

# White Paper: The Armenian Issue

## I. Introduction

Statesmen in western countries are often besieged by representatives of Armenian groups representing huge voting blocs demanding resolutions or "Denier" legislation -with penalties- in connection with events that occurred in Eastern Anatolia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As they would with any other constituents, legislators typically feel obliged to hear these people out and somewhat obligated to represent their interests.

The historical events in question are extremely complex. Not only did they occur in a Moslem culture which is seldom studied to the requisite level of detail by typical students in Western Colleges - or even by future History Teachers - but the particular events in question occurred at the center of an extremely complex web of relationships between nations of extremely diverse cultural backgrounds.

Legislators approached with these demands:

- Are not elected to legislate on the true nature of extremely complex events that occurred over a century ago.
- Are not at all equipped to evaluate their veracity and have increasingly been turning to a group of "genocide scholars" which suddenly appeared in roughly the same time frame at which the Armenians started voicing their demands loudly (in the 60's).

American citizens of Turkish Ancestry report many incidents of ethnic prejudice in their daily lives as a result of these campaigns but they are -almost everywhere- vastly outnumbered as constituents by the Armenians. The same situation is true for persons of Turkish ancestry residing in other western countries.

The Armenian Groups have been widely successful in representing their ideological opponents as "Genocide Deniers" comparing them to David Irving and others who go so far as to claim that there are "unanswered questions about the Nazi Gas Chambers". This slander has been so successful that representatives from the Turkish side are typically either not allowed to speak their case before critical decisions are made, or when given the opportunity to speak, it is only in a poisoned, prejudicial atmosphere.

Due process, freedom of speech, presuming one innocent until proven guilty, assessing the credibility of evidence and the right to a defense are the foremost values of democracy and all civilized jurisprudence. Armenian genocide proponents, time and again are given free rein to convince an unknowing public that Turkey and Turks are not entitled to these most basic underlying rights and values of all civilized societies.

The continuing efforts by the Armenian Propagandists create many problems in international relations and in the lives of new generation of Turks in different countries who face accusations

about their ancestors who report many incidents of ethnic prejudice in their daily lives. The continuous accusations of an unacknowledged genocide, and of a deliberate cover-up results in a pervasive atmosphere of distrust and prejudice against Turks and the unfounded allegations do tremendous damage to Turkey's image in the West.

The purpose of this White Paper is to present the facts: incidents leading to, the cause for and the aftermath of the decision to relocate Armenians living in eastern Anatolia during WWI, and to explain why that decision did not amount to "genocide".

## II. Background

### **Complicity of the movement with Organized Crime**

**1.1** The movement for recognition of a genocide label has not been a peaceful movement. Although many of the participants in the movement are law-abiding citizens, the movement in general gave its silent assent and financial support to a series of terrorist acts perpetrated against Turkish Civil Servants in the period spanning to 1973-1991. A total of 110 acts of terror were carried out by Armenian terrorists in 38 cities of 21 countries. 39 of these were armed attacks, 70 of them bomb attacks and one was an occupation. 42 Turkish diplomats and 4 foreign nationals were assassinated in these attacks, while 15 Turks and 66 foreign nationals were wounded. These acts were not openly condemned by the movement; it raised funds for legal defense of some of the perpetrators and openly treated others as heroes. An atmosphere of confusion resulting from the profuse Anti-Turkish Government propaganda they generated at the time afforded them some level of face-saving and bought them much needed time and cover and enabled them to spread intimidation and terror against anyone who might dare oppose them -all in an era when the West's approach to terrorism was characterized by that naïveté of the pre-2001 World.

**1.2** In 1977, the home of UCLA History Professor Stanford Shaw -who had taken the position after studying the Turkish Archives that there was no directly intended genocidal attempt on the Armenians- was bombed by Armenian Extremists.

### **The Genocide 'Scholar' factor:**

**2.1** The rise of the Genocide "Scholar" movement coincided roughly with virulent rise of Armenian Diaspora demands in the West. The movement came into being largely through the efforts of individuals rather than through a combined effort by established academic institutions. Moreover, unlike conventional transactions in established academic institutions, the transactions of the genocide "scholars" are conducted behind closed doors; individuals who disagree with their thesis report that they are made to know that they are not welcome. Their process is not transparent and they do not uniformly enforce recognized standards of academic rigor

**2.2** The movement's habit of attacking the integrity and character of their ideological opponents - on the Armenian issue- as "Genocide Deniers" is highly irregular in the academic community which normally appeals to documentation and (objective) evidence rather than personal attacks on the integrity of their opponents. Even in the case of the true deniers of the Nazi Holocaust, such individuals are easily dispatched by appealing to logical proofs and documentary evidence rather than by propagandistic accusations against their character. Furthermore their castigation of

their ideological opponents as "Genocide Deniers" amounts to a condemnation of practically an entire ethnic group since the overwhelming majority of Turks feel very strongly that the events in question cannot rightly be labeled "genocide". To date the "Genocide Scholar" movement has attempted to avoid being stigmatized as racist by pursuing a two-pronged strategy:

- All rhetoric is directed at the Turkish Government arguing that it is not the Turkish People but the Turkish Government that is guilty of "Genocide Denial". Care is taken to represent the Turkish People as a race brainwashed by their government and thus somewhat innocent of the crime of "Genocide Denial". By this tactic, the Armenian lobby and their 'scholar'-allies attempt to avoid the appearance of stigmatizing an entire race as "Genocide Deniers" while, in reality, they are doing exactly that.
- Psychologist and leading spokesman for the movement, Israel Charny, has formulated an elaborate theory of "Genocide Denial" which allows for the existence of what he terms "innocent deniers." According to this theory, huge groups of people can fall under the heading of "innocent deniers" who, he assures us, "may not really be aware of the genocide they are helping to deny," and while somewhat innocent are yet "Genocide Deniers" nevertheless. Clearly, by virtue of this theory Charny would have us exempt him from the stigma associated with pejorative condemnation of an entire ethnic group (i.e. almost all people of Turkish Ancestry both in Turkey and abroad ) and escape the epithet of "Racist". The last time we saw people talk about an entire race like this was during World War II, when the Nazis argued that although some Jews appeared to be good, and tried to be good, they could not help themselves from being evil nonetheless. After all, the Nazis argued, it was in their blood to do evil.

**2.3** The movement's response to the Statement of the 69 Academicians published in several leading newspapers is most telling of their modus operandi. In 1985 a large paid advertisement appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post and Washington Times, signed by 69 Americans specializing in Turkish, Ottoman and Middle Eastern Studies objecting to the use of the "genocide" label in House Joint Resolution then before the U.S. Congress. Instead of openly debating the issue, the genocide 'scholar' movement immediately embarked on an effort to discredit these academics on various grounds, insinuating that some of them may have been corrupted by having received research grants from the Turkish Government, etc. The response is conspicuous for the absence of any serious scholarly debate about the issues and concerns raised by these Academicians in the paid Advertisement; instead it consists primarily of insinuated personal attacks on the professional and academic integrity of the signatories who, like all ideological opponents of the movement - are collectively slandered as "Genocide Deniers". All of this constitutes a serious departure from recognized standards of academic integrity; to immediately attack and denigrate ideological opponents before speaking to the substance of the issue - especially in consideration of the credentials of the individuals in question - should place a very serious onus on the accusers. This constant pattern of relentless personal attacks on the integrity and professional qualifications of their ideological opponents followed by declaration of ideological/rhetorical victory when the slander campaign succeeds cannot be tolerated any longer.

## **Who are the Armenians?**

**3.1** The Armenians are a Christian People whose history goes back as far as the earliest centuries of Christianity. Of all the ancient patriarchates of Christianity, the Armenians have the distinction of being the only Patriarchate to have developed and evolved outside of the ancient Roman Empire. All the other ancient patriarchates, the Alexandrian, the Roman, the Greek, the Jerusalem and the Syrian, evolved and flourished -until the rise of the Arab Empire- within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. It is worth noting that the adoption of Christianity as the state religion under Constantine in 325 CE was preceded by a similar event -devoid of any political or social connections- in Armenia, where the monarch, Triadates, had converted just two decades previously effectively bringing with him practically the entire population of the country. Though the Armenians from time to time were tributary to the Roman Empire, there was no prolonged period in the pre-Arab era during which they were full subjects of the Roman Empire. Thus, the political forces and social climate which sometimes influenced the development of church doctrine were different in the Armenian church. Armenian bishops were present, however at most major Church councils as far back as the Nicene, and participated with their peers in the deliberations. The Great Church Controversies of the 5th century resulted in the Armenians permanently rejecting Ecclesiastical control from either Rome or Constantinople. Though Christians, the Armenians remained in many ways separated from the West for over a thousand years, well beyond the middle ages. They were a protected minority when the Ottoman Empire was at its height and Europe was trembling at the advance of the Ottoman Armies. As the Ottoman Empire began to decline in the 18th-19th centuries however, and the "Great Powers" of Europe and "Holy Russia" foresaw the impending collapse of the "Sick man", the Armenians were re-discovered by the Christian West not only as long-lost fellow Christians but as potential contacts in a territory which the principle of the "balance of power" dictated should be divided equitably among the existing powers in case of collapse and dismemberment. This re-discovery with its attendant mixed motives was to have unfortunate consequences for the Armenians when the hour of final collapse came in the War we now call the "Great War".

These newly re-discovered Christians were viewed not only as potential future allies in connection with territorial ambitions but also as potential proselytes. Protestant missionaries were sent in to win over, wherever possible, new converts from the long-separated Armenian fold to the doctrines of the Protestant Reformers that had so changed the texture of Western Christianity in the interval of separation. These were soon followed by Roman Catholic Missionaries - all of whose efforts were to be backed by a conspicuously high level of support from their respective governments. But though the Armenians were very accepting of new western ideologies -particularly nationalism - the assiduous efforts of the missionaries did not result in nearly as many conversions as they had hoped for; most Armenians remained attached to the "Orthodox Armenian" Church. In the 19th century there were nearly 2,000 foreign religious missions in Anatolia hailing from the United states, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, etc.

Although they established educational institutions, they involved themselves in the lives of the Armenians and had the effect of separating them from the Turks. Documentary evidence shows that the Missionary Schools ultimately had a role in the Armenian revolutionary activity.

### III. The Problems and Issues

The Provocation: The Armenian insistence on the Genocide label generally ignores or diminishes the very serious provocation in the hour of Peril. Unlike the American Experience in WWII, in which there were no civilian casualties, Armenian Revolutionary Activity in the years leading up to 1915 involved many instances of brutal killings of Non-Armenian Moslem Turkish civilians. Furthermore the Armenian Military leaders, emboldened by the support they were receiving from the Western Powers and Russia, were even reckless enough to inform the Turks that they would not side with them in the impending war but would instead side with the enemy (Imperial Russia). The Armenian insistence on the "Genocide" label ignores the seriousness of this activity, the great loss of (Moslem Turkish) life and the ramifications of colluding with an extremely powerful enemy in the hour of great danger.

The word "genocide": In the words of one recent author, this word "evokes implicit comparisons with the Nazi past" and this imagery which the word carries in popular usage is inescapable when decisions are being made by civic institutions on the matter. In fact Armenians lived peacefully for centuries with Turks in an atmosphere directly opposite to that in which European Jews lived for centuries. This is precisely what makes the accusation of 'genocide' - when originating from the West toward Turks - so insulting and intolerable. The problem started when revolutionary elements among the Armenians - encouraged by Christian powers with territorial ambitions in the collapsing Ottoman Empire - embarked on a path that threw the entire region into turmoil sparking a conflict that quickly grew out of control, gravely endangering the vast majority of the Armenian Population, precipitating the Great Armenian Tragedy of 1915. These Armenian revolutionaries killed tens of thousands of innocent Turkish Muslims in their attempt to create a nation-state of their own. Their collusion with the invading Russian Armies resulted Turkish deaths numbering in the hundreds of thousands. These massacres of Muslim Turks, many of which took place well before the Ottoman government decided to relocate a large part of its Armenian citizens, amounted to ethnic cleansing. Since Jews did no such thing before the holocaust started, it is utterly dishonest to directly or indirectly compare the Holocaust to the Armenian Tragedy of 1915.

Intolerance and hatred: The allegations of the Armenians, and their reckless campaign against Turkey, have fostered in the West an atmosphere of hatred toward present-day Turks. Turks often feel discriminated against and they often feel unwanted. They are vastly outnumbered, made the objects of slander and calumny, and are loath to defend themselves against charges which are so manifestly unjust and falsified. It is for this reason that they have been reluctant and slow to respond and have only recently started to speak out. All of us, whether Americans or Europeans, must refuse to allow this manifest injustice to persist on our soil. We in the West have determined to take a stand against bigotry and hatred in all its forms. It is on our soil and in our legislatures that this hate campaign has been allowed to flourish. If we fail to act we cannot

escape the onus of complicity in these unquenched hatreds - imported, like an invasive non-native species, from foreign lands.

History becomes political: Because Turks are never heard, the debate about what happened before, during and after World War I is not much of a debate in the West anymore. Most people simply assume that Armenians were victims of genocide. To Armenians this is probably not a problem, but the reality of the matter is that the historians -with the exception of a few specialists - are less sure about what happened than politicians. Politicians, under pressure from powerful constituencies, propose bills that 'recognize' the Armenian 'genocide' while individuals who have studied this subject carefully and objectively are not able to share a collective conclusion. Some history professors say that the Tragedy constitutes genocide, but many others do not<sup>1</sup>. Normally history would be left to historians, but nowadays history is turned into a political tool and the fear of a slander campaign has the effect of bullying historians into silence. As a result, the truth - and history itself - suffers.

#### IV. Conclusion: call for action

Clearly, the decision to relocate the Armenians was undertaken in the hour of extreme danger, desperation and chaos bordering on anarchy. No court has endorsed a 'genocide' label for the 1915 events and when the historical evidence is examined, it is clear that Armenian Revolutionary activity originated decades before the 1915 relocation and stemmed from a desire to 'take back' lands which Armenians considered to be 'their own' and that Armenians were but a small minority on those lands.

When all the evidence is examined, an impartial observer must admit that the present-day movement for recognition of a "genocide" label for the Armenian Tragedy is not at all the humanitarian movement that its promoters would have us believe it to be. Instead, it is not only a deliberate distortion of historical facts but has as its malignant fruits ethnic hatred, terrorism and murder, defamation and intimidation of historians, suppression of true scholarship, the politicization of history and disruption of legitimate political processes in Western Countries. We call upon all recipients of this document to take all steps in their power to ensure that no further support be given to such a clearly harmful and deceitful movement.

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<sup>1</sup> See addendum for list of some of the scholars who believe that, although what happened was terrible, it most certainly does not constitute genocide