

KAREN JEPPE, AAGE MEYER BENEDICTSEN, AND THE OTTOMAN ARMENIANS: NATIONAL SURVIVAL IN IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL SETTINGS¹

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For Danish Protestant missionaries and aid workers in the Ottoman Empire and Syria around WWI and the Armenian genocide, the relationship between the ideology and practice of mission, rescue, aid, (cultural) imperialism, Orientalist ideas, and respect and understanding of local needs, cultures, and beliefs could be a complex one. This was not least the case for Karen Jeppe (1876-1935), who worked as an aid worker among Ottoman Armenians, mainly widows and orphans, from 1902 until her death in Syria in 1935. Jeppe has been called “Denmark’s first development aid worker,”² as she, opposed to other Danish women with Protestant backgrounds and beliefs doing similar work, did not see herself as a missionary. Rather, she saw herself as an aid worker and rescue worker, and, increasingly, as an activist working for national self-determination for the oppressed and dispelled Armenians who had been first colonized and finally almost completely eradicated by the Ottoman Empire. Jeppe defined herself as doing the exact opposite of the missionaries: not undermining the mainly Orthodox (Gregorian, Apostolic) Armenians as a national and religious group by imposing Protestantism on them, but rather helping to restore or strengthen group coherence by focusing on aid, education, industry, Armenian cultural heritage, and national restoration.

This approach was reflected in her choice of organizational backing, as she worked for the largely secular Danish Friends of Armenians (“Danske Armeniervenner,” DA), although she was also formally attached to

Johannes Lepsius' Deutsche Orient Mission (DOM), in effect DA's German senior partner in the field.³ DA had several board members and supporters who were priests and bishops from the Danish national Lutheran Church, but it was founded and led by Danish-Jewish-Icelandic linguist and writer Aage Meyer Benedictsens (1866-1927), a secular and anti-imperialist intellectual, known as "the interpreter for the oppressed nations," as he worked his whole life to propagate the idea of peaceful national self-determination. While travelling in Persia and the Ottoman Empire, Benedictsens had witnessed the devastating effects of the 1894-96 Abdul Hamid massacres on the Ottoman Armenians. And, in 1902, Benedictsens was the person who, through his writings and speeches, directly inspired Jeppe to leave Denmark for the Ottoman Empire to work among the Armenians in Urfa until she had to leave the country in 1918 after WWI and the Armenian genocide.⁴

After WWI, from her base in and around Aleppo, Syria, Karen Jeppe and her organization was working with both Protestant missionary organizations, with Armenian nationalist and religious organizations, with international organizations like the League of Nations (which defined itself as working to secure the rights of both nations and national minorities), with local Muslim Arab leaders and populations, and with the French colonial regime in Syria. This was to not only give temporary aid to individual Armenian survivors, but also to secure the survival of the Armenian nation as such, i.e., in territorial as well as in cultural and religious terms. In the process, Jeppe even became a commissioner for the League of Nations, working to secure the release of the tens of thousands of Armenian women and children from Muslim households who had been forcibly abducted and converted during the Armenian genocide.

One of the main points of this article will be to examine how and why a Western aid worker with a Protestant background operating in predominantly Muslim areas (i.e., a person often associated with "cultural imperialism," Orientalism, and/or with being a representative or proponent of colonialism) came to work as an activist for national self-determination for the Armenians, a people widely regarded in the West at the time as being "Oriental," with most or all of the negative characteristics usually associated with that designation. This means also having to show how the often conflicting ideas of Western superiority, national self-determination, Protestantism as opposed to Islam as well as to Eastern Orthodox Christianity, internationalism, anti-colonialism, secularism, equality, race,

etc., were being implicitly or explicitly negotiated by key members of the DA and applied in the field by Karen Jeppe and her staff.

DENMARK AND WESTERN COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY MIDDLE EAST

As a relatively large part of the Danes involved with the Middle East in the first part of the 20th century were missionaries, rather than soldiers or colonial officials, a general treatment of the subject of Denmark and Western cultural imperialism and Orientalist beliefs will have to deal at some length with the role of these missionaries. It is a commonly held perception among both Western and non-Western scholars of Christian missions to non-Western countries that the individuals representing these missions were per definition “missionary imperialists,” representing “a belligerent European civilization.”⁵ Christian mission has been characterized by Indian historian K. M. Pannikar as “a large-scale attempt – to effect a mental and spiritual conquest as supplementing the political authority already enjoyed by Europe.”⁶ In the process, indigenous religious and cultural traditions were more or less destroyed in order to make way for imposed values. Obviously, history has shown that there is much truth in such assertions,⁷ but when applied as a doctrine, important exceptions and nuances are ignored. Empirical studies of Western missions in the late Ottoman Empire prove this to be the case: Christian missions and missionaries could be seen, and could see themselves, as harbingers of (cultural) imperialism, of religious change, of cultural preservation, of modernity – understood as a desired development toward goals broadly defined as “progressive,” but with no necessary direct association with or link to Christianity or imperialism – or of some or all of the above.⁸

This ambivalence, if not schism, could be reflected in the minds of missionaries themselves, as well as in the minds of members of the local elites and populations. It is not a given that indigenous populations were passive, uncritical recipients of what missionaries and aid workers had to offer.⁹ Nor were Christian missions mere tools for Western imperialism or Western economic interests, influenced as they were by particular national backgrounds, denominations, ideologies, degrees of dependence and loyalty towards political or economical establishments, local populations, time, geographical locations, individual preferences, etc.¹⁰ In fact, missionary objectives – first and foremost evangelization – could at times be at odds with Western political and economic objectives. An early case

in point is the reception in the first half of the 19th century of the first American missionaries by Western diplomats: “To the last man the corps of foreign diplomats were either indifferent to American missionaries or openly hostile to them, while the American Chargé d’Affaires, Commodore Porter, entertained views of the Turkish-American Treaty of Commerce (1830) that completely ruled out all missionary enterprises.”¹¹

A significant, although not always dominant, strand of Christian belief(s) is the belief in the fundamental equality of all human beings, a belief which holds an important critical potential in opposition to the very principle of colonialism which rests on a fundamental view of the inherent superiority of the colonizers over the colonized.¹² In the case of Anne Marie Petersen, Danish Mission Society (“Dansk Missionselskab,” DMS) missionary to India, such a belief, inspired by meetings with Mahatma Gandhi, led her to defy her own organization as well as the British colonial authorities to join the struggle for Indian independence.¹³ Another Danish missionary, Oluf Høyer, who attempted to proselytize among the Muslims of Yemen in the beginning of the 20th Century, was not opposed to all aspects of British colonial rule in the region. But he was careful not to be too closely associated with the British colonial authorities in the area, as this would both restrict his independence and make him suspicious in the eyes of the local populations. And the British authorities on their part would not allow Høyer to proselytize in the interior of the country, as they believed this could have potentially disruptive and destabilizing effects.¹⁴ To achieve a truly historical understanding of the relationship between Christian missions and other Western involvements in non-Western countries on the one hand, and Western (and in this case also Eastern, Ottoman) colonialism and imperialism on the other hand, one has to look at the historical evidence.

To examine the specific role of Danish missionaries and aid workers in Middle Eastern colonial and imperial settings, one has to consider not only their individual beliefs and backgrounds, but also their common national and cultural background. Notwithstanding sometimes rigid scholarly notions of Europeans in the Middle East as being, in essence, agents of imperialism through their creation and sustaining of Orientalist beliefs and/or colonialist practices,¹⁵ it seems reasonable to assume that there could be significant differences between how, e.g., a Dane and a Frenchman perceived him- or herself, and were perceived, in Syria in the 1920s. Furthermore, it seems equally reasonable to assume that there could

be significant differences in the way such persons acted or could act in such a setting. In this specific context, France was a large, still significant European power with a colonial empire, a member of the victorious Entente, and the de facto colonizer of Syria and Lebanon from the early 1920s. Denmark, on the other hand, was a small, neutral country in the periphery of Europe, a country without colonial traditions or ambitions in the region. During WWI, this status helped make Danish observers of the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire reliable and consistent sources of information to this particular aspect of CUP (Young Turk) policies.¹⁶ And, as Jonas Kauffeldt argues, this status could also help make Danes in the Middle East less prone to purport and sustain negative stereotypes of the region:

Danes and others from countries or regions (the Netherlands, Poland, Scandinavia as a whole, etc.) that lacked significant political and economic power were people whose nations never came to dominate, much less rule, lands in the Middle East. Falling outside the power relationship inherent in the occupier-occupied dynamic, they lacked the compulsion to necessarily justify or legitimize their countries in the region. That ability to distance themselves, at least symbolically, from those in power afforded them an opportunity, though not one seized by all, to be more objective and evenhanded in their assessment of the local people and societies. As participants in the Orientalist discourse, these representatives of smaller states constituted a part of the body of Westerners asserting the power and authority to represent the Other, but they were not inherently perpetuating the structures of dominance or the endorsement of the same. Their contributions instead added nuance, depth, and even challenges to the field, widening the base of knowledge and interpretations available to their audience.¹⁷

In other words, “the West,” no more than “the East,” “the Orient,” is or has ever been a monolithic entity.¹⁸ Contemporary, explicit challenges to the Orientalist discourse of inherent Western superiority are, though hardly dominant,¹⁹ not hard to find in Danish publications either. For instance, in 1915, in the popular, Copenhagen-based journal, *Illustreret Tidende*, a long-running theme was introduced on how Europe and Europeans were viewed by non-Western observers in light of colonialism and the ongoing

war. The first such observer was introduced as “a Chinese friend of a member of the editorial staff.” He delivered several scolding analyses, like the following one, printed in July 1916, which also serves to illustrate how neutral European countries with a less known (although not necessarily less bloody) colonial past, rather than present, could be perceived: “Which ones of the peoples of Europe have kept their hands clean in relation to alien peoples and races? Mention them for me, and I shall tell you which European countries that have not joined the war. Has England not weighed down on India and sucked its strength for two hundred years? Has France not robbed the lands of brown and black men and hunted them, like one hunts wild animals? Has Germany not treated the peoples under their yoke worse than slaves; did they not 15 years ago, under cover of their religion, break into this country like robbers and plundered worse than Dschengis Khan? Has Belgium not deeds on its conscience that can only be compared to what this country now has suffered? When I read about raped women and children with chopped off hands, I thought of Congo and understood. Will Europe soon learn to understand? If not, my precious friend, I think that its time is over.”²⁰

This does of course not mean that the Danish missionaries and aid workers in the Middle East were immune to notions of Western superiority. Missionaries in particular propagated the idea of the absolute or, at best, relative truthfulness and superiority of their Protestant Christian and Western beliefs and traditions over the beliefs and traditions of the peoples of the Middle East. Such ideas often led to a rather arrogant “cultural imperialist” attitude towards not only Muslims, but also towards Oriental Churches like the Apostolic Armenian Church, which they considered to be dead or dying.²¹ It was the stated goal of the Danish organization Women Missionary Workers (“Kvindelige Missions Arbejdere,” KMA) and similar organizations to convert Armenians into what was considered true Christians, i.e., into followers of the preferred branch of Protestantism, which was widely viewed as an intermediate step toward reaching the local Muslim populations as well.²² The direct reason for the founding of the Danish KMA was the continued suffering of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire after the Abdul Hamid massacres, but the underlying aim was to follow what was considered to be one of the key messages of the New Testament: “It was clear to the founders of KMA that what was needed was not only temporal aid, there was also a missionary task to fulfil, and Armenia became the first mission field of the society.”²³ Like their equally

evangelical American Board colleagues, they too believed that “it was their moral duty to redeem an errant mankind through active intervention.”²⁴ Other contemporary Danish evangelical missionary organizations, like the Eastern Mission (“Østerlandsmissionen,” ØM), founded in 1898 by the Reverend Einar Prip, were initially directed solely towards almost completely futile attempts at proselytizing among Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, in this case among Arab Muslims in Syria, but the attitude towards non-Protestant Christianity was equally hostile.²⁵ As Prip himself wrote in a letter sent from Jerusalem, 1898: “Cold, barren, and rigid forms [of religion] are more than plentiful here, but Death has marked them.”²⁶

But although the missionary ideology will in the following be contrasted with the beliefs and actions of Karen Jeppe and her organization, it has to be noted that it is not the whole picture. There were important similarities between the actions and ideologies of Jeppe and of many missionaries. Some missionaries had or developed much less prejudiced views of “Oriental” peoples like the Armenians, and tried their best to embrace what was deemed by the 1910 World Missionary Conference to be “[t]he graces and characteristics peculiarly Christian – humility, gentleness, self-government, self-denial, love,”²⁷ and it was recognized by some how important it was to understand, rather than condemn, the religions, traditions, political realities, and languages of the mission fields.²⁸ Missionaries and aid workers could also be allies in the fight against anti-Armenian prejudice. This was particularly necessary, as the arrogant attitude toward the Apostolic church was often supplemented with outright racism against Armenians as a people, as is shown in the writings of an American missionary in the Boston-based *Missionary Herald* in 1909: “The Armenian characteristics of selfishness, ignorance, pride, and quarrelsomeness are coming out as plainly under freedom as under tyranny.”²⁹ (Proto-)racist beliefs were abundant at the time,³⁰ and many Westerners and nationalist Turks alike shared views of Armenians as being a “cunning race of merchants,” “the Jews of the Orient,” etc.³¹ For instance, Danish journalist and traveller, Frantz von Jessen, wrote during the 1903 uprising in Ottoman Macedonia that “all connoisseurs praise the Turks at the expense of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews.”³² Contemporary Armenians, too, could be acutely aware of this Western anti-Armenian prejudice. A. P. Hacobian felt the need in 1917 to underline that, contrary to popular beliefs propagated by European travellers with a superficial

knowledge of Armenians, they did not lack courage, could excel in sports like rugby, and were not greedier than any other group.³³

Such anti-Armenian beliefs were a major reason that, in order to raise the necessary awareness, sympathy, and funding in Western countries, the “Oriental” Armenians were often “sold” by Danish and other Western missionaries and aid workers to the general public as “(almost) like us,” and/or as a people who had earned respect or redemption through suffering. In the eyes of many Westerners, victims of suffering had (and perhaps still have today) preferably to be easily identified as “similar to us,” and, accordingly, Westerners involved with aiding or converting Armenians often systematically countered these specific Orientalist notions by stressing similarities rather than differences, positive rather than negative traits.³⁴ For instance, Karen Jeppe would consistently underline what she believed to be either primarily “Western” or generally positive qualities of the Armenians – e.g., Christianity, work ethic, honesty, moral conduct, willingness to sacrifice. And within explicitly religious circles, it was even sometimes implied that, by sticking to their faith through centuries of oppression and persecution, culminating with the genocide, Armenians had somehow redeemed themselves and their allegedly petrified Orthodox Christianity, and had become the “martyred people,” a people to be admired and respected as “keepers of the faith,” even if they remained alien, “Oriental,” in the eyes of the Western beholder.³⁵

Also, most Danish women missionaries shared with aid workers like Jeppe what can best be described as feminist views. In recent years, the existence of female missionaries had increasingly come to be viewed in missionary circles as a natural and desirable development: “Both home and abroad, [women] have a significant and ever growing part of the Crusade of our time, the struggle for the heavenly Jerusalem.”³⁶ KMA was in fact founded as an organization with “women working for women,” and great emphasis was put on female education and employment in the mission field.³⁷ This development, strongly influenced by Western missionaries, seems to have been welcomed by a significant number of Armenians, especially among the educated. As Ohannes Kilicdagi writes about the pre-WWI period in the Ottoman Empire:

The education of women was given remarkable importance, and regarded as critical. This conclusion can be easily drawn from the numbers given and articles written in the [Armenian] periodicals. For example, Hovhannes Boujikianian wrote a series of articles

with the headline “The West and the East”, in which he made comparisons between several aspects of the life in the West and the East. He allocated one of these articles to the woman question. In this article, he says that there are huge differences between women’s life in Europe and Asia. Women, the author says, have many disadvantages in the East. They are isolated from public life, “belonging to the kitchen.” They have no say in their own destiny. They cannot even choose their partner; love is forbidden to them. “Nature becomes silent when tradition speaks” in the East. [...] Unless freedom is given to women and their dignity is recognized, civilization cannot be established.³⁸

Other important similarities between missionary and aid worker approaches toward the Ottoman Armenians became apparent during the Armenian genocide, when relief (rather than “spiritual salvation”) was needed on an unprecedented scale. Here, even the most fundamentalist Danish Protestant missionary had to concentrate on providing aid to, first and foremost, the Ottoman Armenians, but also to other Christian or to Muslim groups of the empire, often risking their lives in the process. Furthermore, not unlike Jeppe and DA, Danish missionaries and missionary organizations were working almost completely independently of the Danish state. Even though they generally had significant institutional and/or personal connections to the established Danish Lutheran state church, the organizations were independent, voluntary, and self-supporting, and were often viewed as sectarian.³⁹ And they also attempted to work as independently as was practically possible of German and US missionary organizations,⁴⁰ organizations that were generally much more dependent on the governments of their respective countries of origin than were the Danish organizations.⁴¹

JEPPE AND BENEDICTSEN: BACKGROUND AND IDEOLOGY

As stated above, unlike Danish missionary organizations like KMA, ØM, or the Industrial Mission (“Industrimissionen,” IM), neither DA nor Karen Jeppe attempted to combine aid work with proselytizing. Karen Jeppe’s background and world view assured that her attitude toward the Ottoman Armenians was rather different from most Westerners working among Armenians at the turn of the 19th century: she was deeply rooted in a relatively liberal Danish Lutheran movement called “Grundtvigianism” –

one of the two most influential Danish theological movements of the nineteenth century – but she did not consider herself a missionary.⁴² Jeppe shared the Grundtvigian emphasis on personal freedom, education, and of human nature as being rooted in a nation – understood not primarily as a political entity, but as an ethnic group possessing common historical, linguistic, and cultural bonds – and the view that being a Christian was not a matter of being judgmental, having the “right” denomination, or having any specific religious experiences.⁴³ Rather, “true” Christianity was a matter of, for instance, having a personal relationship with God and Jesus, of becoming a child of God through baptism,⁴⁴ and Jeppe believed from the beginning that Protestants ought not to speak of the “dead” Gregorian Church, inasmuch as the Protestant Church could tear away the national roots of the Armenians, separate them from the people.⁴⁵

For Jeppe, this Grundtvigian outlook was combined with an interest and belief in science and scientific methods. Jeppe’s father had encouraged her to study nature, learn the Latin names of plants and animals, etc., and her principal biographer, Ingeborg Maria Sick, stated that Jeppe’s very approach to the Armenian people was “scientific” – i.e., anthropological: in order to assist Armenians in the most effective way, Jeppe wanted to know all about not only language, but of social mores, religion, traditions, mindset – she wanted to “observe and be sensitive to the particularities of the Armenian people, its faults and virtues, listen in to its very heartbeat, as when she and her father listened in to nature’s secrets.” Only then could she “stand shoulder to shoulder with the people, meet some of its needs, pull it toward better conditions of life.”⁴⁶ There is of course quite a bit of essentialism on display here, typical of the *zeitgeist* – “the Armenian people” as an almost monolithic entity, with the sometimes explicit implication that Armenians acting or thinking outside that box were somehow not true Armenians at all. But Jeppe’s attitude was also one of a genuine desire and willingness to see that particular “other” in a realistic way. And especially when faced by the effects of massacre, persecution, and poverty among the Ottoman Armenians in the first decade of the 20th century, she, as well as DA, considered it more important and appropriate to help build up industrious Armenians rooted in their national culture, a culture regarded as being in many ways synonymous with the Apostolic Church. This constituted an explicit departure from the paternalistic attitudes of Christian missions towards local populations.⁴⁷ So, although DA and KMA were from the outset engaged in various collaborative

efforts,⁴⁸ these organizations would often differ widely in goals and methods.

For instance, even though shared experiences during the Armenian genocide tended to make aid workers and missionaries approach the task of rescuing Armenians from slaughter, abuse, or forced assimilation in similar ways, there were still differences between the attitudes of Jeppe and, e.g., KMA missionary and nurse Maria Jacobsen, posted in Harput from 1907-19. Jacobsen, with missionary zeal, thoroughly despised Armenian revolutionaries before, during, and after the genocide (they were seen as disruptive and secular), and she would consistently urge Armenians to literally go and meet their death without resistance. Almost all Armenians in the region did in fact do just that, and although Jacobsen and other missionaries asked the Turkish authorities for permission to join their flock on the death marches and/or massacres, permission was denied.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Jeppe, who had previously been somewhat sceptical toward Armenian nationalism as a political project, started during the genocide to mourn the fact that no true, effective Armenian national movement, or even Armenian national awareness, existed that could have somehow prevented Armenians from being, as was the common contemporary description, “slaughtered like sheep.”⁵⁰

Also, when some Protestant Armenians in Harput were being offered by the local organizers of the massacres and deportations the possibility to be spared if they would convert to Islam, they turned to Jacobsen and other Western missionaries to ask for permission to (pretend to) convert as a means of survival. Jacobsen and some other missionaries then went from door to door to urge the Protestants to become martyrs rather than Muslims.⁵¹ This was not something that Jeppe chose to do, although she, like Jacobsen, believed that Armenians that chose death rather than Turkification and Islamization, when such a “choice” was indeed offered, were the truly admirable ones. For Jacobsen and other missionaries, the fact that many Armenian Gregorians in fact chose “martyrdom” was a proof that Gregorianism was a Christian denomination that was to be at least (and at last) grudgingly accepted as admirable under the circumstances. This was “proof” that Jeppe did not need.

As for the other important DA profile, founding member and chairman Aage Meyer Benedictsen, he had already at an early point in his career as a writer shown himself to be an outspoken anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist, although, even considering the times, not the most radical such.

He was a proponent of principles of non-chauvinist national self-determination, principles not unlike some of the main principles behind US President Wilson's famous 14 Points presented in January 1918, during WWI.⁵² From the early 1890s to his death in 1927, Benedictsen travelled extensively around the world, among other things to understand why "we," as he stated in quotation marks, "Westerners," "Europeans," believed in the right to rule other peoples.⁵³ Benedictsen was, however, still impressed by the perceived civilizing accomplishments of the British Empire, although he also clearly believed that Western colonialism should be, at best, a temporary state of affairs. As he wrote in a letter to DA board member Ingeborg Maria Sick from India in 1908:

I still admire England's huge deed in this part of the world that is India, but it is true, I have also seen what England *will* not do what must be her duty – to let the child feel that school is at some point out, and that the day will come when the teacher has accomplished his deed and must leave if the life of the young one is not to be messed up and impossible. Unfortunately, everything points to the fact that the teacher *will* not go until he is chased away, he has himself become too happy about his own glory. First Japan, and soon India, how this lesson serves our racial grandeur and our predatory morals ["Røvermoral"] right. See, we have been, and still are to some extent, of the opinion that we are the chosen masters. That is why Our Lord made us white and the others dark – so that *we* and *they* would always realize who were the leaders.⁵⁴

In his writings at home in Denmark, Benedictsen described and defended nationalist and/or egalitarian rights or struggles of, among others, Finns, Poles, Balts, Serbs, Danes, Armenians, Irish, Indians, Jews, Yezidis, while also analyzing and criticizing anti-Semitism and racism in general, and defending the rights of oppressed majority populations like the Persians and the Russian peasants against their rulers.⁵⁵ In his first major publication, *Et Folk, der Vaagner* (The awakening of a nation, 1895, translated into English in 1924) about the Lithuanians under Russian rule, Benedictsen argued in the very first paragraphs against opponents of the principle of national self-determination:

At you, my opponent, I aim these opening words. Your superior doubts whether the peoples' desire for *national* self determination is justified has more than anything enticed me to write this small

book, as it has taken shape here. [...] I have travelled a great deal, know many of the peoples of Europe by more than their names. I have preferred to dwell among those who have no ethnic independence [“folkelig Selvstændighed”], those, whose land has been marked on the map with the same colour as that of one of the great ruling people’s. [...] I have wanted to find out whether the national principle really means that little, whether it is something so external and random that it can be shed easily, like a change of clothing, whether the national movements are only being kept alive artificially from a still independent motherland, or by restless minds or people who seek their own advantage, and who, in their vanity, stir up worthless, indeed often harmful emotions. How small the benefits from travelling would be, if one could not, as the greatest reward, learn from these travels to see the peculiarities of other peoples, and to respect other peoples asserting their right. [...] The beautiful words that have been written about world citizenship, about common struggle without regard to the small barriers set by race and language, they are still largely hopes only [...].⁵⁶

This “pragmatic nationalist essentialism,” as one could perhaps dub it – the nation and/or nation state as destiny and as a basic human right, if not necessarily as ultimate ideal – is in fact not far from being a secularized version of the ideas shared by Grundtvig and by Jeppe. Benedictsen did describe himself as being not far from having “a Gypsy nature,” but, in order to be able to understand and enjoy the places and peoples of the world, he also believed that he had to belong to a specific place, in his case Denmark.⁵⁷ As DA chairman, these ideals were also what Benedictsen consistently worked for regarding the Armenians – freedom from imperialism and violent oppression, be it Russian or Ottoman, through national self-determination. And he was quite consistent in his anti-imperialism, which meant that, while explicitly stressing that he was and felt himself to be Danish, he was also an outspoken critic of Danish imperialism in Iceland, his mother’s birthplace.⁵⁸ As he stated in 1917: “I have chosen my standpoint, which is that every nation must have the right to freely exercise its essence, given that it does not violate [...] another nation...”⁵⁹ As the above suggests, Benedictsen was not blind to negative aspects of nationalism, which he stated outright in a 1922 letter to DOM

chairman Lepsius: “What a troubling sign for the cohesion (“Zusammenhang”) of mankind when love of a nation becomes religion...”⁶⁰

Benedictsen was not free from sharing and disseminating popular Orientalist beliefs – like when he described Teheran anno 1901 as “modern,” and therefore disappointingly “un-Oriental” – but he never seized to reflect on what he experienced, and he generally believed that differences between peoples and places were dictated by conditions (geographical, political, etc.), rather than by inherent traits.⁶¹ Also, he was well aware of, and critical toward, what Said has dubbed Western “discrepancies,” defined by Abdirahman Hussein as, among other things: “[discrepancy] between the privileged colonial or neo-colonial official’s experience (feelings of racial and cultural superiority; peremptory, disciplinary power; self-assurance, ease, comfort) and that of the colonial or otherwise victimized subject (daily drudgery, economic deprivation, humiliation; implacable hatred of the foreign intruder; cultural and military resistance) [...]”⁶² To the extent that Benedictsen did subscribe to Orientalist beliefs, these beliefs were far from being “inextricably tied to Western hegemony.”⁶³

Regarding the Armenian genocide, the very background for DA’s work in Syria, Benedictsen was well informed and clear as to what happened and who was to blame⁶⁴ – for instance in 1922, in a reply to the Turkish diplomatic minister in Copenhagen, Ghalib Kemal Bey, who had publicly defended and rationalized, although not outright denied, the CUP destruction of the Ottoman Armenians. Benedictsen wrote about this event that it was a “shattering crime, probably the largest in the history of the world: The attempt, planned and executed in cold blood, to murder a whole people, the Armenian, during the World War.”⁶⁵ But unlike many other contemporary observers of the genocide, like Karen Jeppe, Benedictsen was less prone to harbouring essentialist beliefs regarding the main perpetrator group, as he did not believe that the fact that Turks spearheaded the attempted annihilation of the Armenian minority meant that Turks as such were an evil “race” or people. Also, he was attentive to Muslim suffering.⁶⁶ After having acknowledged that Muslims had suffered at the hands of Christians in the years previous to WWI, not least during the Balkan Wars 1912-13, he wrote that “it is also true that the sufferings of Muhammedans finds less of an attentive ear, less sensitive minds in Europe than does the sufferings of Christians. It is partly due to the instinct of

brotherhood, but more so it is the clear understanding in the enlightened, unbiased circles, that what causes all this horror is ‘Turkish misrule.’ It breeds coarseness, cruelty, and desire for revenge. There is no reason to accuse the ordinary Turk of having a lesser, less noble soul than the Christian soul. I will not even discuss here the question regarding how to decide who ranks lowest in a moral sense. It will lead too far. To me, the unjust sufferings of Muhammedans are just as heartfelt as the sufferings of Christians!’⁶⁷

Karen Jeppe saw things somewhat differently, however. She was fiercely independent, to a large degree even of her own organization and its chairman, Benedictsen, although she did have a great deal of respect for him.⁶⁸ And, as the only DA member in the field during WWI, her experiences were markedly different from those of the other members of the organization. After having witnessed first hand the complete devastation of the Armenians from her base in Urfa – death marches, killings, rape, abuse, forced starvation, etc. – she had no sympathy whatsoever for the Turkish people, or, during and immediately after the genocide, for Islam in general.⁶⁹ And, in a manner reminiscent of the “Yellow Peril” scare of the beginning of the century, Jeppe would after WWI warn against the dangers of “the East”: “It is a joy to me when people admire our work, since that is the tribute owed to the Armenian spiritual life and proficiency. Maybe they could thereby realize what we owe those who have stood in the trenches for so many hundreds of years now and guarded our culture against Asia.”⁷⁰

These views were somewhat tempered or contradicted by her simultaneous allegiance to the internationalist and humanist principles of the League of Nations,⁷¹ and by the fact that some local Muslims, mainly Kurds and Arabs, had secretly been aiding Jeppe’s aid and rescue efforts during the genocide, risking their own lives in the process. As Kauffeldt notes, she would also later modify her views on Islam – “Over time, Jeppe would ease her general condemnation of Islam and Muslims, as she forged strong bonds with Arab Bedouin in Syria, but the Turks she never forgave as their persecution of the Armenian community continued throughout her lifetime.”⁷² She could also, while retaining a perhaps rather condescending attitude, be quite relativistic, as opposed to essentialist, in her understanding of the peoples of the Middle East. In 1926, in a semi-fictional, almost Socratic, fashion, Jeppe approached the question of “Western moral superiority” versus “Oriental cruelty and primitivity,” in

this case the alleged inherent cruelty and primitivism of Kurds in Eastern Anatolia. This was done in a serial based on the life of her Armenian adoptive son, Misak Melkonian:

“But why must the Kurdish tribes always fight each other and destroy everything?” “Well, what can one say? They are now at that age where one does these kinds of things. Boys always fight, too.” “Age? But they get as old as we do.” “The individuals. Yes, that’s true enough, but the race, that’s another matter. By the way, I don’t know if it’s dictated by age, but in Europe they acted the same way a couple of hundred years ago, did they not? Finally, they are not that much the wiser in Europe, the tribes have merely grown so large that they are called peoples, that’s the whole difference. The forays are called war nowadays, and they are farther between since such a large apparatus has to be mobilized before they can be started; but then they are that much worse when they finally do start.”⁷³

Like many other contemporary Westerners, Jeppe was here explicitly questioning the moral superiority of “the West” vis-à-vis “the East.” Such doubts, together with related doubts as to whether “Western civilization,” defined as Western technological superiority, was really the pinnacle of civilization, had become particularly widespread in light of the massive destruction of WWI. Belief in Progress with a capital P had been shaken, and, as it has been eloquently stated, “The West suffered from a chronic misgiving as to whether all the discipline and the toil it imposed on itself and its bondsmen were not a worse vanity than the curling pipe-smoke of the East.”⁷⁴ The famed Danish Orientalist, Johannes Østrup, in his 1923 book on “Islam in the Nineteenth Century,” could even write as a concluding remark: “Should it perhaps at some point be possible, through a mixture in the right proportion of the harmonic inertia of the East and the disharmonic energy of the West, to manufacture a whole new, rejuvenating and refining cultural force? That is the question which, in relation to the great problem of the Orient and the Occident, is the most important of all, but also the question whose answer lies farthest in the future.”⁷⁵ As for evangelical Christians, only personal salvation really mattered, and some believed from viewing their own societies that progress could be seen not only as a positive force, like when it led to freedom from need and from religious, political, and cultural oppression, and not least when it lead to

literacy – a fundamental factor in spreading the message of the Gospel. Progress could also lead to materialism and scepticism, which served to undermine what they believed to be authentic Christianity.⁷⁶

KAREN JEPPE IN SYRIA

Even though DA was an independent aid organization based on humanitarian principles, and with an anti-colonialist chairman, they had attempted to work with, rather than against, the Turkish authorities and the local Muslim populations in the Ottoman Empire before WWI and the Armenian genocide in order to assure the security and prosperity of their operation and of the Ottoman Armenians. In the early 1920s, when large numbers of surviving Armenians were living under destitute conditions, including outright slavery, in what had now become the French mandate of Syria, DA decided to take up work among these survivors from a base in Aleppo. Jeppe, who had suffered a complete physical and mental breakdown caused by her wartime experiences, had recovered sufficiently and was to spearhead this work. In most ways, conditions had changed dramatically, and now a colonial reality, substituting the Ottoman imperial reality, had to be dealt with in order for the Danish organization to be able to aid Armenians in the Middle East.

This meant that it was necessary for Jeppe and her organization to yet again choose a pragmatic approach toward the enormous problems they, as well as all of Syria, were facing. Ideally, Jeppe preferred that an independent Armenian nation state was established in Eastern Anatolia, as promised by the Western powers during WWI and in the Sèvres Treaty of 1920. As this solution grew ever more illusory, Jeppe and DA supported initiatives like Norwegian League of Nations Commissioner Fridtjof Nansen's attempt to settle Ottoman Armenians in the newly established Armenian Soviet Republic. To Jeppe, no admirer of the communist system, this project showed some promise.⁷⁷ Still, it was far from an ideal solution, but, ever the pragmatic, she as well as Benedictsen believed that a Soviet Armenian republic was better than no republic at all.⁷⁸ But despite these efforts, and although she never completely abandoned the hope that the Armenians would one day be settled in an independent Armenian nation state, Jeppe realized that the Armenians in Syria needed immediate solutions to their problems.

In 1921, Jeppe was appointed League of Nations Commissioner for the Protection of Women and Children in the Middle East, an appointment that

secured her and her organization limited funding, but a substantial amount of credibility and political and moral support. This was indeed needed as she and other aid workers faced an enormous task: some 100.000 Armenians,⁷⁹ mainly female, poor, diseased, unemployed, orphaned, traumatized, etc., were scattered around the country, many eking out an existence in refugee camps. Approximately 20-30.000 of the women and children were living in Muslim captivity, victims of kidnapping, forced marriage, rape, and sexual slavery that had become de facto instruments of genocide from 1915 onward, as testified by numerous eyewitness accounts and diplomatic reports.⁸⁰ And more refugees were arriving every day from the Turkish republic, where continuing nationalist policies were instrumental in expelling almost all of the remaining Christians of the country.

These new arrivals threatened to create increasing tensions between Armenian refugees and local populations, making both short term and long term solutions imperative. Jeppe began by initiating regular aid work among Armenians in the large Aleppo refugee camp – “the city of the 20.000,” as it was called. Among other things, a soup kitchen, a medical clinic, and a children’s home were established, alongside workshops for boys and women. Few men or elderly women had survived the genocide, so the various traditional Armenian handicrafts had to be basically relearned by the new generation.⁸¹ But soon a regular industry was established that not only gave Armenians the opportunity to be self-supporting, but also raised funds for the overall relief effort through the growing export of, e.g., needlework to Europe, USA, and Australia. For Jeppe, as well as for Protestant missionaries,⁸² industry was also in itself regarded as therapeutic, even redeeming – including for Armenian rape victims, as she stated in a letter to DA board member Ivara Nyholm in November 1924: “Some will perhaps understand the ennobling influence this work has on the raped young women, who will be led through it back to the spirit of their people; anyway, it is one of the means to that end.”⁸³ Or as Jeppe expressed it in a 1925 report to the League of Nations: “We pursue with equal intensity two aims; to *rescue the women and children* and to *educate the rescued and give them a proper start in the new life.*”⁸⁴

In order to fully understand the magnitude of the work that Jeppe and other missionaries or aid workers, Western or Armenian, had initiated among Ottoman Armenian survivors in Syria and elsewhere, one has not only to look at the number of surviving victims involved, but also at the

magnitude of the collective and individual traumas that these Armenians had been exposed to. These traumas were a direct consequence of the disaster that befell the Armenians during WWI: it was a genocide, an attempted annihilation, not a civil war or a relocation gone wrong. It was an attempt by the CUP and by many “ordinary” Turks, Kurds, etc., to completely destroy the Ottoman Armenians as a group. Most men, the traditional breadwinners of Armenian families, had been killed, women had been raped in their thousands,⁸⁵ children had been used as slave labour, they had been forcibly converted, forced to speak Turkish, Kurdish, or Arabic instead of Armenian, forget their culture; their places of worship were systematically destroyed or converted into stables or mosques, they were vilified, accused of being criminals or of being responsible for their own misery. This explains why not only individual aid and rescue was necessary, but that it was also necessary to save and regenerate the remnants of a completely destroyed and humiliated nation. Such a long-term effort was not easy to perform, as it was imperative to educate and train survivors as quickly as possible in order to make them be able to provide for themselves and surviving family members. With the exception of projects like Jeppe’s efforts at creating permanent solutions to the refugee problem (see below), real long-term efforts were very much the task for various Armenian organizations rather than for Western ones.⁸⁶

Many of the rape victims mentioned above were among the approximately 2000 Armenian women and children released from captivity by Jeppe’s organization from 1921-27. This was Jeppe’s main task in her capacity as a League of Nations commissioner, to secure the release of as many captivated Armenians in the region as possible. Rescuing Armenian survivors from Turkish territory had by now become near impossible,⁸⁷ but that was not the case in Syria. Direct or indirect assistance from the French was vital in that respect, however. To name an example: when two Armenian girls, Astrig and Asaduhi,⁸⁸ who had been used as “dancing girls,” i.e., prostitutes, by a travelling Syrian tribe, were released by Jeppe’s organization, the Arab authorities demanded in a letter that she returned the girls. But after having pointed out that the letter had not been signed or approved by the French authorities, Jeppe was able to keep the girls at the reception home.⁸⁹

On a more general level the task began in earnest in 1922 when a number of search stations were established, mainly in the Eastern parts of Syria and along the Turkish border, and usually near French military posts

for safety. Using these search stations as bases, a network of agents travelled the countryside, actively searching for Armenians in Muslim households. Since both Jeppe, the League of Nations, and the French administration for various reasons were against using force to have the Armenians released, stealth, bribery, and negotiations were the preferred means. Jeppe, in her League of Nations capacity, was in fact commissioned to work not only for the “‘reconstruction’ of families,” but also for “‘reconciliation’ among peoples.”⁹⁰ The project did, however, lead to occasional dramatic episodes, with threats, pursuits, and the killing of an agent, Vasil Sabagh.⁹¹ In the spring of 1922, Jeppe had established a reception house in Aleppo, where the released women and children first of all received medical treatment, were photographed, and had their experiences during genocide and captivity recorded by the staff.⁹² Subsequently, they received education and training, not only to acquire skills necessary to survive and to provide for themselves, but also to become what was regarded as truly Armenian, i.e., Armenian-speaking Christians.

In the Ottoman Empire, Apostolic Christianity, not language, was the principal ethnic marker for Armenians. Depending on where in the empire they lived, Armenians could be multilingual, have Turkish or Kurdish as their mother tongue, or speak Armenian dialects that were incomprehensible to an Armenian-speaking Armenian from another part of the empire. But after WWI and the genocide, when national as well as individual salvation and regeneration was of the highest priority in the diaspora, the (Western) Armenian language was regarded and taught as “the ‘essence’ of identity,” at the expense of other languages.⁹³ And many Western missionaries and aid workers consciously and actively participated in this project of national recovery, rather than advocating assimilation or strictly imposing “Western” rather than what was now widely regarded as essentially “Armenian” values. As it has been stated in relation to the numerous and all-important post-war, American-run Armenian orphanages:

The two hundred orphanages staffed and operated by Americans played an important role in rebuilding the lives of the children who survived. Although the administrators of these orphanages could have been cultural imperialists, they in fact recognized the importance of teaching the orphans about their own history, as well

as helping them relearn their native language, which many children had forgotten while living in Muslim homes. The orphanages were also vital in offering children educational opportunities; indeed, the few survivors we interviewed who were illiterate were those who had lost their parents in the genocide but did not grow up in orphanages. Because American and European orphanage personnel encouraged girls, as well as boys, to achieve educational goals, the girls benefited from opportunities that might not have been available to them otherwise. Many of the girls left the orphanages to pursue nursing or teaching careers, and some of the survivors we interviewed indicated that they had somewhat resented getting married and adopting more conventional Armenian gender roles. Hence, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of these institutions in healing the wounds of the children they nurtured. The orphanages functioned as “families” for the survivors who had lost parents as well as siblings. Here, orphans bonded to each other, seeking to recreate the closeness they would otherwise have enjoyed with their own family.⁹⁴

Besides from the educational efforts, Jeppe considered the most viable long term solution to the refugee problem to be colonization. As prospects in 1923-24 of establishing an independent national home for the Armenians looked increasingly slimmer, and since only a limited number of Armenians were able to migrate or make a living in the Syrian cities, Jeppe basically took off where she left in Urfa before the war, by working with the authorities, with the local populations, and with various Western organizations to establish permanent agricultural settlements in the countryside.⁹⁵ This seemed not only a practical solution; it was also a solution that suited her beliefs that city life for the Armenians would lead to ghettoization, to moral and physical degradation, and to the loss of Armenian culture and religion.⁹⁶ Generally, Jeppe seems to have had little trust in Western powers, the French colonial power in Syria not excluded, to prioritize the well-being of her favoured people over political and economic interests, and history had already proved in abundance that such suspicions were well founded. This mistrust was the main reason why Jeppe had at first been hesitant to accept nomination as a League of Nations commissioner.⁹⁷ She realized that the attention and sympathies of Western nations were fleeting, and that her work had to be based on a

much more solid, long term, and tangible foundation. That foundation was to be the peaceful co-existence between local Armenian, Bedouin, and Kurdish populations. Trust and lasting peace was to be literally built on the foundations of the agricultural colonies.

To secure land for the colonies, Jeppe did not initially approach the colonial authorities. Instead, in 1924, she contacted a Bedouin sheik, Hadjim Pasha, who would eventually become a trusted friend. Hadjim owned large areas to the east of the Euphrates river, in the region of the Al-Balikh river, and he was interested in the assistance of Jeppe's organization and of skilled Armenian refugee farmers using modern agricultural methods, to help his people transform from nomads to sedentary farmers.⁹⁸ Both Hadjim and Jeppe saw Armenian colonists as potentially modernizing, even civilizing influences, and Jeppe was furthermore interested in striking a permanent deal with a powerful Muslim landowner who could not only rent out land at a fair price, but could also truly protect the Armenian settlers. To have such local Bedouin support and protection was necessary for both practical and symbolic reasons. Jeppe's status as League of Nations commissioner, and the chosen pragmatic, result-oriented approach of Jeppe and DA toward colonial authorities, necessitated that they cooperated with these authorities. The French were a political reality, and security for Armenians in Syria in general could not be established without some form of French involvement – "winning the sympathy of the French" was important.⁹⁹ But local Muslims were more likely to respect a local Muslim protector than protection offered by French colonial forces, and Armenian settlers needed assurance that they were protected by a force that they believed would not desert them. In the eyes of many Armenians, the French in Syria were not such a force, as the French, despite promises to the contrary, had evacuated Cilicia in 1921, leaving thousands of Armenians to be killed or expelled by Turkish nationalists.¹⁰⁰ The colonial authorities had in fact earlier offered to establish an agricultural settlement near the Euphrates for Armenians, but, seemingly, few Armenians had at that point much confidence in the French.¹⁰¹

For the Dane, cooperation with the authorities did not result in her becoming an agent for colonial France, and neither did her mistrust result in her being involved in overtly or covertly anti-colonial work or rhetoric. Whether French colonial rule was considered by Jeppe to be malicious or beneficial seems largely to have been measured from the point of view of whether or not French policies were seen to be benefitting Armenians in

Syria, overall security in the region, and Jeppe's various enterprises. There was contemporary Western fundamental critique of French or British mandate rule in the region.¹⁰² But for the abovementioned reasons, and perhaps because she considered French rule to be preferable to, say, the return of Turkish rule, Jeppe did not seem to have fundamentally challenged the French colonial regime. And, in the case of the colonies that were established in Tel Armen, Tel Samen, Charp Bedros, and Tineh, working with both Muslims and the French seemed despite occasional setbacks, like the fear among some local Arabs that Armenians attempted to create an independent state in the colonized areas, to be a winning formula. As Henni Forchhammer, Danish feminist and pacifist, member of the Danish delegation to the League of Nations, and a friend of Jeppe,¹⁰³ wrote: "the colonies will certainly also attract other young Armenians from the surrounding or wandering Arab and Kurdish tribes; the colonies will grow naturally, and while the Armenians wait – and they still do – to come back to 'Armenia' one day, they can lead a decent life here in an Armenian environment. Together, Hadjim Pacha and the Frenchmen secure peace and order."¹⁰⁴ And in a speech in Copenhagen in October 1926, Jeppe herself stated that the heart of the matter was to get Armenians, Bedouins, and French to cooperate to reach the goal of Armenian colonization, as well as of security and prosperity for the displaced Armenians and for the region in general.¹⁰⁵

But from time to time, inherent contradictions between the objectives of Jeppe and of the colonial authorities would lead to strained relations between the parties. While Jeppe wanted to realize her colonization program as independently as possible, the French wanted to supervise and control it. And there were also clear indications that the colonial authorities wanted to control or put a stop to Jeppe's "disruptive" efforts to liberate Armenians from captivity, resulting in Jeppe having to use her League of Nation's status and her persuasive skills to reach a compromise in Geneva that would both satisfy the French and let her continue her work.¹⁰⁶ More generally, French policies in Syria were directed toward generating revenues and consolidating their position in the mandate area, and consolidation was attempted through the classical colonial tactics of playing the various ethno-religious groups against each other. Among other things, this meant that from the early 1920s, the French worked to establish Armenians and other minorities in Syria as virtual client communities, something which served to alienate Armenians from the Arab population.

This was the case during and after the failed 1925-27 Druze uprising, where small Armenian forces under French command were even used in the bloody suppression of the uprising, although it must be noted that Armenians played no larger role in the French colonial military in Syria than did soldiers recruited from Muslims from other French colonies or from local minorities such as the Alawites, Ismailis, or Assyrians.¹⁰⁷ But the colonial authorities subsequently revised their policies and decided instead to support elements within the majority Arab population. Parts of both of these colonial strategies were approved by Jeppe – in the case of the first strategy because the French were temporarily attentive to the needs of Armenians; in the case of the second strategy because the French now favoured a policy of dispersing Armenians from the cities to the countryside, which would benefit Jeppe’s colonization plans and overall ideology. But generally, Jeppe was critical of (elements of) both strategies, as neither strategy was in fact designed or suited to facilitate the prosperity and security of Armenians in Syria.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It would have been easy to identify and write an article on two Danes – travellers, writers, missionaries, diplomats, soldiers fighting for a colonial power – who in their writings and acts simply reproduced popular Orientalist beliefs, who unhesitatingly supported or participated in Western colonization of “the East.” They are not far between. I have instead chosen to write about two Danes whose acts and beliefs in these respects were more complex, not easy to put on a formula. On his travels, Benedictsen was seeking both insight and adventure. He was at the same time a serious, knowledgeable, and reflective researcher and a traveller looking for “authentic” experiences in the Orient; a compassionate humanist, cultural relativist, and cosmopolitan and a patriotic Dane, explicitly conscious of his own self as being different from, though not necessarily “better than,” “the peoples of the East.” He was a secularist with no fixed set of beliefs and a believer in spirituality, with a particular affinity for what he regarded as the core values of Christianity, but ever conscious of what he referred to as his own Jewish and heathen heritage.¹⁰⁸ A believer in, and a staunch critic of, “Western civilization”; an admirer of modern technological advances while seeking a simple life for himself. And, ironically, because of his Jewish heritage and what was described as his “odd” ways of

dressing, he was himself seen by many in his native Denmark as an outsider, as partly “Oriental,” although he was also widely respected.¹⁰⁹

Karen Jeppe was perhaps somewhat less complicated as a person. In Syria as well as in the Ottoman Empire, she saw her life and tasks as difficult, but not complicated, since the goal was clear: to work for the improvement of the life conditions of the Armenians. She had literally found her place, and her only major worries were her failing health and the constant pressure caused by her conviction that she could not allow herself to lose a single political battle.¹¹⁰ But still, seen from the perspective of whether or to what extent she can be seen as a typical Western proponent of Orientalist beliefs, matters are complicated. For instance, as a result mainly of the Armenian genocide, Jeppe did come to harbor racist beliefs toward Turks, and she believed that reconciliation between Turks and Armenians was impossible. At the same time she was combating racist beliefs toward another “Oriental” people, the Armenians, and her whole life she was working actively to promote peace, reconciliation, and prosperity for Muslims as well as Christian Armenians the Ottoman Empire and Syria.

As for the colonial issue, both Jeppe and Benedictsen were in fact in the business of colonization, but of the peaceful, negotiated, non-imperialist kind, i.e., the establishment of small rural colonies in Syria for surviving Armenians, and they were willing to work with the French and with local Bedouins to achieve that goal. Jeppe and Benedictsen would probably have worked with any person or regime that would allow them to continue their work among the Armenians. But there is no evidence that they identified themselves with or aided the French colonial project to any significant degree. Rather, the very reason that they both continued their work for and among the Armenians until their deaths was that they to varying degrees identified with this “Oriental” people, not with its imperial or colonial masters. So in this case, the obvious connections between, as well as shared prejudices of, Western missionaries and rescue workers on the one hand, and colonial authorities on the other hand, did not translate into ideological or practical collaboration with the aim of initiating or consolidating a colonial project. In a somewhat different context, it has been stated that “[i]t was hard to play a humanitarian and an imperialistic game at one and the same time, two horses that did not often race in the same direction.”¹¹¹ In general, Jeppe and Benedictsen tried to play the “humanitarian game” rather than the imperialist one.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper with the same title presented at *Nordic Perspectives on Colonialism*. Conference arranged by Netværk for Global Kulturhistorie (Network for Global Cultural History), University of Aarhus, in Höör, Sweden 11-12 January 2007.
- ² Eva Lous, "Karen Jeppe – Danmarks første u-landsarbejder", *Rotunden*, No. 19, October 2003. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are made by the present author.
- ³ As Jonas Kauffeldt, *Danes, Orientalism and the Modern Middle East: Perspectives from the Nordic Periphery*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Florida State University 2006 (on http://etd.lib.fsu.edu/theses/available/etd-07062006-120724/unrestricted/JK_Dissertation.pdf), p. 125 notes, the continuation of the DA-DOM cooperation in Urfa was in fact questioned by Benedictsén, as he disagreed sharply with DOM's decision to shift their focus from aid work to proselytizing among Muslims.
- ⁴ On the historical and organizational backgrounds for the Danish aid and missionary workers among the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Matthias Bjørnlund, "Before the Armenian Genocide: Danish Missionary and Rescue Operations in the Ottoman Empire, 1900-1914," *Haigazian Armenological Review*, Vol. 26, 2006, pp. 141-156. For a short introduction to Aage Meyer Benedictsén: Matthias Bjørnlund, "En Excentrisk Komet," *Goldberg: Magasin om jødisk kunst, kultur, religion, samfund*, October 2007, pp. 12-14.
- ⁵ A. P. Thornton, *Doctrines of Imperialism*, 1965, p. 170.
- ⁶ Quoted in Torben Christensen, *Kirkehistoriske Afhandlinger*, Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad 1981, p. 132.
- ⁷ See, e.g., Matthias Bjørnlund et al, "The Christian Churches and the Construction of a Genocidal Mentality in Rwanda," in Carol Rittner et al, eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?*, St. Paul, MN: Paragon House 2004, pp. 141-167.
- ⁸ See, e.g., Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*, HarperCollins 2003; Suzanne E. Moranian, "The Armenian Genocide and American Missionary Relief Efforts," in Jay Winter, ed., *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, Cambridge University Press 2003.
- ⁹ Christensen, pp. 161-62.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.
- ¹¹ Leon Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity: From the Beginning to Our Own Time*, New York: The Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. 1946, p. 267.
- ¹² See, e.g., Christensen, pp. 145-46.
- ¹³ Tine Elisabeth Larsen, *Anne Marie Petersen: A Danish Woman in South India. A Missionary Story 1909-1951*, Chennai: Gurukul/Lutheran Heritage Archives 2000. For a Danish critique of British colonial rule in India, see also Ellen Hørup, *Gandhis Indien*, Copenhagen: Hagerups Forlag 1931.
- ¹⁴ Kauffeldt, pp. 59-60.
- ¹⁵ See, of course, Edward Said's groundbreaking, but problematic, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books 1978. See also Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient*, London: Pandora Press 1988. While Kabbani almost exclusively uses writings of male, upper-class, Victorian, British travellers to support her thesis of Westerners in the "Orient" as,

- e.g., “[exiling the East] into an irretrievable state of ‘otherness’,” (p. 6), she uses this limited material to draw broad conclusions regarding the Orientalism of Europeans in general (e.g., pp. 88-89). For critiques/empirically based adjustments of (elements of) Said’s thesis: e.g., Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies*, Penguin Books 2007; Emily M. Weeks, “About-Face: Sir David Wilkie’s Portrait of ‘Mehemet Ali’,” in Paul & Janet Starkey, eds., *Interpreting the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East*, Ithaca Press 2001, pp. 13-14; Amy J. Johnson, “Orientalism and Gender: The Condition and Status of Women in Morocco,” *ibid.*, pp. 209-11; Nikki R. Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present*, Princeton University Press 2007, pp. 341-42; Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London & New York: Routledge 1995, pp. 159-66.
- ¹⁶ Matthias Bjørnlund, “‘When the Cannons Talk, the Diplomats Must be Silent’: A Danish Diplomat in Constantinople during the Armenian Genocide,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 2006, pp. 197-223. On the usefulness in general of Western sources to Ottoman history, Orientalist beliefs notwithstanding: e.g., Suraiya Faruqi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, Cambridge University Press 1999, pp. 110-43.
- ¹⁷ Kauffeldt, pp. 1-2.
- ¹⁸ See, e.g., discussion in Ian Buruma & Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism*, London: Atlantic Books 2005.
- ¹⁹ See, e.g., Johannes Poulsen, *Gennem de Fagre Riger*, Copenhagen: V. Pios Boghandel – Povl Branner 1917, p. 16: “These are the proud Arabs and Turks. These are the beautiful and savage Bedouins that we learned about in our childhood – all, all our conceptions of Arabia are foolish and false, everything is wrong, including our common pronunciation of every Arab name or word. Everything is ruin, yet not beautiful, proud ruins like Italy and Spain and their inhabitants. The ruins of Arabia and Egypt are ruins of dust and stones so soft that one can cut them easier than one can cut a meerschaum pipe, and in the same way the whole of the Mohammedan people is *one* big heap of ruins, so soft and crisp that it collapses like dust with the first touch.” (italics in original text).
- ²⁰ *Illustreret Tidende*, No. 41, 6 July 1916, p. 486.
- ²¹ See, e.g., Henry Ussing, *Evangeliets Sejrsgang ud over Jorden. En Historisk Oversigt over den Evangeliske Missions Udvikling*, Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad 1908 (2. ed.), pp. 323-25.
- ²² Elise Bockelund, *Høsten er Stor – KMA’s Historie Gennem 50 År*, Copenhagen: KMA 1950, pp. 27-28; Amalie Lange, *Et Blad af Armeniens Historie. Kvindelige Missions Arbejdere 1910-1920*, Copenhagen: KMA 1920, p. 10; Jensine Ørtz, *Fra Armenien – Optegnelser fra Malatia*, Kvindelige Missionsarbejdere No. 95, no year [1912?], pp.13-14; H. L. Larsen, *Faldet Blandt Røvere – Armenierne paa Apostelen Paulus’ Veje. En Orientrejse 1924*, Industrimissionen i Armenien: 1924, p. 9. For descriptions of similar missionary attitudes towards the Gregorian Church and other Christian churches of the Near East: e.g., Moranian, pp. 187-88; Balakian, pp. 25-27; Aram Keshisian, *The Christian Witness at the Crossroads in the Middle East*, Beirut: Middle East Council of Churches 1992, p. 11; Arpee, p. 289. As for the attitude towards Islam, it could, as stated above, be no less arrogant – see, e.g., V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Humankind – European Attitudes towards the Outside World in the Imperial Age*, Penguin 1972, pp. 144-45 – but it was sometimes recognized that such arrogance could be “unchristian” as

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- well as counterproductive: “The missionaries who work among the Mohammedans, they too do emphasize that it is necessary to not only have a thorough knowledge of Islam, but also to meet it with sympathy, and sympathy in this context means to ‘treat other religions as less perfect revelations’ [...]. [The aim] of the mission is not to destroy, but to build up...”: Lorenz Bergmann, *De Ikke-Kristne Religioner og den Kristne Mission*, “Nordisk Missionstidsskrift”, 4. og 5. Hefte, Aarhus: 1914, pp. 12-13, 28-30.
- ²³ Bockelund, p. 14.
- ²⁴ Moranian, p. 185.
- ²⁵ Competition, if not outright hostility, could also exist between Protestant missions of various denominations, although there was a large degree of cooperation and mutual respect. An example of direct competition is given by Danish missionary in Burma, H. J. Jensen. Jensen, though he was hospitalized in Rangoon and though he and his organization usually cooperated with local Church of England, Methodist, and Baptist missions, he still insisted on returning to the missionary field in Pobio out of fear that “his field” would be taken over by Baptists in his absence: N. Dalhoff, *En Kvindelig Missionær. Efter hendes egne Breve*, Copenhagen: Diakonissestiftelsens Depot 1893, p. 10. Arpee, p. 290, states that from the beginning these attempts at proselytizing among Muslims met resistance from Western diplomats, like from the British ambassador to the empire, Sir Henry Bulwer, in 1864.
- ²⁶ Quoted in Christian Siegumfeldt, *Østerlandsmissionen*, Vol. 1, “Missionens Grundlæggelse,” Copenhagen: Lohse 1923, p. 39.
- ²⁷ *World Missionary Conference: Report of Commission V: The Training of Teachers*, Edinburgh/London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, New York/Chicago/Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co. 1910, p. 231.
- ²⁸ See statement by Herbert Kelly, *ibid.*, pp. 240-41: “The missionary is bringing the message of Christianity to native life as a whole. He must understand that life, the factors of which it is made up, how the Gospel applies, and what the Gospel can give to the development of the possibilities or to supply the deficiencies in each. The missionaries lay stress, therefore, on the need of a very thorough, that is, of a University, education, because the two primary necessities – trained mental capacity to understand and wide outlook upon the varieties of life which need understanding – are given in a University as nowhere else.” And, *ibid.*, p. 280, J. N. Farquhar, General Secretary of YMCA in India and Ceylon: “Every Missionary ought to be compelled to study the country he is to labour in, especially its history, its people, and its religion, before he goes out. To attempt to influence a country without understanding it is surely one of the maddest possible dreams. Every Missionary comes to India with the pious intention of reading about its history and religion; but very few realise how absolutely indispensable for effective work full and reliable knowledge on these subjects is...”
- ²⁹ Quoted in Arpee, p. 309.
- ³⁰ See, e.g., Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*, Oxford University Press 2005, p. 117: “almost everyone posted to the Ottoman Empire expressed disdain for one or other of the ethnic groups with which they came into contact.” This was also the case within the empire, where many nationalist Turks “expressed disdain” not only for Armenians, Jews, and Greeks, but also for Arabs. As Ussama Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3, June 2002 (available on

- <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/107.3/ah0302000768.html>), states: “Members of the Muslim Ottoman Turkish elite—whose language began to be subject to a series of experimental reforms to modify the Arabic Ottoman script, whose architecture had grown increasingly Western in style, whose education was increasingly westernized over the course of the nineteenth century, and whose history according to Karpat was ‘Turkified’—represented themselves as nationally different from and superior to the Arabs whose historical value had past, and whose present status was subordinated to a putatively more vigorous Turkish nation.” I thank Ugur Ü. Üngör, *Dutch Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Amsterdam, for directing my attention to this article.
- ³¹ See Bjørnlund, *GSP*, pp. 201-2; Johannes Østrup, *Skiftende Horisonter – Skildringer og Iagttagelser fra et Ridt Gjennem Ørkenen og Lilleasien*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1894, p. 243; Stephen H. Astourian, “Modern Turkish Identity and the Armenian Genocide: From Prejudice to Racist Nationalism,” in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press 1998, pp. 28-31; Wolfgang Gust, “Die Verdrängung des Völkermords an den Armeniern – Ein Signal für die Shoah,” *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah/The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, Hans-Lukas Kieser & Domink J. Schaller, eds., Zürich: Kronos Verlag 2002, pp. 466-69; Hans-Lukas Kieser, “Dr. Mehmed Reshid (1873-1919): A Political Doctor,” *ibid.*, pp. 245-80; Hilmar Kaiser, *Imperialism, Racism, and Development Theories: The Construction of a Dominant Paradigm on Ottoman Armenians*, Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute 1998; Arpee, p. 309; Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “‘Down in Turkey, Far Away’: Human Rights, the Armenian Massacres, and Orientalism in Wilhelmine Germany,” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 79, March 2007, pp. 80-111.
- ³² Frantz von Jessen, *Mennesker Jeg Mødte*, Gyldendal 1909, p. 84.
- ³³ A. P. Hacopian, *Armenia and the War: An Armenian’s Point of View with an Appeal to Britain and the Coming Peace Conference. With a Preface by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Bryce, O.M.*, London, New York, Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton 1917, pp. 66-67, 94ff.
- ³⁴ *Karen Jeppe archive*, *Gylling Lokalhistoriske Arkiv* (hereafter *KJ archive*), letter from Karen Bjerre, Aleppo, to DA board member Ivara Nyholm, Ballerup, 8/3 1927.
- ³⁵ *Bavnen*, No. 25, 24/6 1926. See also article by Archdeacon H. Lützhøft in *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 1, No. 2, February 1921, p. 5.
- ³⁶ Dalhoff, p. 4. For an early positive appraisal of women missionaries, see *Foreningen til gudelige Smaaskrifters Udbredelse*, ed., *Gudelige Smaaskrifter*, Vol. 11, Copenhagen: 1868, pp. 269-296.
- ³⁷ Bjørnlund, “Before the Armenian Genocide”, pp. 145-46; KMA, ed., *KMA 1900-1975: Glimt fra K.M.A.s Arbejdsområder Gennem 75 år*, Copenhagen: KMA 1975, p. 2; *Rigsarkivet*, *Private Institutioner: Kvindelige Missions Arbejdere* (hereafter *KMA*), Arkivnr. 10.360, Pk. 40, *Protokol for Armenien. K.M.A. Komite for Armenien, Maj 1900-Dec. 1902*, Møde 11/6 1900; Møde 17/10 1900; Møde 11/4 1901; Bockelund, p. 44.
- ³⁸ Ohannes Kilicdagi, *The Bourgeois Transformation and Ottomanism Among Anatolian Armenians After the 1908 Revolution*, unpublished MA thesis, Bogazici University 2005, pp. 29-30. I thank Ugur Ü. Üngör, *Dutch Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Amsterdam, for directing my attention to this thesis. See also Pamela J. Young, “The Sanasarian Varzharan: Making a People into a Nation,” in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Karin/Erzerum*, Costa Mesa, Ca.: Mazda Publishers 2003, pp. 265-66.

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- ³⁹ This was generally the case for Protestant missions in the early part of the 20th century, and the tendency was for these organizations to become increasingly independent of national or state churches, and to depend more on developing international and interdenominational structures together with other organizations: Tormod Engelsen, "Who has Taken Care of the Missionary Task of the Church Through the Ages?", in *SMT (Swedish Missiological Themes/Svensk Missions Tidsskrift)*, Special Issue on the Missionary – Person and Ministry, Vol. 91, No. 4, 2003, pp. 496-99. The only involvement in the Ottoman Empire by an organization with close ties to the Danish state seems to have been by the Danish Red Cross, which in 1917 aided Russian prisoners of war in Turkey, and Turkish prisoners of war in Russia: *Hjælp ydet fra Danmark til de Krigshærgede Lande under og efter Verdenskrigen 1914-1918. Samlet og Udarbejdet af Dansk Røde Kors*, Copenhagen, no date, pp. 43-44. See also Barbara Zalewski, *Den Nærsynede Barmhjertighed*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Copenhagen 1996, p. 98.
- ⁴⁰ *KMA*, Arkivnr. 10.360, Pk. Nr. 42, "1912-1921". Referat af møde i KMAs Armenierkomite, 18/1 1912; Jacobsen-problemer med ABCFM: *KMA*, Arkivnr. 10.360, Pk. Nr. 42, "1912-1921". Referat af møde i KMAs Armenierkomite, 13/6 1912; *KMA*, Arkivnr. 10.360, Pk. Nr. 42, "1912-1921". Referat af møde i KMAs Armenierkomite, 5/10 1912.
- ⁴¹ On the relationship between the American government and American organizations, see Arman J. Kirakossian, ed., *The Armenian Massacres, 1894-1896: U.S. Media Testimony*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press 2004, pp. 34-35. On the same subject in a German context, see Hilmar Kaiser, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor – Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915-1917*, Princeton & London: Gomidas Institute 2002, pp. 2-3.
- ⁴² For an English language introduction to Grundtvigianism, and to its founder, N. F. S. Grundtvig, see A. M. Allchin, *N. F. S. Grundtvig - An Introduction to his Life and Work*, Aarhus University Press 1997.
- ⁴³ Jeppe would for instance explicitly criticize what she deemed to be the judgmental attitude of representatives of the other large Danish 19th century religious movement, the rather fundamentalist Inner Mission ("Indre Mission"). *KMA* missionaries like Maria Jacobsen and Jensine Ørtz generally came from an Inner Mission background: *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Nyholm, 21 July 1927.
- ⁴⁴ See, e.g., Ole Christiansen, *Vindue til Asien*, Copenhagen: Dansk Santalmissions Forlag 1992, pp. 25-29.
- ⁴⁵ Ingeborg Marie Sick, *Pigen fra Danmark*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1928, pp. 77-78.
- ⁴⁶ Sick, p. 70.
- ⁴⁷ Christensen, p. 145.
- ⁴⁸ See, e.g., the minutes from 20 February 1902 meeting in *KMA's* Armenia Committee, where Benedictsen participated: *KMA*, Arkivnr. 10.360, Pk. 40, *Protokol for Armenien. K.M.A. Komite for Armenien, Maj 1900-Dec. 1902, Møde 20/2 1902*.
- ⁴⁹ Maria Jacobsen, *Maria Jacobsen's Diary 1907-1919, Kharpuz – Turkey, Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate 1979*, e.g., pp. 176-77, 190, 228-32 in original Danish manuscript (a facsimile of the original, handwritten Danish-language diaries is included in this volume). For an English translation of the diaries, see Maria Jacobsen, *Diaries of a Danish Missionary – Harpoot, 1907-1919*, Princeton & London: Gomidas Institute

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- Books 2001 (ed. by Ara Sarafian, translated by Kirsten Vind). For other testimonies re. the genocide in the Harput region, see, e.g., Hansine Marcher, *Oplevelser Derovrefra*, KMA 1919; Henry H. Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia. Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-1917*, Ann Arbor: Gomidas Institute 1997; Ruth A. Parmalee, *A Pioneer in the Euphrates Valley*, Princeton: Gomidas Institute 2002; Verjiné Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide and Historical Memory*, Yerevan: Gitutiun 2004; Leslie A. Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, New Rochelle, New York: Aristide D. Caratzas 1989. For an analysis on secularism as the perceived enemy of Armenian and Jewish genocide survivors, see Maud Mandel, "Faith, Religious Practice, and Genocide: Armenians and Jews in France following World War I and II," in Omer Bartov & Phyllis Mack, eds., *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Berghahn Books 2001, e.g., p. 292.
- ⁵⁰ See, e.g., Matthias Bjørnlund, Matthias Bjørnlund, "'A Fate Worse than Dying': Sexual Violence during the Armenian Genocide," in Dagmar Herzog, ed., *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming. See also Kauffeldt, p. 128.
- ⁵¹ Jacobsen, 1979, pp. 235-37
- ⁵² Margaret MacMillan, Paris 1919: *Da Den Store Krig Sluttete* (orig. title: *Peacemakers*), Borgen 2004, e.g., pp. 146-47; Louis Auchincloss, *Woodrow Wilson*, Viking Penguin 2000, p. 87.
- ⁵³ Katri Meyer Benedictsen, ed., *Åge Meyer Benedictsen: De Undertrykte Nationers Tolk. En Mindebog*, [hereafter *Mindebog*] Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag/Arnold Busck, Vol. II, 1935, p. 77.
- ⁵⁴ *Mindebog*, Vol. II, 1935, p. 78. Italics in original Danish text. Incidentally, on this Indian journey, Benedictsen participated in talks with Indian nationalists and in nationalist public meetings, and was followed, interrogated, and harassed by British police and the local secret service (CID) as a perceived supporter of Indian nationalists. This whole experience – "a lesson in the bitterness of the British colonial regime" – in fact made him even more understanding of Indian nationalism: *ibid.*, pp. 78-84, 94-95.
- ⁵⁵ See, e.g., the following of Aage Meyer Benedictsen's many contributions to the booklet series *Grundrids ved Folkelig Universitetsundervisning: Russisk Jord og Russiske Bønder*, 1900; *Jøderne og Jødehadet*, 1906; *Indien og Europa*, 1909; *Irlands Folkekamp*, 1910; *Island i Nutiden*, 1910; *Stat og Nation*, 1915; *Mennesket og Menneskeracerne*, 1922; *Den sorte Race i Afrika og Amerika*, 1927.
- ⁵⁶ Quoted in Åge Meyer [Benedictsen], *Et Folk, der Vaagner – Kulturbilleder fra Litaven*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1895, pp. 1-2.
- ⁵⁷ *Mindebog*, Vol. II, 1935, pp. 9-10.
- ⁵⁸ Benedictsen, *Island...*, 1910.
- ⁵⁹ *Mindebog*, Vol. II, 1935, p. 134.
- ⁶⁰ *Deutschland, Armenien und die Türkei 1895-1915. Dokumente und Zeitschriften aus dem Dr. Johannes-Lepsius-Archiv an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle Wittenberg*, comp. by Hermann Goltz & Axel Meissner, Munich: K. G. Saur 1999, 15181.
- ⁶¹ *Mindebog*, Vol II, 1935, e.g., pp. 18-20.
- ⁶² Abdirahman A. Hussein, *Edward Said: Criticism and Society*, London & New York: Verso 2004, p. 226.

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- ⁶³ Kabbani, 1988, p. 138, states that, whether or not it was expressed in direct or in more subtle forms, “[t]he ‘ideology’ of Orientalism was inextricably tied to Western hegemony...,” but at least in the case of Benedictsen, such a tie was less than obvious.
- ⁶⁴ See particularly Aage Meyer Benedictsen, *Armenien – Et Folks Liv og Kamp Gennem to Aartusinder*, Copenhagen: De Danske Armeniervenner 1925.
- ⁶⁵ *Mindebog*, Vol. 1, 1934, p. 121. On the Armenian genocide in general, see, e.g., Bloxham, 2005; Benedictsen, 1925; Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers 2003; Wolfgang Gust, ed., *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern 1915/16: Dokumente aus dem Politischen Archiv des Deutschen Auswärtigen Amts*, zu Klampen 2005; Henry Morgenthau, *United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, 1913-1916*, compiled and introduced by Ara Sarafian, Princeton & London: Gomidas Institute 2004; Hans-Lukas Kieser & Dominik J. Schaller, eds., *Der Völkermord*; Taner Akcam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, New York: Metropolitan Books 2006; Taner Akcam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*, London & New York: Zed Books 2004; Ara Sarafian, compiler, *The United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, Princeton & London: Gomidas Institute 2004; Robert F. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1992; James Bryce & Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*, uncensored ed. by Ara Sarafian, Princeton, New Jersey: Gomidas Institute 2000; David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I*, Gorgias Press 2006.
- ⁶⁶ On this subject, see, e.g., Mark Levene, “Creating a Modern ‘Zone of Genocide’: The Impact of Nation- and State-Formation on Eastern Anatolia,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, No. 12, 1998, pp. 393-433.
- ⁶⁷ *Mindebog*, Vol. 1, 1934, p. 122.
- ⁶⁸ On Jeppe’s relative independence of DA and Benedictsen, see e.g. *KJ archive*, photocopy of letter from Benedictsen to Jeppe, 4 January 1925; letter from Jeppe to DA committee, 9 February 1925.
- ⁶⁹ On Jeppe’s experiences in Urfa, see Sick, pp. 89-132; Karl Meyer, *Armenien und die Schweiz – Geschichte der Schweizerischen Armenierhilfe*, Bern: Blaukreuz-Verlag 1974, pp. 94, 110; Ephraim K. Jernazian, *Judgment unto Truth: Witnessing the Armenian Genocide*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1990, pp. 64-67; Bedros Der Bedrossian, *Autobiography and Recollections*, Philadelphia 2005, passim.
- ⁷⁰ *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Nyholm, 22 November 1924.
- ⁷¹ *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Benedictsen, 15 February 1925.
- ⁷² Kauffeldt, p. 129.
- ⁷³ *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 6, Nos. 9-10, September-October 1926, p. 40.
- ⁷⁴ Kiernan, 1972, p. 126.
- ⁷⁵ Johannes Østrup, *Islam i det Nittende Aarhundrede*, Gyldendal 1923, p. 84. On Østrup’s views on the Armenian genocide, see *ibid.*, pp. 31-32; Bjørnlund, *GSP*, pp. 201-2.
- ⁷⁶ Christensen, p. 151. See also Alfred Nielsen, *Aftener i Damaskus*, Copenhagen 1925, p. 42.
- ⁷⁷ *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Benedictsen, 30 May 1922.

- ⁷⁸ *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 21, Nos. 11-12, November-December 1941, (letter originally written by Jeppe in December 1921) p. 23. In this letter Jeppe also mentioned the idea that had been raised of settling large numbers of Armenians in Brazil, although this desperate solution was only to be attempted if the Caucasus solution failed. On Benedictsen's views, see *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 5, Nos. 9-10, September-October 1925, p. 36. Members of the Danish Industrial Mission, who worked among Armenian refugees in Salonica, Greece, were equally desperate to find a viable long term solution to the refugee problem, as Armenians in Greece were under increasing pressure caused by the enormous influx of Greek refugees from Anatolia. Thus, IM suggested that Armenians should be allowed by the Greek government to settle in Macedonia, a part of Greece that was relatively thinly populated, not least because of the Greek-Turkish "population exchange": *Industrimissionens Blad*, Vol. 3, No. 11, February-March 1924, p. 158.
- ⁷⁹ Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars*, London: Hurst & Co. 2006, p. 232, n. 83.
- ⁸⁰ See, e.g., Bjørnlund, "A Fate..."; Matthias Bjørnlund, "Seksuel vold under det Armenske Folkedrab," January 2007, on www.historie-nu.dk; Ara Sarafian, "The Absorption of Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide," in Omer Bartov & Phyllis Mack, eds., *In God's Name*, pp. 209-21; *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 6, Nos. 7-8, July-August 1926, pp. 25-29; Donald E. Miller & Lorna Touryan Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, University of Los Angeles Press 1993; *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Benedictsen, 30 May 1922; Katharine Derderian, "Common Fate, Different Experience: Gender-Specific Aspects of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 1-25; Vahé Tachjian & Raymond H. Kévorkian, "Reconstructing the Nation with Women and Children Kidnapped During the Genocide," (translated from French by Marjorie R. Appel), *Ararat*, Vol. XLV, No. 185, Winter 2006, pp. 5-14.
- ⁸¹ See, e.g., *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to DA committee, 21 April 1923.
- ⁸² See, e.g., *The New Near East*, March 1926, p. 7.
- ⁸³ *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Nyholm, 22 November 1924.
- ⁸⁴ UM, 6. U. 300, "Folkenes Forbund, Bilag," "League of Nations. Commission for the Protection of Women and Children in the Near East. Second Meeting held at Geneva on Saturday, September 5th, 1925." "Annex. Report of the Commission," p. 3. Italics in original text.
- ⁸⁵ See, e.g., Karen Jeppe, *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 6, Nos. 7-8, July-August 1926, p. 28. Jeppe states here that out of the literally thousands of Armenian females she had encountered during or after the genocide, all but one had been sexually abused.
- ⁸⁶ See, e.g., Panossian, *passim*.
- ⁸⁷ Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian, *A Hair's Breadth From Death*, London & Reading: Taderon Press 2003, pp. 264-66.
- ⁸⁸ The girls had been given the Arab names Zekia and Fehine by their captors, but at the reception home they were immediately given Armenian names: *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 6, Nos. 11-12, November-December 1926, p. 44.
- ⁸⁹ Gerda Mundt, *Til Østerland – I Ord og Billeder*, Gyldendal 1929, p. 109; *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 6, Nos. 11-12, November-December 1926, pp. 44-46.
- ⁹⁰ Vahram L. Shemmassian, "The League of Nations and the Reclamation of Armenian Genocide Survivors," in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Looking Backward, Moving*

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- Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 2003, p. 85.
- ⁹¹ UM, 6. U. 300, "Folkenes Forbund, Bilag," "League of Nations. Commission for the Protection," p. 3.
- ⁹² Some 1400 of these usually brief records have been found recently by German historian Hilmar Kaiser and are being prepared for publication. Some of the testimonies by these survivors can also be found in various issues of *Armeniervennen*, in *KJ archive*, in publications like Sick, passim, etc. See also A. Hopf, *Unter Verfolgung und Trübsal: Missions- und Kulturbilder aus dem Orient*, Meiringen: Walter Loepthien Verlag [1928], pp. 153-58.
- ⁹³ Panossian, p. xi. On attempts by Armenian nationalists at creating national consciousness among Ottoman Armenians through teaching of language, history, and religion, see, e.g., Young, in Hovannisian, ed., pp. 261-92.
- ⁹⁴ Miller & Miller, pp. 121-22. On the vital US relief efforts among Armenians in the Middle East, see Balakian; Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Foreign Policy, 1810-1927*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1971.
- ⁹⁵ For instance, financial support for the establishment of the colonies was provided, not by the French authorities or to any large degree by the League of Nations, but by NGOs like the Swedish branch of the Christian, ecumenical *International Fellowship for Peace and Reconciliation*, an organization working for peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians. This organization is still active: see, e.g., www.swefor.org/default.asp. For a list of further contributors, see UM, 6. U. 300, "Folkenes Forbund, Bilag," "League of Nations. Commission for the Protection of Women and Children," p. 4.
- ⁹⁶ Kauffeldt, p. 135.
- ⁹⁷ *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Benedictsens, 30 May 1922.
- ⁹⁸ Kauffeldt, p. 141.
- ⁹⁹ *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Benedictsens, 6 October 1924.
- ¹⁰⁰ For interesting information on the French defeat in and evacuation of Cilicia provided by Armenian survivors, see testimonies by Digin Gulianian and Sahag Boghosian in KMA Archives, Arkivnr. 10.360, Pk. Nr. 15, "Armenier-Missionen, Diverse Skildringer vedr. Arminierne [sic] 1906-1927."
- ¹⁰¹ *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 4, Nos. 11-12, November-December 1924, pp. 49-50.
- ¹⁰² Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, London: Harper Perennial 2006 (rev. ed.), pp. 177-78.
- ¹⁰³ See e.g. Hanne Rimmen Nielsen, "Den Hvide Slavehandel. Bekæmpelse af Handel med Kvinder 1900-1950," *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2001, pp. 10-24.
- ¹⁰⁴ Henni Forchhammer, "Kolonierne i Syrien," *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 6, Nos. 7-8, July-August 1926, p. 31
- ¹⁰⁵ *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 6, Nos. 11-12, November-December 1926, p. 48.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Armeniervennen*, Vol. 5, Nos. 9-10, September-October 1925, p. 34.
- ¹⁰⁷ Keith D. Watenpugh, "Towards a New Category of Colonial Theory: Colonial Cooperation and the *Survivors' Bargain* – The Case of the Post-Genocide Armenian Community of Syria under French Mandate," in Nadine Méouchy & Peter Sluglett, eds., *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspective*, Leiden: Brill 2004, p. 608; Kauffeldt, p. 140.

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- ¹⁰⁸ *Mindebog*, Vol. II, 1935, p. 111. By “heathen,” Benedictsen most likely means his Icelandic, here understood as pre-Christian, “Viking,” “Norse,” background.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Mindebog*, Vol. I, 1934, pp. 139, 141-42, 146, 147.
- ¹¹⁰ *KJ archive*, letter from Jeppe to Nyholm, 2 October 1924; letter from Jeppe to Nyholm, 21 August 1927.
- ¹¹¹ Arpee, pp. 295-96.