The “Forgotten Genocide”

For years now, the identity, politics and culture of the Armenians dispersed around the world have been dominated by the efforts to re-convince the world of the truth of a single event - the Genocide of 1915. This monolithic story has resulted in a Turkish denial of the event.

At present, there is no objective history of the Ottoman Empire related to the Genocide. Current Turkish academic discourse claims that the Ottoman administration and society were “benevolent” and “tolerant”, in contradiction to historical fact.

When the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 finalized the geographical boundaries of the Republic of Turkey, Kemal Ataturk, first leader of Turkey, embarked on the creation of a new national identity for the Turks. A Turkish historical “research” committee was founded, and in 1932, a Turkish History Thesis was officially endorsed and turned into an official state dogma. It claims that the history of the Turkish Nation is not limited to Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations, but also to Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and Egypt.

In this context, the continued Turkish denial becomes explicable, if not acceptable.

The Riots in Constantinople

...Amid the crowd in the market place was heard a cry from a number of Musulmans and Kurds, all armed with bludgeons, iron bars, spades, clubs and sticks, and setting under the direction of men in turbans, who were evidently, well-organized mobs, a discharge of musketry. The collective soon resembled that of the carnage of September. In all quarters of the city, Armenians, were brutally murdered.

From San Stefano to Berlin

While acknowledging the brutal policies of the Ottomans towards the Armenian population and the necessity of implementing radical reforms, article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano provided for Russian troops to remain in the Armenian provinces until the Turkish government carried out reforms and stopped the activities of the Kurds and Circassians who were terrorizing the Armenians.

A peace treaty between the Ottomans and Russia was signed in Berlin (San Stefano) on March 3, 1878. Article 16 of the treaty stipulated that Russian troops would remain in the Armenian provinces until the Ottoman government carried out reforms and stopped the activities of the Kurds and Circassians who were terrorizing the Armenians.

The Ottoman Empire: Myths & Realities

Ottoman society in its inception was amalgamation of Tataar, Mongol and Seljuk tribes that originated in Central Asia and bedeviled Anatolia. Through military conquest, they subjugated the indigenous population comprised of Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Assyrians and Arabs. By 1452, the Byzantine center, Constantinople, fell to the invaders, who later came to be known as the Ottomans.

While other Empires promised their subjects freedom, cultural and religious values among their people were protected and preserved. While the Ottomans, on the contrary, were known for their tolerance and acceptance of different cultures and religions.

The Ottoman Taxation System

In the empire, taxation was managed by the sultan’s designated treasurer and private financiers. At the conclusion of the negotiations, the governor of the province would present the sultan and, in return, negotiated with a host of subcontractors. Since officials were often corrupt, they would declare the tax as a “Taxation System” that was in reality blackmail and extortion. Armenians, these gangs often had to deal with three or more separate “tax collectors” simultaneously.

The Adana Massacres of 1909

On April 13, 1909, the province of Adana, governed by a corrupt and fanatical Vali, was the scene of terrible massacres resulting in the death of over thirty thousand Armenians. This massacre was a result of the economic base. No one was punished for these crimes.

“The space will not permit me to write in detail of the many who were crucified, thrown into the river with a stone upon their head, or murdered by the thousands in the churches or in their homes. The blood of many who were tortured and killed in such hideous and awful ways that dare not be repeated, but it is estimated that in the vilayet of Adana between twenty and thirty thousand were slain and months later the plain was strewed with their bones.”

Rose Lambert, American Missionary Hadjin, and the Armenian Massacres.