

TELL OF HORRORS DONE IN ARMENIA

**Report of Eminent Americans
Says They are Unequaled
in a Thousand Years.**

TURKISH RECORD OUTDONE

**A Policy of Extermination Put
in Effect Against a Helpless People**

ENTIRE VILLAGES SCATTERED

**Men and Boys Massacred, Women and
Girls Sold as Slaves and Distributed
Among Moslems**

The Committee on Armenian Atrocities, a body of eminent Americans which for weeks has been investigating the situation in Turkish Armenia, issued, yesterday, a detailed report of that investigation, in which it is asserted that in cruelty and in horror nothing in the past thousand years has equaled the present persecutions of the Armenian people by the Turks. The committee adds that the sources of its information are "unquestioned as to their veracity, integrity, and authority of the writers."

The data on which the report is based were gathered from all parts of the Turkish Empire.

The report tells of children under 15 years of age thrown into the Euphrates to be drowned; of women forced to desert infants in arms and to leave them by the roadside to die; of young women and girls appropriated by the Turks, thrown into harems, attached, or else sold to the highest bidder, and of men murdered and tortured. "Everything that an Armenian possesses, even to the clothes on his back, are stolen by his persecutors."

The report says "the use of the bastinado has been revived, high dignitaries of the Church have been hanged, families scattered to the four winds, and thousands upon thousands of defenseless, miserable persons herded together like cattle and driven into the desert lands of the empire, there to starve and die."

Men Who Signed the Report

The men who signed this report are:

The Right Rev. DAVID H. GREER, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of New York.

OSCAR S. STRAUS, former Secretary of Commerce and Labor, and ex-Ambassador to Turkey.

CLEVELAND H. DODGE, of Phelps, Dodge & Company

The Rev. Dr. STEPHEN S. WISE, Rabbi of the Free Synagogue, N.Y.

CHARLES R. CRANE of Chicago, Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Democratic National Committee during the last campaign.

ARTHUR CURTISS JAMES, Director of many railroads and of the Hanover National Bank, the United States Trust Co., and Phelps, Dodge & Co.

The Rev. Dr. FRANK MASON NORTH of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

JOHN R. MOTT of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association.

WILLIAM W. ROCKHILL, former Ambassador to Turkey and former Ambassador to Russia.

WILLIAM SLOANE, President of W. & J. Sloane, 575 Fifth Avenue, NY

The Rev. Dr. EDWARD LINCOLN SMITH of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

The Rev. Dr. FREDERICK LYNCH of the New York Peace Society.

GEORGE A. PLIMPTON of Ginn & Co., a trustee of Constantinople College.

The Rev. Dr. JAMES L. BARTON, for many years a missionary in Turkey, and now the Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

The Rev. Dr. WILLIAM J. HAVEN, one of the founders of the Epworth League.

STANLEY WHITE, President of the White Advertising Corporation.

Professor SAMUEL P. DUTTON, an authority on Balkan affairs.

Identity of Writers Concealed.

"For reasons that will be obvious to all," says the committee in a foreword to its report, "the names and positions of the various writers cannot be given at this time. These are known to the committee, who vouch for them and their statements. In most cases it will be necessary to conceal the place from which the statements were written, and even the names of the cities and towns referred to, in order that the writer or his interests may not suffer irreparable harm."

Sources of the information, it added, are Greek, Bulgarian, American, Turkish, German, British, and Armenian.

The report, which contains 20,000 words, is divided into twenty-five parts. The first, dated April 27, 1915, states that a "movement against Armenians forms part of a concerted movement against all non Turkish and mission and progress elements, including Zionists."

The second, dated three days later, tells of the persecution, plunder, and massacre in the interior of Turkey, and of "incredible severity" against Armenians in Zeitun and Marash.

July 10, the writer stated that it was then evident that a "systematic attempt to uproot the peaceful Armenian population had been decided upon."²

"Torture, pillage, rape, murder, wholesale expulsion and deportation,

and massacre, came from all parts of the empire and was due, not to fanatical or popular demand, but was purely arbitrary, and directed from Constantinople."

July 16, another writer reported that "a campaign of race extermination is in progress."

Chapter VI, tells of the massacre in late July of women and children, most of whom had been deported from the Erzerum district. The massacre occurred near the town of Kemakh, between Erzerum and Harput.

Deportation Was Begun in Zeitun

Chapters VII, and VIII, form two of the most horrible of all the chapters of horrors, into which the report is divided. The are, in part, as follows:

"June 20. The deportation began some six weeks ago with 180 families from Zeitun; since which time all the inhabitants of that place and its neighboring villages have been deported; also most of the Christians in Albustan, many from Hadjin, Sis, Kars Pazar, Hassan Beyil and Deort Yol.

The numbers involved are approximately, to date, 26,5000. Of these, about 5,000 have been sent to the Konieh region, 5,500 are in Aleppo and surrounding towns and villages, and the remainder are in Der Zor, Racca, and various places in Mesopotamia, even as far as the neighborhood of Baghdad."

"The process is still going on, and there is no telling how far it may be carried. The orders already issued will bring the number of in this

region up to 82,000, and there have been as yet none exiled from Aintab, and very few from Marsh and Urfa."

"The orders of commanders may have been reasonably humane; but the execution of them has been for the most part unnecessarily harsh, and in many cases accompanied by horrible brutality to women and children, to the sick and the aged. Whole villages were deported at an hour's notice, with no opportunity to prepare for the journey, not even, in some cases, to gather together the scattered members of the family, so that little children were left behind.

In Hadjin, well-to-do people who had prepared food and bedding for the road, were obliged to leave it in the street, and afterward suffered greatly from hunger."

Women Driven Under the Lash

"In many cases the men were (those of military age were nearly all in the army) bound tightly together with ropes or chains. Women with little children in their arms, or in the last days of pregnancy were driven along under the whip like cattle. Three different cases came under my knowledge where the woman was delivered on the road, and because her brutal driver hurried her along she died of hemorrhage. I also know of one case where the gendarme in charge was a humane man, and allowed the poor woman several hours rest, and then procured a wagon for her to ride in."

"Some women became so completely worn out and hopeless that they left their infants beside the road. Many women and girls have

been outraged. At one place the commander of the gendarmerie openly told the men to whom he consigned a large company that they were at liberty to do what they chose with the women and girls.

As to subsistence, there has been a great difference in different places. In some places the Government has fed them, in some places it has permitted others to do so. There has been much hunger, thirst and sickness, and some real starvation and death."

"These people are being scattered in small units, three or four families in a place, among a population of different race and religion, and speaking a different language. I speak of them as being composed of families, but fourth fifths of them are women and children, and what men there are for the most part old or incompetent.

If a means is not found to aid them through the next few months, until they get established in their new surroundings, two thirds or three fourths of them will die of starvation and disease."

Prisoners' Feet Beaten to Pieces

"I was called to a house one day where I saw a sheet which originated from the prison and which was being sent to wash. This sheet was covered with blood and running in long streams. I was also shown clothes which were drenched and exceedingly dirty. It was a puzzle to me what they could possibly have done to the prisoners, but I got to the bottom of the matter by the help of two very reliable persons who witnessed part of it themselves:"

"The prisoner is put in a room (similar to the times of the Romans) Gendarmes standing in twos at both sides and two at the end of the room administer, each in their turn, bastinadoes as long as they have enough force in them. At the time of the Romans 40 strokes were administered at the very most; in this place, however, 200, 300, 500, even 800 strokes are administered. The foot swells up, then bursts open, due to the numerous blows, and thus the blood spurts out. The prisoner is then carried back into prison and brought to bed by the rest of the prisoners - this explains the bloody sheet."

"The prisoners who become unconscious after these blows are revived through the means of some cold water, which is thrown on their heads, and which accounts for the wet and dirty clothes."

"A young man was beaten to death within the space of five minutes."

"Apart from the bastinadoing other methods were employed, too, such as putting hot irons on the chest. A forger, who was suspected to have forged the shells of the bombs, was let free only after his toes were burned off with sulphur, (called Kerab)."

"The German Consul of Aleppo estimates the number of deported to be 30,000. Five thousand people were deported to the unhealthy spot of Sultani, in the District of Konia. The Government gave in the first days some bread. When the bread was finished they received none; the misery was heartrending."

In Chapter 9 the writer tells of another reign of terror, during which

the terrible bastinado was again brought into use, with torture by fire added. He had heard instances of this burning out of the eyes of the poor victims. In another instance some old bombs found in a cemetery and planted there probably during the reign of Abdul Hamid were used as an excuse to torture and kill hundreds who were accused of having hidden them there for use against the Turks.

On June 26 the Armenian men of a certain town were ordered to leave the town. No exception was made; old and young, rich and poor, sick and well, all had to go. When seriously ill the victim was dragged from his bed into the streets. They were robbed of their shoes and clothing. They were thrown into prison and marched away in groups of thirty and more. Some groups were chained. A man in touch with the Turkish Government subsequently stated they had been killed.

Women of Sultan's Soldiers Deported

“Following the deportation of the men the women and children were ordered to be ready to leave. They were told to be ready to leave on a Wednesday. This is what happened:”

“On Tuesday, about 3:30 A.M., the ox carts appeared at the doors of the first district to be removed, and the people were ordered to depart at once. Some were dragged from their beds without even sufficient clothing. All the morning the ox carts creaked out of town, laden with women and children, and here and there a man who had escaped the

previous deportations. In many cases the husbands and brothers of these same women were away in the army, fighting for the Turkish government.”

“The panic in the city was terrible. The people felt that the Government was determined to exterminate the Armenian race, and they were powerless to resist. The people were sure that the men were being killed and the women kidnapped. Many of the convicts in the prison had been released, and the mountains around _____ were full of bands of outlaws. It was feared that the women and children were taken some from the city and left to the mercy of these men.”

“However that may be, there are provable cases of the kidnapping of attractive young girls by the Turkish officials of _____. One Moslem reported that a gendarme had offered to sell him two girls for a medjidie (\$4.00). The women believed that they were going to a fate worse than death, and many carried poison in their pockets to use if necessary. Some carried picks and shovels to bury those they knew would die by the wayside.”

“During this reign of terror notice was given that escape was easy; that any one who accepted Islam would be allowed to remain safely at home. The offices of the lawyers who recorded applications were crowded with people petitioning to become Mohammedans. Many did it for the sake of their women and children, feeling that it would be a matter of only a few weeks before relief would come.”

“This deportation continued at intervals for about two weeks. It is estimated that out of about 12,000 Armenians in _____ only a few hundred were left. Even those who offered to accept Islam were sent away. At the time of writing no definite word has been heard from any of these groups..”

Another chapter tells of the deportation of 12,000 Armenians, of all classes and ages, and that “the whole Mohammedan population knew these people were to be their prey from the beginning, and they were treated as criminals. The route of this unhappy band was marked by corpses.”

Beat Child's Brains Out on Rock

This is what happened in a village in which many Armenians once lived:

“_____, a village about two hours from _____ is inhabited by Gregorian and Catholic Armenians and Turks. A wealthy and influential Armenian, together with his two sons, according to a reliable witness, were placed one behind the other and shot through. Forty-five men and women were taken a short distance from the village into a valley. The women were first outraged by the officers of the gendarmerie, and then turned over to the gendarmes to dispose of. According to this witness a child was killed by beating its brains out on a rock. The men were all killed and not a single person survived from this group of forty-five.”

“Here is, in part, the story of another unhappy Armenian town: Daily, the police are searching the

houses of the Armenians for weapons, and not finding any, they are taking the best and most honorable men and imprisoning them; some of them they are exiling, and others they are torturing with red hot irons to make them reveal the supposedly concealed weapons.”

“The Gendarmerie Department seems to have full control of affairs and the Mutessarif upholds them.

They are now holding about a hundred of the best citizens of the city in prison, and today the gendarmerie chief called the Armenian Bishop and told him that unless the Armenians deliver their arms and the revolutionists among them, that he has orders to exile the entire Armenian population of _____ as they did the people of _____. We know how the latter were treated, for hundreds of them have been dragged through _____ on their way to the desert whither they have been exiled. These poor exiles were mostly women, children and old men, and they were clubbed and beaten and lashed along as though they had been wild animals, and their women and girls were daily criminally outraged, both by their guards and the ruffians of eve village through which they passed.”

Woman Writes of Horrible Experience

Another document in the hands of the American Committee states that “The Young Turk Government pursues unceasingly, and every day with added violence, the war to the finish that it was declared against its Armenian subjects.”

A letter from a woman in Turkey, of unquestioned integrity, reads, in part, as follows:

“Our party left June 1, (old style) fifteen gendarmes going with us. The party numbered 400 or 500 persons. We had got only two hours away from home when bands of villagers and brigands in large numbers, with rifles, guns, axes, surrounded us on the road and robbed us of all we had. The gendarmes took my three horses and sold them to Turkish mouhadjirs, pocketing the money. They took my money and that from my daughter's neck, also all our food.”

“After this they separated the men, one by one, and shot them all within six or seven days - every male above 15 years old. By my side were killed two priests, one of them over 90 years of age.

These bandsmen took all the good looking women and carried them off on their horses. Very many women and girls were thus carried off to the mountains, among them my sister, whose one year old baby they threw away; a Turk picked it up and carried it off, I know not where. My mother walked till she could walk no further, and dropped by the roadside on a mountain top. We found on the road many of those who had been in previous sections carried from _____; some were among the killed, with their husbands and sons.”

“We also came across some old people and little infants still alive, gut in a pitiful condition, having shouted their voice away. We were not allowed to sleep at night in the villages, but lay down outside. Under

cover of the night indescribable deeds were committed by the gendarmes, bandsmen and villagers. Many of us died from hunger and strokes of apoplexy. Others were left by the roadside, too feeble to go on.”

“One morning we saw fifty to sixty wagons with about thirty Turkish widows, whose husbands had been killed in the war; and they were going to Constantinople. One of these women made a sign to one of the gendarmes to kill a certain Armenian whom she pointed out. The gendarmes asked her if she did not wish to kill him herself, at which she said, ‘Why not?’ and drawing a revolver from her pocket, shot and killed him.”

“Each one of these Turkish hanums had five or six Armenian girls of 10 or under with her. Boys the Turks never wished to take, they killed all, of whatever age. These women wanted to take my daughter too but she would not be separated from me. Finally, we were both taken into their wagons on our promising to become Moslems. As soon as we entered the araba they began to teach us how to be Moslems, and changed our names, calling me _____ and her _____.”

“The worst and most unimaginable horrors were reserved for us at the banks of the Euphrates and in the Erzingan Plain. The mutilated bodies of women, girls, and little children made everybody shudder. The bandsmen were doing all sorts of awful deeds to the women and girls that were with us, whose cries went up to heaven. At the Euphrates the bandsmen and gendarmes threw into the river all the

remaining children under 15 years old. Those that could swim were shot down as they struggled in the water.”

“After seven days we reached _____. Not a single Armenian was left alive there. The Turkish women took my daughter and me to a the bath, and there showed us many other women and girls that had accepted Islam.”

Moslem Criminals Released for Pillage

Excerpts from various statements included in the report given out yesterday follow:

“August 2. about 800 middle-aged and old women, and children under the age of 10 years, arrived afoot from Diarbekir, after forty-five days en route, and in the most pitiable condition imaginable.”

“They report the taking of all the young women and girls by the Kurds, the pillaging even of the last bit of money and other belongings, of starvation, of privation, and hardship of every description.”

“All over the country leading Armenians have been shot or hanged. Leading merchants have been beggared and exiled.

Thirty thousand Mohammedan criminals have been released from jail and formed into bands under strict military discipline. One of the duties of these bands is to pillage villages and to rob and assassinate exiles.”

“The Greek and Armenian patriarchs have been refused audiences with the Ministers of the Turkish Government. Foreign Ambassadors among them the United States Ambassador, have been rebuffed and told that what the

Imperial Government wishes to do with its subjects is none of their business.

The Turkish Ministers and other officials have repeatedly avowed the intention to smash the Christian nationalities and thus forever put an end to the Armenian question.”

“The important American religious and educational institutions in this region are losing their professors, teachers, helpers, and students, and even the orphanages are to be emptied of the hundreds of children therein, which ruins the fruits of fifty years of untiring effort in this field.”

“The Government officials in a mocking way ask what the Americans are going to do with these establishments now that the Armenians are being done away with. The situation is becoming more critical daily, as there is no telling where this thing will end. The Germans are being blamed on every hand, for if they have not directly ordered this wholesale slaughter, (for it is nothing less than the extermination of the Armenian race) they at least condone it.”

The story of a visit to one of the desert camps to which the Armenians have been exiled is given near the close of the report. It tells of famished old men, women and children, reduced to the very lowest state or misery by their persecutors. There are only a few men in the camp, the report reads, “as most of them have been killed on the road. Likewise many women and little children had been murdered.”

“The condition of these people,” says the report, “indicates

clearly the fate of those who have left and are about to leave here. The system that is being followed seems to be to have bands of Kurds awaiting them on the road to kill the men especially, and incidentally some of the others. The entire movement seems to be the most thoroughly organized and effective massacre this country has ever known."

Turks Foil Missionaries' Efforts.

"The American Missionaries began considering plans to aid the women and children who would be left here with no means of support. It was thought that perhaps an orphanage could be opened to care for some of the children, and especially those who had been born in America, and then brought here by their parents, and also those who belonged to parents who had been connected in some way with the American mission and schools."

"There would be plenty of opportunity, though there might not be sufficient means, to care for children who reached here with the exiles from other vilayets and whose parents had died on the way. I went to see the Vali about this matter yesterday and was met with a flat refusal. He said we could aid these people if we wished to do so, but the Government was establishing orphanages for the children and we could not undertake any work of that nature. An hour after I left the Vali the announcement was made that all the Armenians remaining here, including women and children, must leave by July 13."

"In response to the urgent appeal of Ambassador Morgenthau," the report concludes, "the Committee on Armenian Atrocities, in co-operation with the Committee of Mercy, has decided to make a wide appeal for funds."

"Several gentlemen have already pledged large contributions, but the need is very great, and it is expected that a good number of smaller gifts will be received."

"The crimes now being perpetrated upon the Armenian people surpass in their horror and cruelty anything that history has recorded during the past thousand years. The educated and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, are all being subjected to every form of barbarity and outrage. It is understood, however, that very many Turks are opposed to this policy of persecution."

"It is hoped that prompt action will make it possible to save a great many lives, and repatriate some at least of those who have been driven from their homes."

Funds will be forwarded to the Ambassador as fast as received. Donations should be sent to the Treasurer Charles R. Crane, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York.

¹ Facsimile of NYT front page. Article copied from The New York Times on microfilm by AGRC in 1986.

² From a telegram by U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Washington, DC, dated July 10, 1915. U.S. State Dept Archives, R.G. 867.4016/74. (from a report by US Consul Leslie Davis of Harput who further says: "Professors American College have been tortured. Some others died under torture or lost mind..." Davis also states in this report: "There seems to be a systematic

plan to crush the Armenian race" and in his July 13 telegram to Morgenthau stated: "The entire movement seems to be the most thoroughly organized and effective massacre this country has ever seen." (R.G. 59, 867.4016/122)

The State Department File

Footnote two is but one example of the unimpeachable nature of the evidence that formed the bulk of eyewitness reports of the Armenian genocide. This extensive article on page one of The New York Times is based on a twenty-five part, 20,000 word report compiled by the American Committee on Armenian Atrocities. The first few sections of the report are verbatim statements from Ambassador Morgenthau's confidential dispatches to the State Department dated April 27, 1915, and July 19, 1915. The section of the article shown as 'Chapter VI' is from a report filed by German missionary, Dr. Johannes Lepsius, President of the German Orient Mission, who filed his report on July 31, 1915. Those sections shown as 'Chapters VII, VIII' are from a report filed by U.S. Consul Hollis of Beirut who filed his report on June 20, 1915. Other sections of this article can be attributed to reports by other American consuls, missionaries and others referred to in the article as "sources of unquestioned authority and credibility" but who, by necessity, had to remain anonymous.

- AGRC. December 1999

The United States National Archives contain many files pertaining to the Armenian deportations and massacres of 1915 to 1923. The General Records of the Department of State form a part of these archives and include within them extensive diplomatic correspondence relating to the Internal Affairs of Turkey. Of the many categories in this general file, several pertain largely to Armenians. One file, "Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-1929," is divided further into specific topics. Prominent among these subcategories is one entitled "Race Problems," which refers mainly to the persecution of the Christian population and covers the period of the Armenian Genocide and contains reports and documents from many sources, including missionaries, consular offices, relief workers, and survivors. The "Race Problems" file

contains 520 entries from this period dealing with the Genocide. The entries can be divided into groups based on their source or place of origin. Thus, there are 77 consular reports, of which 60 originated from American consuls in the Ottoman Empire. Reports from missionaries, relief workers, and eyewitness survivors in the Ottoman Empire or Transcaucasia total 72 entries. Of these, 55 originated in Northern Syria or Anatolia, particularly Harput, the midpoint of a major route of deportation, and Aleppo, where many deportation routes met.

The various committees that were organized to aid the Armenian refugees by providing relief money are also included in this record file. These committees sent 32 accounts of the living conditions of the refugees and their needs to the State Department. Additionally, the State Department had three internal memoranda on the Armenian situation. Ten newspaper articles received by the Department concerning Armenian conditions are also on file. The State Department itself is involved in 188 entries. These can be divided into three categories which include State Department correspondence sent to United States diplomats (49 entries), correspondence sent to foreign embassies (seven entries), and Department exchanges with private individuals in the United States (132 entries). In addition, 18 letters transmitted between private citizens are also on file. The State Department received 114 entries from embassies. Seventy-eight of these originated in Constantinople and were sent by either Ambassador Henry Morgenthau or his successors, Charge d'Affaires Hoffman Philip and Commissioner Lewis Heck. In addition, 25 telegrams were received from other American embassies, and seven telegrams were sent by foreign embassies in the United States.

Excerpted from "Documents: The State Department File" by Armen Hairapetian, *The Armenian Review*, Spring 1984, pp.41-42.

Compiled by AGRC April 2000