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"PLEASE DENY THESE MANIFESTLY FALSE REPORTS": OTTOMAN DIPLOMATS AND THE PRESS IN BELGIUM (1850–1914)

Abstract
Similar to ruling elites in Western Europe, the Ottomans were preoccupied with foreign "public opinion" regarding their state. Historians have devoted attention to Ottoman state efforts at image building abroad and, to a lesser degree, related attempts to influence the European mass press. Yet, an in-depth study of this subject is lacking. This article turns to one of the prime, though largely neglected, actors in Ottoman foreign policy making: the sultan's diplomats. Through a case study of Ottoman envoys to Belgium, it demonstrates how foreign "press management" evolved and was adapted to shifting domestic and international political circumstances. Increasingly systematic attempts to influence Belgian newspapers can be discerned from the reign of Abdülhamid II onward. Brokers between Istanbul and "liberal" Belgium's thriving newspaper business, Ottoman diplomats proved essential to this development. Ultimately, however, Ottoman efforts to counter Belgian (and European) news coverage of the empire had little impact and occasionally even worked counterproductively, generating the very Orientalist images they aimed to combat in the first place.

Keywords: diplomacy; European–Ottoman relations; international history; media history; propaganda

The steady rise and expansion of the press in the modern era has been a popular subject for historians. More than a source of information, the press has been seen as an essential, if not defining, component of "public opinion." Easily manipulated by state and corporate elites, it played (and still plays) an important role in power politics. Recent historical studies, for instance, adopting the perspectives of world history, political economy, and/or colonial history, have analyzed the infrastructure of the mass press and situated it within larger processes of transnational "capitalist imperialism" to show how "the world's first mass medium, the popular penny press," was instrumental to the invention of "colonial heroes" and the popularization of European Empire.[1] For international historians, the interplay between foreign policy and public opinion still represents a contentious issue.[2] Long before the emergence of mass media and "new journalism" in the 1870s, the

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free circulation of newspapers, and hence of potentially "subversive" ideas, deeply troubled European decision makers.[3] Sustained "news" campaigns could impact bilateral relations, and some newspapermen, today considered pioneers of "modern" journalism, were able to secure powerful societal positions and influence not only the opinions of their readership (at home and abroad), but also those of state decision makers.[4] A classic example of the potential of the emerging mass press to influence international politics is the sensationalist British reporting of the "Bulgarian Horrors" (1876), which contributed considerably to a cooling down of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship. Yet diplomats also saw opportunities in the press, which they sometimes used as a tool for propaganda. Especially from the 1870s on, "'public opinion' in foreign countries was . . . seen as a more and more crucial target of diplomatic activity because of its real or perceived power to influence foreign governments and affect bilateral relations." As a result, several European Foreign Ministries resorted to forms of "press management."[5]

Investigations of public opinion and the printed press have proliferated in recent studies of the late Ottoman Empire. Historians have treated the subject from a variety of analytical angles. Some have explored state attempts to gauge domestic popular opinion through secret surveillance, or to control and/or suppress the local multilingual newspaper press. Others have focused on the emancipatory power of the press for Ottoman minorities, or described how different opposition groups in exile (e.g., freemasons, "nationalists,"[6] or constitutionalists) utilized various strands of "political journalism."[7] Still others have demonstrated the newsprint's critical role in processes of "othering" and/or imperial identity construction,[8] or analyzed its essential part in the formation of popular radical culture in the eastern Mediterranean.[9]

Historians of the Ottoman Empire have equally touched upon the question of the foreign (mostly Western European) press, with which Ottoman imperial ruling elites had been concerned from early on. In fact, the Istanbul government seems to have been a forerunner in the "institutionalization" of press management. It is well known that the Sublime Porte's famous Translation Office (Tercüme Odası), founded in 1821, carefully kept track of news coverage about the empire by several of the then-leading European dailies. In 1858, in the aftermath of the Crimean War, a separate office was founded that provided Ottoman envoys abroad with regular "information circular[s]" to use in countering inimical rumors in the press. The initiative proved to be short lived.[10] In 1869, however, a Foreign Ministry Press Office (Hariciye Matbuat Kalemi) was established that monitored press commentaries of the empire's affairs in the major European periodicals, and forwarded informatory notes to, and compiled "press releases" for, Ottoman diplomatic missions abroad.[11] Similar initiatives by Continental European states came later: press bureaus were founded in the Quai d'Orsay in 1879 and, around the same period, in the Ballhausplatz in Vienna. In Rome this occurred only in 1901.[12]

Some scholars of the late Ottoman Empire have suggested that the Ottomans suffered from an "image problem"[13] abroad, and that foreign policymakers in Istanbul consequently tried to influence and even shape European public opinion.[14] In his classic study of Hamidian imperial ideology, Selim Deringil has labeled such strategies as "image management" or "damage control."[15] Considering the precarious and often contested international position of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, this argument is convincing. Nonetheless, the historical evidence supporting such claims is often flimsy and gives no clues as to the actual functioning of foreign press management. Most historians have also restricted themselves to the Hamidian period (1876–1908), although it is

obvious that Ottoman "public relations" strategies, which were always contingent upon the particular and shifting geopolitical circumstances in which the empire found itself, must have been very different during the Tanzimat era and Second Constitutional Period. More importantly, historians have not yet explored the different national contexts in which these putative press policies were implemented. For a better understanding of *how* the Ottoman center interacted with European news media, one needs to take into account the complexities and particularities of the local and look at such issues as national press regulations, Ottoman diplomats' social networking strategies, and market forces driving the highly competitive domestic newspaper business.

In this article, we offer a case study by examining Ottoman engagements with the printed press in Belgium. We analyze Ottoman efforts at press management in this particular state primarily through the lens of diplomacy, a key institution of international relations that is crucial to understanding Ottoman interactions with the wider world, and aim to reinstate Ottoman foreign envoys as agents in their own right. We should note that this article is not a systematic analysis of Belgian news coverage of the Ottoman Empire, but rather attempts to assess how Ottoman diplomats interacted with and perceived the Belgian press. Considering our analytical purposes, it is especially interesting to investigate Ottoman press strategies in Belgium. With a constitution ensuring absolute freedom of the press, the country was one of the most liberal of its time.[16] The young kingdom (and Brussels in particular), together with Switzerland, was also a popular international free haven for various dissident and/or "subversive" editors, journalists, cartoonists, and writers, who had fled political suppression and censorship back home.[17] This situation alarmed some of the "Great Powers" who interpreted the lack of censorship as a violation of Belgian neutrality or deemed it a threat to peace on the Continent.[18] The Ottomans shared these anxieties, for among those attracted to Belgium were opponents of the sultan's government.

Ottoman official relations with Belgium date back to 1838, when a treaty of commerce and amity was concluded. While this small neutral state was, in geopolitical terms, only a secondary ally, the Ottomans had recognized its position as an industrial power. In 1849 an Ottoman legation opened in Brussels, becoming the sixth diplomatic mission in Europe, after Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, and Athens. The country was, especially from the 1860s onwards, a vital importer of industrially manufactured goods and, up to the 1890s, a key supplier of weapons to the Ottomans. The involvement of Belgian capitalists in the modernization of the Ottoman urban infrastructure (transportation and public utilities) in the late 19th and early 20th century was massive.[19] The mutual awareness by Ottoman and Belgian state elites of such shared economic interests ensured a fairly stable diplomatic relationship between the two countries throughout the long 19th century.

In this article we argue that Ottoman efforts at press management abroad hardly ever resulted from forthright top-down policy, but was largely the product of the improvisatory labor of the empire's diplomats, who continuously attempted to negotiate with a multiplicity of local actors (journalists, propagandists, foreign state officials, and even Ottoman fugitive/exiled dissidents) to prevent and counter the publication of "negative" news reports about the empire. While some degree of systematization can be discerned in these activities from the Hamidian period onward, the Ottomans' sensitivity to the foreign press was highly variable over time and largely dependent on international political circumstances and the kind of political regime in place in Istanbul. Finally, we demonstrate that Ottoman press management attests to both the agency of the sultan's

diplomats and, more broadly, the fluctuating, yet persistent, aspiration of conservative imperial state elites to *control* "modern" public opinion, both at home and abroad.

TANZIMAT DIPLOMATS

Prior to the Crimean War, the few major Belgian dailies that included serious foreign news reporting hardly ever published original articles on Ottoman affairs; instead, they reproduced news bulletins on the empire from the leading French, British, German, and Austrian papers. When such articles showed the empire in a bad light (which they most often did), the editorial offices concerned occasionally received a response from the Ottoman Legation in Brussels. In 1850 and 1851 the Ottoman *chargé d'affaires*, Eugène de Kerckhove—remarkably a Belgian national himself and a conservative Catholic[20]—sent two letters to *L'Indépendance belge*, the leading liberal daily, to rectify calumnies against the Sublime Porte. Both letters, which were published in the paper concerned, denounced European ignorance of the Ottomans and eulogized the Tanzimat reforms.[21] In February 1853, two Ottoman officers on a special mission in the Belgian city of Liège to survey the Ottoman military's regular weapons orders, were so disgruntled about the local media coverage of their "homeland" that they published a sharp thirty-three-page pamphlet condemning biased news reporting in the European press. The authors, calling themselves "patriots" and "soldiers [defending] the honor of their flag," did not refer to any particular paper, but did denounce the complicity of "certain Belgian periodicals" in copying the lies published in other European dailies about the empire.[22] Though an isolated case, the pamphlet illustrates the frustrations some Ottoman officials felt when reading the mainstream European press.

As already mentioned, after the Crimean War the Ottomans shortly experimented with a central publicity bureau that forwarded informatory notes to the Sultan's foreign envoys. This initiative was likely prompted by the outcome of the war, which must have convinced some Ottoman policymakers of the political importance of sustaining the pro-Ottoman mood that had characterized several British and French news organs prior to and during the war.[23] But it would take another decade before a proper press office was founded. Apart from such institutional developments, Ottoman diplomats devised their own strategies for interacting with local papers. Although sources prior to the Hamidian period are scarce, it is possible to sketch the basic characteristics of these early operations in the Belgian context. In 1859, the Ottoman Armenian *chargé d'affaires* Aleksan Diran Bey[24] reported having forged an agreement with *L'Indépendance belge*. This elite liberal paper was one of Europe's most widely read dailies, together with *The Times* and *Le Temps*. It had an international audience (including many diplomats) that was particularly attracted to its extensive reporting on foreign affairs.[25] Istanbul understood the international impact of the paper. The Ottoman foreign minister Fuad Pasha opined that *L'Indépendance belge*'s main "merit is that it is being read by a world of elites."[26] The editor-in-chief Léon Bérardi agreed to publish Ottoman disclaimers, sometimes even disguised as "correspondences [of a] friend of Turkey." The reason was to prevent suspicions that the daily was a mouthpiece for the Ottomans.[27] Seven years later, Diran's successor Faustin Glavany, an Istanbul-born Levantine, co-prepared news bulletins about the empire in the same periodical.[28] Rewards for such services by Belgian journalists were probably largely symbolic. Bérardi, who refused to accept

money, suggested to Diran that he desired an Ottoman decoration.[29] Bribery, an issue we will return to later, also occurred. In 1856, the liberal-Catholic *L'Emancipation* received a subsidy of 2,500 francs.[30]

If these Tanzimat-era diplomats managed to insert rectifications in some Belgian newspapers and to establish contacts with more or less "sympathetic" journalists, by no means did they influence the content and character of the mainstream news coverage of the empire. Telling, in this sense, is an 1860 dispatch by Diran Bey in which he commented on an article published in the liberal daily *L'Observateur* that he saw as symptomatic of European sentiments toward the Ottomans. Diran lamented the fact that "we do not possess the same weapons to fight our adversaries: if I had a few thousand francs at hand, at least I would have organized a little phalanx of great pens [writers], which I would have aligned with [our] government . . . in order to silence . . . those [critics] whom we cannot win over."[31] Diran's suggestion that lack of money hindered "combating" negative publicity was not completely off the mark, for most major editors at the time were not solely journalists, but political lobbyists too, often depending on regular subventions from various benefactors. This was especially true for those periodicals that did not embrace commercial advertising. The news business in "liberal" Belgium was obviously no exception to this rule. *L'Indépendance belge*, for its part, received major stipends from the exiled French Duc d'Aumale, and thus pursued an unmistakably Orleanist agenda when reporting on the Second Empire.[32]

Yet Istanbul was not interested in "sponsoring" a Belgian newspaper. Fuad Pasha's reply to Diran's abovementioned letter is instructive for the Tanzimat mindset. Acknowledging that the systematic attacks against the empire by some European journals were regrettable, he argued that, in the end, only the big newspapers counted and therefore *L'Observateur* "should not even interest us."[33] This pragmatic attitude is markedly different from the one that prevailed during Sultan Abdülhamid's reign, when even marginal dailies were able to disconcert the Ottoman Palace. This is not to say that Tanzimat leaders were indifferent to foreign news coverage. On the contrary, they frequently provided their diplomats with the necessary information to curb "false" news items. But how this was to be done was completely left to the discretion of the diplomats. During the Cretan Uprising (1866–69), for instance, when European public opinion was markedly anti-Ottoman, a typical informatory circular to Ottoman envoys ended by instructing them to make use of the provided intelligence as they saw fit in order to "educate the opinion of your environment about the real facts."[34]

Ultimately, it was not the domestic Belgian press that really troubled Istanbul, but a foreign-owned paper published in Brussels: *Le Nord*. Founded during the Crimean War and financially supported by the Russian government, this periodical became the principal tool for Czarist and Pan-Slavic propaganda on the international scene.[35] In 1857 the Sublime Porte responded by financially backing the foundation of a counter newspaper, *Le Levant: Organe des intérêts politiques et industriels de l'Orient*. Not much is known about this biweekly except that it was headed by the French journalist Pierre Baragnon (who would later become editor-in-chief of the semiofficial Istanbul-based *Journal de Constantinople*), employed other French republican writers and journalists, and appeared in Brussels until at least 1870. Istanbul also instructed its foreign embassies to provide news items to the paper.[36] The journal remained rather obscure and never achieved *Le Nord*'s popularity.

The Ottomans dedicated more rigorous efforts to curb another hostile paper issued by a foreigner in Brussels. In the summer of 1859 Georges (Giorgios) A. Mano, a Greek national originally from Fener in Istanbul, announced the upcoming publication of a biweekly periodical, *L'Orient: Journal quotidien, organe des nationalités orientales*, devoted to the defense of Ottoman Christians. In a previously circulated program of *L'Orient*, Mano had used a fierce anti-Ottoman rhetoric. After Diran Bey informed Istanbul about the paper, Fuad Pasha wasted no time in preventing its circulation within the empire. Diran was instructed to keep a close eye on Mano. After less than three weeks, the Ottoman *chargé d'affaires* informed his superiors that the Greek editor had published an "injurious article" about Sultan Abdülmecid, and that he had immediately complained to the Belgian Foreign Ministry. Mano received a warning from the police that he risked eviction within twenty-four hours if he repeated his attack.[37] While the constitution allowed freedom of the press, insulting foreign heads of state had been punishable by law since 1852.[38] In such cases of libel, foreigners could be easily intimidated.[39] The Belgian police's warning to Mano apparently had some effect: in April 1860, after only seventeen issues, the paper ceased publication.[40] This swift action reveals the Belgian authorities' goodwill toward the Ottomans. Although most of the actions described above testify to a desire to influence the press, they were largely *ad hoc* and isolated.

THE EARLY HAMIDIAN PERIOD

In 1875 the Ottoman government decided to upgrade its Brussels Legation by appointing Stefanaki Karatodori Effendi (1836–1907), scion of a prominent phanariot family, as minister plenipotentiary to Belgium (Fig. 1). His promotion could not have come at a worse time. News about the Ottoman Empire was dominated by the affairs in Herzegovina, where an insurrection among Christian peasants, clandestinely supported by Serbia and Montenegro, had erupted. One year later, the Ottomans were confronted with a revolt in Plovdiv, which they brutally suppressed. Dramatic reports reached Europe and sparked a wave of indignation, reinforced by Gladstone's media campaign about the "Bulgarian Atrocities." Meanwhile, political instability haunted the Ottoman capital: in May 1876 Abdülaziz was dethroned and succeeded by Murad V, who himself was soon after removed and replaced by his brother Abdülhamid II. In the midst of all this, the Ottomans were at war with Serbia and Montenegro (since June 1876). An armistice (January 1877) brought little relief, as in April 1877 it was Russia's turn to declare war on the Ottomans. The fighting would end in January 1878.[41] From Karatodori's perspective, his new host country, (in)famous for its "liberal" press regime, must have seemed an unattractive posting: many of the leading Belgian newspapers (both Catholic and liberal) heavily condemned the Ottoman response to the insurrection in Bulgaria.[42] Moreover, the diplomat had to face incessant attacks on his government by the pro-Russian *Le Nord*.[43] Although instructed to deny and curb the paper's harmful articles,[44] his attempts at arbitration with *Le Nord* remained fruitless.[45]

Yet, precisely in the midst of this volatile "Turkophobic" atmosphere in Europe, Ottoman interactions with foreign news media gradually became more systematic. This was certainly the case for Belgium: both Istanbul, through its Press Bureau, and the Brussels Legation started to monitor the Belgian press methodically. This increased

FIGURE 1. (Color online) Stefanaki Karatodori Effendi, Ottoman representative to Belgium between 1875 and 1900, autographed portrait taken in Brussels, undated (probably around the mid-1880s). From Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels, *Papiers de Borchgrave*, 334.

preoccupation with public opinion is palpable in the Ottoman archival record: documents relating to media issues in Belgium are abundant for the period after 1875. As a result, we have a fairly good view of the functioning of early Hamidian press operations, which largely involved attempts to counter negative coverage, either by demanding rectifications from the newspapers in question, or, if this proved ineffective, by inserting disclaimers in dailies generally "sympathetic" to the Ottomans. This process followed a regular pattern: "harmful" articles were singled out by the Legation or by the Ottoman Foreign Ministry, after which the relevant editorial offices were contacted in an attempt to counter "rumors."

Instructions from Istanbul typically had an open-ended format. This was the case, for example, during the "Balkan Crisis" (1875–78). During the initial troubles in Bosnia, Safvet Pasha sent out a circular to all Ottoman foreign representatives:

> For some time now certain European journals seem to be resolved to publish news items that are sensational and completely false. The character of these reports is often such that they require an immediate denial [*démenti*] instead of awaiting instructions, as a late rectification could weaken the desired effect. In such cases, please deny the[se] manifestly false reports, without losing time

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to gather information. Moreover, I leave it to your discernment to distinguish between those [news items], which ought to be denied immediately, without contacting my department, and those for which special instructions would be required.[46]

Although such flexible guidelines left diplomats with some latitude, their task remained difficult. The velocity of the modern news industry meant that envoys frequently read about "massacres" in the empire even before having received briefings from Istanbul on the "real" circumstances surrounding the events. But, returning to Safvet Pasha's circular, how did Ottoman diplomatic agents distinguish between the articles calling for a prompt denial and those necessitating prior advice from Istanbul? *Which* papers were deemed important in the first place? To answer these questions, we need to probe deeper into the activities of the Brussels Legation.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the ideologically diverse, bilingual (French, Flemish [Dutch]) Belgian press was rapidly expanding in quantity. To map this vast media landscape, Karatodori and his staff roughly split up the press into two categories: papers characterized as (more or less) sympathetic and those qualified as hostile. Taking pride of place on the list of sympathetic newspapers was *L'Indépendance belge*, a long-time "ally" of the Porte. Although the paper had lost much of its former standing, its foreign news reporting was still considered authoritative.[47] As in the 1860s, the paper agreed to publish Ottoman denials and rectifications, and from the 1880s onward Karatodori's letters suggest strong ties with this daily. In 1884, for instance, the diplomat reported having found an "outrageous" and "absurd" article in *L'Indépendance belge* about the death of the former grand vizier Midhat Pasha, a particularly sensitive issue for the Hamidian government. After a complaint, the editor-in-chief Bérardi informed the Legation that he had already erased the article from the remaining editions of that day (four issues appeared daily).[48]

If a "negative" article did make it into the final paper edition, the Legation was allowed to insert a disclaimer in a subsequent issue. Moreover, *L'Indépendance belge* occasionally published articles lauding Abdülhamid, and its foreign correspondent in Istanbul was considered generally sympathetic to the Ottomans.[49] However, as Karatodori admitted, the daily *did* sometimes publish pieces critical of the Ottomans. When the diplomat confronted the editors in such cases, either in writing or in person, they argued this was due to inattention.[50] The extensiveness of the Legation's relations with this newspaper suggests bribery, a far from uncommon practice at the time.[51] Leopold II, for instance, "fed information and funds to journalists to shape [Belgian] public opinion" in order to popularize his Congo Free State.[52] As for the influential *L'Indépendance belge*, many diplomats in Brussels suspected it had been "bought" by the Quai d'Orsay.[53] It is therefore not implausible that the Ottomans also "subsidized" the newspaper. Roderic H. Davison notes that Ottoman subventions were made to other European newspapers since 1846, while Carter V. Findley refers to monthly, largely ineffective, payments to *Punch* and *Handelsblatt*.[54] For Belgium, we have found no evidence of bribery in the Hamidian period. However, it is safe to assume that even *if* Istanbul had wanted to pay off *L'Indépendance belge*, it could not have paid the high sums necessary to significantly influence the daily's content. In 1898, the German minister to Brussels estimated that the French paid this newspaper allowances between 100,000 and 120,000 francs. This high price tag was one of the reasons why the Germans never "bought" a Belgian newspaper.[55]

The Legation usually employed "soft tools" of diplomacy, such as the granting of decorations, to sustain its relationship with *L'Indépendance belge*. Popular among wide segments of society, these shiny gadgets were desired by some newspapermen too. On several occasions, the Legation recommended journalists of the paper for an Ottoman order.[56] Karatodori's exceptional networking skills formed another asset. A well-liked figure in Brussels's high society, he was admired by both friends and critics of the empire. The numerous notices published in *L'Indépendance belge* about Karatodori's social activities in the Belgian capital indicate his amicable relationships with staff members.[57] Lastly, this particular liaison was likely beneficial to both parties, as *L'Indépendance belge* was one of the few foreign newspapers permitted to circulate in the empire, an exceptional privilege.[58] The Belgian periodical had a wide geographical reach in the Ottoman lands, with subscribers in cities such as Adana, Aleppo, Baghdad, Salonika, Sivas, Smyrna, and Trabzon. Its clientele was mostly made up of European expatriates, but some Ottoman officials and military men subscribed as well.[59]

According to the Legation's classification of the press, other "sympathetic" papers included *L'Opinion* and *L'Étoile belge*. All of these were situated in the Liberal camp, a (party-)political distinction that was explicitly made by Karatodori.[60] In the category of "hostile" dailies, the Legation differentiated between those perceived as widely read and reputable and those considered radical and marginal. The first type included, among others, the liberal *La Gazette* and the liberal-Catholic *Le Journal de Bruxelles*. The latter was widely (and correctly) perceived as the government's unofficial newspaper.[61] Both papers were "well respected" and had a large readership. Aware of their importance, the Legation tried to negotiate with the respective editorial staffs in order to move them to more favorable dispositions toward the Ottomans. When in 1892 *La Gazette* published an article entitled "Braconnage au Harem" (literally, Poaching in the Harem) that featured the stereotypical "lustful Turk" and claimed that the Sultan's son had recently "trespassed" by taking one of his father's wives, Karatodori received instructions to "undertake the necessary steps in order to prevent similar publications and to try to find out who the author is of this malevolent account."[62] Two weeks later, the diplomat reported back to Istanbul that he had received the editors' promise that they would be "favorably disposed toward us" in the future.[63] The affair shows not only that political articles elicited indignation, but also that Orientalist fantasies about the empire were taken seriously.

Even more sensitive were articles dealing directly with the sultan. In 1888, Karatodori reported that *Le Journal de Bruxelles* had reproduced an article from the *New York Herald* about Abdülhamid's household[64] full of "absurd and injurious allegations." He immediately wrote a protest letter to the Belgian foreign minister, who deplored the article, apologized, and promised to summon the editor-in-chief. An interesting triangular correspondence developed. In a nutshell, the editor-in-chief of the paper wrote two rather indifferent letters to the Ottoman minister explaining that the article was published inadvertently and not with bad intent. Although he did not apologize, the paper's editor-in-chief did permit Karatodori to insert a rectification.[65] Afterward, the Ottoman diplomat informed Istanbul that he had contented himself "by giving the editorial staff a lesson in decency." He could do nothing more as Belgium's press law "even allows for a license of grave insults and does not spare [anyone], not even the [Belgian] Monarch himself," and legal actions "almost always lead to absolutely

scandalous acquittals."[66] Indeed, Leopold II was regularly attacked in the Belgian press and there existed a rich tradition of bold satirical criticism of the king, especially in the form of caricatures.[67] The Ottoman minister was equally right in his assessment of the Belgian judiciary. Between the mid-1880s and 1914 only two Belgian journalists were summoned to court, for accusations of libel against the Persian Shah Nasir al-Din and Queen Victoria, respectively. The jury acquitted both.[68] Karatodori obviously left no doubt as to his own opinions regarding Belgian freedom of the press, but the subtext of his message, reiterated in several other dispatches,[69] was clear: the Legation was unable to *prevent* such hostile reports about the sultan. The only weapon Istanbul possessed was to ban the newspaper from circulating in Ottoman lands.[70] Even more ineffective were attempts to resist slanderous reports pubished in overtly hostile newspapers: those described by the Legation as "radical," such as the far right *Les Nouvelles du Jour* and the radical-liberal *La Réforme*. The "brutal" articles in these dailies could definitely rouse emotions in Istanbul. The Legation argued, however, that the influence of these dailies was minimal.[71]

A particularly contentious moment for Ottoman press management occurred in the late 1880s, when the Western European public was in the grip of the fierce abolition rhetoric of the French Cardinal Lavigerie, archbishop of Algiers and Carthage and founder of the missionary order of the "White Fathers." Preaching an international "crusade" against slavery, the cardinal made a tour of several European capitals.[72] Visiting Brussels in 1888, he gave an inflammatory speech in the Church of St. Michael and St. Gudula, which was fully packed for the occasion. Calling for the abolition of slavery in Africa, he violently targeted Islam as one of the prime forces that sustained the practice and urged the Belgians to support their king's "humanitarian" enterprise in his colony. His lecture was subsequently published by various newspapers and ignited a polemic between liberal and Catholic journalists, not only about the role of the Church in fighting slavery, but also about Islam. While Catholic papers were supportive of Lavigerie and adopted a violent anti-Islamic "clash of civilizations" discourse, liberal papers such as *L'Indépendance belge*, skeptical of the Church's motives in Africa, were much more moderate in their treatment of Islam.[73]

Though the cardinal did not directly attack the Ottomans, Karatodori felt compelled to retort Lavigerie's allegations through an open letter published on the front page of *L'Indépendance belge*, in which he argued that all societies had practiced enslavement and that one could not fault Islam as a whole for the slave trade. To enhance the authoritative weight of his argument, he referred to a publication by the British Orientalist Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner, parts of which were reproduced in his letter. Karatodori also referred to the Qur'an to bolster his reasoning.[74] Remarkably, his tactfully composed letter drew an immediate and fierce response from the cardinal, also published in *L'Indépendance belge*. As such, Lavigerie gave the whole affair a polemical flavor and in so doing unwittingly confirmed the legitimacy of Karatodori's (and thus the Ottomans') presence in the public debate. Lavigerie argued that the Ottomans only condemned the slave trade *pro forma* and that Islam was not indigenous to Africa, but was primarily embodied by slave-trading "Turks" and "Arabs" roaming the African interior. Islam, he insisted, "cannot escape its responsibility [for sustaining] slavery" and "as a bishop of Africa" it was his duty to demand that the enslavers went back to where they came from, namely "the Muslim countries."[75]

The prelate's generic statements about the "threat" of Islam, shared by not a few (Catholic) European opinion makers, prompted Karatodori to take up his pen once again. By now, according to *L'Indépendance belge*, "this discussion between cardinal and diplomat [has already] sparked much attention in [both] Belgium and abroad."[76] In his letter, Karatodori remarked that the slave trade had been abolished in the empire since 1847. He included references to the Qur'an (and also the hadith this time) in order to prove that Islam prescribed a different, more humane treatment of "slaves." Quotations from *Mahomet et le Coran* (1865) by Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire and cultural relativist critiques of the Church's own record of tolerating enslavement did the rest.[77] This anecdote offers a fine illustration of the individual agency of Ottoman diplomats. Utilizing his connections with Belgian journalists, Karatodori carved out a place for him within the "public debate" and in so doing ensured that the official Ottoman voice was heard. That his letters were drafted in the same "humanitarian" language used by his detractors assured that his message could gain wide resonance among a diverse Belgian and foreign audience. Istanbul praised the diplomat for his handling of the matter.[78]

The public indignation over slavery in the wake of the Lavigerie campaign ultimately cleared the ground for the summoning of what later became known as the Anti-Slavery Conference (1889–90). Though originally a British initiative, it convened in Brussels. Seventeen states participated, including the Ottoman Empire. It can be argued that the conference was a diplomatic farce, as the global abolition of enslavement in itself was never on its agenda (only the *trade* in enslaved humans was discussed), and most participants were primarily bent on settling colonial disputes in Africa.[79] For the Ottoman Empire, whose (Muslim) elites still practiced domestic enslavement (albeit on a small scale), the conference was not particularly welcome, for they felt it could potentially taint the empire's international image and threaten its sovereignty.[80] Yet, as Istanbul had always been careful not to provoke European public opinion and to present itself as progressive towards abolitionist causes,[81] it accepted the invitation. Karatodori was chosen as the Ottoman delegate. In April 1890, he reported that the Catholic and what he called the "socialist and democratic" press virulently attacked the Ottomans,[82] sparing not even the envoy himself. As an illustration, the diplomat forwarded two clippings from the radical-liberal *La Réforme*. The paper, skeptical of the colonial and exploitative designs of the conference, decried the presence of delegates from enslaving "Oriental" states (Persia and the Ottoman Empire), and noted that Karatodori had even "eulogized [enslavement] from the perspective of the poor blacks who are exposed to lesser risks when they are slaves of the Turkish pashas than when they are free in their [own] countries. This Turkish minister is really a coldhearted joker."[83] Karatodori reported, however, that the Belgian government had already responded to *La Réforme*'s allegations by publishing a note in defense of the Ottomans and himself in the *Journal de Bruxelles*. Liberal papers had also taken him under their wing—*L'Indépendance belge*, for instance, condemned the attacks on Karatodori, and called him a *gentilhomme chrétien*.[84] These interventions by "friendly" Belgian periodicals were probably due to the diplomat's connections with government officials and newspapermen. Yet, more importantly, the episode demonstrates the limits of Ottoman press management when faced with the actual polyphony of the Belgian press, which included some radical, though influential, voices, such as *La Réforme*.

To return to the gradual systematization of Hamidian press operations, around this same period we can actually observe a certain "professionalization" taking place. In an 1892 report, Karatodori informed Istanbul that, compliant with their instructions, he had instated a *service de presse* in his legation, which scanned newspapers on a daily basis. In the same year, another report mentioned that the Brussels mission hired a lawyer to advise them on press-related issues.[85] It is obvious that Hamidian foreign policymakers, just like their European peers, increasingly considered foreign "public opinion" a significant factor in international relations. This was related to evolutions in the news industry itself, most notably the global rise of the mass press. But in the case of the Ottomans, the dramatic outcome of the Russo-Ottoman War and the memory of having been internationally isolated prior to the war convinced some statesmen of the politico-strategic necessity of enhancing the Ottoman image abroad. Several "domestic" issues, such as the "Macedonian Question," became "international" news and speculation about the empire's possible demise filled the newspapers. It is therefore not surprising that Istanbul gradually sent more directives to its envoys abroad with increasingly more specific instructions to "deny" hostile press rumors. Abdülhamid's accession to the throne also played a crucial role in forging a different engagement with and perception of the European press. Hamidian censorship of the domestic multilingual Ottoman press, though often misrepresented,[86] is notorious. M. Şükrü Hanioğlu estimates that it "was one of the strictest in modern times . . . more capricious than the repressive machinery assembled by Prince Metternich."[87] But the sultan was also heavily preoccupied with international news media. Historians have noted that he "was an assiduous if undiscriminating student of the European press"[88] and extremely preoccupied with his public image abroad.[89] Compared to his predecessors, Abdülhamid was much more sensitive to Western news coverage. Not long after his enthronement, he established personal contacts with several foreign correspondents of major European journals in Istanbul and founded his own press bureau in Yıldız Palace.[90] But as we will see, the tragic events of the mid-1890s would definitively tarnish the sultan's image abroad and consequently alter Ottoman chances for foreign press management.

ARMENIAN MASSACRES (1894–97)

After the Berlin Congress, the Great Powers forced the Ottomans to consider the plight of their Armenian subjects, victims of political suppression, violence, and land usurpation in the eastern provinces. The situation grew tenser as a result of the state-organized influx of Muslim refugees from the Balkans. At the beginning of the 1890s, skirmishes erupted between Armenian revolutionary committees and Kurdish cavalry militias, the so-called Hamidiye regiments. Tensions reached a climax in August 1894 during the Sasun uprising of armed Armenian villagers in the *vilayet* of Bitlis, which was forcefully suppressed, triggering a spiral of violence that resulted in several massacres of Armenians in various localities of the (eastern) Anatolian provinces and even the capital itself. These mass killings between the years 1894 and 1897 remain a contentious issue in Ottoman studies. Most scholars estimate the number of direct Armenian victims to be between 80,000 and 100,000.[91] While there is debate about the causes, context, and consequences of the slaughters, there is consensus about the general character of the events: they were "pogroms" enacted by Hamidiye militias and various groups of ordinary Muslim

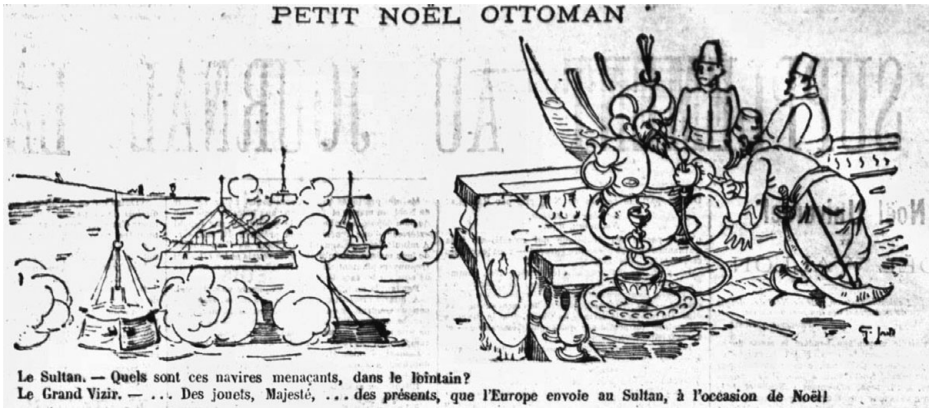

FIGURE 2. "A Little Ottoman Christmas"—A satire on the pressure exerted by the Great Powers on Abdülhamid II to deal with the "Armenian Question." From *La Réforme*, 16 December 1895.

civilians. The Ottoman authorities (both in the center and the provinces) mostly refrained from intervening, at times even aiding, if not instigating, the assailants.[92]

News of the killings, often sensational and harking back to age-old Orientalist presuppositions of the "Turks" as barbarians and bloodthirsty religious fanatics, triggered outrage among Western opinion makers. Although there were major differences in the journalistic reception of the killings in Europe and North America—in Germany, for instance, there was markedly less solidarity with the Armenians[93]—almost all the sultan's envoys were suddenly faced with an increasingly hostile public opinion. The London, Paris, and Washington missions in particular geared up their activity, spreading pamphlets and/or publishing disclaimers and op-eds in the local press.[94]

In Belgium it was the Catholic press that devoted most attention to the massacres, which it primarily interpreted as a religious conflict between Islam and Christendom. The fiercest critic of Ottoman rule was *Le Bien public*, an ultramontane Catholic periodical. Liberal papers stressed the lack of legal equality between Muslims and Christians, instead of Islam, in their news coverage. Most vociferous in its criticism, however, was the radical-liberal *La Réforme*, the only paper to include political cartoons about the events (Fig. 2).[95] Faced with this continuous inimical news stream, the Brussels Legation clung to its traditional allies to turn the tide: *L'Indépendance belge*, *L'Opinion*, and, to a lesser degree, *Le Journal de Bruxelles* and *L'Étoile belge*. Thus assured of the occasional support in Belgium's (mostly liberal) press, the Legation, however, missed the fact that the influence of these dailies was on the wane.[96] This is clear from Karatodori's reports, in which he incorrectly continued to describe *L'Indépendance belge* as the leading Belgian daily. As for *L'Opinion*, it would soon disappear altogether.[97] More importantly, the minister and his staff appear not to have established any relationships with important low-cost newcomers such as the Catholic *Le Patriote* or the self-declared independent (yet moderately liberal) *Le Soir*. The ever-expanding Flemish-language press was entirely overlooked, probably due to the lack of personnel with knowledge of the language—though surely there must have been some men in the Ottoman diplomatic corps who read Dutch. Although in terms of readership it could not compete with the

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Francophone press, the regional Flemish-language newspapers had their heyday in the 1880s and 1890s, with the foundation of important and inexpensive dailies such as the Christian-democratic *De Gentenaar,* the liberal *Het Laatste Nieuws,* and the socialist *De Vooruit*.[98] Most of these included extensive foreign news sections.

L'Indépendance belge remained distant in its coverage of the Armenian massacres and was the only daily not to critique Abdülhamid personally.[99] *Le Soir*, by contrast, fiercely attacked the Ottomans and in January 1896, right after the Urfa massacre, published a very critical reader's letter that styled the Ottoman Muslims as "ferocious adherents of Mahomet."[100] The correspondence between Istanbul and the Brussels Legation poignantly illustrates how the Ottoman Foreign Ministry (and hence the Palace) dealt with the wave of indignation and criticism in the European press. Between August 1894 and December 1896, several articles, prepared in the Ministry's Foreign Press Bureau, were forwarded to Karatodori to be inserted "in one of the most important papers."[101] Although he managed to get these published in *L'Indépendance belge*,[102] they obviously had little impact. Moreover, both Foreign Ministry officials in Istanbul and diplomats in Brussels seemed in a state of denial. News reports about massacres in the eastern Anatolian provinces were considered as fantasies, constructed by the empire's enemies. With respect to the Urfa massacre, Karatodori received the following instructions by telegram: "You have done well to deny the[se] [false] reports. . . . Such *racontars* are invented by our enemies in order to cause us harm. I urge you to do what is necessary to counteract the effects caused by these odious and totally unfounded publications."[103]

Adding to the Legation's waning influence on segments of the Belgian press was that the intricate triangular relationship between Karatodori, *L'Indépendance belge,* and Istanbul came under considerable pressure. The editorial office increasingly complained that it was unable to deliver its newspaper to the many subscribers in the empire due to provincial censors.[104] In 1895 alone, the Ottoman minister, seemingly desperate, sent five requests to his superiors demanding to lift any ban on the "important" daily.[105] Two years later, the editor-in-chief Gérard Harry sent another complaint in which he claimed that his paper was "one of the rare big European papers . . . which appreciates [His Majesty's government's] acts with a benevolence often called excessive by many of its occidental readers [and that is] without mentioning certain of its readers from Turkey."[106] Yet, notwithstanding several promises from Istanbul and the continued willingness of *L'Indépendance belge* to support the Ottoman center—in 1898 an attaché of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry's Press Bureau figured among its Istanbul correspondents[107]—the periodical continued to encounter difficulties with the Hamidian censor.

The year 1897 did not promise any relief for Ottoman decision makers. Problems arose with Greece, which had dispatched an expeditionary force to Crete in January, resulting in an armed confrontation with Ottoman troops. The events culminated in a full-scale war in which the Ottomans proved victorious in September. The socialist *Le Peuple* and the ultra-Catholic *Le Bien Public* openly supported Greek military operations.[108] *La Réforme* took the lead, however, dramatizing its reports by including eye-catching political cartoons of Sultan Abdülhamid as butcher of innocent Christians (Fig. 3). Anti-Ottoman opinions were also prevalent among other segments of Belgian society: in March a philhellenic meeting in Brussels, attended by university students and "socialists," turned into a violent demonstration of around 700 people in front of the Ottoman Legation, causing damage to the building.[109]

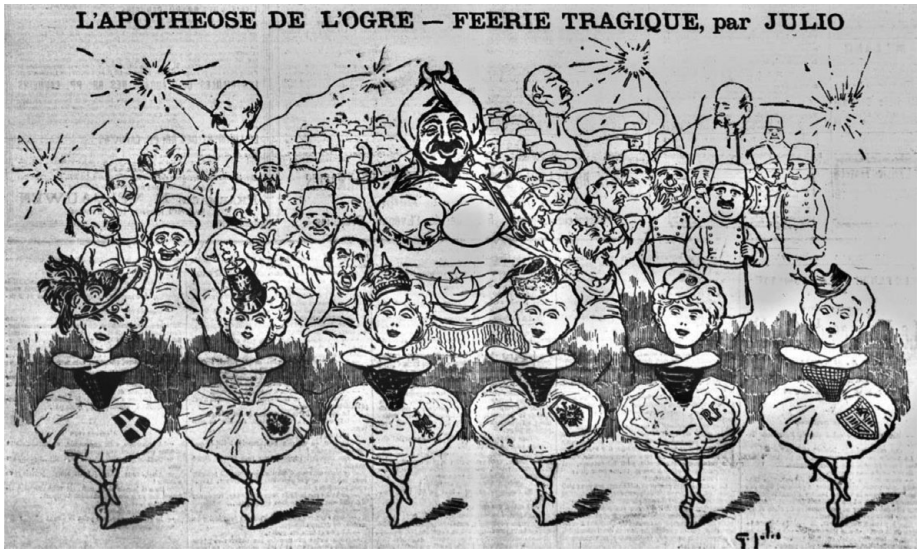

FIGURE 3. "Apotheosis of the Monster: A Tragic Feast"—A mockery of the Ottoman announcement to implement reforms in Crete. From *La Réforme*, 21 February 1897.

OTTOMAN DISSIDENTS, HAMIDIAN PROPAGANDA

In the 1890s, Hamidian administrators also grew increasingly anxious about the numerous newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets published in France, Switzerland, and England by Ottoman dissidents and revolutionaries. The European public generally referred to these men as "Young Turks." Yıldız Palace took them very seriously, deploying considerable effort through its embassies and legations to curb their publishing activities, to the point of buying opposition papers.[110]

In 1897, it was Belgium's turn to briefly become the focal point of international attention as a center of anti-Hamidian opposition. In the summer of that year, the well-known Ahmed Rıza, an exile in Paris who was one of the key opponents of Abdülhamid II and was affiliated to the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), had decided to publish his journal *Meşveret* (Consultation) in Brussels. The paper had appeared in Paris since 1895, but in 1897 the republican government decided, under Ottoman pressure, to prohibit its publication on French soil. The activist's hope of finding a more hospitable environment in "liberal" Belgium was quickly shattered. The Brussels Legation had picked up news of his arrival and contacted both the Belgian Foreign Ministry and State Security. The Young Turk leader was evicted by Royal Decree in December.[111] In taking this step, the Belgian government went even further than its French neighbor. Arguably the Rıza affair presents the most "intimate" moment in Belgo-Ottoman official relations. After all, decision makers in Brussels had chosen to reinterpret Belgium's liberal laws on foreign residency and the press to oust the Ottoman dissident and thereby safeguard their connections with Istanbul. The whole affair sparked fierce debates in both parliament and the liberal and socialist press. The Catholic government, and especially the minister

of justice, Victor Begerem, and the foreign minister, Paul de Favereau, were heavily criticized.[112]

While the government's decision to back the sultan was primarily motivated by an economic and diplomatic logic, judging from the parliamentary proceedings Karatodori's personal influence might have played a role as well. Begerem lionized the sultan's envoy, stating: "all will concur with me that . . . [Karatodori] counts as one of our most esteemed and respected diplomats." One day later he added in parliament: "we should deport Ahmet Riza, which will please Mr. Carathéodory, who is an excellent man!" De Favereau supported his colleague in this eulogy.[113] Yet, ultimately the episode benefited Rıza's agenda. In Belgium and beyond, he received expressions of support in the press.[114] And although *Meşveret* effectively ceased publication in 1898, the highly successful French version of Rıza's periodical, *Mechveret Supplément Français,* continued to appear in Paris until 1908.[115]

Whereas the Rıza affair may have been the apex of Karatodori's influence within the Belgian establishment, an ensuing press controversy eventually brought about his downfall. In September 1900, in a letter to Istanbul, Karatodori signaled the planned publication of a book on the sultan "surely written by [a] treacherous expert, knowing everything in thorough detail." The writer was identified as Charles Hecquard, a French ex-consul who had served in the Ottoman Empire.[116] The book offered a thorough analysis of the Hamidian regime, clearly based on inside information, and openly called for the reinstatement of the deposed Murad V, the sultan's brother. The Legation suspected that Damad Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha, a former minister and the brother-in-law of Abdülhamid who had fled to Europe the year before and quickly became a much-feared opposition member, was also involved in the "odious pamphlet." According to Karatodori, a dangerous network was behind the publication, with links to well-connected people in Istanbul. However, Hecquard and his companions were willing to abort the project in return for cash payment, as they faced infighting and financial problems.[117] Istanbul often faced blackmail demands by European authors[118] and Ottoman political dissidents in exile.[119] Karatodori contacted the Belgian ministers of justice and foreign affairs, who conducted an investigation, interrogated the publisher, and identified three culprits, among them Hecquard. But apart from that, the Belgian authorities made clear to Karatodori that they could do little given the laws guaranteeing freedom of the press.[120] The diplomat therefore insisted to Istanbul that the only way to prevent the compromising publication was through payment. He convinced Hecquard to sell his rights to the book for 50,000 francs. Tevfik Pasha, the Ottoman foreign minister, refused the deal, however.[121] Around mid-December the book was published under the title *L'Empire ottoman: La Turquie sous Abdul-Hamid II. Compte-rendu de la gérance d'un empire pendant un quart de siècle*. For Karatodori, there was nothing left to do but to point out to his superiors the last two possible options: taking Hecquard to court or buying up all of the copies.[122]

Curiously, in November, even before the actual publication of Hecquard's monograph, Karatodori was suddenly discharged and replaced by Salih Münir Bey, the Ottoman ambassador to Paris (Fig. 4).[123] Münir Bey was also put in charge of the new legation in Bern, to which Karatodori had been appointed one year earlier. The immediate cause of Karatodori's replacement, as suggested by several Belgian and foreign journalists, was likely Hecquard's extremely critical pamphlet. Others attributed it to his unwillingness

FIGURE 4. "Rumors of Münir Bey's Nomination to Brussels." From *Le Petit bleu,* 18 November 1900.

or inability to effectively curtail the Young Turks' movements in Europe,[124] or saw him as a victim of Münir Bey's machinations.[125] Whatever the case may be, Karatodori's prompt dismissal provoked indignation in the Belgian press, another indication of his popularity in Brussels. In socialist, liberal, and Catholic newspapers, he was described as an eminent diplomat and gentleman who had fallen prey to the intrigues on the Bosporus.[126]

Although the internal complexities of the Hecquard case remain unclear, the episode conveys a fundamental problem of Hamidian diplomacy vis-à-vis the West. *La Turquie sous Abdul-Hamid II* was an antiauthoritarian pamphlet, yet ultimately a pro-Ottoman one. It addressed the dictatorial nature of Abdülhamid's regime, but did not question the Ottoman dynasty's legitimacy as such. Nonetheless, all Ottoman official actors, including Karatodori and the Ottoman Foreign Ministry (on behalf of the Palace), desperately wanted to thwart its publication. Karatodori approved of extralegal measures such as bribery, while Istanbul, in its vague and open-ended telegrams, possibly envisioned intimidation as the most adequate solution. Pursuing the promotion abroad of an image of a modern Ottoman state, Hamidian officials ended up doing the exact opposite. By resorting to "undemocratic" methods, they confirmed the picture of an autocratic Oriental empire. Ironically, the affair ended with the removal of precisely the diplomat who had been most successful in counterbalancing the authoritarian image of Istanbul. As a respected member of Brussels' high life, Karatodori was an effective antidote to simplistic Orientalist biases against the Ottoman state. His dismissal elicited many unfavorable press comments regarding the sultan and his government—*Le Soir*, for instance, called Abdülhamid a "savage potentate"—further damaging the empire's public image.[127]

Karatodori's dismissal put some pressure on the relations between Brussels and Istanbul. To make matters worse, "the Ottoman Foreign Ministry made the mistake of announcing . . . the appointment of Salih Münir before applying for the agreement of King Leopold. This was a serious break of diplomatic etiquette."[128] As a result, the Belgian government bluntly refused to accredit Münir Bey. The immediate consequence was a degradation of the Ottoman Legation in Brussels, henceforth headed by a simple *chargé d'affaires*—until 1905 Mihran Effendi, an Ottoman Armenian, occupied this

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post. In reality Istanbul considered Münir Bey, one of Abdülhamid's "most trusted advisors," its actual representative, and the former occasionally visited the Brussels Legation incognito.[129]

Although Ottoman diplomatic correspondence on the Belgian press clearly diminished as a result of these developments, after 1900 the same trends described above continued and at times even intensified: both Istanbul and its foreign representatives tracked "unfavorable" news coverage of the empire in Belgian periodicals, and disclaimers were published in "friendly" newspapers, usually *L'Indépendance belge* and *Le Petit bleu*,[130] which the Legation erroneously considered "the most important of Belgium."[131] Emin Arslan Effendi, consul-general in Brussels, wrote that *L'Indépendance belge* was "the only [paper] in Europe that is really sympathetic to us."[132] In reality, these Ottoman agents, similar to Karatodori before them, misinterpreted (or willfully misrepresented?) the Belgian media landscape. While the new penny paper *Le Petit bleu* slowly gained wider recognition, *L'Indépendance belge* had definitely lost most of its former prestige and significance, both domestically and internationally.[133] In addition, the already strained relationship between the Legation and its old ally further soured, as the newspaper continued to encounter problems with the Ottoman provincial authorities, which often banned the periodical (albeit temporarily) in their respective jurisdictions.[134] Ultimately, *L'Indépendance belge* was gradually perceived as "more and more hostile,"[135] eventually prompting the Ottoman foreign minister to consider its total prohibition in the empire.[136] As for *Le Petit bleu*, the Legation's staff had personal connections with its director, Gérard Harry, the former editor-in-chief of *L'Indépendance belge*. But these relationships were not straightforward. In 1902, for instance, Münir Bey described the paper as "generally hostile."[137] *Le Petit Messager de Bruxelles* was considered one of the rare sympathetic dailies, yet carried little significance in the Belgian press landscape. It is not improbable that Mihran Effendi deliberately overestimated the position of this paper to satisfy Istanbul.[138] Other important dailies were either not (in the case of Flemish newspapers) or rarely (*Le Peuple*, *Le Soir*) mentioned, or they were simply characterized as hostile (*Le Matin*). The socialist *Le Peuple* was wrongly (or again willfully?) presented to Istanbul as "generally unknown."[139]

And yet the Hamidian propaganda machine really moved into gear after 1900, with the Paris embassy as its hub. Münir Bey (Pasha in 1903) disposed of considerable sums to influence the French press,[140] and even "succeeded in persuading a prominent French journalist to write an extremely critical article about Damad Mahmud Pasha and his sons in the prestigious French daily *Le Figaro*."[141] In 1906 the Porte instructed Münir Pasha to print and distribute a brochure, prepared in Istanbul, to counteract rumors spread by Bulgarian news media concerning the alleged maltreatment by the imperial troops of Christian subjects in Macedonia. The ambassador replied that, for a sum of 2,200 francs, he had ordered a thousand copies, which he would distribute "among all political milieus in Europe. . .according to the lists prepared at the Imperial Embassy." Twelve copies would also be sent to each of "our [diplomatic] missions."[142]

The Ottoman Empire, just like other European states, also employed propagandists—writers, journalists, scholars—to publish pieces casting the Ottomans in a good light. Earlier, we mentioned the French Baragnon, but the most famous example is probably the notorious Hungarian Orientalist and secret informer for the British, Ármin Vámbéry, who was for some time in Abdülhamid's pay. As for the newspaper business, there is

the peculiar case of the Ottoman Greek Nicolas Nicolaïdès. He started out as a fierce, if reactionary, critic of sultan Abdülhamid in the French-language weekly *L'Orient* (its title changed various times) that he had published in Paris since 1888. His opposition paper gained renown in Europe, so much so that in 1895 Hamidian agents invited him to "the bargaining table with the palace," quickly convincing him to switch sides in exchange for money. Henceforth *L'Orient* would become widely perceived as the sultan's unofficial mouthpiece. In the autumn of 1901 Nicolaïdès permanently settled in Brussels, from where he continued publishing his paper, now called *L'Orient: Journal de défense des intérêts de l'Empire ottoman*.[143] Nevertheless, Nicolaïdès occasionally annoyed Istanbul because he wrote about the empire's domestic problems too. On several instances he received warnings that his allowance would be stopped.[144] In 1905 there was even a feud with Mihran Effendi, who complained that Nicolaïdès had initiated a smear campaign against him. The Ottoman *chargé d'affaires* also insinuated that *L'Orient* was a hoax, with no subscribers in both Belgium and France and nowhere sold.[145] This is untrue, but it does illustrate that Hamidian propaganda attempts abroad were hardly a smooth, top-down process.

THE 1908 REVOLUTION AND ITS AFTERMATH

After the CUP launched its military rebellion in July 1908, forcing Abdülhamid to reinstate the constitution, Ottoman attitudes toward the press entered a new phase. On the home front, almost all restrictive regulations were temporarily lifted, triggering an explosion of pamphlets, cartoons, and new newspapers.[146] However, "the abolition of pre-publication censorship was a superficial demonstration of liberalism" as the new 1909 press law ensured continuing (often violent) crackdowns on domestic newspaper offices, albeit in a more rationalized and institutional manner.[147] On the international stage, Ottoman responses to European news media coverage showed continuity with the Hamidian period: Istanbul and its diplomats still monitored the foreign press and were equally anxious to prevent or refute "harmful" and "false" reports.[148] In spite of that, considerably less attention was given to press management than before, at least in the Belgian case. The new Ottoman leadership had appointed the famed writer and poet Abdülhak Hamid Bey as the new minister plenipotentiary, largely a symbolic concession to Brussels, as this diplomat was one of those "'amateur officials' . . . who neither pushed papers like an old-fashioned scribe nor did anything else much of an official nature."[149] It is remarkable how few documents from the Brussels Legation relate to the press in this period, and the ones that do suggest few if any serious attempts to lobby editorial offices. Moreover, relations with *L'Indépendance belge* deteriorated even further and ultimately ended in open hostility; during the Italo-Ottoman War, Abdülhak Hamid reported that the daily had sided with the Italians.[150] Some unsolicited favorable reports appeared in *L'Étoile belge*, one of the leading liberal newspapers in Brussels, which defended the Porte's rights in Ottoman Libya.[151] Clearly, however, this reporting was anything but the result of the Legation's efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

Just like most other European powers, the Ottoman Empire was preoccupied with the foreign press and aspired to mold public opinion abroad in its favor. This article has tried

to demonstrate, however, that Ottoman attempts at press management never stemmed from a systematic top-down policy, but was mostly left to Ottoman diplomats on the ground, from whom a certain inventiveness was expected. Ottoman press operations therefore always involved complex processes of negotiation, implicated several actors (diplomats, foreign state officials, journalists, and/or Ottoman dissidents), and often revolved around conflicting interests (state propaganda, interstate collaboration, personal enrichment, careerism, or favoritism).

Tiny "neutral" Belgium held a special place in the minds of Ottoman foreign policymakers. Considered both an important European center of (international) news *production* and a dangerous gathering place for Ottoman dissidents, it demanded constant and vigilant attention. Karatodori Effendi's activities in Brussels illustrate Ottoman diplomats' individual agency in engaging with Belgian news media. During the quarter century when he ran the Imperial Legation, press management reached a high level of confidence and methodization. He and his staff had fairly good knowledge of the extent, diversity, and political orientations of the Belgian media landscape. More importantly, Karatodori succeeded in safeguarding the continuous support of the internationally renowned newspaper *L'Indépendance belge*, with which interdependent relations were forged. Regularly faced with hostile news coverage of the empire by other papers, he negotiated with editorial offices and/or inserted his or Istanbul's disclaimers in "friendly," mostly liberal papers. That most of the Legation's "allies" were situated in the liberal sphere is not unexpected, since they tended to be more tolerant of religious diversity and less preoccupied with the empire's "Islamic" character than ultra-Catholic papers. As for the "radical" press, Ottoman diplomats knew what to expect, as the almost absolute freedom of the press rendered suing local journalists for libel useless. In this sense, the experience of diplomats in Brussels probably resembled that of Ottoman envoys in other postings with relatively liberal press regimes, such as the United States and Great Britain. At the same time, Karatodori profited from a favorable climate within the Belgian governmental establishment, intent on promoting commerce and financial cooperation with Istanbul.

More important is that foreign press management clearly varied over time. Tanzimat leaders were mostly negligent, while the "image-obsessed Abdülhamid"[152] appeared excessively preoccupied with the European press and became increasingly demanding of his foreign envoys, as exemplified by the prompt and sloppy dismissal of Karatodori in 1900. The post-1908 leadership in turn resembled their Tanzimat predecessors. From the mid-1890s, the intensity and significance of press management in Belgium diminished, partially because after the Armenian massacres, the international legitimacy of Abdülhamid, now often described as the "Red Sultan," had suffered a severe decline in European public opinion. After 1908, Ottoman interest in Belgian press affairs faded almost completely.

Returning to the sultan's diplomats, all tried, in different ways, to navigate the fragile thread with Istanbul. Their interactions with the press in Belgium were always aimed at appeasing both their superiors and Belgian allies. They presented themselves as virulent defenders of their state; while Diran Bey contented himself with some lobbying, men such as de Kerckhove and Karatodori went further by reaching for their pens. Their opinions about the freedom of the press also neatly reflected evolving Ottoman state ideology. Although in 1869 the Tanzimat-era diplomat Glavany openly sympathized

with European regimes that abolished restrictive press laws, exactly twenty years later, Karatodori characterized the freedom of the press in Belgium as "defective."[153]

Ultimately, the Ottomans could hardly impact European news coverage of the empire. Any state-orchestrated attempt at "image building" (publication of disclaimers, state-sponsored propaganda papers, distribution of pamphlets, bribery) was bound to fail in the cacophony of voices that made up the European press of the late 19th and early 20th century. Istanbul and its envoys clearly understood the power of public opinion, yet they had few illusions about the limits of any press operation. The small victories aside, and contrary to what the substantial archival record might suggest, it was impossible to stem the tide. Or, as Karatodori aptly wrote in 1876 during the "Balkan Crisis": "paralyzing . . . imminently false" news reports was like "the vessel of the Danaides," a pointless endeavor, in other words.[154] Even the ousted Abdülhamid later supposedly lamented that "I should have learned earlier to be less sensitive to public opinion."[155]

In the end, the effects of Ottoman press management on the empire's public image in Belgium and beyond were probably counterproductive, especially during the Hamidian era. If the Ottoman desire to counter "false" news and Orientalist prejudice stemmed from a craving for Western acknowledgement of its "modernity" and "Europeanness," both the Rıza and Hecquard affairs illustrate how press operations could generate opposite outcomes: the reproduction in newspapers of the image of a despotic Oriental empire. But what this story illustrates more than anything else is how imperial state elites grappled with, and uneasily tried to adapt to, one of the most defining assets of democratization: the emergence and expansion of the modern mass media. And in this sense, the Ottoman Empire was very much a child of its time.

NOTES

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[1]Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets, and Globalization, 1860–1930* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007); Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011).

[2]For a recent critical essay on the subject, see Daniel Hucker, "International History and the Study of Public Opinion: Towards Methodological Clarity," *International History Review* 34 (2012): 775–94.

[3]Robert J. Goldstein, *The War for the Public Mind: Political Censorship in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London: Praeger, 2000), 5.

[4]For example, W. Sydney Robinson, *Muckraker: The Scandalous Life and Times of W. T. Stead, Britain's First Investigative Journalist* (London: Robson Press, 2013).

[5]Dominik Geppert, "The Public Challenge to Diplomacy: German and British Ways of Dealing with the Press, 1890–1914," in *The Diplomats' World: The Cultural History of Diplomacy, 1815–1914*, ed. Markus Mösslang and Torsten Riotte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 138.

[6]Scholars have criticized historical studies analyzing the Ottoman émigré press only to fit teleological ethnonationalist narratives. See Isa Blumi, *Foundations of Modernity: Human Agency and the Imperial State* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 12–13, 120.

[7]Cengiz Kırlı, "Balkan Nationalisms and the Ottoman Empire: Views from the Streets of Istanbul," in *The Ottoman Empire and the Rise of Balkan Nationalisms, 1789–1832*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Rethmynon, Crete: Crete University Press, 2006), 249–63; Ebru Boyar, "The Press and the Palace: The Two-Way Relationship between Abdülhamid II and the Press, 1876–1908," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and*

African Studies 69 (2006): 417–32; İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, "Chasing the Printed Word: Press Censorship in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1913," *Turkish Studies Association Journal* 27 (2003): 15–50; Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003); Florian Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire: Conspiracies and Political Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2010), 27–29, 34–36; M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[8]Michelle U. Campos, "The 'Voice of the People' (*Lisan al-Sha'b*): The Press and the Public Sphere in Revolutionary Palestine," in *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Seteney Khalid Shami (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2010), 237–62. René Worringer has shown how Ottoman "print capitalism" (a term borrowed from Benedict Anderson) conditioned appreciative images of both Japan and a "non-Western" modern imperial self, among state elites as well as the civilian population. See *Ottomans Imagining Japan: East, Middle East, and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 15, 115–16.

[9]Ilham Khuri Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2010), 32, 45–46, 49–53, 146.

[10]Roderic H. Davison, "How the Ottoman Government Adjusted to a New Institution: The Newspaper Press," in *Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms*, ed. Sinan Kuneralp (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1999), 370.

[11]Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 188, 258.

[12]Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 131.

[13]We borrow this term from Davison, "Ottoman Public Relations in the Nineteenth Century: How the Sublime Porte Tried to Influence European Public Opinion," in *Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms*, 351.

[14]Ibid., 352; François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II: Le sultan calife (1876–1909)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 135–41, 258, 263, 275, 278.

[15]Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 135–37, 142–43.

[16]Bram Delbecke, *De lange schaduw van de grondwetgever: Perswetgeving en persmisdrijven in België 1831–1914* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2012).

[17]Francis Sartorius, *Tirs croisés: La petite presse bruxelloise des années 1860* (Tusson, France: Du Lérot, 2004).

[18]Daniel H. Thomas, *The Guarantee of Belgian Independence and Neutrality in European Diplomacy, 1830's–1930's* (Kingston, R.I.: D. H. Thomas Publishing, 1983), 585–86.

[19]Jan Anckaer, *Small Power Diplomacy and Commerce: Belgium and the Ottoman Empire during the Reign of Leopold I (1831–1865)* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2013); Jacques Thobie, "Intérêts belges et intérêts français dans l'Empire Ottoman (1880–1914)," in *Les relations franco-belges de 1830 à 1934: Actes du Colloque de Metz* (Metz, France: Université de Metz, 1974), 213-44; Simon Verstappen, "Concurrentiestrijd in het Osmaanse Rijk: Belgische en Duitse wapenhandel met de Sublieme Porte, 1875–1914" (BA thesis, Universiteit Antwerpen, 2013).

[20]For an account of the circumstances of de Kerckhove's entry into Ottoman service, see Jan Anckaer, "Prinsen, pasja's, diplomaten en consuls: De politieke en economische betrekkingen tussen België en het Ottomaanse Rijk tijdens de regeerperiode van Leopold I (1831–1865)" (PhD thesis, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2010), 509–21.

[21]These letters were published on 3 February 1850 and 29 July 1851, respectively.

[22]Rüstem Effendi and Seid Bey, "Réponse à quelques journaux rélativement aux affaires de Turquie" (Brussels: F. Michel, 1853), 4, 13.

[23]For British and French news coverage of the empire in the run-up to the Crimean War, see Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853–1856)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 87–90.

[24]Names of Ottoman officials are transliterated according to modern Turkish orthography.

[25]Pierre Van den Dungen, *Milieux de presse et journalistes en Belgique (1828–1914)* (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 2005), 34–37, 157–80, 163.

[26]Undated reply from Fuad Pasha to a letter by Diran, written on 3 March 1859, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul (hereafter BOA), Hariciye Nezareti collection (hereafter HR), Mütenevvia (hereafter MTV) 299/40. Note that almost all cited dispatches can be consulted online at *Ottoman Diplomats: Letters from the*

Imperial Legation in Brussels (1849–1914) (2014 ed.), Centre for Political History, University of Antwerp, http://dighum.uantwerpen.be/ottomandiplomats/.

[27]Diran to Fuad Pasha, 13 and 27 January 1859, BOA, HR, Siyasi Kısım (hereafter SYS) 225/2–3.

[28]Anckaer, "België en het Ottomaanse Rijk," 503.

[29]Diran to Fuad Pasha, 3 March 1859, BOA, HR.MTV 299/40, and 10 November 1859, BOA, HR.MTV 299/45.

[30]Anckaer, "België en het Ottomaanse Rijk," 503n2409.

[31]Letter to Fuad Pasha, 13 February 1860, BOA, HR.SYS 225/6.

[32]Van den Dungen, *Milieux de presse en Belgique*, 34–37.

[33]Letter to Diran, [n.d.] 1860, BOA, HR.SYS 225/6.

[34]Fuad Pasha quoted in *Ottoman Diplomatic Documents on "The Eastern Question"* (hereafter *DDEQ*), vol. 2, *The Cretan Uprising, 1866–1869*, ed. Sinan Kuneralp (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010), 164.

[35]Sartorius, *La petite presse bruxelloise*, 138–51.

[36]Forthcoming study by Sinan Kuneralp on the history of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Istanbul: Isis Press); Sartorius, *La petite presse bruxelloise*, 150–51.

[37]Letter to Fuad Pasha, 18 August 1859; Fuad to Diran, 12 October 1859; Diran to Fuad, 19 January 1860, BOA, HR.SYS 225/4–5.

[38]Delbecke, *Perswetgeving en persmisdrijven*, 221.

[39]Frank Caestecker, *Alien Policy in Belgium, 1840–1940: The Creation of Guest Workers, Refugees and Illegal Aliens* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 13.

[40]Sartorius, *La petite presse bruxelloise*, 151n3.

[41]For an account of the "Balkan Crisis" (1875–78), see F. A. K. Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878–1888* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1996), 13–18.

[42]Milka Dontcheva, "L'insurrection d'avril 1876 en Bulgarie et ses répercussions dans la presse belge," (MA thesis, Université libre de Bruxelles, 1985), 128–31.

[43]Letter to Safvet Pasha, 10 October 1876, BOA, HR.SYS 225/1.

[44]See, for example, internal note of the Press Bureau, 18 September 1875; and Safvet Pasha to Karatodori, 3 October 1875, BOA, HR.SYS 225/1.

[45]Letter to Raşid Pasha, 5 January 1876, BOA, HR.SYS 225/1.

[46]18 October 1875, quoted in *DDEQ*, vol. 7, *The Balkan Crisis, 1875–1878*, ed. Kuneralp (2013), 130.

[47]Van den Dungen, *Milieux de presse en Belgique*, 140–41.

[48]Letter to Âsım Pasha, 9 July 1884, BOA, HR.SYS 225/25. Midhat was murdered in that year on the order of Abdülhamid. Caroline Finkel*, Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 500–501.

[49]Karatodori to Said Pasha, 13 September 1892, BOA, HR.SYS 225/68; Karatodori to Sava Pasha, 29 May 1880, BOA, HR.SYS 225/22.

[50]Letter to Âsım Pasha, 9 July 1884 and 20 August 1885, BOA, HR.SYS 225/25-26; letter to Said Pasha, 29 October 1889, BOA, HR.SYS 225/43; letter to Tevfik Pasha, 22 April 1896, BOA, HR.SYS, 226/26.

[51]Geppert, "The Public Challenge to Diplomacy," 143–44.

[52]Matthew G. Stanard, *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 32.

[53]Karatodori to Aleksandros Karatodori Pasha, 25 July 1879, BOA, HR.SYS 229/35; Jacques Willequet, "La légation d'Allemagne, la presse et les milieux de presse bruxellois entre 1887 et 1914," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 36 (1958): 391.

[54]Davison, "Newspaper Press," 365; Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 227–28.

[55]Willequet, "Les milieux de presse bruxellois," 402, 430–31.

[56]See for example, Karatodori to Nurî Bey, 3 March 1898, BOA, HR.SYS 226/42.

[57]Thomas Reyntjens, "Diplomatieke sociabiliteit: Een Osmaans diplomaat tussen het hof en de salons (1875–1900)" (BA thesis, Universiteit Antwerpen, 2013).

[58]Donald J. Cioeta, "Ottoman Censorship in Lebanon and Syria, 1876–1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979): 171. However, foreign periodicals could and *did* escape the Hamidian censor through the foreign post offices, which operated throughout the empire. Yosmaoğlu, "Chasing the Printed Word," 27–30.

[59]Information deduced from some complaint letters to Karatodori, written by the paper's staff and director. We treat this issue in more detail later in the article.

[60]See, for example, letter to Said Pasha, 6 April 1890, BOA, HR.SYS 225/51.

[61]See, for example, Karatodori to Said Pasha, 20 July 1889, BOA, HR.SYS 225/40; and Karatodori to Arifi Pasha, 20 December 1882, BOA, HR.SYS 225/24.

[62]Said Pasha to Karatodori, 30 May 1892, BOA, HR.SYS 225/59.

[63]Letter to Said Pasha, 15 June 1892, BOA, HR.SYS 225/65.

[64]We could not locate this newspaper article.

[65]Letter to Said Pasha, 17 November 1888, BOA, HR.SYS 225/34.

[66]Karatodori to Said Pasha, 25 October 1888, BOA, HR.SYS 225/33.

[67]Laurence Van Ypersele, "L'image du roi dans la caricature politique en Belgique de 1884 à 1914," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* (hereafter *BTNG*) 26 (1996): 113–64.

[68]Michael Auwers, "The Island and the Storm: A Social-Cultural History of the Belgian Diplomatic Corps in Times of Democratization, 1885–1935" (PhD thesis, Universiteit Antwerpen, 2014), 234.

[69]See, for instance, Karatodori to Said Pasha, 13 July 1889, BOA, HR.SYS 225/41.

[70]Letter to Said Pasha, 17 November 88, BOA, HR.SYS 225/34.

[71]See, for example, Karatodori to Said Pasha, 30 August 1888, BOA, HR.SYS 225/28; and Aristarki Bey to Said Pasha, 30 December 1889, BOA, HR.SYS, 225/48.

[72]For an account, see François Renault, *Lavigerie: L'esclavage africain et l'Europe (1868–1892)* (Paris: E. de Broccard, 1971).

[73]Luc Chatelet, "België en de slavenhandel in Kongo-vrijstaat (1889–1890)" (MA thesis, Universiteit Gent, 1983), 58–62; Karolien Janssens, "De kolonisatie van Kongo-Vrijstaat: Een humanitaire actie of een strijd tegen de Islam? Een discours- en inhoudsanalyse van de publieke opinie, 1888–1894" (MA thesis, Universiteit Antwerpen, 2014), 11–13.

[74]The letter is dated 24 August 1888 and was published two days later.

[75]The letter is dated 26 August 1888 and was published two days later.

[76]*L'Indépendance belge*, 31 August 1888.

[77]The letter is dated 29 August 1888 and was published two days later.

[78]Karatodori's reports to Said Pasha on 16 and 26 August, 2 September, 17 October, and 13 November 1888, and Said's reply on 25 September 1888, BOA, HR.SYS 225/29.

[79]For an account, compare Suzanne Miers, *Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade* (London: Longman, 1975), 236ff; and Chatelet, "België en de slavenhandel," 63–210.

[80]On the Ottoman participation to the conference, see Y. Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and Its Demise, 1800–1909* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 144–47; and Ehud R. Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and Its Suppression, 1840–1890* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 244–46.

[81]Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade*, 268.

[82]Letter to Said Pasha, 6 April 1890, BOA, HR.SYS 225/51.

[83]*La Réforme*, 17 March 1890.

[84]*L'Indépendance belge*, 22 March 1890.

[85]Karatodori to Said Pasha, 16 March 1892, BOA, HR.SYS 225/57; Karatodori to Said Pasha, 12 June 1892, BOA, HR.SYS 225/64.

[86]Boyar, "Abdülhamid II and the Press."

[87]M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 125–26.

[88]Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 20.

[89]Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 139.

[90]Doğan Gürpınar, *Ottoman Imperial Diplomacy: A Political, Social and Cultural History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 147.

[91]Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 51. Raymond Kévorkian estimates a number of 200,000. See his *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 11.

[92]For a historiographical discussion, see Brad Dennis, "The Debate on the Early 'Armenian Question' 1877–1896: Strengths, Weaknesses, Lacunae and Ways Forward," *Middle East Critique* 20 (2011): 271–89. A majority of scholars refer to structural social-economic explanatory factors. See Ronald Grigor Suny, "Writing Genocide: The Fate of the Ottoman Armenians," in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End*

of the Ottoman Empire, ed. R. G. Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15–41; and Sinan Dinçer, "The Armenian Massacre in Istanbul (1896)," *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis* 10 (2013): 20–45. Cf. Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran, and Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 2006), 54–77.

[93]Margaret Lavinia Anderson, "'Down in Turkey, Far Away': Human Rights, the Armenian Massacres, and Orientalism in Wilhelmine Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 79 (2007): 80–111.

[94]Gürpınar, *Ottoman Imperial Diplomacy*, 143–44, 148–49.

[95]Tim Puttevils, "'Les massacres d'Arménie': België en de Armeense massamoorden (1894–1896)" (MA thesis, KU Leuven, 2006), 47–76.

[96]Romain Van Eeno, "Pers 1873–1914," in *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 13, ed. Dirk P. Blok (Haarlem: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1978), 107; Lionel Bertelson, *La presse d'information: Tableau chronologique des journaux belges* (Brussels: Institut pour journalistes de Belgique, 1974), 86.

[97]See Karatodori to Türkhan Pasha, 18 June 1895, BOA, HR.SYS 226/13; and Karatodori to Tevfik Pasha, 25 December 1895, BOA, HR.SYS 226/23.

[98]De Bens, *De pers in België*, 33.

[99]Puttevils, "België en de Armeense massamoorden," 61–72, 107–8.

[100]Letter to Tevfik Pasha, 25 January 1896, BOA, HR.SYS 226/24.

[101]Tevfik Pasha to Karatodori, 3 November 1896, BOA, HR.SYS 226/34.

[102]See, for example, letters to Said Pasha, 11 and 26 December 1894, BOA, HR.SYS 226/9–10; and letter to Türkhan Pasha, 20 June 1895, BOA, HR.SYS 226/14.

[103]Telegram from Tevfik Pasha, 23 April 1896, BOA, HR.SYS 226/27.

[104]The first complaint dated as early as 13 September 1892, BOA, HR.SYS 225/68.

[105]See, for example, letter to Said Pasha, 20 February 1895, BOA, HR.SYS 226/13.

[106]Letter to Karatodori, 4 October 1897, BOA, HR.SYS 226/40.

[107]This according to the Belgian *chargé d'affaires* in the Ottoman capital, in a report to de Favereau, 23 November 1898, Archief van de Federale Overheidsdienst Buitenlandse Zaken, Brussels (hereafter ABZ), Correspondance politique-Turquie (hereafter CPT), vol. 3.

[108]Godfried Smeets, "Belgische relaties met het Ottomaanse Rijk, 1876–1914" (MA thesis, KU Leuven, 1981), 84, 93.

[109]Karatodori to de Favereau, 6 March 1897, and the latter's reply, ABZ, CPT, vol. 2.

[110]Hanioğlu provides numerous examples in *The Young Turks in Opposition*. See, for example, p. 46.

[111]For a detailed account, see Sofie Van Campenhout, "De Jonge Turken in België (1897–1909)" (MA thesis, KU Leuven, 2004), 48–85. On Rıza's paper, see Gérard Groc, "La presse jeune-turque de langue française," in *Première rencontre internationale sur l'Empire ottoman et la Turquie moderne*, ed. Edhem Eldem (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1991), 433, 435–36, 438, 440.

[112]Van Campenhout, "De Jonge Turken in België," 78.

[113]Quoted in Reyntjens, "Osmaans diplomaat tussen hof en salons," 21. Our translation.

[114]Van Campenhout, "De Jonge Turken in België," 84–85; Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 113; Groc, "La presse jeune-turque," 435.

[115]Groc, "La presse jeune-turque," 435.

[116]Letter to Tevfik Pasha, 4 September 1900, BOA, HR.SYS 227/7.

[117]See Karatodori's correspondence with Tevfik Pasha between 4 September and 21 December 1900, BOA, HR.SYS 227.

[118]Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 140.

[119]For instance, in late 1900 some CUP members in Britain founded a satirical journal with the sole intent of extorting money from Istanbul; they effectively sold it. Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 154.

[120]Van Campenhout, "De Jonge Turken in België," 86–87; Karatodori to Tevfik Pasha, 17 October 1900, BOA, HR.SYS 227/11.

[121]See telegrams from Tevfik Pasha on 12 September and 2 and 10 October 1900, BOA, HR.SYS 227.

[122]Letter to Tevfik Pasha, 21 December 1900, BOA, HR.SYS 227/10.

[123]In an account by *Le Petit Bleu*, 20 November 1900, a newspaper clipping of this article is preserved in ABZ, Dossiers de presse (hereafter DP), 104.

[124]The French diplomatic representative in Brussels to Delcassé, 18 January 1900, Archives Diplomatiques, Paris, Correspondance politique et commerciale-Turquie, 1.

[125]Compare articles on Karatodori in *Le Petit Bleu* (18 November 1900), *La Chronique* (23 November) and *Frankfurter Zeitung* (29 November), ABZ, DP, 104.

[126]See the press clippings in ABZ, DP, 104.

[127]*Le* Soir, 18 January 1901.

[128]Quoted in Sinan Kuneralp's forthcoming *The Sultan's Envoys: A Biographic Guide to Ottoman Diplomats (1832–1922)* (Istanbul: Isis Press).

[129]Ibid.

[130]Münir Bey to Tevfik Pasha, 3 June 1902, BOA, HR.SYS 227/20; General Tevfik Pasha (military attaché at the Brussels Legation) to Tevfik Pasha, 14 January 1906, BOA, HR.SYS 227/40.

[131]Münir to Tevfik Pasha, 27 March 1905, BOA, HR.SYS 227/36.

[132]Letter to Tevfik Pasha, 27 May 1902, BOA, HR.SYS 227/21.

[133]Eric Meuwissen, "'Le Petit Bleu' de Gerard Harry (1894–1908)," *BTNG* 15 (1984): 137–64.

[134]See, for example, Tevfik Pasha to Emin Arslan Effendi, 5 February 1901, BOA, HR.SYS 227/14; and to Münir, 28 July 1903, BOA, HR.SYS, 227/29.

[135]Tevfik to Ragıb Raîf Bey, 16 June 1908, HR.SYS 227/54; Ragıb Raîf to Tevfik, 21 May 1908, BOA, HR.SYS 227/52.

[136]Ragıb Raîf to Tevfik, 14 July 1908, BOA, HR.SYS 227/55.

[137]Letter to Tevfik, 3 June 1902, BOA, HR.SYS 227/20.

[138]Münir Bey to Tevfik, 27 November and 4 December 1901, BOA, HR.SYS 227/17–18.

[139]Mihran to Tevfik, 8 March 1904, BOA, HR.SYS 227/32.

[140]Kuneralp, *The Sultan's Envoys*.

[141]M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9.

[142]Letter to Tevfik Pasha, 15 November 1906, quoted in *Ottoman Diplomatic Documents on the Origins of World War One* (hereafter *DDWW*), vol. 4, *The Macedonian Issue, 1879–1912,* ed. Sinan Kuneralp and Gül Tokay (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2011), 170.

[143]Laurent Therer, "'L'Orient': Trois années de la vie d'un journal ottoman en Europe" (MA thesis, Université de Liège, 2005); Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 68–69.

[144]See, for example, Ragıb Raîf to Tevfik, 6 April 1907, BOA, HR.SYS 227/45.

[145]Letter to Ferid Pasha, 29 July 1905, BOA, HR.SYS 227/38.

[146]Erol Baykal, "The Ottoman Press, 1908-1923" (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2012).

[147]Yosmaoğlu, "Chasing the Printed Word," 48, 31–47.

[148]For examples, see *DDWW*, vol. 5, *The Turco-Italian War 1911–1912*, ed. Kuneralp.

[149]Findley, *Ottoman Officialdom*, 227.

[150]Letter to Mustafa Âsım Bey, 29 February 1912, BOA, HR.SYS 229/60.

[151]See, for example, Esad Bey to Hakkı Pasha, 11 September and 7 October 1911, in *DDWW*, 5:113–14, 216–17.

[152]Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 139.

[153]Letter to Âli Pasha, 8 July 1869, BOA, HR.SYS 220/40; letter to Safvet Pasha, 28 January 1869, BOA, HR.SYS 220/21. For Karatodori, see his report to Said Pasha, 13 July 1889, BOA, HR.SYS 225/41.

[154]Letter to Raşid Pasha, 21 April 1876, in *DDEQ*, 7:359.

[155]As recounted by Ali Vehbi in *L'Empire ottoman et l'Europe d'après les pensées et souvenirs du sultan Abdul-Hamid II (1876–1909): Réimpression de l'édition originale (1914)*, ed. Ali Merad (Paris: Publisud, 2007), 220–21.