

Dissertation Thesis

From the Armenian to the Pontic Genocide

A concise study initiating by a selection of movies and documentaries



A thesis submitted for the degree of

Master in Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies

UNIVERSITY CENTER OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF STUDIES

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ECONOMICS

February 2021

Thessaloniki, Greece

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January 2021

Thessaloniki Greece

Abstract

This dissertation was written as part of the Master in Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies at the International Hellenic University.

The discourse on genocide and ethnic cleansing must always be contextualized in the political, economical, social, religious and cultural conditions they occurred. Are genocides widely recognized and attributed to the persecutors and the victims as such and in what pretext? How are the victims vindicated if ever? Is history facing the forgotten genocides accordingly? What was the role of eye witnesses and foreign delegations? What were the instruments of International law for the prevention and punishment of genocide?

Nowadays, are there non-fiction films and documentaries that have didactic content and raise awareness about genocides and in what way? Can someone be informed by these films? Were there any obstacles posed by the perpetrators of the genocides and their governments as instruments of foreign policy? An attempt to sketch the chronicles of the Armenian and Pontic Greek genocides during the period 1894 to 1924 will be attempted and this paper will probably contribute to the repose of the victims' souls in peace and their restitution and redemption.

I would like to acknowledge Professor's Kyriakos Chatzikyriakidis patience and his important guidance and tolerance during this arduous effort. The illuminating piece of information given by the honorable Professor Ioannis Hassiotis paved another way in my search and I am deeply grateful about it. I would like to also thank Dr Theodosios Kyriakidis for his valuable contribution especially on current publications, IHU's Academic Associate Dr. Stefanos Kordosis for his support, the journalist Nikos Aslanidis and the Professor Dr. Panayotis Diamadis for their contribution on valuable information. Additional thanks to the staff of the Armenian Library Thessaloniki for their support and help with publications and inquiries and Dr. Sofia Theodosiadou for her valuable comments on the first draft. Finally, the patience and support of my husband, children and parents during these hard times make me a blessed person.

Keywords: Armenian, Pontic genocide, film, documentary, recognition, Turkey

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February 2021

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Preface

According to Hannah Arendt genocide, as a crime against humanity, is an international offense, and can be considered an attack upon human diversity and upon a characteristic of the human status without which the very words "mankind" or "humanity" would be devoid of meaning¹.

It is important to have a thorough knowledge of history from unbiased sources in order to depict a specific period and justify or judge actions taken. As far as the Ottoman Empire is concerned, it is common knowledge that it had a brilliant archival and administrative system where everything was noted to the minor detail.

Yet, as far as the odious actions occurring in the last decades of the Empire, very few sources were available. Most of them were declassified after many years, such as the minutes of the court martial and the trials involving the exterminations, others are not -even today- accessible to researchers.

Another hindrance is the reluctance of the Turkish scholars to search and verify the crimes committed which goes hand in hand with formal government's policy to deny the genocidal terminology.

However, enlightened and unprejudiced Turkish historians have recently started to give luminous to dark pages of their history, read and write about these emblematic moments of the large scale genocide of the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire.

Most scholars nowadays agree that the extermination plans were carefully, systematic and centrally planned to the detail², escalated as the circumstances worsened for the Empire and as the World War I was approaching. They were encompassed through the various regimes that ruled the last decades of the falling Empire along with the internal struggle until the establishment of the newly born state, the Republic of Turkey.

The role of the Great Powers of that time was ambiguous since they all had their private agendas' to pursuit. Foreign ambassadors, consulates played important role and at some points decisively altered the predetermined fate of victims. We must not exclude the efforts of the missionaries, press reporters

¹ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), 268–69; Peg Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt & Human Rights: The predicament of common responsibility* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2007), 58.

² Richard G Hovannisian, *Looking backward, moving forward: Confronting the Armenian genocide* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 132, 236, 242.

and humanitarian volunteers whom testimonies and photographs verified the magnitude of the brutality of the exterminations. In addition to these, the risk many Muslims undertook to save their neighbors or members of their families show us that some common people didn't approved; nor participated in the massacres and the plunders.

Through this dissertation a short presentation of the prolonged and extensive violations with whom the empire tackled with its non Muslim subjects, different *minorities and manifold communities*³ will be attempted through selective movies about specific incidences or fragments of time.

The Armenian Genocide, the first globally attested as such, will be depicted anent the movies "Ararat", "The 40 days of Musha Dag", "The promise" and the documentary "Map of Salvation". The genocide of the Christian Pontic Greek element will be presented apropos the films "America America", "Waiting for the clouds" and the documentaries "The Band" and "Genocide - A true story".

The recognition of the genocides through states, international organizations and States of the U.S. will be presented in contrast to the official Turkish side and the efforts they undertake to silence attempts of genocidal recognition.

³ Benny Morris and Dror Ze'evi, *The thirty-year genocide: Turkey's destruction of Its Christian minorities, 1894-1924* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2019), 3.

1.1 How Genocide is defined

The current instrument humanity has to determine the cohesion of global society against genocides is the *Genocide Convention*, officially known as "The convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide" that was declared in Paris on the 9th December 1948 and initially ratified by 41 states like Australia, France, Brazil, Egypt, Norway, the United States of America, Pakistan, Russia, etc. Nowadays 152 nations participate in the treaty, some reserving dissensions against certain articles of the convention.

After WWII, the need to punish the responsible for manifold atrocities and the Jew Holocaust compelled legal authorities, judges and law makers to create the necessary framework for international tribunals, courts and punishment as the existing was not adequate⁴.

The first attempt of International Law is dated back in 1864 at the *Geneva Convention for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded in armies in the field*⁵, but it was not enough to cover for the increased paragon that were added as wars unexpectedly escalated the next century. The League of Nations established after WWI and the triumphant treaty of Versailles, as the first global intergovernmental organization whose aim was to prevent further war intrigues, to enforce disarmament and solve disputes through arbitration and negotiations. Yet, no international legal framework sufficed for the committed atrocities occurred before, during and after the "Great War"⁶.

It was the persistence and dedication of a sole individual, the Nobel nominated Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin who coined the word "Genocide"⁷ as an international legal term to cover for the "crime without a name"⁸. The coinage of the term was first presented in July 1942 in his book "*Axis Control in Occupied Europe*" where he incorporated aspects of genocides over the centuries⁹. According to him, "*Genocide... was intended group destruction...and...there are many ways to destroy a group*". He was an active member¹⁰ in the formation of

⁴ Dominik J Schaller, Jürgen Zimmerer, and Routledge, *The origins of Genocide: Raphael Lemkin as a historian of mass violence* (London; New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 1.

⁵ "Treaties, States Parties, and Commentaries - States Parties - Convention for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded in armies in the field. Geneva, 22 August 1864".

⁶ "World War I: History, Summary, Causes, Combatants, Casualties, Map, & Facts," Encyclopedia Britannica.

⁷ "The man who defined Genocide: 'The lid is on' podcast classic," UN News, April 7, 2017.

⁸ Panayiotis Diamadis, "Governmental and Parliamentary Recognition of the Genocides of the Armenians, Assyrians and Hellenes," 1.

⁹ John Cooper, *Raphael Lemkin and the struggle for the genocide convention*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 55-56.

¹⁰ Tanya Elder, "What you see before your eyes: Documenting Raphael Lemkin's life by exploring his archival papers, 1900–1959," *Journal of Genocide Research* 7, no. 4 (December 1, 2005), 473.

the Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, on the 9th December 1948 in Paris (see annex 6.1). He was also a very prolific writer, producing many books involving such crimes and defending minorities as he became a refugee himself and lost many family members from the Nazi regime.

The thrive to search for legal term for the genocide atrocities occurred to him when - at the age of 21 he came across information on the retaliating murder of Talaat Pasha, the mastermind of the Armenian extermination and former Minister of Interior of the Ottoman Empire. He was found guilty and sentenced to death, in absentia for his role in the exterminations but, with German aid, he and other five highly ranked colleagues escaped from prosecution, thus stayed unpunished for their crimes. The Armenian survivor Soghomon Tehlirian was the individual who -after an arduous long-scaled Armenian operation called "Nemesis"¹¹- murdered Talaat Pasha in Berlin in 1921. He was caught and trialed under the German laws, nevertheless he was acquitted as he was characterized insane and driven by psychological trauma of the extermination of all his family members, during genocide.

Lemkin not only invented the term "*genocide*" to define "*the physical destruction of national, ethnical, racial or religious groups*"¹², "*he labored for years to ensure the act became an influential component within international law*"¹³. Denials of the first genocides of the modern times might claim that the legal framework produced in 1948 shouldn't apply to crimes committed before the definition of the terminology, however, it is the prominent law professor and former secretary of the UN Human Rights Committee, Alfred de Zayas, who justified, beyond any shadow of a doubt that "*the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide does not create a new offence in international criminal law, but is declaratory of pre-existing international law*"¹⁴, additionally, it must apply to "*the enumeration of potential victim groups on select grounds of communal identity*"¹⁵. Moreover, de Zayas clarified that "*in the case of the Ottoman genocide against the Armenians and other Christian minorities before, during and after World War I, the perpetrators are dead and*

¹¹ "Perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide," Operation Nemesis, <https://www.operationnemesis.com/the-condemned/>.

¹² Cooper, *Raphael Lemkin and the struggle for the genocide convention*, 274.

¹³ Raphael Lemkin and Donna-Lee Frieze, *Totally unofficial: The autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*. (Cumberland: Yale University Press, 2014), x.

¹⁴ Alfred M De Zayas, *The Genocide against the Armenians 1915-1923 and the relevance of the 1948 Genocide Convention* (Beirut: Haigazian University, 2010), 5–8.

¹⁵ Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, *The Oxford handbook of Genocide studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 10.

beyond the reach of criminal justice, but the Turkish State remains liable for the crimes committed by the Ottoman Empire"¹⁶.

1.2 The Historical Frame

The Ottoman Empire was considered a multicultural conglomerate of different nations and manifold religious beliefs¹⁷, with adequate tolerance -in general- throughout more than four and half centuries; from the besiege of Constantinople in 1453 to the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1924.

The millet system¹⁸ categorized its subjects and imposed certain taxes, heavier and disproportionate to non-Muslim residents. Certain groups flourish as attested "*in commerce and finance the Greeks and Armenians had established their supremacy*"¹⁹, led a prosperous life for many years and with the exemption of individual incidences and specific deprivations, few significant revolts took place until the 19th century.

It is imperative for the purposes of this study, to delineate and summarize the political situation of the late 19th century to the early 20th century of the "great patient" the Ottoman Empire. The emergence of liberation movements along with the proclamation of independence of Greek (1829) and Serbian (1835) states inaugurated the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire²⁰, under the aegis of the Great Powers of that time: Great Britain, France and Russia.

The ignominious defeat in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-78 along with the St. Stefano treaty provoked intense feelings of shame among the Muslim population, along with the emerged animosity against Christian elements²¹. The autonomy of Bulgaria (1878) and the interference of the Great Powers -e.g. in article 61 of St. Stefano treaty where the Porte was supposed to grand safety

¹⁶ Ibid., De Zayas, 12.

¹⁷ Vasileios Th. Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, 1913–1923: A Comprehensive Overview," *Genocide Studies International* 9, no. 1 (2015), 106.

¹⁸ Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The functioning of a plural society Vol.II*, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 69–87; Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 383–84.

¹⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *From Empire to Republic Essays on the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey Volume 1*, (Istanbul, Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2008), 27

²⁰ George N. Shirinian, *Introduction to genocide in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks 1913-1923* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017).

²¹ Morris and Ze'evi, *The thirty-year genocide*, 248–50.

and protection to the Armenian population of Anatolia²²- to the internal affairs of the Empire, such as the capitulations and the pressure for social transformations concluded into the Tanzimat Era²³. A set of reforms and rights applied to non-Muslim habitats of the empire enlarged the social gap as a result of the welfare of commerce and trade, fields of financial activities traditionally and proportionally practiced by Armenian, Greek and few Jew subjects.

The insolvency and the fiscal struggling of the empire along with its immense expenses led to social disorder. Armenian movements for autonomy and civil rights sprang as soon as they realized that concessions may be achieved only with the decisive interventions and under the auspices of the Great powers. For this reason they sent representatives in the Congress of Berlin in 1878²⁴. These actions inevitably awakened the discontent of Turkish civilians who encountered such demands as actions of jeopardy and treason towards the empire. The German state unification in 1870 broke the unanimous policy imposed by the great powers to the Gate and made consensus almost impossible. The Greek annexation of Thessaly along with the French occupation of Tunisia in 1881 and the British invasion in Egypt the following year altered the existential sovereignty of the Empire. However, the crushing of the Cretan revolution and the glorious victory against the Greeks in 1897 provided the Sultan with the necessary breath of hope. Abdul Hamid II promoted the dogma of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Touranism in an effort to unite heterogeneous Muslim elements of his Empire and bring the Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Albanians, Circassians and other tribes under a common sacrosanct belief, within a Muslim state²⁵.

Meanwhile, all the aforementioned incidents had also had severe and decisive impact on major elements of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenians established the Hintchak or Huntchak nationalistic and revolutionary society in Geneva in 1887 and Dashnak Armenian Revolutionary Federation in 1890 in Tbilis which immediately activated in the Ottoman Empire and held responsibility for the occupation of the Ottoman bank in 1896, in an effort to raise awareness for the bloody massacres of Armenians by the Sultan's Hamidian "*irregular auxiliary forces*"²⁶ of Kurdish tribes wisely deployed to form armed divisions, between

²² Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The quest for identity*, 2003, 41.

²³ George N. Shirinian, "Introduction to The 'Great Catastrophe: The Genocide of the Greeks,'" 4-6.

²⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *From Empire to Republic Essays on the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume 2*, 2008, 176.

²⁵ Ağoston and Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, 8-9, 454-6.

²⁶ Michael A Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 50.

1894 and 1896²⁷. These massacres dubbed Sultan Abdul Hamid II as the "Red Sultan" and ended in a total loss of 80.000 to 500.000 Armenians, set aside the ravished women and the innumerable orphans.

Opposition soon arose in the ranks of the Ottoman army and the Young Turk revolutionary movement augmented its actions. They established the Committee of Union and Progress and, after revolts in Macedonia and Istanbul, in 1908, they deposed the Red Sultan and exiled him to Salonika on the 27th April 1909. His younger brother Mehmed V succeeded him until 1918. The Unionist slogan was "Liberty (*hürriyet*), Equality (*müsavet*), and Justice (*adalet*), according to the French Revolutionists' pillars, altered only to the third pillar where the French wanted fraternization while the Young Turks, allegedly, thrived for justice. The non Muslim subjects of the Empire initially became supporters to the CUP since they could represent progress and development, as derived from their declaration. Yet, their notion of the Turks as the "dominant nation" of the Empire led them to utilize the Turkism ideology for fulfilling their purposes²⁸.

Furthermore, the loss of almost all Ottoman territories in Europe after the Balkan wars (1911-1913) and the throngs of thousands of Muslims²⁹ who abandoned the Balkan territories created a huge problem of their settlement and integration into the amputated remnants of the Empire³⁰.

It was from 1911 to 1914 that, according to the Consulate George Horton, the first large scale executions against the littoral Asia Minor Greek Christian subjects started. Cities like Phocaea and villages of the periphery of Smyrna had been attacked by Turks who killed, looted, plundered and raped excessively³¹. Their feelings of hatred arose from extensive articles, published in the local newspapers with reference to "falsified" testimonies about atrocities of Christians against Muslim subjects³².

*On the eve of WWI "the Rayas were drafted into the army where they were treated as slaves. They were not given guns but were employed to dig trenches and do similar work, and as they were furnished neither food; clothing nor shelter, large numbers of them perished of hunger and exposure"*³³.

²⁷ Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times* (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1997), 224–25, 418-19.

²⁸ Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, 22–23.

²⁹ Shirinian, "Introduction to The "Great Catastrophe," 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Reynolds, 38.

³¹ Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against the Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 69.

³² George Horton, *The Blight of Asia; an Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers; with the True Story of the Burning of Smyrna*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1926), 42–43.

³³ *Ibid.*, Horton, 45.

Similarly, the Armenian population of Anatolia were also disarmed and sent to Labour Battalions (Amele Tabourlari). And while the conditions in the Ottoman army were already horrible and dingy where many fell dead way before they fought against the enemy, from diseases and deprivations, in the Labour Battalions Christians were treated like animals and died like flies³⁴.

It was in 1913, in a very fragile and unstable political environment, when a coup d' etat by the three pashas (Mehmed Talaat, Ismail Enver & Ahmed Djemal), leading members of the CUP party³⁵, took over authority and made the last Sultans powerless symbolic figureheads. During the World War I, specifically in November 1914, Turkey proclaimed Jihad (holy war) against the Allied members of Entente³⁶, as it was fighting along Central Powers which ultimately got defeated. (With the Mudros' Armistice on 30th October 1918 and the Treaty of Sèvres in 10th August 1920, Turkey got dismembered). Furthermore, the initiation of massive deportations and the implementation of the odious "Tehcir Law" (see annex 6.3) the Law of Relocation and Resettlement of Armenians issued in 1915 was a milestone from a set of measures and temporary laws which targeted the non-Muslim subjects of the empire in the effort of homogenizing Anatolia.

The humiliating terms of the Treaty, along with the arising nationalism led to the "Turkish War of Independence" from 19 May 1919 to 24 July 1923, in an effort to revoke the terms and regain sovereignty. By November 1922, the newly established republican regime of Kemal Ataturk abolished the sultan's era, expelled Greek, Armenian and French army, made truce with Russians and Italians and settled disputes with the British. The treaty of Lausanne was a victory for Ataturk's Turkish Republic and after its ratification in 24 July 1923; the Establishment of the Republic of Turkey was formally inaugurated in 29 October 1923 as a secular modernized state.

For the strengthening and the stabilization of the newly emerged state, under the prism of Turkification³⁷, nationalism and ethnical clearance had to play a vital role. Together with the WWI, the reformation and the stabilization of the borders, genocides occurred to annihilate minority populations in a state

³⁴ "Η Δολοφονική «λογική» Του Πολέμου," Ιστορία των Διακρίσεων, <https://www.historyguide.gr/992-2/%ce%b7-%ce%b4%ce%bf%ce%bb%ce%bf%cf%86%ce%bf%ce%bd%ce%b9%ce%ba%ce%ae-%ce%bb%ce%bf%ce%b3%ce%b9%ce%ba%ce%ae-%cf%84%ce%bf%cf%85-%cf%80%ce%bf%ce%bb%ce%ad%ce%bc%ce%bf%cf%85/>.

³⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (London: Hurst, 2010), 167.

³⁶ Ibid, Morris and Ze'evi, 495.

³⁷ Ibid, Morris and Ze'evi, 495

organized attempt of de-Christianization³⁸ as an instrument of ethnical conformity and demographic engineering³⁹. Already the Armenians, Pontic Greeks and Assyrians had suffered a heavy blood toll along with the Greeks in the Ionian coastal zone (e.g. Smyrna). Populations had started migration flows way before the Lausanne treaty, in an attempt to avoid cruelties, brutalities and even bloodbaths. It is worth-mentioning, that with the Lausanne's treaty an obligatory exchange of population took formal context for the first time, worldwide. Approximately 1,1 million Orthodox Greek were compelled to leave their homes in the former Ottoman Empire and flee to Greece and simultaneously, approximately 0,4 million Muslims left Greece for the newly established Republic of Turkey. The Greeks of Constantinople (along with the habitants of Imvros & Tenedos islands) and the Muslims of Western Thrace were exempt from the treaty. These called "établis" were all the Greeks who were already established before the 30th October, 1918, within the areas under the Prefecture of the City of Constantinople, as defined by the law of 1912 (registered in the prefecture's catalogues), about 25,650 Greeks.

By the end of 1927, during the first census, the non Muslim element of the Turkish Republic was almost 2% of the total population whereas almost forty years earlier they were more than 20% according to Morris & Ze'evi⁴⁰ and more than 24% according to Tessa Hoffman and Kemal Karpat⁴¹(see annex 6.4).

Particular reference should be made for the Special Organization SO (Teşkilat-I Mahsusa)⁴². It was the corpse that held absolute responsibility for the deportations and liquidations of the Christian element⁴³. It was officially established by the order of Enver Pasha on 30 November 1913⁴⁴ and guided from the prominent and intellectual members of the CUP party Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir Bey and Dr. Nazım Bey. And whilst the triumvirate was consisted of persons of humble background and academic profile, the Special Organization's leaders were individuals of higher academic profile and skills. The recruiters were Kurds, Circassians, Muslim refugees from Balkans or Caucasus and convicts formerly imprisoned⁴⁵.

³⁸ Ibid, Morris and Ze'evi, 494-495

³⁹ Erik-Jan Zürcher, *The Late Ottoman Empire as Laboratory of Demographic Engineering*, Leiden University, 2009, 8–13.

⁴⁰ Ibid, Morris and Ze'evi, 485

⁴¹ Tessa Hofmann, "The Ottoman genocide against Greek Orthodox Christians, Congres National es Armeniens occidentaux"; Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman population, 1830-1914 : Demographic and social characteristics* (Madison, Winsconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 72.

⁴² Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian genocide a complete history* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 217–63.

⁴³ Mark Mazower, *Dark continent: Europe's twentieth century* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 60–61.

⁴⁴ Akçam, *The Young Turks' crime against the humanity*, 4–5; Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, 121.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Akçam, *The Young Turks' crime against the humanity*, 412.

Indicative of the situation is the group of the leaders for the Aegean littoral clearing which was consisting of Cafer Tayyar Bey (the late General Cafer Tayyar Eğılmez), Chief of the General Staff of the Fourth Army Corps, acting on behalf of the army, (the late) Governor of İzmir Rahmi Bey as civilian in charge and Mahmud Celal Bey (the 3rd Republican President later called Celal Bayar)⁴⁶, on behalf of CUP. Moreover, the SO armed irregular groups acted at the Caucasus and Van as well as in Iran and enemy territories in India, before the outbreak of WWI. Their dual goal was to unite Turkic element outside the Empire and at the same time eliminate non-Muslim domestic element⁴⁷.

The mechanism that enabled the operational level of the deportations and exterminations was set in a dual substructure. Official orders were issued from the Interior Ministry, usually by Talaat Pasha -the notorious Architect of the Genocide⁴⁸- himself to the local governors of all (involving) provinces, who then transmitted these orders to the regional gendarmeries, police and security services. Then, separated encoded commands about the massacres and slaughters were transcript by the head of Special Committee Dr. Sakir to the CUP's regional secretaries. It was their catalytic role that distributed the death orders for the unsuspected victims⁴⁹. All these networks and orders were indeed confirmed mainly from oral testimonies during the martial courts that followed the global public outcry after the end of WWI.

Whatsoever, after the abolishment of the caliphate and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Kemal's dream of the emerged secular state ran parallel to the western nations and their endorsement for creating a new totally different state, based on westernized laws, directives and moral.

The general loath of European and American public opinion against the committed atrocities together with the winner's commission in Constantinople pressed for bringing the responsible for the genocidal crimes to court⁵⁰. In spring 1919 the first trial of the head of the triumvirate ministry and the leading CUP members started but, most of the accused were already escapees⁵¹. Another set of trials, especially Court Martials took place⁵². They were codified

⁴⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 146, 412.

⁴⁸ Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of modern Turkey, architect of genocide*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020), 419.

⁴⁹ Akçam, *The Young Turks' crime against the humanity*, 194.

⁵⁰ Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The documentation of the World War I Armenian massacres in the proceedings of the Turkish military tribunal," *International journal of middle East studies* 23, no. 4 (November 1991): 551-554; Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Turkish military tribunal's prosecution of the authors of the Armenian genocide: four major court-martial series," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 11, no. 1 (March 1, 1997): 30-32.

⁵¹ Kevorkian, *The Armenian genocide a complete history*, 783-84.

⁵² Vahakn N Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian genocide trials* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 272-331.

as “the Unionist’s trial”⁵³, “the trial of Young Turk ministers”⁵⁴, trials “for the responsible secretaries and the vicissitudes of the subsidiary trials in the provinces”⁵⁵. The outcome of the trials led many convicted to imprisonment under British rule in Malta.

We must underline the fact that “*apart from the 13 indictments and final judgments found in the Ottoman Gazette (Takvim-i Vekayi), all that remains of the historical record of these events is the reports on the trials found in the daily newspapers*”⁵⁶ local and international.

⁵³ Kevorkian, *The Armenian genocide a complete history*, 785–86.

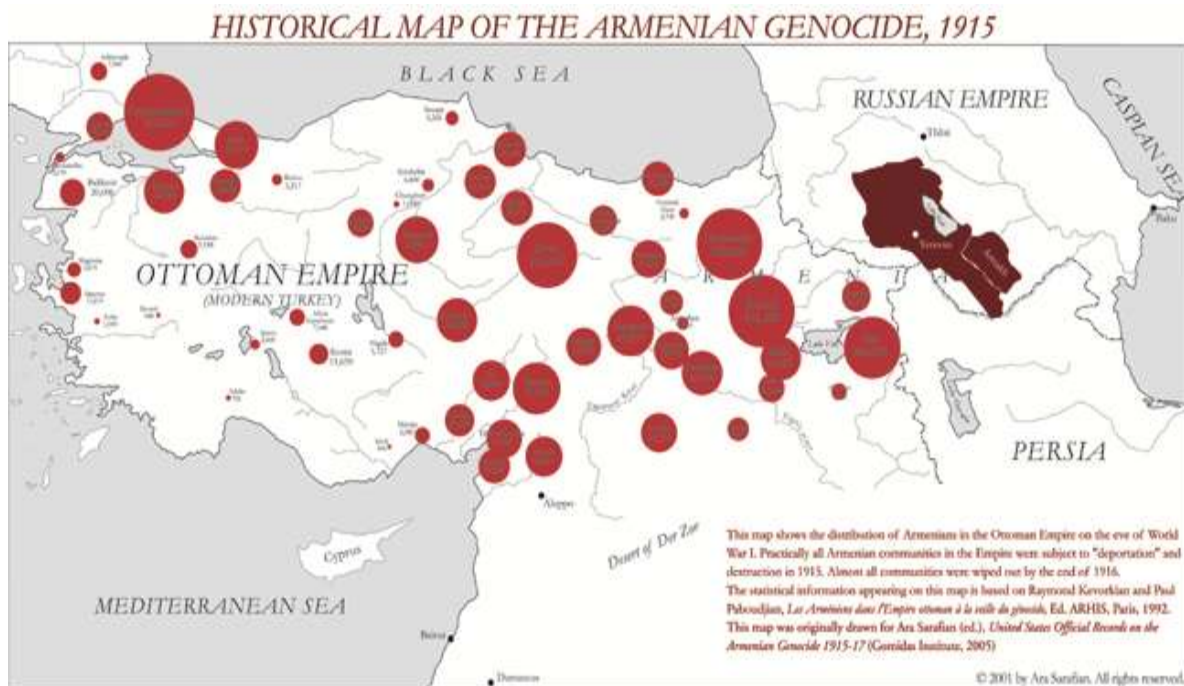
⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Kevorkian, 787–89.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Kevorkian, 790–98.

⁵⁶ Taner Akçam, *Killing orders: Talat Pasha’s telegrams and the Armenian genocide*, 2018, 9.

2. The Armenian Genocide through selective movies

2.1 Brief history of the Armenian genocide



The Armenians dwelled the Anatolian plateau from ancient times. It was the era of Tigran the Great (around 1st century B.C.) when the kingdom reached its magnitude and fame as opposed to the Roman Eastern borders. They were the first to convert to Christianity (3rd century A.D.). The populace lived throughout the Anatolian territories known today as Eastern Anatolian provinces that extend from Caucasus on the north to Cilicia to the south. After the fall of their kingdom they were annexed under the Byzantine and the Persians empires and later after the march of Turkic tribes, they were conquered by the Seljuks and later by the Ottomans. A smaller part was annexed to the Russian Empire.

Though they were widely spread, they always formed a minority in all provinces having mostly Kurds and Circassians as majority neighbors. They were peaceful peasants or skilled artisans and some involved in trade, finance and even the state mechanism, where they flourished. They usually formed enclaves in the cities and provinces and at the administrative system of millet, they had their own sense of autonomy, bejeweled with heavy taxation imposed on all non-Muslim subjects.

After successive downfalls of the Ottoman Empire and the pressure exerted upon the Sublime port from the Great Powers to its internal affairs, an alteration of the governance model was to provide more freedom and civil rights

to the minorities. Various treaties followed Ottoman defeats sealed these changes. In the St Stefano treaty (1878), the Sultans representatives pressured by the winners signed for "grand safety and protection to the Armenian population of Anatolia"⁵⁷. The Tanzimat era was a period of declared reformations, especially for non Muslim elements, more freedom, safety and protection under a set of regulations established in an effort to westernize Ottoman Empire. Consecutive upheavals, the reluctance of the Porte to implement those reforms along with the monetary deterioration and bankruptcy inflamed feelings of animosity against Christian elements that took advantage of even the minor changes and further established their position. They were the middle class of the struggling Ottoman Empire, held wealth and fame and even settled in Constantinople and other major cities and ports to facilitate their businesses inland and abroad.

The Armenian community had already members of its growing Diaspora settled in European cities like London, Geneva and Paris and had also crossed the Atlantic Ocean by the 19th century.

It was around the end of 19th century when all the above-mentioned reasons led to a general dismemberment of the already divided society and feelings of hatred arose. Some Armenians, with a view to the European help, started imagining their own autonomy and creation of a great Armenian state, in the paradigm of Bulgaria with their own church and administration. Even revolutionary organizations emerged, the Hunchak established in 1887 in Geneva and Dashnak established in 1890 in Tbilisi and immediately activated in the Empire.

At the same time, the Sultan reluctant to proceed with more reformations tried to suppress the feelings of the minorities and imposed terror and fear by killing prominent members of its communities. This movement also aimed at the provocation of the Armenians to revolt in order to have an official excuse to further constrain them. The Sultan Abdul Hamid II even deployed Kurdish tribesmen to formulate the so-called Hamidian order in his attempt to divide and conquer and keep the bloodthirsty Kurds busy. They slaughtered hundreds of Armenian inhabitants of the Eastern provinces immediately after revolutionary leaflets were spread in Constantinople, in 1895. Under the pressure of European Great powers and the European public outcry, the Sultan

⁵⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The quest for identity*, 41-42.

was forced to sign for even more reforms. Moreover, some Armenian rebels retaliated in return. All these enlarged the gap between Christians and Muslims who were furious by the many rights granted under the western auspices.

When in 1894 the Armenians in Sasun refused to pay the obscured taxation imposed by the Porte and collected by the Kurdish tribesmen, having the role of tax-collectors, the Sultan gave the order to the Hamidian battalion to quash the rebellion in blood. It was the initiation of a set of massacres, since these battalions were committing their atrocities according to their wish⁵⁸, which ended in 1896. It was then when a group of 26 young Armenian rebellions seized the Ottoman bank in Constantinople with a scope of socializing the Armenian massacres to the Great Powers and gaining global sympathy. Consecutively, while the European ambassadors endeavored to save the rebellions by helping them escape to Paris and therefore deteriorate the incident, escalation of the massacres in Constantinople and other eastern cities resulted in a total loss of between 88.000 (Johannes Lepsius estimations) and 300.000 (French embassy's estimations), during the famous "Hamidian massacres"⁵⁹. These atrocities gave Abdul Hamid II the nicknames "the Red Sultan" & "Abdul the Damned"⁶⁰ all around European media. They also resulted in the first large-scaled emigrational movement (mainly) from eastern Anatolia provinces to the Russian provinces, Europe and even Algeria⁶¹.

For some years dreadful incidents of slaughters and plunders took place mainly from Kurdish tribes that faced the possibility of Armenias' autonomy with skepticism as it would include parts of their long-owned (Kurdish) lands. Moreover, Balkan Muslim refugees loathed Christians who prospered in their motherland while they were not well-received; nor welcomed. Instead of blaming their authorities for being unable to provide for them, they put the blame on Armenian and other Christians committing atrocities against them.

It was the massacre in Adana in 1909⁶², as a benchmark in the escalation of violence against the Armenian element. When troops loyal to the Sultan Abdul Hamid II, under his religious proclamations of the resurrection of the Caliphate, tried to siege Constantinople the Young Turks counterattacked. News of a mutiny committed with Armenian assistance travelled through the empire and

⁵⁸ Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian genocide and America's response* (New York: Perennial, 2009), 40.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Balakian, 70–75.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Balakian, 35.

⁶¹ Morris and Ze'evi, *The thirty-year genocide*, 127–29.

⁶² Ibid, Morris and Ze'evi, 487.

brutalities from fanatical Muslim mob initiated mainly at Adana province. It is worth mentioning that while this insurgency in Constantinople lasted only ten days with minimum casualties, in Adana territory and provincial villages excessive murder, rape and pillaging exceeded a monthly duration. In the end the pogrom against Armenians in Adana had its severe toll an estimated number between 15.000 to 20.000 dead, houses, shops, churches and equipment⁶³ and was driven from religious, political and economical differences as they constituted the wealthier portion of Adana's population.

The authoritative regime under the triumvirate of the Three Pashas had aspirations of transforming the Empire into a secular state under puppet Imperial authority. However, the Balkan wars of 1911-13 and the Russian-Ottoman conflicts at the north-east Anatolia's borders resulted in countless waves of helpless and agitated refugees who suffered atrocities from Christian elements in Balkans and Russian Empire. All these rigorous hardness further resulted in increased animosity against all Christians they encountered in their motherland.

It was not until the end of 1913 when things severely changed. The establishment of Special Organization in the end of November 1913 by Enver Pasha and the decisions about its autonomous unfettered multiple activities which included provocation of Muslim riots in India, Iran, Russia and other cross-border enemy states; and cleansing⁶⁴ the domestic prefectures from treacherous Armenian, Assyrian, Greek and other Christian populace that would probably line up with the Great Powers into rending the "Sick man" the Ottoman Empire.

The embarrassing defeat at Sarikamis, where the Ottoman army led by the Minister of War Enver Pasha against the Russian army led by Tsar Nikolas II devastated the positive psychology from short up to then victories and a great segment of 95.000 soldiers that died from cold, starvation and short of equipment and lack of preparation. Armenians from the Russian territories fought against the Ottoman army and committed many brutalities marching towards Anatolian provinces.

This was a catalytic excuse for the triumvirate and the Special Organization to achieve the mostly wanted homogenization of the nation by

⁶³ Taner Akçam, *A shameful act: The Armenian genocide and the question of Turkish responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Holt, 2007), 68–70.

⁶⁴ Jay Murray Winter and Cambridge University Press, *America and the Armenian genocide of 1915* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 39.

considering Armenians as enemies of the state and potential cooperators with their Russian foes and to inaugurate and execute their plans for deportation and execution of the two million Armenians. Though some scholars still disagree whether this genocide was premeditated there is inevitable evidence that this was a product of several meetings held in Constantinople in March 1915⁶⁵. Clandestine decisions on deportation and liquidation of domestic enemies should have been taken there.

The revolt in Zeitun was bloodily suppressed by the end of March 1915 where innocent civilians slaughtered indiscriminately⁶⁶. Deportations from Erzerum, Lapsaki, Zeitun and elsewhere started their death marches south to Syria⁶⁷. Simultaneously extensive researches in Armenian houses were occurring in an effort to disarm them thus avoiding the possibility of retaliation. The arrests were at a greater scale and notables from Maras, Kizirilmak, Van, Diyarbekir, Bitlis and elsewhere were arrested, tortured and most of them perished as well⁶⁸. On April 22 a decree ordered the requisition of weapons and the registration of their location in 5 days time⁶⁹.

The arrest of the intellectuals in Constantinople on 24th of April 1915 was the significant benchmark for the "forgotten genocide"⁷⁰ where the most prominent members of the Armenian society in Constantinople and elsewhere were arrested, interrogated, imprisoned, and later transferred in deportation routes where they ultimately faced a dreadful death usually by members of the Special Organization. A day later, in 25th April 1915 the Empire entered World War I alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary. Concurrently Armenian officers in the telegraph and post services were kicked out, probably under orders of the Minister of Interior Talaat Pasha, who widely used the cables as the mean to set the annihilating operation functioning smoothly. All the men between 18 and 60 years old were registered to the army to form the Labor Battalions and assist the army forces as auxiliary battalion or work on large scale constructions such as the railway. Most of them were undernourished, poorly clothed and eventually died from famine, illnesses, hardship and discomfort.

⁶⁵ Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish nationalism and the Armenian genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 166.

⁶⁶ Raymond H Kévorkian, *Le génocide des Arméniens* (Paris: Jacob, 2006), 313-4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Kevorkian (2006), 356,685,727.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Kevorkian (2006), 298-99, 393,441.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Kevorkian (2006), 324; Raymond Kevorkian, "The extermination of Ottoman Armenians by the Young Turk regime (1915-1916)", *Sciences Po Mass Violence and Resistance - Research Network*, January 25, 2016, extermination-ottoman-armenians-young-turk-regime-1915-1916.html.

⁷⁰ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 101.

All the above atrocities didn't go unnoticed by foreign officials, civilians, missionaries and clergy. It was Henry Morgenthau, the U.S.A. Ambassador in Constantinople from 1913 to 1916, -when he ultimately resigned under the pressure of the severe hostility of the Ottomans against their Christian subjects-, who first pointed out that a mass killing of a race was happening. He was extremely active gathering reports from U.S.A. regional consular offices, from missionaries, doctors, U.S. citizens visiting the Empire and he had a set of frequent visits with the Minister of Interior Talaat Pasha and the Minister of War Enver Pasha, in his endeavors to prevent the continuation of the exterminations. When his courageous efforts resulted fruitless as the U.S.A. had no intention to intervene and intrigue bad relations with the Ottoman Empire in view of WW1, he himself started a crusade to media worldwide to raise awareness and public sentiment on the Armenian case. It all resulted in a significant relief fund for the Armenians and a publication of a memoir book in 1918⁷¹ that became target of Turkish counter propaganda, in vein. In this book, documentation about the orders of deportations, the boasting of Talaat Pasha that he achieved in three months what the Sultan didn't achieve in three years and other cold blooded statements, is registered⁷².

Similarly, Leslie Davis, the U.S.A. wartime consul appointed in Harput, during the genocide, despite his initial repugnance to the Armenian race sent a set of elaborate and detailed reports of all kinds of atrocities he encountered between 1915 and 1918, while he was visiting his domain. The American missionary doctor Henry Atkinson who was usually accompanying him verified and endorsed all his reports. They both even witnessed stories from indignant Kurds who disapproved of the massacres and informed them about the pattern of the exterminations. Corpses burnt, mutilated, raped, amputated, with bayonet, axe or more seldom bullet wounds were recorded⁷³. All other American, British, German, Austrian⁷⁴, Russian, Swedish and French Consuls and Ambassadors frequently sent detailed notes about the horrible incidents, to their homelands thus raising awareness of the ongoing atrocities and gradually formulating the image of the "terrible Turk" in Western people's minds.

Johannes Lepsius, the German humanitarian missionary, wrote about the suffering of the Armenian race and published detailed reports about scenes he

⁷¹For a thorough study see Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's story*.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Morris and Ze'evi, 2-3.

⁷⁴ Racho Donef, "The Pontian Genocide: The continuous cycle of violence and massacres," 3, /The_Pontian_Genocide_The_continuous_cycle_of_violence_and_massacres.

had witnessed, along with details of his meetings with Enver Pasha. His work was secretively published, sometimes excluding details that would diminish Germany's position towards the genocide or out of fear that it would damage diplomatic relationships between the two allies. He was extremely active instigating German people's moral on the Armenian question thus funding orphanages and missionary settlements, saving thousands from inevitable death.

At this point, specific reference to the two substantial incidents of significant historical value, worth mentioned, which are the siege of Van and that of Musa Dagh, must be done. The former started when Djevdet Bey requested four thousand male habitants to enroll to his army forces. The local Armenian community paid toll to exclude from conscription. Nevertheless, the demand grew bigger and from April 2th the Armenians took shelter in the city trying to defend themselves when necessary. They were few with limited ammunition and provisions and people from neighboring villages kept coming. By the end of May Russian forces assisted Armenians and set them free. The news caused thousands of desperate Armenian to break the lines of their death marches and seek for shelter in the city. When the Russians retreated from the territory, out of fear of remaining helpless, most dwellers from Van, almost 150.000 Armenians drifted through the borders to Transcaucasia out of despair of retaliation of the Ottoman forces. Almost ten thousand people died and many more were attacked from Kurdish tribes while climbing the mountainous passages to freedom.

In the province of Hatay, Armenians of villages around of Musa Dagh decided to resort to the mountain and escape from deportation. They held off several attacks from the Ottoman army and after a total of 53 days they faced the dilemma to surrender or heroically fight until their last bullet, while suffered from severe famine and lack of ammunition and medical supplies. Their brave act of revolt ended in their freedom by French warships that were moored in Alexandretta's port. The Musha Dagh riot became globally known when the famous writer Franz Werfel wrote a meticulous and detailed novel about the siege which was received in the press as a heroic narration⁷⁵.

Other humanitarians and missionaries such as the devoted European women the "Map of Salvation" was dedicated to, their colleagues and mentors, published their diaries, documents and photographic documents. The prominent Dr. Ussher with his wife's contribution published a book based on his memoirs, as

⁷⁵ Louis Kronenberger, "Franz Werfel's heroic novel," *New York Times*, December 2, 1934, sec. BR.

well⁷⁶. A whole league of missionaries (mostly from U.S.A.), that facilitated the Near East Relief⁷⁷ fund and other similar settlements, who also kept notes, diaries and photos, often with personal cost.

Many entrepreneurs and their family members who were in the Ottoman Empire for business and became first hand witnesses along with famous journalists that jeopardized their lives following the Armenian guerillas even in the mountains like in the case of Musa Dagh⁷⁸. Most of these testimonies are included in a collective volume known as the "*Blue Book*" which is "*The treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-16*" by Vice count Bryce James and Arnold Toynbee, published in 1916 in U.K.⁷⁹

The premeditation of the Armenian genocide can be attested by the rapidity certain laws passed. A characteristic example was the Tehcir Law (May 1915), a temporary law which inaugurated the deportation and extermination of notable Armenians. Moreover, the speed of the mechanisms of massive extermination combined with the short duration of the genocide - from 1915 to 1916 almost 1, 2 million Armenians perished- is a token of premeditation and systematic execution plans.

Finally, the Armenian genocide ended with a heavy toll on human lives. From the initial number of two million Armenians in the Anatolian province, only approximately four hundred thousand escaped death. Many of them were converted to Islam, women were forcibly married Muslims or became slaves and children were deprived of their parents.

⁷⁶ See Clarence Douglas Ussher and Grace H Knapp, *An American physician in Turkey; a narrative of adventures in peace and in war*, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917).

⁷⁷ Kevorkian, *The Armenian genocide a complete history*, 772.

⁷⁸ Richard G Hovannisian, *Remembrance and denial: The case of the Armenian genocide* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1999), 147-49.

⁷⁹ Arnold Toynbee and James Bryce, *Armenian atrocities, the murder of a nation*, 2015.

2.2 The forty days of Musa Dag (1982)

2.2.1 General information

The film "The forty days of Musa Dag" is based on the famous German-Austrian Franz Werfel's novel⁸⁰ published in 1933 in German and in 1934 translated to English (and later another 23 languages), omitting certain parts that might have offended the English readers. The MGM Company quickly bought the rights for the movie and in 1935 stated in media that shooting would soon start with the prominent Clark Gable as the leading actor. Immediately, the Turkish Republic through its ambassador in the U.S.A. Ertegun noted its disappointment for such an act and clarified to the State Department that his country wouldn't tolerate such a movie. Similar attempt was made in 1968 and later in 2006 but faced the same Turkish anti-propaganda⁸¹.

The company postponed filming ad infinitum and the rights were finally sold. It was in 1982 when the film was directed by Sarky Muradian and the original novel was transferred on screen by Alex Hakobian. Its duration was 144 minutes⁸²; the budget was 1 million US dollars and wasn't received well by the very few critics who watched it. The film like the book was banned in Turkey and didn't make it to commercial theaters. It was mostly attended by Armenian audience worldwide.

The place was the Moses mount (Musa Dag in Turkish) located 30 kilometers from Antioch, in the Hatay province, near the southeast coast of Alexandretta's harbor. It has a wide plain on top and rich forester flora.

The movie is about the decision of some Armenians to deny deportation and take shelter on the mountain where they would inevitably face the anger of the Turkish army and confront them heroically or die trying.

⁸⁰ Hovannisian, *Remembrance and denial*, 147–50.

⁸¹ "Global Hollywood versus national pride: The battle to film the forty days of Musa Dagh," *Film Quarterly*, March 1, 2006, <https://filmquarterly.org/2006/03/01/global-hollywood-versus-national-pride/>.

⁸² Sarky Mouradian, *Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, drama, history, war (High Investments Films, n.d.).

2.2.2 The plot

The famous and affluent French-raised Gabriel Bagradian returns to his homeland with his French wife Juliette and their son Steven⁸³. Childhood memories came forth and family time of leisure and pleasure comes to an end when in one of his visits in the local bath he eavesdrop some Turkish officials talking about deportations of Armenians from other Anatolian provinces. Quickly he tries to return to Paris but their passports were declared void therefore they were forced to remain to his village. When ravished and maltreated Armenian refugees found shelter at their village, Gabriel realized their soon dooming fate. At a local gathering, they villagers decide to disobey the orders of deportation and resort to the mount Musa for their safety. Plans for artillery and food provisions hastily made reality.

When the orders of deportation arrived, some 8.000 Armenians resorted to the mountain of Moses⁸⁴. At its plain they created an improvised village at the most remote place to avoid the army's attacks. The natural morphology along with their knowledge of their territory gave them an adequate advantage to defend themselves. Many small-scale battles and confrontations were successfully repulsed and their morale was high at first. Even some counter attacks deprived the soldiers of provisions and artillery. Yet, soon illnesses, lack of medical supplies and shortage on food and ammunition turned the balance in favor of the Turkish army. An attempt to notify the USA or French embassies in Antioch in order to send a ship ashore to rescue them led to the capture of Gabriel's son Steven. When his identity was revealed he was brutally murdered and his dead corpse was sent with a noble Muslim to the revolting Armenians on the mountain. There, Gabriel and his wife collapsed in view of their dishonored dead son and the funeral was heart-wrenching.

In the end, when all provisions ceased and famine was their basic rivalry, they decided to climb down the mountain to reach the sea in hope for help. The information that the army was planning on attacking them infuriated them and made their abandonment the only imperative move. By the time the last alive Armenians were climbing down the cliffs, boats from notified French ships, moored at Alexandretta harbor, came for help and they manage to collect most of the hopeless refugees. From the 8.000 people who initially climbed the

⁸³ "The 40 days of Musa Dagh" Godine, Publisher, <http://www.godine.com/book/the-forty-days-of-musa-dagh/>.

⁸⁴ Mouradian, *Forty days of Musa Dagh*.

mountain half of them were rescued and later found shelter in Port Said. This case of Armenian resistance became known throughout Europe and U.S.A. from missionaries, Consuls, Ambassadors⁸⁵ and from the rescued themselves who later travelled globally to find their new settlements, but never forgot, nor returned!



2.3 Ararat (2002)

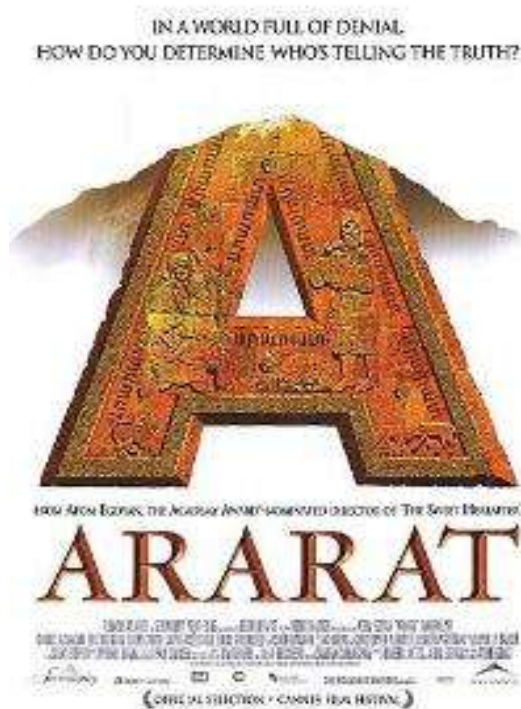
2.3.1 General information

The film "Ararat" is about a movie within a movie. The Canadian director with Armenian origins Edward Saroyan sets out a movie about the 1915 siege of Van, the place of his ancestors where the Armenian population paid a heavy toll. In the movie the biblical mountain Ararat is depicted in the background of the scenes of the city, in an effort to present the long lasting Armenian element that dwelled East Anatolia for ages before the Seljuk Turks conquer the area. It is the mountain that Noe's ark was stranded and grounded after the flood.

The film is Atom Egoyan's tribute to his Armenian ancestors that suffered and finally exterminated in the beginning of the 20th century and a way to present the forgotten genocide to a global audience. The great distributing company Miramax and the internationally respected actors like Charles Aznavour

⁸⁵Indicatively: Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's story*, reprinted (New York: Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday, Page, 1919); Horton, *The blight of Asia; an account of the systematic extermination of Christian populations by Mohammedans and of the culpability of certain Great Powers; with the true story of the burning of Smyrna*,; Clarence Douglas Ussher and Grace H Knapp, *An American physician in Turkey; a narrative of adventures in peace and in war*, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917).

(France), Eric Bogosian (USA), Christofer Plummer (USA), Bruce Greenwood (Canada), David Alpay (USA), Arsinee Khanjian (Canada) guaranteed the publicity and widespread of the movie. Egoyan was the director, writer and among the group of producers⁸⁶. One module of the movie that lasts 115 minutes is about the third generation Armenian offspring Raffi, who *"is sent to Turkey to shoot background footage for the film and what begins as a search for clues becomes a determined quest for answers across a vast and ancient terrain of deception, denial, fact, and fears"*⁸⁷. The film cost 15,5 million US Dollars⁸⁸ and was initially presented in the 2002 Cannes Festival⁸⁹ and was later released in theaters in Canada and USA receiving different reviews from extremely negative as provocative and rather confusing to "the most thought-provoking film of the year"⁹⁰.



⁸⁶ "Ararat - official site - Miramax," <https://www.miramax.com/movie/ararat>.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Miramax.

⁸⁸ Atom Egoyan, *"Ararat"*, Drama, War (Alliance Atlantis Communications, Serendipity Point Films, Ego Film Arts, 2002).

⁸⁹ "Festival de Cannes - from 15 to 26 May 2013," October 10, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20121010001319/http://www.festival-cannes.com/en/archives/ficheFilm/id/3158397/year/2002.html>.

⁹⁰ Stephen Holden, "Movie reviews," *The New York Times*, November 15, 2002.

2.3.2 The plot

The history of the Armenian Genocide is depicted through a set of different stories and characters all presented in this film. The story about the most famous painting of the prominent Armenian Painter Arshile Gorky⁹¹ presenting him and his mother as a memoir from the only photo they had together since his mother was among the victims of the genocide whilst he survived and became an Armenian of Diaspora.

The well known Art historian Ani gives lectures on Gorky's work and is hired as an historian advisor for the movie the Armenian director Edward wants to shot in remembrance of the siege of the city of Van where atrocities, rape and slaughter had fallen upon the Armenians.

The role of the eye-witness doctor and missionary Clarence Ussher, whose written memoirs, photographs and testimonies gave tangibility in the evidence of the genocide itself. It was his orphanage where young Arshile found shelter, when his mother followed the death march and this was probably the place from where later immigrated to America. Dr. Ussher and his wife tried to assist, save, feed and shelter as many under-aged children as possible and at the same time were in collaboration with humanitarian and charity organizations to equip them with the necessary medical and food provisions⁹². During the Van siege they cared for as many wounded people as possible irrelevant their nationality or belief and they faced the harsh face of mass extermination with vivid images of all kind of injured and dying Armenians.

The role of Xhevdet Bey, the "bad Turk" accepted by an actor of Turkish origins in the movie poses him in controversy with Raffi, the young son of Ani argue with him about the justification of the killings by the Turks.

Raffi, being a junior member of the crew, would travel to Anatolia to take footage of the places there. The incident at the airport control, upon his arrival, when Raffi is being interrogated by the airport security stuff at the last day of his duty before retirement and his strenuous effort to find out whether the young man smuggled heroin to Canada through the reels or is just telling the truth that the containers had additional footage of Anatolian sightseeings for the movie. Unfortunately, David's son had an affair with Ali, the actor playing the villain Turk in the movie so David, seemed to know beforehand that Raffi

⁹¹Hayden Herrera, *Arshile Gorky: His life and work* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

⁹² Ussher and Knapp, *An American physician in Turkey; a narrative of adventures in peace and in war*.

was lying, because the movie was already over and that night was its official premiere. When he finally decided to give the boy a chance and allowed him to go home, he confiscated the reels and later confirmed that one of them contained heroin.

At the same movie the efforts of Edward the Armenian director to make the film of his life as a legacy to next generations and as a tribute to his dead relatives are presented in his constant stress to have a perfect result.

2.4 The promise (2012)

2.4.1 General information

No major Hollywood movie was produced by the great filming companies for years. Even the movie "the Promise" which was released in 2016, with duration of 223 minutes⁹³ was privately financed by a group of producers, the famous Kirk Kerkorian alone (the late MGM owner from 1969) gave some 90 million US dollars to be his "fitting legacy"⁹⁴. The renowned and academy awarded Terry George was the director and writer of the movie. He also directed, wrote and produced the famous "Hotel Rwanda" and for his two movies portraying genocides he got awarded with the Armin. T. Wegner humanitarian award.

The story was about a love triangle between Michael an Armenian potential medicine student, Ana a beautiful Armenian living in Paris and Chris, her American friend and prominent journalist who was covering the incidents of the Ottoman Empire, during WW1⁹⁵.

The movie was a financial disaster as it turned only 12 million US dollars gross but as the director stated "audiences learn more from films today than they do from history books". Moreover, to avoid the foreign implications "the

⁹³ *The promise (2016) - IMDb*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt4776998/fullcredits>.

⁹⁴ Anita Busch, "Kirk Kerkorian's legacy: A mainstream feature about the Armenian genocide," *Deadline*, September 15, 2016,

⁹⁵ *The promise (2016) - IMDb*.

filmmakers opted to stay under the radar during production"⁹⁶. Historical research preceded the filming and events like the Musa Dagh resistance are vividly depicted⁹⁷. Last but not least is worth-mentioned the fact that the movie received an orchestrated attack on formal rating sites during the days of its premiere⁹⁸.



2.4.2 The plot

The local apothecary of Siroun, a village of south-east Anatolia province of Ottoman Empire, Michael dreamed of becoming a doctor. To achieve his goal he got betrothed to Maral, daughter of a prominent and wealthy villager and got a 400 liras dowry. With this amount of money and the promise to marry his fiancé after his completion of studies, he left for Constantinople to enroll in the Imperial Medical School, on the eve of WWI. At medical school he became friends with Emre Ogan, a Turkish offspring of a notable military family. He also met Anna, an Armenian artist living in Paris who returned to attend her father's death. She was having an affair with Chris Meyers an American photo-journalist of Associated Press who followed her in Constantinople as an opportunity to cover the Ottoman Empire's involvement in WWI. There, a triangular love affair begins.

⁹⁶ 'Hotel Rwanda' Director revisits historic tragedy in 'The promise', Voice of America - English", <https://www.voanews.com/arts-culture/hotel-rwanda-director-revisits-historic-tragedy-promise>.

⁹⁷ Mike Fleming Jr, "'Hotel Rwanda's Terry George looks at Armenian genocide with 'The Promise': Toronto Q&A," *Deadline* (blog), September 11, 2016, <https://deadline.com/2016/09/terry-george-armenian-genocide-wwi-turkis-government-the-promise-toronto-hotel-rwanda-1201817135/>.

⁹⁸ "The promise: Film study guide, Genocide education project", https://genocideeducation.org/teaching_guides/the-promise-feature-film-study-guide/; Jr and Jr, "'Hotel Rwanda's Terry George looks at Armenian genocide with 'The promise'".

When the registration of males to the Ottoman army started, Michael escaped recruitment making use of an exemption for medical students. Later, in 24th April 1915, when the Ottomans were gathering the distinguished intelligencia of the Armenian community, Michael tried to save his uncle. There he was held detained and sent to labor battalion where he eventually managed to escape. When he returned to his village he realized that relationships among Armenian and Turkish neighbors were in tension with outbreaks of violence. His mother then persuaded him to marry his fiancé Maral and find shelter in a cabin on the mountains. Michael and Maral had to climb down the mountain because she had a problematic pregnancy and was in need of assistance and treatment.

When, Michael learnt that Anna and Chris were at Red Cross missionary facility close to his village, he went for them seeking help for his family. They all headed towards Siroun, accompanied many orphans, when they confronted a terrible scene of slaughtered and decimated corpses of Michael's fellow villagers. His family was among them with his wife brutally murdered with her womb wide open and the fetus lying dead outside his mother's body. Fortunately, his mother was only severe wounded and the convoy took her with them. Chris got caught by soldiers and imprisoned back in Constantinople with accusations of spying in favor of the Allies. There, Emre notifies Ambassador Morgenthau who after diplomatic maneuvers succeeded in having Chris released and sent to Malta. However, Emre's whistle-blowing became known and he was convicted to death⁹⁹.

Marching southwest, they met with people of Musa Dagh periphery who decided to resist and not follow the death marches so Michael, Anna, the orphanages and other refugees follow the rebellions on the mountain. The resistance there lasted for 53 days, where the losses were many on both sides. The Armenian guerillas fought heroically but lacked on provisions and medicines. Due to this shortage many Armenians died and so Michael's mother who finally succumbed to her wounds. By the 53rd day the survivors on the mountain saw French ships sailing ashore as they had previously secretly been notified about their dooming situation. Among the ships was the French Guichen where Chris was onboard in his effort to return to Anatolia.

When the desperate fighters evacuated Musa Dagh and were climbing down the sea side of the cliff to embark on the boats, the Ottoman army fired

⁹⁹ "Hotel Rwanda' Director revisits historic tragedy in 'The Promise.'"

upon them. As a result Anna and Michael's younger cousin Yeva got shoot and fall in the sea. Michael tried to save them but ultimately he only saved Yeva.

At the last scenes of the film Michael had settled in the U.S.A. with Yeva his then adopted daughter and started a new life. The final stage is on Yeva's wedding in 1942 where Michael as the father of the bride, wished the couple good fortune¹⁰⁰.

2.5 Map of Salvation (2015)

2.5.1 General Information

A hundred years after the Armenian genocide this documentary film presents a solid "*historical and academic account of the Armenian Genocide and the women who were there to witness it and save lives*"¹⁰¹. The director Aram Shahbazyan along with Manvel Saribekyan who had the main idea and was the producer, dedicated the film "*to the memory of great humanists as a payment of gratitude on behalf of the entire Armenian nation, other nations espousing humanitarian views, and generally all people who cherish noble values*"¹⁰². The screenplay was written by Anna Sargsyan and the narrator is Dr. Svante Lundgren a Finn professor of history at the Center of Middle East Studies at the Lund University in Sweden¹⁰³. It was released on the 22nd April 2015 in Yerevan Armenia, for the centennial commemoration ceremonies, its duration is 90 minutes and its budget was 380.000 U.S.Dollars¹⁰⁴.

Professional organizations such as famous Universities, museums, etc. from seven countries have participated in the creation of the film and scenes were shot in fourteen different cities -such as Sivas, Harpoot, Diyarbakir, Dolma, Constantinople, Salonika, Kragero, Aleppo, etc- in five countries, following

¹⁰⁰ *The Promise (2016) - IMDb.*

¹⁰¹ "Map of salvation," *Film Threat* (blog), March 23, 2019, <https://filmthreat.com/reviews/map-of-salvation/>.

¹⁰² "Map of salvation – Pomegranate Film Festival", <http://pomegranatefilmfestival.com/films/map-of-salvation-armenia-manvel-saribekyan-90-min-north-american-premiere-f/3137/>.

¹⁰³ "Svante Lundgren, Lund University",

<https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lucat/user/8fc30a6573ad378a10cb3593dfa90b71>.

¹⁰⁴ "'Map of Salvation' Armenian genocide documentary to screen in Glendale," *Armenian National Committee of America* (blog), May 20, 2016, <https://anca.org/map-of-salvation-armenian-genocide-documentary-to-screen-in-glendale/>.

the steps of the courageous humanitarian women. These women were not the only altruistic females who offered their help to salvage lives of doomed Armenians, yet they were significant examples of people who didn't rest assured in the safety of their wealthy houses¹⁰⁵ but chose a hard way to rescue lives.

Their devotion to human lives set aside the warnings of their cherished family environments in Europe, far away from the "terror and death"¹⁰⁶ they later encountered, allowed them to save many children from obvious death. Commemorating plates, statues or ceremonial graves has been dedicated to all of them and they are cherished by the Armenian community for their catalytic contribution of saving children.

As stated in the film, the "forgotten genocide" would remain as such unless missionaries broke their silence. Their diaries, notes, memoirs, photos and other personal documentation¹⁰⁷ unveiled the magnitude of the horror of the genocide in ways that couldn't and shouldn't be ignored. *"This is an ode to the struggle and triumph of life... healing the grief of thousands of people and emerging feelings of pride and gratitude towards the courageous women"*¹⁰⁸.



2.5.2 The plot

The docudrama starts with Professor Lundgren presenting a map he calls "Map of Salvation" during one of his lectures in Lund University. It is about the

¹⁰⁵ "Foreigners talking about genocide, Aravot – news from Armenia," archive.is, April 4, 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Aram Shahbazyan, *Map of salvation (2015)* - IMDb, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4590326/>.

¹⁰⁷ Dr Svante Lundgren, "A Norwegian hero for the Armenians" *The Armenian Weekly*, July 22, 2020, <https://armenianweekly.com/2020/07/22/a-norwegian-hero-for-the-armenians/>.

¹⁰⁸ "Genocide movie presents destiny of five missionaries", armenpress.am, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/786144/genocide-movie-presents-destiny-of-five-missionaries.html>.

"country of blood and tears"¹⁰⁹ as he described Ottoman Empire for the Armenian internal migrants who were left abandoned in the inhospitable desert to die from famine, illnesses and persecution. It was the unfolding of a governmental executed plan (originally conceived in 1912 in Salonika by the Young Turks' movement as a necessity to exterminate minorities) to finish the "Armenian problem" once and for all.

The map is a counterbalance of rescue and life under the humanitarian and missionary aid, where there was nothing but terror and death as ordered by Nazim bey the secretary of CUP and Sakir bey the deputy director of CUP who were in charge of the Special Organization - the execution instrument of the genocide. On the map the places where the settlements of the brave women saved lives were spotted and their stories were unfolded. The narrator went to almost all places to find remnants of the settlements and follow the steps of the dedicative females. He gave information about their origins, their birthplaces and how they ended up in the turmoil of the Ottoman Empire in the eve of WWI. He presented important pigments of information found on various libraries and archives around the world concerning letters, photos, and even diaries they kept while facing all kinds of atrocities. He contacted descendants of family members of the missionaries and tried to find information yet unrevealed and he also contacted other scholars and researchers who made similar inquires.

Among the humanitarian assistance arrived from many places of the world were five young women from different European origins who ran for the provision of care and medical assistance to the desperate Armenian children. They were the Swedish Alma Johansson, the Norwegian Bodil Katharine Bjorn, the Estonian Anne Hedwig Bull and the Danish Karen Jeppe and Maria Jakobsen. All but the humanist Maria Jakobsen were missionaries and in almost all their memoirs they claimed to have received a signal from God to offer their help and support. None of them had children of their own nevertheless some, like Bodil Bjorn adopted Armenian orphanages. Their devotion led to a heavy toll as far as their health was concerned but this didn't prevent them from continuing their mission.

Alma Johansson, born in 1881 in Hallunda Sweden, was a trained nurse and midwife who worked in the city of Mush from 1910 to 1915, in a children's house and polyclinic. When she witnesses the inhumane death of the orphanages of Mush she went to Constantinople to testify the incident to diplomats. It was

¹⁰⁹ Lundgren, "A Norwegian hero for the Armenians."

included in the "Blue book" a series of witnessed testimonies gathered by the British and initially published in 1916. She also published her memoirs in the book "A people in exile: One year in the life of Armenians" in 1930 when she was in Sweden. Previously, after the massacres in Mush she returned to Sweden and then headed back to Salonika to assist the migrant Armenians resettle. There she even begged on the streets for provisions for the Armenians and later she founded kindergarten, primary school and a small sewing workshop for the Armenian women to make a living, all from donations and contributions. She aided Armenians in Thessaloniki until 1941 when after her retirement she went back to Sweden with health problems. She died in 1974 in Sweden¹¹⁰.

Bodil Katharine Bjorn was born in 1871 in Kragero Norway in a wealthy family. As an experienced missionary nurse, in 1905 she was sent to Mezereh and in 1915 she was in Mush with Alma Johansson witnessing the terrible massacres. While saving as many lives as possible she kept diary notes and photographic depictions with detailed information at the back of each photo¹¹¹. After the extermination of Armenian element in Mush, she went to Armenia to facilitate the impoverished refugee orphans until the soviet period when she returned back to Syria to continue her missionary service with orphans and widows. She also adopted an orphan Armenian boy and named him Fritjoff. Bodil died in 1960¹¹² and her family house is nowadays the city hall of Kragero.

Born in 1876 in Gylling Denmark, Karen Jeppe a teacher and relief worker, fascinated by a vigorous speech of the humanitarian Benedictsens, joined the team of Dr. Lepsius in Urfa in 1903. She was among the most active missionaries, learning Turkish, Armenian and Arab immediately and started innovative educational programs along with the facilitation of the local orphanage¹¹³. She adopted two Armenian orphans Misak and Lucia.

After the brutal massacres in Urfa and arousing health problems, she returned to Denmark to recover from physical and psychological trauma. In 1922 she returned to Aleppo as "a League of Nations Commissioner for the Protection

¹¹⁰ "Alma Viktoria Leontina Johansson," <http://skbl.se/en/article/AlmaJohansson>.

¹¹¹ "Genocide Museum, The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute", http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/online_exhibition_4.php.

¹¹² "Bodil Bjorn - An unsung heroine" Hetq.am, <https://hetq.am/en/article/27216>.

¹¹³ "Maps, Vilayet of Aleppo, Sandjak of Aleppo, Religion, Missionaries: Houshamadyan - a project to reconstruct Ottoman Armenian town and village life", <https://www.houshamadyan.org/mapottomanempire/vilayetaleppe/sandjak-of-aleppo/religion/missionaries.html>.

of Women and Girls in the Near East"¹¹⁴ a title that granted her respect and helped her to achieve her goals of helping the refugees. She maintained good relationships with local tribesman and rent a piece of land which transformed to a settlement with orphanages, medical center, workshops and schools. It was in 1935 when after a second malaria crisis, she passed away and buried in the Armenian cemetery as a token of gratitude to her unstoppable efforts of relieving the suffering Armenian refugees. At the memorial tomb in her birthplace the inscription refers to: Karen Jeppe mother of the Armenians.

Anne Hedwig Bull, born in 1887 in Haapsalu a small Baltic port of the Russian Empire, was a humanitarian missionary and a teacher as well. After completing her studies and practice in other refugee shelters in Russia, she left for Maras, Cilicia in 1911 where she provided aid in the orphanage for Armenian children until 1916, when she was recalled. It was in 1921 when she returned to Aleppo and established school, hospital, medical centers and refugee camps to improve the lives of the desperate refugees. After many hardships and changes in authorities, the Bolshevik regime refused to grant her visa to travel back home, consequently she became a refugee herself. As a result she spent the rest of her days in Austria and Germany, where she ultimately died in 1981 in a missionaries' nursing home near Heidelberg. She was also called mother of Armenians for her contribution in saving thousands of Armenian (children especially) lives¹¹⁵.

Maria Jakobsen was born in Siim Denmark in 1882. Being a trained nurse, initiated her first mission in Harpoot in 1907. Until the late 1919 she kept detailed diary (more than 600 pages) with photos and documents¹¹⁶ of the sealing fate of the exiled Armenian population. She soon learnt Armenian and helped numerous orphans from famine and death. Soon she got typhoid disease herself and in 1919 it was imperative for her to return to Denmark for treatment. She was then asked to visit U.S.A. and give speeches about the situation in Anatolia. These speeches allowed her to raise valuable funds for the orphans. It was in 1921 when she returned to Beirut Lebanon and established orphanages. It was in 1928 when the "Bird's nest" orphanage was established,

¹¹⁴ "Biography of Karen Jeppe 'Mother of Armenians' Published in Houshamadyan", Elyse Semerdjian, Ph.D., <https://elysesemerdjian.com/blog/biography-of-karen-jeppe-mother-of-armenians-published-in-houshamadyan>.

¹¹⁵ "Hedwig Büll," July 20, 2011,

https://web.archive.org/web/20110720125028/http://www.muuseum.haapsalu.ee/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=195&Itemid=373.

¹¹⁶ Dickran Karekin, "The Danish peace academy: Dickran, Karekin: Maria Jacobsen and the genocide in Armenia".

near Sidon, which sheltered and educated thousands of orphans¹¹⁷, turning out to be her safe haven for the beloved children she devoted her life to. Upon her death, she was buried in Bird's nest facilities thus being her last will and testament. "The album and handwritten diary of Maria Jacobsen are in Lebanon, but the missionary reports, accounts, photos, etc. are in the Danish archives of K.M.A."¹¹⁸ (Women's Missionary Workers). She recorded almost daily the genocide against the Armenians and by 1919 she had produced one of the most detailed primary accounts of the genocide ever written. Her memoirs were published in 2001, under the title *"Maria Jakobsen, Diaries of a Danish Missionary, Harpoot, 1907-1919"* by Gomidas Books¹¹⁹.

2.6 Coda

The facts of the first more ferocious genocide of the 20th century must be taken under serious consideration and thought. It is worldwide accepted among most of the scholars and intellectuals that the history of the Armenian Genocide is thoroughly documented, depicted in photo documentaries and testimonies of eye-witnesses, set aside the testimonies of the surviving Armenians.

The systematical extermination of the Armenian element of the Ottoman Empire may have initiated by minor incidents like the siege of the Ottoman Bank or small scale revolts of revolutionary elements among the peaceful Armenians but the outcome they produced was the state's formal excuse to escalate the widely expanded premeditated plan of "dealing with the Armenians". And while loads of money and effort have been given to diminish the status of the genocide, evidence proved otherwise.

From the abovementioned films we can extract similarities as far as the doomed subjects of the Ottoman Empire are concerned. They all have affection for their ancestral heritage and their primogenitor land. They struggled to make a living worthy of their values and morals abiding by the law. This conformation

¹¹⁷ "Genocide Museum, The Armenian genocide museum-institute", <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/29.03.2013.php>.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Karekin, "The Danish peace academy: Dickran, Karekin: Maria Jacobsen and the genocide in Armenia," 5–9.

was a primary reason why most of the victims didn't resist nor fought against their executioners. They suffer the outmost torments and inhumane tortures unable to defend themselves and death came slowly and more suffering for most of them. In all presenting movies a grief is drowned in the faces of the descendants of survivors who manage to restart their lives from scratch. They all wanted the best future for their off-springs leaving behind the atrocities they escaped from. All had friends and family members who starved or tortured to death. Many of the protagonists didn't mention what they had seen for many years as their consolidation wasn't over.

Many surviving members of the Armenian Diaspora described their fatherlands with vivid colors, as their imaginary land was only a sacred long anamnesis. Incidents of brave guerilla resistance were distinguishingly mentioned in many films, such as the Musha Dagh revolt proving Turkish propaganda to cover such unknown incidents, extremely difficult.

In all films a foreigner's witnessing and testimony is always present. In "Ararat" is the presence of Dr. Ussher, in "the forty days of Musha Dagh" and "the Promise" is the globally known journalists and in the "Map of Salvation" is the testimonies of the European devoted missionaries. As if the eye witnessing and the suffering of the escaping Armenians couldn't suffice. Moreover, contrasts of the life before and after the atrocities present a dramatic change in everyday life, cities and villages once flourishing and then pillaged, plundered, devastated and burnt to the ground.

3. The Pontic genocide through movies

3.1 Brief history of the Pontic genocide

Greek element spread across the southern fringes of Anatolia as early as the establishment of Sinope¹²⁰ as a major Miletian colony¹²¹ in the 8th century B.C. From then on a consecutive colonization process spread the Greek element all around Black Sea littoral¹²² marking towns of the later called "Pontic kingdom" as milestones in trade and export. It was during the era of Alexander the Great's Diadochoi when Mithridates the 1st a mercenary warrior in the court of Antigonos fled and created the Pontic kingdom which reached its magnitude at the years of Mithridates the 6th the so-called "Great"¹²³. After the battle of Zela in 47 B.C. Pontic region ultimately fell into Roman authorities and became part of the Roman province of Bithynia and Pontus. It was spread from the Sinope area to Sochumi and Batum east wise.

During the Byzantine era the most significant family was the Komninoi dynasty that became emperors. After the siege and fall of the Constantinople, brave Pontic resistance lasted for eighteen more years, until 1471 when the whole territory finally became part of the Ottoman Empire. Multiculturalism enabled tolerance and a level of independence through the millet system of governance and the Orthodox Greek element flourished and lived a -generally-unconstrained life, suffering from heavy taxation.

It was the forthcoming end of the Ottoman Empire that significantly changed the position of non Muslim subjects. From the revolution of the Neo-Turk movement, in 1908, against the Sultan and the institution of the new Constitution and the Triumvirate regime, the condition for all Orthodox peoples dramatically changed¹²⁴. And though the first large scale atrocities against

¹²⁰ David M. Robinson, "Ancient Sinope: First part," *The American Journal of Philology* 27, no. 2 (1906): 125–53; *ibid.*; David M. Robinson, "Ancient Sinope: Second part," *The American Journal of Philology* 27, no. 3 (1906): 245–79.

¹²¹ For a thorough study see: Vanessa Gorman, *Miletos, the ornament of Ionia a history of the city to 400 B.C.E.* (University of Michigan Press, 2001); Alan M Greaves, *Miletos: A history*, 2002.

¹²² More in: Pia Guldager Bilde and Vladimir F Stolba, *Surveying the Greek chora: Black Sea region in a comparative perspective* (Aarhus [etc.: Aarhus University Press, 2006).

¹²³ See: Jakob Munk Højte, *Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom* (Aarhus; Oakville, CT: Aarhus University Press, 2009).

¹²⁴ Κυριάκος Χατζηκυριακίδης, "Η Τουρκία ενάντια στους χριστιανούς της Ανατολής (αρχές 20ού αιώνα). Η Γενοκτονία των Ελλήνων του Πόντου".

Greeks started 1913 from the Ionian littoral and the Phocaea region, where sudden killings of innocent Greek habitants resulted in massive migration out of fear of escalating atrocities, and it soon continued with massive killings of Armenian subjects and at later stage. Boycott of Greek products, shops and trade along with falsified and provocative articles against revolting Greeks further enhanced the Muslim sentiment. Foreign delegations and the Patriarchate complained to the Sublime Port for mistreatment of Christian subjects¹²⁵ of Anatolia. The Special Organization branches and irregular gangs started intimidating Christians in all provinces, such as in Pontus, Ionia littoral, Cappadocia, etc.

The premeditation of the extermination plans is today inevitable if one examines all the facts thoroughly. An interview of an intellectual significant founding member of CUP, Nazim Bey, later appointed as the head of Special Organization, in a Greek journalist, as early as 1908 revealed the blatant intentions to cleanse the Ottoman Empire and unify its subjects under one re-emerged national identity. He declared that their aim was to reject from their roots the linguistic and racial variants and to flatten all differentiations and divisions among specific districts already drawn upon maps of Muslim, Greek, Armenian and Jew communities and raze all nations for the emergence and benefit on a sole Homeland unified Turkish nation¹²⁶. Moreover he estimated the Christian population, around three million souls as a minority compared to Muslim element and he boasted by saying that in due time this minority would diminish even more as the majority's population would grow more rapidly due to multi weddings and polygamy and the influx of Muslim refugees¹²⁷ from ambiguous Balkan territories (which were later lost and fragmented from the Ottoman Empire). As a consequence, no one can claim today that the Pontic Genocide took place in isolation nor it was the hostility of the Orthodox Greek subjects towards the regime¹²⁸. And while the Armenian massacres were overt and unabashed, the global outcry made the Young Turks and their regime to act more carefully and proactively, as far as the Greek element was concerned, due to the fact that the newly Greek state would respond to the massacres of its brothers and probably retaliate by massacring Muslims in Greek territories.

¹²⁵ Akçam, *A shameful act*, 68–71.

¹²⁶ Μιχαήλ Αργυρόπουλος, "Η νέα Τουρκία - Σπουδαιότατη συνέντευξις με τον Ναζήμ Βέην", *Αθήναι*, September 8, 1908, 1, Ψηφιακή Βιβλιοθήκη της Βουλής των Ελλήνων, (see annex 6.2)

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, Αργυρόπουλος.

¹²⁸ "Did the Pontian genocide occur in isolation, or was it part of Turkey's bigger plan?" Zoryan Institute, <https://zoryaninstitute.org/did-the-pontian-genocide-occur-in-isolation-or-was-it-part-of-turkeys-bigger-plan/>.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Interior Talaat Pasha stated "... *I see that time has come for Turkey to have it out with the Greeks the way it had it out with the Armenians in 1915*"¹²⁹. The German allies of the triumvirate had already informed them that the decisions of deporting the general Christian population are unexcused and may even cause further disturbances in the field of diplomatic relations with other foreign delegations.

From 1916, long deportation routes started and caravans of unarmed and unprotected people, women children and elders included, headed towards the south of Anatolia to inhospitable places, in a familiar state organized pattern¹³⁰. Of course, like in the Armenian Genocide, these deportations were not formally planned to relocate the residents of Pontus but they aimed at exterminating the refugees from starvation, deprivation, cold, exposure and illnesses¹³¹. No shelters, nor food and provisions were offered during their arduous long-lasting marches and the dead were left behind as prey for vultures¹³².

The majority of strong men was sent to labor battalions and was used under inhumane conditions to complete major constructions like railways, roads, etc. There, they perished like flies from hardships and adversities. It was autumn 1916 when the commander of Special Organization arrived at Pontus and massive slaughters reemerged. Fortunately, there were some guerilla attempts of desperate yet brave Christian who sheltered in the mountains for their self defense. Countless stories about insurgent and unarmed people who escaped at the harsh mountainous range of Pontic Alps and found heroic death are written in memoirs and books about survivors' testimonies.

The territory east from Trebizond was under the Russian army from Easter 1916 to February 1918 when, after the Bolshevik revolution, all Russian army divisions were withdrawn from the Ottoman Empire.

The benchmark of 19th May 1919 was the date when Mustafa Kemal, the appointed hero at the Gallipoli battle, arrived in Samsus¹³³, where immediately broke away from the Sublime Port and became autonomous; he initiated contacts with irregular forces (cete), one of them being Topal Osman, the notorious

¹²⁹ Πολυχρόνης Ενεπεκίδης, *Οι διωγμοί των Ελλήνων του Πόντου (1908-1918): Βάσει των ανεκδότων εγγράφων των κρατικών αρχείων της Αυστροουγγαρίας* (Αθήνα: Σύλλογος Ποντίων Αργοναύται-Κομνηνοί, 1962), 11.

¹³⁰ Theodosios Kyriakidis, "The Roman Catholic accounts testifying to the Pontic Greek genocide," in *The Greek genocide, 1913-1923: New perspectives*, Edit. George N. Shirinian (Chicago, U.S.A.: The Asia Minor and Pontos research center, 2019), <https://www.greek-genocide.net/index.php/27-bibliography?start=18>.

¹³¹ Morris and Ze'evi, 467.

¹³² Akçam, *The Young Turks' crime against the humanity*, 107–11.

¹³³ Θεοδόσης Κυριακίδης, "Οι βίαιοι εκτοπισμοί ως εργαλείο εξόντωσης στη γενοκτονία των Ελλήνων του Πόντου", http://clioturbata.com/%ce%b1%cf%80%cf%8c%cf%88%ce%b5%ce%b9%cf%82/kyriakidis_genocide/.

slaughterer of Pontus¹³⁴, provincial chief of local gangs in Cerasous region. After negotiations with Kemal, Topal Osman received promises of amnesty for all his prior and following hideous acts, and he was supplied with armament and ammunition. Some researchers estimate that Topal Osman and his gang were responsible for more than 70.000 heinous crimes and gruesome deaths of innocent Pontic civilians, the burning of numerous villages, the violation of many women and children and the desecration of cemeteries, churches and tombs.

There "it can be safely argued that the total number of Greeks living in Asia Minor and Pontus just before the outbreak of the First World War ranged approximately between 1,270,000 and 1,420,000"¹³⁵. According to the Black Book, published by the Central council of Pontus in Athens in 1922 (gathering evidence from reports until autumn 1921), 960 schools were destroyed, 1134 churches, 815 villages (communities) and a total of 303,238 people exterminated¹³⁶. Yet, the official number exceeded this number by far, estimating the death toll of the Pontic populace to 353.000, since additional "50.000 new martyrs... came to be included in the register by spring 1924"¹³⁷.

What is more, Turkish ad hoc trials assembled in a spur of a moment and sentenced to death many profound members of the Pontus territories and immediately after the judgments the executions completed the puzzle. Among these martyrs were reputable parliament members, members of the clergy, bankers, monopoly owners, advocates, doctors, pharmacists, traders, journalists, members of sports teams, etc. who were accused of insubordination and motivation on the creation of the Republic of Pontus¹³⁸. After the end of WWI, the humiliating conditions of Mydros armistice and the de jure control of the Ottoman Empire by the winning Entente members' Committee, a series of Ottoman Court-Martials against the masterminds and the responsible organizers of the annihilation of the Christian population (Armenian, Greek, Assyrian), resulted in various convictions, even in death penalty in absentia for the triumvirate and the head of Special Organization. Members of the leadership were imprisoned under British command but the three Pashas - Talaat, Xhemal and Enver - flee with a German ship to unknown destination out of fear of being

¹³⁴ Kyriakidis, "The Roman Catholic accounts testifying to the Pontic Greek genocide," 38; Morris and Ze'evi, *The thirty-year genocide*, 409.

¹³⁵ Antonis Klapsis, "Violent uprooting and forced migration: A demographic analysis of the Greek populations of Asia Minor, Pontus and Eastern Thrace," *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 4 (July 4, 2014): 622–39.

¹³⁶ Greek Genocide RCen, "Black Book: The tragedy of Pontus, 1914-1922," Greek Genocide Resource Center, 6–19, <http://www.greek-genocide.net/index.php/bibliography/books/236-black-book-the-tragedy-of-pontus-1914-1922>.

¹³⁷ Konstantinos Fotiadis, "The genocide of the Pontian Greeks" (Εκδόσεις Αντ. Σταμούλη, 2015), 60–62.

¹³⁸ RCen, "Black Book," 27–29.

murdered.

During the Turkish-Greek war from 1919 to 1922 atrocities continued unstoppable and even escalated in an effort to cleanse the area -that would soon constitute the first Turkish Republic of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk- from Christian subjects¹³⁹. The regime was mostly afraid that the Greek element would constitute a fifth pillar and act in favor of the thrusting Greek army¹⁴⁰. Forced Islamization, persecutions and violence¹⁴¹ were daily phenomena from members of the Turkish National Movement, similarly "*the raping of Greek women was almost considered to be a national duty*"¹⁴².

Important eye witnesses also testified for the Pontic genocide. Apart from the consuls and the Ambassadors who defeated them there were mercenaries who fought at the Ottoman army, such as the Venezuelan Rafael de Nogales Mendez, and members of the German delegation who gave their important testimonies and also provided books with ample facts of the atrocities often endangering their lives.

Decisive was activity of Catholic missionaries in the Pontus area as they frequently sent detailed reports about the horrible facts of annihilations to their supreme authority, the Vatican. Such was the extent of their efforts that Pope Benedict XV wrote many appeals initially to the Porte, then to Grand Vizier and ultimately to Kemal himself asking him to spare the lives and properties of innocent civilians. Kemal blatantly ignored Pope sending a meretricious reply that he insured the life of all subjects of Turkey and continued the massacres. More letters followed but in vain as the situation was by then derailed¹⁴³.

Some Arab tribesmen and few Kurds who didn't approved of the massacres and even found them appalling gave detailed reports about the patterns and ways of deportations, exhaustion and slaughtering.

Last but not least we must not forget the refusal some Ottoman officials expressed when they were ordered to participate in the atrocities committed into the areas under their control. Most of them were forcibly repositioned, like the governor of Aleppo and Konya while others were brutally murdered when tried to treat the refugees in a slightly humane manner.

¹³⁹ Morris and Ze'evi, 494-495

¹⁴⁰ Morris and Ze'evi, 382.

¹⁴¹ Meichanetsidis, "The genocide of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, 1913-1923", 122-25.

¹⁴² Racho Donef, "The Pontian Genocide: The continuous cycle of violence and massacres" 3.

¹⁴³ Kyriakidis, "The Roman Catholic accounts testifying to the Pontic Greek genocide," 36-38.

After the end of the war and the Treaty of Sevres (1920), which - cunningly- wasn't ratified by the Turkish side, the Treaty of Lausanne on the 24th July 1923 finally put the gravestone to the Hellenism of Anatolia and Pontus in particular. It was the first time in international history that a mandatory exchange of population occurred¹⁴⁴. The remaining Greek element of Pontus thus followed its fortune on the way to Greece, leaving behind the ancestral land, which was dwelled by Greek subjects for more than two thousand years. The deported Pontics, after an exile road full of hardships and malaise, finally reached their places of resettlement in the newly expanded Greek territories of Macedonia and Thrace. Most of them after being quarantined were settled in rural areas establishing a new agricultural population, while some of them moved into urban centers such as Thessaloniki, Drama, Kilkis, Kavala, Imathia, Serres, etc¹⁴⁵. Many Pontics followed north routes and settled in the Caucasus and Anti-Caucasus region where there was already strong Greek element¹⁴⁶. Finally, it was the founder of the Turkish Republic who declared, on 13 August 1923, at the Turkish Grand National Assembly "At last we've uprooted the Greeks ..." ¹⁴⁷.

3.2 America America (1963)

3.2.1 General Information

Though the epic film "America America" is not strictly a representative one of Pontic genocide, it is the first indirect reference to both Armenian and Greek genocides along with the suffering of Christian elements of Anatolia and the backwash huge migration flows. It was imperative for the purpose of this study to present this film as a personal effort of an offspring of Anatolian Christians who depicted his memories from family storytelling on screen.

¹⁴⁴ Morris and Ze'evi, 397, 467-471.

¹⁴⁵ Michel Bruneau, "The Pontic Greeks, from Pontus to the Caucasus, Greece and the Diaspora. 'Iconography' and mobile frontiers," *Journal of Alpine Research, Revue de Géographie Alpine*, no. 101-2 (November 1, 2013): 1-2.

¹⁴⁶ Kyriakos Chatzikyriakidis, "Forced migration, exile and an Imaginary Land-Heaven. The case of Greek-Pontians in the Caucasus," *Words and Silences* 6, no. 1 (2011): 50-51.

¹⁴⁷ Harry Tsirkinidis, *At last we uprooted them... The Genocide of the Greeks of Pontus, Thrace and Asia Minor, through the French archives* (Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis Brothers, 1999), 300.

Moreover it was the first Hollywood attempt to deal with the minorities, in a large scale production. While in the search for proper locations Kazan was clever enough not to explain the Turkish government what he was going to shoot because when the Turkish side realized the purpose of the movie, they expelled him and he had to make the rest of the scenes in other locations in Greece.

It was based upon the novel "The Anatolian Smile" published in 1962 by Elias Kazan one of the most famous and influential directors of all times. The book was a tribute to his ancestry line as it rhapsodized the real story of his uncle (in the movie named Stavros Topouzoglou) and his odyssey from his home town at the foothills of mount Argaeus (today Erciyes), in the central Anatolia to the promise land. It was this journey that opened the gateway for Kazan's family to migrate to the U.S.A. and found shelter there and represented the urge of the old world to migrate to the new - promising- world in hordes of desperation¹⁴⁸.

From all the movies Elias Kazan had ever made this one was his favorite by far. Its outstanding value lays on the sincerity of the characters, the accurate description of the conditions and the everyday life in Ottoman Anatolia in the late 19th century, the picturesque sightseeings and the presentation of many different ways of life in urban and rural societies. Yet, the most striking element of the movie is the presentation of the slaughter of the Armenians during the Hammidian massacres in 1894-96, under the orders of the Sublime Porte, the impoverishment and the decadence of the Great patient, the Ottoman Empire.

The film was produced, written and directed by Kazan¹⁴⁹ himself who searched for suitable locations in Turkey and Greece for almost two years before the filming. He was casting many actors for the leading role and he finally chose Stathis Gialelis, a twenty-one-years old novice actor¹⁵⁰ who by that time didn't speak any English at all. His freshness and truthfulness impressed the Director who immediately realized he would have the leading role as his uncle Stavros.

The film lasts 174 minutes¹⁵¹, is in black and white¹⁵² and the emblematic music was composed by Manos Hadjidakis¹⁵³. Its budget was 1, 25 million U.S.

¹⁴⁸ Bosley Crowther, "Screen: A tribute to the great immigrant wave: Elia Kazan's 'America America' opens Russian 'night before Christmas'" *The New York Times*, December 16, 1963.

¹⁴⁹ *America America (1963)*, https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/america_america.

¹⁵⁰ "AFI Catalog - America America", <https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/22484>.

¹⁵¹ Elia Kazan, *America America*, drama (Athena Enterprises, Warner Bros., 1964).

Dollars and was distributed by Warner Bros Company. Kazan was the narrator in the beginning and in the end of the movie along with the ending scores. Moreover, many techniques were used such as the cutting of the scenes, the first and last pictures being the same that is mount Argaeus, disproportionate length in specific acts to emphasize, etc.

It received four nominations for the Academy Awards: Best picture, best direction, best art direction and best original screenplay and was granted the Best Art Direction in the 36th Oscars. In the 21st Golden Globe Awards Elias Kazan was awarded as best director and Stathis Gialelis as most promising male newcomer. Its latest impact was in 2001, when it was selected in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as a "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant motion picture"¹⁵⁴.



3.2.2 The plot

The movie starts with Stavros, a Greek young man and his Armenian friend and protector Vartan heading down mount Argaeus together, on a horse-drawn cart, when Stavros turned back and starred at the glorious mountain,

¹⁵² "Elia Kazan and the Armenian genocide: Remembering 'America America', Salon.Com", https://www.salon.com/2015/04/23/elia_kazan_and_the_armenian_genocide_remembering_america_america/.

¹⁵³ Crowther, "Screen."

¹⁵⁴ "National Film Registry, 2001", September 23, 2009, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090923234838/http://www.loc.gov/film/nfr2001.html>.

crowned with clouds, as if seeing it for last time. Later, they encountered a group of Ottoman troops that scolded them and when Vartan gave acquaintance to the sergeant, he advised them to avoid their village as a destruction of the Armenian populace would take place.

The next scene is when the helpless Armenians found shelter in the church and the outraged Ottomans locked them in the church, disgraced one priest outside the church and set fire to the holy building. Screams of desperation mixed with prayers for their fate silenced when the smokes occupied the interior of the church. Vartan, in an attempt to save his people attacks the soldiers and tries to free people from the church, in vain. The next morning Stavros holds Vartan's -shot to death- corpse and a pile of burned Armenian bodies laid aside and into the smoked church.

Later, in Stavros' house his father took him aside and informed him about the decision he made to liquidate his assets and sent him to his uncle to Constantinople to work with him, in his carpet store with a view to bring the whole family away from their village¹⁵⁵, where the Christian population was in a constant unrest and fear.

His mother and sisters sew money inside his clothes and when the family greeted him goodbye, they gave him everything that could have a significant value, even stuff from his sisters' dowries, and a donkey to carry his belongings. On his way through the depths of Anatolia, he met with strange people, one of them - a cunning and shameless Turk rascal- tried to confiscate his money and wealth, even his donkey. Stavros was naïve and unworldly and he finally reached Constantinople with half his garments. When his uncle met him he thought he was a beggar and all his dreams of uniting their money to save his carpet shop went away. Under family obligations, he fed his nephew and then proposed him to make a fortune wedding with the daughter of a prominent trader and associate partner of the uncle¹⁵⁶. Stavros of course refused and left his uncle's place. He went to the worst districts of Constantinople making the most exhausting and humiliating drudgery ended as a heavy carriage back porter.

His life aspiring dream was always to cross the Ocean and travel to America to make a fortune there. Working by the port he was fascinated every time he heard stories about the new land. After a long time, sparing all his money, a friend led him to prostitutes. There, he got cheated and looted of all

¹⁵⁵ "America, America (1963) - Elia Kazan, synopsis, characteristics, moods, themes and related, AllMovie, <https://www.allmovie.com/movie/america-america-v83620>.

¹⁵⁶ Kazan, *America America*.

his savings once again, resulted in extreme poverty. He found shelter in a dormitory at the butt end of the borough where one night the police attacked under suspicion of revolts and riots. After an obscure scene of terrible gun-shooting the following day he was found semi-fainted and pilled on a cart with dead bodies to be thrown away to the sea.

When he regained consciousness, he decided to go back to his uncle where he repeated the matchmaking. Stavros accepted the event unresisting due to his misfortune and with the ultimate goal of gathering the dowry money for his dream travel. In the house of his in-laws where Stavros was warmly welcomed, a status-quo of settled relationships and defined roles of men, women, the rich breadwinner in contrast to the inferior position of the females and the imperturbable life that was inaugurating with his engagement conclusively determined his plan of migrating to America. In a moment of severe truthfulness, his fiancée, Thomna asked him whether he was happy and in their new dowry house he admitted that his aim was to buy a ticket to the land of freedom and abandoned her.

While he was working in his father-in-law enterprise, he became acquainted with Armenian-American aristocrats who returned in Constantinople for business and pleasure. One such couple was fascinated by his character and spirited temper and the Armenian wife developed close tights with Stavros who was seduced by her "western" ways.

At the same time, one day he met Hohannes, a poor and indigent Armenian whom he assisted on his way to Constantinople giving him his pair of shoes. His friend informed him that he was waiting for the ship to America, under the sponsorship of his new boss who was in the search for new labours for his businesses in U.S.A. Stavros' eyes sparkled and immediately asked Hohannes to make contacts for him as well.

The next scene is onboard where Stavros, Hohannes and other poor immigrants are travelling for their new beginning. At the same ship is the aristocrat Armenian couple and Stavros soon became enmeshed in a temporary love affair with the wife of the couple. Just before they reached America, the wealthy merchant discovered the adultery and he warned Stavros that he will press charges upon him before disembarking to the States. The fear of deportation back to Constantinople was most imminent than ever and our protagonist was in horribly god-awful position. As he was kept locked in a cabin he was communicating with his friend Hohannes who suffered from tuberculosis and was also afraid that he was going to be deported due to his aggravated

health condition. In a moment of desperation, Hohannes jumped in the sea and his trails lost.

The next scene is at Elis Island where the immigrants were under strict screening control before given the mostly wanted permission to enter U.S.A. There, in a sudden moment of mental alertness and self preservation, knowing that he would be deported due to the charges pressed by the rich Armenian, he chose to change his identity to that of the lost Hohannes. Therefore, his journey to America ended well and he became employee of a shoe polishing business. After many years he finally succeeded in saving his family and transferring them to the States, starting a new life. The last phrase of the film is that stated by Kazan himself that only his old father didn't followed them but preferred to stay and die in their homeland.

3.3 Waiting for the clouds (2004)

3.3.1 General Information

The film is about the life of Ayse an old lady in a remote seaside village on the northern outskirts of Anatolia, in Trebizond province. It was directed by Yesim Ustaoglu, produced by her and Setarh Farsi and along with Petros Markaris adopted the screen play which was based on the novel "Tamama" by Giorgos Andreadis which was awarded in 1992 with the Ipektsi award in Istanbul. The writer was later deported (in 1998) due to the influence some of his books had on the Turkish intelligencia and youth. In 2000 Giorgos Andreadis was awarded from the Athens Academy for his contribution on the awakening of the remaining Islamized Pontic Greeks in south black Sea region. His book has been translated in many languages and the rights from the Turkish edition were accorded to UNESCO for the restoration of Panagia Soumela monastery¹⁵⁷.

The duration of the movie is 90 minutes and its budget was 2 million Euros. It is a French-German-Turkish and Greek co-production. Worth-mentioning fact is the language of the protagonists which are Turkic, Greek and

¹⁵⁷ "Εφυγε σε ηλικία 80 ετών ο συγγραφέας Γιώργος Ανδρεάδης - Εύξεινος Πόντος", <https://efxinospontos.gr/eidiseis/619-efyge-se-ilikia-80-eton-o-syggrafeas-giorgos-andreadis>.

Pontic-Greek. The shootings took place in Rizounta, Tripolis, Thessaloniki, the old city of Kavala and villages in Drama¹⁵⁸. The village in the highlands of the Pontic Alps is as remote as it used to be 45 years ago.

The movie was presented and nominated in 2004 Montreal World Film Festival, in 2005 Berlin International Film festival¹⁵⁹ and received the special prize in 2004 Istanbul International film Festival¹⁶⁰. It was consider another dauntless attempt of Ustaoglu to reveal the forgotten multicultural past of Turkey in an effort to consolidate coherence with the obnoxious past actions against minority subjects of Turkey.



3.3.2 The plot

The movie starts in 1975, yet another political tumultuous period for Turkey, the time when the official population census is taking place. There, in Trebolu, a place west of Trebizond the elder Ayse takes care of her ailing sister Selma who is dying. After the death of her sister, Ayse became aloof and distant from all her fellow villagers but the young Mehmet who considered Ayse like his beloved grandmother. They liked sharing stories from her past days in Merzifon, where she was living with her beloved sister before moving to Tripolis. When Ayse, along with all villagers climbed up the mountains she became more unapproachable and she liked standing on a small rock gazing at the clouds for hours. In one such day, when little Mehmet was looking for her, she revealed her thoughts of seeing her mother and her little sister on the clouds. Another day,

¹⁵⁸ "Patrides/John", <http://www.patrides.com/feb05/malk1.htm>.

¹⁵⁹ "Bulutları Beklerken, Waiting for the clouds - Crossing Europe", <https://www.crossingeurope.at/en/archive/films-2017/film/bulutlari-beklerken-waiting-for-the-clouds.html>.

¹⁶⁰ "Περμμένοντας Τα Σύνεφα", October 26, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20071026214011/http://www.cinephilia.gr/world2/clouds.htm>.

when she was feverish, she called Mehmet with the name "Niko" and the curious boy started asking questions about who Niko was.

It was during the deportations of the Pontic Greeks from the coasts of Northern Anatolia to the southern parts of Turkey when Ayse, then Eleni Terzidou with her mother and siblings started a journey of no return.

When Thanasis, a former Pontic Greek communist came from Russia to Tripolis, on his way to Greece, he came in contact with Ayse who confessed to him about her past in a tremendous scene. There she unfolded the story of her life. She was born as Eleni Terzidou and during the deportations her baby sister died in her mother's arms. Later, her mother, also died from hunger and fatigue and the remaining siblings Eleni and her little brother Nikos -whom she had sworn to her father to protect- were heading towards the makeshift orphanages which were overcrowded with children. A good Turk saw the two brothers and decided to engulf them into his family and treat them as his own off-springs. He strictly forbid them to speak their dialect to avoid being captured by their persecutors and changed their names. The young Niko couldn't tolerate this and decided to go to the orphanage where his traces were later lost.

Eleni, Ayse from then on, didn't speak her mother language nor revealed her secret up to the meeting with Thanasis. Finally, she confessed to him that she was carrying heavy burden not knowing what happened to Nikos, thus disobeying her father's last will. Thanasis promised to help her find information about Nikos and a little later we saw Eleni coming to Thessaloniki, a major city of great refugee influx, with a piece of paper with Nikos' address.

After some time she reached his house and upon their introduction, Nikos shut the door to her face. It was his wife that welcomed Eleni and found her story plausible. She begged Nikos to reconcile with his past and speak to Eleni. The following day Nikos approached Eleni and presented her a volume of family photos debating her that if she was his sister she would be included in these photographs. Then Eleni showed Nikos a worn out photograph of the two of them very young, probably the last family photo they had together before their great suffering and separation. After the reunion of the siblings Eleni returns to her village but with a constant smile on her face.

The movie was all about the suffering and torture peoples of the Ottoman Empire faced in an effort to turkify the newly emerged state. The former multicultural Ottoman Empire had been transformed in a Republic with a disproportionate toll of blood and human lives. The whole chart of the census of

the population before and after the genocides verified these exterminations in favor of the Turkic element.

A significant detail is that a noble Turk provided shelter for the two brothers and cared for them. He didn't behave aggressively and ferociously nor did he abuse the children. He represented a portion of the population that stood against formal orders and acted like human rather than beast. It is imperative to honor these people and clarify their role in saving innocent lives, often with personal or family risk. It is also their crucial, contrary role that defines the magnitude of the genocide for as many as the honest ones could save, another countless souls would be perished.

3.4 The Band

3.4.1 General Information

The short film documentary¹⁶¹ presents the story of John Papadopoulos, the only surviving member of the Kerassouda philharmonic marching band. He wrote a short book for his awkward story of life to be remembered, under the title *"Ποντιακαί Μελέται, Σελίδες από την ιστορίαν της Κερασούντος και τα τερατουργήματα του αιμοσταγούς Τοπάλ Οσμάν καθ' όλη την περιφέρεια του Πόντου"* edited by Pantelis Fourniades and published in 1965¹⁶² in approximately 500 copies.

The book was handed over by Professor Konstantinos Em. Fotiadis to the well-known journalist Nikos Aslanidis who immediately decided to make it a short film documentary. The 64 minute documentary was produced, directed and transcribed by Nikos Aslanidis in Greece, under the budget of 15.000 euro and was initially presented in Thessaloniki's 21st International Documentary Film Festival. The following year, in the 60th Thessaloniki International Film Festival it was awarded with the Public Price¹⁶³. The film was presented in many countries, mainly to Pontic Associations and has subtitles in six different

¹⁶¹ *Η μπάντα*, 2020, <https://www.filmfestival.gr/el/movie-tdf/movie/12016>.

¹⁶² «Η μπάντα» του Νίκου Ασλανίδη - Ένα συγκλονιστικό ντοκιμαντέρ για τη Γενοκτονία των Ποντίων", <http://www.thessnews.gr/article/125422/i-mpanta-tou-nikou-aslanidi-ena-syglonistiko-ntokimanter-gia-ti-genoktonia-ton-pontion>.

¹⁶³ Newsroom, "Η αληθινή, αιματοβαμμένη ιστορία της «Μπάντας» από την Κερασούντα του Πόντου.

languages (English, French, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish). Whenever it was presented was warmly accepted by the audience and usually conversation with the creator followed¹⁶⁴.

The 3/5 of Kerassouda's population, by the time of the genocide, was Pontic Greeks. They held control or commerce, trade and finance and most of them were skilled hardworking artisans. Almost the entire Greek element was either brutally murdered, raped, slaughtered, etc or sent to the notorious working battalions. Most of them perished and the very few who survived were either converted to Islam or adopted by Muslim families.

The Kerassouda's philharmonic band was consisted of Greek and Turkish habitants as well, presented in a way the peaceful life and close proximity most people of the communities had for long.



3.4.2 The plot

During the extermination of Christian element in the early 21st century, the notorious Topal Osman, a local militia leader participated to the plunders, slaughters and rapes of Armenian and later Greek Christians of the Pontus territory¹⁶⁵. He even confiscated properties of Christians and soon became the greatest enemy and fierce persecutor of Christians. His origins were from the Kerassouda province and there he usually operated.

¹⁶⁴ Information through e-mail correspondence with the journalist Nikos Aslanidis in 28th December 2020.

¹⁶⁵ Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian genocide a complete history* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 221, 486.

He was an illiterate evildoer, who after his limb during the Balkan Wars, preserved feelings of hatred against the Greek. When he returned from war he was dealing with smuggling and malfeasance activities, rather than being productive and hard-working like the Greeks. According to Robert Shenk, the author of "America's Black Sea Fleet: The U.S. Navy Amidst War and Revolution, 1919-1921" by Naval Institute Press, 2012, he was "*sadistic ethnic cleanser of Armenians and Greeks*"¹⁶⁶.

While he was persecuting the Greeks, he ordered members of the Kerasounta philharmonic band to accompany them with their music while the militia gang was brutally executing people. The narrator was a flute player in the band and along with other 15 musicians (13 Greek and 3 Turks) was forced to play, under the threat of guns. They were all martyrs of his horrible and tremendous extortions, rapes and macabre ways of annihilating helpless civilians, men and women, of all ages. This martyrdom resulted in their one by one execution out of fear of revealing their terrible acts of extreme violence and illegal authority. The last to be executed was John Papadopoulos who didn't want to die bayoneted so he tried to escape the militia in order to be gun shouted. Fortunately he was lucky enough not to be hit and he jumped down a steep cliff. Later, still being persecuted he jumped another cliff and finally he followed Saggarios river where he met the Greek military forces. The major of the army ordered him to go to Greece to tell his story as an eye witness and so he did. When the Greek forces retreated, John Papadopoulos started a new life in the city of Kavala where he wrote his story in a makeshift book.

The documentary was going to be presented in Turkey as well but ultimately banished by the Turkish police authorities¹⁶⁷. The unique value of this documentary lies upon the memoirs of the sole eye witness of almost all atrocities and manifold ways of exterminating Pontic Greeks in the Kerasounta territory, a testimony that can't be dispeached nor disputed.

¹⁶⁶ Robert Shenk, *America's Black Sea fleet: The U.S. Navy amidst war and revolution, 1919-1923*, Reprint edition (U.S.A.: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 50–51.

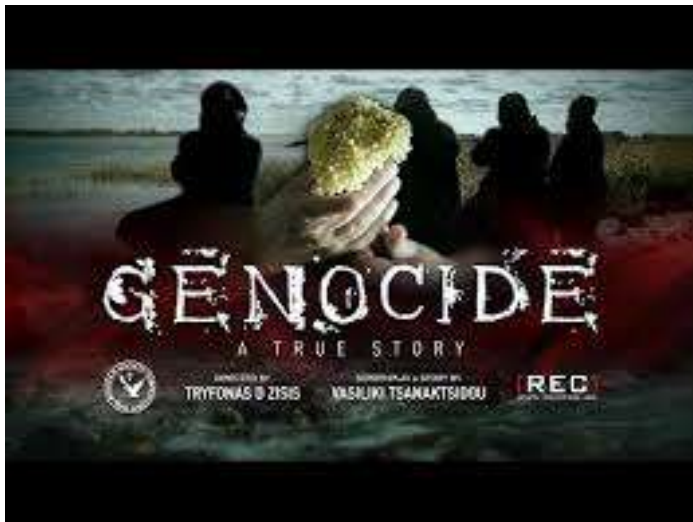
¹⁶⁷ "Ο Ερντογάν απαγόρευσε την προβολή της 'Μπάντας' του Ν. Ασλανίδη στην Άγκυρα..."
<https://www.makthes.gr/o-erntogan-apagoreyse-tin-provoli-tis-mpantas-toy-n-aslanidi-stin-agkyra-217199>.

3.5 Genocide - A true Story

3.5.1 General Information

The short film "Genocide - a true story" was an initiative undertaken by Vasiliki Tsanaktsidou, in an effort to provide material for the recognition of the genocide of the 353.000 Pontic Greeks. The film coincided with the centennial anniversary in the memory of the victims of the genocide. The shooting started in 2017 and ended in the beginning of 2019. It was directed by Tryfonas Zisis and Vasiliki Tsanaktsidou was the producer -in collaboration with the Pontic Association "Pontos" of Norwalk CT and REC Company and she was also the scriptwriter.

The film was financed through the producers, volunteers and sponsors. The film was made for non-profitable reasons but to raise awareness for the official declaration of Pontic genocide¹⁶⁸. Its duration is 19 minutes and it was firstly released on 29th March 2019 in the U.S.A.



3.5.2 The plot

From the beginning of the film a black dressed widow is wondering on why were the Greeks deported from their homeland, why were they treated as traitors and enemies all of a sudden? How can unarmed women and children present a lethal danger to the central state that had to be violently removed and displaced thousands of miles away? Who could they hurt and how?

¹⁶⁸ Tryfonas Zisis, *Genocide - A True Story*, short, drama, history, 2019.

The narrator develops a story as inland refugee of her and her little son. The malnutrition, bad hygiene and climate conditions along with the maltreatment of the gendarmeries led them to death from diseases or famine. The corpses along their way were a tremendous spectacle yet became worse when her son died and had to be buried properly. The militia allowed no one to waste time engraving burial places; nor making other traditional burial rites. The helpless refugees had to abandon the dead bodies of their beloved ones as prey for vultures and other animals¹⁶⁹. When she fiercely protested and demanded to bury her son, was also shot to death and similarly left casted aside.

Other narrators speak of the importance of the terminology of genocide in collective memory and the obligation each righteous state has to the memory of the victims of the genocide.

Finally, a statement the narrator points out is that beyond the fact that the deported ones had no weapons or other means of fighting they still comprise a real and vivid ganger to the regime that persecuted them and that is the memory of the genocide¹⁷⁰. It is this memory the Turkish Republic nowadays tries to understate in order to eventually be forgotten.

3.6 Coda

Through navigation of the Pontic history and from the presented movies we can extract some useful conclusions. The genocidal pattern that the Young Turk regime followed was the one already implemented on Armenians, hastily and successfully (mainly from 1914 to 1916). The Greek suffering and bedevilment lasted longer (from 1913 to 1922 even as late as 1924) and the authorities were quite more proactive due to the fact that the Greek State would care for the rest of Hellenism and thus act against the Ottomans with diplomatic and political means.

In all presented movies we see the peaceful and calm way of living at the ancestral land and the prosperity and everyday life of the Pontic Greek subjects. From the beginning of the mishandling of their fellow Armenian subjects they became suspicious about what was going to follow. Some, the lucky and proactive ones already migrated either in big cities like Constantinople, in

¹⁶⁹ "Genocide – A true story – Rec productions", <https://www.recpro.gr/genocide-a-true-story/>.

¹⁷⁰ Zisis, *Genocide - A True Story*; "Genocide – A true story – Rec Productions."

Greece or in Northern territories where there was a vivid nucleus of Pontic settlements well established and flourishing for many years. In the films, each time a hero left his birthplace a grief was spread all over his face and pictures of the landscape were the last memoirs.

When the deportations and mistreatment started, initially by sending the male population to labor battalions, no discrimination between the elderly, women or children occurred. Everybody should abandon their residents, initially, as deceitfully claimed¹⁷¹, for a couple days walk, which ultimately lasted much longer in an effort to exhaust the caravans and outnumber them from malaise, deprivation and starvation. Many children and young girls were separated from their mothers and brutally ravished or sold like slaves in harems or in Arab and Kurd tribesmen. Some were also abducted by attacks on the deported groups. Ultimately, from the total Greek element very few arrived in Greece after the exchange of population and most of the families lost many members especially the most vulnerable ones.

The constant question that arises in every film with reference to genocide is a "Why?" Why was such cruelty implemented upon the innocent victims? Why children and elder people uprooted from their homes and lead to unsacred death? Why were they a major jeopardy for the state? How could non-combatants be a factor of destabilization after centuries of existence there? The answers on the above questions have nothing to do with mistakes on behalf of the Pontic Greek element. They were just members of a minority that had to be annihilated for reasons of state unification, Turkification and Islamization. The new secular state couldn't be tolerant to minorities due to the fact that minorities would always present an opposing factor to the homogenous Turkic state. Moreover, they were members of the wealthy middle class and the arduous agricultural societies that flourished when the Ottoman element went to ceaseless wars; therefore they had to be exterminated by both "political and economic measures"¹⁷². What about the victims? It is nowadays imperative for all descendants to pay a tribute to the souls of the exterminated ancestors by "demanding international recognition and an acknowledgement by the Turkish State of the "genocide" committed against their people"¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ Morris and Ze'evi, 503-504.

¹⁷² Ahmad, *From Empire to Republic essays on the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey Volume 1*, 145.

¹⁷³ Bruneau, "The Pontic Greeks, from Pontus to the Caucasus, Greece and the Diaspora. 'Iconography' and mobile frontiers," 9.

4. Recognition of the genocides and the Turkish side

4.1 Official state recognition of genocides

The end of WWII and the International war crime tribunals against the architects of the Holocaust paved the way for retribution of the responsible state authorities and the acknowledgement of the first forgotten genocides of the 20th century.

The Armenian Diaspora worldwide acted quickly and effectively producing books, documentary films, movies, giving speeches and lobbying about the genocide. The first publication was the memoirs of Aurora Madriganian in 1918 under the title "*Ravished Armenia: The Story of Aurora Mardiganian, the Christian Girl, Who Survived the Great Massacres*" which in 1919 became a movie under the film "*Auction of Souls*" that made a huge impact wherever it was presented. Moreover international Armenian associations acted coordinately and they put pressure on governments to recognize the genocide as a leverage of pressure against Turkey. The outcome is that more than seven transnational bodies (including the Joint Declaration of Allied Powers in 1915, the European Parliament in 2015 and European Green Party also in 2015), more than twenty nine countries and more than forty states have already declared the Armenian genocide officially¹⁷⁴.

The Pontic Genocide is a more recently declared genocide, the approval of the term was confirmed as late as 1988 after suggestion of the late professor Polychronis Enepekidis in the 2nd International Conference of Pontic Hellenism and efforts by Pontic associations worldwide led to the declaration of Pontic Genocide by the European Green Party in 2015, by Pope Francis the same year and by the International Association of Genocide Scholars in 2007. Armenia, Austria Greece and Sweden are the nations that have already recognized the genocide so far along with more than twelve American states¹⁷⁵. The delay for the notification of the Pontic Genocide laid on the facts that after WWI and the Lausanne treaty most exiled Pontic Greeks were struggling to reignite their lives. Additionally, Greece made coalition with the Turkish Republic under the

¹⁷⁴ "Armenian National Institute", <https://www.armenian-genocide.org/index.html>; Panayiotis Diamadis, "Countries That Recognize the Armenian Genocide," 9–20, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/recognition_countries.html.

¹⁷⁵ Diamadis, "Governmental and Parliamentary recognition of the Genocides of the Armenians, Assyrians and Hellenes," 9–20; "Το... μετέωρο βήμα διεθνοποίησης της ποντιακής Γενοκτονίας", <http://www.pontos-news.gr/article/203572/meteoro-vima-diethnopoiisis-tis-pontiakis-genoktonias>.

common Communist threat. The secularization of the Turks also led to a narration of detaching its existence from the previous regimes and the iconography of the "terrible Turk". Later, the WWII, the Greek civil war, the junta and other hardships prevented the official Greek state to further chase international recognition of the Pontic Genocide.

Today, more strenuous and orchestrated efforts must be done, unanimously, for a greater impact of the recognition as the horrible and unjustified suffering and ultimate extermination of the Greek element is still unknown for many scholars and states.

4.2 The Turkish side

The urge of non Muslim subjects and the efforts from a radicalized minority among them who revolted and dreamt of an independent Armenia and the Democracy of Pontus provided the necessary context for the Turkish side to claim ethnic reprisal actions rather than ethnic cleansing¹⁷⁶. The Armenian and Orthodox Patriarchate always tried to abolish such revolutionary actions of members of their congregants out of plausible fear of retaliating actions¹⁷⁷.

After the end of WWI and the trials of the responsible for the atrocities committed, a period of resurgence of the Turkish nationalism started. Kemal was a hero and rightful successor of the CUP leadership. The murders of the responsible of the Genocide gave Kemal and the contemporary revisionist academics an excuse that justice had been served as the guilty are now dead¹⁷⁸. The exchange of imprisoned convicts with British war prisoners, further strengthen the national sentiment as a victory of Kemal's negotiators¹⁷⁹ and the end of the court martial procedures.

It is important to mention here that "*in the indictment, the prosecutor's office claimed that the Unionist government facing imminent defeat in the First World War, performed a "cleansing" of its archives*"¹⁸⁰, as an answer to all denialists who base their argumentation upon the fact that there are today no disclosed written evidence. Going even further, the Turkish Historical Society,

¹⁷⁶ Donald Bloxham and Oxford University Press, *The great game of genocide: Imperialism, nationalism and the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 69–95.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., Bloxham, the great game, 142.

¹⁷⁸ Kevorkian, *The Armenian genocide a complete history*, 804.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., Kevorkian, 805.

¹⁸⁰ Akçam, killing orders 8.

in 1993, published the book *"Ermenilerce Talat Paşa'ya Atfedilen Telgrafların Gerçek Yözö"* by Sınasi Orel and Söreyya Yuca, -translated into English in 1986 with the title, *"The Talat Pasha Telegrams, Historical Fact or Armenian Fiction?"*- claiming that *"both the memoirs and cables published by Andonian were forgeries"*¹⁸¹. Nevertheless important testifiers of the trials mentioned the existence of a series of cable documents that ordered the massacres and liquidation of Armenians¹⁸².

A new paragon has been added quite recently to debate the Armenian genocide that *"it is argued that even if the Armenians were subjected to genocide, there is little that can be done about it today, because the Genocide Convention cannot be applied retroactively. This theory contains two fallacies: 1) that the Armenian claims are derived from the Genocide Convention, and 2) that the Convention cannot be applied retroactively"*¹⁸³. Nevertheless, Turkish liability dates back to the treaty of Sevres (articles 230 & 144) and *"...the Genocide Convention of 1948 can be applied retroactively, because its key provisions are declarative of pre-existing international law"*¹⁸⁴.

Denialism as a widespread practice of disregarding mass violence is not merely a rejection of the facts; it is rather *"that nebulous territory between facts and truth where such denialism germinates. Denialism marshals its own facts and it has its own truth. Ultimately, the debates over denialism do not revolve around the acceptance or rejection of a group of accepted facts, or a truth derived therefrom. Rather, they are a struggle for power between different sets of facts and truths, driven by ulterior motives"*¹⁸⁵.

Even though there are testimonies from the above mentioned eye witnesses -set aside the escaping victims- that *"the perpetrators tried to cover up the evidence"*¹⁸⁶ and destroyed towns, villages, churches and all Christian cultural elements, the policy of suppressing memory and abolishing the recollection through falsification and blur truth¹⁸⁷ is a mean in Turkish stance to genocide.

Many officials stated that the deportations and expulsions were the outcome of revolts, that the authorities didn't commit massive murders and only irregulars or Kurds committed the atrocities. Another set of excuses involve stated that the plan wasn't centrally planned on the contrary there were

¹⁸¹ Ibid., Akçam killing orders, 9.

¹⁸² Hovannisian, *Remembrance and denial*, 272.

¹⁸³ De Zayas, *The Genocide against the Armenians 1915-1923 and the relevance of the 1948 Genocide Convention*, 81.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., De Zayas, 86.

¹⁸⁵ Taner Akçam, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's telegrams and the Armenian genocide*, 2018, 2-3.

¹⁸⁶ Hovannisian, *Remembrance and denial*, 202.

¹⁸⁷ Jones, *Genocide*, 351-52.

specific orders to take care of the deportees (like the official cables of Talaat Pasha, yet the supporters never mention the consecutive cables with aggressive messages sent to the CUP secretaries). The countless deaths of starvation, deprivation, malaise and illnesses weren't massacres or massive murders; they were the outcome of wartime conditions¹⁸⁸. All these factors summon Turkey's official thesis, regarding the Genocide of non Muslim subjects, today.

With refer to the release of the presented filmography strenuous efforts by Turkish officials and denialists took place. There were cases where even the Turkish ambassador interfered with great production studios for the prevention of movies with genocidal references; such was case of "the forty days of Musha Dagh" which was prevented several times from shooting. At the presentation of documentaries in International Festivals, protests and coordinated negative critics were driven by Turkish nationals and descendants of Turkish origins.

A wise strategy the Turkish Republic implemented was to attract the American delegation to Istanbul and Ankara, such were the cases of Admiral Bristol, Ambassadors Grew, Sherill and Mc Murray, General Charles Hitchcock, embassy official Howland Shaw, et.al. Similarly, organizations like the "American friends of Turkey" and "Turkish-American clubs" and the Turkish ambassadors to the U.S.A. Ahmet Muhtar and Munir Ertegun worked effortlessly to establish and maintain good relations after the WWI era. These procedures ended in mutual beneficial trading and exchanging deals¹⁸⁹, which of course put the genocidal reprisals aside and transform the representations of the "terrible Turk"¹⁹⁰. Moreover excessive funding to famous universities initiated attractive programs for scholars eager to present and justify Turkey's revisionist approach. Additionally, published books initiate a controversy about the genocide where famous scholars deny it and try to decompose its constituent parts. Some of them are Bernard Lewis and his book "The emergence of Modern Turkey" (2002), Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw and their book "*History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*", Samuel A. Weems and his book "*Armenia: Secrets of a "Christian" Terrorist State: The Armenian Great Deception Series - Volume I*" (2002) and finally Justin Mc Carthy's book "*The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*" (2001)¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., Jones, 353.

¹⁸⁹ Şuhnaz Yilmaz, "Challenging the stereotypes: Turkish-American relations in the inter-war era," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 2 (2006): 225–29.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 224–28.

¹⁹¹ Maria Karlsson. "A hoax and a sham" An argumentative analysis investigating Western denial on the Armenian genocide, unpublished thesis, Department of History, Lund University, 2009.

5. Conclusion

The "ethnic majoritarianism" and the "secularizing revolution" went through increasing demographic measures against the non Muslim subjects¹⁹². It is now undeniable what Talaat himself had revealed that WWI provided the necessary pretext¹⁹³ to finish with "inner enemies"¹⁹⁴, set aside these enemies were the pioneers in culture, economy and education¹⁹⁵. It was the religious variant along with the cultural and fiscal dominion of Christian subjects that increased feelings of envy and hatred among the Ottomans¹⁹⁶.

From this essay it is obvious that *"each regime confronted a different cluster of dangers, acted under different constraints, and imagined a different future. Ultimately, however, all three engaged in a giant and continuous crime against humanity"*¹⁹⁷, under the universally acknowledged doctrine that *"the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy... The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation"*¹⁹⁸. The extermination of non Muslim communities was not the outcome of a single cause. *"At play were fears of foreign machinations and interference, Turkish nationalism, ethnic rivalries, economic envy, and a desire to maintain political and social dominance. Perpetrators sought power, wealth and sexual gratification"*¹⁹⁹; all under the veil of Islam.

Extensive violence in the Ottoman Empire was initiated in the late 19th century; it escalated during WWI, and the triumvirate of CUP *"against Greeks, Armenians, Assyrians and even Yezidis"*, and it continued uneventfully and relentlessly in the years of the Turkish Republic since it followed the same ideology of getting rid of all foreign elements, even though they were autochthones to Anatolia²⁰⁰. The jihad was fully implemented by the pious Muslims to all non Muslim population as a rightful cause.

The massacres, deportations, exiles and labor battalions aimed at the clearance of the Anatolian and Pontus areas from Christian population in an

¹⁹² Donald Bloxham, *Political violence in twentieth-century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 93–94.

¹⁹³ Winter and Cambridge University Press, *America and the Armenian genocide of 1915*, 40–41.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., Bloxham, *Political violence* 98; Bloxham and Oxford University Press, *The great game of genocide*.

¹⁹⁵ Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, 1913–1923," 108–9.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., Meichanetsidis, 110–11.

¹⁹⁷ Morris and Ze'evi, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Carl Schmitt, *The concept of the political*, 1976, 26.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. Morris and Ze'evi, 5.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., Donef, 6.

effort to settle and integrate the muhasirs from the Balkans and other areas. Moreover the confiscation of properties, houses, businesses and factories and their redistribution among Muslims led to the creation of a Muslim middle class and to personal means of gain wealth through plundering and looting. Moreover, the wealth of Christians allowed for the regimes to finance their struggles and the state which was on the verge of bankruptcy.

It is now uncontroversial that "*colossal crimes have been committed against the human race*"²⁰¹ during the pogroms and genocide of all Christian elements and "*the destruction of Smyrna was but the closing act in a consistent program of exterminating Christianity throughout the length and breadth of the old Byzantine Empire*"²⁰². Turkey must acknowledge the genocide in order to reconcile with its past and set its history on solid ground. Only this way can the contemporary state be able to join all modern nations and follow evolution.

The role of the foreign diplomats and their states' official positions to the prevention of the genocides didn't contribute at all to the sufferings and maltreatment since all countries had their own agenda's to implement and execute rather than deal with minorities. Only spatial efforts were occurred from famous diplomats who couldn't close their eyes towards the magnitude of exterminations and atrocities. Most non Ottoman people tried to save the deportees or ease their sufferings. Missionaries and Relief Organizations played an important and decisive role to the preservation of the few -usually children- innocent non combatants.

A conclusive remark from the presentation of the selective filmography, as stated by the Armenian National Committee in America is that "*in this contemporary video-oriented era, feature films remain an important means to convey the deep and enduring impact of genocide. They can shed some light on an exceedingly dark era, but ultimately they are attempts to "describe the indescribable*"²⁰³.

Current large scale productions and a continuous research in manifold Universities worldwide enables the genocide to change from the forgotten one to the first odious genocide of the 20th century.

We must underline the efforts done by very famous and acknowledged academics around the world for the broader institutionalization of the Armenian genocide nevertheless only scarce efforts for the Assyrian and Greek genocide

²⁰¹ Horton, *The blight of Asia; an account of the systematic extermination of Christian populations by Mohammedans and of the culpability of certain Great Powers; with the true story of the burning of Smyrna*, 13.

²⁰² Ibid. Horton, 13.

²⁰³ "The Armenian genocide in feature films," *Armenian National Committee of America* (blog), October 20, 2017, <https://anca.org/the-armenian-genocide-in-feature-films/>.

have been done worldwide concluding in a disproportionate recognition of the latter genocides. Major factors were also the very influential associations of the Armenian Diaspora, under a unanimous cause in contrast to the various Pontic and other Greek Diaspora associations worldwide which still can't agree upon a fixed day for the commemoration of the *Greek Genocide* as a whole. The political turbulences in Greece during the 21st century didn't allowed for official recognition of the Pontic genocide as such, only very lately was it ratified by the Greek parliament. The cash flow of Armenian collaborations towards efforts of recognition are constant whereas the Pontic Associations' means are quite limited. This resulted in the lack of international productions about the Greek genocide.

Additional differences of the two genocides are the shorter duration of the Armenian one with thousands of hundreds of massacred non combatants mainly in the period 1914-1916 whilst the Pontic genocide started around 1917 and ended in 1924 with the compulsory exchange of population. In the Armenian case the Special Organization exterminated the majority of the deportees on site - some even in the outskirts of their cities- while in the Pontic genocide they thrived for days - even months to the depths of Anatolia, dying from malaise and deprivations rather than executions. In both cases some guerilla groups retaliated for the suffering of their people but usually resistance ended in bloodbaths. Maltreatment, raping and torture towards women and children were common characteristics. Annihilation of the male population through labor battalions was another aspect of the demographic engineering, so were the adoption of children and the slavery of women.

Last but not least difference in the promulgation of the two genocides is the quantity of publications of books and articles in English. Only few publications about the *Pontic Genocide*, from contemporary scholars have been translated in English and presented in international forums. So more systematic publications and documentaries about the *Pontic Genocide* in other languages should be printed and socialized.

Regrettably, a major disadvantage of this paper is the limitation of languages as Armenian, Assyrian or Turkic sources couldn't be interpreted in such a short time. Moreover the place limited the research only to electronic or published sources. Probably, further papers will be produced by gathering archives from the Turkish, Greek, Armenian, European and other sources with the collaboration of various scholars in order to produce a broader collection that would include all elements of the Christian minorities' genocide under the

Ottoman and Turkish yoke. Such a narrative may conclude in a wide recognition of the origins, motives, patterns, networks, systems, timeframes and casualties of the genocides and unite them under one catalytic pillar that is the systematic extermination of Christians in an effort to turkify the remnants of the collapsing Ottoman Empire and arouse the religious and later nationalistic sentiment of the successor regimes. For the moment the most recent collective study is the book by Benny Morris and Ze'evi Dror "*The Thirty-Year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of Its Christian Minorities, 1894-1924*", published in Cambridge, Massachusetts by Harvard University Press, in 2019.

*"The power of man is greater than they would ever have dared to think and that man can realize hellish fantasies"*²⁰⁴.

²⁰⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The origins of totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), 446.

6 Annex

6.1 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide²⁰⁵

Approved and proposed for signature and ratification or accession by General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948

Entry into force: 12 January 1951, in accordance with article XIII

The Contracting Parties, Having considered the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world, Recognizing that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and Being convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation is required, Hereby agree as hereinafter provided :

Article I

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

Article II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article III

The following acts shall be punishable: (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide.

Article IV

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

Article V

The Contracting Parties undertake to enact, in accordance with their respective Constitutions, the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention, and, in particular, to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III.

Article VI

²⁰⁵ "United Nations office on genocide prevention and the responsibility to protect", <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide-convention.shtml>.

Persons charged with genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those Contracting Parties which shall have accepted its jurisdiction.

Article VII

Genocide and the other acts enumerated in article III shall not be considered as political crimes for the purpose of extradition. The Contracting Parties pledge themselves in such cases to grant extradition in accordance with their laws and treaties in force.

Article VIII

Any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III.

Article IX

Disputes between the Contracting Parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfillment of the present Convention, including those relating to the responsibility of a State for genocide or for any of the other acts enumerated in article III, shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the request of any of the parties to the dispute.

Article X

The present Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall bear the date of 9 December 1948.

The present Convention shall be open until 31 December 1949 for signature on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State to which an invitation to sign has been addressed by the General Assembly.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. After 1 January 1950, the present Convention may be acceded to on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State which has received an invitation as aforesaid. Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article XII

Any Contracting Party may at any time, by notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, extend the application of the present Convention to all or any of the territories for the conduct of whose foreign relations that Contracting Party is responsible.

Article XIII

On the day when the first twenty instruments of ratification or accession have been deposited, the Secretary-General shall draw up a procès-verbal and transmit a copy thereof to each Member of the United Nations and to each of the non-member States contemplated in article XI. The present Convention shall come into force on the ninetieth day following the date of deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession. Any ratification or accession effected subsequent to the latter date shall become effective on the ninetieth day following the deposit of the instrument of ratification or accession.

Article XIV

The present Convention shall remain in effect for a period of ten years as from the date of its coming into force. It shall thereafter remain in force for successive periods

of five years for such Contracting Parties as have not denounced it at least six months before the expiration of the current period. Denunciation shall be effected by a written notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article XV

If, as a result of denunciations, the number of Parties to the present Convention should become less than sixteen, the Convention shall cease to be in force as from the date on which the last of these denunciations shall become effective. Article XVI

A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any Contracting Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General. The General Assembly shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request.

Article XVII

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall notify all Members of the United Nations and the non-member States contemplated in article XI of the following: (a) Signatures, ratifications and accessions received in accordance with article XI; (b) Notifications received in accordance with article XII; (c) The date upon which the present Convention comes into force in accordance with article XIII; (d) Denunciations received in accordance with article XIV; (e) The abrogation of the Convention in accordance with article XV; (f) Notifications received in accordance with article XVI.

Article XVIII

The original of the present Convention shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations. A certified copy of the Convention shall be transmitted to each Member of the United Nations and to each of the non-member States contemplated in article XI.

Article XIX

The present Convention shall be registered by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the date of its coming into force.

Table with 2 columns: ΕΣΤΕΡΟΥΚΟΥ, ΕΣΠΕΡΙΚΟΥ. Rows for various newspapers like Η ΕΠΕΤΑΣΙΣ, Η ΠΡΩΤΟΡΕΥΣΙΑ, Η ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΗ ΕΞΟΥΣΙΑ.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙ

ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΤΗΣ & ΙΔΙΟΚΤΗΣΗΣ Γεώργιος Κ. Παπ

Η ΝΕΑ ΤΟΥΡΚΙΑ

ΣΥΝΟΥΛΙΟΤΑΤΗ ΣΥΝΕΝΤΕΥΞΙΣ ΜΕ ΤΟΝ ΝΑΖΗΜ-ΒΕΗΝ

ΚΡΗΤΙΜΑ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΛΑΛΗΚΟΥ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΟΥ

Οσον αφορά τα νεοτετα αλληλεγγύη α...

ΤΟΥΡΚΙΑ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝ ΟΛΟΚΡΑΤΟΝ. Η μεταρρύθμιση...

Εξαιτίας του κακοδομημένου...

Αλλά οι μισοί αρνούνται να...

Εν κατακλείδι, η παρούσα...

Αλλά η Τουρκία είναι...

αλλά, μολις εν συνεχεία, οι Άρμένιοι...

Οσον αφορά τα νεοτετα αλληλεγγύη α...

Αλλά οι μισοί αρνούνται να...

Εν κατακλείδι, η παρούσα...

Αλλά η Τουρκία είναι...

Συνεπώς, άλλω όσον...

Οσον αφορά τα νεοτετα αλληλεγγύη α...

Αλλά οι μισοί αρνούνται να...

Εν κατακλείδι, η παρούσα...

Αλλά η Τουρκία είναι...

ΤΙΜΑΙ ΚΑΤΑΧΟΡΙΣΘΕΝ

ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΑΤΑΧΟΡΙΣΜΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ...

ΠΑΛΙΝ ΠΕΡΙ ΦΕΝΙΜΙΣΜΟΥ

Η Έπισημότης του...

Αλλά οι μισοί αρνούνται να...

Εν κατακλείδι, η παρούσα...

Αλλά η Τουρκία είναι...

Αλλά η Τουρκία είναι...

Η ΕΤΡΑΦΟΜΕΝΗ ΝΕΩΙ ΣΥΝΑΡΜΟΤΑΙ

Αρχίζοντας...

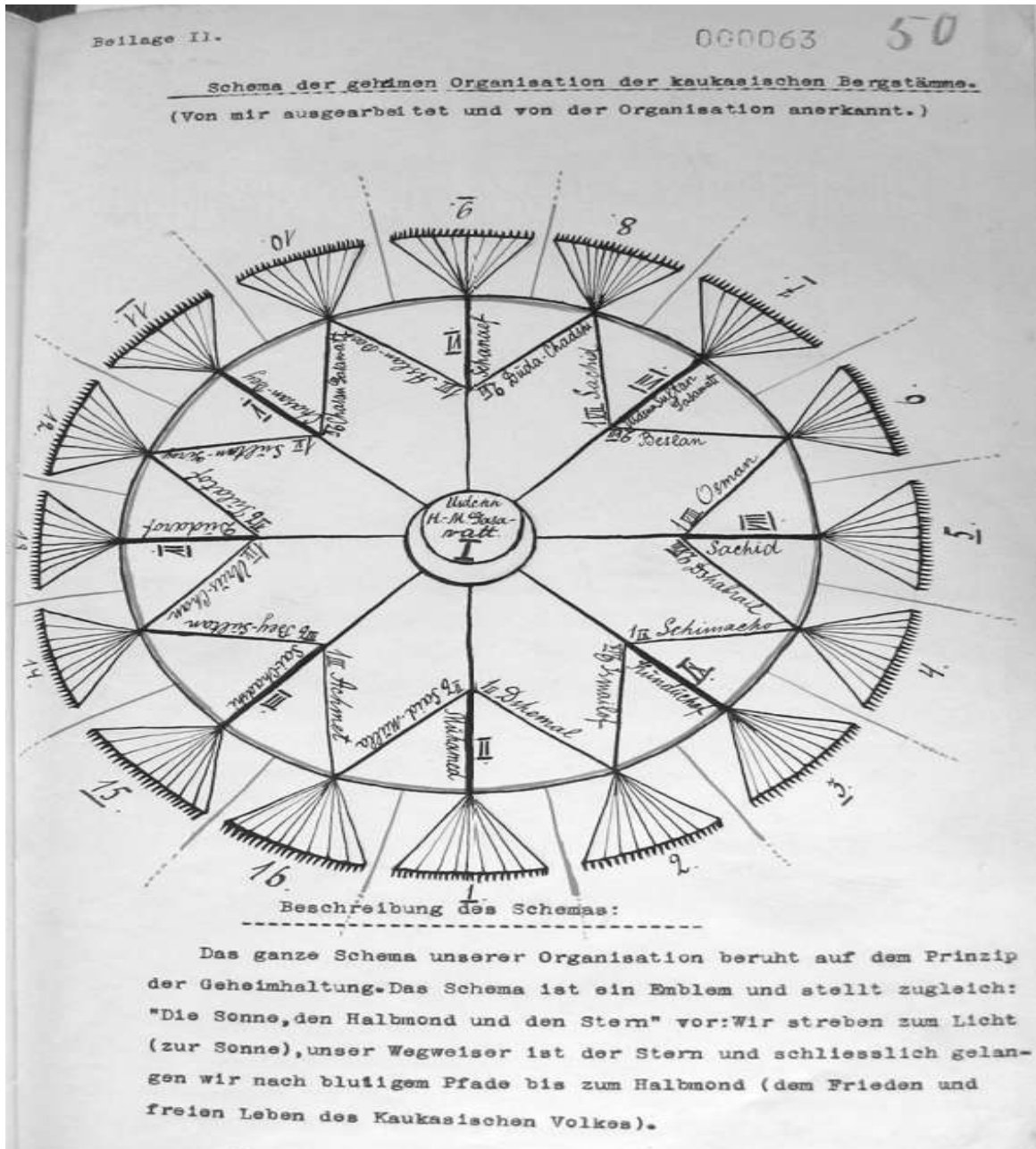
ΠΩΣ ΠΡΕΠΕΙ

ΝΑ ΤΡΕΦΟΜΕΝΑ...



<p>کتابخانه عمومی تبریز ۱۳۳۶ مجله و نشریات ایران پست صندوق شماره ۱۰۰ تبریز پلاک ۱۰۰ تبریز</p>	<h1>تَقْوِیَةُ وَفِیْهِ</h1> <p>دولت جدید شاهانه بر رویه سپید (فرمانده شرفرو)</p>	<p>تاریخ آبیسی ۱۳۱۲ مجله و نشریات ایران پست صندوق شماره ۱۰۰ تبریز پلاک ۱۰۰ تبریز</p>
<p>سال: ۱۳۰۱ راساً ۱۳۳۳ / ۱۹ / ۱۳۳۱ شمسی / ۲۱۸۹۱ شمسی</p>		
<p>بر سرورک اوامر حکومت و احسانت ملکت و عافیت آسانده شفق ایرانی و تزیینات دولتی احسانت و صلاحیت تمام و صلاحیت گور و کرمه و مطب نویس مسکریه ای که در تندی سورده آفرینان آینه و مجاز و مستشرق استند اما اینکه مأذون و مجبور بود - ماده ۱۲: آرد و دستل نول اردو و فرقه نولخانه تری ایستاد مسکریه سن را مستشرق و بیاض تری سن ایستاد تری و تحصیل امانت سترماً واً مکتباً دیگر مطب سول و استکان ایستاد و بیاض - ماده ۱۳: آرد نول اردو کورج سترمن سترمن - ماده ۱۴: آرد نول اردو سترمن سترمن سترمن ایستاد ایستاد و بیاض و سترمن آردی سترمن - مجلس محریک استانده قانون کلیت آردی آردی آردی آردی قانونیک سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن ۱۳۰۱ رجب ۱۳۳۳ / ۱۳ / ۱۳۳۱ شمسی</p> <p>کتابخانه ایستاد ایستاد و بیاض آردی سترمن سترمن آردی سترمن سترمن</p>	<p>تاریخ آبیسی ۱۳۱۲ شمسی ۱۱ جادی الاخره ۱۳۳۳ آردی کلیت مسکریه قانون و کلیت ۱۱ شمسی مدامت سترمن - کتاب سترمن آردی سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن قانون سترمن ماده ۱۱: کلیت مسکریه قانون کلیت ۱۲ شمسی سترمن آردی سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن استانده ایستاد ایستاد ایستاد ایستاد ایستاد ایستاد ایستاد مجلس محریک سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن قانونیک سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن ۱۳۰۱ رجب ۱۳۳۳ / ۱۳ / ۱۳۳۱ شمسی</p>	
<p>اصول کلیه سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن کلیه سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن ۱۳۰۱ رجب ۱۳۳۳ / ۱۳ / ۱۳۳۱ شمسی</p>	<p>اصول کلیه سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن کلیه سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن سترمن ۱۳۰۱ رجب ۱۳۳۳ / ۱۳ / ۱۳۳۱ شمسی</p>	

6.4 Sketch of Special Organization in Caucasus



German Archive Document. See Chart of Secret Organization established by German and Ottoman military in Caucasus. Source: DE/PA-AA/R 21016, Der Weltkrieg 1914, Geheime Akten, Report from Usden H. M. Gasawatt to German Headquarters, 13 December 1915. in Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' crime against the humanity: The Armenian Genocide and ethnic cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 151

6.5 Religious structure of the Ottoman Population 1820-1900²⁰⁶

Table 4.2. Religious Structure of the Ottoman Population in Europe 1820-1900 (in thousands)

Religious Group	1820s		1840s		1870s		1890s	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Greek Orthodox								
Bulgarian	6,225	61.0	9,145	59.0	5,106	50.3	3,137	49.5
Catholics	405	4.0	620	4.0	406	4.0	—	—
Others	—	—	—	—	30	0.3	—	—
Total Christians	6,630	65.0	9,765	63.0	5,542	54.6	3,137	49.5
Jews: Others	305	3.0	140	0.9	244	2.4	190	3.0
Total Non-Muslims	6,935	68.0	9,905	63.9	5,786	57.0	3,327	52.5
Muslims	3,265	32.0	5,595	36.1	4,364	43.0	3,010	47.5
GRAND TOTAL	10,200	100.0	15,500	100.0	10,150	100.0	6,337	100.0

Source: Compiled from European and Ottoman yearbook statistics and from Engin Akarli, "Ottoman Population in Europe in the 19th Century: Its Territorial, Racial, and Religious Composition" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1970).

Table 4.3. Summary of Religious Structure of the Ottoman Population (in thousands)

Years	Europe		Asia		Total	
	Total Population	% of Muslims	Total Population	% of Muslims	Total Population	% of Muslims
1820s	10,200	32.0	11,100	80-90	21,300	59.6
1840s	15,500	36.1	—	—	—	—
1870s	10,150	43.0	16,500	80-90	26,650	68.0
1890s	6,337	47.5	16,000	87.5	22,337	76.2

Source: See Table 4.2. (Variations in figures are due to losses of territory.)

²⁰⁶ Karpat, *Ottoman population, 1830-1914: Demographic and social characteristics*, 72-73.

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