Controversy Over History

The Events of 1915 and The Turkısh-Armenıan

...it is misleading to compare the appalling losses suffered by the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire with the destruction of Jews of the Nazi Germany... what happened to the Armenians is a result of their armed rebellion against the Turks that started long before the war and continued increasingly.

Brendan Lewis, Notes on a Century: Reflections of a Middle East Historian, 2010

Within the Ottoman Government had planned to the protection and nourishment of the displaced Armenians, their suffering could not be avoided, under the circumstances of the time. War time conditions exacerbated by internal strife, local groups seeking retribution, famine, epidemics and the general lawlessness of a disintegrating Empire combined to produce a tragedy the weight of which was beyond any expected contingency.

Archives documents reveal that there were some Ottoman officials who committed offences against Armenian lives contrary to their orders. They were held responsible for the Armenian lives were punished in 1916 including with capital punishment.

With the de facto dissolution of the Ottoman Empire following the First World War, the constituent members of the Empire fought the "War of Independence" and established the Republic of Turkey. In 1920, the victorious national movement that founded the Turkish Republic had to take on a war, especially between 1918 and 1923, with the Armenian rebels as well as with the occupying forces. While in 1923, as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, the victorious Turkish Republic was claiming its role in the world with the founding principle of "Peace at home, peace in the world", it buried the pain of the loss and destruction of the Armenians, the events that took place during the First World War.

The smear campaign that started within the USSR soon after the events of 1915 spread globally to Armenian groups. Fuelled radicalism and caused divisions against Turkey and Turkish identity. Political organisations used this concept for the Armenian losses and were punished in 1916 including with capital punishment.

A higher percentage of the Armenian population living in the warring areas were killed during the war. "While the ARF program aspired to freedom and autonomy within the framework of the empire, the Hunchak program applied to the complete separation and independence of the Turkish Empire. Consequently, these groups used different tactics to achieve their goals. For example, in order to bring European attention to the Armenian Question, the Hunchaks staged mass demonstrations. Their most notable activities were the Rium Kupa demonstration of July 27, 1906, the plebiscite (khata) held in 1907, and the Sazon Sabdakan of August 1844 against the nomadic Kurdish tribes and government tax collectors.

Building The Armenian Narrative "Concerning The Events of 1915"

Many of the descendants of the victims of the events of 1915 and the following years – especially those in the Armenian diaspora – construct identity around the perception that their community has been a victim of genocide. "Many of the descendants of the victims of the events of 1915 and the following years – especially those in the Armenian diaspora – construct identity around the perception that their community has been a victim of genocide." European Court of Human Rights, Case of Pınarı vs. Switzerland Grand Chamber Judgment, 11.10.2016, para. 156.

For some third party countries the "genocide thesis", depending on the state of political relations, could be used as a foreign policy tool against Turkey.
It is not possible to deny the suffering of the Ottoman Armenians. All evaluations are subject to drawing attention to the untold nature of the genocide itself.

No one can deny that Armenians suffered terribly and many lost their lives. The deaths of millions of Ottoman Muslims in the same way, but the question of how Ottoman history does not constitute a reason for condoning or even justifying the deaths of Armenians. "This burns the place where it falls.”

However, insisting on genocide as the only way to define the events of 1915 by ignoring or belittling the time conditions and the law is an inappropriate way to express the memory of dead Armenians. Turks and Armenians from getting together to reconcile.

"...the three pillars of the Armenian claim to be satisfied. We have already accepted as relating to an in- any public cause against Turkey to fall under the "dolus not only within Turkey but also in the International".

European Court of Human Rights, Case of Per- the events of 1915 by ignoring historical facts, the war- cations, about events such as those in issue in the pres- ents of mutual understanding and empathy.

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Turkish and Armenians should work to rebuild their his- torical friendship without forgetting the difficult peri- od. In this regard, it is important to make a firm and vigilant. One cannot affirm that the dis- tance and the law is an inappropriate way to express the memory of dead Armenians. Turks and Armenians from getting together to reconcile.

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