



ARMENIANS IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST AND ARMENIANS

FACTS ABOUT RELOCATION

TÜRKKAYA ATAÖV



ARMENIANS IN
THE LATE
OTTOMAN PERIOD

THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST AND ARMENIANS

Türkkaya ATAÖV

THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST AND THE ARMENIANS*

Türkkaya ATAÖV

One can discern, off and on, some effort on the part of some Armenian authors and their close supporters to associate the notorious Jewish Holocaust of the Nazi period (1933-45) with Armenian-Turkish relations during the First World War (1914-18). There are sweeping generalizations stating that unfortunately there had been “no Nuremberg”¹ (Nürnberg) for the defeated Ottomans in 1918. There are even attempts to lump together Fascist Germany, the United States, Israel, South Africa, Britain, El Salva-

* This article was previously published in **The Armenians in the late Ottoman Period**, Türkkaya Ataöv ed., The Council of Culture, Arts and Publications of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Publication No. 90, (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 2001) pp. 109-142

1 Peter Lanne, **Armenia: The First Genocide of the XX Century**, tr Krikor Beledjian, Munchen, Institute for Armenian Studies, 1977, pp. 175-208.

dor, Guatemala and Kampuchea under the collective heading of “genocide”.² While the latter source makes an unqualified, one-sided and highly objectionable generalization on the Ottoman Empire in just two sentences in the whole book,³ another source draws parallels between the Armenians, Jews, Bangladeshis and the Hutu.⁴ There also exist, largely Armenian-inspired, outright comparisons of the Armenian and the Jewish cases.⁵

William Wordsworth, immortal English poet said in a poem: “Like-but oh, how different!” One may agree with Alexandre Dumas (fils): “All generalizations are dangerous-even this one.” The danger of historic comparisons is obvious. All-inclusive assumptions quoted in the first paragraph are over-simplifications. They strike one as ‘too liberal’ refutations of veritable differences in terms of origins, accumulation, circumstances, and results. Concisely, in various phases of European history, dominant Christian groups living on that continent, who needed to

2 Alexander Galkin et al., **Genocide (Genotsid)**, Moskova, Izdatel’stvo Progress. 1985.

3 **Ibid.**, p. 6.

4 Leo Kuper, **Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century**, New Haven and London, Yale University Press. 1981. His two chapters on the Armenians and Jews in pp. 101-137.

5 For instance: R. Hrair Dekmajian, “Determinants of Genocide: Armenians and Jews as Case Studies”, **The Armenian Genocide in Perspective**, ed., Richard G. Hovannistan, New Brunswick and Oxford, Transaction Books, 1986. pp. 85-96.

externalise and project their unwanted “bad” parts unto others and thereby feel themselves as “good”, killed and expelled the inoffensive Jews. The citation of Europe only in the previous sentence does not necessarily connote the non-existence of antisemitism even in the United States - moreover, even currently.⁶ It was Wilhelm Marr (1819-1904), a professed antisemite German writer,⁷ (who coined (1879) the term “antisemitism”. Although there was no clear distinction between early and modern Jew-hatred,⁸

6 The National Jewish Population Survey found in 1990 that some 85% of American Jews believed that antisemitism was a serious problem in their own country. It has declined since then. Jerome A. Chanes, “Antisemitism in the United States 1999, a Contextual Analysis”, **Approaches to Antisemitism: Context and Curriculum**, ed. , Michael Brown, New York/Jerusalem, The American Jewish Committee and The International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, 1994. pp. 32-45

7 Moshe Zimmerman, **Wilhelm Marr: the Patriarch of Antisemitism**, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986. Marr's pamphlet *Der Sieg des Judentums über das Germanentum vom konfessionellen Standpunkte* (The Victory of Jewry over Germanism from the Confessional Point of View) The old term “Jew-hatred” could describe only the traditional Christian antipathy toward Jews based on religious foundations. The modern Judeophobia was grounded on genetics and racism. The hyphen, sometimes seen in English, is not used in German or Hebrew. There is no such thing as “semitism”.

8 Although Christian attitudes, those of the Catholics and the Lutherans, initially consisted of the views of the clergy. Spanish authorities later insisted on “pure blood” introducing the racist element. Likewise, the Nazi laws reflected, not only racist, but also religious notions.

it included old and new ideas and concepts embracing racist as well as religious notions.

This chapter does not intend to chronicle the development of antisemitism in different periods of history or in various countries.⁹ It may never be easy to fully explain this phenomenon. Scholars will probably continue to discuss the relative importance of many factors facilitating its spread.¹⁰ World libraries are full of printed works describing the Jews as a unique religious, historical and a cultural phenomenon. They were perhaps the oldest minority having spread virtually all over the world. Being nowhere more than a small minority, the Jews were often chosen as scapegoats.¹¹ They were the first organised monotheists who preached a religion based upon righteousness. They certainly posed an important theological issue no less than antagonizing some others, in later ti-

-
- 9 There are full bibliographies on the subject, especially in the European context Robert Singermann's annotated bibliography (**Anti-Semitic Propaganda: an Annotated Bibliography and Guide**, New York, Garland, 1982) is perhaps the most comprehensive one. It contains 24,000 entries A valuable one among the single volumes Shmuel Almog, ed., *Anti-semitism Through the Ages*, New York and Jerusalem, Pergamon Press and The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988
- 10 Israel W. Charny et al., eds., **A Critical Bibliographic Review**, London. Mansell. 1988, David M Szonyi, ed, **The Holocaust: an Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide**, New York. KTAV for the National Jewish Research Center. 1985.
- 11 Josef Banas, **The Scapegoats: the Exodus of the Remnants of Polish Jewry**, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979.

mes, with their socio-economic status as financiers or as left-wing theoreticians/activists. In the inevitable process of industrialization and modernism Jew-hatred was cultivated to evolve into a new ideology ready to pass from one generation to another. There was -and still is- antisemitism. even in some societies without Jews.¹² Some countries imported it, along with alien technology. Although the announcement of the Catholic Church that Jews cannot be held collectively responsible for the death of Jesus came as late as 1965, it nevertheless signifies the alternative of compromise and toleration in the Christian tradition feeding the hope that the cancerous growth of antisemitism may one day be destroyed. That disease of some non-Jewish societies may be healed with the development of a new multicultural, multiethnic and pluralistic world in which groups mature to accept and respect each other. The last time antisemitism was elevated to the status of official policy of a leading state, the outcome was the Second World War causing the loss of many millions of people, in addition to some six million Jews.

Because the perception of the Armenians in Ottoman society on the one hand, and the World Jewry on the other has been so contrastingly different from

12 Paul Lendvai, **Antisemitism without Jews: Communist Eastern Europe**, New York, Doubleday, 1971.

the description above that it will be worthwhile to remind one, in some limited detail, the overall maturing of antisemitism. The Israelites, who developed a belief in one God, undermined the polytheistic world of ancient times. Although the Persian king allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple, the one, only and the universal deity that they believed in clashed with the culture of Ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Greece and Rome. The Jewish ethical conceptions, largely based on monotheism and the Ten Commandments of Moses, were quite apart from those of the other groups.¹³ A massacre of Jews was carried out in Alexandria in 38 A.D. on account of the Jewish refusal to put a statue of Caligula into a synagogue.¹⁴ For instance, Hellenism, with its family of gods and goddesses and other sets of values, was an opponent of Judaism. In Roman times as well, Judaism was still a vigorous religion, horrifying many Romans threatened by potential changes in their imperial civilization.¹⁵ When Christianity beca-

13 Rosemary Ruether, **Faith and Fratricide: the Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism**, New York, Seabury Press, 1971.

14 Jacob Lestchinsky, "Anti-Semitism", ed., Feliks Gross, **European Ideologies: a Survey of 20th Century Political Ideas**, New York, Philosophical Library, 1948, p. 656.

15 Menahem Stern, **Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism**, 3 vols., Jerusalem, Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974-1984; John G. Gager, **The Origins of Antisemitism: Attitudes towards Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity**, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1983.

me the official religion of the Roman Empire (321), some of the old prejudices were carried on into the “Christian” attitudes toward the Jews.¹⁶ Of course, new misconceptions were added. Apart from the old notion that the “gods” hated the Jews because the latter did not recognise them gave way to “collective responsibility” for the death of the “Son of God”. The Christian church, which held Jews responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, moreover believed that its new creed superseded Judaism. Not only was the entire Jewish community considered to be the “culprit”, but also Judaism was supposed to be an “enemy” of Christianity.

Discrimination and repression intensified with the First Crusade (1096) leading to the massacre of Jews among others. While the campaigns were waged behind a screen of religious slogans such as setting free the Holy Land from the “infidels”, the feudal lords of Western Europe made no secret of their intentions to plunder the economically much better developed lands of the East and seize new territories with serfs, and peasants also took part in the hope of escaping from the feudal yoke and obtaining land for themselves. They all hoped to conquer Syria and Palestine from the Seljuk Turks and drive out

16 Bernhard Blumenkranz, **Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde occidental: 430-1096**, Paris, Mouton, 1960.

their rival, the Byzantine Empire, from the sphere of Eastern trade. Renewed and intensified anti-Jewish prejudice was part of this overall discrimination, exploitation and plunder. On their way to Palestine, the Crusader mobs indulged themselves in the mass slaughter of Jews in the Rhineland cities of Mainz, Worms and Cologne where entire Jewish communities were destroyed.¹⁷

For a very long time and contrary to the experience in the Ottoman Empire, the Jews of Western Europe felt little inclination to become an organic part of the economic life of the countries where they led insecure residence.¹⁸ In most cases, they were forbidden to own land and excluded from the handicrafts. When the Jews, government service being closed to them, indulged more and more in trade and became distinguished as usurers, they became the target of further resentment. Prohibited by Christianity and Islam at least in theory, usury became a Jewish preserve. Such “theological hatred” of the Jews led to the Fourth Lateran Council edict demanding that the Jews wear a yellow mark on their clothes. What became tragically popular much later in Nazi Germany had its roots in the Middle Ages.

17 Robert S. Wistrich, **(Anti-Semitism: the Longest Hatred,)** London, Thames Mandarin, 1992. p. 311.

18 **Ibid.**, pp. 649-650.

Accusations of blood murders, called “blood libels”, constituted the baseless (and perhaps the ugliest) charge that the Jews hammered nails into barrels, put murdered Christian children into them at Easter time and rolled them down a hill to use their blood to make matzot (Passover bread).¹⁹ They were even held responsible for the “Black Death” epidemic. Seven centuries before they were hunted in Germany, the Jews were expelled from England and France and finally from the Iberian Peninsula (1492). As it will be expounded in some detail further in this chapter, they were welcomed by no other than the Muslim Turkish sultans of the Ottoman Empire.

The general picture in Western Europe continued until the 19th century when the able and hard-working Jews became part and parcel of the economic, cultural and scientific life of Europe. It was inevitable that the Jews would create their own capitalist class in the process. The new allegation that there was an essential link between Judaism and capitalism and that the Jews as such could essentially be exploiting capitalists missed the point once more. Capitalism

19 This aggressive attitude brings to mind much later speculations in the Soviet Union that some Jewish doctors were poisoning their patients to get more money or just for pleasure. Levas Kovarskis, “On Being a Soviet Jew”. **Mind and Human Interaction**, Charlottesville. VA.. III/3 (May 1992), p. 72.

is a socio-economic formation, replacing feudalism, with no direct connection with any race or religion.

But this basic truth did not prevent some romantic German nationalists from considering even assimilated Jews as “aliens” in their homeland as well as supporters of leftist causes²⁰ from considering them “the enemies of the working classes”, (both extremists providing part of the background for the murder of German and European Jewry in the coming 1930s and the 1940s). Germany’s Jewish citizens were much larger than that of the Western European countries-about 1% of the total population. While the feudal class carried the old antisemitic tradition regarding the Jews as inferior people, these believers in Moses came to play a dominant role in all the vital branches of the country’s economic life.

While Jews, Armenians and Greeks were employed in the highest posts of the Ottoman Empire, the German authorities strictly forbid, even towards the end of the 19th century, the hiring of Jews as state officials. This was the case even when German Jews attained high achievements in science, medicine and literature. The prestige of the Jewish-owned liberal press²¹ and the large number of Nobel prizes won

20 Robert Wistrich, **Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky**, London and New York, Harrap, 1976.

21 For instance: Berliner Tageblatt, Frankfurter Zeitung, Vossische Zeitung.

by Jews irritated, not only the German antisemites, but also some liberal intellectuals. The defeat of Germany at the end of the First World War shocked the people who looked for a victim upon whom they could vent their wrath.²² When a severe economic crisis gripped Germany, the stage was basically set for the Nazi alternative.

Germany was not the only country where antisemitism was rampant. In France, the allegation that the Jews benefited from the fruits of the French Revolution gave way to accusations that they were plotting to destroy Christian culture. Such discriminatory sentiments were fanned by influential publications, especially after the “Dreyfus affair”,²³ which helped to “institutionalise” antisemitism in France. The antisemites there tried to profit by the Dreyfus case to overthrow the young French Republic. This was the first important attempt to set the “Jewish question” in motion to serve a political struggle.²⁴ Tsarist Russia gave the world especially after 1881, pogroms

22 No one seriously challenged Count von Schlieffen's plan that the war with France would not last longer than a month. Holger H. Helwig. **The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918**, London, Hodder Headline Group: Arnold, 1997, pp. 46-49, 66-67, 97-106.

23 Michael R. Marrus, **The Politics of Assimilation: a Study of the French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair**, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971.

24 The Nazi occupation gave the French antisemites much of the freedom of action that they desired.

(Russian: devastation) which made life unbearable for the Jews. It was in 1871 that the first pogrom occurred in Odessa. In the crucial year of 1905, there took place about 700 pogroms (attacks on Jewish shops and houses)²⁵ in Russia. The Tsarist policy was formulated as such: "One-third of the Jews will have to emigrate; another third will die out; and the rest will become Gentiles".²⁶ Some came to Turkey. The authorities encouraged quite few of the Jewish massacres in Russia, in part, to divert attention from pressing domestic problems and revolutionary reactions to them. The plight of the Jews in parts of Eastern Europe was similar. These events were paralleled all over Europe by the emergence of pseudo-racial theories, justifying inequality, exploitation and even wars.

This historical accumulation provided Germany's National Socialists with the opportunity to use every accusation and tool of oppression culminating in the Nuremberg Laws (1935). At the heart of Europe, within a nation that considered itself the most culturally advanced, a significant minority conceived of a plan to annihilate the Jews. Some industrialists and even scholars played no less a part in Germany's antisemitic drive than politicians. Adolf Hitler's Third

25 Hugh Seton-Watson, **The Decline of Imperial Russia**, New York, Praeger, 1952, pp. 158-159.

26 Gross, **op. cit.**, p. 663.

Reich made the 'Jewish question' an affair of the state. It created an antisemitism unparalleled in history. It was thoroughly ideological, racial, coherent, official, juridical, total, and expansionistic. The national state was based on the idea of race as the final criterion. In the eyes of the state, a person of Jewish "blood", whether a citizen or not, could not avoid the consequences of being a Jew. The state did not want to absorb even the best Jewish elements. The "cream", including Albert Einstein and the Nobel Prize winner Fritz Haber had to become exiles. German antisemitism was a publicly proclaimed official doctrine of the government. It was not a policy carried out by the government in disregard of codes ruling the country; antisemitic ordonnances became laws themselves. Wholesale murders were planned, organised and carried out officially by the government or the party in power. It embraced all realms of civil, social, political, economic, intellectual and military life. It did not limit its authority to the subjects of the Third Reich. Anti-Jewish laws were equally applied to aliens of Jewish "blood", who resided even in German-occupied territories. Nazi antisemitism became the total extermination of about six million people belonging to a particular religious group. It is properly described as genocide or the Jewish Holocaust.

Mussolini's state in Italy, where Fascism became monolithic, was a model for Hitler. Il Duce had writ-

ten: "Humanity needs a credo. It is faith that moves mountains because it gives the illusion that mountains move. Illusion is perhaps the only reality of life".²⁷ He honoured Vilfredo Pareto, the theorist of aristocratic elites, by making him a senator of the fascist Italian state. Having praised political assassins as heroes, Mussolini combated the whole complex of democratic ideology. For him, the goddess of liberty was dead, and her body was already putrescent. Believing neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace, the final plan of fascism was imperialist. Mussolini, who was not within the constitutional system but above it, *ha sempre ragione* (was always right).

Although the era under discussion in this chapter is the Nazi period, it is fair to state that the German society oscillates between alternatives.²⁸ To some observers, the Germans will always be a prey to some sort of authoritarianism: Prussian conservatism, fascist totalitarianism, Communist control or neo-Nazism. Others believe that Germany can achieve an unbroken democracy with a pluralism that will give everyone a chance to speak his (or her) mind. As Madame de Stael noted, Germany often was "le co-

27 George Catlin, **The Story of the Political Philosophers**, New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1939. p. 716.

28 Luigi Barzini, **The Europeans**, Middlesex, U.K., Penguin Books, 1985. pp. 66-113.

eur de VEurope" (the heart of Europe), events there affecting the whole continent. This point assumes more importance when one remembers that no other major country has undergone such frequent and extreme changes. In a relatively short period of time (during which the United States steadily developed), Germany has swung from utter disunity (up to 1871) to unification and utmost centralization (under Hitler) to fragmentation and later to unity again. It has gone from one extreme of impotence to the other of commanding power positions, from authoritarianism to pluralism and back to tyranny. It can boast of the greatness of Beethoven, Goethe or Kant but not of the moral abyss of the concentration and extermination camps.

Perhaps because of this duality, the Germans have alternately appeared as good and bad in the extreme to the world. There were times when they earned the hatred of even their allies. They shocked the world when they rolled over neutral Belgium twice. They were the first to resort to poison gas. They attacked the Soviet Union without warning (1941) although they had signed a treaty of non-aggression only two years before. They sent the Jews to gas chambers, and shot hostages in wars. They even seized the vehicles of the Italians, their allies, and made them walk on foot in the African desert. But there were also times when an entire generation shared the

ideals of enlightenment and liberalism. Wilhelm von Humboldt was a German equivalent of John Stuart Mill. It is this diversity of theories that sometimes left the German people without accepted standards of attitude and action. Emanuel Geibel, a German poet, had written almost prophetically: "Am deutschen Wesen soll die Welt genesen" (The German spirit will heal the world). But which "spirit" was this going to be? It was this feeling of uncertainty that contributed to the rise of a new dogmatic creed around which large masses congregated - Nazism.

The Weimar Republic (1918-33) is generally described as "the first German experiment in democracy".²⁹ While the Constituent Assembly met, after the general elections of 1919, in the quiet atmosphere of the National Theater in Weimar, the charming city of Goethe, Schiller, Herder and Liszt, in the fourteen years of the republic (up to the accession of Hitler) Germany saw twenty different cabinets, and nowhere else in the world could one perhaps find stronger party discipline.³⁰ Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg, the candidate of the right-wing parties who was elected president after Friedrich Ebert's death

29 Gwendolen M. Carter and John H. Herz, **Major Foreign Powers**, 4th ed., New York and Burlingame, Harcourt, Brace and World. 1962. p. 369.

30 James K. Pollock, "The German Party System", **American Political Science Review**, 23 (November 1929). pp. 859-891.

(1925) but who permitted himself to wander away from democratic and parliamentary principles, became one of the destroyers of the Weimar system, accomplished through the immense prestige of the man himself and the constitutional powers of his office, including Article 48 which permitted the Reich President to suspend the fundamental rights of the citizens and invalidate the effectiveness of the Constitution.

Thomas Mann, Max Reinhardt, Emil Ludwig, Gerhart Hauptmann and others had worldwide importance connected with achievements in drama, literature and music. The Nobel Prize for Literature (1929) was awarded for the first time in seventeen years to a German, Thomas Mann. Germany was particularly responsible for new ideas in architecture, expressed in the works of Walter Gropius. While the teachers at the Bauhaus included painters like Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger and Oskar Schlemmer, the first few of Bertolt Brecht's plays³¹ were premiered in Reinhardt's Berlin theaters.³² The "Dada" movement, led then by George Grosz, Walter Mehring, Max Ernst and the like, had spread rapidly with outposts in capitals other than Berlin and Vienna. Musical life in Weimar Germany, in which Arnold

31 Trommeln in der Nacht, Im Dickicht der Städte and Mann ist Mann.

32 Deutsches Theater, Kammerspiele, Grosses Schauspielhaus.

Schonberg, Paul Hindemith, Anton Webern and others caught most attention, was conspicuous for a hitherto unexcelled wealth of talent in opera and music. But the Germans had not been educated for democracy, and the new republic, which stood under an unpropitious star, was unloved.³³ When many of these great names left Germany, there were indeed few places where they could go. One was the Republic of Turkey—a fact to be elaborated further below.

German society was ripe for dictatorship, racism and antisemitism from the point of view of hitherto many philosophical writings. Not only some Germans but also quite a few French and even British writers, although the latter very few, taught history of philosophy according to racial lines. For them, the white race was superior to the coloured races; the Aryans enjoyed supremacy among white men; the Nordic race was the best among the Aryans; and the Teuton Germans were destined to lead the Nordics. Judging by the writings of Count Arthur de Gobineau³⁴ and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, why should not some Germans embrace racism if influential Europeans

33 **German Cultural History from 1860 to the Present Day** (an up-dated new edition of: Ernst Johann /Jörg Junker, **Deutsche Kulturgeschichte der Letzen Hundert Jahre: 1860-1960**, München, 1970), München. Nymphenburger Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983. p. 127.

34 **Essai sur l'inegalite des races humaines** (The Inequality of Human Races, tr. Adrian Collins, New York. Putnam. 1915).

felt themselves Teutons and assigned to the Germans the highest rank among the Teutons? In France, Maurice Barres³⁵ developed Gobineau's theory of pure racist antisemitism. The Nazis (and Mussolini) inherited from George Sorel, who abhorred mass democracy, the idea of the "myth". Chamberlain, the son of a British admiral, was the son-in-law of Richard Wagner,³⁶ the celebrated German composer, and chose to become a naturalized German citizen. Hardly a great loss for the English people! Chamberlain's *Die Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts*,³⁷ which emphasised that everything good came from the Teuton and everything bad emanated from the Jew, turned into a Bible of the German racists. Alfred Rosenberg brought from Moscow *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, supposedly an authentic report of the minutes of a secret Jewish congress to overthrow Christian civilization.³⁸ The Tsarist police had used it to turn the wrath of the people from the government to the Jews. It was now widely circulated in

35 Zeev Sternhell, **Maurice Barres et le nationalisme français**, Brussels, Editions Complexe. 1985.

36 Jacob Katz, **The Darker Side of Genius: Richard Wagner's Antisemitism**, Hanover. New Hampshire, published for Brandeis University Press by University Press of New England, 1986.

37 H. S. Chamberlain, **Foundations of the 19th Century**, New York. J. Lane Co.. 1912.

38 Norman Cohn, **Warrant for Genocide: the Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion**, London and New York, Harper, 1967.

Germany. As Chamberlain's disciple, Rosenberg's elaborated myth was the superiority of the Teutonic race.³⁹ Alexander Tille's amateurish attempt to apply Darwinism to the human society constructed, nevertheless, the ideological link between the Nazis and the big German industrialists. Oswald Spengler, who preached the downfall of Western civilization,⁴⁰ was not an advocate of Nazism, but he helped disarm many of its opponents. It was Arthur Möller van den Bruck who invented the myth of Das Dritte Reich, which was also the title of his book. While Carl von Clausewitz's idea of war in his celebrated *Über den Krieg*⁴¹ was not a total one, but merely a continuation of political intercourse, General Erich Ludendorff's theory of "total war"⁴² was the logical consequence of the Nazi Weltanschauung.

Although there were divergences of opinion between the governing and the governed in Weimar Germany, one may assert that these variations were subordinated to a dominant factor—a fierce chauvinism. All

39 Alfred Rosenberg, **Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts**, München, Hoheneichen Verlag, 1942; Alfred Baeumler, Alfred Rosenberg und der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts, München, Hoheneichen Verlag, 1943.

40 Oswald Spengler, **Der Untergang des Abendlandes**, Gütersloh, C. Bertelsmann, 1921.

41 Carl von Clausewitz, **On War**, Washington, D.C., Combat Forces Press, 1953, pp. 16f.

42 Erich Ludendorff, **Der totale Krieg**, Berlin, Ludendorffs Verlag, 1935.

Germans thought that the conditions of the Versailles *Diktat* were extremely harsh but they had to be signed. The new republic had been born out of defeat and was still dependent on the forces that had shared the responsibility for the defeat. Constant use of the “stab in the back” legend, that is, the cowardly civilians stabbing the brave German soldiers in the back, helped the militarist circles to gain the upper hand. The emergence of this dominant factor may be explained by a multiplicity of factors, such as a rapid increase of population, a powerful industry, the loss of needed raw materials, the influence of heavy industry or writings in favour of a policy of force. But the fact remains that nearly all of the political elite was intoxicated by morbid chauvinism. German frontiers, flag and titles changed, but not the national anthem: *Deutschland über alles*. A small minority, which had escaped that disease, could have no hold on the mass of the governed. Thomas Mann’s passionate appeal for reason in late 1930 in the Beethoven Hall in Berlin could not convince the anti-democrats that their struggle against Weimar was preparing the way for the worst. Some members of the small resisting minority, such as Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Kurt Eisner were assassinated. Heinrich Brüning of the Center inaugurated the dictatorial régime in Germany, and another Centrist leader, Franz von Papen, opened the way to power for Hitler.

This was a very different thing from plain patriotism. With Hitler the disease reached its climax and crisis

Hitler had taken a keen interest in the Austrian pan-German and antisemitic movement, whose leader (G. R. von Schönerer⁴³) had greatly impressed him. In late 1919 he joined the *Deutsche Arbeits Partei*, a violently antisemitic and reactionary group whose funds was exactly 7,50 marks. He was its seventh member, but addressing an audience of 2000 only five months later. Article 4 of the famous “25 Points” of the program that he had written stated: “None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew, therefore, may be a member of thenation”.⁴⁴ All editors and contributors of newspapers published in the German language were to be from the members of the nation. The name of the party was changed (NS-DAP), and the semi-military units were formed under it.⁴⁵ When Hitler was incarcerated in the fortress of Landsberg-on-the-Lech on account of the failure of his coup de force (1923), he wrote **Mein Kampf**, which describes the Jew “as a parasite in the body

43 P.L. Carsten, **Fascist Movements in Austria: from Schönerer to Hitler**, London, Sage Publications. 1977.

44 W. M. Knight-Patterson (W.W. Kulski), **Germany from Defeat to Conquest**, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1945, p. 330.

45 The notorious S.A. (*Sturm-Abteilungen*) and the S.S (*Schutzstqffel*). Together they constituted an immense army of half a million men.

of other nations and States”, that he possesses “no culture-creating energy” and that any progress of mankind takes place “not through him but in spite of him”.⁴⁶

Fritz Thyssen, together with his Ruhr colleagues, financed Hitler’s National Socialist organisation. The Rhineland industrialist admitted this fact in the title of his book, **I Paid Hitler**.⁴⁷ John Heartfield’s poster, entitled *Millionen stehen hinter mir* (Millions stand behind me), depicted Hitler with Nazi salute about to grab the banknotes handed to him by a sponsor half-hidden in the back.⁴⁸ The Prussian landowning class, likewise, made the Neudeck estate a gift to the President, the incorruptible Hindenburg on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. Dipping deep into the pockets of the big industrialists and aided by the 1929 economic crisis, Hitler and his lieutenants marched slowly but surely to power. Even before attaining it, a group from his party including Frick, Goebbels, Goring and Strasser introduced a motion in the Reichstag that the entire property of the “Eastern Jews and other foreigners” who had immigrated since 1 August 1914, be confiscated without compen-

46 Adolf Hitler, **Mein Kampf**, New York, Reynal and Hitchcock. 1940, pp. 418, 420.

47 Fritz Thyssen, **I Paid Hitler**, London. Hodder and Stoughton, 1941.

48 **Fragen an die deutsche Geschichte**, Bonn, Bundestag, 1984, p. 309.

sation.⁴⁹ The Prussian Diet, where the Nazi Party elected its new Speaker, passed a law confiscating the entire property of all Jews who had entered Prussia from Eastern Europe after this date.⁵⁰ Gregor Strasser, then in charge of the party's organisation, stated in his first broadcast that the Nazis wanted "German leadership without the Jewish spirit, without Jews pulling the strings and without Jewish capital".⁵¹ Following the resignation of Franz von Papen's "Cabinet of Barons" and the subsequent fall of General Kurt von Schleicher from the Chancellorship, the new Hitler regime (1933) issued without delay a number of Decrees, two of which (7 April) immediately excluded the Jews from all posts in the administration and introduced anti-Jewish regulations for lawyers.⁵² The key idea in the first antisemitic law for the restoration of the professional civil service was that the officials of non-Aryan origin were to be eventually retired.⁵³

The Jewish Holocaust that followed is unique in the annals of history for a number of reasons. The Nazis sought to murder every Jew everywhere, regardless of gender, age, beliefs or actions, using the govern-

49 Knight-Patterson, **op.cit.**, p. 483

50 **Ibid.**, p. 535.

51 **Ibid.**, p. 541.

52 Franz von Papen. **Memoirs**. New York, E.P. Dutton, 1953. pp. 207 ff.

53 Konrad Heiden, **Der Fuehrer: Hitler's Rise to Power**. Cambridge. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1944, p. 588.

ment bureaucracy of an efficient modern state for this purpose. The Jews of Germany and of the German-occupied lands of Europe were a peaceful religious/ethnic group that laid no claims either to land or power, but had, moreover, contributed to science, arts and literature of their country (or countries) earning about one-third of the Nobel prizes. Most German Jews considered themselves no less German than any of their Christian compatriots. Thousands of them had laid their lives in the interest of their beloved country fighting during the First World War. It was difficult for them (and for the third parties as well) to grasp that a German government could strip them of their rights and identity, and moreover, annihilate them wholesale. The Nazis openly stated, on the other hand, that their total liquidation was to the advantage of Germany and the world. Grounded on a spurious ideology that considered the Jews a destructive race, it was such an extreme case of antisemitism that led to the genocide policy and implementation of die Endlösung ("Final Solution"), the cover name (Deckname) for the destruction of European Jewry.

Once Hitler, whose Teuton background showed it only in his blue eyes, seized power, reality for him was his ideas about "national enemies". Acts of violence against Jews immediately gained a new momentum. The dismissal of Jewish civil servants heralded

their systematic elimination from all aspects of life. The "Aryan paragraph" of the law⁵⁴ was increasingly used against artists, doctors, dentists, chemists, lawyers, journalists and others. The school gates were more and more closed to Jewish children. They were barred from associations and clubs. They were frequently forbidden to use public baths and park benches or enter bars. Jewish works were removed from libraries, galleries, theatres and concert halls. Their names were erased from the polls of honour on war memorials. Marriages between Jews and Aryans were forbidden. Such matrimonial unions, in spite of the law, even if the ceremony had taken place abroad, were invalid and punishable with imprisonment.

Making use of an assassination attempt by a Jewish minor on a German diplomat in Paris, a massive persecution campaign started throughout the Reich with the beginning of the Second World War. On the notorious Reichskristallnacht (9 November 1938), the police and the S.A. forces destroyed Jewish shops, synagogues burnt down, property looted, and some Jews sent to concentration camps. The complete identification and the social outlawing of the Jews became clearer than ever with the decree (1941) that required all above seven years of age to wear, on the

54 Uwe D. Adam. "An Overall Plan for Anti-Jewish Legislation in the Third Reich", **Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance**, 11 (1976), pp. 35-55.

left arm or the left hand side of the chest, a hexagonal star, the size of the palm of the hand, drawn in black on a yellow background with the inscription of “Jude” on it in black. The physical extermination of the “Jewish Bolshevik ruling elite in the Reich” and the Jews of Eastern Europe, along with the need to acquire Lebensraum for the German master race, became a war aim. Starting with 1942, the “Final Solution” was the terminology used for the systematic extermination of the Jewish population of the whole continent.

The relative defencelessness of the Jewish minorities in many countries had made them a convenient target almost throughout history. But Hitler had elevated them to a new degree of sin and evil. They were made into a symbol of impurity, never attained before, and, by implication, all forms of indecency were more or less caused by their influence. Even such words as democracy, capitalism, socialism, intellectuals, art and the like could be transformed into something “evil” simply by adding the epithet “Jewish” before it. At times appealing to legends and even superstitions, the Nazi regime created its antithesis referring to German science or teaching. What was left for the Jews were the concentration (Konzentra-

tionslager)⁵⁵ and extermination⁵⁶ camps. The Jews were murdered in the latter, frequently upon arrival, either by means of poisonous gas in special chambers or by mass shootings (Einsatzgruppen). The total number of the Jewish genocide probably reached a little less than six million.

Perhaps the biggest center of Nazi genocide was the death camp in Auschwitz,⁵⁷ where some four million people including Jews, Gypsies, leftists, some resistance members, and a host of others lost their lives. An enormous death complex rose there, which consisted of a mother camp and a network of small sub-camps. They were surrounded by rows of electrified barbed wire and by sentry towers. The inmates, condemned to death, were used as cheap labour by the S.S. as well as such concerns as Krupp or Hermann Goring Werke. The camp numbers, having replaced the names, were tattooed on the prisoners' left arms. Doctors, who carried criminal experiments,

55 Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Flussenburg, Gross-Rosen, Mauthausen, Natzweiler. Neuengamme, Traversbruck, Sachsenhausen, Theresienstadt.

56 Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmo, Lublin-Maidanek, Sobibor, Stutthof, Treblinka.

57 **KL Auschwitz**, Warszawa, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza. 1960; Mark Clinton, *The Mysticism of Mass Murder: Ethical and Political Issue in the Autobiography of Rudolf Hoess*. Centerpoint, 4/1 (1980), pp. 60-69.

used some of them as guinea pigs.⁵⁸ The prisoners lived under constant threat, knowing that tomorrow might be their last day. After the airtight doors of the gas chamber were locked, the cyclone-B poison poured through special holes, killed the inmates in about quarter of an hour. Only a few, emaciated as skeletons, lived to see the liberation.

The Jews of countries ruled directly or almost directly by Germany had a very slim chance of survival. Puppet states either brutally murdered their own Jews or turned them over to the Germans. In some of the European countries, antisemitism plagued their societies irrespective of the Nazi presence or rise. Although no French scholar has attempted to present a comprehensive history of native antisemitism, there has been an anti-Jewish sentiment in France.⁵⁹ Robert Byrnes's book covers only the period from the French Revolution to the "Dreyfus affair" (1894).⁶⁰ Some non-French books analyse the deep-seated nature of antisemitism in that country. Edgar Morin concludes, for instance, that French hostility toward-

58 Jack S. Boozer, "Children of Hippocrates: Doctors in Nazi Germany", **Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences**, 450 (1980), pp. 83-97.

59 David Weinberg, "French Antisemitism: Recent Historic-graphical Trends", **Approaches to Antisemitism**, op. cit., pp. 309-317; Michael R. Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, New York. Basic Books, 1981.

60 Robert Byrnes, **Antisemitism in Modern Prance**, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1950.

ds Jews is embedded within the collective psyche of that nation.⁶¹ The “shame”⁶² of the French officials has been admitted by a former Vichy Jewish affairs commissioner. The reappearance of antisemitism in contemporary France makes one think that the evaluation above deserves serious attention.

This is not to say that there was no resistance against the Nazi regime in Germany. Sections of the middle class conservatives, the political left, churchmen and some officers opposed Hitler, his lieutenants and allies, but they could not create a united front, not only of their diverging views but also on account of the perfect surveillance system. There was no substantial attempt to overthrow Hitler until mid-1944; however, it was unsuccessful.⁶³ The Holocaust was the ultimate degeneration of German civilisation, but one cannot indict a whole people with a crime committed by a transient leadership.

Antisemitism is an ancient phenomenon, initially assimilated into Christian culture and then transformed in some secular societies, manifesting it even today particularly in Europe. It targeted Jews who were seldom equipped to protect themselves. The understanding of the issue not as a “Jewish prob-

61 Edgar Morin, **Rumour in Orleans**, New York. Pantheon, 1971.

62 Luce Giard, “La Honte”: **Esprit**, I (1979), pp. 71-78.

63 **Germans Against Hitler**, Bonn, Berto-Verlag, 1960.

lem” but as a “gentile problem” is indispensable for a balanced evaluation of Western civilization.

In sharp contrast to the undisguised and obvious antisemitism described above, the coexistence of the Jews and the Muslims within the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey has a history of more than five hundred years. One can assert that this coexistence was not hampered by treason or oppression. An international Quincentennial Foundation celebrated the 500th anniversary (1492-1992) of the mass immigration of Jews to the Ottoman lands escaping from the European Inquisition. Activities all over the world, encompassing the entire year of 1992, reflected the beauty and grandeur, in the words of the President of the Foundation, “of this humanitarian approach”.⁶⁴ Many German intellectuals, including prominent Jewish professors, fled Nazi oppression before and during the Second World War and found shelter in Turkey. Historical evidence demonstrates that the Turks, during the Ottoman and the Republican times, welcomed and embraced the persecuted Jews. The prompt Turkish response to the Jewish drama in both cases, separated from each other by centuries, is also a reminder to those who seemed undisturbed and stood aloof from these bestial acts.

64 Jak V. Kamhi, “Foreword”, **Exhibit of the Quincentennial Foundation**, [Istanbul, 1992], p. 2.

Under the Ottoman millet system of autonomous self-government, the Greeks, the Armenians, the Jews and the other major non-Muslim minorities were each administered under their own religious leaders, who had more power over their followers than had been the case in the Christian states which had previously controlled the same lands.⁶⁵ The Ottoman society was divided into various communities along religious lines, each group or individual belonging to one or the other millet according to religious affiliation. Such division was also customary among the Romans, as well as the medieval empires of Europe and the Middle East. The Ottomans elaborated and institutionalised it. Each millet, including the non-Muslim Ottoman citizens, established and maintained its own laws and institutions to regulate conduct and conflict under its own leaders.

In addition to the Muslims, the Ottomans initially recognized three basic religious groups. Jews and Christians were “People of the Book”, whose religions were related to but superseded by Islam. The Orthodox included some Slavs apart from the Greeks and about half of the Rumanians. It was the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II, who recognized (1461) the Armenian *millet* and its national church, which was monop-

65 Stanford J. Shaw, **History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey**, Vol. I, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 58-59, 151-153.

hysite in doctrine and condemned as heretical by the Orthodox Church. The Jews, under their own Grand Rabbi (*Hahambaşı*) enjoyed so much autonomy that tens of thousands of them had a narrow escape to the Ottoman lands from Spain and other parts of Europe such as Austria, Bohemia and Poland. Those from the Iberian Peninsula, called the Sephardim, kept their old dialect *Ladino* alive, and dominated the whole Jewish community that also included the Ashkenazim coming from central Europe. There is some opinion, though not conclusive evidence, that the Jews of Constantinople aided the Turks in 1453 by opening to them some gates of the city.

The years before 1492 witnessed a mounting persecution of the Jews, making expulsion more or less a logical climax.⁶⁶ The Safarid Jews, who were previously expelled from Andalusia, segregated into separate quarters and were forced to wear a yellow armband (*rouelle*), had to leave Spain after having lived there for over fourteen centuries. Even the converted Jews (*conversos*) had to go in order to preserve *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood). The forcibly converted Muslims were also expelled.⁶⁷

66 Eleazar Gutwirth . "Towards Expulsion: 1391-1492", ed., Elie Kedouri, **Spain and the Jews: the Sephardi Experience, 1492 and After**, London, Thames and Hudson, 1992, pp. 51-73.

67 Mehmet Suphi, "The Expulsion of Safarad Jews: Regression in the Development of Modern Society", **Mind and Human Interaction**, Charlottesville, VA, IV/1 (December 1994), pp. 40-51.

The Safarid Jews found a “safe haven” in the vast Ottoman lands. Much earlier than that (1326), the Ottoman Sultan Orhan I authorized the construction (in Bursa, the newly-acquired capital) of the *Ez ha-Hayyim* (Tree of Life) synagogue that was functioning until the 1950’s when an accidental fire destroyed it. Numerous Jewish communities found themselves within the tolerant Ottoman state as the latter expanded in the Balkans. Not only the Turkish rulers actively encouraged Jewish immigration, but also the Ottoman Jews invited their coreligionists to seek safety and prosperity among the Turks. A letter by Rabbi Isaac Sarfati (written probably in the mid-15th century) criticises “the tyrannical laws, the compulsory baptisms and the banishments” in the German states and proclaims that “Turkey is a land wherein nothing is lacking, and where, if you will, all shall yet be well with you”. Adding that everyone there “may dwell at peace”, he advises at the end to leave their “accursed land forever”.⁶⁸ The Jews enjoyed considerable self-rule in the Ottoman Empire administering their economic, social and judicial affairs, as well as religious ones.⁶⁹ They had to pay a special (military exemption) tax, along with the other non-Muslim

68 Bernard Lewis, **The Jews of Islam**, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 135-136.

69 Walter F Weiker. “Turkish-Jewish and Turkish-Christian Relations”, eds., David A Altabè, Erhan Atay and Israel J Katz, **Studies on Turkish-Jewish History: Political and Social Relations, Literature**

religious minorities, but the state guaranteed the safety of their lives and property. Even when this tax was abolished, a very high percentage of the non-Muslims chose to continue to pay the tax instead of doing military service. The Jews, who brought their financial and intellectual skills, at one time provided about forty physicians to the Sublime Porte. While well-to-do Jews offered their financial resources to the advantage of the state, some Turkish sultans intervened abroad to prevent their persecution or to protect Jewish rights to trade freely. When Sultan Abdulmecid's imperial edict (*ferman*) stated (1840) about the "blood libel" that he could "not permit the Jewish nation, whose innocence of the crime alleged against them is evident, to be worried and tormented as a consequence of accusations which have not the least foundation in truth",⁷⁰ the belief in the authenticity of the same charge was rampant as epidemic in many corners of Europe. The Ottoman Jews had no separatist ambitions and were never seen by Turks as agents of the European powers.

The Republic of Turkey was a major place of refuge for European Jews, as the Ottoman Empire had been centuries ago. The Republican regime once

and Linguistics, New York, Sepher-Hermon Press for The American Society of Sephardic Studies, 1996. pp 21-34

70 Nairn Guleryuz, **The History of the Turkish Jews**, Istanbul, Batur Matbaası, n.d., p. 12.

more opened the gates of the country to hundreds of intellectuals fleeing from Nazi persecution and to thousands more who were less well known.⁷¹ There were prominent jurists, economists, historians, sociologists, philologists, mathematicians, physiologists, pharmacists, botanists, zoologists, chemists, engineers, astronomers, composers, architects, sculptors and leading members of other professions who helped improve university teaching and academic research in Turkey.

Ernst Reuter, who later became the Mayor of West Berlin, taught urban planning in Ankara. Lèopold Lèvy educated many gifted Turkish painters in Istanbul. Carl Ebert founded the Theatrical Department at the State Conservatory and was the Director of the State Theater in Ankara. Rudolf Belling served as professor of sculpture at the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy. Andreas Schwartz taught Roman law, Ernst Hirsch international trade law and Fritz Neumark economics at Istanbul University. Albert Einstein could not respond to a Turkish offer because he had already accepted a position at Princeton University. Even when none other than Hitler wrote a personal letter to Turkey's President İsmet İnönü requesting him to send back the German professors who had ta-

71 Stanford J Shaw, **Turkey and the Holocaust: Turkey's Role in Rescuing Turkish and European Jewry from Nazi Persecution, 1933-1945**, New York, New York University Press, 1993.

ken refuge in Turkey and suggesting instead another group of German academics, İnönü replied in writing that he would cling to the good ones that he had. Almost all stayed until the very end of the Second World War, and many extended their stay beyond that date. Some were buried in Turkey or left a will requesting their remains to be sent there.

Several Turkish diplomats serving in Paris, Marseille, Belgrade, Constanza, Rhodes, Prague, Budapest, Athens, Varna, and elsewhere did their best and succeeded in saving the lives of thousands of Jews who would have otherwise ended up in the Nazi concentration and extermination camps. To have a Turkish passport or to have been a former citizen of the Turkish Republic meant for a Jew in Europe the difference between life and death. Having diplomatic relations with Germany and with most of the German-occupied countries, Turkish diplomats frequently and insistently used their status on behalf of the Turkish Jews living or working in those countries. Some had married locally, acquired a new citizenship or failed to register with the Turkish consulates abroad. The Turkish diplomats encouraged them to register, issued false papers when necessary and even saved the lives of non-Turkish Jews as well. A Turkish diplomat was imprisoned, and his wife was killed in connection with that kind of activity. Turkey permitted the Jewish Agency to open up a rescue of-

fice in İstanbul. The Turkish frontier officials generally allowed Jews coming from neighbouring Greece, where life was one of the worst in the whole of Europe, to enter Turkish territory.

Jewish experience with the world, and especially the events encountered during the Nazi period, are far different from the Turks' relations with the Armenians throughout the ages. Although the Christian Armenians were believers in the monophysite Gregorian sect and as such were condemned as heretical by some other Christians, it was the Ottoman Turks who legally recognized them, as early as 1461, as a separate community with self-government under its own leadership. In consequence of the Ottoman *millet* system, this statutory right, renewed by the *fermans* of the succeeding Ottoman rulers, conceded to the Armenians their religious and ethnic freedoms at a time when Cromwell's soldiers were persecuting the Catholics, the French massacring the Huguenots and suppressing the other Protestants, established churches subduing the Calvinists, and above all, when the Inquisition was quashing and wiping out the Jews.

Even when one takes the date of 1071, as indicative of mass and permanent Turkish penetration into Anatolia, one should say with certainty that the Turks had not taken over those lands from the Ar-

menian community, which had no independent state then. The well-known armed engagement took place between the Muslim Seljuk Turks and the Greek Orthodox Byzantine Empire. The Turks, whether Seljuks or Ottomans, did not bring any Armenian state entity to an end. The Byzantines terminated the official Armenian existence and moreover, resettled them. Frequently, the Armenians cooperated with the Muslim rulers to be able to withstand the repressions of their fellow Christians. The early Turks, on the other hand, had earned praise even from the Armenian historians, such as Mateos of Urfa, who spoke highly of Turkish sovereigns (Kılıçarslan and Melikşah) as well as their appointed governors as being “good, virtuous, merciful, protector of Armenian monuments and bent towards construction”.⁷²

For hundreds of years, coexistence and peace dominated the association of the Turks with the Armenians. Quite dissimilar to the Jewish experience in other parts of the world, the Armenians, like the other minorities, enjoyed considerable self-rule, the Ottoman Government retaining final authority only in some spheres. The non-Muslims often appealed to Muslim courts when dissatisfied with the decisions of their own courts. One cannot do justice to

72 Ali Sevim, **Genel Çizgileriyle Selçuklu-Ermeni İlişkileri**, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983. pp. 20-21, 27.

the relations between these two peoples unless one approaches the subject in a larger and proper perspective. This point is all the more significant when one remembers the contrasting treatment of the Jews throughout the ages. These lines are not written, however, to idealize the past Seljuk or Ottoman states. It is only fair to remember, on the other hand, that many foreign historians and travelers pay high tribute especially to the early centuries of Turkish administration. This chapter is not the suitable place to offer their views in support of this statement. Some adversities may also be found even in those better centuries that preceded the most troublesome epoch in the long history of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, there were times when the safety of the caravan trade could not be guaranteed, on account of gangs (*Celâlis*), who did not differentiate between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. It is important to note that the latter, within the norms of the era, were not subjected to persecution.

The Armenian Patriarch had authority over his followers, similar to those enjoyed by the Greek Patriarch and the Grand Rabbi, all of whom had permanent high places in the state bureaucracy. The Ottoman Government protected the Armenians, not only from the encroachments of others, but also occasionally intervened in order to bring about harmony within the Armenian community itself. Such mediation oc-

curred in 1841 when a new Armenian national committee was established to balance the interests of the old conservative Armenians and those of the emerging common folk. Especially in the late 19th century, there grew internal turmoil within each of the minorities under the continued dominance of their own religious authorities who were conservative in their attitudes in non-religious matters as well. It was also the Ottoman Government that acted as a factor of equilibrium in the bitter controversy between the Armenian Gregorian Church and the newly converted Armenian Catholic and Protestant groups. The Turks had to issue two more edicts establishing separate Catholic and Protestant *millet*s within the Ottoman state, defining the rights and the privileges of each.

Whether Gregorian, Catholic or Protestant, the Armenians, like the members of the other minorities, entered all walks of life (as tradesmen, bankers, writers, journalists, architects, doctors, lawyers, actors, musicians, and the like). Economically, the Armenians were better off than the rest, including the Muslims. Gabriel Noradounghian, an Armenian, had been in charge of three different ministries, one being the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - a post he held until 1913, a year before the First World War. The fact that an Armenian citizen was entrusted with the reins of Ottoman foreign policy during the turbulent years

of the Balkan Wars should not be permitted to pass as an ordinary event. Would a Jewish German citizen have been allowed to fill the post of Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, Freiherr von Neurath or Joachim von Ribbentrop? Hagop Kazazian, another Armenian, was, at the time, the Ottoman Minister of Finance while Garabet Artin Davut headed the Ministry of the Postal Services. Three other Armenians held, in turn, the post of the last mentioned ministry and three more the Ministry of Public Works. There were four Armenian Senators and nine Armenian Representatives in the short-lived 1878 Ottoman Parliament. There were eleven Armenian Deputies in the 1908 Ottoman Parliament and still eleven more in the 1914 Ottoman Parliament.

Apart from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, four of the Permanent Under-secretaries were Armenians, and a total of 48 Armenians worked in the Foreign Ministry. Garabet Artin Davut had been Ottoman Ambassador to Berlin and Vienna, Dikran Aleksanian to Brussels, Yetvart Zohrab to London, and O. Kuyumjian to Rome. The counsellors of the Ottoman embassies in Berlin and Brussels were also Armenians. Fifteen of them served as Ottoman consuls and 12 more as diplomatic secretaries with varying ranks. Four were members of the Council of State, 51 were Lieutenant Governors or high officials in the Interi-

or Ministry.⁷³ The Ottoman archives have complete lists of the many Armenian citizens employed in foreign relations, finance, justice, education, public works, postal services, forestry, agriculture and the like. In the Ottoman society, there was no racial, ideological, official or any kind of expressed or implied discrimination against the Armenians. Apart from the belief in the Islamic doctrine that the monotheistic religion propagated by Muhammad being the last and thereby the most perfect universal faith of its kind, Ottoman behaviour toward the minorities, including the Armenians, “can be characterized as impressively tolerant”.⁷⁴

It was in the second half of the 19th century that the Ottoman Empire met several reverses. It was no other than the government itself that saw the need to introduce reforms. It was also toward the end of the same century that the “Armenian question” became an international issue. Although that aspect of the problem is beyond the scope of this chapter, one should only remind the reader that such an internationalisation cannot be isolated from the attributes of the “Era of Imperialism”, which affected almost every event of the age. Not only by judging from

73 An Armenian source on this point: Masrob K. Krikorian, **Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire: 1860-1908**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1977.

74 Weiker, **op. cit.**, p. 32.

what happened elsewhere in all continents, but also a glance at the great power interest in the retreating Ottoman state gives any researcher the serious thought that the Armenian issue had also become a plaything in the hands of foreign governments of the day.

Again, this chapter is not the appropriate place for an analysis of imperialism, or international competition based on industrialization and the search for raw materials and markets. But it is worth offering a comparison between the goals of the principal economic powers of the worldwide marketplace and the aspirations of the less developed areas, on which the former were becoming increasingly dependent. Although the subjugation of vast tracts of land and indigenous populations was by no means a new phenomenon, as rivalries increased, European powers moved with greater determination and frequency to control territories, economies, governments, and peoples. The last-mentioned included the minorities as well. The French supported imperialism as a means, first of undoing the results of the humiliating defeat before the Germans in 1871, and then stopping the loss of existing and potential markets. The British were alarmed at the accelerating pace of German industrialisation. The Germans were after a place in the club of great powers. Hitler carried this craving to the point of world domination.

The developing political consciousness of the Ottoman Turks, on the other hand, was diametrically opposed to the ambitions of the established great powers. The Ottoman Empire had lost its grandeur and was searching for ways and means to reform itself, principally on the basis of the liberal political thinking of Western experience. The government gradually appreciated the value of important technological changes elsewhere, such as the mass production of steel, the use of electric power in industry and commerce, the introduction of the steam turbine, and much later conversion from coal to oil. But the Ottoman liberals, whose loose association was frequently referred to as the Young Turks, argued in favour of accompanying fundamental political and social reforms.⁷⁵ Contemporaneous education was part of this drive, in which the government took a willing lead. Some of their graduates formed groups, one being the Committee of Union and Progress, which advocated constitutionalism and freedom. The compulsion of the Ottoman elite was in the direction of individual liberties.

It was this same committee, which ruled the Ottoman society during the First World War, including the stormy year of 1915, which forced (1908) Sultan Ab-

75 Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, **History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey**, Vol. II. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 255-259, 263-267, 270-287, 298-304, 332-334.

dülhamid II to restore the Parliament (closed down in 1876) and subsequently to abdicate. The dedicated liberals, including Ahmet Rıza (1859-1930), Mehmet Murat (1853-1912), Damat Mahmut Paşa (1853-1903) and his sons Princes Sabahaddin and Lütfullah, in contrast to Gobineau, Barrès and Sorrel in France or Chamberlain, Rosenberg and Möller in Germany, demanded a constitutional regime for the benefit of the people. The Second Young Turk Congress, which met (1907) in Paris, was chaired jointly by two veteran Muslim liberals (Ahmet Rıza, and Prince Sabahaddin) and also by K. Maloumian, of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Dashnags*). One of the leading cities in Macedonia, Salonica, where there was a substantial Jewish population, happened to be a leading center for constitutional activity. In contrast to the *Reichstag* fire in Germany, the Young Turk Revolution forced the sultan to reopen the Parliament and give up most of his powers. This bloodless change signified the defeat of autocracy in favour of constitutional government. The Abdülhamid era was over although he remained on the throne one more year. Muslims and non-Muslims embraced each other in the streets. Political prisoners were pardoned. New political parties and newspapers were established, and new elections, though still indirect, were held. The Turks gained a majority in the Parliament, and the Armenians sent 11 representatives.

This decisive step, however, was not a panacea for all the ills of the past autocracy. While the conservatives campaigned against the Constitution and even led an abortive uprising (1909), the Union and Progress government, in four years, lost even more territory than the deposed sultan had to give up during his long reign. When the new regime failed to create miracles, the Armenian and the Greek terrorists were again active in their own localities.

If Turkish nationalism came to prominence during these years more than it ever was in the past, it can in no way be compared to German nationalism of the 1930s. It is important to remember that ideas related to “Turkism” did not originate in the home country, i. e., in the Ottoman Empire or in the Republic of Turkey, but in the diasporas. In this way, it differs from Pan-Germanism, Pan-Hellenism, Pan-Slavism and similar irredentism of other neighbours. It originated abroad, mainly in response to the “pan-ideologies” of other nations. For instance, the official Tsarist policy of Russification, often accompanied with Christianisation, provoked some Turkic groups, such as the Crimean Tatars, to be increasingly aware of common ties with each other. The inception of Turkism by them unfolded on the cultural plane with emphasis on unity or similarity in language, literature, folklore and history. Its propagators felt themselves justified because they had more than their share of competi-

tors or opponents in the form of Pan-Slavism of Tsarist Russia and the *Megali Idea* of the Greeks. Unlike German Nazism, the ideas of Turkism were defensive and not irredentist.

The Nazi leaders put into action after 1933 and during the war years what they had openly advocated even before coming to power. The future could be read undisguised in the party program, theoretical works, step-by-step decisions and in almost all public pronouncements. Only the victimizers had the political power and the guns needed for the genocide of the peaceful and loyal Jewish minority. The Armenians lived and acted in a much different Ottoman milieu. When they took up arms towards the end of the 19th century and shed much blood since then, especially at the beginning of the crucial year 1915, the Ottoman Government, left between Scylla and Charybdis, had to take a relocation decision which carried most of the Armenians to the south, some losing their lives in the process. Relocation turned into murders in certain segments of the migration. It was only the Ottoman courts, however, that tried and convicted the guilty. There are no decisions or documents ordering annihilation. The instructions cover the compulsory but bloodless transfer of people to safer areas. The directives are detailed enough, at least on paper, to secure an eventless journey. The relocation did not encompass all Armenians either.

Otherwise, there would not have been any Armenians left in Turkey today. Catholic and Protestant Armenians, those serving in the army, professionals such as doctors, personnel of the Ottoman Bank and the health departments, the officials of the state tobacco company, some bureaucrats, groups of traders and workers, the employees in foreign diplomatic missions, and those known to be loyal citizens, with no links to violence, no matter where they might be residents, together with the members of their families, were all excluded from the process of resettlement.

Some Armenian groups, prepared to start a southward journey, were stopped because the government abandoned the resettlement policy before they hit the road. The government initially authorized but later cut short, in reaction to rumours of abuse and corruption, the auction sales of the immovable property of the relocated people. The amounts received from sales were sent to the actual owners by way of a state commission created for this purpose. The fact that a great majority of the Armenians reached their destinations can be authenticated, not only in numerous Ottoman documents, but also in reliable Armenian and Western accounts. Some officials, whose negligence, lack of solid will to ward off attacks, or outright crimes of their own were observed,

suffered discharge and punishment including court martial in serious cases.

It is no exaggeration to say that many Armenian and Muslim lives were lost on account of the general war conditions, sickness and rampant epidemics of all sorts. Even the British, German and Turkish commanders fell victim to these diseases.⁷⁶ The consequences of a similar deportation organised by the French go to prove the truth of this point. A scholarly French-language journal informs us that when the French gathered the Armenians of the south-eastern Turkish cities like Adana to carry them away to the port of Marseille in their own battleships, a few thousand of them, made to walk to the shore, lost their lives on the way due to fatigue and failing health.⁷⁷ Those Armenians were certainly not victims of genocide or massacre perpetrated by the French. The same applies to some other instances.

It is also true, however, that some Armenian groups in the process of relocation were attacked mainly by Muslim marauders of various ethnic backgrounds. The Turkish courts were the only tribunals set up

76 Türkkiye Ataöv, **Deaths Caused by Disease, in Relation to the Armenian Question**, Ankara, Sevinç Matbaası, 1985.

77 Georges Boudière, "Notes sur la Campagne de Syrie-Cilicie: l'affaire de Maraş (Janvier-février 1920)", **Turcica**, Paris/Strasbourg, IX/2-X (1978). p. 160. Also in Kâmurân Gürün, **Ermeni Dosyası**, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983, p. 225.

to try the culprits and pass judgements, including prison sentences and capital punishments duly carried out. One must also remember that almost all high-ranking Ottoman statesmen, inclusive of the Grand Vizier, the Speaker of the Parliament, Chief of the General Staff, the Sheikh-ul Islam (chief religious authority), cabinet members, MPs, governors, army commanders, university professors, editors, journalists, and some minor officials were all deported to the British crown-colony of Malta where they awaited legal evidence against them, but finally freed.⁷⁸ Some of them were gunned down by Armenian assassins while on their way back to Turkey.

Relocation was temporarily stopped on account of severe winter and totally discontinued in early 1916. Less than 450,000 Armenians were moved southwards from their original places of residence, and a great majority of them seem to have reached their destinations, so designated even by some officially responsible Armenians of the time. Some of the remainders died from diseases, and some were unfortunately murdered.

One other point that needs proper attention is the fact that, within a short period of eight years (1914-

78 Bilâl N. Şimşir, **The Deportees of Malta and the Armenian Question**, Ankara, Foreign Policy Institute, 1984; **Malta Sürgünleri**, 2. B., Ankara, Bilgi Yayınevi, 1985.

22), various Armenian groups, in contrast to the much later behaviour of the Jews in Nazi Germany or in Europe, participated, under their own (or foreign) commanders, in about a dozen wars, during which they killed their adversaries and even each other for political or ideological reasons. The Armenians themselves published several books and a series of articles with photographs documenting their active engagement in a number of battlefronts.

Those who returned were given back their properties along with some allowance to start a new life. Their debts were either cancelled or postponed. The money sent from the United States or donated by church missionaries and consulates were distributed to the Armenians with Ottoman Government approval and supervision. Orphans were entrusted to relief committees composed of Armenians themselves.

The experiences of German Jews and Ottoman Armenians and the circumstances of their place in history seem to be so different that they cannot be grouped together under such a general heading as “genocide”. The Jewish ordeal is unprecedented.

