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Ravished Armenia: Visual Media, Humanitarian Advocacy, and the Formation of Witnessing Publics

LESHU TORCHIN

New York University

ABSTRACT Discourses around human rights frequently treat media as transparent delivery systems for testimony and spectacles of atrocity. Such views detract from the degree to which media circuits shape human rights claims, in which aesthetic strategies transform a vast and distant horror into sympathetic cause, and systems of exhibition channel sentiment into action. This article's study of *Ravished Armenia* and the early film advocacy of Near East Relief in the Armenian case yields not only the contributions of media to claims-making process and humanitarian action but also Christian underpinnings of human rights movements. The evangelical legacy produced missions that provided the transnational infrastructure for sharing visual testimony and administering aid and offered an instrumental iconography of suffering that shaped an early "rights imaginary." [Keywords: film, activism, Armenian genocide]

In 1919, *Ravished Armenia* was released. This silent, eight-reel film was a commercial adaptation of Aurora Mardiganian's written account of the brutalities suffered by the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 and witnessed by Mardiganian herself. Oscar Apfel, a later associate of Cecil B. DeMille, directed the film while early film pioneer Colonel William Selig produced. The screenplay is attributed to Nora Waln, the publicity secretary of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR). And in a bid to both authenticity and sensationalism, the 17-year-old Mardiganian starred as herself. Just as with the publication of her testimony, the film was screened under the auspices of the ACASR—later to become Near East Relief (NER)—as part of a much larger fundraising campaign designed to generate both publicity and money for

the Armenian cause.¹ The New York City screenings ran for 12 days with afternoon and evening showings. The room sat approximately 1,000 and the admission cost was \$10 per ticket. A report from the *New York Times* quotes spokeswoman Mrs. Oliver Harriman:

The whole purpose of the picture is to acquaint America with ravished Armenia . . . to visualize conditions so that there will be no misunderstanding in the mind of any one about the terrible things which have transpired. It was deemed essential that the leaders, social and intellectual, should first learn the story, but later the general public shall be informed. It is proposed that before this campaign of information is complete, as many adults as possible shall know the story of Armenia, and the screen was selected as the medium because it reached the millions, where the printed word reaches the thousands. [*New York Times* 1919:4]

Visual media as a tool for activists is nothing new, and the NER's showing of *Ravished Armenia* represents an early exploration into the possibilities of film as a new medium for testimony. Film can visualize abject conditions or humanitarian mission work for a broad audience while stories and images marshal the sentiment of vast and dispersed spectators to generate empathy, encourage action, and, as in the case of NER, raise money for political and relief efforts.²

Ravished Armenia is a significant case, not for its technical excellence—indeed, it received little more than a few tepid reviews and its success beyond the NER fundraising campaign is uncertain—but as an example of the convergence of international humanitarian activism and entertainment media practices at the turn of the 20th century. This film and its context offer an opportunity to consider the practices of publicity and testimony in human rights advocacy. The Armenian crisis, a period extending

from the Hamidian Massacres of 1894–96 to the genocide and purges of 1915–23, occurred at a transitional point: Visual media technologies, specifically the graphic magazine and film, developed alongside a discourse of international human rights enforcement.³ These new forms of media enabled more immediate contact with suffering at a distance, presenting trauma for the viewers “at home.” In the face of tragedy, a sense of moral obligation to those overseas—whether legally, politically, or charitably—came into play.

Testimony and publicity provide useful frameworks for understanding the work that this film, and its skillful use of images, was intended to carry out. Testimony as a genre is presumed to hold socially and morally transformative properties. In this sense, it is not just a representation but also more akin to a “speech act” that occasions beneficial change in a process that involves both speaker and listener (Felman and Laub 1991). When they are successful, testimonials are not simply forms of witnessing. Instead, they produce a community conducive to listening and responding. In this way, the transformative and ethical possibilities of testimony can be seen in genres as diverse as Christian witnessing, the legal process, and human rights advocacy. Drawing on these legacies, Meg McLagan (in press) argues that the performative dimensions of testimony make “ethical claims on viewers and listeners and cultivate potential actors in the political arena.” As a form of political communication, speeches are public acts; they must access the political arena in order to hail a public sphere or audience, which McLagan (2003) has called “witnessing publics.” Although human rights advocacy has relied on testimony to make ethical claims on its audience from the time of the abolition movement, this performative tradition has expanded dynamically with the emergence of new media forms in the 20th century.

The exhibition of *Ravished Armenia* took place within a wider consciousness-raising campaign that was designed to transform feeling into immediate action. Early work in human rights and genocide has treated media as delivery systems for information, advancing the idea that the exposure of atrocities is enough to stimulate action. Recently, scholars such as Thomas Keenan (2001), Susan Moeller (1999), and Barbie Zelizer (1998) trouble this position in their examinations of the moral and political failures surrounding recent human rights crises, such as those in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Although Harriman’s introduction to the film points to this belief in the transparency of photographic images, the practices around the film indicated that for these images to work, aesthetic strategies invoking recognition and compassion needed to be incorporated into the exhibition of atrocities and that the practices of circulation and exhibition directly played into the film’s capacity to stimulate action. One key way of eliciting both compassion and outrage was to highlight the religious dimension of Turkish atrocities against Christians. Such presentations elicited empathy by connecting to a visual tradition of suffering in Christian iconography as they traveled through a sophisti-

cated transnational network responsive to and dependent on these modes of expression: missionary organizations.

Ravished Armenia was successful not only because visual images produced a moral obligation to act but because those images were part of a much larger global network of information and humanitarian concern constructed over time by Christian mission organizations, which had long been involved in forming a language of testimony and a global circuitry to move that testimony around the world.⁴ From early on, the Armenian Crisis was represented as the victimization of Christians by Muslim oppressors, and Christianity became a conceptual force in shaping these testimonial encounters. *Ravished Armenia*, and the wider campaign of which it was a part, reveals various economies—religious, cinematic, political, and legal—that come together in the formation of images geared to animate action. Study of the film reveals the centrality of visual media to the development of international humanitarian advocacy; however, much of the success may be attributed to the weaving of images into a larger political campaign. In the Armenian case, the campaign was waged in a Christian register.

The Armenian campaign drew on the fact that, in the 19th century, the fate of Christians at the hands of Ottoman Turks had long been a cause for identifying and opposing persecution (Lauren 2003). The shared religious identity reminded the Christian viewer-reader that the Armenians were also Christians and thus deserving of human compassion. A report in an 1896 *Harper’s Weekly* notes, “The massacres in Armenia very justly aroused a feeling of horror and indignation throughout Christendom, and excited a widespread desire to protect and aid the unfortunate victims.” Christianity evoked shared identities, recognition, and the expectation of compassion and action. To invoke Christianity was to produce the witnessing public that would respond to the imperiled Armenians. Furthermore, the Christian mission projects had assured a transnational Christian presence and a network for information exchange. Peter Balakian (2003) has argued that the Armenian case represents a significant milestone in the evolving history of human rights and that interest in ideas about human rights were intensified by the extensive use of Christian discursive networks.⁵

The tight link between Christian missions, political advocacy, and the Armenian crisis can be seen in the figure of James L. Barton, who left a position working for a missionary organization to become director of NER. Barton couched his advocacy directly in the language of social gospel. “The Armenians have no one to speak for them and it is without question a time when the voice of Christianity should be raised,” Barton wrote in a letter to rights activist Cleveland Amory (Barton 1930:4). Barton’s use of a “Christian voice” evokes both the speech act of testimony and a more political form of communication that “makes ethical claims and hails collectivities” (Barton 1930:4). Barton’s voice is intended to depict the terrible conditions of Armenians, but these conditions will be visualized within a Christian framework that informs aesthetic strategies and encounters

with the testimony. Local religious organizations supplied venues and audiences for testimony; missions abroad served as the origins of the reports of atrocities; U.S. and German missionaries stationed in the Ottoman Empire assisted victims; the U.S. State Department used the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions to launch an emergency drive for the collection of funds. In both rhetoric and structure, the relief effort around the Armenian crisis brought together an emerging human rights framework with an established mode of Christian organizing.

As this Christian network of information and humanitarian action developed, so too did the technologies of publicity that created new witnessing publics. A growing sense of obligation to respond to suffering at a distance intensified as visual technologies granted new immediacy to far away places. One of the most important forms at the turn of this century was the new graphic magazine. Images drawn from the editorial cartoons incorporated the act of witnessing and expressed concern over the issue of response. Figure 1, "Waiting the Signal?" depicts the Armenian case within a gladiatorial arena, in which the figure of Turkey stands above a prone Armenia, arm outstretched to the crowds; both await the thumbs up or down response from the audience, the global public. Figure 2 depicts Armenia as a fallen woman, savaged by a Turk—a caricature of a violent orient—while a weeping world garbed in military gear stands and looks on. The caption, "Tears, Idle Tears," suggests that sympathy alone ("idle tears") is not enough and action is necessary. Both cartoons invoke the act of viewing through witnessing and both imply a call for greater action. "Tears, Idle Tears" is particularly noteworthy for making the world a political spectator whose passivity indicates complicity.

In these media, the Armenian crisis had been staged for transnational audiences, eventually becoming a commonplace by the late 1920s. Pictorial magazines offered illustrated accounts of the traumas suffered. Books chronicling the massacres found a ready audience. Among the publications was an eyewitness account of the genocide, as told by Mardiganian, which appeared in serial form in *The New York American* (Variety 1919). A book version was published in the United States as *Ravished Armenia* and the United Kingdom as *Auction of Souls*. Although no numbers are available for the earlier printing, a reprint in 1934 boasted an alleged circulation of 360,000 copies (Slide 1997). Mardiganian, having endured the horrors of the Armenian genocide, arrived in the United States in 1917 at the age of 16. She was taken in by an Armenian American couple, who also aided her in her search for her brother by posting advertisements in newspapers. These advertisements were followed by newspaper interviews, which further publicized her story and eventually brought it to the attention of screenwriter Harvey Gates. Gates and his wife adopted Mardiganian and placed her in the charge of Nora Waln, publicity secretary of the ACASR–NER. With them she delivered a testimony for publication. This publication, in turn, was made into a film that chronicled massacres, deportations, and rape and fea-



WAITING THE SIGNAL?

—Punch (London), Oct. 17, 1896

FIGURE 1. Image courtesy of The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota.

tured Mardiganian as herself. Although producer William Selig held the rights to the film, the promotions boasted the film as "Produced for the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief." In 1919, a 21-city campaign of special screenings on behalf of ACASR was launched with ticket prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$10.00. These cities included Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Indianapolis (Variety 1919:49). Mardiganian toured with the film, appearing at screenings, dinners, and other fundraisers; when the engagements became too many for a single individual and likely far too much pressure for one girl, Mardiganian impersonators were used. Historian Anthony Slide makes a compelling case for Mardiganian's exploitation by these commercial practices; however, it is important to recognize that this is not irreconcilable with the advocacy goals of ACASR–NER. NER mobilized *Ravished Armenia* with the assumption that viewing these abject conditions would move audiences to contribute to the fundraising campaign.

At the center of this activity is the presumption of transparency: The film depicts the conditions experienced by Mardiganian. The presence of Aurora on screen and in the audience deepens the indexical resonance that advances the truth claims of the film. Nevertheless, sets of aesthetic and



TEARS, IDLE TEARS!

The Weeping World—"Oh!! This is aw-ful!! Ain't it?"

—*Ram's Horn* (Chicago), Sept., 1896

FIGURE 2. Image courtesy of The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota.

narrative strategies contribute to the film's meanings and shape an audience response. In the Armenian case, there were sign systems in place that facilitated the presentation of the suffering as cause; among such mobilizing aesthetics were images that capitalized on an Orientalist imaginary and long-standing Christian tradition of representing suffering. Earlier representational practices had established a template; *Ravished Armenia* drew on these iconic tropes that engage and stimulate this witnessing public while making legible (and palatable) a concept of distant suffering.

To do this, the mediation of the Armenian crisis drew heavily on established tropes of the savage Turk, sexually avaricious and cruel, ravishing helpless Christian women (see Figure 2). Cinema (and Col. Selig) had adopted the literary titillation of the Oriental harem and Turkish cruelty as early as 1909 in films such as *In the Sultan's Power*. *Ravished Armenia* evoked this tradition in its title and in its content. Shortly after the film begins, the Turkish Governor, Husein Pasha, seeks to bring Aurora into his harem. Later in the film, she and her sister are taken to a slave auction; although she escapes, scenes of slave markets continue throughout the film.⁶ Interspersed with tales of massacre are title cards informing the viewer of the "Unspeakable Turk," who was "steeped in murder, rape and pillage" (Apfel 1919:Reel One, Title 14). Although such images were designed to dehumanize the Turk and engage audience sympathy, they were clearly designed to titillate as well. The film's press kit promised such visions as "real harems," noting how "with other naked girls, pretty Aurora Mardiganian was sold for eighty-five cents" (Slide 1997:10). The press fixated on this aspect. The *New York Times*, notes Slide, wrote

of these harems and slave markets; the trade press noted "a sensational story of Turkish depravity" (1997:10).

These scenes of titillation underscore the commercial dimension of this film. The historian Gregory Topalian sees this as the commercial exploitation that undermined an "important issue" (Topalian 1998:77), but this risks missing how political advocacy can be carried out through sexual stimulation, not despite it. Sensation provides an excellent mode of publicity. Furthermore, these scenes were intercut with the stories of massacres and deportations. This structure suggests that a more identifiable and individually based narrative aided in conferring meaning onto the landscape of vast atrocity. These recognizable forms grounded the audience as they marshaled sentiment. Clearly the use of such tropes is fraught, and I do not endorse the racist and troubling depictions; rather, I seek to call attention to those images that readily hail an audience, thanks to long-standing histories and the titillation of the imagination. Human rights historian Paul Gordon Lauren notes that particularly effective in spurring public outcry and demands to protect humanity were the "pen-and-ink drawings in newspapers [that] provided visual images of rapacious Turkish troops burning homes, riding over dead bodies, and massacring children and women who were clearly wearing medallions of the Christian cross" (Lauren 2003:66).

Ravished Armenia illustrates the peculiar mix of sexual stimulation with persecution and martyrdom. In the second reel of the film, an Armenian man is violently enjoined to "swear the Moslem oath"; if so, his people would be saved. Instead, he responds, "There is but one God, and Jesus Christ, his son, is my savior." Although only the titles remain here, the implication is that the man is slaughtered for his testimony. Within this moment, the policy of extermination, tied to imperial and religious goals, is clearly reduced to martyrdom and a witnessing to Christ. This martyrdom is inscribed en masse later in the film in the crucifixion of naked women. The crosses are raised and a row fades into the horizon, suggesting the extent of the violence. What follows is a close-up of a woman gazing upward in mournful agony, a bird of prey hovering above her. These images draw on a tradition of representation, producing a recognizable form of suffering that merits outrage and compassion. Notably this sequence intersects with the titillation initially supplied by the harem fantasies, as it asserts not merely a crucifixion of women but their nudity as well.

These tropes not only lend a recognizable framework but a palatable one as well. Interviews with Mardiganian have revealed that these images derived from her account of a brutal impaling of women. As noted in Slide 1997, "The Turks didn't make their crosses like that. The Turks made little pointed crosses... and after raping them, they made them sit on the pointed wood" (1997:6). Given my own visceral resistance to imagining and sharing such horrific events, the impulse to turn to a more sanitized and familiar shape of suffering and pain makes sense. The Christian iconography of suffering supplies the necessary familiar and recognizable shapes of suffering that invoke the ready-made



RAISING THEIR MONUMENT

—The Chicago Herald

FIGURE 3. Image courtesy of The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota.

sentiment of a Christian audience. Indeed, given the familiarity and widespread usage of this iconography, one could see their function as transdenominational; Christian iconography has infiltrated the secular imaginary. The martyrdom imagery supplies a means of “political communication through which ethical claims are made and collectivities are hailed” (McLagan 2003). The Armenian massacres came to be visualized as mass martyrdom (see Figure 3).

The film draws heavily on the Christian claims invoking biblical and ritual histories that seek to produce a shared humanity for an audience addressed as if they were Christian. An opening title card informs the audience that Armenia is “the first nation in the world to adopt Christianity. Within this land was located the Garden of Eden... and here, on the summit of Mt. Ararat, the ark of Noah landed when the deluge subsided. Here beneath the shadows of Mt. Ararat, lies Armenia, the cradle of infant humanity, where dwelt four million peaceable and industrious souls.” Christianity and its loci function assert the personhood of the victims, work as a hailing mechanism, and even suggest the possibility of biblical affiliation as a form of land claim.

Audience response suggested the efficacy of these affecting images—that they would be decoded as encoded. Slide notes that Hanford C. Judson of *Moving Picture World*

wrote, “One would think the scenes in *Auction of Souls* had been pictured in Armenia at the time of the persecution of this Christian people. They are given the chance to declare for Mohammed, but are true to Christ, and from this comes their martyrdom, burnings, starvation, outrage beyond relief and torture beyond the power of the mind to realize” (1997:13). The *L.A. Evening Express* wrote: “Now the producers have broken with tradition and in stage setting, costume, and action have reproduced not a conventional Arabian nights slave market and harem scene, but they have taken as their models these places as they actually exist today” (Slide 1997:12–13). The National Board of Motion Pictures described the film as “a frank straightforward exposition of the sufferings of Armenia which makes a sincere and powerful appeal to every drop of red blood in America’s manhood and womanhood” (Slide 1997:11). Notably, these descriptions assert the truth of the images as well as their potential for appeal. Fears of anti-Turkish sentiment, addressed by Britain’s Foreign Office, equally suggest the capacity for appeal.⁷

But were these images in fact mobilizing? Although commercial and exploitative, the film was used by NER as part of a very successful campaign that raised upward of \$100 million between 1915 and 1930. Moreover, the film encouraged further use of film publicity in fundraising campaigns. However, it was not the images alone that produced this overwhelming response but also the circuits of transmission and contexts of exhibition that shaped the advocacy work of this film.

NER used multiple media venues, from pen and ink to performance as part of the fundraising campaign for the Armenian cause. Although *Ravished Armenia* was a commercial film that came to be used for this campaign, NER entered the field of visual publicity soon after, making the most of both the lifted censorship of the war years and the interest in the Near East. James Barton’s account of this publicity project, in his chapter “Letting the Public Know,” addresses the movement of newsreel companies into the Near East and the ways NER capitalized on their presence. Barton writes

The Committee, because of its contacts with the people and the officials, was able to give these photographers access to unusual material and the companies in turn graciously permitted their operators to take special pictures of the relief conditions and the children for exclusive use of the Committee. This mutual arrangement with the moving-picture producers was supplemented by a wealth of camera-pictures by the staff. [1930:390]

In effect, the Committee provided the circuits through which visual media would travel; they were the gatekeepers to the events and they would, in turn, receive “special pictures” for the use of NER.

These short films depicted the harrowing conditions of orphanages, refugee camps, and the work of the NER, and they concluded with an announcement of local campaigns for relief. They were distributed to theatrical and nontheatrical venues alike and played in schools, churches, and public gatherings, many of which supplied attendant venues for action, typically fundraising. For example, NER

launched "Golden Rule Sunday," an event in which families were asked to eat a simple orphanage meal and make a sacrificial gift equivalent to at least the cost of an average U.S. dinner. This event took a larger public form and soon local community organizations arranged Golden Rule meal events. These events would often take place in hotel banquet halls (donated) while "a simple orphanage menu" was served. Films and special guest speakers supplied a large attraction. "Often more than a thousand people would attend these simple meals at which moving pictures were shown and the work of the Near East Relief was presented by speakers from overseas" (Barton 1930:384). Although donations were likely solicited as a means of entry to the event, the films could draw publics and potentially reinforce the identification supplied by the performance of the meal itself. The very conditions of the event, as well as the titles that informed viewers of local campaigns, asserted a context of action; the compassion evoked was already mobilized and additional channels of action supplied.

The value of film as publicity and practical tool did not go unnoticed. Many films were produced during this time including *Alice in Hungerland*, *Seeing is Believing*, *One of these Little Ones*, *Stand By Them a Little Longer*, *A Great Achievement* or *Uncle America's Golden Rule*, and *What the Flag Saw* (Barton 1930:391). Although churches continued to supply an excellent action site, a ready audience, and strategies to channel the humanitarian impulse, NER also made use of theatrical venues. Short films that depicted the organization's work, the conditions they sought to alleviate, and a title directing the viewer to the local campaign initiative were used as fillers for the feature presentation. Celebrity was also mobilized as a mode of publicity. Jackie Coogan, a child actor, became the figurehead for "the Children's Crusade" and "visualized for the Near East the child interest of America" (Barton 1930:391). Audiences who sought out films with this popular child star would encounter these pleas for aid. And as with the Golden Rule Sunday, action could be built into the act of attendance. In one case, "a milk campaign was organized across the country by using the moving-picture houses where Jackie's pictures were being shown, to collect cans of condensed or evaporated milk. The supplement to the price of admission was a can of milk" (Barton 1930:391). Film offered an effective way of producing a witnessing public, as the medium was used to visualize both the abject conditions and the mission efforts. However, it was neither the aesthetics nor the perceptual experience of another's suffering alone that resulted in the efficacy of the fundraising campaign. A crucial part of the film-based campaigns appears to have been plans that incorporated context and provided direct action routes in tandem with the film presentations. In fact, such campaigns capitalized on the appeal of film as a form of mass entertainment as well as a mode of testimony.

Film and other visual media offer effective modes of mobilizing accessible tropes, both popular (sexual exploitation and Orientalist) and Christian, both of which enable performances of suffering and redemption, and of persecu-

tion and the assured humanity of the victim, all of which supplies a moral call to action for Christian publics. Although exploitative and problematic, particularly in the troubling maintenance of a Christian-based transnationalist narrative, the images alarmed audiences and resulted in if not action, the sentiment that action was demanded in the political and legal arenas. Furthermore, the network of circulation through these channels assured that an immediate form of response would accompany the call to action—that the emotional or sensational appeal could be translated into action. The church-based networks that supplied modes of information circulation and venues of exhibition and action contributed to the effective strategy of the film medium as a delivery system for testimony. The purpose here is not to celebrate a Christian success with the "revelation to action" model of human rights media discourse, but to note how Christian mission organizations formed the circuits and shapes of film testimony to produce an effective fundraising campaign and animated humanitarian advocacy on an international level.

NOTES

1. This transformation occurred later in 1919 on incorporation (Peterson 2004:51–52). The relationship between these two organizations is not fully explored in this article, but suffice to say that they do appear to be interrelated, with ACASR appearing as an earlier incarnation of NER. Elaine Tejirian (2000) offers further information on the relationships between early mission and relief organizations. For purposes of simplicity, the organization will be referred to as NER.

2. I am very grateful to the film historian Anthony Slide for providing the bulk of the historical information surrounding this film. His research yielded interviews with Mardiganian, documentation of response to the film, and, most importantly, a title list that supplies enormous insight into the entire structure of the film. This last element is particularly important given that, at this time, only a fragment of the film (a 15-minute reel) is available.

3. Although *Ravished Armenia* and subsequent films of NER take place after the 1915 genocide, this transitional period spans from the Armenian Massacres (the Hamidian massacres) of the 1890s, which were reported and visualized through graphic weekly magazines, to the official extermination policy that resulted in the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Although I do offer a (negligible) distinction between the Hamidian massacres and the later genocide, I nonetheless accept the massacres as genocide. This is a politically contentious issue; however, this article will not serve as a defense of this position.

4. Although it is tempting to dismiss the mission movement as a form of cultural imperialism, much like one could dismiss commercial media as incompatible with an activist cause, Christian missions have been associated with such early human rights movements as abolitionism.

5. This hailing of Christian sensibilities persisted, as the *Nation* (1885) chided Christian Europe for its distraction. The Christian aspect was even invoked by Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, a Jewish man. When Ambassador Morgenthau arrived in Constantinople to meet with the U.S. community and the Young Turks, Talaat Pasha queried his interest in the Armenian people, "You are a Jew; these people are Christians." Morgenthau responded, "You don't seem to realize that I am not here as a Jew, but as the American Ambassador. My country contains something more than 97,000,000 Christians and something less than 3,000,000 Jews. So in my ambassadorial capacity, I am 97 percent Christian . . . The United States will always resent the wholesale destruction of Christians in Turkey" (Morgenthau 1918:335).

6. The film no longer exists in its entirety. However, a title list is available within Anthony Slide's history of the film, enabling the narrative elements to be known.

7. Such concerns were legitimate. The *Moving Picture World* wrote, "The appalling sights created not only a feeling of hatred and detestation for the abominable Turks, but an unquenchable determination to relieve the suffering and despair of innocent Armenian and Syrian women and children" (1919:884).

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