

The Armenian Allegation of Genocide: FACTS

The issue: **Whether during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire genocide was perpetrated against Ottoman Armenian citizens in Eastern Anatolia.**

The Ottoman Empire ruled over all of Anatolia and significant parts of Europe, North Africa, the Caucasus and Middle East for over 700 years. Lands once Ottoman dominions today comprise more than 30 independent nations.

A century of ever-increasing conflict, beginning roughly in 1820 and culminating with the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, characterized the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The imperiled empire contracted against an onslaught of external invaders and internal nationalist independence movements. In this context must the tragic experience of the Ottoman Armenians of Eastern Anatolia be understood. For during these waning days of the Ottoman Empire did millions die Muslim, Jew and Christian alike.

Yet Armenian Americans have attempted to extricate and isolate their history from the complex circumstances in which their ancestors were embroiled. In so doing, they describe a world populated only by white-hatted heroes and black-hatted villains. Infusing history with myth, Armenian Americans vilify the Republic of Turkey, Turkish Americans, and ethnic Turks worldwide. Bent on this prosecution, Armenian Americans choose their evidence carefully, omitting facts that tend to exonerate those whom they presume guilty, ignoring important events and verifiable accounts, and sometimes relying on dubious or prejudiced sources and even falsified documents.

Any attempt to challenge the credibility of witnesses, or the authenticity of documents is either wholly squelched or met with accusations of genocide denial. Moreover, attempts to expose the suffering and needless death of millions of innocent non-Christians enmeshed in the same events as the Anatolian Armenians

are greeted with sneers, as if to say that some lives are inherently more valuable than others and that one faith is more deserving than another. The lack of real debate ensures that any consideration of what genuinely occurred nearly a century ago in Eastern Anatolia will utterly fail as a search for the truth.

Ultimately, whether to blindly accept the Armenian American portrayal is an issue of fundamental fairness and the most cherished of American rights - free speech. Simply put, in America every person has the opportunity to tell his or her story. However, Armenian Americans seek to deny this very right to others by branding anyone who disagrees with their portrayal a "genocide denier." The complete story of the vast suffering of this period has not yet been written. When that story is told, the following facts must not be forgotten.

FACT 1: Demographic studies prove that prior to World War I fewer than 1.5 million Armenians lived in the entire Ottoman Empire. Thus, allegations that more than 1.5 million Armenians from eastern Anatolia died must be false.

Figures reporting the pre-World War I Armenian population vary widely, with Armenian sources claiming far more than others. British, French and Ottoman sources give total figures of 1.05-1.50 million. Only certain Armenian sources claim a pre-war population larger than 1.50 million. Comparing these to post-war figures yields a rough estimate of losses. Boghos Nubar, head of the Armenian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1920, noted that significant numbers survived the war. He declared that after the war 280,000 Armenians remained in the Anatolian portion of the occupied Ottoman Empire while 700,000 Armenians had emigrated to other countries. Historian and demographer, Dr. Justin McCarthy of the University of Louisville, calculates the actual losses as slightly less than 600,000. This figure agrees with those provided by British historian Arnold Toynbee, French missionary, Monseigneur Touchet, and others.

FACT 2: Over 2.5 million Muslims died during the same period from similar causes.

Armenians suffered a high mortality. But one must likewise consider the number of non-Christian dead. The statistics tell us that more than 2.5 million Anatolian Muslims also perished. Thus, the years 1912-1922 constitute a horrible period for humanity, not just for Armenians. Documents of the time describe intercommunal violence, forced migration of all ethnic groups, disease, and famine as causes of death.

FACT 3: Armenian American evidence of genocide is derived from dubious and prejudicial sources.

Armenian Americans purport that the wartime propaganda of the enemies of the Ottoman Empire constitutes objective evidence. Oft-quoted Ambassador Henry Morgenthau stated in correspondence with President Wilson that he intended to uncover or manufacture news that would goad the U.S. into joining the war, and thus he sought to malign the Ottoman Empire, an enemy of the Triple Entente. Moreover, Morgenthau relied on politically motivated Armenians; his primary aid, translator and confidant was Arshag Schmavonian, his secretary was Hagop Andonian. Morgenthau professed that the Turks were an inferior race. Thus, his accounts can hardly be considered objective.

Compare the wartime writings of Morgenthau and the oft-cited J.G. Harbord to the post-war writings of Admiral Mark L. Bristol, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey 1920-1926. In a March 28, 1921 letter he wrote, "[R]eports are being freely circulated in the [U.S.] that the Turks massacred thousands of Armenians in the Caucasus. Such reports are repeated so many times it makes my blood boil. The Near East Relief have the reports from Yarrow and our own American people which show absolutely that such Armenian reports are absolutely false. The circulation of such false reports in the United States, without refutation, is an outrage and is certainly doing the Armenians more harm than good.... Why not tell the truth about the Armenians in every way?"

FACT 4: The Armenian deaths do not constitute genocide.

A. Boghos Nubar addressed a letter to the Times of London on January 30, 1919 confirming that the Armenians were indeed belligerents in World War I. He stated with pride, "In the Caucasus, without mentioning the 150,000 Armenians in the Russian armies, about 50,000 Armenian

volunteers under Andranik, Mazarbekoff, and others not only fought for four years for the cause of the Entente, but after the breakdown of Russia they were the only forces in the Caucasus to resist the advance of the Turks...."

Between 1893 and 1915 Ottoman Armenians in eastern Anatolia rebelled against their government -the Ottoman government -- and joined Armenian revolutionary groups, such as the notorious Dashnaks and Hunchaks. They spearheaded a massive Russian invasion of Eastern Anatolia. On November 5, 1914, the President of the Armenian National Bureau in Tblisi declared to Czar Nicholas II, "From all countries Armenians are hurrying to enter the ranks for the glorious Russian Army, with their blood to serve the victory of Russian arms." In the service of the Russians, traitorous Armenians massacred over 60,000 Muslims in the city of Van alone.

B. The allegation of genocide is illogical. In the words of eminent historian Bernard Lewis, speaking to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz on January 23, 1998, "The Armenians want to benefit from both worlds. On the one hand, they speak with pride of their struggle against Ottoman despotism, while on the other hand they compare their tragedy to the Jewish Holocaust. I do not accept this. I do not say that the Armenians did not suffer terribly. But I find enough cause for me to contain their attempts to use the Armenian massacres to diminish the worth of the Jewish Holocaust and to relate to it instead as an ethnic dispute." (translation)

C. None of the Ottoman orders commanding the relocation of Armenians, which have been reviewed by historians to date, orders killings. To the contrary, they order Ottoman officials to protect relocated Armenians. Unfortunately, where Ottoman control was weak, Armenian relocatees suffered most. The stories of the time give examples of columns of hundreds of Armenians guarded by as few as two Ottoman gendarmes. When local Muslims attacked the columns, Armenians were robbed and killed. These Muslims had themselves suffered greatly at the hands of Armenians and Russians. Conversely, where Ottoman control was strong, Armenians went unharmed. In Istanbul and other major Western Anatolian cities, large populations of Armenians remained throughout the war, their churches open.

D. The term "genocide" did not exist prior to 1944. It was later defined quite specifically by the 1948 U.N. Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide. The standard of proof in establishing the crime of genocide is formidable given the severity of the crime, the opportunity for overlap with other crimes, and the stigma of being charged with or found guilty of the crime. While presenting the Convention for ratification, the Secretary General of the U.N. emphasized that genocide is a crime of "specific intent," requiring conclusive proof that members of a group were targeted simply because they were members of that group. The Secretary General further cautioned that those merely sharing political aims are not protected by the convention.

Under this standard of proof, the Armenian American claim of genocide fails. First, no direct evidence has been discovered demonstrating that any Ottoman official sought the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians as such. Second, Ottoman Armenian revolutionaries confessedly waged war against their own government. Under these circumstances, it was the Ottoman Armenians' violent political alliance with the Russian forces, not their ethnic or religious identity, which rendered them subject to the relocation.

FACT 5: The British convened the Malta Tribunal to try Ottoman officials for crimes against Armenians. All of the accused were acquitted.

In 1919 The British High Commission in Istanbul, utilizing Armenian informants, arrested 144 high Ottoman officials and deported them to the island of Malta for trial on charges of harming Armenians. While the deportees were interned in Malta, the British appointed an Armenian scholar, Mr. Haig Khazarian, to conduct a thorough examination of the Ottoman, British, and U.S. archives to substantiate the charges. Though granted complete access to all records, Khazarian's corps of investigators discovered an utter lack of evidence demonstrating that the Ottoman officials either sanctioned or encouraged killings of Armenians. The British Procurator General exonerated and released all 144 detainees - - after two years and four months of detention without trial. No compensation was ever paid to the detainees.

FACT 6: Despite the acquittals by the Malta Tribunal, Armenian terrorists have engaged in a vigilante war that continues today.

In 1921, a secret Armenian network, named Nemesis, took the law into its own hands and hunted down and assassinated several former Ottoman Ministers, among them Talat Pasha and Jemal Pasha. Following in Nemesis' footsteps, during the 1970's and 1980's the Armenian terrorist groups ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) and JCAG (Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide) committed over 230 armed attacks, killing 71 innocent people, including 31 Turkish diplomats, and seriously wounding over 520 people in a campaign of blood revenge.

FACT 7: The Holocaust bears no meaningful relation to the Ottoman Armenian experience.

1. Jews neither demanded the dismemberment of the nations in which they had lived nor did they kill their fellow citizens. By contrast, Ottoman Armenians openly agitated for a separate state in lands in which they were numerically inferior. With determination they committed mass treason, and took up arms against their government. They also massacred local Muslim and Jewish civilians.
2. The guilt of the perpetrators of the Holocaust was proven at Nuremberg. By contrast, those alleged to have been responsible for the maladministration of the relocation policies were exonerated at Malta by the World War I victors.
3. Hitler did not refer to the Armenians in plotting the Final Solution; the infamous quote is fraudulent. For this reason it was rejected as evidence by the Nuremberg tribunal.
4. Armenians collaborated with the Nazis, forming the 812th Battalion of the [Nazi] Wehrmacht, and its successor, the Armenian legion. Armenians published Anti-Jewish, pro-Nazi propaganda in the Armenian-language Hairenik daily and the Armenian weekly journal.

The depth and volume of scholarship on the Holocaust is tremendous. By contrast, much about the late Ottoman Empire has yet to be learned and many conclusions have yet to be drawn.