasha, Minister of the Interior and later Grand Vizier, and Jemal, Military Governor of Istanbul and later Minister of the Marine, who became subservient to the new racialist doctrine of pan-Turkism. In several secret conferences of the 'Committee of Union and Progress', held in Salonica from 1910 onwards, the elimination of all Armenians was adopted as a central object of Young Turk policy. The elimination of the Armenian clergy received attention first from the Turkish government. In mid-February 1915 Talaat Pasha had instructed 'It is necessary above all to work for the extermination of the Armenian clergy.' Thirty-four high-ranking celibate clergy were murdered along with 4,000 married priests. Among them were the primates of Erzerum, Trebizond, Caesarea, Bitlis, Mush, Sert and Erzinjan and therein the parish priests of every church and village. The Bishop of Diarbekir 'was mutilated, drenched with alcohol, and burnt alive in the prison yard, in the midst of a carousing crowd of gendarmes, who even accompanied the scene with music.[15] According to the official ecclesiastical records attached by Archbishop Maghakia Ormanian (1896-1908) to his most influential work *The Church of Armenia* (1896-1908), there were 3,722,000 members of the Armenian Church before the First World War, with 100 dioceses, 3,909 parishes and 3,788 churches, with one third of the Armenian population having been massacred or forcibly converted to Islam; forty years later, in 1954, the membership of the Armenian Church reached and even slightly surpassed its former number. In the new statistics compiled by Bishop Derenik Poladian, for the third edition of Ormanian's *The Church of Armenia*, the number of Armenian Church members appears as 3,674,757, but this time only with 26 dioceses, 446 parishes and 417 churches. The Catholic Armenian Church was also targeted—according to Catholic Armenian sources: 8 bishops, 106 priests, 55 nuns, and over 80,000 catholic Armenians.[16] The Armenian Evangelical community

15 Leon Arpee, *A history of Armenian Christianity from the beginning to our time*, New York, 1946, pp. 300-01.

16 *Bazmavep* 10 (1919), p. 284; *Handes Amsorya* (1917-18), p. 134; 1920, pp. 38-51. The Jesuit review *La Civiltà Cattolica* recently published statistics showing that of the 98,000 Catholic Armenian faithful living in Turkey when the killings began, only 33,900 survived. Of 156 churches and chapels, only 20 stood at the end, and of 110 missions, only 10 were still active by 1923. (Giovanni Sale s.j., 'La questione

also suffered great losses. In 1914, Armenian Evangelicals all over the world numbered about 70,000 of which approximately 51,000 lived in Turkey. The community had 137 organised churches with 82 ordained ministers and 97 preachers. In the aftermath of the genocide the Armenian Evangelicals counted 14,000 members, 31 churches with 25 ordained ministers and 13 preachers.[17] American missionaries entered the Middle East in the early decades of the nineteenth century with the grandiose purpose of Christianising the nations of the Ottoman empire. Their programmes among the native Armenians in Ottoman Turkey had expanded to such an extent that at the turn of the century the Kharpert mission was considered the most successful not only in the Ottoman empire but throughout the world.[18] The missionaries from the United States, Germany and Great Britain achieved a great deal by encouraging the reform-minded element in the population and helped to raise expectations but they were unwilling or unable to support them in the long run. In characterizing the policies of the European powers in the Ottoman empire, the US minister, John A G Leishman, had complained: 'they do just enough to do harm, but not enough to do good.'[19]

According to 'The statistical lists and documents of Armenian churches and monasteries compiled by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and submitted to the Turkish Ministry of Justice and Faiths, 1912-1913'[20] in 1914 there were 210 monasteries and

armena nei documenti degli archivi ecclesiastici', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, N° 3954, 21/03/2015, pp. 561-571.)

17 Maghakia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, translated by G Marcar Gregory, London, 1912, Appendix II, 'Statistics of Armenian Dioceses', pp. 239-43; 2nd revised ed. by Bishop Derenik Poladian, 1955, pp. 211-12; Vahan H Tootikian, *The Armenian Evangelical Church*, Los Angeles, 1981, p. 54; The 'Statistical Report' of the head of the Protestant *millet* Prof. Zenop Bezjian delivered to the *Conference of the Armenian Evangelical Churches*, Constantinople, July 5-10, 1922.

18 William E Strong, *The Story of the American Board. An account of the first hundred years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, Boston, 1910.

19 Barbara J Merguerian, 'Like a policeman in a mob: The establishment of the US Consulate in Kharpert, Turkey, 1901-1905' in *Armenian Perspectives*, Nicolas Awde, ed., London, 1997, p. 309; Barbara J Merguerian, 'Cyrus Hamlin and the American education for Armenians in Constantinople', in *Armenian Constantinople*, Richard G Hovannisian and Simon Payaslian, eds., Costa Mesa, CA, 2010, pp. 199-21.

20 A Kh Safrastian, 'Կոստանդնուպոլսի Հայոց պատրիարքարանի կողմից Թուրքիայի Արդարա- դատոէթյան եվ Դավանանքների մինիստրության ներկայացված հակական եկեղեցիների եվ վանքերի ցուցակներն ու թաքրիները' in *Ejmiadsin* 1915-65, 1-2-3-4 (1965), pp. 40-47, 174-187; 10 (1965),

700 monastic churches. Also, there were 1,639 churches outside the jurisdiction of the monasteries. More than a hundred monasteries were then enjoying full prosperity. These were not isolated for prayer alone, but according to a national tradition they were cultural, theological and creative centres. These were museums that housed manuscripts, stone crosses, reliquaries and countless objects of religious art. Among them were the monasteries of St Karapet (Saint John) and the Monastery of Surb Arak'elots (Apostles, Kars, 930-43), the Monastery of Varag or Yediklise, The Seven Churches (Van, 1231), Aghtamar or Church of the Holy Cross, located on the island of Aght'amar, Van (915 and 921), Awag Vank' or the Monastery of Mount Sepouh (Erzinjan, thirteenth century) and Karmir Vank in the *vilayet* of Erzerum, the Monastery of St Narek not to mention St Nshan in Sivas, the Monastery and Theological Seminary in Armash near Constantinople, the Catholicate of Cilicia in Sis (Kozan, in Ant'ilias near Beirut). In the multi-volume studies on the monasteries of Vaspurakan, Taron, and Sebastia by Father Hamazasp Voskian published between 1940 and 1953 light was shed on the existence of 573 monasteries in the provinces of Erzerum, Van and Bitlis, and 13 others in the immediate vicinity of the city of Sivas.[21] Georg Mesrop estimates that more than 200 monasteries were destroyed by the Turks during the thirty-year period preceding the war (1880-1914).[22] In 1915 in their determination 'to dispose of the Armenian question once and for all', the Turkish nationalists turned their fury on everything which bore witness to the mute presence of the legitimate owners of the devastated regions. Vahan Papzian ('Koms', 1876-1973), Ottoman Deputy for Bitlis in the Young Turk Parliament of Constantinople, recalls Djevdet Bey, Governor of Van, saying 'Either no trace of Turks or no trace of Armenians should remain in this country.' Lord Kinross, a Turkish sympathiser to the extent of considering the Genocide of 1915-1918 as an 'unfortunate political

pp. 43-48; 2 (1966), pp. 38-44; 3 (1966), 57-60; 6 (1966), 41-47; 7-10 (1966), pp. 55-60, 60-63, 106-114.

21 Hamazasp Oskyan, *Վասպուրական-Վանի վանքերը* ('The Monasteries of Vaspurakan-Van'), Vienna, 1940; Sebastia 1946, Taron-Turuberan, 1953, Kilikiay (Cilicia) (1960) Sebastia-Kharpert-Diarbekir and Trabizon (1962); Jean-Michel Thierry, *Armenian Art*, trans. from the French by Celestine Dars, 1989. For a comprehensive description of the monasteries and churches, see Patrick Donabedian's 'Main Armenian sites', pp. 469-595, in *Armenian Art*.

22 Georg Mesrop, 'Armenian losses in the field of the arts', *Hayastani Kotchnak*, June 1931.

necessity', speaks in his book *Within the Taurus*, however, with some regret, as a connoisseur of Armenian civilization, and describes the ruins of Ani as totally abandoned: 'the demolition of the crosses and of the walls with their frescoes is tragic.'[23] The French explorer, F Balsan, relates in his travels, *The Surprises of Kurdistan*, the words of his escort Setke Bey: 'the elimination of the Armenians was an urgent salutary work. Their very name must no longer have a sense, their memory, their monuments, their least traces must disappear. It is the order.' Further on, speaking of the Armenian Church of St Step'anos (St Stephen) of Deir (on the Turkish-Iranian border), he relates this cynical comment of his Turkish escort: 'It is the last Armenian church. I hope so, at least.' Then he translates the words of a Turkish subaltern 'They do not despair of "finishing it off", one of these days however hard its stones are. It is all a question of having explosives … Whenever they receive explosives, the church, too, receives its share.'[24]

The Armenian has always had an inborn love and genuine admiration for culture, science and the arts demonstrated in no way better than in the following rare incident. In the forced flight towards the regions occupied by the Russians in 1915, the Armenians of Mush carried with them, at the cost of indescribable sacrifices, the great *Homiliary of Mush* dated 1204 (Matenadaran, Erevan, Ms. no. 7729), and the splendid wooden doors of the Apostles' Monastery of Mush 1134. The former is now one of the glories of the Matenadaran (Erevan) and the latter is in the State History Museum of Armenia. The rescuing of this manuscript bears witness to the devoutness of Armenians and their untiring efforts to save a manuscript which, according to the words frequently used by Armenian scribes, was regarded a 'captive' by infidels and those who would rescue it 'were worthy to receive their fitting reward', wrote the scribe Kostandin Vahkatsi in the colophon of his manuscript of the Four Gospels in 1413.[25] Vardan Baghishetsi' (d. 1705) in a colophon of a manuscript writes 'the restoration of thirty or forty books from deterioration and destruction to life means more than building a church.' The *Homiliary of Mush* weighs 32k, measures

23 Patrick B Kinross, *Within the Taurus*, London, 1954, p. 121.

24 Francois Balsan, *Les Surprises du Kurdistan*, Edition G Susse, Paris, 1945, p. 69, and pp. 271-72.

25 *Լ.Ս.Խաչիկյան, ԺԵ դարի հայերեն ձեռագրերի հիշատակարաններ: Մասն Առաջին (1401-50)* ('Colophons of 15th century Armenian manuscripts'), Erevan, 1955, vol. I, pp. 157-58.

70.5 x 50cm and consisted of 660 parchment leaves. The manuscript was kept in the Apostles' Monastery in Mush. Two women fleeing from the massacres in 1917 took refuge in the courtyard of the Apostle's Monastery, and saw the monumental manuscript and decided to rescue it. The manuscript being too heavy, they split it into two halves taking one half with them and burying the second half with care. The ladies delivered the first half to the Armenian Ethnographic Society in Tiflis. Two years later in 1919 a Polish soldier serving in Baku found the second half of the manuscript and sold it to the Armenian Benevolent Union. During its endless wanderings, the manuscript has lost some of its folios. Of the 660 folios, 601 have survived, while another 17 folios are in the Library of the Mkhitharists in Venice, and one folio in the Mkhitharist library in Vienna. In 1977 the Matenadaran (Erevan) received two folios of the same manuscript from the State Lenin Library in Moscow. After 1915 the Matenadaran received 1,545 manuscripts belonging to the monasteries in Lim, Ktuts, Aghtamar, Varag, Mush and Van.[26]

Suren Kolanjyan in his series of articles devoted to the loss of Armenian manuscripts between 1894-96, 1909 and 1915 gives a detailed account of the losses of Armenian religious manuscripts in his 'The Armenian massacres and the loss of Armenian manuscripts'.[27] Among the most significant collections destroyed forever were the holdings of the monasteries of the Holy Cross Church of Sebastia (T Gushakian, 1923), the Monastery of St Karapet of Ernjak (M Smbateants, 1904), of the Monasteries of Vaspurakan (E Lalayan, 1915), Karmir Vank of Ankiwrya (B Kiwleserian, 1957), of the Monastery of Galatia (B Kiwleserian, 1961) and of the Monastery of St Karapet and the Church of St Daniel (T Palian, 1963).[28]

Among the British Library's collection of Armenian manuscripts the most outstanding is MS. Oriental 13654, given the name the Awag Vank' Gospels, bought in 1975 by the writer and formerly belonging to the late Hagop Kevorkian Collection in New York. This manuscript, consisting of 384 vellum folios measuring 37 x 29cm, is among the largest of

26 G W Abgarian, *The Matenadaran*, Erevan, 1962, p. 14.

27 *Ejmiadsin*, 2-3-4 (1965), pp. 96-107; 5-6-7 (1966), pp. 133-44; 8-9-10 (1967), pp. 27-37, 88-93; 5 (1967), pp. 46-57 and 6 (1967), pp. 50-56.

28 For a full list of the catalogues consult H S Anasyan, *Հայկական Մատենագիտություն* ('Armenian Bibliology V-XVIII centuries'), vol. I, pp. lxxvii-xcv; Bernard Coulie, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens*, Brepols, Turnhout, 1992 (Corpus Christianorum).

ancient Armenian manuscripts. The manuscript was commissioned by Bishop Ter Sargis, as a memorial for a paternal uncle, Ter Awetik, and copied by the scribe Vardan in 1200-02 in the monastery of Awag Vank' on Mount Sepuh in Erzinjan. The scribe Vardan is the same Vardan who copied the *Mush Homiliary* (Mat. MS. 7729). The manuscript was brought to Constantinople by a group of refugees fleeing from persecution in August 1605 and presented to the Church of St Nicholas. There is a notice dated 1609 which states 'in this year, the year 1058 [20 October 1608] severe, enormous affliction came again upon the thrice wretched nation which has seen much misery when a severe command came from the king [Sultan Ahmed I, 1603-17] to drive us Christians from this town, saying "Go to your own country"; and we do not know what the end will be. We have been trampled upon as "the mite of the streets" and the Lord has "abhorred his heritage greatly".' In the eighteenth century the manuscript became part of the collection of the Monastery Library at Galatia, and was catalogued by Babgen *vardapet* Kiwleserian between 1902 and 1907. During the massacres of 1915 the entire collection of the Galatia Monastery was lost. The manuscript was among the Armenian manuscripts of the Hagop Kevorkian Collection (New York), which sold in 1975, and was acquired by the British Library. As with many manuscripts, the memorial notices provide a commentary on the times, which the Armenian American writer Michael Arlan Jr has likened to 'messages in bottles, messages from some long ago sea wreck, messages written by men'. For Armenians a manuscript is the 'child in Zion' through its colophon called *hishatakaran*, literally 'place of memory', which binds every Armenian to the saving powers of the Armenian Church and other members of the Armenian Christian congregation.[29]

The Catholicate of Cilicia in Sis

By early summer 1915, the Turkish ultra-nationalist dictatorial triumvirate (Enver, Talaat and Mehmet Jemal Pashas) has succeeded in its systematic deportation and massacre of innocent Armenians

29 Vrej Nersessian, *Armenian Illuminated Gospel Books*, London, 1987, pp. 18-21; *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Library acquired since the year 1913 and of collections in other libraries in the United Kingdom*, London, 2012, pp. 130-46; 'The forgotten genocide', *World Magazine* 35 (March 1990), pp. 68-76.

in the provinces and Cilicia, while Catholicos Sahak Khapaian was busy dispatching appeals to Patriarch Zaven Eghiaian (1913-15; 1919-22) in Constantinople and to foreign embassies beseeching them to intercede on behalf of the Armenian population and to stop the unprecedented atrocities against his constituency. In the early morning hours of 24 April 1915 in a surprise move the Istanbul police and members of the Young Turks spread out over the city arresting several hundred leaders of the Armenian community across the entire spectrum of society (politicians, intellectuals, poets, journalists, physicians, writers, teachers, primates and priests).[30] The objective was to break the backbone of the Armenian community by removing its leaders, thus making the surviving Armenians powerless. After hiding the detainees in several jails in the city, the Turks transported them out of town and shot or stabbed to death each and every one at several locations in the country which was described as 'German method—and Turkish execution'.[31]

Catholicos Sahak Khapaian on 19 July 1915 sent his last batch of appeals to Patriarch Zaven in Constantinople. His activities displeased the officials of the Ottoman government. They decided to silence him by sending him to a small town where he could cause no further embarrassment. Following the instruction of the Interior Ministry in Istanbul, the governor of Aleppo ordered Khapaian to leave 'quietly' in two days for the city of Idlib, located 35 miles southeast of Aleppo. Khapaian appealed to his old friend Mehmet Jemal Pasha, requesting that he be allowed to leave for Damascus or Jerusalem since his

30 *The Lost Voices of World War I: An International Anthology of Writers, Poets and Playwrights*, Tim Cross, ed., Bloomsbury, London, 1988. Vrej Nersessian introduces three Armenian authors killed by the Turks in 1915: Grigor Zohrab (1861-1915), Daniel Varouzan (1884-1915), and Siamanto (1878-1915), pp. 368-79.

31 Rene Pinon, *Հայերու բնաջնջումը : Գերմանական մէթոտ-թրքական գործելակերպ* ('The massacres of the Armenians. German method and Turkish execution') translated into Armenian by Edward Choburian, Constantinople, 1919; *Լոյտ Ճորճի հռչակաւոր ճառը եւ հայկական խնդիրը Անգլիական խորհրդարանին մէջ* ('The famous speech of Lloyd George on the Armenian Question delivered to the British House of Commons'), trans. Enovk'Armen, 2nd printing, Constantinople, 1919; Hakobian Yovhannes, *Գերմանդաւը Կովկասի մէջ: (Համագերմանականութիւնը եւ Վրաստան)* ('The German conspiracy in the Caucasus. Pan-Germanism and Georgia'), Tiflis, 1917;Viscount Bryce James, *Անգղիական կառավարութեան կապոյտ գիրքը հայկական մեծ եղեռնի մասին (1915-1916)* ('The British Blue Book and the great Armenian massacre'), Constantinople, 1919.

impoverished staff and retinue were deprived of their normal means of survival. On 15 October 1915 a curt telegram from Justice Minister Ibrahim Bey instructed the Catholicos to depart for Idlib, with which he complied. However, on 21 October 1915, Catholicos Sahak decided to leave Idlib and depart for Jerusalem. He visited Aleppo one more time. In June 1916, the triumvirate devised a plan in which the hierarchy of the Armenian Church in the Ottoman empire would completely sever its ties with the 'Russian dominated Catholicos in Ejmiadsin'. Thus the Armenians would have only one head with his seat in distant Jerusalem, accountable directly to the authority of the Turkish government. On 1 August 1916 an official document prepared by a governmental committee was signed by Sultan Mehmet V Rashidi (1909-18), the Grand Vizier, six ministers and Mustafa Bey. The new edict, entitled 'Regulations for the Conduct of the Armenian Catholicate/Patriarchate' promulgated the elimination of the Armenian *millet* and the abolition of the National Constitution of 1863. The document consisted of an introduction, three chapters and thirty-nine articles. Article 1 ordered the abolition of the four Holy Seats—Cilicia, Aght'amar (already defunct in 1895), Constantinople and Jerusalem. A new office of Catholicos/Patriarch of the Ottoman empire would be installed in Jerusalem away from the capital, thus reducing its status to a small regional religious entity under the authority of the local governor. The spiritual and temporal authority of the Catholicos in Ejmiadsin would be completely neutralised.[32]

Although the regulations provided special procedures for the election of a Catholicos/Patriarch by the Armenians, the triumvirate ignored this provision and Catholicos Sahak Khapaian was appointed for the post on the recommendation of Jemal Pasha. In May 1916, while on a visit to Jerusalem, Jemal Pasha summoned Catholicos Sahak for a private 'friendly' meeting, during which he told him, 'my government does not wish to allow a Catholicos subject to our enemy [the Russians] to become the moral and spiritual leader of the Armenians living within our borders.' He then informed him that the government had resolved to abolish all four Holy Seats within Ottoman

32 Hrand Ds Vardapet, *Օսմանեան Պետութիւնը եւ Հայ. Եկեղեցու անկախութիւնը: Յաւելուած Կ.Պատրիարքարանի կանոնագիրքը* ('The Ottoman Empire and the Independence of the Armenian Church', Appendix: 'The New Constitution of the Armenian Catholicate and Patriarchate'), Constantinople, 1917, pp. 65-80.

territories and that he was selected as the only head of the Armenian Church with the title of 'Catholicos/Patriarch of All Armenians' in the Ottoman empire. It is said Khapaian declined the post using his old age as an excuse. Promising financial and moral support, Jemal Pasha assured the Catholicos that if he accepted the appointment, persecution of the Armenians would end. On the morning of Friday 11 August 1916 two government functionaries in Istanbul paid a visit to Patriarch Zaven Ter Yeghiayan. They handed him a letter from the Deputy Minister of Justice and Religion, addressed to him as 'Former' Patriarch of Constantinople, ordering him that with immediate effect, he was relieved of his post as patriarch and all the four Holy Seats under Ottoman rule would be replaced by a single leader and that the 1863 National Constitution was null and void. On 21 September 1916, accompanied by military policemen, Patriarch Zaven was escorted out of town into exile in Bagdad, his birthplace. In his place Khapaian, pursuant to article 24, formally confirmed Bishop Gabriel Jevahijian as his Vicar in Istanbul. His second major step was to comply with the provisions of Article 5, which required him to form two councils—one religious, containing 12 clergy, and the other mixed, consisting of 4 clergy and 8 lay members.[33]

The Cloister Caravan—Վանքին Կարաւանը

In July 1915 the Turks drove more than 100,000 Armenians from the *vilayet* of Adana and Marash into the Mesopotamian desert. This was the end of the Armenian presence in Cilicia. Catholicos Sahak II remained for 15 years in Aleppo. In 1930 the Catholicate moved to its present location in Ant'elias, in the Lebanon, north of Beirut.[34]

33 Haig A Krikorian, *Lives and Times of the Armenian Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Chronological Succession of Tenures*, Sherman Oaks, CA, 2009, pp. 487-95.

34 Babgen I Kiwleserian, *Պատմութիւն Կաթողիկոսաց Կիլիկիոյ (1441-էն մինչեւ մեր օրերը)* ('History of the Catholicoses of Cilicia from 1441 to our times'), Ant'ilias, 1939; Biwzand Eghiayian, *Ժամանակակից Պատմութիւն Կաթողիկոսութեան Հայոց Կիլիկիոյ 1914-1972* ('Contemporary History of the Armenian Catholicate of Cilicia, 1914-1972'), Ant'ilias, 1975.

> On 3rd September 1915 the brotherhood of the Catholicate of Cilicia gathered the treasures of the eight hundred year-old See into large, specially prepared leather cases, awaiting for the order to depart. 13th September, the Sunday Feast Day of Exaltation of the Cross, the monks and the handful of Armenians remaining in Sis, handed over the keys of the monastery to the government and departed. The journey from Sis to Aleppo lasted 23 days, part of the treasures in spite of several adventures, misfortunes and attacks that occurred along the way, the *Vank'in Karavane* [Վանքին Քարավանը] ('Cloister Caravan') reached Aleppo and was delivered into the safe hands of Catholicos Sahak II (1849-1939, Catholicos from 1903-1939). In 1998, in the recently opened Kilikia Museum (Cilician Museum) the rescued treasures were made accessible to the public. On the occasion of the 1700th anniversary of the official proclamation of Christianity in Armenia, the rescued treasures of Cilicia were exhibited at the State Gallery Moritzburg, Art Museum of Saxony-Anhalt.[35]

The theological seminary of Armash

Those first in the line of the enemy's sight were the graduates of the Theological Seminary of Armash, the promising generation raised under the spiritual and intellectual guidance of Maghakia Ormanian (1841-1918) and Eghishe Durian (1921-30). After the declaration of the National Constitution in 1860, there was the need to establish a well functioning establishment that would prepare the leaders of the Church of the future. In 1889, Patriarch Khoren Ashegian (1872-88), established the Seminary of Armash under the abbotship of Ormanian adjacent to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. It was the general desire to turn the ancient Monastery of Armash

35 Herman Goltz and Klaus E Goltz, *Rescued Armenian Treasures from Cilicia. Sacred Art of the Kilikia Museum, Antelias*, Lebanon, Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2000.

that had existed since the seventeenth century into the 'Venice of the Turkish Armenians'.[36]

In the period 1889-1914 the Seminary prepared 34 celibate church leaders known as the 'Armashaklan generation'. They all occupied key positions in the life of the Armenian Church. A great number of them became primates or diocesan bishops in the remote provinces of Turkish Armenia, looking after the spiritual needs of an oppressed people stricken at heart by the afflictions caused by the Turkish atrocities. Some of them perished as victims of the Turkish massacres, thus giving the example of Christian martyrdom as the supreme expression of their faithfulness to Christ.[37] From among the graduates those who survived became highly respected figures in the twentieth-century Armenian hierarchy, whose literary, intellectual activities led the recovery of the Armenian Church in the Diaspora; among them were: Babgen Kiwleserian (1868-1936), Catholicos of Cilicia, Eghishe Durian (1860-1930), Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Shahe Gasparian (1882-1935), Zawen Ter Eghiyian (1868-1922), Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, T'orkom Gushakain (1874-1930), Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem.[38]

In 1919 a silent film on the Armenian genocide was made based on the memoirs of a survivor, Arshalouys [Aurora] Mardigian. The documentary called *Ravished Armenia* is based on the book called *The Auction of Souls*.[39] The film is made up of postcards of which the final scene is a crucifixion scene, but it is unlike the Christian image of Christ on the Cross which depicts the triumph of life over death. There are eight crosses in a row to which are nailed eight naked, young Armenian women. The film offers a panoramic view of the eight crosses and their victims. It focuses on a single sufferer. Nailed to the cross, she is helplessly alive. One could tell from her facial expressions that her cognitive functions were alive as she awaited the painful doom of

36 *Արմաշու դպրեվանքին 25 ամեայ յոբելեանին առթիւ 1889-1914* ('On the 25th anniversary of the Theological Seminary of Armash, 1889-1914'), Constantinople, 1914, pp. 26-34.

37 Maghakia Ormanian, Archbishop, *Խոհք եւ Խօսք: Իր կեանքին վերջին շրջանին մէջ* ('Thoughts and words'), Jerusalem, 1929, pp. 442-57.

38 Zawn Arzumanian, *Ազգապատում :Դ Հատոր, Գ գիրք* ('National History'), New York, 1995, vol. IV, Bk. 3, pp. 11-25.

39 *The Auction of Souls. The story of Aurora Mardigian, the Christian girl who survived the great massacres*, interpreted by H L Gates, London, 1919.

her crucifixion. The scene symbolically expressed much that the Turks wanted to convey about their behaviour towards both the Armenians and their religion.

The perpetrators took the most sacred symbol of Christendom and turned it into a blasphemous obscenity, symbolically proclaiming absolute Muslim dominance. But something else was also conveyed by this brutal act: women are the child bearers. Their wombs carry the next generation. The message was clear: 'We express our utter contempt for you and your religion. We intend to destroy your future. You have no human rights. We can do with you what we wish.'

Catholicos Gevorg V Sureneants (incumbency 1911–1930) on the Feast-day of Easter in his Easter greetings ponders over the sacrifice of his people calling it a 'Second Easter', which the Armenian people celebrate with its millions of martyrs in the name of Christianity.

> 'Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, who wast crucified for us', connects us to God, in as much as the second Person of the Holy Trinity (i.e. God Himself) becomes a human being who in turn turns Himself into us, the Church, for propitiation and for remission of sins, at the rite that defines the Church, namely the Divine Liturgy.
> Now that the human sacrifice of 1915 has been sanctified like those of the Battle of Avarayr of 451, we can say of them in the words of Eghishe they 'bore their countless sufferings with great patience, placing their hopes in God and beseeching with prayers, that he might not suffer them to witness the destruction of their holy churches … since we recognise the Holy Gospel to our Father and the Apostolic Catholic Church our mother. Let no evil meddler come between us to separate us from her.'[40]
>
> The Armenian melody sung for the feast of the Holy Cross says:
> 'The cross appeared in the beginning, blossoming in the garden planted by God.

40 Eghishe, *Վասն Վարդանայ եւ Հայոց Պատերազմին* ('History of Vardan and the Armenian war'), E Ter Minasyan, crit. ed., Erevan, 1957, p. 67.

It was a comfort to Seth, a presage to the father Adam.
We have put our trust in that wood, on which our Lord Jesus was nailed.
We humble ourselves and worship this holy sign that holds God up to us *(Աստուածընկալ)*'[41]

Appendix

The names of the senior clergy killed in 1915

For a full text with biographies see:T'eodik, *Յուշարձան Նահատակ Մտաւորականութեան* ('Memorial to the martyred intellectuals'), 2nd ed., Erevan, 1985; A Hatityan, 'Նոր Ղեվոնդյանք' [New Ghewondians], *Ejmiadsin*, 2-3-4 (1965), 58-70.

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Orthodox Church

1	Bp. Khosrov Behrikian (1868-1915)	2	Bp. Smbat Saatet'ian (1871-1915)
3	Mkrtitch Vardapet Jghlatian (18…-1915)	4	Sahak Ds. vard.Odabashian (1875-1915)
5	Artavazd Ds. vard. Galenderian (1876-1915)	6	Pargev Ds. vard.Danielian (1888-1915)
7	Psak Ds. vard.Ter Khornian (1882-1915)	8	Shawarsh Ds. vard.Sahakian (1881-1915)
9	Suren vrad. Galemian (18…-1915)	10	Gegham vard. T'evek'elian (18… 1915)
11	Hamazasp vard. Eghisian (1864-1915)	12	Bp. Nerses Danielian (1868-1914)
13	Bp. Hakob Ashot P'ap'azian (1847-1914)	14	Bp. Khoren Dimak'sian (1864-1914)
15	Bp. Eznik Galbak'sian (1864-1915)	16	Gevorg Ds. vard. T'ourian (1872-1915)
17	Vardan Ds. vard. Hakobian (1846-1914)	18	Anania Ds. vard. Hazarapetian (1861-1915)

41 *Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church*, trans. Tiran Abp. Nersoyan, Revd Vrej Nerses Nersessian, ed., revised fifth edition, London, 1984, p. 40.

19	Eeremia vard. Liforian (1875-1915)	20	Sahak vard. Sargisian (… 1915)
21	Hovsep' vard. Sogomonian (1860-1915)	22	Nerses vard. Mkrtchian (1864-1915)
23	Abgar vard. Yot'neghbayrian (… 1915)	24	Barsegh Ds. vard. Makerian (1850-1915)
25	Sahak vard. Tcholak'ian	26	Yocvhannes vard. Mavian (1858-1915)
27	Ohan vard. Kyumishkhanei		
28-32	The brotherhood of the Monastery of St Karapet: Eghishe vard. Paluni, Komitas vard. Ardsruni, Eghishe vard. Karapetian, Step'anos vard. Baghdasarian, Karapet vard. Lariian.		

Catholic Armenian Church

1	Bp. Anreas Tchelepian (1848-1915)	2	Bp. Step'anos Israyelian (1866-1915)
3	Bp. Hakob T'op'alian (1855-1915)	4	Bp. Lewon K'eshenian (1860-1915)
5	Bp. Karapet K'tchurian (1847-1915)	6	Bp. Hovsep' Melik'set'ian
7	Bp. Mik'ayel Khatchatrian (1846-1915)	8	Bp. Ignatios Maloian (1878-1915)

Mkitharist Congregation of Venice and Vienna

1	Step'anos vard. Sarian (1865-1915)	2	Karapet vard. Ter Sahakian (1882-1915)
3	T'ovmas vard. Odabashian (1887-1915)	4	Poghos vard. Gasparian (1878-1915)
5	Matt'eos vard. Hachian (1867-1915)		

Protestant Armenian Community

1	Prof. Karapet Soghikian (1874-1915)	2	Prof. Mkrtitch Vorberian (1870-1915)
3	Prof. Hovhannes Pouniganian (1873)	4	Prof. Nikoghos T'enek'enian (1863-1915)
5	Prof. Tonapet K.Lyoulehian (1876-1915)	6	Prof. Arak'el K Sivaslian (1859-1915)
7	Prof. Hovhannes Hakobian (1862-1915)	8	Prof. Hovhannes Arozian (…)
9	Prof. Zesi Mat'osian [42 years old]	10	Prof. Lout'fi Papikian [30 years old]
11	Prof. Arshak Roumian [30 years old]		

'For the memorial and salvation of all the Armenians, whose names the Lord knows.'

(Armenian inscription in a mosaic in the apse of the sixth century funerary chapel in the Musrara Quarter of Jerusalem)

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE CENTENNIAL: A WAY FORWARD?

Harry Hagopian

When will the moment arrive that the crime of the annihilation of the Armenians will be recognized as fact?
Günter Grass, the late German Nobel Prize winning author in Istanbul, on 14 April 2010

Dorcy Rugamba is a Rwandan from Kigali, and most of his family were slain by the Hutu militia during the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Co-author of the six-hour play *Rwanda 94* that wove together survivor testimonies with music, comedy and fictional reconstructions, Rugamba who settled in Brussels always knew he had to wrestle with the psychological legacy of a genocide that not only killed his family but was also perpetrated by an enemy that came from within the country itself.

His production with the Rwandan theatre company Urwintore is *The Investigation*, a revival of Peter Weiss's searing 1965 German docudrama. It describes how ordinary people got caught up in the Nazi regime, and how many of them who were initially following orders later used their own personal cruelty to kill or maim their perceived enemies. Their collective and individual attitudes gave rise and credence to the chilling phrase 'the banality of evil' that was coined in 1963 by the German political theorist Hannah Arendt in her *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*.[1]

The banality of evil: in the same manner as Rugamba describes it in terms of his own experience, I too believe that the acts of murder, extermination deportation, starvation, torture and terror perpetrated

1 If Germany had adopted such unforgivable words about the Jewish Holocaust, you would not have been able to see through the Berlin exhaust fumes as the world's ambassadors headed for the airport: Robert Fisk, *The Independent*, 19 June 2015.

against Armenians in Turkey by Ottoman Turks and their proxies under the cover of the First World War were as much a result of orders given by the troika of the Young Turks' leaders to eliminate Armenians as they were the momentum of brutality gained by blood-thirsty mobs who might well have been following orders but then exceeded them when their own primitive and primal instincts overtook their orders. I need only recall the infamy perpetrated by Djevdet Bey, the Vali of Van, who was known as the 'horseshoer of Bashkale' for nailing horseshoes to the feet of his Armenian victims. The overall result is what history has proven already, namely an Armenian population that lost well over one million of its men, women and children, and a race that was subjected to deliberate—albeit providentially unsuccessful—waves of elimination that are tantamount in law as much as in practice to sheer genocide.

What would happen today if Germany suddenly decided that the Jewish Holocaust was not genocide: would America lobby that Germany should be allowed to get away with such a travesty?
Robert Fisk, *The Independent*, 6 March 2010.

Over the past century, and more pointedly ever since 1965, Armenians worldwide have been campaigning indefatigably for an acknowledgement of their suffering and a recognition that theirs was a genocide by definition so that the evil that was visited upon them does not in fact become banal and the horrors their forebears experienced are not trivialised by the pedantic statements and hair-splitting responses of different political mouthpieces.[2] Clearly leading the denialists is modern-day post-Ottoman Turkey that now has at its helm a reconstructed Islamist government still somewhat hopeful to lead the country into the EU. A new political leadership that claims to institute reforms refuses to examine the mirror of its own past. Even those few who have admitted to those crimes against Armenians attempt to justify them by deeming that Turks were under attack by Armenians. It is a way of denying genocide by claiming it was war,

2 Statement by Concerned Scholars & Writers: http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.22/current_category.3/affirmation_detail.html, accessed 30 June 2015. [NO indication where this goes!!!]

or as the historian Deborah E Lipstadt wrote, turning the perpetrator into the victim as one of the latter stages of denial.[3]

A good measure of the extent of a person's (or by analogy a nation's) denial is the vigour it demonstrates in defending itself and the aggression it levies against those who pry into it. It has been many years now since Freud argued that the guiltiest among us take it out on others who are the strongest. I would argue that we are no longer in a phase where we still have to debate whether the Armenian genocide took place. The evidence is far too overwhelming and in my legal opinion quite incontrovertible and corroborative. Indeed, governmental efforts—sadly such as those of the UK and USA—not to ruffle Turkish diplomatic feathers through convenient forgetfulness, shameless ignorance of the facts and staged friendliness merely enable denialists to perpetuate their political interests and as such do a disservice to the overall normative let alone ethical values of humanity.

Why is it that Turkey spends so much energy, diplomacy and money to militate against a truth that its leadership are quite aware of but that the people are largely disallowed from discovering for themselves? Why does Turkey refuse to accept a century-old reality and turn a new page in its relations with Armenia and Armenians across the Diaspora?

Readers would doubtless have their own individual persuasions. However, for my part, I believe that one fundamental reason is because the Age of Empire never truly left the Turkish consciousness despite the many changes that have occurred in Turkey and the world since 1915. It seems to me at times that the Turkish mentality—one that its Arab neighbours for instance are wary of given the renewed diplomatic and political flurry of initiatives undertaken by Turkey—is still an empire on pause, longing for a return to a reformatted sense of neo-Ottoman greatness. As Tolga Baysal, writer and filmmaker in Istanbul, suggested, Turks are wilfully closing their eyes to the skeleton the Ottoman empire had become in its final forlorn years, and so no one wants to remember the indignities visited upon the Ottoman empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. This might well translate into forgetfulness, or *amnésie internationale* (a play on words)

3 The International Association of Genocide Scholars considers genocide denial to be 'the final stage of genocide, enshrining impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, and demonstrably paving the way for future genocides.' Deborah E Lipstadt, *The Guardian*, 9 September 2009, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/09/holocaust-analysis-deborah-lipstadt-germany, accessed 30 June 2015.

as one commentator put it to me in a forum discussion in Marseille years ago.[4] But it also reeks of something that is more disturbing than forgetfulness, and that is moral cowardice.[5]

Consequently, any reference to the guilt of genocide perpetrated by Ottoman Turkey against its Armenian citizens in 1915 as the zenith of ever-increasing massacres that started in the nineteenth century and lasted till 1922 has become the echo of such emaciated realities. This is indeed an emotional response, but with the Jewish Holocaust representing the baseline for genocides in the twentieth century, Turkey refuses to be lumped in with this horrific event and wishes to maintain—falsely—a myth of an unimpeachable Ottoman legacy and a total disconnect with this genocide.

After all, was it not Dr Gregory H Stanton, former president of *Genocide Watch*, who also wrote in *Eight Stages of Genocide* that the culmination of genocide is denial?[6] Or as the chartered clinical psychologist Aida Alayarian elucidated in *Consequences of Denial*, does the denial of the Armenian genocide not deprive its victims of the opportunity to make sense of their experience and render Turkish society unable to come to terms with its past and therefore with itself?[7]

Defending intellectual freedom is defending the possibility not only of a free academy but of a society willing to learn—and thus a society willing to see itself critically
+ Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, CARA Lecture, on 12 May 2010

According to Fatma Müge Göçek in *Middle East Historiographies: Narrating the Twentieth Century*,[8] the dream of The Committee of Union

4 I gave two talks at two events organised by La Jeunesse Arménienne de France (JAF) in 1999 and 2001.

5 Amnésie Internationale: Aix/Marseille: Amnésie internationale entend raviver la mémoire les 23 et 24 janvier: http://destimed.fr/Aix-Marseille-Amnesie, accessed 30 June 2015.

6 http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/8stagesofgenocide.html, accessed 30 June 2015.

7 In Aida Alayarian, *Consequences of Denial: The Armenian Genocide*, London, 2008; see http://www.karnacbooks.com/product/consequences-of-denial-the-armenian-genocide/26208/, accessed 30 June 2015.

8 Fatma Müge Göçek, 'Reading Genocide: Turkish Historiography on the Armenian

and Progress *(Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti)* for establishing an ethnocratic empire by expanding to the east and consolidating an ethno-linguistic union with the Turks of Central Asia could have been impeded by the presence of a sizeable Armenian community in Asia Minor. According to her, the narratives of the Armenian massacres in Turkish historiography can be catalogued under three periodic headings. The first is the Ottoman investigative narrative (1915-1918) that did not question the 'facticity' of the massacres or deaths. Instead, acknowledging that the massacres took place, this narrative questioned the reasons associated with it, and the Ottoman state published proceedings of the military tribunal that tried some of the perpetrators. In the second Republican defensive narrative (1923-present), the 'deaths became distant memories' as the Armenian massacres were entirely denied. The moral blame on the incidents belonged to anybody except the Ottoman Turkish perpetrators. The Armenian victims themselves were blamed alongside the Western powers for the 1915 events. The third post-nationalist narrative (1990s-present) incorporated works that are 'directly or indirectly critical of the nationalist master narrative but do not [necessarily] focus specifically on the Armenian deaths.' They are 'knowledge products of the emerging civil society' in Turkey.[9]

However, a tentative public debate has begun to take shape in Turkey for the first time in decades following the critical ninetieth anniversary of the Armenian genocide in 2005. According to Altinay and Turkyilmaz, this debate consisted of two main positions. The first revolved around questions of curiosity about the events of 1915-1916, whilst the second revolved around a 'war of pre-defined positions' or what is called the 'war of theses'. Among the ploys used by the Turkish thesis to diminish the reality and enormity of the genocide were an opposition to the use of the term 'genocide' and its replacement with *tehcir* or deportations in addition to the so-called 'mutuality' of those massacres, number-crunching—and the question of intent which is pivotal to the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. However, over many years, historians, lawyers and researchers worldwide have rebutted those undervalued claims and underlined that genocide was perpetrated

Deportations and Massacres of 1915' in *Middle East Historiographies: Narrating the Twentieth Century*, (eds) Israel Gershoni, Amy Singer, and Y. Hakan Erdem, Seattle, 2008; see: https://www.washington.edu/uwpress/search/books/SINMID.html, accessed 30 June 2015.

9 *Ibid*., p. 121.

against Armenians during this period. Turkish, European and American archives have demonstrated the issues of intent, numbers as well as non-mutuality. Fresh documents found in the national archives of the Foreign Ministry and the war archives of the General Staff in Sweden, for instance, as well as reports from Swedish missionaries and newspapers, confirm the view that the Ottoman Turkish government conducted a systematic extermination *(utrotandet)* and annihilation *(utplåna)* of the Armenian nation.[10]

However, in the midst of denial, there are resonant voices or moving stories that keep coming out. There are all those remarkable and righteous Turks—I prefer the term *good neighbours*—who helped shelter Armenians during the genocide. But there are also those who worry about the impact of this chapter in Ottoman history upon their own society since coming clean should not be viewed solely as a salvific outcome for Armenians alone but also as a way of coming to terms with one's own past—as the West has slowly done with some of its own post-colonial excesses. So I am heartened by the increasing candour of intellectuals, academics and journalists in Turkey who speak out that Turkish denial is a spurious falsehood necessary to be addressed directly sooner or later. Much as there is a blackout on any education about this genocide in modern-day Turkish schools, there are a number of Turks who are challenging the legal taboos by risking incarceration in questioning the horrors perpetrated by Ottoman Turkey during WWI. One powerful example that corroborates my viewpoint that this sense of political transmogrification is first and foremost necessary for Turkey itself came in an article entitled *Genocide* by Ahmet Altan in *Taraf* on 6 March 2010:

> Amongst this entire hullabaloo, my favourite comment comes from a Turkish speaker who denounces this decision: 'Turkey is no longer a country that can easily be humiliated.' When a commission of the US Congress votes for 'genocide', we are 'humiliated'. Do you know what humiliation is?
> Turkey is not humiliated because that commission approved that resolution with a difference of one vote.

10 http://www.huliq.com/57457/swedish-archives-confirm-it-was-genocide-armenians, accessed 30 June 2015.

> Turkey is humiliated because it itself cannot shed light on its own history, has to delegate this matter into other hands, is frightened like hell from its own past, has to squirm like mad in order to cover up truths.
> The real issue is this: Why is the 'Armenian genocide' a matter of discussion in American, French and Swiss parliaments and not in the parliament of the Turkish Republic? Why can we, ourselves, not discuss a matter that we deem so vital that we perceive the difference of one vote as a source of humiliation?
> If you cannot discuss your own problems, you deserve to be humiliated. If you keep silent in a matter that you find so important, you deserve to be humiliated. If you try to shut others up, you are humiliated even more. The whole world interprets the killing of so many Armenians—a number we cannot even estimate properly—as 'genocide'.
> The history of every society is tainted with crime and blood. We cannot undo what has been done but we can show the courage to face the truths, to discuss the reality.
> We can give up trying to silence the world out of concern for incriminating the founders of the republic.
> We can ask questions. No one dares humiliate brave people who are not afraid of the truth. If you feel humiliated, you should take a hard look at yourself and what you hide.

Der Voghormya (Lord Have Mercy) as Gomidas sang out his own grief and emotional turmoil, asking the eternal God for comfort and solace. God, however, remained silent!
Armenian Golgotha
Grigoris Balakian (2009)[11]

Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935) was a priest and founder of Armenian classical music and a tome was written about him by the late Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Torkom II. Gomidas single-handedly saved much of Armenian folk and sacred music from obliteration during

11 *Armenian Golgotha*, New York, 2010, p. 73..

the Armenian genocide. As a young boy with a good voice who sang folk and church music, he was taken to Holy Etchmiadzin where, with Khrimian Hayrig's (Catholicos of All Armenians, 1892-1907) encouragement, he worked tirelessly at collecting, notating and arranging Armenian music and organising choirs and concerts. He was determined to save as much as he could of an endangered culture, and his polyphonic rendering of the Armenian divine liturgy is one of the two basic settings in use in Armenian churches world-wide.

This excerpt I just quoted of him singing out his grief with *Lord Have Mercy* can also be found in the book *Armenian Golgotha*, cited above, that was compiled by a priest, Grigoris Balakian, translated into English and published in the USA by his great nephew Peter Balakian. This book is part testament to the fate of Anatolia's Armenian population and part eyewitness memoirs of the events of the Armenian genocide. The book sees the bishop narrating his arrest, deportation, imprisonment, death march, survival and ultimate escape to safety. In a nutshell, the priest finds himself in Berlin at the dawn of the First World War witnessing the early stages of nationalist fervour that greeted the declaration of war in the German capital. With Europe beginning to tear itself apart, Balakian returns to Istanbul where he is included on the infamous list of Armenian intellectuals and leaders (roughly 270 of them) who were rounded up and deported to the prison camp of Chankiri on 24 April 1915. The eve of the Armenian genocide, 24 April 1915, is equated by the writer to Gethsemane whilst the genocide itself is written up as a long march up the hill of Golgotha resulting in the martyrdom of an entire nation—hence also the book's title.

The book is harrowing in terms of the cruelties it depicts by an observer-sufferer. But one poignant image in the book goes a long way to explain the haunting horrors of this genocide and in fact any genocide. Balakian writes, 'Without pity or human feeling, they struck the hapless and confused left and right, hitting them everywhere: eyes burst open, skulls were crushed, faces were covered with blood, and new wounds were opened up.'

This book, an evocative microcosm of the atrocities suffered by Armenians as seen by countless Christian missionaries, let alone by diplomats, photographers and other witnesses who reproduced their accounts in many books (such as that published by the German photographer Armine Wenger and by *Bible Lands* now renamed *Embrace*

the Middle East),[12] has raised uncomfortable questions about the real reasons behind the genocide of Armenians as well as Assyrians and Pontic Greeks during this period. Surely, those massacres did not peak into genocide because Armenians were Christian and therefore were viewed—quite wrongly in my opinion—as a potential fifth column? I rebut such an epistemic claim but accept its political expediency. In other words, assuming there were some Armenians—albeit poorly equipped in general—who switched sides and fought with the Russians against the Turks, does this justify the wholesale massacres that were so marked that Dr Raphael Lemkin, the Polish Jewish jurist, used them as one yardstick upon which he built the modern-day UN Genocide Convention of 1948? Besides, I cannot go in the direction of simplifying this genocide as a Muslim-Christian split either when many of its survivors found succour and refuge with Arab Muslim families across the whole Middle East—from Jerusalem to Lebanon, Syria, Baghdad and further afield. I would re-define it as a Turkish (and 'Muslim' in this narrow sense alone) attempt at re-drawing the region politically whereby Armenian and other Christian minorities stood in the way of this plan.

As happens often in many parts of the world, political enmity at times found its outlet in religious spoliation. Hence my distinction between philosophy and politics—otherwise, between a quest for the truth and an attempt at its obfuscation!

Indeed, this was recently confirmed when I re-read a research paper by Revd Dr George A Leylegian on 'The Status of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the Province of Diyarbakir and specifically in the county of Palou'. Revd Dr Leylegian delivered it in October 2010 at the Scholars' Conference hosted by the International Human Rights Law Association at the University of California entitled 'Genocide and Then What? The Law, Ethics, and Politics of Making Amends'. I would like to extract four salient points he makes through his detailed research:

> i) In the summer of 1915, the third wave of genocide began, but this time, not only were the churches plundered, but the people were again subjected to forced conversion to Islam or as we sadly know, extermination. The destruction of the Armenian diocese of Palou was

12 See Armine Wegner: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21Yysv63GBM; accessed 30 June 2015.

nearly accomplished; I say 'nearly' because of the 21 priests, one miraculously survived. After only 20 years and extraordinary financial efforts starting in 1896 to reconstruct the majority of the village churches, not one sanctuary was left intact. Artwork, gold and silver pieces, vestments, curtains, and even the doors and shutters were all looted. Registers and records were burned, and the few, traumatised survivors were left without any comfort of their religion. It is said that a priest from Kharpert continued to visit Palou during the 1920s. In 1929, the final phase of genocide forced the handful of remaining Armenians in the area to be expelled by the Kemalist government.

ii) The situation for the other rural dioceses in Ottoman controlled Armenia during the nineteenth century was sadly the same as in Palou. Research is always ongoing, but at the moment, we are able to estimate that in the year 1800, in the jurisdictions under the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, the Catholicosate of Aghtamar, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, there were about 4,000 churches and chapels, with another 500 functioning monasteries. By the time that Karekin Vartabed Srvantsdiants penned *Toros Aghpar [?] [ok = Brother Toros]* in the mid-1880s[13] the forced conversion policy and sporadic pillaging had already reduced the number of churches and monasteries by 50 percent. The pillaging of 1895-1896 further reduced the number from about 2,100 to about 1,600 churches that could be considered functioning, and reduced the number of operating monasteries to barely 100. By the armistice of 1918, of the 1,600 churches, fewer than 100 were standing, and every single monastery had been left in ruins. Today, there are fewer than 40 Armenian churches operating in all of Turkey—that is to say, just 1 percent of the number at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

13 See http://www.houshamadyan.org/tur/themes/music-gallery-ii.html, accessed 30 June 2015.

iii) Between 1800 and 1929, estimates suggest that up to 10,000 Armenian priests and monks were killed in the course of forced conversion tactics and outright genocide. In the 500 or so monasteries, there were hundreds of manuscripts and thousands of pages of documents. It is estimated that over the same course of time, more than 20,000 historic manuscripts were stolen or destroyed. In addition, hundreds of priceless relics of the saints that had been venerated throughout the centuries, were stolen, destroyed, or simply lost.

iv) Where are we today? By comparison with the centuries-old objective of having 1 priest for every 20 hearths, the Armenian Church has truly suffered and has barely recovered in the aftermath of Ottoman and later Soviet aggression. If we were to regain a statistical equivalent to the level of influence which the Armenian Church once held, we would need 50,000 married priests and 6,000 *vartabeds*. Worldwide today, there are only 800 married priests and 80 *vartabeds* serving an estimated Armenian population in excess of 8,000,000—which is to say, one priest for every 1,200 hearths. Where once we had about 500 monasteries, today, there are just 3 functioning in Armenia, 1 in Jerusalem and 1 in Iran.

'An oil field would prove much more valuable than the fate of a small and weak Christian people'

A review of *Armenian Golgotha,* on 20 April 2010[14]

It seems that there are three sets of reasons why Turkey refuses to admit its guilt. I have already indicated that the first one is a sense of overweening pride and nationalistic dignity within Turkish officialdom and across some of its grassroots which overlooks that the Ottoman empire could have possibly committed acts that are synonymous with genocide and are similar to the evils of the holocaust. The second is

14 Tim Gebhart in http://blogcritics.org/book-review-armenian-golgotha-by-grigoris/, accessed 30 June 2015.

that Turkey also seems quite worried that recognition will *ipso facto* expose it to Armenian demands for legal remedies under international law—something a number of Armenian organisations or individuals and their supporters are claiming during the commemorations of the centennial as a legal progression from recognition.

The third and final reason, however, is even more profound in that it has to do with the continuity of the policies pursued by the Ottomans and the Republic—in other words one that affects the whole legal jurisprudence of state responsibility today. So let me pause for two thoughts here. Mustapha Kemal Pasha based his Republican regime on the nationalist ideology of a Turkic race whereby Anatolia had to be 'cleansed' of all 'foreign' elements. Policies of ethnic, cultural, economic and social cleansing eliminated much of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek groups albeit failed to do so with the Kurds—hence the persistent Kurdish problem today. For another, some of the perpetrators of the genocide became political or administrative elites in the new Republican regime, and whilst Mustapha Kemal Pasha feigned ignorance of such facts, he benefited from them by offering them prominent positions within the Republic.

Moreover, one legal manifestation of such nationalism can be found in Art 301 (amongst others such as Art 288) of the Turkish Penal Code allowing the State Prosecutor to bring charges against anyone for 'insulting Turkey or Turkishness'. But what does this phrase mean? Yet, renowned authors such as Orhan Pamuk, high-profile symbols of moderation such as Hrant Dink (murdered for his views on 19 January 2007) alongside other reporters, writers and publishers, the likes of Aris Nalci, Serkis Seropyan, Aydin Engin, Karin Karakashli and Ragip Zarakolou have been charged with a breach of Article 301 and taken to court where their cases have either been postponed or given suspended sentences. Taner Akçam is one of those eminent Turkish historians who examined Ottoman archival documentary evidence and concluded the indisputable reality of genocide. He was then gaoled under Article 301 for publishing his findings and therefore 'insulting Turkishness'.

However, under International law, Article 301 also contravenes—in both its original and revised versions—the right to freedom of speech codified in Article 19 of the International Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

If we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand Utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory
Professor Howard Zinn, 1922-2010[15]

Today, the recognition of the Armenian genocide is no longer an historical moot point but a strictly political challenge. Armenians worldwide should therefore exercise their political judgement more prudently and creatively by using this opportunity to define a consensual strategy for the future. The severe paucity of long-term strategic choices by some Armenian national or community leaders has been supplemented over the past 100 years by short-term tactical options and occasional sublimating paroxysms and emotive standpoints that blur the rational arguments. Much as this is not a sociological oddity in many communities, it would nonetheless help if Armenians were to consider co-operating under an umbrella that could define their strategies and then consolidate their efforts toward the genocide and—critically—establish its causal nexus with other pending political issues such as the closure by Turkey of its border with Armenia ever since 1993 or the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In fact, one area where modern-day politics also intersected with history can be found in the abortive attempt for the normalisation of Armenian-Turkish relations through the signature in Switzerland in 2009 of the two Armenia-Turkey Protocols. Despite the huge amount of excitement for and against the protocols at the time, they are what we call in the legal vernacular as extant documents because the Turkish parliament never ratified them but succumbed to pressure by Azerbaijan not to normalise relations with Armenia so long as its own territorial conflict—which has been subject to the conciliation mechanisms of the OSCE Minsk Group—had not been resolved to its satisfaction. But this is dangerous since the geopolitics of the region are shifting again, more so in view of the ISIL phenomenon that has evoked new thinking on the dynamics of the region and its constituent communities. One has to add here that the European Parliament in Brussels has recognised the genocide many times since 18 June

15 See http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/2229-to-be-hopeful-in-bad-times-is-not-just-foolishly, accessed 30 June 2015.

1987, whereas the EU Commission as its executive arm is missing an opportunity to re-shape the Southern Caucasus with its adamant refusal to go anywhere near the 'Armenian Question'. However, being a pessoptimist by nature, I would still suggest that if some progress towards a diplomatic rapprochement were achieved, accompanied by the beginnings of a popular reconciliation, the 100th anniversary this year could provide a stepping-stone for both Turkey and Armenia to work together toward a resolution of a most difficult issue in their history and foreign relations. After all, what I am advocating—a win-win solution for a conflict-free zone that seeks 'zero problems with neighbours'—is also what Ahmet Davutoğlu, now prime minister, had advocated on numerous occasions as he unfurled his theories. But his version of *Pax Ottomana* seems to have faltered in its strategic depth when it comes both to Armenian issues and those associated with ISIL.

GENOCIDE: it is clear that there are dire political consequences that flow from this single eight-letter word whose etymology lies in *genos* for the Greek word meaning race or tribe, and *cide* from the Latin *cidium* for killing. Its power is clearly undeniable, as the horrific Rwandan experience has *inter alia* taught the world. Yet, unlike Rwanda where the world bickered over 'genocide' as it was being committed, the genocide against the Armenians is a distant event, relegated largely to the annals of history. However, the irony is that this spatial distance might render the word even more relevant for the Turks.

When I recall the horrors of genocide, read and speak about it, or when I think of the fearful horrors that the physical excesses behind this word evoke in many souls, minds and hearts, from the Armenian experience to the mind-numbing atrocities in Darfur today, I am struck by the insidious let alone subtle and hidden nature of this term. I remember the moving portrait of the photographer Jonathan Torgovnik that represents Joseline Ingabire, a beautiful Rwandan mother embracing her daughter, which won Britain's National Portrait Gallery annual photographic prize in 2007. On the surface, this is a gripping and healthy portrait, but it belies the ugly truth that the child is a result of the mother being raped during the Rwandan genocide.

This is the harrowing truth about genocides: not all its horrors are apparent, since there are so many underlying tiers of suffering that haunt the latter-day relatives of such victims. I acknowledge it is not easy for them—be they Armenians, Jews, Cambodians, Bosnians, Rwandans

or other hapless victims—to forgive and forget the heinous crimes perpetrated against their forbears. To reach that stage, we need to bare the human soul that provokes such aberrant behaviour and understand how genocide is used as a brutal political tool. We also need to fathom how the past would help us prevent the deformation and distortion of the future. Was it not the philosopher and essayist George Santayana who wrote that those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it?[16] This is not a glib statement, but a sad reality that affects Armenians worldwide today as it does so many other races that have experienced attempts at extermination through the course of history.

So how could one seek a way forward?

There seems to be an unwritten political convention in the UK (and elsewhere for that matter) that we should not cross certain red lines with Turkey on the issue of the genocide or else we risk forfeiting our economic interests or military assets such as the İncirlik Hava Üssü (airbase). This fact was *inter alia* argued by the eminent barrister Geoffrey Robertson, QC, in his Opinion dated 9 October 2009 entitled *Was there an Armenian Genocide?*[17] He later followed this Opinion with his 2014 book *An Inconvenient Genocide*[18] in which he also lucidly argued through the use of various FCO memoranda that the evidence of genocide is undeniable and that what prevents it from being recognised by HM Government are the political, strategic and commercial considerations with Turkey that overshadow the ethical ones.

But what happens in the unlikely scenario that some EU countries were to assume the moral obligation of coaxing Turkey—the EU candidate—into recognising the genocide? Even more unlikely, but what if our government—as well as those of the USA and Israel to mention three miscreants—were to pass resolutions accepting the genocide and (in our case in the UK) pretty much endorsing the Parliamentary Blue Book by Viscount James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee (of 1916)?[19] After all, Germany and Austria both rather unexpectedly recognised the genocide in April 2015 and the Palestinian Authority even issued a commemorative stamp of the centenary anniversary. So

16 See http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/g/georgesant101521.html, accessed 30 June 2015.

17 http://groong.usc.edu/Geoffrey-Robertson-QC-Genocide.pdf, accessed 30 June 2015.

18 *An Inconvenient Genocide: Who Now Remembers the Armenians?*, London, 2014.

19 See http://www.gomidas.org/books/show/24, accessed 30 June 2015.

what comes after recognition on an international political scale? Much as recognition is an objective, and much as it remains an initial step toward closure of this open sore in Armenian *and* Turkish psyches, it is equally necessary to have a sturdy vision that goes well beyond it. Since I believe that one principal aim for the future should be the empowerment of healthy and robust Armenian new generations, I would suggest that a real prophetic challenge would lead us to explore ways in which we could overcome the trauma of the Armenian genocide as the sole gateway to our identity. This would contribute toward healing our psychological, moral and political bruises let alone toward tending to our broken memories. It would also mean taking a step away from eschatology and one closer to soteriology instead.

The power of healing: such an approach today goes well beyond political and even religious orthodoxy. It is admittedly a painful one for many of us that is also much more Sisyphean than pursuing a retributive or even vengeful course of action that could perhaps also temporarily dilute our angst and in the process vindicate our forebears' memories who lost their lives during those genocide-driven years. However, I would dare suggest that healing remains a co-equal necessity and an ultimate way forward in confronting the sordid evils of genocide, whereby we infuse in ourselves a sense of renewal and a preponderance of life over death that refuses to be defeated by the heavy onus of genocide. In pursuing such a dual track, and in reaching out as Christians to the Resurrection rather than being boxed into a mindset of the crucifixion alone, we will have thwarted both Ottoman Turkish past designs to subdue us as a race as well as present-day Turkish endeavours to deny our past sacrifices. But equally importantly, it will have put us back on the road toward recovery from a trauma that can only colour our lives and those of our families.

As some Armenians already do, we should pray with our fallen martyrs who were canonised as saints at the Holy See of Etchmiadzin on 23 April 2015 and also stand vocally in solidarity with all victims of genocide worldwide. Whilst recognising that we have been *victims* of a dreadful experience, we should underline that we are also *victors* who have vanquished both the victory and sting of death over life (1 Cor 15:55). Let our present define our past: the genocide was indisputably homicidal and well over one million victims according to conservative historical estimates are its perpetual reminder in Armenian psyches.

Yet, would our strength not be even greater if we also funnel more of our energies into our living and thriving men, women and children? I know this is a hard choice for any people that have suffered ethnic cleansing, but I am confident we all have the forward-looking resilience to achieve this renewal by choosing living unity over deathly disunity. In my opinion, the choice is not a stark 'either-or' and I would argue that this would be the sharpest riposte to Turkish spin and denial, much more pungent than solely lobbying countries for recognition and a healthier commemoration of collective Armenian memory.

We need to do our homework as Armenians, but Turkey should indisputably also do their homework and realise that they are not doing Armenians any favour by recognising the genocide but are instead strengthening the moral fabric of their own societies and unleashing in the process the economic and political dividends that such a step might well produce globally. This has been recognised time and again by the likes of Ragip Zarakolou, Taner Akçem, Fethiye Çetin, Pinar Selek, George Jerjian or Elif Shafak who have helped civil society and the media in Turkey to open up to Armenian pain.

Forget-Me-Not
24 April 2015

The forget-me-not flower was the symbol that was chosen by Armenians worldwide for the centenary of the genocide. It depicts the 12 stone slabs of the Tsitsernakaberd Genocide Memorial in Yerevan. Its five petals represent the five parts of the world where Armenians found shelter after the genocide and subsequently created the vast Armenian diaspora. The motto for the centenary commemorations was 'We remember and demand'.

We remember the sacrifices of our forbears and we also demand a proper closure through recognition of this festering sore. I realise that such a breakthrough might not happen for some years yet since politics often checkmate ethics. But was it not the British statesman and political thinker Edmund Burke who once stated that 'the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing'? As Armenians and their friends commemorate the centenary anniversary of the Armenian genocide this year, it is my hope that the world of

men and women with goodwill and good faith will stand in solidarity with the truth which is no less than an affirmation of life—not of Armenian life *per se* but of *all* life across all races and continents and in solidarity with *all* victims of genocide everywhere.

After all, and in so doing, are we not also protecting the image of God in all of us?

CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTERS WITH ISLAM IN HISTORY AND MODERN TIMES: SOME THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Ian Latham †

Christian-Islamic debates in Arabic and Syriac from 750 AD

The context

When the 'conquest' of the Middle East was completed, the Umayyad caliphs of Damascus (661-750) were replaced by the 'Abbasids of Baghdad (750-1258). A long period of relatively stable rule followed and the Christians often held important positions at the caliph's court.[1] For instance, Theophile of Edessa (d. 785) was the court astronomer of the Caliph al-Mahdi (775-785), and the writer of an official chronicle, a work of history including current events, as well as the translator into Syriac of Greek medical works and of Homer's epics. He was a contemporary of the famous Muslim biographer of Muhammad, Ibn Ishaq, for the preceding caliph, al-Mansur (754-775). The caliphs were accustomed to invite Christian theologians to discuss their faith with the Muslim men of sacred learning, the *mutakallimun* (doctors in the science of the 'word'), and some of these discussions were later 'published'.

Such learned discussions between persons of different faiths took place, when conditions were favourable, throughout the new Islamic 'empire'. We will examine those at the caliph's court in Baghdad from 750-850. The open discussions were in Arabic, but many of the texts later published were in Syriac. Some of the texts, while adopting the literary form of a dialogue between a Muslim interlocutor and

1 The Christians involved (in the 'East') were mainly the 'Melkites' (Eastern Orthodox-Byzantine), the Syrian Oriental 'Orthodox', and the Church of the East. See J Waardenburg, 'The Early Period, 610-650', in *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions*, ed. Jacques Waardenburg, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 3- 17.

a Christian theologian, were most probably literary fictions, though with a basis in actual court dialogues. The Muslim 'theologians', the *mutakallimun,* were mainly Sunnite *(ahl al-sunna wa'1-jama'a,* the people of the tradition and of the community), but a few were Shi'ite *(shi'at 'Ali,* the party of 'Ali).[2]

Christian and Muslim motifs for dialogue

The motif, from the Christian point of view, was to reply to the Muslim demand for 'an apology for our faith', as Theodore bar Koni (*fl. c.* 792) in his *Scholia* explains. The questions discussed are the Christian Scriptures, the acts of Baptism and the Eucharist with the veneration of the Cross, and the key issues of Jesus as God's Son and the Holy Trinity. It is, in fact, a theology in the form of a 'rational apologetic', often starting from the public practices involved.

But the Christian 'apologists' had another motive. After the complaints of an anonymous Syriac chronicler that 'the children of Hagar began to impose Egyptian servitude on the sons of Aram' under the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685-705) in Damascus, another Syriac chronicler paints a very different picture of the situation in Baghdad a century later, a little before the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid (789-809). It was a period of humanist culture, marked by Iranian cultural influences, and by an 'intellectual invasion' of Greek thought. The caliphs were patrons of the arts, with musicians, singers and dancers in the caliph's court, and with teams of Christian, Muslim and Jewish translators of Greek medical, scientific and philosophical texts, working for the caliph. For the 'socially upwardly mobile elements in the Christian communities, the results were predictable':

> The gates were open for them to [enter] Islam … Without blows or torture they *slipped towards apostasy* in great precipitancy … A great crowd did so … from the districts of Edessa and of Harran and of Tella and of Resaina.[3]

2 For the on-going relevance of these exchanges see S H Griffith, 'Arabic Christian Relations with Islam: Retrieving from History, Expanding the Canon', in *The Catholic Church in the Contemporary Middle East*, Melisende, London, 2010, pp. 263–90.

3 Sidney Griffiths, 'The prophet Muhammad, his scripture and his message

The publication of the 'dialogue-debates' in the caliph's court, whether real or fictitious, were intended to reply to Muslim attacks on the Christian faith and to counterattack with objections to the Islamic doctrines. In their polemics, the Christians were especially concerned to deny the 'prophethood' of Muhammad, and to defend the role of Jesus as the true and complete 'revealer'. What were the 'signs' of the true prophet? And what were the 'marks' of truly 'inspired' scripture? The key problem, for both sides, was the 'formal' aspect of divine revelation, and not only the 'material' content of the alleged revelations. (When we reflect on what is presented as 'God's Word', we can examine the genuineness of the claim that God is speaking, as well as looking at the value of the content of what God is claimed to have spoken.)

The Muslim reply, the *'ilm al-kalam*, 'the science of discourse', was also a 'defensive apologetic'.[4] Muslim religious speculation began with the typically Islamic studies of grammar as an aid to study the text of the Qur'an, and of law to decide what was commanded and what forbidden. In fact, the *tafsir* (Qur'anic commentary, with grammar as an 'aid') and the *fiqh* (Qur'anic law) are the chief formative influences on the Muslim mentality. The later *'ilm al-kalam*, the so-called Muslim theology, literally 'the science of the (of God or about God), but also called, significantly, 'the science of Oneness' *('ilm al-tawhid)*, was developed in the context of discussions with Christian theologians in Damascus, which continued and grew in Baghdad, with the added influx of classical Greek science and philosophy. In fact, it was the stimulus of the so-called 'foreign sciences', with their new questions and new methods, which led to the birth and development of 'Muslim theology'. This was rather a 'defensive apology of the Muslim faith' (Gardet, 157). Since the mystery of God is both revealed (to the extent and in the manner that God wishes) and hidden ('veiled' by the *hijab al-ism*, the 'veil of the Name'), an 'illuminative' reflection on the being

according to the Christian apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the First Abbasid Century', in *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth Century Palestine,* Variorum, London: 1992, pp. 99-146.

4 Louis Gardet, *L'islam. Religion et communauté*, Desclée De Brouwer, Paris, 1967. Gardet [1904-1986] was a member of the fraternity Little Brothers of Jesus inspired by the hermit Charles de Foucauld (+1917) and a leading Catholic thinker on Islam—he considered him as a 'a Christian philosopher of cultures'. See Maurice Borrmans, *Louis Gardet: Philosophe chrétien des cultures et témoin du dialogue islamo-chrétien (1904-1986)*, Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 2010.

of God and God's ways is not open to orthodox Islam. It is rather a matter of 'defending' the given revelation by examining its 'signs' *(ayat)*, by reflecting on natural phenomena as 'signs' of God's creation and by pointing out the self-evident revelatory character of the Qur'anic text, with its consequences for the guidance of human actions.

Arabic/Syriac and Greek/Latin 'thought-forms'

What came to be 'common' to these two very different theological approaches was the introduction 'from outside' of Greek concepts and logic. It is important to realise that the thought-forms of Semitic languages are essentially different from those of Indo-European languages. For example, the Greek concept *logos* (word) remains firmly in the sphere of 'knowing': the word spoken that expresses the thought and the reason behind it. But the Hebrew *dabar* (word) had quite different connotations: it both evokes and means the spoken word, the creative word (that acts and has effects), the event (as effected or as recorded), the human word-event, the word of God which is life and light … In brief, the use of the concept 'word' in a given context will emphasise one of these meanings, but without rejecting the other meanings. 'And Mary kept all these words *(remata)* … in her heart' (Lk 2:19.51): should we translate as 'words', 'events', 'reflections'? Or should we *hold-together* (as the verb here used, literally throw together, suggests) all these different meanings? In Greek-style thinking, we would like to distinguish language and events, thinking and acting, the act of thought and its verbal expression. But the two approaches are complementary, not incompatible, let alone contradictory. We can see both Hebrew and Greek antecedents to the concept 'word' in John's gospel-prologue (in 1:1-18). A more complex example is Jesus' self-appellation as 'son of man': does it mean 'a human being' (by implication, weak and liable to death), or 'the glorious figure of Daniel's vision' (who ascends to God's throne and reigns for ever)? Does it refer to Jesus alone (meaning 'I'), or to some, or all, others? A semitic understanding of the term immediately gives us the clue that all these meanings should be 'held together', the context will stress one or other of the various significations, but the other (including the opposite) senses are also present to the mind of speaker and hearer. Is

not Jesus both weak and glorious, both himself alone and himself as head of his extended 'body' of which he is the 'whole'? The Biblical presentation of the 'redemption' depends on holding together all this fullness of meaning as one single whole.

To take Qur'anic examples, the word 'Qur'an' means 'recital' and so 'book' (the words 'recited' and 'gathered' in written form), and so 'warning' (the main intention of the 'recital'), and so 'law' (the way to observe the 'warning'), and so 'Word of God' and so 'Will of God'. A rich and evocative concept, combining so much! But how can this (humanly written and audible) 'recital' be the [eternal] Word of God? The semitic-existential answer is simple: it is God's dictation to His chosen Prophet. But in the context of Greek speculative thought, the inevitable question of how this is possible arises. In fact the early Mu'tazilite school of *kalam* affirmed simply that the Qur'an was 'created'. Not only humanly audible and visible, was it not expressed in one particular human language, Arabic? Certainly, it is created 'by God', but it cannot be a 'subsistent attribute', for God is simply One, totally indivisible and purely spiritual. The Mu'tazilites, we see, while firmly believing the Qur'an and the *sunna* (tradition), insist on the role of 'reason' *('aql)* as a 'criterion' in the defence of faith (Gardet, 205). After a brief success as the 'official doctrine' (even taking their opponents to court during the period of the Mihna (833-48), they were opposed in turn by the Hanbalites, who refused their rational method as non-traditional, and by the followers of al-Ash'ari (at first of their party), the Ash'arites, who adopted their rational approach but who insisted on the absolute precedence of the Law over reason. So they affirmed an 'uncreated Qur'an', though granting created leaves (of the parchment) and created recital (on the lips of believers)—this concession being rejected by the traditionalist Hanbalites, as a use of Greek (therefore non-Islamic) logic.

A typical case of pure Islamic logic is the Qur'anic phrase (28:88): 'All things perished, except His Face.' The meaning is not simply that all created things decrease, die and disappear, but that they both flourish and perish, and are thus both in 'parallel' and in 'opposition' to the One who alone remains in face of them unclear. This is clear from the famous passage on Abraham as the model 'believer'.

> So we were showing Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, that he might be of those having

> sure faith. When night outspread over him he saw a star and said, 'This is my Lord'. But when it set he said, 'I love not the setters'. When he saw the moon rising, he said, 'This is my Lord'. But when it set he said, 'if my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be of the people gone astray.' When he saw the sun rising he said, 'This is my Lord—this is greater!'. But when it set he said, 'O my people, surely I am quit of that you associate. I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth, as a man of pure faith—I am not of the idolators' (Qur'an 6:75-79).

In these two passages, we have a perfect example of what some have called 'two-term logic'! In place of the Aristotelian logic with three terms, based on the connecting universal 'middle term', we have a simple concrete comparison of two realities: a concrete human reality, such as the rising and setting sun, and the contrasting invisible reality of God's hidden 'Face'. The 'logic' is to persuade the human mind to 'move' from the 'seen' as reflected-upon to the 'unseen', new to the mind, but, as it were, already 'pregnant' though so far unrecognized in the initial reality as observed and 'encouraging' reflection. The same 'logic' is common in the Hebrew scriptures; 'The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God remains for ever' (Is 40:8). The prophetic message is one of Hope and deliverance for the people ('Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people'). So although the immediate context declares, 'All flesh [humanity] is grass [which withers]', the overall context clearly supposes that this humanity is alive and will flourish! Will flourish precisely because of the contrast 'flesh/grass—the everlasting Word', for this 'Word' is Life and life-giving. There is a subtlety and finesse in this two-term logic which is lacking in the more exact but more formal syllogistic logic!

The dialogue between the Monk Abraham and the Muslim Amir[5]

The monk belonged to the monastery of Bet Hale (near Hira—about a 100 km south of Baghdad), and the amir belonged probably to the court of the governor of Iraq, Maslama ibn al-Malik (d. 738).

The Muslim notable had been staying 'for some ten days' in the monastery because of sickness (an interesting fact). At first he spoke 'through an interpreter' (to mark his position), while the monk 'preferred to keep silence' (through prudence). But once confidence was established, the two spoke together, without an interpreter and with the monk playing the key role.

In fact, the record of the conversation as we have it, in question and answer form, is clearly a 'a text of Christian apologetics pure and simple',[6] as the following quotation shows:

> Our investigation into the apostolic faith [took place] at the instigation of a son of Ishmael. And since it seems to me that it would be profitable for you to bring it to the attention of your brethren, I am going to set it down in question and answer format.

So the amir begins by challenging the Christian creed: 'Though you pray much, your creed does not allow your prayer to be acceptable.' Whereupon the monk replies by inviting the amir to put whatever questions he wishes, saying that he will reply 'either from the scriptures or from the speculations of reason'. The Emir then asserts that Islam is the best religion because:

> We are careful with the commandments of Muhammad and with the sacrifices of Abraham … We do not ascribe

5 Sidney Griffiths, 'Disputing with Islam in Syriac: The Case of the Monk of Bêt halê and a Muslim Emir', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies*, Vol. 3 (2000), .no. 1, pp. 29-54; S H Griffths, `Muhammad and the Monk Bahira: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic text from early Abbasid Times', *Oriens Christianus*, Vol. 79 (1995), pp. 146-174; S H Griffiths, `Monasticism and Monks', *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, Vol. 3 (J-O), ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, E J Brill, Leiden, 2003, pp. 405-408.

6 Extracts are from Sidney Griffiths, 'Disputing with Islam in Syriac …', pp. 29-54.

> a son to God, [a son] who is visible and passible like us. And … we do not worship the Cross, nor the bones of the martyrs, nor images like you do … But here is a sign that God loves us and is pleased with our religion. He has given us authority over all religions and all peoples; they are slaves and subject to us.

The monk answers that, 'You Ishmaelites are holding the smallest portion of the earth as a whole—all creation is not subject to your authority!' Following some discussion about Abraham, in which the monk explains that the sacrifice of Isaac is the 'type' of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, the amir asks, 'How is it possible for divinity to be with him on the Cross and in the grave, as you say, [the divinity] neither suffering nor being harmed?' To which the monk replies, 'Divinity was truly with Christ, but there was neither mixture, nor intermingling nor confusion (as the heretics say), but it was by way of the will, in such a way as not to be harmed or to suffer.' And this sacrifice, he adds, 'is continued every day in the Eucharist.' [The monk explains the incarnation in a Nestorian manner: it is a union 'in countenance and in will' *(parsopa'ith wa sebyana'ith)*].

The amir turns to the question of Christ as 'Son of God' and to the Christian belief in God as 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. The monk's reply is brief: 'God is one: He is known in three *qnome* ('aspects')', as appears in both the Old and New Testaments.

He then challenges the amir to say, 'Whose son do the make the one whom you call ' Isa ibn Maryam, and we call Jesus the Messiah, to be?' The Emir says, quoting the Qur'an (4:168), 'the Word of God and His Spirit', which the monk 'caps' by quoting Luke 1:30:

> Peace be to you, full of grace: our Lord be with you—the Holy Spirit will come and the power of the Most High will cover you—and so the one to be born from you is holy, and will be called the 'Son of the Most High'.

And the monk concludes, 'Either you estrange the Word of God and His Spirit from Him, or you proclaim him to be the Son of God straightforwardly'. At which the amir opts for silence!

The conversation now turns to the person and role of Muhammad. The monk begins by giving his opinion that Muhammad was 'a wise man and a God-fearer, who freed you [the Arabs] from the worship of demons and made you recognize that God is one.' 'Then why', the amir said, 'did Muhammad not teach us the doctrine of the Trinity?' 'Because', said the monk, 'your people were then as children in the knowledge of God, and not yet ready for the mature teaching of the Holy Trinity, which might have led them into idolatry. So Muhammad preached only the doctrine he received from "Sargis Bahira" [we will look at his alleged role later].'

The discussion then moves on to the public practice of the Christian faith. 'Why do you worship images, crosses and bones of martyrs: is this not idolatry?' The monk replies with various examples of veneration of material things in the scriptures, and concerning the image of Christ as Son of God, he adds:

We make prostration and we pay honour to his image because he has impressed it with his countenance *(parsopa*—in Greek this would be *prosopon)* and has given it to us; each time we look at his icon we see him …, honouring the king's image because of the king himself.

The amir says that he knows of an icon 'which Christ made of himself and sent to Abgar, king of Edessa.' The monk, appealing to the role of 'tradition', says to the Emir:

> In your case also, I think, Muhammad did not teach all your laws in the Qur'an, but you learned some of them from the surat al-Baqarah, and in G-g-y-g-y and in T-w-r-h.

The end part of this text may refer the Torah and Gospel (often paired in the Qur'an), but the interesting point is the apparent reference to an extra-Qur'anic authoritative text (also referred to by St John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus*, ch. 101).

Returning to the veneration of the Cross, the monk, after citing symbolic allusions in nature and the vision of Constantine before his famous victory, concludes:

> We Christians, when worshipping the Cross, are not worshipping it as wood or metal … rather we are

> worshipping our Lord Christ, God the Word, who dwells in the temple from us, and in this banner of victory.

The same argument is used to justify the veneration of the bones of the martyrs, for 'we worship the One who dwells in them and works prodigies through their bones.' But 'why do Christians pray facing the East?', the amir asks. The monk replies,

> Our Lord Jesus used to pray toward the East. The holy apostles received from him this practice and handed it on to us. The proof is that all the churches on earth worship toward the East.

What was the amir's final reactions? He makes three main remarks, beginning by saying:

> Truly you are in possession of the truth and not error … Even Muhammad our prophet said of the inhabitants of monasteries and of the mountain dwellers that they will enjoy the kingdom.

This is an echo of the 'positive things' said about Christians, and especially about monks, in the Qur'an and the Hadith [although negative appreciations can also be found!]. The amir adds:

> But while I know that your religion is right, and your way of thinking preferable to ours, what is the reason why God handed you over into our hands … so that your bishops and priests are killed, and the rest of you are subjugated and enslaved with the king's impositions [taxes] more bitter than death.

The monk replies, saying: 'As for you, sons of Ishmael, God did not give you authority over us because of your righteousness, but because of our sins.'

But, asks the amir, 'Are the sons of Hagar going to enter the Kingdom?' The monk quotes, 'Whoever is not born of water and the Spirit will not enter the Kingdom of God (Jn 3:5).' But he adds:

> If a man has good deeds, he will live in grace, in abodes far removed from torment. However, he will think of himself as a hired man, not as a son.

And finally the Emir confesses:

> I testify that were it not for fear of the government and of shame before men, many would become Christians.

Clearly the dialogue as it stands is primarily addressed by the Christian monk to his fellow Christians! In fact, it well shows how the Christians faced up to and answered the Muslim objections to their 'religion'.

But this does prevent the discussion from having originated in a genuine meeting. The setting, a visit by a Muslim notable to a Christian monastery for rest and recuperation, rings true. So also does the marked hesitation of the monk to reply to questioning in matters of belief from a member of the ruling power whose religion was different. Again the problem of what language to use, and the desire to avoid the use of an interpreter, sounds authentic.

Islamic-Christian dialogue in the first 'Abbasid century.[7]

Much more could be said about the history of Islamic-Christian dialogue in this period (the second and third Hijra centuries). We can resume by saying: (1) This initial period of exchanges fixed both the themes and the style of the 'dialogue' for centuries to come, until the 'modern' period. Both sides were influenced by the approaches of the other. The Muslims adopted, in varying degrees, the rational Greek methods of logical analysis and argument, while the Christians developed their theology in response to the Islamic challenge and questioning. For example we find John of Damascus replying to the Muslim 'theologians' (the *mutakallimun*), and Thomas Aquinas replying to the 'Arab philosophers' (*falasifa)* both insisting forcefully on the

7 S H Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2008; J Waardenburg, 'The Medieval Period, 650-1500', *op. cit.*, pp. 18-69.

'de Deo uno', God as 'one', and on the clear distinction between the Creator and creatures.

But (2) while the dialogue in Syriac and Arabic (in the 'East') was courteous and respectful, that in Greek and later in Latin (in the 'West') was polemical and often (and increasingly) abusive. Of course this was partly due to the different spheres of political and religious control! But at a deeper level, the common culture and languages of the East (Arabic and Syriac are sister languages), combined with much that was common in religious practice, enabled a genuine 'dialogue' (whatever its limitations) to take place. The refined Greek-language Byzantine culture was very different from the Islamic Arabic culture: the co-habitation led to borrowing and stimulation on both sides, but the cultural-religious divide remained.

Was this 'dialogue' in the modern sense? If we mean the attempt to know and understand the 'other' in their 'otherness', with an intellectual objectivity and sympathy, the answer is clearly 'No'. The concept, still rarely practised, is, I think, a recent 'discovery'. And it needs further 'exploration'!

Muhammad and Jesus as 'prophets'[8]

Christians today often ask: 'Can we consider Muhammad to be a "prophet of God?"', or: 'Should we not recognise the prophet-hood of Muhammad, as the Muslims recognise the prophet-hood of Jesus?' To my mind, it is better to approach the matter in another way. We need to ask: 'How do Muslims understand Muhammad as Prophet?' We can then examine how we, as Christians, see Jesus' prophetic role. And, finally, we may enter into an 'inter-faith dialogue'.

8 On the question of Muhammad in Christian theological thought, see John Flannery, 'Christ in Islam and Muhammad, a Christian Evaluation', in A O'Mahony and John Flannery (eds), *The Catholic Church in the Contemporary Middle East*, Melisende, London, 2010, pp. 331-352.

Why does God send prophets? Because the 'night of ignorance' *(jahiliyya)* has clouded the minds of men and women, so that the 'original pact' *(mithaq)* has been hidden, and a new 'call/proclamation' *(da'wa)* is required. For this there needs to be a 'proclaimer', who may also be a 'messenger' *(rasul)* to a people, in some special cases with a 'book' *(kitab)*.

The series of prophets begins with Adam and ends with Muhammad, but the series is discontinuous: plunges of God's light into the world's darkness. The five main prophets are Noah, Abraham *(Ibrahim)*, Moses, Jesus and 'the Prophet'. The last three are the source of sacred 'books': the Torah, the Gospel, the Qur'an. What is their message? The basic message never varies; each prophet, even the 'minor prophets', proclaims the One God, warns of the Day of Judgement, and guides the people in the 'right way'. The variations only touch the details of cultic and civil laws. Muhammad is both a 'prophet-messenger' for the Arab people (hence the privileged role of the Arabic language and Arab people), and a universal prophet for all peoples (all Muslims are 'brothers' and equal). He is the 'seal of the prophets', correcting, completing and universalising all previous prophetic traditions. The original message was, and is, always valid; but human alterations or additions may have 'contaminated' it. Muhammad declares (Qur'an 46:9): 'Say: I am not an innovation among the Messengers … I am only a clear warner.'

So the Jewish Torah and the Christian Gospel are essentially true. Why, then, do they differ from the Qur'an? Because they have been altered (by textual additions) or misinterpreted (by tradition).

In fact, both the Torah and Gospel witness to the coming of Muhammad. Abraham foresaw a Prophet in Mecca, and so constructed, with his son Ishmael, the Ka'ba sanctuary. Moses announcement of a 'prophet to come' (Dt 18:15-19) is a clear reference to Muhammad. And Jesus, equally clearly, announced the Prophet when speaking of the coming of the 'Paraclete' (in 14:16-18; 16:7-13). The Paraclete is seen as a clear reference to Muhammad (usually by way of the change of the Greek *paracletos* to *periklutos*, the 'praised/illustrious one', a name of 'the Prophet').

What is the 'proof' of Muhammad's prophet-hood? It is, quite simply, the matchless and inimitable 'Holy Qur'an'. This is the sign of

God, and no other is needed. It is sufficient to challenge any 'deny-ers' to produce an equal! The 'Night Journey' says (17:88):

> Say: 'If men and jinn banded together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they would never produce its like'… They say: 'We will not believe thee till thou makest a spring to gush forth … or makest heaven to fall'. Say: 'Glory be to my Lord! Am I aught but a mortal, a Messenger?' Say: 'God suffices as a witness between us'.

In other words, Muhammad's prophetic status neither has, nor requires, any 'sign' *(aya)* other than itself, the production of the Qur'an being its purpose and fruit. No exterior miracle is needed as a support. It is itself 'the miracle': both as a whole and in each of its verses, it is a 'sign of God' *(ayat Allah)*.

Jesus's prophetic role in the Christian tradition.=

As Christians we see and believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the 'fulfilment' of prophecy, both as being the 'realisation' of the partial messages of earlier prophets, and—most importantly—as being the 'Son' whose 'Word' makes known God's self (as also God's plan to make us 'sons in the Son'). Two quotations, related to each other, explain this:

> In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days *He has spoken to us by a Son*. (Heb 1:1-2, italics added).
> In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), *He spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word*—and He has no more to say. (St John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:22, 3-5,* italics added; cf. CCC 65).

In other words, Jesus, while exercising a prophetic role, is more than a prophet: he is 'the Son'. The prophet as such is sent by God to give God's people a 'message' from God: know this, do that. But the Son in 'person' is the message. As Son he 'makes known' the mystery of God's 'inner life'. In his human life, he reveals, 'unveils', the divine

life he shares with the eternal Father: 'Who sees me, sees the Father' (Jn 14:9).

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this new and total mode of God's self-revelation. It follows that Jesus not only gives us the words of God (which indeed he does), not only is a Word of God (he is in all his life God's envoy and messenger), but he is also, and above all, God's 'Word' in person (Jn 1:1), God's Word 'made flesh' as human like us, as 'one of us', and so as 'revealing' God to us.

It is also by his life that Jesus reveals God's 'plan' for us; he is 'the first of many brethren' and the 'way' of our journey.

So the 'economy' of revelation has a 'history'. There are partial revelations through the Hebrew prophets, and through the prophets of other peoples, which prepare the way for the 'full' self-revelation of the Son-Word, which in turn will be 'developed' through the prophetic ministry of the Church-community. The partial prophecies are limited and incomplete, and so in themselves 'imperfect': only the Light of Christ can complete and 'perfect' them, by giving them their true meaning and value in a new whole. Again the 'development' of the Church's preaching, reflection and mystical life can only 'bring out' what is already 'there', already 'given' in the life of Jesus as the one Son, the one Word.

A further point: Christian tradition (unlike that of Islam) distinguishes between revelation and inspiration. God 'reveals' his 'Word' through the human words of his prophets, and He 'inspires' certain persons to write an account of His relations with His people. In the first case, the human agent is, and acts like, an 'instrument' in God's hands. In the second case, the writer acts under his or her own responsibility, and therefore with their own personal intentions and expressions, sources of information and manner of collation, editorial procedures and so on. While the whole revelatory process is 'overshadowed' by the Holy Spirit, we need to recognise, in both cases, the social 'inculturation' and individual 'personalisation' of God's eternal Word, and so the need of 'interpretation' in the Church community as guided by the same Spirit. This perspective is different from the Islamic understanding of the transmission to us humans of God's Word through the mouthpiece of the Qur'anic prophets, above all through 'the Prophet', pure instrument of God's 'supernatural dictation' (through the angel Gabriel).

Inter-Faith dialogue

We must first ask: What is 'dialogue'? The Greek root-word *'dia-logos'* gives us a clue: *logos* meaning 'word', and *dia* indicating 'through', and so 'between'. So we can define 'dialogue' as an exchange of words between two or more persons or groups. Of course, words are the expression of thoughts, that is of ideas, beliefs, feelings, wishes, hopes. And this exchange is, or should be, something that grows and develops. In fact, it involves, if pursued, what is most 'deep' within us. We both 'give' to the other of our 'self', and we are open to 'receive' from that other, our dialogue-partner, the expression of his/her 'self'. It is, then, an act of 'reason'—a 'word' by nature signifies and expresses a 'rational' content, a meaning—and it is also an act of 'will': a free choice, and so an act of love. Only love, in the sense of wishing the other well, of choosing to reveal oneself to the other in trust and of welcoming the self-revelation of that other, can open the way for a genuine and sincere dialogue. In short, it is an exchange of thoughts and intentions, and so of the 'self', in friendship.

My 'faith' and my friend's 'faith' are what is most personal and most profound within us. And so the 'exchange' of these 'faiths' is both delicate and yet precious: almost *infinitely* so. It follows that the obstacles, ready to prevent or distort all dialogue, are more active than ever in inter-faith dialogue, where the 'faith' in question is different. We need only think of those quasi-instinctive prejudices, the fruit of long histories of conflict and social division, that form cultural mind-sets that are, as such, closed to any real knowledge of the other as the other is and feels.

The dialogue in words supposes a 'dialogue of life'. To talk together, we must, at least, meet together! And, normally, the more extensive and profound this 'being together', the better! Did not Jesus live with us for thirty years before talking (publicly) with us? To begin a verbal inter-faith dialogue too early, before everyday contact, and so trust, has been developed, will be fruitless, and can be disastrous.

To go further, this dialogue of words and minds may well lead to a dialogue where each party feels 'called' to pass over their faith, which they experience as a saving reality for themselves, as the saving reality for their dialogue friend. I am, or my friend is, 'proclaiming' to the other 'God's message of salvation and life'. This supposes that one

feels 'inspired' by the Spirit of God to invite one's friend to respond to God's 'call' to them.

These three levels of dialogue—we may call them dialogue of the body, of the mind, and of the spirit—are as such distinct. Of course, the three 'levels' are activities of the whole person. And existentially these different levels lead into each other. But if we fail to see their distinctness, we risk crossing boundaries that the other may not wish to cross. My neighbour may not want to know in detail about my faith (in a sharing of minds). Still less may my neighbour desire to feel that I am persuading her/him of the saving role of my faith for her/him. The same need for discretion applies, naturally, to inter-faith group discussion. We must ask: Are we here to try to know and understand and appreciate each other's faith beliefs and faith commitment? Or are we are 'proposing' our faith to them for their acceptance and 'belief'?

We are justified in wishing to 'communicate' our faith as such. If I 'see' my faith in Jesus as the foundation of my life, I can only wish to offer this same 'treasure' to my friend who has become for me 'another self'. But am I justified in 'leading' my friend onto ground which I am aware that they do not wish to enter? In other words, inter-faith dialogue is by definition an exchange between persons of different faiths, and so morally these faith commitments must be accepted as genuine and respected as such.

How, then, can we imagine the beginning of an inter-faith dialogue between Muslims and Christians on the subject of 'prophecy'?

Muslims, clearly, would like us to accept Muhammad as a true prophet of God. 'We accept Jesus as a great prophet; can you not do the same for Muhammad, even if you do not accept him as the "seal of the prophets"?' As Christians, we might reply: 'Well, if you can accept the death of Jesus on the cross as an historical fact, without going further, we could perhaps acknowledge Muhammad as a special kind of prophet.' This kind of bargaining approach , seeking some sort of compromise by both sides, seems to me a flawed approach. We may well feel this way! But, surely, while it is an appropriate way in practical matters, it is hardly suitable in genuine inter-faith dialogue!

Of course, this attempt at inter-faith compromise (often linked with a rather 'low' faith level) is certainly an improvement on the centuries old controversial 'dialogue' of 'polemics'. As in some family or neighbourly disputes, each party seeks to 'demolish' the other! Such disputes have at least a common cultural mind-set, the difference being that of individual temperaments. In inter-faith dialogue, however, there is always a profound gap between the two religious mentalities, and frequently an added cultural diversity. It is not only disagreeable, it also useless for each side to criticise the other in terms of their own belief structure.

In the past, some Christian apologists have attempted to see Muhammad the prophet as a 'Christian heretic'. Did he not learn from a Christian monk, Bahira? But this Bahira, or other Christians, must have misled him; or he must have misunderstood their teaching. This approach, which could be taken as originally well-intentioned (and which may have an historical basis), has the defect of situating Muhammad in terms of Christian faith and theology. John of Damascus, monk and theologian, who held this view, was the son of an official in the caliph's court in Baghdad and had many Muslim friends. Given his nearness to the early Muslim conquests, it was a reasonable first 'reading' of the extraordinary 'success' of Islam, but one made in terms of a Christian theology of salvation. In recent times, similar attempts have been proposed: Is not Islam a regression to monotheistic Judaism? Or is Islam, perhaps, a religion of 'the age of nature' with some Jewish and Christian influences? Such theological attempts to situate Muhammad's prophetic role have the double disadvantage of failing first to seek to know Islam in all its complexity from the historical and philosophical viewpoints, and of not attempting to see and understand the other as 'other'.

For Muslims, as we have seen, Muhammad as 'the Prophet' is God's final Messenger, Announcer, Warner and Guide, for the Arab people and for all peoples.

Jesus himself, in line with Abraham and Moses, is a witness to Muhammad as Prophet. Jesus was a man of miracles: born miraculously of a Virgin Mother, Mary, 'the most blessed among women', he worked miracles even as a child (to defend his mother's chastity) and particularly

as an adult (many miracles of healing, producing a 'table' of food for his apostles), and he was finally 'taken up' miraculously to heaven (another being killed in his place). Further Jesus will come again at the 'end' together with Muhammad.

As a prophet, Jesus' role was to purify the Jewish religion, and, as with all the prophets, to witness to the One God and the day of Judgement. As the 'son of Mary' (both Mary and Jesus are 'untouched by Satan') Jesus is 'Messiah', and 'Word of God' *(Kalimat Allah),* but neither 'Son of God' nor 'One of Three' as he himself witnessed. In the overall plan of God, Jesus is the last, and most important, witness to the coming of the 'Final' Prophet, Muhammad.

Today some Muslim scholars present the 'Three great religions "from heaven"' as three stages in humanity's growth. For the childhood of humanity, God gave the Jewish religion, with its many detailed prescriptions of the Torah, to train man's obedience. Then came the religion of love, religion of the heart, the Gospel, suited to the period of Humanity's adolescence. Finally came Islam, the religion of humanity as fully adult, the religion of reason, taking man as he is, and offering happiness in this world and the next. Such is the view of Muhammad 'Abduh, *Risalat al-Tawhid,* Cairo 1353/1925. In the same vein, Ibn Taymiyya (*Fatawat* 5, Cairo 1329H) claims that Torah, Gospel and Qur'an are the Word of God, for each witnesses to God as One. This follows the classical Muslim approach, claiming that true Christians are those who are faithful to Jesus in adoring the divine Unity. So states the Qur'an in an often quoted passage:

> You will surely find the nearest in love to believers [Muslims] are those who say 'We are Christians' , for among them are priests and monks and they are not filled with pride. When they hear what has been sent down on the Messenger [Muhammad] you see their eyes overflow with tears, for they recognise the truth. They cry out, 'Lord, we believe, inscribe us among the witnesses, that we may enter [Paradise]'.

So Ahmad Benani, from Morocco, in *Our point of* view on the Council [Vatican II], writes: 'We believe in Jesus the Messiah (on him peace) as a true prophet. More, we believe that we are the true

Christians, for we believe in the original Christian doctrine, as the Qur'an so clearly presents it.' How can the Christian refuse to be *mu'min* and *muslim*, one who 'believes' in God and 'surrenders' to God, and so one who 'professes islam'?[9]).

The Christian view of prophecy is, naturally, commanded by one's belief in Jesus as being *in* person Word and Son. As the Word who is God (Jn 1: 1), Jesus, the Word-made-flesh (Jn 1: 14), reveals in his humanity the hidden life of the One God. Not only his human words, but all his human acts 'reveal' the Life, Light, and Love that is God, the One who alone can say I AM (Ex 3:14). This 'self-revealing' of God culminates, paradoxically, in the 'lifting up' of Jesus on the Cross which is completed in the 'lifting up' of the Resurrection-Ascension: 'When you see the Son of Man lifted up, then you will know that I AM' (Jn 8:28). In fact, the whole gospel of John elaborates the theme of 'revelation' (implicit in the synoptic gospels), and the corresponding themes of 'witness' and 'faith', so giving an overall view of Jesus as prophet.

For Jesus as prophetic revealer of God makes known to us the 'mysteries' of God's being, One and yet Three [the Trinity], of God's saving presence with us and action for us [the Incarnation and Redemption], and of God's adoption of us as God's children [the gift of grace as healing our humanity and divinising our nature]. The man Jesus as Son of God reveals by his human life among us these three inter-related 'mysteries'; for God makes us 'sons in the Son' (*Lumen Gentium* 8, resuming St Paul).

We have, then, presented to our faith, 'mysteries' which by their nature are 'beyond' the scope of human reason. Looked at by reason alone, they appear unreasonable. To the Muslim reason, rooted in the acknowledgement of God's Unicity, they 'reasonably' appear absurd, and shocking. The very truth of what they affirm with such vigour can, and does, 'block' their way towards accepting the truth of these great mysteries that we can only express with poor human comparisons derived from our down-to-earth human experience. How unreasonable, it seems, to apply the human family relationship of 'father-son' to the inaccessible Godhead! We need to be aware both of the 'treasure' given gratuitously to us, and of the 'obstacle' that it puts in the way of our Muslim friends.

9 See Gardet for all the above analysis: Louis Gardet, *L'islam. Religion, et communauté*, Paris, Desclée De Brouwer, 2002, pp. 392-4.

In Conclusion: Dialogue for building a Better World Together[10]

The first aim of dialogue is to learn to know each other better in our respective faiths. It is a long work of discovery, requiring an apprenticeship in mutual respect: we need to learn to 'see' the other as they are, precisely as 'other', and as they wish to *be*. But we must also learn how, practically, to work together to make together the 'world' in which live together a better world. Here we can, and must, find common ground. We *cannot* honestly have a common faith (though, of course, we have many 'essentials' in common). But on the level of social practice, we have sufficient fundamentally common principles to enable us to carry out common actions in a given situation. Can we not work for an elimination of degrading poverty, both through concrete measures to alleviate misery and through efforts to formulate a new economic system? Should we not aim at better education, better health care, better family life, better social coexistence and cooperation? While our approaches to these and other questions may vary, these very differences, on the level of practical choice and action, can be, with appropriate discussion and compromise, a help to finding new answers to old, but so far unsolved, problems. Our common religious values, as distinct from our specific religious beliefs, can, in this practical field, be a 'background' support and inspiration for common action. Do we not see ourselves as brothers and sisters of the One true God whose providence guides all human beings on the way of goodness and happiness? Do we not share a profound belief in the God of Life, the Living One and the Giver of life? And do we not confess together faith in the 'presence' of God and of God's action in the midst of all our human activities? In a world which seems to be increasingly 'secular' (in the sense of not accepting

10 I Latham, 'Charles de Foucauld (1898-1916): Silent witness for Jesus' in the face of Islam', in: *Catholics in Interreligious Dialogue: Studies in Monasticism, Theology and Spirituality* , Gracewing, Leominister, 2006. See now Ariana Patey, 'Life and Thought of Charles de Foucauld: An Eremitical Vocation to Islam and his Contribution to the Understanding of Muslim-Christian Relationswithin the Catholic Tradition', PhD Thesis, University of London, 2012; Ariana Patey, 'Sanctity and Mission in the Life of Charles de Foucauld', *Studies in Church History*, Vol. 47, 2011, pp. 365-375.

God in our world of personal and social relations), this last common conviction is of vital importance, not only for us but all we live and work with in all places.[11]

11 The question and relationship between revelation in the Bible and the Qur'an has been taken forward by Brother Michel Cuypers, confére of Brother Ian, in Michel Cuypers, 'Le Festin. Une lecture de la sourate al-Mâ'ida', *Collection «Rhétorique Sémitique»* n° 3, Lethielleux, Paris, 2007; M Cuypers, *La composition du Coran*, Librairie Gabalda, Paris, 2012; M Cuypers and Geneviève Gobillot, Idées reçues sur le Coran, Le Cavalier Bleu, Paris, 2014; M Cuypers and Geneviève Gobillot, *Le Coran (Idées reçues)*, Le Cavalier Bleu Editions, Paris, 2015. On how the interpretations of the Qur'an have been positioned and articulated in relation to violence, see M Cuypers, 'Is a non-violent Interpretation of the Qurīan possible?', *The Catholic Church in the Contemporary Middle East*; ed. A O'Mahony and John Flannery, Melisende, London, 2010, pp. 317-329.

TO DEFEND THE FAITH? THEMES AND CONCEPTS IN THE WRITINGS OF SAYYID QUTB AND ROWAN WILLIAMS

Peter Colwell

In his book *The Sea of Faith* Don Cupitt, reflecting on the decline of religious belief and influence expressed in Matthew Arnold's poem 'Dover Beach', makes the observation in relation to the rise of rationalism and secularism:

> We started by asking why people do not go to church, but it is also worth asking why it is that in spite of everything so many people still do go to church. If the whole climate of thought has been so inimical to religion for so long, how does religion survive?[1]

Western Europe during the latter part of the twentieth century has witnessed a process that has come to be known as secularization, where religion is seen to play a less significant role in society and national life. In the Islamic world a comparable process seemed to be in progress with governments and regimes pursuing forms of secular politics in which Islam would play a peripheral role. This is found in the politics of Arab nationalists such as Nasser in Egypt, and also in leaders in other parts of the Islamic world such as Ataturk of Turkey and the Shah of Iran.

However, any suggestion that the tide of religion was in permanent retreat may have been premature. The early part of the twenty-first century has seen a resurgence of religious confidence that had not been foreseen by previous generations. Furthermore, we may be witnessing the emergence of a significant change in the way religion relates to society and more widely within the global context.

1 Don Cupitt, *The Sea of Faith*, SCM Press, London, 1984, p. 33.

Post Enlightenment Europe had grown accustomed to the 'Westphalian model' which sees religious and cultural pluralism as secondary in international relations, and further believes that they must be 'privatized' in the interest of international peace and order.[2] We have therefore grown accustomed to religion playing a peripheral rôle in society, hence the frequent use of the term 'secularization'. However, as Scott Thomas and others have pointed out, we are witnessing a global resurgence in religion in which religion often transcends national boundaries and identities.[3]

This survey looks at the work of two very different writers from two different religions in two different societies who have offered a religious critique of secular politics that is rooted in a theological confidence and who writings have varying degrees of influence within their respective traditions. Both writers express dissatisfaction with secular societies (and we might say the 'Westphalian Model') and both seek to take account of religious pluralism.

Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian Sunni Arab Muslim, has been a major influence in the Islamo-political revival commonly referred to as Islamism. Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury until 2012, is one of Europe's foremost theologians. We shall explore ways in which each of these writers attempt to defend their religious tradition in a world where religious influence is believed to be under threat and how they take account of the plurality of religious belief.

As we shall see the issues at stake for both writers, in their very different ways, relate to the centrality of the religious meta-narrative. Thus 'defence of faith' is not simply a defence against hostile ideas, but is a defence against those who are heard to deny that Islam or Christianity are entitled to assert a normative religious meta-narrative.

2 The Congress of Westphalia (1648) adopted the principle *cujus regio, ejus religio*—the ruler determines the religion of his realm—which included the notion of noninterference in matters of religion in domestic affairs.

3 Scott M Thomas, 'Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously—The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Society', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2000, p. 815-841.

The Islamic world in the shade of the Qur'an: the writings of Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) is a significant voice and influential Islamic writer particularly for those with an Islamist outlook upon the world. The details of Qutb's life have a very strong influence upon the direction of his thinking, and his life remains a seminal story for many Islamists.

Qutb's life is set against the backdrop of twentieth-century politics in the Middle East, in particular British control and influence in his native Egypt and the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. The Balfour Declaration and the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel were regarded by Qutb and his contemporaries as an abrogation of the right of Arabs to self-determination.

Although Egypt received its independence from Britain after the First World War, Britain continued to exercise control over Egyptian affairs, including control of the Suez Canal. This was deeply resented by many Egyptians, including Qutb, and many became active in movements struggling against the British during this time.

Qutb's politics were not restricted to his objections to British influence and his writings reveal concerns about the apparent lack of moral behaviour of his own people, which he regarded as resulting from Western influence. His political and religious views came to the attention of the Egyptian government and he was sent to the United States for a period, presumably in the hope that it would help to moderate his viewpoint. However, his time in the United States convinced him of the truth of his assessment of Western society: From his time in America Qutb was to conclude that the West was vapid and amoral particularly in relation to sexual ethics. Sex plays an important role in Qutb's thinking: As a young man he had been an advocate of sexual liberalism, advocating at one point the practice of 'naturism' as a means of personal fulfilment, but he later developed a strongly puritanical attitude to sexuality but this did not lessen his pre-occupation with it and he has much to say about sexuality both in the West and in Muslim societies[4].

4 Often Qutb's moral judgements are preoccupied with sex. Given this frequent preoccupation, a detailed psychological study might conclude that Qutb's radicalization was as much blown by a repressed sexuality as they were by political

But his moral comment was not limited to sexuality: Of jazz, for example, he said

> it is a type of music invented by Blacks to please their primitive tendencies and desire for noise.[5]

But far from articulating a wholesale rejection of Western culture he reveals an appreciation of 'high culture' and on a visit to an art gallery in America he expresses puzzlement at the lack of appreciation of art amongst many of those visiting the gallery.

His visit to the United States also nurtured a disdain for Christianity: on the outward voyage he viewed with horror as a Christian missionary evangelized the passengers and crew. When in the United States he was to comment on American religious observance:

> Nobody goes to church as often as Americans do … yet no-one is as distant as they are from the spiritual aspects of religion.[6]

He observed that Churches compete for congregations much in the same way that theatres competed for audiences. He records his disapproval when he observed, at a church dance, men and women dancing together in close contact. This echoes his revulsion at the conduct of some women when he first arrived in Cairo as a young man.

In 1951, following his return to Egypt, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood which was to become a major turning point in his thinking. The Muslim Brotherhood, which had been founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, was initially formed to struggle against foreign domination of Islamic lands but in time it saw its struggle against regimes it deemed un-Islamic. It began in Egypt, but similar movements were to emerge in other parts of the Islamic world. Qutb's involvement with the Brotherhood was so momentous for him that he would later comment 'I was born in 1951'[7] and he would often refer to this as his 'conversion' to Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood's proclaimed *jihad*

events.

5 Malise Ruthven, *A Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America*, London, 2004, p. 81.

6 Ruthven, p. 79.

7 Ruthven, p. 83.

against the British would soon be replaced by their opposition to the rule of Nasser including a failed assassination attempt in 1953, which resulted in Qutb's imprisonment and torture. Although he was released in 1964 his freedom was short-lived and the following year he was arrested again and executed in 1966.

Qutb the political activist went hand in hand with Qutb the scholar—amongst his many writings is the substantial commentary on the Qur'an, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, which has been hugely influential, particularly with contemporary Islamists.

We might ponder why it was that Qutb, well-educated, knowledgeable about Western literature and philosophy, and who as a young man shared many of the liberal beliefs of Europeans, was to become one of the most influential anti-Western, Islamist writers. We will now turn to some of the details of Qutb's views of the defence of faith and his understanding of religious plurality.

Defence of the faith against *jahiliyyah*

For many contemporary Islamists, Qutb is a crucial figure, both in his writings and in the events of his life. His struggles against Nasser and his experience in the United States are seminal for those who view the Islamic *raison d'être* as one of struggle against the 'House of War'.[8]

Qutb believed that Western hegemony was reaching its nemesis, not simply because of a loss of political and military power but because it had been deprived of the 'life giving values which once enabled it to become the leader of humanity.'[9] Although Qutb had a high regard for many aspects of Western culture, particularly in the field of literature, art and philosophy, he rejected *modernity* because it negated the sovereignty of God. In his writings he connects the health and influence of a civilization with morality and high culture. In his own mind his view of the past was essentially a nostalgic one: both in terms of his image of a Western society of high culture, and of a former Islamic world—a kind of 'paradise lost'. At the same time his

8 *Dar al-harb* (house or abode of war) as opposed to *dar al-islam* (house or abode or Islam).

9 Ruthven, p. 85.

view of the contemporary world was one of moral degradation that was doomed to collapse. A new world leadership would emerge, he believed, that would preserve all that was good in European culture whilst providing a positive view of human destiny. Only Islam, he believed, could provide this new leadership.

Qutb believed that the Qur'an was the basis of a totalizing philosophy that would transform the way in which people viewed the world. Thus Islam was as much a political ideology as a spiritual religion. However, Qutb did not believe that Islam should be approached in an intellectual or analytical way, indeed he rejected attempts to contextualize or interpret the Qur'an insisting that the Qur'an was its own interpreter. What the Qur'an offered was an 'instinctive way of reality'.[10] This may explain, at least in part, why much of his writing is polemical in tone. In Qutb's view it was necessary to engineer a change in the world view of every Muslim and every Muslim community—a transformation similar to that experienced by the first Muslim communities of Mecca and Medina.

Qutb did not regard the West as innocuous—a civilization that was once noble but had gone astray and should no longer be emulated—on the contrary he viewed it as part of the forces of *jahiliyyah*—literally 'state of ignorance'. The term *jahiliyyah* in classical Islam referred to the period prior to Muhammad and was regarded as a finite period of history that came to an end with the revealing of the Qur'an. Qutb followed Abul A'la Maududi (1903-79), the Pakistani Islamist scholar and jurist, in redefining *jahiliyyah* as a philosophical concept for all time rather than a definition of an historical period.[11] And so as well as referring to Muhammad's struggle against *jahiliyyah*, Qutb also equated *jahiliyyah* with Western and other modern societies, including Nasser's Egypt. Thus, *jahiliyyah* are the forces that are in opposition to the 'Islamic Movement' *(al-harakah al-islamiyyah)*.

In order for a transformation of the world order to come about Muslims must struggle against the forces of *jahiliyyah* so that Islam might be the dominant view of reality. This would involve the replacement

10 Charles Tripp, 'Sayyid Qutb: the Political Vision' in Ali Rahnema (ed.), *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*. Zed Books, 1994, p. 161.

11 Hugh S Galford, 'Sayyid Qutb and the Qur'anic story of Joseph: A Commentary for today', in Ronald L Nettler and Suha Taji-Farouki (eds), *Muslim-Jewish Encounters, Intellectual Traditions and Modern Politics*, Harwood Academic Publishers, Reading, 1998, p. 53.

of 'man-made laws' with *shari'ah* and the overthrow of political systems which put such laws in place.[12]

This struggle *(jihad)* is not simply a means by which Islam would become the dominant view of reality, but it is also vital if Islam is to survive at all, as the forces of *jahiliyyah* seek to undermine and destroy Islam. In Qutb's view it was the aim, not only of the West but also of many governments in the Islamic world, to undermine and destroy Islam. Thus there is an obligation placed upon all Muslims to engage in *jihad* against the forces of *jahiliyyah*. Whilst Qutb insists that Islam is a religion of peace and that there can be no justification of war, the exception to this is the *jihad* against *jahiliyyah*. Furthermore it is the responsibility of every Muslim to protect the true believer and to ensure that they do not stray from the religion. He further insists that Muslims must be given the freedom to spread Islam and thus it is justifiable to fight against any system or regime which obstructs *da'wah*[13]. It is significant to note that Qutb criticizes those Muslims who have insisted that *jihad* only resorts to the use of force in a defensive capacity—he calls them 'spiritual and intellectual defeatists'.[14]

What is not clear from Qutb's writings is the relationship between the European 'high culture' for which he had such a high regard and the forces of *jahiliyyah*, and how one distinguishes between what is good and *jahiliyyah*.

Having therefore overcome the forces of *jahiliyyah* the true Islamic society will emerge. This is a society where humanity lives in harmony with the divine. Qutb often speaks with a strongly mystical language, leading many commentators to describe him as a 'militant Sufi … who has achieved complete harmony and understanding in himself and who sought to convey the message to others.'[15] However, this ought not to mislead us in respect of Qutb's attitude to Sufism which is often harshly critical.[16] Furthermore the mystical language of Qutb does not lead his readers to an 'otherworldliness' but rather he seeks

12 Tripp, p. 162.

13 *Da'wah*–literally 'the call [to Islam]' and the closest Islamic concept to the Christian understanding of 'mission'.

14 Yvonne Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival' in John L Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, Oxford, 1983, p. 84.

15 Tripp, p. 173.

16 Elizabeth Sirriyah, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World*, Curzon Press, London, 1999, p. 161.

a harmony with God in *this* world and in that sense his vision is not unlike that of some forms of Christian Liberation Theology. In this respect it would not be wide of the mark to describe Qutb as one of Islam's foremost 'liberation theologians'. Just as a good deal of Christian political theology places stress upon the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, Qutb likewise looks to the creation of an Islamic state but rejects the recreation of the ancient caliphate as an unrealistic goal:

> The Islamic system is not restricted solely to a replica of the first Islamic society, but is every social form governed by the total Islamic view of life … The Islamic system has room for scores of models which are compatible with the natural growth of a society and the new needs of the contemporary age as long as the total Islamic idea dominates these models in its expansive external perimeter.[17]

Such an Islamic state would create true freedom for the individual, but as well as the language of the individual he also speaks of the Islamic community as 'one body'. There is a tension here in Qutb between the corporate and the individual which is seen in the apparent contradiction in his views about the leader of the Muslim community. In one instance he states that the leader's power is absolute unless he deviates from Islamic principles at which point it is legitimate for the community to depose him (the assumption is that the community will function as a single entity which raises questions as to why the leader of the community would deviate in the first place and he does not consider the possibility of a diversity of view on what constitutes 'Islamic principles'). However, he was to suggest elsewhere that in such a Muslim community there would be no need of a leader at all as the true ruler of the community is Allah, and Allah alone.[18]

17 Qutb, quoted in Haddad, p. 71.
18 Tripp, p. 170.

Sayyid Qutb and other religions

We have so far seen how Qutb viewed Western civilization as exhausted and morally decedent, that we are witnessing its nemesis and that the West constitutes part of the forces of *jahiliyyah* that are in opposition to the *al-harakah al-islamiyyah*. Other religions are identified with the forces of *jahiliyyah* both in its Quranic and contemporary sense.

Qutb is really only concerned with two religions—Judaism and Christianity—and this is principally because they feature so prominently in the Qur'an, but also because of their pertinence to contemporary events. Qutb places particular emphasis upon those aspects of the Qur'an where Muhammad is in conflict with, or is critical of, Judaism and Christianity. In addition Qutb's assessment of Judaism and Christianity is fashioned by contemporary political events (the creation of the State of Israel), history (the Crusades) and his own experiences (the United States).

Qutb sees Judaism and Christianity as part of the forces of *jahiliyyah* and he often does not distinguish between these religions and Western civilization. He also compares Western societies unfavourably to Islam. For example we find him contrasting post-Constantinian Christian Europe with Islam—in Christian Europe not only were non-Christians subject to the persecutions that Christians were previously subject to, but also Christians who would not accept doctrinal orthodoxy. By contrast:

> Islam came to declare and establish the great universal principle that: 'there shall be no compulsion in religion'. The right way is henceforth distinct from error. This reflects the honour God has reserved for man and the highest regard in which man's will, thought and emotions are held, and the freedom he is granted to choose his beliefs, and the responsible position he is afforded to be judge of his own actions. Here lies the essence of human emancipation which 20th century authoritarian and oppressive ideologies are regimes have denied mankind.[19]

19 Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Vol. 1, Islamic Foundation, Leicester (translation 1999), p. 325.

The Qur'an, he says, contains archetypes by which the contemporary world might be compared. Here we find one of Qutb's recurring themes—viewing the Quranic drama being continually recapitulated throughout history. Another word for what Qutb is doing is 'repristination'—a recreation of the past in the present without taking account of the way the world has changed. Ronald Nettler has pointed to a tendency in Sunni Islamic thinking whereby categories of past, present and future are blended into an 'eternal present'.[20] This phenomenon is also found in Christianity (and, as Nettler points out, Judaism too)—the Eucharist emphasizes as 'an eternal present' in which the death and resurrection of Christ is brought to the present. However, for Christianity there is a sense of resolved conflict not only of Christ's suffering but also in the sense of the eschatological (now and to come) resolution of human suffering. What Qutb does, with his emphasis upon the recapitulation of the Quranic struggles in an 'eternal present', is to highlight an underdeveloped eschatology in Islam.

A good instance of this repristination is in his commentary on Surah 2.116-118 where he takes the Jews, Christians and polytheist Arabs and makes contemporary (and to some extent, spurious) analogies:

> It is interesting to note here that those groups compare very closely with the three groups that are opposed to Islam today, as represented by world Zionism, the crusading Churches and international Communism, the last being even more hostile to Islam that the polytheist Arabs ever were.[21]

As we have seen, Qutb's understanding of history is that of an 'eternal present', to use Ronald Nettler's phrase: Muhammad's struggles with the Jews, Christians and pagans are recapitulated. These are Quranic archetypes by which history and contemporary events are to be understood. Thus 'all three groups seem to share the same attitudes, concepts and inclinations, and therefore belong together,' furthermore they would never make peace with Muslims 'unless Muhammad

20 Ronald L Nettler, 'A Post-Colonial Encounter of Traditions: Muhammed Sa'id Al-Ashmawi on Islam and Judaism, in Ronald L Nettler, *Medieval and Modern Perspectives on Muslim-Jewish Relations*, Oxford, 1995.

21 Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Vol. 1, p. 111.

abandoned Islam and took up their distorted beliefs and erroneous ideas.' As a result 'the faith of Islam has always been at the centre of the crusades and campaigns launched against the Muslim community all over the world.'[22]

Having therefore established Qutb's basic framework and methodology we can now turn to his detailed comment on other religions, in particular Judaism and Christianity. Qutb gives considerable attention to other religions in his commentary on Surahs 4-6, 8, 9, 33 and 49 which is concerned with the structure of the Muslim community, relations with non-Muslims, war and social justice. Qutb interprets Surah 9.25-35 as a framework for the Muslim community's relationship with the 'People of the Book',[23] the earlier part of the Surah being concerned with the contrasted relationships with the polytheists who are regarded as unclean.[24] Central to this relationship was the payment of *jizyah*:[25]

> Fight against such as those who have been given the Scripture as believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, and forbid not that which Allah hath forbidden by his messenger, and follow not the religion of truth, until they pay the tribute readily, being brought low.[26]

As far as Qutb is concerned, there can be no negotiation or agreements unless the *jizyah* is paid. This is the only viable way for the Muslim community to relate to the People of Book. This is not simply for the benefit of the Muslim community, it also is of benefit to the People of the Book, because they will be afforded protection and permission to practise their religion in peace. In addition they can be exempted from the *jizyah* if they choose to become Muslim but only on the basis that there is 'no compulsion in religion'. Qutb does not

22 *Ibid*., p. 113-114.

23 People of the Book—sometimes called scripturiaries—the Quranic term that is used to describe Jews and Christians and is sometimes extended to include other faiths, particularly Zoroastrianism.

24 9.28.

25 Often translated as 'poll tax', and was levied against the People of the Book payable by every free male and in return they would receive protection and the right to practise their religion.

26 Mohammed Marmaduke Pikthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, Surah 9.29.

believe that it is possible for Muslims to co-exist with Christians and Jews except within the framework of the *jizyah* because of the conflict between God's programme and *jahiliyyah*.

Many Islamic commentators have emphasized those aspects in Judaism and Christianity that resonate with Muslim belief. Not so Qutb: The People of the Book are associated with *shirk* (idolatry), *kufr* (unbelief) and *batil* (falsehood). In drawing attention to this Qutb is aware of the comparisons some non-Muslim commentators have made with other, apparently more positive, portions of the Qur'an on the People of the Book and of their view that this reflects a development in Muhammad's thinking. He of course rejects this and insists instead that the Qur'an's assessment of the People of the Book is not that of Muhammad but of God himself.[27] Qutb has often been criticized for his emphasis upon the Medinan rather than the Meccan passages thus arriving at a more confrontational assessment of Jews and Christians. However, he justifies this emphasis by explaining that in respect of Medina most Jews and Christians were 'unbelievers' whilst the few individuals that were found in Mecca were in fact strict monotheists and for that reason they received the message of the Qur'an with joy. By contrast with Mecca, the large number of Jews in Medina were hostile to Islam from the start and denied that Muhammad is foretold in the Jewish scriptures. He further asserts that whatever was happening in Medina and Mecca the main narrative of the Arabian peninsula is one of resistance to Islam by the People of the Book and why the stress is upon their wickedness and falsehood.[28]

Once again we encounter Qutb's tendency towards interpreting history as Quranic recapitulation: he links together in a theological narrative events such as Jewish opposition to Muhammad, alleged Jewish involvement in the rebellion in which the third caliph is killed, the civil war between ᶜAli and Mu'awiyah, the Mongol's sacking of Baghdad and the destruction of the caliphate. This theological narrative continues into modern times, and Qutb concludes:

27 Neil Robinson, 'Sayyid Qutb's Attitude Towards Christianity: Sura 9.29-35 in Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an' in Lloyd Ridgeon, *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, Macmillan, London, 2001, p. 162.

28 Robinson, p. 163.

> they have been behind every disaster which has befallen Muslims in every place on the face of the earth, and they are behind every attempt to crush the beginnings of the Islamic revival.[29]

In respect of Christianity, the Church is equally antagonistic towards Islam, seeing it as a threat. Christianity, he says, is 'a pile of ancient idolatries and ecclesiastical errors clad in the vestiges of the words of Christ, peace be upon him.'[30]

The hostility of the Church towards Islam was to repeat itself again and again throughout history, including the Byzantine defeat of the Muslims at Mu'tah, the reconquest of Spain, the crusades and contemporary events in Zanzibar, Cyprus, Eritrea and Southern Sudan.

Qutb regards the command to struggle against the People of Book until the implementation of the *jizyah* as true for all time and establishes in absolute terms how Muslims are to relate to the People of the Book. Furthermore he equates Jews and Christians not with monotheism but with unbelief *(kufr)*:

> It cannot be said of anyone who treats Ezra or Christ as son of God that he believes in God. Likewise anyone who says, 'God is Christ the son of Mary' or 'God is the third of three' or 'God becomes incarnate in Christ' and so forth of the ecclesiastical imaginings which the revered compilations have made up … and those who say that they will not enter hell-fire except for a number of days no matter how much they sin, because they are sons of God and his beloved ones, and the chosen people of God, and those who say every disobedience will be forgiven through union with Christ and participation in the holy supper and that there is no forgiveness except by this way … it cannot be said that they believe in the Last Day.[31]

29 Qutb, quoted in Robinson, p. 164.
30 *Ibid*.
31 Qutb, quoted in Robinson, p. 165.

Nevertheless, Qutb holds fast to the Quranic injunction that the fighting against the People of the Book is to cease when they pay the *jizyah* not when they convert to Islam.

Islam is the 'primal religion'[32] and must remove all things that stand in the way of human liberation through Islam. However, this must not be done at the expense of human freedom and therefore, says, Qutb, this can only be achieved through the destruction of human systems and powers that are based on things (religious or otherwise) other than Islam. Having destroyed such systems the non-Muslim will surrender and pay the *jizyah*; only then will human beings truly have the free choice either to accept the one true religion or alternatively pay the *jizyah* and live in peace.

Qutb's reading of the Qur'an therefore does not take the view that the People of the Book are to be respected because they too are worshippers of the one God, but rather they are to be treated with suspicion because of their natural propensity to deviate from the religion of truth, to distort, deceive, mislead and to corrupt God's word. For this reason it is important to struggle against them until they submit and stop their attacks on the Muslim community. Furthermore Qutb believes that it is incumbent upon all Muslims to expose the 'lie' that the People of the Book are following God's religion. He laments the fact that many Muslims are misled into believing this claim and for this reason he regards designations such as 'People of the Book' or 'People of the Scripture' as misleading and warns against those who appear to be Muslim who make alliances with the 'People of the Book' but their aim is the destruction of Islam. The most dangerous example of this phenomenon was, in Qutb's view, Kamal Ataturk the founder of modern-day, secular, Turkey. He called such people 'the unbelieving Islamic movement'.[33]

Similarly, Qutb has little regard for inter-religious dialogue, calling one major advocate, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a 'deeply wicked and extremely cunning Crusader writer', and commenting that there is little merit in dialoguing or debating issues of religious truth. In respect of debates about the origins of the universe he comments:

32 Islam's self-understanding is that it is not founded by Mohammed but is the first religion (Adam, the first man, is the first Muslim) but also that every person is Muslim at their birth; hence Muslims speak of 'reversion' rather than 'conversion'.
33 Robinson, p. 172.

> The fierce disputes which have periodically erupted among Muslim scholars … are part of the unfortunate legacy of Greek philosophy and Jewish and Christian theological and ecclesiastical arguments which have crept into Arabic and Islamic thought and theology. Today, we would be better advised to avoid engaging in such futile debates which only mar the clarity of faith and destroy the beauty of the Qur'an.[34]

Instead he emphasizes that between Islam and other religions and philosophies:

> There is an abyss [between *jahiliyyah* and Islam] which is not spanned by a bridge to allow for a meeting half-way between the two, but to allow for the people of the *jahiliyya* to come over to Islam.[35]

Critical reception of Qutb

Sayyid Qutb remains a powerful and influential voice in contemporary Islam. Yvonne Haddad, for example, observes that:

> few Muslim thinkers have had as significant an impact on the reformulation of contemporary Islamic thought as has Sayyid Qutb. Since his execution … his writings have inspired numerous revivalist movements throughout the Muslim world. They have captured the imagination and the commitment of young Muslims and transformed them into working for the cause of Islam in the world.[36]

However, although Qutb's writings have been very influential with modern Muslims, and especially Islamists, it would be wrong to assume that Qutb does not have his critics or detractors or those who have taken are distinctively different approach to Islam and modernity.

34 Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Vol. 1, p. 43ff.
35 Quoted in Tripp, p. 171.
36 Haddad, p. 67.

Qutb operates with a common Islamist assumption, that Islam contains a political theory by which a society ought to be governed. This has been seriously challenged by a number of Muslim scholars. The Tunisian historian and Muslim thinker Mohamed Talbi (b. 1921), for example, denies that Islam has any intrinsic political principles. He suggests that those that read any political 'blueprint' for society are wrong or misguided. Instead he states that Islam is a revealed system of belief, piety and worship and contains no polity.[37]

The Indonesian Muslim scholar Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005) makes a similar point:

> The concept of the 'Islamic state' is a distortion of the [properly] proportioned relationship between state and religion. The state is one of the aspects of worldly life whose dimension is rational and collective, while religion is an aspect of another kind of life whose dimension is spiritual and personal.[38]

Nucholish not only questions ideas of Islamic polity but also suggests (albeit controversially) that notions of Islam as the only true religion are misplaced: in his comment on Surah 3.83-85 he says that whilst 'Islam' is the exclusive name for that which was revealed to Muhammad it is also the name of the primal religion which people had professed in the widest possible sense, which he understands as submission to Ultimate Truth. This enables him to recognize the validity and equality of all religions (including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism) with none (including Islam) taking priority over the other.[39]

Neal Robinson takes issue with Qutb both in terms of the very framework of his analysis and his interpretation of particular Quranic texts. Robinson questions the prominence with which Qutb gives to the word *jahiliyyah* which, he points out, only appears in the Qur'an four times yet is central to Qutb's analysis of the relationship between

37 Ronald L Nettler, 'Mohamed Talbi on Understanding the Qur'an' in Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.), *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an*, Oxford, 2004, p. 227.

38 Anthony H Johns and Abdullah Saeed, 'Nurcholish Madjid and the interpretation of the Qur'an—religious pluralism and tolerance, in Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 76.

39 Johns and Saeed, *op. cit.*, p. 86ff.

the Muslim community and 'the other', and, as we have seen, is a concept that Qutb (and Maududi) significantly modified in its meaning and application. Furthermore Robinson is critical of Qutb's use of the term *al-harakah al-islamiyyah* (the 'Islamic movement') which never appears in the Qur'an.[40] Robinson further accuses Qutb of employing a polemical reading of history:

> He supposes that Christians have always been power-hungry empire builders and inveterate enemies of true religion, whereas Muslim armies invariably serve simply to liberate subject peoples so that they are free to choose to serve God. I would argue, on the contrary, that Christians and Muslims alike must face up to the painful truth that at a relatively late stage both religions were hijacked by individuals and interest groups who were more concerned with extending their own power than in the spreading the ideals of their founders.

Robinson furthermore refers to those who have challenged the commonly held view that there is such a thing as an Islamic system of government. He points to the writings of Ali Abd al-Raziq, an Egyptian judge, who in 1925 argued that it was not part of Mohammed's mission to found an Islamic state and that the caliphate, far from representing an 'Islamic golden age' was in fact the source of much evil and corruption. [41] Connected to this is the suggestion that modern day Islam is in the process of 'rediscover(ing) its vocation to be a message inviting a response rather than an order which imposes itself.'[42] In this course of development it is the theological and ethical principles of the Qur'an rather than the regulations which merge as being of central importance.

Qutb's writings have often been read (both by sympathetic and hostile readers) as a call to violent struggle against the forces of *jahiliyyah*. However, not everyone has placed this interpretation upon his writings. No less than Qutb's own brother, Mohammed Qutb, has insisted that his brother's intention was to encourage Muslims to be defenders of their faith in the midst of a hostile environment. Thus Mohammed

40 Robinson, p. 174.
41 Robinson, p. 174ff.
42 Robinson, p. 175.

Qutb's insistence is that *jihad* is an intellectual and moral struggle, not a violent one.[43]

We might further reflect upon whether it is possible for a religion to deny any separation between things sacred and things secular, between things spiritual and things temporal. Bernard Lewis asserts that:

> In pre-western Islam, there were not two powers but one, and the question of separation, therefore, could not arise … It was not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and then under the influence of Western ideas and institutions, that new words were found … to express the idea of the secular.[44]

No doubt Sayyid Qutb would have wholeheartedly agreed with that assessment, however there is a strong dualistic strand to Qutb's thinking, between the forces of *jahiliyyah* and *al-harakah al-Islamiyyah* and given the importance of this theme in Qutb, and especially given the fact that the forces of *jahiliyyah* are associated with *kufr*, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Qutb has articulated a separation between the sacred and the secular.

Faith in the public square: aspects of the thinking of Archbishop Rowan Williams

The notion of 'defence of faith' is an important one for an Archbishop of Canterbury: The monarch, who is Head of the Church of England, holds the title 'Defender of the Faith' first given to Henry VIII by Pope Leo X as a reward for his opposition to the ideas of Martin Luther; a title which was preserved following the break with Rome. Notionally 'defender of faith' has been concerned with the defence of faith against all others (and for periods in history that has been understood to be other Christian denominations). Dr Williams became archbishop at a time when questions were raised about the appropriateness of the Church-State Establishment, especially given the religiously plural nature of English society. We shall therefore consider Williams' approach

43 Tripp, p. 177.
44 Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, Chicago, 1988, p. 2ff.

to religious plurality, the role of Christianity in national life and how this might relate to the historic relationship of the Church of England to the English nation.[45]

Rowan Williams was born in Wales, and has taught theology at Mirfield and Cambridge, before being appointed as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford University. Since then he has served as Bishop of Monmouth, Archbishop of Wales, the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury and currently Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge and Chair of Christian Aid. His doctoral thesis was entitled 'The Theology of Vladamir Niklaevich Lossky: An Exposition and Critique'; orthodox (particular Russian) theology has been a major influence on his thinking. Williams' published works are extensive, including *Resurrection* (1982), *The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to St John of the Cross* (1990), *On Christian Theology* (2000), *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (2002), *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* (2008) as well as collections of poems.

Although religious pluralism as such had not been a major part of his output prior to his becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, it was during his time of office he developed an interest in public life and the rôle religion plays within it. In this survey we shall focus upon his consideration of pluralism within the context of Trinitarian theology as expounded in his book *On Christian Theology* (2000), an article written in 2001 'Beyond Liberalism' in which he considers the Christian response to current trends in socio-political thinking, as well as *Faith in the Public Square* (2012). Additional reflections come from his 2002 Richard Dimbleby Lecture and his 2003 speech at the University of Birmingham entitled 'Christian Theology and Other Faiths'.

As we shall see, whilst there are significant and obvious differences between the theological language of Qutb and Williams—their understanding of 'the other' and how a society should function in relation to matters legal, moral and spiritual—there are at the same time some important commonalities in their approach. Like Qutb, Williams has a critique of secular society and an analysis of the rôle a religious meta-narrative should play in a society.

We begin first of all to consider Williams' approach to Christian theology and 'the other' before considering the rôle of religion as the critiquer and influencer of culture.

45 In Wales the Anglican Church was disestablished in 1920.

The doctrine of the Trinity and religious pluralism

In his book *On Christian Theology* Rowan Williams includes a chapter on religious pluralism. He takes as his starting point the writings of the Catholic theologian, Raimundo Panikkar (1918-2010), in particular his article 'The Jordan, the Tiber and the Ganges: Three Kairological Moments of Christic Self-Consciousness'[46] and his 1973 book *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*. It is Panikkar's assertion that 'the mystery of the Trinity is the ultimate foundation for pluralism' that is Williams' starting point for his approach to the religious 'other'. Williams summarizes Panikkar as follows:

> the Trinitarian structure is that of a source, inexhaustibly generative and *always* generative, from which arises form and determination, 'being' in the sense of what can be concretely perceived and engaged with; that form itself is never exhausted, never limited by this or that specific realization, but is constantly being realized in the flux of active life that equally springs out from the source of all. Between form, 'logos', and life, 'spirit', there is unceasing interaction. The source of all does not and cannot exhaust itself simply in producing shape and structure; it also produces that which dissolves and re-forms all structures in endless and undetermined movement, in such a way that form itself is not absolutized but always turned back towards the primal reality of the source.[47]

As the ground of all being God is not only the source of all life, but also *all* reality and *all* history. This can be the only framework in which to understand reality. God is therefore the source of what is expressed and articulated, even if a good deal of the language can only be metaphorical. But as reality is diverse, any understanding of God must be grounded in diversity and plurality. Thus for Panikkar, 'God in Trinity' is the context for understanding the nature of religious experience and the diversity of human spirituality, who

46 Published in J H Hick and P Knitter (eds), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, London, 1987.

47 Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000, p. 167.

'grounds them in their plurality and so demonstrates their unity in diversity.'[48]

The Trinity therefore becomes because of a *pluralist* concept of God which alone can make sense of the diversity of human spirituality and religious experience. This is achieved through the identification of unifying themes and images ('Being', 'Spirit', 'Logos' etc) which are not intended to be theories about the essence of religion, least of all are they intended to act as definitions of religion in any kind of exclusive fashion.

By grounding theological plurality in the doctrine of the Trinity, Williams points out that Panikkar is being the opposite of a relativist. Panikkar takes it as given that human beings' experience reality in a manner which is diverse but this does not refute suggestions that there is an essential unity of existence—a oneness in which differences become insignificant. Panikkar has made a plea for a reflection upon reality that is 'concrete and universal' as opposed to 'particular and general'.[49] In other words there is a fundamental truth that is at the very ground of existence whose very nature is universal and as such it is at the same time comprehendible and misunderstood. The analogy of a chord in the body of a symphony is suggested:

> The individual reality or situation is like a single chord abstracted from a symphony; it can be looked at in itself, but only with rather boring results, since what is there is determined by the symphony. What it is *is* the symphony at that juncture.[50]

This then is a concept of plurality that is rooted in the Christian apprehension of the divine which invites us into a struggle to understand the nature of ultimate reality whilst not abandoning the Christian theological frame of reference. Panikkar's description of the dialogical task is seeing the unity of things in terms of 'christic universal vision' and 'christic fact', which he distinguishes as *Christianness* as opposed to Christianity or Christendom,[51] meaning

48 Williams, *On Christian Theology*, p.168.
49 Williams, p. 169.
50 *Ibid*.
51 Williams, p. 170.

that he distinguishes between the dialogical task and Christianity in the exercise of power.

When we move into the historical and political arena, Panikkar believes that the Christian understanding of history is ambiguous and often resorts to an evolutionary linear understanding of progress in history that has historically been pejorative of other cultures and religions. Williams connects this with recent notions of the 'end of history' which views a form of American capitalism as the culmination of human history of human potential.[52] Instead we are presented with a different understanding of history, which derives from the first Christian theologians, in particular Paul and John of the New Testament. Whilst this grounds salvation history in the Christ-event, it not to be restricted to the historically specific, and the Logos is active in history in ways that are fluid and unpredictable.[53] Human fulfilment and liberation is understood as finding its fulfilment in the Logos incarnate, in Jesus, but this is only realized historically in ways that are incomplete:

> so that the unity and intelligibility can never be seized as a single object to a single mind. It can only be hoped and worked for as lives are touched and changed, moving into the likeness of Jesus' freedom before God, and that movement of manifold change, the endless variety of imitations of Christ, is where we recognize the divine action as *Spirit*—the same divine action as establishes the form of the incarnate Logos, but working now to realize that form in a diversity as wide as the diversity of the human race itself … The fullness of Christ is always to be discovered.[54]

This approach both rejects approaches of tolerant pluralism and imperialist exclusivism and instead regards engagement with other religions as part of the theological salvation story that is rooted in the Christ event. This, Williams states, is a development of Panikkar's position. Williams expresses his puzzlement that Panikkar's distinctive

52 Williams, p. 171, presumably referring to Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Penguin, London, 1992.
53 Williams, p. 172.
54 Williams, p. 173.

approach is contained within a volume of essays on religious pluralism in which the other contributors take a more deconstructionist approach to theology. Panikkar's position does not offer limitless pluralism and is resistant to:

> the homogenization of human beings—*cultural* resistance, in other words, and *political* resistance, to the forces in our world that make for the reduction of persons and personal communities to units in large scale, determinate processes, resistance to the power of the universal market or the omnipotent state.[55]

Williams does not accept Panikkar's approach uncritically and expresses the fear that Paniikar runs the risk of a 'privatization of Christian identity' in his distinguishing between Christianity/ Christendom and Christianness, but does believe that he shows a more fruitful way to engage with the 'religious other'.[56]

Thus Williams proposes an approach to religious plurality that defends Christological claims of Christianity, takes theological account of the religious other but at the same time sees the crucial task of religion as defending the development of human (spiritual) fulfilment against the forces that he calls the 'universal market' and 'omnipotent state' and which is not unrelated to Qutb insistence that the forces of *jahiliyyah* stand in the way of human liberation and fulfilment.

Having considered Williams' approach to religious plurality we now turn to his comments on the Christian role in the public arena and his understanding of what it means to defend the faith.

Christianity, society and the defence of faith

In an article published in 2001, Dr Williams considered the rôle of Christianity in an increasingly secular society whose ethical basis is increasingly 'rights based'.[57] This has a number of manifestations not

55 Williams, p. 174.
56 Williams, *op. cit*., p. 180.
57 Rowan Williams, 'Beyond Liberalism', *Political Theology*, Vol. 3, No. 1, November 2001.

only in respect of cultural, religious and sexual minorities but also in the realm of the *consumer* who assumes a contract with the *provider* with all the implication of *rights* and *obligations* that go with it:

> What we are seeing, I suggest is a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the typically modern models of political relationship, which depict the individual political subject, endowed with rights, over against the state, endowed with the monopoly of legitimate power, and thus of legitimate violence or coercion. The purpose of political action, on such models, is to persuade the power-holder to honour or realize the rights of the citizen.[58]

What is missing from such a society is any overarching ethos which might critique a belief in one's entitlement to rights of a particular sort. In this version of society there are different *narratives* as to what constitutes the social good which may or may not agree with one another. A society which is purely rights based will lack any overarching that underpins the shared life of all: in other words communitarianism. However, the alternative offered is articulated as the so-called 'perfectionist liberal' that assumes a degree of neutrality and is the arbiter of what is positive and good in society. This tends to be secular in nature and is popularly referred to as 'political correctness'. This, according to writers such as the political scientist Raymond Plant, is the only alternative to communitarianism. Williams summarizes Plant thus:

> A religious community may refuse to accept this as a proposition about what is morally primary in the common life of human beings; but if the only alternative is communitarianism (and therefore a radical pluralism about social goods), the community has to accept that a liberal framework which accepts that religious doctrine or tradition is welcome because it maximizes some sort of choice (and therefore serves autonomy) is its safest ally.[59]

58 Williams, 'Beyond Liberalism', p. 65.
59 Williams, 'Beyond Liberalism', p. 67.

Williams has his own assessment of this point of view:

> Is it enough to say that a religious community is bound to defend a liberal polity because at least it guarantees the community's own 'territorial' integrity as a legitimate option?[60]

Stanley Hauerwas suggests that such a position defines different groups (including religions) as interest groups lacking any serious narrative. In effect, the perfectionist liberal denies the validity of religious meta-narrative and demands assent to its 'neutral' world view. Another commentator, Charles Mathewes talks of the 'Balkanized ethics and politics of liberal America'. To put it differently, and more pointedly, the perfectionist liberal point of view represents an assault on religious (and for that matter, any) meta-narratives.

However, the perfectionist liberal has many defenders of its position. Michael Ignatieff for instance believes that a rights-based political culture will invite minorities and interest groups to play a part in building a national identity and as such will feel a degree of ownership of it that will cause them to defend it.[61] However, if the trends in the nature of religious identity are accurately described by Scott Thomas then Ignatieff's analysis of how religious minorities relate to a national state is insufficient.

Williams' critique of Ignatieff's position is that a rights-based political culture is likely to foster a society in which majority and minority have no shared vision of what it means to be inter-related with one another. Furthermore it will breakdown if one group believes that the extension of rights to another is to undermine the validity of their own values.

These thoughts from 2001 reflect some of the debates during the early years of the government of Tony Blair and some of the policies that were pursued towards creating a 'cohesive' society. These included policy responses to the Cantle Report into disturbances in northern English towns where different ethnic and religious groups were deemed to be living 'separate lives', and also the caution and sometimes opposition to the government's introduction of civil partnerships

60 *Ibid*.
61 *Ibid*., p. 69.

for same sex couples, which subsequently came to be accepted by numerous Churches and faith groups when proposals were brought forward—and finally legislated upon—for same-sex marriage in 2014.

Having considered and offered a critique of the 'perfectionist liberal' position, Williams turns to what he considers a much larger theological issue to be faced:

> The Christian narrative affirms that the self-emptying or 'decentring' of spirit is first the rationale of creation and then the content of the story of Jesus and the call of the believing assembly. This assembly (the Church) exists not to make political policy or to witness to an abstract universal justice or emancipation, but to speak of and enact the patterns of self-displacing and self-risking invited by the story of the self-displacing God, who elects to live in the life of the radically other (contingent and historical humanity, moral vulnerability). It assumes that fundamental to creation is a mediation of the one foundational act of God's self-sharing, God's Word, in and inseparably in the multiplicity of creation.[62]

In his 2002 Richard Dimbleby lecture Williams underlined the fact that for religious people the nature of what it means to be human is a matter of serious conviction:

> For the religious believer—very particularly in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim world—each of us, and each item of our environment, exists first in relation to something other than me, my needs, my instincts. They are related to a life or agency quite independent of any aspects of how things happen to be or happen to turn out in the universe; to the eternal, to God.[63]

Thus in the context of a rights-based culture it is not possible for the Church to function in the same way as different interest and

62 Williams, 'Beyond Liberalism', p. 71.

63 The Richard Dimbleby Lecture, 12 December 2002. http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/about/

lobby groups, as it has a cosmic view of the nature of reality. The Church's contribution, therefore, is through its theological narrative that is not simply expressed through a bland expression of justice, toleration and partnership. This is not to demean or deny the validity of such language but it fails to do justice to the theological reality of God's salvific work.

The Church, then, has an important rôle to play in asserting that the Christian narrative is not simply one amongst many but is one which stands apart from society, offering not only a critique of the way things are, but also an overarching analysis of the human condition that is rooted in an expression of confessional Christian theology. This question occurs elsewhere when Williams discusses the implication in Sergeii Bulgakov writings that 'without a religious account of national vocation, the way lies open to secularist messianisms that recognize no prescribed limits, and so slip into aggression and endemic conflict.'[64] Elsewhere Williams has suggested that secularism is a mirror image of religious fundamentalism.[65]

But Williams does not see the Christian contribution to society in terms of an exclusive theology insistent upon social control: To return to his Dimbleby lecture again he states:

> So the challenge for religious communities is how we are to offer a vision, not in a bid for social control but as a way of opening up some of the depth of human choices, offering resources for the construction of growing and critical human identities.

In his more recent book *Faith in the Public Square* he discusses secularism further and adds a commentary and critique of it.

> A secularist set of protocols for public life would rest upon the assumption that our attitudes to one another in the public realm have to be determined by factors that do not include any reference to agencies or presences beyond the tangible. Thus, ideally, attitudes in such a

64 Rowan Williams (ed.), *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology*, Edinburgh, 1999, p. 295.

65 Rupert Shortt, *Rowan Williams: An Introduction*, DLT, London, 2003, p. 77ff.

> context are a matter of what can be negotiated and successfully sustained between visible agents and groups of agents. Some of these groups will have commitments that can't be ruled 'admissible' in public discourse; if these commitments are to play any role, they must be translated into language accessible to those who don't share them.[66]

There are two implications to this, he suggests. The first is that for groups (religious or otherwise) to engage in public discourse, they will have to 'dress in borrowed clothes'. Secondly, it assumes that the basis for engagement in the public arena is based upon how one's aims are to be realized and how other groups or individuals might help or obstruct them. He suggests that this is inseparable from 'functionalism' and will therefore 'generate a social practice that is dominated by instrumental or managerial considerations, since the perspectives that would allow you to evaluate outcomes in other terms are all confined to the private and particular sphere.'

Evaluation of Williams

Drawing extensively on the work of Raimundo Panikkar, Dr Williams offers an approach to religious pluralism that is both firmly rooted in Trinitarian faith and at the same time has a genuine openness to the 'religious other'. When we set this alongside his analysis of contemporary society we find both a critique of a type of current secular liberalism and a defence of the notion of Christianity as public truth—to draw on the language of the late Dr Lesslie Newbigin. In fact Newbigin's critique of Western secular society has considerable similarities with Williams' position:

> We have tended to suppose that the kind of open democratic societies which have grown out of the European experience in the past five hundred years can be reproduced and can continue without the rooting in the Christian worldview within which they developed.

66 Rowan Williams, *Faith in the Public Square*. Bloomsbury, London, 2012, pp. 12ff.

> Contemporary political events do not encourage that optimism.[67]

What Williams strives at doing in a way that Newbigin does not is to find a place for the religious 'other' within a Christian understanding. Thus we find Williams defending the place of faith schools of other religious communities but on the basis that it does the reverse of communitarianism and obliges other communities to engage in a relationship with the public arena.[68]

This, however, raises the significant question as to the place for an established Church and Church-State relations within Williams' framework. During the period immediately prior to Williams' appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury it was suggested in some quarters that he may be unsuitable for the office as he might be in favour of disestablishment, although he has never been on record as holding such a view.[69] However, shortly after becoming archbishop, in an interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, he attempted to discourage the Prince of Wales from becoming 'Defender of Faith' rather than 'Defender of *the* Faith', emphasizing the specific nature of the monarch's relationship to the Church of England.[70]

Given what Dr Williams has said and written in different places it would seem that Williams is arguing for a renewed importance for the rôle of the Church at the centre of national life. Such a rôle is very different from that exercised in the past whereby the Church was regarded as part of the political establishment (this would be consistent, too, with Panikkar's desire to distinguish 'Christianness' from 'Christendom'). Williams' use and development of the theological pluralism of Panikkar places the Christian meta-narrative as the overarching social narrative in which the 'religious other' has a significant part to play, both theologically and socially and whose contribution to society would be more easily brokered by an established Church than it would in an explicitly secular society. If this is Rowan

67 Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. SPCK, London, 1989, p. 221.
68 Rowan Williams, 'Christian Theology and Other Faiths', a lecture given at Birmingham University, June 2003, in Michael Ipgrave (ed.), *Scriptures in Dialogue: Christians and Muslims studying the Bible and the Qur'an Together*, Church House Publishing, London, 2004, p. 140.
69 Rupert Shortt, p. 70.
70 *Daily Telegraph*, 12 February 2003.

Williams' understanding of the rôle of an established Church, it would strike familiar chords with the position of other faith commentators. Tariq Modood, in his discussion of the rôle of an established Church sees establishment as preferable to total secularism:

> given the distribution of power, a further advance for secularism is likely to be at the cost of the new as well as the old faiths. On the other hand, the minimal nature of an Anglican establishment, its proven openness to other denominations and faiths seeking public space, and the fact that its very existence is an ongoing acknowledgement of the public character of religion, are all reasons why it may seem far less intimidating to the minority faiths than a triumphal secularism.[71]

The notion expressed here that a society with an established Church is more accepting of plurality and will 'allow space' to minority religions is a direct challenge to many assumptions that arise from the perfectionist liberal standpoint. A similar point is made by the philosopher John Gray, who, commenting on the banning of overt religious symbols in French schools, states:

> It flows from the rigid secularism *(laïcité)* of French republicanism—a tradition of citizenship that has many achievements to its credit, but which makes the absorption of immigrants with different religious traditions from the host society more difficult than it need be. In Britain, as in a number of other European countries, church and state are not separated in the same way … This sort of religious pluralism is a more promising path to 'modus vivendi' between different communities than an attempt to cling to monolithic secularism, which is inconsistent with the multicultural societies that exist throughout most of Europe today.[72]

71 Tariq Modood, 'Establishment, Multiculturalism and British Citizenship', *Political Quarterly*, Vol. 65(1), January 1994, p. 72ff.

72 Quoted from an interview in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol. 21, no. 3, Summer 2004.

Williams' approach has not been without its critics. The philosopher (and former student of Williams') Richard Cross for example has been critical of the central place Williams gives to religion in national life. Cross rejects as unhistorical the suggestion that only a non-secular society can accommodate different viewpoints.[73] Furthermore it can also be pointed out that Williams' approach is one informed by Anglican theological polity within the English context and does not adequately take into account other Christian traditions and their theology of the public square and how they have engaged with secularism. Modood's point about the minimal nature of Anglican establishment and how it has accommodated other traditions fails to take account of the religious history of Britain: the road towards Catholic emancipation, the suppression of the Welsh language and rendering of Nonconformist Christians as second class citizens (barring them from certain professions and universities). Arguably, the flourishing of intra-Christian pluralism from the seventeenth century onwards was due to the persistence of the Dissenting tradition over and against the political and religious establishment. The reality for Catholic, Nonconformists and also Jews was one of precarious toleration that could easily be terminated. By the nineteenth century Nonconformists were advocating the end of the privilege of one Church over another, in effect seeking their own abolition in favour of a genuinely inclusive society.[74]

This historical heritage, along with British colonial history and its effects upon other religions ought to raise questions for non-Christian faiths as to how they are to engage in the public square without feeling the need to 'dress in borrowed cloths'.

A second question is whether Williams assumes that the only 'Christian' response to 'secularism' is a confessional and ecclesial one? The non-realist philosopher Don Cupitt argues for a 'secular Christianity', suggesting that many of the so-called 'secular' beliefs, reforms and aspirations are rooted in Christianity, and constitute a fulfilment of all that Christian values represents. Regardless of whether actual faith is held or religious practice is maintained Christianity leaves its indelible mark upon Western civilization:

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73 Rupert Shortt, p. 80.

74 See, Keith Robbins, 'Nonconformity and the State, ca 1750-2012', in Robert Pope (ed.), *T&T Clark Companion to Nonconformity*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013, pp. 75-88.

> We remain what Christianity has made us, and in many respects the postmodern West is more Christian than ever. If you are a Westerner and are committed to Western values, then you are a Christian.[75]

In effect, what Cupitt points towards is an abiding Christian meta-narrative that is not dependent upon ecclesial authority or belonging but is self-sustaining, particularly in terms of ethics. If Cupitt is right, then modernity may negate the sovereignty of God, but it by no means extinguishes the Christian meta-narrative.

Conclusion

Sayyid Qutb's rejection of modernity because it negates the sovereignty of God touches upon the crucial area of meeting between himself and Rowan Williams. Both men represent religious traditions which have a 'cosmic story' in which human beings participate. Islam and Christianity cannot, according to Qutb and Williams function at the level of mere players in someone else's narrative (this is something that Williams refers to in his reflections upon the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, when he points out that 'the Muslim world is now experiencing—as it has for some time, but now with so much more intensity—that 'conscription' into someone else's story that once characterized the Church's attitude to the Jews.')[76] Herein lies the essence of 'defence of faith' in the thinking of these two men.

Notwithstanding any of the above Qutb and Williams are very different writers both in terms of their analysis and in their vision of what society should be. Both men place high importance upon defence of faith, but within their own very different terms of reference. In fact, what we might call the 'totalizing tendency' of Islam is very much in evidence in Qutb's work and likewise the 'oecumenical tendency' of Christianity underpins the work of Rowan Williams. But when we compare the two writers, Qutb achieves the very thing that Williams

75 Don Cupitt, *The Meaning of the West: An Apologia for Secular Christianity*, SCM, London, 2008, p. 36.

76 Rowan Williams, *Writing in the Dust: Reflections on 11th September and its aftermath*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2002, p. 70ff.

is at pains to avoid—transforming a religious narrative into political ideology. We may reflect upon how much this is dependent upon the nature of eschatology in the two religions, although such reflections would have as their starting point Christian theological assumptions as to the desirability of a developed doctrine of eschatology.

In early centuries of a new millennium the secular West is forced to take account of a resurgence in religious confidence. Meanwhile Islam is a religion that often feels under siege whilst Christianity often feels under threat. The context of the dialogical encounter between these two faiths, at least in the West, will be the way they relate to a society which seems to compel them into defence. Both religions have a framework in which to reflect upon this reality—for Islam is akin to Muhammad's own struggles, whilst for Christians it is to be related to the drama of redemption. A final question to ponder therefore—is there a meeting point between the 'totalizing' and 'oecumenical' and can there be a meeting point between those who negate the sovereignty of God and those who cannot?