

EDITOR'S NOTE

Robert Frost, the American poet, wrote in one of his poems, that two roads diverged in a wood, and that he “took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference”. The chapters in this collective volume provide the reader with information, documents and arguments, less utilised but nevertheless that make all the difference in the treatment of Armenian-Turkish relations, especially in the year 1915. A group of academics and other interested researchers who contributed individual articles selected a three-member board of advisors one member of which assumed the functions of editor, collected the written material, assigned translators to render the Turkish ones into English, read and summarized submitted papers, wrote this editor's note, drew up the conclusions stressing only the opinions shared by all the contributors, prepared a balanced bibliography, not exhaustive but informing the reader of further possible references, and added an Index as well as the short write-ups of the contributors.

The editor who prepared this volume for publication (and the two other members of the advisory board) diligently refrained from making changes in the texts that would alter the meaning but restrained themselves to suggest some modifications to avoid excessive repetitions and to secure a degree of uniformity in footnotes. Even then, individual authors were left free in their choice of drawing their own frames of reference and style of writing. Hence, a degree of repetition or variance in quotations and footnotes.

The articles are listed to conform to a chronological order of relations between the Turks and the Armenians ending with the contribution of the editor who prepared this volume for publication. A great majority of the contributors are academics, some being emeritus professors, and a few others who dealt with this particular issue in their careers.

Ömer zgi, the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the author of published selected legal texts in the capacity of a former practicing barrister, contributed the first

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article by way of "Introduction" to this book, summarizing the overall relations of the Turks with the Armenians within the framework of the Ottoman experience. Reminding the reader of the Ottoman tradition of religious tolerance, the writer observes that it was the ethnic churches, initially, of the Balkan peoples, and later, of the Armenians which were used as vehicles for nationalist movements. He correctly supports the view that the founders of the Turkish Republic were neither uninformed about nor insensitive to the events of the last quarter of the 19th century and the second year of World War I. The revolutionary leadership, with its motto of "Peace at home, peace in the world", simply stressed the future, not the past, of the Turkish people. Neither did it educate the new generations in vindictiveness or irredentism, nor did it join the revisionist powers in the international arena. It is no coincidence that an experienced legal expert no other than zgi underlines that Republican Turkey was one of the very few host countries indeed, which offered a safe haven to the European liberals and democrats fleeing persecution, brutality and death. While the Turks put the past to rest, various Armenian groups, certainly outside Turkey, let the one-sided interpretation of memories live and be transferred from generation to generation. The number of victims on one side only was thus increased to hundreds of thousands and eventually to millions, without proper reference to the violence and bloodshed that the Armenians had earlier caused. The Turkish arguments, in terms of evidence and publications, were however unavoidable in response to the renewal of Armenian terrorism. zgi introduces the genesis of the topic, which is the bloody Armenian rebellion in the Van province during the war, which left no alternative to the Ottoman Government but to relocate those citizens deemed disloyal, rebellious and murderous. The author, who happens to be a prominent lawyer and the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament, introduces this book as an evaluation of the Turco-Armenian events in the late Ottoman period.

Nejat Göyünç, Professor of History, takes up an often-neglected aspect of Armenian-Turkish relations, namely their cultural interactions throughout centuries, stretching back even to the pre-Ottoman period. He canvases various fields of shared achievement in poetry, folklore, architecture, music, theatre arts, and journalism. Concrete evidence of such close cultural interaction helps to draw an image quite distinct from, and even

contrary to the superficial but more widespread image of the so-called "terrible Turk" or the "meek Armenian", but offers a wealth of clues to the two peoples who may be described as soul brothers for centuries, in spite of the difference in confession of faith. It was the tolerance, expressed through daily life no less than numerous official *fermans* (edicts), throughout the overwhelming part of the history of our relations, in the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-racial Ottoman atmosphere in which the talents of all, be Abhaz, Armenian, Bosnian, Circassian, Gagauz, Greek, Jewish, Levantine, and a host of others, were cradled that explain the existence of different cultural groups. It was this environment and training that encouraged and enabled Armenian architects, Jewish doctors or Greek ambassadors to attain self-expression freely. It was this climate of recognition and applause that maintained and enriched the positions of these peoples within the all-embracing Ottoman world.

Ylmaz Öztuna, the author of voluminous works on general history, highlighted the political milieu when the "Armenian question" became more or less internationalized. Its starting point is naturally the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War and its dismal consequences for the defeated Turks. The Armenians as well as the Turks felt that the "psychological tent" of the hitherto largely secure Ottoman state was shaken very badly. Part of the Armenian leadership started to search for new alternatives of security, and even of survival. Their search, increasingly through foreign support and resort to arms, for an independent or autonomous administration on land where the Armenians formed only a minority, eventually led to clashes with the government and the Muslims forming the majority in the same area. The author reminds the readers that the same Armenian circles carried out assassinations of leading Muslim figures, led several uprisings, and even shed the blood of their own folk with whom they happened to disagree.

Justin McCarthy, Professor of History, compares Armenian, Ottoman and Russian statistics on population and arrives at enduring conclusions as to the actual number of Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of the six *vilâyet*s (provinces) of eastern Anatolia, Istanbul and Edirne. The author, who considers the Ottoman population statistics as reliable data on the Armenian minority as well, convincingly underlines that the Armenians nowhere constituted the majority. Describing the Armenian

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Patriarchate statistics as “pure invention”, he reminds that such spurious figures, often quoted as accurate even today, were not drawn from any actual count. The unreliable Armenian estimates, not only broke down the “Muslim” category into various groups, even including “sedentary” and “nomadic” Kurds, no one else but the Ottoman Government counted the Muslims. Refreshing our memories on the basis of dependable documents and meticulous calculation, the author persuasively argues that more Armenians were migrants than were resettled, and that many more Muslims also became forced migrants. Putting the Armenian loss into perspective, he notes that the Muslims suffered especially in the war zones, which saw the greatest conflict between Muslim and Armenian civilians. He correctly notes that the mortality in Anatolia was the product of total war, during which no crops were harvested, and disease ravaged populations. All shared starvation and sickness. Those who emphasise and elevate the mortality of one group, the author notes, should not ignore the mortality of the other.

Hüseyin Çelik, presently a Member of Parliament from the Turkish Van province and a former Associate Professor of Literature, relates the fateful events of Van, his hometown, in the crucial year of 1915, on the basis of the witness accounts by the surviving Turks. A “son of the soil”, the author offers extensive quotations from recorded statements of the original inhabitants of that province which went through an ordeal of treachery and bloodbath in the hands of Armenians, whose weapons were procured by Russian agents. This attack on the defenceless quarters of the city triggered the government’s decision to remove the combatant Armenian population operating so close to the front. It is essential to appreciate the military fact that the resort to arms to force by civilian Armenians, the ensuing cold-blooded slaughter of many of the Muslim inhabitants and the flight of the remaining ones activated the central government in Istanbul to take immediate measures to protect its armed forces and civilians under siege. It should not be overlooked that the Armenian use of arms was not a response to an order to resettle them elsewhere; quite the contrary, it was their insurgence and onslaught on other groups of Ottoman citizens that set in motion the process of relocation. Çelik’s quotations from eyewitnesses, interviewed some years ago, describe the provocation of the Russian Armenians,

Armenian use of various kinds of weapons including artillery, and the exodus of the Muslims.

Yusuf Halaçoğlu, the Director of the Turkish Historical Society, dwells on the reasons that compelled the Ottoman authorities to resettle the bulk of the Armenian population, especially those close to the eastern war front. Utilizing first-hand authentic Ottoman documents, he elaborates on crucial facts, still not widely known in non-Turkish circles but which nevertheless make an altogether different story of the whole episode. It is essential to grasp, realistically, and in justice to both sides, not only the justifications behind the transfer decision, but also the precautions against abuse, which could not be totally prevented. The author's meticulous treatment of the subject, as perfect as it can be within the confines of an article, once more, justifies the decision and determines the absence of will on the part of the Ottoman state and government to annihilate any Armenian group. He convincingly analyses the purpose of resettlement, the conditions of transfer, official measures against possible attacks, the reality of resident Armenians, the official and public effort to solve the difficulties encountered, and the order to terminate the relocation. The author argues that there is absolutely no authorization, directive, law, edict, mandate or permission, or even a hint emanating from the official circles that the lives of Armenians are to be brought to an end. There are orders, on the other hand, prohibiting the members of the gendarmerie even to talk to Armenian women, for fear that the former may abuse their positions. According to the writer, the great bulk of the 450,000, or more, of the people moved southwards, actually reached their destinations. It was no other than the Ottoman courts that tried and convicted those guilty of criminal acts.

Enver Konukçu, Professor of History, concentrates on the mass graves of Turks killed by the Armenians between 1915-1920. The author was the responsible scholar who supervised and conducted the excavations on such mass graves, witnessed by a group of historians, Turkish and foreign media representatives, local officials, the sons and daughters of survivors and other interested people. Guided by the statements, photographs and other documentation left by General Kâzım Karabekir, on active duty in the eastern front at that time, as well as several eyewitness accounts, the author, an experienced historian, led excavations in seven areas in the present-day provinces of Erzurum, Kars and

Van. He underlines that there exist many more such mass graves in other regions of eastern Anatolia, where new excavations need to be carried out. The Turks, whose remains such as bones and worn-out pocket Qur'ans were unearthed, had been bayoneted, shot or burnt wholesale in village barns. These findings constitute part of the abundant proof of Armenian readiness in shedding Muslim blood.

Stanford J. Shaw, Professor Emeritus of Turkish History, uses material from the archives of the French Ministry of War in the Chateau de Vincennes in Paris and from the archives of the Turkish General Staff and the Prime Minister's archives in Turkey to show how France abused its occupation in south-eastern Turkey following the First World War, dressing Armenian soldiers in French uniforms and using them to ravage Turkish villages in "Cilicia" (Çukurova and its vicinities) and slaughter Turks between the years 1919 and 1921. He cites the reports of the Legion's French officers to show that after they first tried to send the Legionnaires to guard railroad tracks, and that after the Armenian soldiers refused to go on the grounds that they had come to Turkey only to kill Turks, the Armenian Legion was officially dissolved by the French Government. The author shows that the outrages committed by the Armenian Legion in the name of France, came at a time when the invading Greek army, sent to occupy zmir, was also advancing far beyond the limits of its "authorization" in south-western Anatolia, burning Turkish towns and villages and killing Turks and Jews with the intention of forcing them to flee, substituting Greek refugees in order to create a homogeneous Greek population majority to justify permanent occupation of the area. These outrages led to the Turkish national resistance (1919-22) and the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

Ömer Turan, Associate Professor of History, dwells only on the Armenian issue during the Lausanne Convention (1922-23), which replaced the defunct Sèvres Treaty (1920). The author notes that a United Armenian Delegation, composed of the representatives of the newly-formed Republic of Armenia and of the Armenian National Deputation, was present almost throughout the conference lobbying for some kind of an "autonomous" Armenia in eastern Anatolia or at least a mere mention of a "national home" in the final official text at the end of the deliberations. General smet (nönü), the head of the Ankara Delegation, stated that the living conditions of Turkey's minorities would be ameliorated but that

foreign interference in the form of provocations from abroad ought to come to a standstill for the benefit of all concerned. While the Armenian spokesmen did their best to remind the victorious Allies that the Armenian minority was an active combatant in the Caucasian front (in collaboration with Russia), in the so-called "Cilicia" in and around Adana (in partnership with the French) and in the Sinai and Palestine armed conflicts (in conjunction with the British), the Turkish side suggested that the representatives of the extensive Muslim world (for instance, those in India and North Africa), constituting clear majorities in certain regions, may also be heard in the Lausanne Conference. As the U.S. representative in the same meeting clearly expressed, some Allied states crudely used the Armenians for their military and political objectives on the one hand, and indulged in burlesque shows to satisfy their own aroused public opinion and Armenian lobbies on the other. Having pushed the Armenians into battle and caused bloodshed, they now felt the need, at least, to pay lip service to the idea of a national home for their pawns. Convinced that they cannot hope to be granted nothing more than an independent state in the Caucasus, the author records that the Armenian representatives abandoned the conference.

Süleyman Seyfi Ögün, Professor of Political Science, reminds the reader that the Ottoman Empire, which arose in the wake of the dissolution of the Roman legacy in Europe, converted the deeply rooted traditions and institutions into Islamic terms and sought to create a *Pax Ottomana*. Dwelling on the *millet* (religious group) system, the author explains the subtle Ottoman techniques to secure peace and harmony. It was under this system that each community, including the Ottoman Armenians, enjoyed the right to maintain their religious, cultural, judicial and professional traditions. He describes the behaviour of Armenian leadership in 1915 as a "fifth column" posture and distinguishes their relocation from the Jewish *Holocaust*.

Gündüz Aktan, former Ambassador, persuasively argues that there is sufficient material on the events of 1915 to prove that the circumstances of resettlement cannot be accepted as genocide. Analyzing the Genocide Convention (1948) in terms of what it entails and what it excludes, the author examines the four protected groups, the components of the criminal act and the concepts of objective and motive. Discussing whether or not these criteria apply to the case of the Ottoman Armenians, he reaches

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the following conclusions: The Armenians should be described as a "political group" deeply involved in armed revolt. The Ottoman Government entertained no notion of exterminating its minority. General war conditions, hostile climate, and rampant contagious diseases took many Armenian and Turkish lives. The obvious impotence of a disintegrating state cannot be described as an intention or even neglect of duties. It was no other than the Ottoman courts that convicted 1397 persons, a great majority of whom received capital punishment. He proves that the whole episode beginning with the search for a solution of the revolting Armenians in the province of Van to the end of the resettlement cannot be made to fit the conditions of the Genocide Convention.

Türkkaya Ataöv, Professor of International Relations, challenges the effort of some Armenian authors and their supporters to link the events of 1915 with the Jewish *Holocaust*. He contends that the two events cannot be compared in terms of origins, extensive body of opinion, circumstances and results. Describing the antisemitic trend in Nazi Germany as thoroughly ideological, racial, coherent, official, juridical, total and expansionistic, the author reminds that Hitler's Third Reich created an antisemitism unparalleled in history. The national state being based on the idea of race as the final criterion, not only refused to absorb even the best Jewish elements, but planned wholesale murders, organised and carried out officially by the government or party leadership. It embraced all realms of life and did not limit the act to the subjects of the Third Reich. Nazi antisemitism is properly described as genocide. Jewish experience with the world, and especially the events encountered during the Nazi period being far different from Turkish relations with the Armenians throughout history, the author argues that it was the Turks who first recognized (1461) the Armenians as a separate religious community and who appointed an Ottoman Armenian as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the crucial year 1913. He also relates that groups of Armenians were resettled mainly on account of their association with violence during war, an attribute totally absent in the Jewish case in Germany.

The paragraphs above are short summaries of the chapters that will follow. Although the editorial policy was to maintain some uniformity in appearance, especially in footnoting, the contributors, accustomed to their own style of writing, were left free to express themselves. Hence, a degree of dissimilarity was

unavoidable. Some contributions had plenty of sub-titles and some none. Further, different authors employed the words deportation, resettlement, relocation or transfer, all meaning the removal of the Armenians, especially those residing close to the war fronts, to the southern parts of Ottoman lands to guarantee more security for the fighting Turkish armies.

Similarly, various contributors spelled the name of an Armenian political party, the Dashnagtzoutiun, in different ways. The editor adopted the "Dashnag" version, the closest to Western Armenian; it could be "Tashnak" in Eastern Armenian. "Hinchag" is probably closest to the original Armenian pronunciation, with the important difference that the sound of the "i" is like the Turkish equivalent without a dot. Perhaps, "Sasoun" or "Sassoun" is more suitable than Sason or Sasun. The same applies to the Treaty of San Stefano (Ayastefanos, Ayos Stefanos, Ye ilköy) or to Nubar (Noubar). The Turkish names of places, cities and persons are reproduced here as they are spelled in modern Turkish. However, some proper names, such as the Ottoman Empire (not *Osmanlı imparatorluğu*) are written as they are in English. 'stanbul' with a dotted capital 'S', and 'İlca' without dots, however, appear in Turkish form, in order to conform to other names that could otherwise sound unintelligible.

A bibliography is added under the title of "Additional References". It was bound to be selective for reasons of space. Some new material is included as well as sources whose contents are not shared by the contributors to this volume. Apart from three bibliographies by leading Armenian researchers, some exceedingly pro-Armenian and highly influential publications by people such as the U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau have also been added. Although unfairly one-sided, the impact of the Morgenthau book has few equals. Initially serialized in the largest newspapers and magazines, it was reprinted over and over again, becoming a key source for a number of others including Pastor Johannes Lepsius. But our bibliography includes other sources which prove, on the basis of the Morgenthau collection of papers, that two Armenian secretaries and the skilled hand of a popular American writer were more responsible for the book signed by the American Ambassador who relied on rumours passed on to him by the same Armenian interpreters.

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Our bibliography also includes Aram Andonian's book, published in 1920 in three languages, referring to the so-called "official Ottoman documents" supposedly demonstrating the existence of genocide. Turkish scholars have already proved that the "Andonian documents" are counterfeit. Full of various factual mistakes, omissions and contradictions giving its Armenian author(s) away, there was no attempt even by the British and their Allies to make use of them when they were searching Ottoman and other archives for evidence to convict 144 Turkish leaders detained in Malta for this reason. Further, Turkey being a pluralistic society where all opinions are expressed, our bibliography includes also Turkish sources, diverging from the mainstream, but mentioned along with scholarly criticisms of the same publications, on grounds of contradictions and lack of documentation.

Our bibliography lists numerous publications on Muslims massacred by the Armenians, the bloodbath taking place before as well as after the relocation. Such printed works on the massacre of Muslims in Adana, Bitlis, Erzurum, Çel, Kars, Mu , Sar kam , Urfa, Van, Ye ilyayla, and in several other localities cannot be overlooked or minimized. Our bibliography also includes publications by prominent Armenians, who proudly announce, as a glorious saga, that they fought against the Turks on several fronts, but who provide us with irrefutable confessions justifying resettlement.

Our thanks go to a group of men and women who translated the Turkish texts of Göyünç, Öztuna, Halaçoğlu, Çelik, Konukçu, Turan, and Aktan, into English, and especially to Prof. Talât S. Halman, one of Turkey's leading poets who rendered the pieces of poetry (in Göyünç's article) into English in iambic meters.

The editor's special thanks should also go to Vahit Erdem, the experienced Secretary-General of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and his able aid, brahim Birler, and to some of the secretarial staff of the Council of Culture, Arts and Publications as well as the craftsmen of the Turkish Historical Society's printing house, which possesses modern facilities.