

The Origins of Armenian Lobbying in the United States: A Geopolitical Conceptualization of Restorative Justice

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This paper focuses on the origins of Armenian lobbying the U.S. government for favourable policies toward the Armenian cause in the homeland — that is, Ottoman Armenia and the Republic of Armenia (1918-1921). Vahan Cardashian, a New York lawyer, organized a lobbying campaign during and after the Young Turk genocide against the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire (1915–1923). He and his associates formulated a geopolitical conceptualization of restorative justice. While Cardashian’s lobbying campaign eventually failed to exert the desired influence on U.S. policy during the Wilson administration, his strategy nevertheless established the foundations for Armenian lobbying in the United States for successive generations. This article seeks to contribute to the literature on ethnicity and ethnic lobbying a host state — in this case the United States — diasporan community and politics, and restorative justice.

Keywords: Armenian lobbying, U.S. government, San Francisco World Fair 1915, Armenian genocide, restorative justice

The origins of Armenian lobbying in the United States for favourable policies toward the Armenian question in the Ottoman Empire date back to the early years of the twentieth century. Two concerted efforts are worth noting as historical cases that served as the foundations for Armenian lobbying the U.S. government. The first was the *Armenia* journal, founded in 1904 under the editorship of community activist Arshak Mahdesian. The publication of the *Armenia* journal, as a lobbying strategy, relied heavily on the assumption that such a publication could influence public opinion and policymakers. The Armenian humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Ottoman Empire during World War I and the lack of a political will on the part of the U.S. government to intervene amplified the failure of Armenian lobbying up to that point. Besides promoting and protecting commercial interests and missionary activities, policymakers in Washington were reluctant to be engaged in Ottoman affairs for mere humanitarian objectives.² The second effort to lobby the U.S. government emerged during the Armenian genocide and was led primarily by Vahan Cardashian. Rather than relying on publications such as the *Armenia* journal to mobilize political support for their compatriots in the homeland, Cardashian employed his extraordinary organizational skills and connections with leading politicians of the time to mobilize the energies of civil society both in the Armenian community and the wider American society to advocate for U.S. support. He subsequently established the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA) in New York, a lobbying organization which consisted exclusively of Americans as a way of gaining credibility and legitimacy for its demands. Similar Armenophile organizations were active abroad, including the British Armenian Committee, the Italian Committee for the Independence of Armenia, and *La Voix de l'Arménie* in France.³ Further, in addition to the Armenian community, other ethnic communities were engaged in lobbying the U.S. government during and after World War I.⁴

This paper focuses on Cardashian's strategy to lobby the U.S. government to secure restorative justice during and after the genocide (1915–1923). It seeks to contribute to the literature on ethnicity and ethnic lobbying a host state — in this case the United States — diasporan community and politics, and restorative justice.⁵

Cardashian launched his first effort at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in San Francisco (20 February–4 December 1915), followed by the U.S. Congress. Like a consummate 'geopolitician', he formulated a geopolitical conception of restorative justice, whereby the profound damage caused by the genocide would be rectified by Allied powers, most emphatically by the United States.⁶ Cardashian and his associates thus articulated the genocide narrative that served as the foundational narrative for succeeding American Armenian generations as collective, historical memory and in political activism, including lobbying the U.S. government. Beginning with the San Francisco fair and for the next several years, Cardashian and his Armenian co-activists — for example, H.M. Dadourian, John R. Mardick, Ashod Tiryakian, Aghazar Keshishian, Krikor Chubook and Zadig Matikian — along with several Armenophile American policymakers, pursued restorative justice with respect to two fundamental existential crises concerning the Armenian people at the time.⁷ The first involved the genocide unfolding across the Ottoman Empire, and the second concerned the precarious situation the newly established Republic of Armenia found itself upon declaration of independence in May 1918.

Two archival sources proved particularly valuable for this essay. First, the personal papers of James W. Gerard, former U.S. ambassador to Germany (1913–1917), who, at the invitation of Cardashian, served as chair of the ACIA. Their correspondence reveals the extent to which their

definition of what we currently understand as ‘restorative justice’ was shaped by geopolitical considerations. Second, the archives of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco at the Bancroft Library Manuscript Collection (University of California, Berkeley) provided exceptionally valuable material regarding Cardashian and the San Francisco fair. Both archival sources offer a more accurate assessment of Cardashian and his lobbying efforts than has been possible thus far.

Restorative Justice

The extant scholarship on restorative justice encompasses various theories and approaches. ‘Restorative justice’ is said to represent a ‘deeply contested concept’ signifying ‘all things to all people’.⁸ Nevertheless, despite this diversity, analyses of and practical recommendations regarding restorative justice tend primarily to focus on reforms in ‘community-based’ punitive criminal justice systems — that is within the domestic rather than international realm.⁹ Gerry Johnstone and Daniel W. Van note that restorative justice requires, *inter alia*, that policymakers pay close ‘attention to the injury done to the victims’ and to their tangible needs’.¹⁰ In a similar vein, Howard Zehr maintains that restorative justice must ‘repair the harm as much as possible, both concretely and symbolically’.¹¹ Gross violations of human rights, according to the restorative justice model, ‘create obligations’, the principal element of which would be the obligation ‘to repair the harms caused by wrongdoing’. This obligation is not dependent upon the perpetrator of the crime alone but also involves the larger community, nationally and internationally.¹² Approaches to restorative justice thus far, however, have rarely been applied to international situations.¹³

The growing literature and the application of restorative justice to the Armenian genocide case has advanced the conceptualization of restorative justice in terms of memory and healing. Mark Kielsingard, for example, employs the term 'restorative justice' to mean 'an indispensable step in the healing process'. He further states that 'this resolution could help heal the wounds caused by the Armenian Genocide by bearing witness to a determined U.S. commitment to human rights'. Referring to House Resolution 106, which was introduced in the House in 2007, Kielsingard argues that it was 'provided for the benefit of survivors', and addressed 'the effects of the Genocide denial on succeeding generations'. Kielsingard concludes that 'Officially recognizing the Armenian Genocide and granting the small measure of restorative justice that is within the power of the U.S. to provide, is the only solution available to diminish this ongoing victimization'.¹⁴

In a similar vein, regarding the Armenian genocide, Eldad Ben Aharon emphasises the 'absence of conventional restorative justice mechanisms between perpetrators and victims' and 'the lack of shared understanding of the events of 1915 between Turks and Armenians', whereby the associated absence of a shared basis for 'restorative justice' for the Armenians has affected the geopolitics of memory'. Aharon rightly maintains that 'restorative justice is not just a matter of domestic politics but that it may also be embedded in an international context of ever-changing alliances and disputes between nation states'.¹⁵

It is worth noting that such approaches to restorative justice as applied to the Armenian genocide underscore the temporal distance that result in the conceptualization of restorative justice concerning the actual events in terms of memory and healing. The analysis presented here re-envisions the conceptual contours of restorative justice and broadens its

theoretical aperture to encompass a geopolitical perspective. A geopolitical conceptualization of restorative justice would press the field into policy areas and issues beyond the existing dominant subject areas of domestic laws and practices and would render matters of international significance integral components of restorative justice in theory and practice. The geopolitical, *Realpolitik* model of restorative justice as presented here based on the Armenian experience underscores, as integral components of just resolution of conflict, the need to pay attention to the dynamics of power relations among states, particularly as pertaining to territorial, international boundary readjustments, consideration of population (for example, refugee) needs, certain adjustments in the form of development of communication and transportation networks, and guaranteed access to sea port and similar structural developments. This model is predicated upon the deep interconnectedness between the state and civil society at the local, national, and international levels. Restorative justice, in its most concrete form, accentuates the temporal proximity to the crime that gave rise to demands for restitution. Cardashian and others lobbying the U.S. government at the time conceptualized restorative justice as a matter of geopolitical restitution and restoration, but with widening temporal distance, later generations of Armenian lobbyists transformed it into restorative justice for memory and healing.

The Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco

The literature on international expositions have variously characterized them as representing ‘victorious spirits’, the ‘epitome of civilization’, ‘imperial fantasy’, and ‘geopolitical phenomena of modernity’, which, in

addition to the promotion of ‘civilised commerce’ and material, technological progress, also exercise ‘moral influences’ in their articulation of transnational aspirations to raise the human spirit and world civilizations beyond national frontiers.¹⁶ The Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco aspired to be just that. It celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal in August 1914 as a new interoceanic shipping lane.¹⁷ Businesses and governments from forty countries, including the Ottoman Empire, participated, and nearly nineteen million people visited the Exhibition, whose 635 acres encompassed palaces, gardens, and pavilions.¹⁸

At a time when visitors flocked to the San Francisco world fair, World War I ravaged Europe, and the Ottoman government launched its genocidal policies, annihilating approximately 1.5 million of its 2,100,000 Armenian subjects.¹⁹ The urgency of the situation compelled Armenian activists, such as Vahan Cardashian, who was heavily involved in the organization of the Turkish pavilion at the fair, to lobby the American government to intervene in the Ottoman Empire by any means possible to halt the atrocities committed against the Armenian communities in the homeland. If the San Francisco world fair sought to cultivate international commercial partnerships and good will, Cardashian advocated a ‘geopolitical partnership’ for a restorative justice predicated upon *realpolitik* and moral, humanitarian principles. This study focuses on Armenian efforts, especially that of Cardashian’s, to lobby the American government for economic, military, and moral support within the framework of a geopolitical conceptualization of restorative justice.

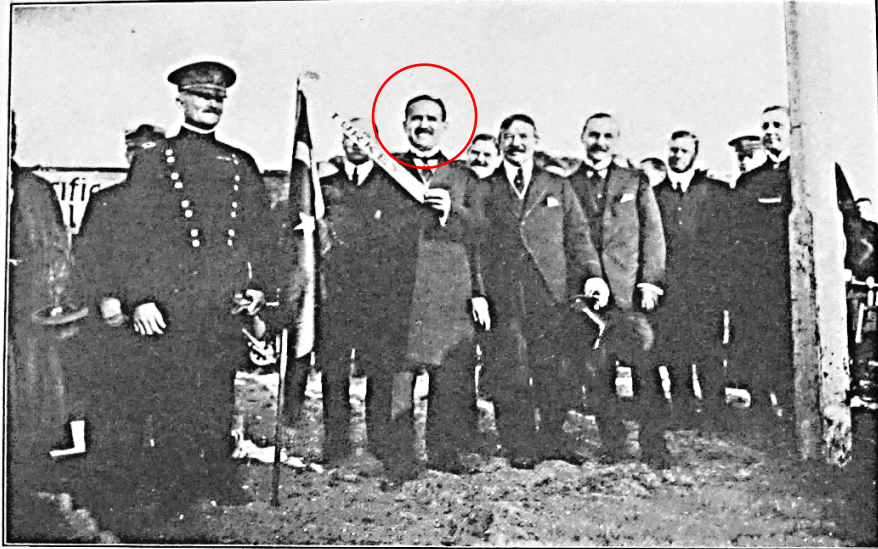
Vahan Cardashian and the PPIE

Vahan Cardashian (1882–1934) was born in the ancient town of Caesarea (Gesaria; Kayseri) in the Ottoman Empire. He immigrated to the United States in 1902 and became a U.S. citizen. He married a wealthy socialite widow Cornelia Alexander Holub in May 1907, but they were divorced in 1916. Cardashian attended Yale Law School graduating in 1908. Soon thereafter he started a successful law practice, and beginning in 1911 served as a counsellor at the Ottoman embassy in Washington, DC, and at the consulate in New York. He was appointed Adjutant High Commissioner and Executive Director of the Ottoman pavilion at the PPIE.²⁰

The Ottoman pavilion, covering an area of 73,580 square feet, represented, according to an official guide, a ‘typical Turkish’ construction, with domes and minarets, costing about \$300,000. Cardashian, the guide added, acting in his capacity as the Imperial Commissioner-General, had ‘so arranged that just the cream of the collection of Oriental manufactures, such as silks, rugs, ... jewelled ornaments and fabrics assembled throughout the Empire for this Exposition’.²¹

The unfolding genocidal policies under the Young Turk regime and the Turkish embassy’s dismissive attitude towards his protests in Washington reportedly compelled Cardashian to resign from his posts.²² However, prior to his resignation and the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition, Cardashian had warned a number of top officials in the Wilson administration (including Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan) of the crisis developing in the Ottoman Armenian communities. Considering the position Cardashian held at the Exhibition as Adjutant

High Commissioner and Executive Director of the Ottoman pavilion, the world fair of 1915 offered a perfect opportunity to launch his campaign for American support for his family and compatriots in the homeland.



A VIEW OF THE CEREMONIES INCIDENT TO THE SELECTION
OF THE OTTOMAN SITE

Following a review of the United States Troops, under the command of General Pershing, Commandant of the Pacific Coast, in honor of the Ottoman representative, the Ottoman Flag was raised over the Ottoman site to the salute of twenty-one guns.

Fig. 1. Vahan Cardashian. Courtesy of the University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library Manuscript Collection, BANC MSS C-A 190, carton 89, folder 14.



Fig. 2. Vahan Cardashian at the dedication of the Turkish building, the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco, 1915. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12352/islandora:146790>

At the San Francisco fair Cardashian aimed to convince a number of American policymakers to intervene to secure the cessation of the forced deportations and massacres of his Armenian compatriots. Thus, in addition to the above-mentioned functions, the Exposition in San Francisco also served as a forum for the launching of an embryonic and soon exceptionally well organized institutionalization of Armenian lobbying in the United States. To be sure, the Armenian case was not the only lobbying activity at the PPIE. Other civil activists — African-Americans and women among them — believed that the PPIE offered ‘an ideal setting to assert their presence as citizens’ and sought to press for their rights.²³

Lobbying and Expectations

The genocide and its consequences gave rise to obligations not only involving the perpetrator of the crime but also the larger international community. According to Cardashian and Armenians in general, meaningful restorative justice required more than mere politically motivated rhetoric in the halls of government in Washington, London, or Paris. Effective justice required more than what Joseph Nye called ‘soft power’ — for example, as attempted by the *Armenia* journal, use of persuasion through dissemination of information and demonstration of cultural and religious ties.²⁴ Considering the loss of home and homeland, effective restorative justice as dictated by the physical, territorial issues involved, above all required ‘hard’, military power to compensate, as much as possible, for the harm caused by the massacres, forced deportations, and the crime of genocide in general.

Vahan Cardashian and other Armenian community leaders expected U.S. foreign policy to cause the cessation of the genocide that was unfolding

in the homeland. They also sought guarantees for military protection for the fragile Armenian state. Lacking the necessary resources for self-defence, liberation from Turkish rule as a matter of national survival required international guarantees for their security. Their expectations for Western intervention were not totally unrealistic, for historically, combining symbolic rhetoric of humanitarian concerns with concrete geopolitical considerations, Western powers had employed diplomacy and force to intervene in the affairs of foreign states, including the Ottoman Empire.²⁵

In their desperation, Armenians expected similar intervention by Western powers, although in the Armenian case in the Ottoman Empire, the Western powers had refused to intervene. When between 1894 and 1896 Sultan Abdul Hamid II ordered the massacres of Armenians across their historic lands, which resulted in the death of more than 100,000 Armenians, Western powers refrained from employing military force to intervene to stop the carnage.²⁶ The Young Turk Revolution in 1908 finally forced the abdication of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1909, which inspired confidence in the potential liberalization and democratization of Ottoman society. Not long thereafter, however, the ultra-nationalist leadership rose to power through a military coup in January 1913. The Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihad ve Terakki*), led by Ahmet Jemal (Minister of the Navy), Mehmet Talaat (Minister of the Interior), and Ismail Enver (Minister of War), espoused a nationalist ideology of militarism and pan-Turanism, which fuelled their genocidal schemes against the non-Turkish minorities (Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians) within the empire.

As the arrests and deportations of Armenians escalated, on 24 May 1915, the triple Entente powers (Great Britain, France, Russia) issued a joint

condemnation of the Turkish policy of deportations and massacres, warning that 'In view of these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization,' 'the Allied governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible ... all members of the Ottoman government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres'.²⁷ Accordingly, as this case study demonstrates, Armenians expected the Allies, including the United States, to punish the perpetrators of the genocide after the war.

Thus, while millions of visitors enjoyed the Exhibition festivities in San Francisco, U.S. Consul Jesse Jackson reported from Aleppo in August 1915 that more than 500,000 Armenians had been killed, and caravans of thousands of refugees marching on foot continued to arrive to the region.²⁸ As in the earlier cases of massacres, neither the United States nor the European powers intervened on behalf of the Armenians. The United States, which since the early nineteenth century had maintained good relations with the Ottoman government, adhered to the policy of neutrality and relied on ambassadorial presentations at the Sublime Porte.²⁹ In 1914, Cardashian had warned several top officials in the Wilson administration of the escalating crisis in the Ottoman Armenian communities.³⁰ His efforts to bring the matter to the attention of the Wilson administration proved futile, however. The U.S. policy of neutrality precluded direct engagement in Ottoman affair, an ally of Germany in the war.

As the situation in the Armenian communities across the Ottoman Empire deteriorated, Cardashian found himself in a moral dilemma as a representative of the Ottoman government. At the same time that he was serving as the Adjutant High Commissioner and Executive Director of the Ottoman pavilion at the PPIE with responsibilities to organize the

pavilion in San Francisco, the same Ottoman government was in the process of persecuting, deporting, and murdering members of his family and compatriots in his own homeland. Nevertheless, he continued to organize the Turkish pavilion while he lobbied U.S. policymakers to address the humanitarian crisis enveloping the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The policymakers he met with in San Francisco included former Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan on the afternoon of 7 July 1915.³¹ Bryan was supportive of the Armenian cause, but he had resigned on 9 June 1915 in disagreement with President Wilson's stance on neutrality in responding to the German submarine warfare, particularly the sinking of the British liner *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915. Bryan's successor, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, sought to maintain good relations with Turkey regardless of the genocide — a situation that did not augur well for Cardashian's campaign.³²

At the PPIE, Cardashian also met with Senators Albert B. Cummins (R-IA), James D. Phelan (D-CA), Oscar W. Underwood (D-AL), James W. Wadsworth, Jr. (R-NY), and William J. Stone (D-MO). It is not clear how Cardashian decided to meet with these policymakers at the San Francisco world fair. His confidence in them appears to have been misplaced, as they were ill-prepared for the enormity of the task. Cardashian met with them in San Francisco having in mind the Armenian humanitarian crisis unfolding in his homeland, but the Senators had come to the world fair to promote the economic interests of their respective states and were not prepared to make promises. Nevertheless, in his desperation, as an immediate step, Cardashian met with as many policymakers as possible to secure assistance for his family and compatriots. However, as Senate proceedings indicate, these senators, who in general had poor voting records in the Senate, rarely participated in the debates on Armenian issues. More fundamentally, they seem to

have been the wrong people to approach.

For example, Senator Stone served in the Senate from 1903 to 1918 and was chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (1913–1918) when Cardashian met with him in San Francisco (Stone passed away in 1918). Stone opposed the large influx of immigrants who, he argued, included ‘the world’s derelicts, men who are without a good moral character, men who would uproot the foundations of social order and government structure, criminals, anarchists, incompetents, and people of that stamp’.³³ Similarly, Senator Phelan vehemently opposed immigration (one of his re-election campaign posters read ‘Keep California White’) and supported the Japanese Exclusion League of California.³⁴ Senator Cummins had served as governor of Iowa from 1902 to 1908, and Senator from 1908–1926. From 1919 to 1925, he held the powerful position of president pro tempore, when the Senate debated some of the key issues pertaining to Armenians and Armenia. His main policy interests consisted of the development of railroad and transportation systems.³⁵ Thus, according to the records of congressional debates, these policymakers showed little or no interest in the Armenian question.

Acknowledging the limited impact his meetings at the PPIE exercised on policy, Cardashian and fellow community leaders organized the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA). In a letter dated 7 January 1919, he invited James W. Gerard to serve as chairman of the newly formed ACIA. Gerard accepted the invitation ‘with pleasure’. Cardashian wrote to Gerard, ‘You have rendered signal service to the cause of justice and righteousness. Relying upon your known lofty ideals of international morality that we are asking you to lend your moral support to the cause of Armenia with which you no doubt sympathize’.³⁶

The U.S. Congress

One of the earliest influences Cardashian and the ACIA exercised on the U.S. Congress appeared on 25 February 1919, when Congressman John J. Esch (R-WI) introduced on the House floor a petition submitted by the ACIA, which urged the Allied peace conference to arrange for assistance for Armenia's independent republic.³⁷ The ACIA expanded its influence and enjoyed growing popularity both in the Armenian community and among leading American political figures, clergy, and professionals. In less than a year, by November 1919 ACIA's membership had grown from forty-eight members to eighty-one. Its membership included members of the U.S. Congress, prominent educators, clergy, philanthropists and industrialists.³⁸

At issue was whether the United States would accept the role of a mandatory or protectorate for Armenia (however defined), whether the U.S. role would be limited to extending economic and military assistance, and finally whether the United States, as a matter of government policy, should become engaged in the Armenian crisis. Two groups lobbied the U.S. Congress for the Armenian cause. The first, led by Cardashian and James W. Gerard of the ACIA, advocated U.S. direct assistance to Armenia, a policy that was supported by the government of the Republic of Armenia led by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, Hay Heghapokhagan Tashnagsutiun), an influential Armenian political party (established in 1890 in Tiflis/Tbilisi) in the diaspora.³⁹ The opposition, including the Armenian National Union of America led by Mihran Sevasly, the Armenia America Society (formed in 1920) led by Walter George Smith, George Montgomery, and James Barton, believed that 'a separate Armenian state was not feasible without an American mandate or direct supervision'.⁴⁰ Senator Joe T. Robinson (D-AR) recommended rejection of

the mandate and instead advocated the extension of unilateral, or in conjunction with the Allied powers, assistance to Armenia and the Armenian people.⁴¹

Encouraged by their growing popularity and political prowess, executive members of the ACIA, James W. Gerard, Cleveland H. Dodge, and William Jennings Bryan, felt confident to recommend in a cable addressed to President Wilson that the administration extend official recognition to Armenia so that it can receive economic and military assistance.⁴² Cardashian dispatched, to the ARF office in Boston, a copy of the letter he had sent to President Wilson at the Paris Conference. The letter contained the names of thirty governors supporting the Armenia cause, which Cardashian, the ARF, and Armenians in general viewed as confirmation of political as well as public disposition regarding policies favourable to Armenians. Wilson replied to the letter stating that he “wholeheartedly” agreed with the content of the letter and expressed his confidence that the Paris Conference remained deeply interested in supporting the Republic of Armenia. The ARF in Boston thanked President Wilson as the ‘greatest champion of justice’ for his support for the Armenian cause.⁴³

Indeed, although in February 1919 President Wilson in a telegram from Paris to Gerard communicated his assurances that he ‘shall be as watchful as possible to do my utmost on Armenia’s behalf’,⁴⁴ a month later a less optimistic Colonel House informed Gerard that while the Peace Conference could attempt everything in its power regarding Armenians, he could not offer ‘any definite information about the boundary situation’.⁴⁵ Gerard requested certain guarantees from House to reassure the ACIA of the Allied powers’ intention to assist in the integration of access ports on the Black and Mediterranean seas

(Trebizond and Cilicia, respectively) with the Armenian republic in the Caucasus in the envisioned independent Armenian state.⁴⁶ Viscount James Bryce supported the inclusion of Cilicia as part of Armenia in order to have access to the sea at Mersina or Alexandretta. Bryce expressed hope that the United States would enter the League of Nations and accept an Armenian mandate.⁴⁷ In his immediate reply, House urged Gerard to dispatch an ACIA representative to Paris to bolster the Armenian claims.⁴⁸

The Armenian lobby was not sufficiently strong to produce the desired positive, concrete results. The two venues that the Armenian lobbyists placed their hopes on began to disintegrate soon after the initial optimism. Disagreements among France, Italy, and Britain, and disagreements among policymakers in Washington, weakened the Armenian position. The Allied powers sought to protect their own national security and economic interests, considering the impending partition of the Ottoman lands. While in his message to Congress, President Wilson welcomed the opportunity to assume the mandate for Armenia, the Senate rejected engagement in the highly unpredictable and potentially unmanageable Armenian affair.⁴⁹

Thus, restorative justice in the Armenian case was predicated on the following points: 1) That the Allied Powers could be expected to cooperate with the United States to implement the Turkish-Armenian boundaries proposed by Wilson; 2) That the Allied Powers (including the United States) would recognize the legitimate government of the Republic of Armenia; 3) That the U.S. government would use its “moral influence” to convince France to maintain its forces in the region of Cilicia on the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and in the case of French withdrawal from the area, that the U.S. government and the other

Allied powers would institute measures for the protection of the Christians there; 4) That the U.S. government would clarify its position with respect to its ties with the governments of Turkey and Armenia; 5) That the Allied Powers would establish a '\$60 Million Fund' for the reconstruction of Armenia for a period of three years; and finally 6) That the U.S. would extend humanitarian and other forms of assistance to the 2,600,000 Armenians under Turkish and Russian Bolshevik rule.

The Armenian demands rested on two principles: 1) justice for the victims of the genocide; 2) justice as a compensation for the Armenian contribution to the war effort in support of the Allied powers, the victors in the war. Cardashian and his associates maintained that the Armenian nation paid a high price during WWI in Armenian lives in Turkey and Russia.⁵⁰ Armenians had rendered military services on the Caucasian front disproportionate to their numbers — Armenian regular soldiers, nearly 20,000 volunteers, Armenian reservists on the Caucasian front, about 160,000.

Karekin Pasdermajian (Garegin Pastermajian, 1872–1923), better known by his *nom de guerre* as Armen Garo (Armen Karo), represented the Armenian government in the United States and worked closely with Cardashian lobbying the US government. In a statement he read: 'With our modest means, we have fulfilled our duty in full measure in this great struggle in order to save civilization from an impending doom. Now it is for our great Allies to act'.⁵¹

From the Armenian perspective, by the middle of 1919 two contending policies appeared before them. On the one hand, the promises of the Peace Conference to support the Armenian cause. On the other hand, the growing preferences among the participating nations, their

humanitarian rhetoric notwithstanding, to forge closer ties with the Nationalist movement led by Mustafa Kemal. The Allied powers seemed to gravitate towards the latter, thus jeopardising support for Armenians. Further, the ACIA had the task of mobilizing support in the U.S. Congress, particularly in the Senate, where the dominant isolationist mood resulted in the rejection of policies that could potentially incur enormous financial and political costs.

As a result, expectations on the part of the ACIA and promises by political leaders did not translate into actual policy bases for restorative justice. In 1919, Senator John Sharp Williams (D-MS) introduced Senate Joint Resolution 106, which read in part: '*Resolved, etc., "That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to use such military and naval forces of the United States as in his opinion may seem expedient for the maintenance of peace and tranquility in Armenia until the settlement of the affairs of that country has been completed by treaty between the nations'*.⁵² Such resolutions proved futile. If during the war Wilson had not requested a declaration of war against Turkey, a German ally in the war, after the war the U.S. Congress showed little inclination concerning a military option to defend Armenians against Turkish attacks or with respect to the proposed assumption of mandatory power over Armenia.

In November 1919, Senator Williams wrote to Gerard of his sense of hopelessness concerning the refusal by the Senate to assume humanitarian responsibilities. 'It seems to me that the Senate wishes to divorce themselves from the civilization of the world, from all altruistic services to their fellowmen elsewhere, and from a just and enduring peace'. It would be best, Williams added, to concentrate energies on convincing the administration to extend recognition to the Republic of Armenia.⁵³

One of the key legislations regarding the Armenian case, Senate Concurrent Resolution 27 (S. Con. Res. 27), reflected the Senate's opposition to the American assumption of a mandate over Armenia. An awkwardly worded resolution, as originally reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, (S. Con. Res. 27) read: 'That the Congress hereby respectfully declines to grant to the Executive the power to accept a mandate over Armenia as requested in the message of the President dated May 24, 1920'.⁵⁴ The torturous process S. Con. Res. 27 experienced was indicative of the unwillingness of the chamber to shoulder such a responsibility. It is instructive to consider here the amendments proposed by Senators Hitchcock and King.

The Hitchcock Amendment to S. Con. Res. 27 proposed to empower the president to appoint a joint commission to oversee 'the preparation, issuance, offering for sale, and sale in the United States of bonds of the Armenian Government, not exceeding \$50,000,000 in amount'. The proceeds would be used to purchase American 'agricultural implements, materials for railroad development, construction, and repair in Armenia, and other similar supplies for economic development and rehabilitation that may be designated by the Armenian government'. However, the U.S. government would not be, in any sense, 'responsible for the payment of either principal or interest'. The Senate rejected this amendment, by a vote of 41 to 34, and 21 not voting.⁵⁵

Similarly, the King Amendment to the S. Con. Res. 27 proposed to authorize and empower the President 'to enter into arrangements ... with the allied powers, either through the supreme allied council or the council of the League of Nations, or otherwise, ... for the proper protection of Armenia, including the advancement of supplies and

commodities essential for the health and life of its people and the preservation of its political independence and territorial integrity'. The Senate rejected the King Amendment by a vote of 46 to 28, and 22 not voting.⁵⁶ Among the three ACIA member Senators who cast their votes, Henry Cabot Lodge (R-MA) and Charles Thomas (D-CO) rejected it, while Williams voted in support. Of the Senators with whom Cardashian had met at the PPIE, Cummins did not vote, Phelan and Underwood voted in favour of the amendment, and Wadsworth rejected it.

In the final vote, the Senate voted on 1 June 1920 to support S. Con. Res. 27—that is, that the President be denied the authority to accept the mandate over Armenia. Fifty-two senators voted to 'decline' to authorize Wilson to accept a mandate over Armenia, twenty-three Senators voted against the resolution, and twenty-one did not vote.⁵⁷ Among those with whom Cardashian had met in San Francisco, Albert Cummins did not vote, Senators Phelan and Underwood opposed it, while Senator James Wadsworth voted in favour (see Table 1).⁵⁸

The votes indicate a lack of consistency among senators with whom Cardashian had met at the PPIE in San Francisco and among ACIA members. While, as noted above, ACIA membership had experienced an impressive increase in 1919, such growth created the false impression of strong representation in the U.S. Congress. No more than three senators were members of the ACIA, and combined with the four senators with whom Cardashian had met in San Francisco, they number seven, clearly a numerical weakness in matters of voting.⁵⁹

Table 1. Senate Roll Call Votes, S. Con. Res. 27, 1 June 1920

<i>Senators with whom Cardashian met at the PPIE</i>	Hitchcock Amendment	King Amendment	Final Vote S. Con. Res. 27
Albert B. Cummins (R-IA)	No vote	No vote	No vote
James D. Phelan (D-CA)	Yea	Yea	Nay
Oscar W. Underwood (D-AL)	Yea	Yea	Nay
James W. Wadsworth, Jr. (R-NY)	Nay	Nay	Yea
 <i>ACIA members in the Senate</i>			
Henry Cabot Lodge (R-MA)	Nay	Nay	Yea
Charles Thomas (D-CO)	Yea	Nay	Yea
John Sharp Williams (D-MS)	Yea	Yea	Nay

Source: *Congressional Record*, Senate, 66th Congress, 1 June 1920.

Moreover, the Senate debates concerning the U.S. mandate over Armenia revealed the evolution of the theory and language of ‘restorative justice’ from a geopolitical vision as advocated by Cardashian to a humanitarian and ultimately symbolic conceptualization of restorative justice. Confronted with the political realities of the geopolitical situation on the ground in the homeland, future generations of Armenians in the United States limited their lobbying discourses to humanitarian and symbolic

aspects of political action.

The ACIA also advocated direct economic and military aid as an alternative to the mandate. Both the Wilson administration and Congress, however, were reluctant to extend such aid. By December 1920, the Yerevan government had collapsed, and although the Tashnagist leaders organized an armed resistance against the Military Revolutionary Committee (*Revkom*), by the end of June 1921, that resistance too had collapsed and the Red Army had solidified control over Armenia.⁶⁰

Having lost the Republic of Armenia to the Bolsheviks, Cardashian next concentrated his efforts on the Lausanne Treaty (signed 24 July 1923; entered into force, 6 Aug. 1924). He transformed the ACIA into the American Committee Opposed to the Lausanne Treaty (ACOLT), and David Hunter Miller (former attorney for the American Peace Mission) served as its chair. In the Senate, Senators King and Claude Swanson were the principal supporters of the ACOLT.⁶¹ Cardashian and Gerard lobbied intensely against the American ratification of the Lausanne Treaty. Although the Senate rejected the treaty on January 18, 1927, President Coolidge nevertheless received Ambassador Muhtar on 5 December 1927, thus establishing diplomatic ties between the United States and the Republic of Turkey.⁶²

In the final analysis, Cardashian attributed the U.S. failure, as a matter of policy, to intervene to halt the genocidal process and to extend military and economic support to the Republic of Armenia to both Wilson and what he considered the symbiotic relationship between the Department of State and the oil industry. In a booklet titled *Wilson, Wrecker of Armenia*, Cardashian stressed that the Armenians of Russian Armenia

established the Republic of Armenia in May 1918 without any assistance from the United States and the European powers. He criticized the American missionaries who garnered large sums of money from the American public for relief aid and the 'evangelization' of the Armenian people, a people who have been Christian since the early fourth century. The missionaries, Cardashian wrote, have been the main advisers of Wilson and guided his policy toward Armenian issues. He noted that Wilson's policy concerning Armenia had been 'equally mischievous. It has resulted in the dismemberment of Armenia by 60%, the loss of over 200,000 lives since the conclusion of the armistice, and the pitiful plight of Armenia'.⁶³

Conclusion

Cardashian's lobbying campaign was greatly appreciated by the Armenian community and American policymakers, even when political divisions appeared insurmountable. The ARF agreed that Cardashian had assumed the 'lion's share' in leading efforts to secure American support for the Armenian cause.⁶⁴ James W. Gerard wrote that 'Vahan Cardashian ... was a tower of strength in organizing the Armenian cause. Armenians in America should remember him with gratitude'.⁶⁵ Considering Gerard's contribution to the Armenian cause, one Armenian, Arakel H. Bozyan of Newport, Rhode Island, wished to proclaim Gerard 'Governor General' of Armenia.⁶⁶

The language employed by Cardashian, Gerard, and the ACIA set the foundations for the lobbying discourse in the Armenian community and in congressional hearings. Future hearings benefitted greatly from the formative stages of Armenian lobbying in the United States. A

fundamental difference appeared, however, in the process of the evolution of the Armenian lobbying discourse: whereas the original conceptualization of restorative justice emphasized the geopolitical aspects of the Armenian genocide, the later generations embraced the discourses of trauma and memory, recognition and healing. This transformation was visible even during Cardashian's campaign.

The San Francisco world fair, similar to other world fairs, was designed to promote products and markets and imperialism, rather than serve as forums for the cessation of crimes against humanity. The Ottoman genocide against the Armenian people continued until 1923, causing the unprecedented Armenian national catastrophe and the dispersion of the survivors throughout the world. Cardashian played a central role in the organization of an influential group of American Armenophile luminaries who mobilized public support and resources for the Armenian cause. In the end, however, U.S. and European geopolitical and geoeconomic interests prevailed. The Armenian community, despite the energy expended on securing restorative justice, could not contest the political, economic, and military powers exercised by the major powers.

Considering the political realities in Washington, it was ironic that under Cardashian's guidance the Armenian lobby, which lacked material, physical power, formulated a geopolitical conceptualization of restorative justice. A geopolitically envisioned restorative justice necessitated military capability. In the absence of such a capability, the rhetorical valence of Cardashian's lobbying efforts perforce gravitated towards humanitarian relief. In theory, the humanitarian conception of restorative justice assumed a 'moral baseline' in the formulation of morally acceptable responsiveness and accountability, whereby the international community, particularly the Allied powers, bore moral

responsibilities regarding the Armenian catastrophic situation. The moral baseline, in the words of Margaret Urban Walker, was constitutive of ‘a kind of right or rights, a norm of fairness, standards of due care and attentiveness, or the dignity and respect-worthiness of persons’.⁶⁷ However, that moral baseline proved woefully inadequate for the physical protection of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and for the protection of the Republic of Armenia.

Colonel Stephen Bonsal, secretary of President Wilson, noted in his diary: ‘Poor Nubar! Poor Aharonian! Unfortunate Armenians! Our promises are out the window and the reconstituted Armenian state has not a Chinaman’s chance’.⁶⁸ Here one could add, ‘poor Cardashian!’ The American policy he envisioned as restorative justice for the survivors of the genocide and for the survival of the Republic of Armenia proved illusory; American policy neither proved restorative nor delivered justice for the Armenian nation.

By the twenty-first century, a huge temporal gap had been developed since the years of the genocide and the demise of the Republic of Armenia in 1921. What had developed as an Armenian geopolitical conceptualization of concrete restorative justice had transformed into an emotional conceptualization of metaphysical, symbolic restorative justice that emphasized memory and healing.

Endnotes

¹ Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature, Department of History, Boston University, email: payas@bu.edu. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the National Movements and Intermediary Structures in Europe (NISE) conference on 'Nationalism and World Fairs', 30 May–1 June 2023, Vienna, Austria. Thanks to the anonymous reviewer for SNM for the valuable comments that greatly improved this paper. Thanks also to Arpi Payaslian for her comments on the numerous drafts of this paper. Special thanks are due to two expert archivists for their valuable assistance: Maria Brandt at the archives of the University of California Bancroft Library Special Collections, Berkeley, CA, and Kristin Goss at the University of Montana Mansfield Library, Archives and Special Collections, Missoula, Montana. Their prompt responses to my requests are greatly appreciated.

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³ Gregory L. Aftandilian, *Armenia, vision of a republic* (Boston: Charles River Books, 1981), 18–19.

⁴ See, for example, Joseph O'Grady, ed., *The immigrants' influence on Wilson's peace policies* (Lexington: U. of Kentucky Press, 1967); Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American diplomatic tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

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¹⁰ Johnstone and Van Ness, 'The meaning of restorative justice', 7.

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³² Payaslian, *United States policy*, 74–78.

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