

# THE BEGINNINGS OF GENOCIDE

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES IN WORLD WAR I

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## Prefatory Note

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The perpetrators of the crime against the Armenian people still are at large, and coaxed, cajoled, countenanced, strengthened and sanctified. **Mr. Guttman** has shown clearly the relation between them and the perpetrators of the crimes against the Jews, the Poles and other peoples in Europe "massacred" in **World War II**.

One wonders who will be the victims next!

While God weeps!

But He also **ACTS!**

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## THE BEGINNINGS OF GENOCIDE

The wholesale extermination of six million Jews is rightly considered the greatest single crime of our time. A special scientific term, "genocide", was invented to characterize the organized attempt to exterminate a whole ethnic group. And one thought that such a crime had never been attempted in modern times.

But this is not quite correct. The Nazis organized the mass killing on an unheard of scale and with a "scientific" brutality without precedent. But there had already been a grandiose attempt to exterminate a whole nation in our "enlightened" century. It took place, if not directly in Europe, at its very gates, and the victims were not members of some "savage tribes", but of a civilized Christian nation. If the methods of murder, compared with the "scientific" efficiency of the Nazis, look rather primitive (gas-chambers were not yet known at that time), still we see there all the elements which were later so much "perfected" by the Nazis: There was a well-prepared plan for action; co-ordinated operations of an entire administration, directed by a powerful party machine; government-inspired attempts to incite mobs to violence; assassination of all men who would be able to resist; destruction of families, separation of men from women, of children from parents; mass deportations under conditions in which most of the deportees died on their way; the liquidation of the rest in remote regions in concentration camps or during "death marches."

### The Background

Some readers will already have guessed what I have in mind: the Turkish atrocities against the Armenians thirty years ago. But some will have to admit that they did not think of it. And that is the tragedy of our times. We forget too fast. Yesterday, the victims were "only" Armenians; today, "only" the Jews — but also Poles and other European peoples. And to-morrow?



The original home of the Armenians is the mountainous region between the Black and Caspian Seas. The Armenians were among the first nations converted to Christendom; they defended, with great endurance their faith, their nation, and their customs against numerous foreign conquerors.

But Armenia proper soon ceased to be their only home. There was a diaspora of a kind. The Kurds, a primitive nomadic tribe, favored by the Turks, invaded old Armenia and started a long and bloody feud with the settled and well-to-do Armenian peasants. On the other hand, Armenian artisans and merchants dispersed throughout the Middle East.

The Armenian, says Toynbee, "has also that talent for commerce which the Jew displays in Eastern Europe and the Greek in the Levant, and he plays a similar role himself, as the skilled workman and the man of business, in the interior of Asiatic Turkey. Every town in Northern Syria and Anatolia had . . . its populous, prosperous Armenian quarter — the focus of local skill, intelligence and trade, as well as of the town's commercial relations with Constantinople and Europe."\*

In 1915, there were about 160,000 Armenians in Constantinople alone; in the whole Turkish Empire of that time, there lived about 1,800,000 of them, constituting 8% of the population.

### **Always Oppressed**

They were always treated as an oppressed race. They had no right to carry arms; in a primitive country without regular enforcement of law, that meant a steady threat from their neighbors. On the other hand, they had, among the primitive agrarian population a virtual monopoly of trade and business, and their well-to-do classes accumulated considerable wealth. From time to time, they were

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\*) Arnold J. Toynbee: **Armenian Atrocities. The Murder of a Nation.** With a speech delivered by Lord Bryce in the House of Lords. New York, 1915.

robbed of their profits by local tyrants, but in general, they still could live nicely. And what is important, there were no great pogroms up to 1878.

But in this year, the situation changed. Turkey lost a war with Russia and had to grant independence to Bulgaria. After that, the Ottoman Empire lived in a permanent crisis and the rulers were afraid that the intelligent and economically strong Christian minorities might free themselves with foreign help. Their first countermeasure was to incite the minorities to mutual massacres. Armed Kurds were sent against the Armenians and the first big massacres occurred in 1895-96.

### **Young Turk Movement**

In 1908, the Young-Turkish revolution overthrew the old regime. A constitution was adopted and the Young-Turkish Party, officially called "Committee for Union and Progress", seized power. The Armenians hoped for a better future, and their secret national organizations, which had supported the Young-Turkish movement, constituted themselves as legal political parties. But already in 1909, there was a new pogrom in Adana. The Young Turks adopted the national policy of their predecessors. Sultan Abdul Hamid had once declared that he would easily solve the Armenian question by the extermination of the Armenians; now, the Young-Turkish leader Talaat Pasha started the atrocities with the words: "Now, there will be no Armenian problem for the next fifty years."

The opportunity for the liquidation of the Armenians arose — exactly as the opportunity for the extermination of the Jews 25 years later — during a world war. The war freed the Turkish government from the control of the world public opinion. Among the big powers, Germany and Austria were its allies and one could be sure that they would not protest publicly. And their victory would protect Turkey also after the war. Therefore, the signal to start was given in 1915.

## **The Pattern**

Let us first describe the events in the words of Toynbee:

"The crime was concerted very systematically, for there is evidence of identical procedure from over fifty places . . . they will be found to include every important town in Armenia proper and in Eastern Anatolia, as well as Ismid and Brussa in the west. . . . The uniform directives from Constantinople were carried out with remarkable exactitude by the local authorities. Only two cases were reported of officials who refused to obey the Government's instructions. . . . In general, what happened, was **this**:

"On a given day the streets of whatever town it might be were occupied by the local gendarmerie with fixed bayonets, and the Governor summoned all able-bodied men of Armenian race that had been exempted from military draft, to present themselves now on pain of death. 'Able-bodied' received a liberal interpretation, for it included any male between fifteen and seventy years of age, and these were all marched out of town by the gendarmes. They had not far to go, for the gendarmerie had been reinforced for the purpose from the gaols, and the brigands and the Kurds were waiting in the hills. They were waiting to murder the prisoners. The first secluded valley witnessed their wholesale massacre, and acquitted of their task, the gendarmes marched back leisurely into town.

## **Death Marches**

"This was the first act. It precluded the pitiful possibility of resistance to the second, which was of a more ingenious and far reaching kind. The women, old men and children . . . were now given immediate notice of deportation within a fixed term. . . . They were to be uprooted, whole households, from their homes, and driven off to an

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\*) Toynbee, *op. cit.*, pp. 28 ff.

unknown destination, while their houses and properties were to be transferred to Moslems. . . .

"Communities like this, after being mutilated by the wholesale conscription and assassination of the husbands and fathers, were now torn up by the roots and driven, under the forlorn leadership of the mothers and the old men, into an exile that was to terminate in a death of unspeakable horror. . . .

"The week of grace was occupied by heart-rending scenes. . . . People made preparations for carrying out Government's orders by selling whatever possessions they could in the streets. Articles were sold at less than 10 per cent of their usual value, and Turks . . . filled the streets, hunting for bargains.

"But the Armenians gained little by selling up their goods, for even the trifling sums they realised were more than they were permitted to carry with them. Their journey money was strictly limited to a few shillings, and in fact it would only have exposed them to pillage by their guards if they had attempted to carry more. . . .

"Most of the Armenians . . . were absolutely hopeless. Many said it was worse than a massacre. No one knew what was coming, but all felt that it was the end. Even the pastors and leaders could offer no word of encouragement or hope. Many began to doubt even the existence of God. Under the severe strain many individuals became demented. . . .

"In this agonizing state . . . the bands of Armenian women were driven forth on their road. There was a heroism about the exodus, for there was still a loophole of escape, the same alternative of apostasy that had tempted their husbands and fathers. And in their case, at least, apostasy brought the certainty of life, because the condition laid down was their immediate entrance into a harem of a Turk. Life at the price of honour — most of them seem to have rejected it, and yet, if they had known all that lay before them, they might have judged it a better part. . . . Some were sold into shame before the march began. One

Moslem reported that a gendarme had offered to sell him two girls for a medjidieh. They sold the youngest and most handsome at every village where they passed the night, and these girls have been trafficked in hundreds through the brothels of the Ottoman Empire.

### **Bloody Banks of Euphrates**

“Women with little children in their arms, or in the last days of pregnancy, were driven along under the whip like cattle. . . . Some women became so completely worn out and helpless, that they left their infants beside the road. . . . Many children seem to have been thus abandoned. . . . Many died of hunger. . . . The people found themselves in the necessity of eating grass.

“The worst and most unimaginable horrors were reserved for the banks of the Euphrates. . . . The mutilated bodies of women, girls and little children made everybody shudder. . . . At the Euphrates, the brigands and the gendarmes threw into the river all the remaining children under fifteen years old. Those who could swim were shot down as they struggled in the water. . . . The fields and the hill-sides were dotted with swollen and blackened corpses, which filled and fouled the air with their stench.”

One could give more quotations, whole books of them. One could describe the concentration camps near Deir-es-Zor in the desert, an anticipation of Belsen and Buchenwald. And the descriptions are not exaggerated, they are not “propaganda”, after new experiences from Germany we know. The same cruelties are described in the Report of the American Committee on Armenian Atrocities, in the speech of Lord Bryce in the House of Lords, in the reports of the French journalist Henry Barby, war correspondent of the newspaper **Journal**, and in the books of the German pastor Lepsius, as well as in the reports of American, Italian, and German consuls, missionaries, and nuns.

Pastor Lepsius gave us an — approximate — statistic



of the "success" of the action, as far as it was known in 1916.\* Here it is:

It is necessary to say that in East Anatolia, there were opportunities to escape because the Russian army invaded the country, and when it retreated again, it allowed Armenian refugees to follow. But many of them were killed later, when the Turks invaded Trans-Caucasia in 1918. The 4000 "saved from Cilicia and Syria" were the rebels of Musa Dagh, the heroes of the well-known novel of Franz Werfel, who resisted the Turks several weeks and were finally taken by Allied Navy ships to Egypt.

### Survivors Few

How many of the deported people survived, we can only estimate. With the East-Anatolian transports, only a third of all the deported arrived at the place of destination. Those who survived the transports, were starved to death in the concentration camps. In a single one of those camps, in Meskene on the Euphrates, 55,000 Armenians

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\*) See Dr. Johannes Lepsius: **Bericht ueber die Lage des armenischen Volkes in der Tuerkei**. Potsdam, 1916. The book was printed as a private print and distributed only among German pastors and among the members of the Reichstag. It was seized by censorship. After the war, a second edition appeared under the title: **Der Todesgang des Armenischen Volkes. Bericht ueber das Schicksal des Armenischen Volkes in der Tuerkei waehrend des Weltkrieges**. Zweite, vermehrte Auflage, Potsdam, 1919.

	Number of		Deported	
	Armenians	Spared	Escaped	or killed
Cilicia and Syria	242,950		4,000	238,950
Eastern Anatolia	1,058,000		240,200	817,600
Western Anatolia	337,000	27,200		309,800
Constantinople, Adrianople	194,000	164,000		30,000
Palestine, Bagdad	13,500	13,500		
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	1,845,450	204,700	244,200	1,396,350

were buried. The caravans which arrived in Deir-es-Zor in 1915, brought an estimated 60,000 persons. In April 1916, 19,000 of them were sent to Mosul; after 5 weeks and a 350-km-long (200 miles) march in the desert, only 2500 survived. In July 1916, there were 20,000 deported people in Deir-es-Zor. Eight weeks later, there were only several hundred artisans who worked for the army. The rest just disappeared.

One estimates that 200,000 of the "transferred" survived because they either were converted to Islam on the transport or were sold (women and children) to Moslem homes and harems. 200,000 more survived in the "colonization areas" on the border of the desert, most of them accepting Islam there. **About one million Armenians lost thier lives during the persecution in 1915-1916.** About another 100,000 were killed during the Turkish invasion of Trans-Caucasia in 1918. The value of the confiscated property was about 1 billion German Marks.\*

What could the Turkish government say in its defense? When the world started to protest, the Turks issued two apologetic pamphlets. One appeared in 1916\*\*, the second in 1919\*\*\*. Both are annonymous, without author or editor. And both contain the following story:

Already in 1878, the Armenians achieved, through their patriarch, protective clauses in the peace treaties; from that time, they tried to separate themselves from Turkey; they organized secret associations; the Armenians abroad called for armed intervention of foreign powers; during the World War, 200,000 Armenians served in the Russian army; the Czar issued a proclamation, calling the Armenians to an armed uprising; in Allied countries, Ar-

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\*) According to a later book by Dr. Johannes Lepsius: **Deutschland und Armenien 1914-1918. Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstuecke.** Potsdam, 1919.

\*\*) **Verite sur le mouvement revolutionnaire Armenien et les mesures gouvernementales.** Constantinople, 1916.

\*\*\*) **Evenements insurrectionnels que ont necessite le deplacement des Armeniens.** Constantinople, 1919.

menians volunteered for war against Turkey; finally, there were open rebellions in Armenian regions; the Armenians spied for Turkey's enemies. And therefore:

### **Pretexts Found**

"In order to prevent the Armenians in the military zone from creating difficulties to the Army and Government, in order to remove the possibility of Armenian riots against Moslem populations, in order to protect the communications of the Imperial Army and to prevent possible coups, it was decided to transfer the Armenians from military zones to other localities. . . . The primary necessity to assure internal order and external security of the country has made indispensable the removal of Armenians from places where their presence was considered to be dangerous. . . . During the application of these measures, regrettable acts of violence have sometimes been committed, but however regrettable these acts might have been, they were inevitable because of the profound indignation of the Moslem population. . . ."\*

### **Pastor Disputes Charges**

The government maintains that some Turks were punished for "excesses" by prison terms from one month up to three years, and that several gendarmes were fired. And then it concludes with incomparable insolence:

"The Imperial Government took all possible measures to protect the life and property of the transferred Armenians, and never ceased to respect their legal rights".

Good pastor Lepsius undertook to disprove the Turkish contentions point by point.\*\* He proved that the Armenian societies were always loyal to the Young-Turkish movement and saved the lives of several of its leaders by hiding them in the time of persecution; that the 200,000

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\*) Verite, etc., pp. 13-15.

\*\*\*) Dr. Johannes Lepsius: Bericht ueber die Lage des armenischen Volkes in der Tuerkei, Potsdam, 1916.

Armenians in the Russian army were Russian citizens; that the Armenian soldiers in the Turkish army were always loyal and had been praised in official army communiques just before the extermination started; that the so-called "Armenian rebellions" began only as desperate attempts of self-defense during the persecution; that, according to official reports of German consuls on the spot, the Armenian "conspiracies" did not exist and the bomb plots were invented by the police. And we have now enough experience from the totalitarian countries to recognize such propaganda lies for what they are. So we shall rather look into the real reasons of the trouble.

### **The Real Reasons**

Let us first recapitulate the economic conditions of the Armenians and their relations to the Moslem population in order to see whether they constituted opportunities for an anti-Amenian mass movement.

As we already noticed, the situation of the Armenians was similar to that of European Jews because a great part of them lived dispersed in cities and towns, surrounded by Moslem population, and their colonies were composed, to a large extent, of artisans, merchants, and intelligentsia. It is true, the peasants in Armenia proper formed still the majority of the ethnic group, and in the Armenian communities in the towns, there were many poor artisans and workers. But if somebody so chose, he could see only the rich businessmen and the rather numerous intelligentsia. And even those who did not know anything about the Armenians, used to repeat the saying, that a Greek can deceive three Turks, a Jew can deceive three Greeks, and an Armenian can deceive three Jews, a proverb which is being told throughout the Levant in many variants as to the order of nations involved, according to personal prejudice.

The existence of a class of rich Armenian businessmen made it possible to attempt a mobilization of hostile feelings against the entire Armenian people. Already during the Balkan wars of 1912-13, there were attempts to or-

ganize a boycott of Armenian and Greek stores. The peasants, arriving in the cities for shopping, were diverted to Turkish stores, but the prices there were higher and the commodities bad quality, and the boycott soon broke down. That did not contribute, of course, to the popularity of Armenians among Turkish competitors. Neither did the fact that most Moslem merchants owed money to Armenian importers. According to sources, quoted by Lepsius, more than 60% of Turkish imports, more than 40% of the exports, and 80% of the domestic wholesale trade were in Armenian hands. Lepsius says:

“As the import and export trade is in the hands of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, and the Turks never got beyond small business, being, with the exception of the official caste, mostly peasants, the dislike of Turks for Armenians, Greeks, and Jews can be explained by the natural antagonism between primitive and money economy, between primitive agriculture and the beginning of industrialization of the country.”

But was the persecution of the Armenians a spontaneous popular outbreak? Not at all. The same Lepsius asserts categorically:

“The opinion that the massacres of Christians in Turkey are explosions of popular passions like pogroms against Jews in the Middle Ages . . . **is in no way supported by the facts. The massacres in Turkey are organized by the government and by nobody else.** But the idea that the ruin of Christian business may help the Turkish commerce, may have been a motive contributing to **governmental measures.**”\*

### **Few Spontaneous Riots**

Of course, in many places mobs participated in the atrocities and especially in looting Armenian properties. But all witness reports agree that they were composed most

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\*) Lepsius: *Der Todesgang*, etc. pp. 244-245. (*Italics mine—J. G.*)

ly of criminal elements, or Kurdish riders, armed and trained by the government, or so-called Muhajirs, refugees from the lost provinces of European Turkey. These refugees were originally concentrated in Western Anatolia, but just before the start of the Armenian "action", they suddenly appeared in all towns with Armenian quarters, to take over Armenian properties. They played a similar role as the Volksdeutsche, repatriated from Russia and the Baltic countries, played in the Jewish extermination in 1941.

But the reports are unanimous in the assertion that the mobs played only a minor role in the action and that also this role was planned and prepared from above. Pinon writes:

"What is striking in all the reports, is the regular and systematic organization of all the massacres. The Germans could recognize their allies and pupils in that spirit of order. It is not a populace throwing itself upon another one in a crisis of savage anarchy. No, the operation starts with a decree of the government, properly posted in the villages; instructions come from Constantinople to high officials, and through them, to the executors. The telephone plays a big role in that sinister tragedy; one hears the telephone ringing in the witness reports, one sees the authorities meeting. Everything happens according to a terrible plan. One does not kill in the cities because one wants to avoid epidemics. The transports gather on the pre-arranged days and hours; the Kurds and the brigands have been informed in time and they will meet the transports in places where the gendarmes are supposed to deliver the "game". Special commissions estimate the loot, belonging to the state. Cheap objects are thrown to rapacious mobs; everything of real value is put aside to be sold later; the debts of the Armenians to the Turks are paid so that no Moslem be damaged; the State gets the rest. . . . Moslem refugees from Bosnia and Macedonia established themselves in Armenian houses. . . . The deportation of women and children is also organized in an orderly way, after sanitary inspec-

tion by Turkish doctors. . . . There can be no mistake, it is a total destruction of the Armenian people.\*

### **The Party and the Leader**

And the moving force of all that? Behind the state administration, there is the Party:

"The Young Turkish clubs in the province towns of the interior were the driving force in the preparation, organization, and ruthless execution of the violent measures. They drew formal proscription lists. . . . Against the **walis** who tried to mitigate the measures or to make exceptions, they insisted on total deportation in the most brutal form. . . . They recruited bands of criminals and Kurdish robbers to attack and to massacre the transports. They enrich themselves by confiscated goods. Their admitted aim is the annihilation of the Armenian people."

This party came to power in a seemingly liberal revolution. But after the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid ". . . a stern party rule was enforced. A shadow government held the strings of the official administration and the elections were not free any more. The party committee decided about the appointment of the highest officials of the Empire."

It is a rather familiar picture. Whatever liberal and democratic elements might have originally contributed to the Young-Turkish revolution were now suppressed by a rigorous party and army dictatorship. And the "party" was not a democratic organization of its membership: it was practically composed of committees and nothing else. Its program was centralistic, nationalistic, and Pan-Turkish. The Turkish race had to be not only predominant, but the only ruling race. The election of just one Arab into the Central Committee of the Young Turks was voted down during the congress in Saloniki in 1911. The report, prepared for this congress, says:

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\*) Rene Pinon: *La suppression des Armeniens. Methode allemande, travail ture*, pp. 59-61.

**"Sooner or later, a complete ottomanization of all Turkish subjects must be accomplished. It is clear that it cannot be achieved just by persuasion, one will have to use the force of arms . . ."**

The world often admired the nerve with which Hitler openly announced his entire criminal program to the public in "Mein Kampf." As you see, even such things had happened before.

And what was the Turkish Hitler like? We are ready to introduce him to the reader. In the preface to the second edition of his report on the Armenians, pastor Lepsius describes his interview with the Turkish Leader as follows:

**"Enver Pasha entered . . . The Ottoman hero whose Albanian blood . . . so often brought phlegmatic Turkish adventurous decisions . . . has nothing heroic in his features . . . In his ornate uniform with a fur cap and many strings and braids, he looks more like a gypsy baron than like a hero. One told me in Berlin that he has three portraits hanging on the wall behind his desk: Napoleon to the right, Frederick the Great to the left, and in the center, as a synthesis of both, a portrait of himself. . . ."**

That is enough, we know already. It is always the same type.

### **The Echo in the World**

News about the atrocities soon reached the world behind the border. Many thousand Armenians fled to Russia, several thousands were brought to Egypt. Some reports came through the surviving Armenian communities in Western Anatolia and Constantinople, through the office of the Armenian Patriarch, and through the headquarters of the Armenian National Party which had been transferred to Sofia when the war started. In many Turkish towns, there were Italian consuls up to 1915, American consuls up to 1917, and German, Austrian, Swiss, and Scandinavian consulates throughout the war. There were also foreign missionaries, doctors, nurses, engineers, businessmen. The world was informed. What was the result?



Germany decided that the atrocities are an "internal affair" of its ally. Numerous reports of German consulates, sent to the German legation in Constantinople and to the Foreign Office in Berlin, were kept secret. Dr. Lepsius, who wanted to help the victims, **was allowed to go to Constantinople** — that was all; when he asked the Turks for permission to go to the interior of the country and to organize a relief action, the government refused the permission, and the German legation did not insist. Only later, when the atrocities were already known to the world and public opinion in Allied countries accused Germany of complicity, the Reich diplomats made some discreet attempts to "bring to the attention of the Turkish government" that such things damage the prestige of Turkey and its allies in the world.

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The Turks left these "friendly representations" without answer for many months. In the meantime, the massacres continued. When they were almost finished, the Turkish government answered officially that this was "a purely domestic" matter and promised unofficially some moderation. This was accepted by the Reich government as satisfactory, although German consuls reported already one week later that the "moderation" was a swindle and that the measures were rather more strict than before. And all these negotiations were secret; before the public, the Germans covered the Turks completely. When the American minister in Constantinople suggested to his German colleagues a common demarche, the German indignantly refused to "interfere with Turkish domestic affairs". The first reports on the atrocities which came to America, were officially denied by the German Embassy in Washington; the book of Lepsius, published as a private print, and distributed only among pastors and members of the Reichstag, was seized by censorship; news about atrocities was labelled "Entente propaganda." The German press, from the rightwing Nationalist **Taegliche Rundschau** to the "serious" and "liberal" **Frankfurter Zeitung** defended the "necessary measures" of the Turkish government with



the same arguments we already know from the Turkish pamphlets.

**In the Allied and neutral countries**, there were public protests. There were indignant speeches in both houses of the British parliament and in the French Chamber of Deputies; the governments of France and Britain issued White Books of documents; in America, Switzerland, and other countries, committees were organized, books, pamphlets, newspapers denounced the crimes. American and neutral institutions in the Levant organized some relief for the deportees where it was possible.

And that was all. If one could not save the hundreds of thousands of victims from tortures and death, one could at least expect that one will try to protect the survivors in the future. But this was not done. No "national home" and no "minoity rights" were guaranteed to the Armenians by the peace conference. The criminals were not punished. **And soon, the world started to forget.**

This forgetfulness was fateful. If Enver and Talaat Pasha almost succeeded in "solving the Armenian question" by the extermination of the Armenians, how shouldn't this fact encourage future attempts to solve the Jewish and other similar problems in the same way?

According to documents, read at the Nuremberg trial, Hitler told Goering and his generals, at a gathering in Obersalzberg, in August 1939, just before he invaded Poland and started the world war:

**"What the weak western European civilization thinks about me does not matter. . . . I have sent to the East only my Death's Head units with the order to kill without pity or mercy all men, women and children of the Polish race and language. Only in such a way will we win the vital space we need. Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?"\***

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\*) See **The New York Times**, Nov. 24, 1945, p. 7. Also, **Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression**, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Washington 1946, vol. vii, p. 753.

The relation between the failure to punish the Turkish leaders of the Armenian atrocities and the later rise of Nazi barbarism was not simply accidental, brought about through some "blind law of history." The arch criminals were, as you see, very much aware of what they were doing.

