

9(566)  
G-36

# Genocide & Human Rights

*A Special Issue of  
the Journal of Armenian Studies  
Volume IV, Nos. 1 and 2 (1992)*

## *Lessons from the Armenian Experience*

Foreword by Roger W. Smith  
*College of William and Mary*

Preface by Gregory H. Adamian  
*Bentley College*

Introduction by Sol Gittleman  
*Tufts University*



National Association for Armenian Studies and Research  
Armenian Heritage Press

*Papers presented at the National Conference  
Organized and Sponsored by Bentley College and  
the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research*

# Genocide & Human Rights

*Lessons from the Armenian Experience*

A Special Issue of  
the Journal of Armenian Studies  
Volume IV, Nos. 1 and 2 (1992)



Armenian Heritage Press  
National Association for Armenian Studies and Research  
Belmont, Massachusetts

*Papers presented at the National Conference  
Organized and Sponsored by Bentley College and  
the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research*

JOURNAL OF ARMENIAN STUDIES (ISSN 0883-9948) is a publication of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Inc., Armenian Heritage Press, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, Mass. 02178. Telephone: (617) 489-1610.

ADVISORY EDITORIAL BOARD: Arra S. Avakian, Edmond Y. Azadian, Kevork Bardakjian, S. Peter Cowe, Lucy Der Manuelian, Ara Dostourian, Richard N. Frye, John A. C. Greppin, Sonia Ketchian, Dickran Kouymjian, Hagop J. Nersoyan, Dennis R. Papazian, and Ronald G. Suny. EDITOR: Barbara J. Merguerian

©1993 by National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Inc.  
All rights reserved

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Genocide & human rights: lessons from the Armenian experience.  
p. cm.

"A special issue of the Journal of Armenian studies, volume IV, nos. 1 and 2 (1992)."

"Papers presented at the national conference, organized and sponsored by Bentley College and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research."

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-935411-11-9: \$25.00

1. Armenian massacres, 1915-1923--Congresses. 2. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Congresses. 3. Genocide--Congresses.  
I. Bentley College. II. National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (U.S.) III. Journal of Armenian studies. IV. Title: Genocide and human rights.

DS195.5.G345 1993

956.6'2015--dc20

88683

93-19321  
CIP

3 000 22802

Publication of this special issue of the  
*Journal of Armenian Studies*  
was underwritten in part by a grant from the  
AGBU-Alex Manoogian Cultural Fund of Southfield, Michigan

# Contents

## FOREWORD

by Roger W. Smith	v
-------------------	---

## PREFACE

by Gregory H. Adamian	ix
-----------------------	----

## INTRODUCTION

Sol Gittleman - <i>The Stereotype as a Prelude to Genocide</i>	1
--	---

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Richard G. Hovannisian - <i>The Historical Dimensions of the Armenian Question, 1878-1923</i>	9
James J. Reid - <i>Sources of Alienation and Identity Crises in Ottoman Intellectual History</i>	35
Barbara J. Merguerian - <i>The American Response to the 1895 Massacres</i>	53
Christopher J. Walker - <i>Britain as World Policeman</i>	85

## FACTS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Yves Ternon - <i>The State's Crime</i>	97
Richard Ashton - <i>Experiences and Observations</i>	109
Alice Odian Kasparian - <i>The Massacres in Angora and Western Turkey</i>	119
Frank A. Stone - <i>Young People Caught Up in a Catastrophe</i>	137

## RESPONSE TO GENOCIDE

Sybil Milton - <i>Armin T. Wegner, Polemicist for Armenian and Jewish Human Rights</i>	165
Dickran Kouymjian - <i>The Genocide and Political Violence</i>	187
Vahé Oshagan - <i>The Image of the Turk in Modern Armenian Literature</i>	199
Gilbert Abcarian - <i>Ambiguous Legacy: Genocide and Political Romanticism</i>	211

## DENIAL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Dennis R. Papazian - <i>Misplaced Credulity</i>	227
Michael M. Gunter - <i>Historical Origins of Armenian-Turkish Enmity</i>	257
Israel W. Charny - <i>The Psychology of Denial</i>	289

## GENOCIDE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Leo Kuper and Gary Remer - <i>The Religious Element in Genocide</i>	307
Helen Fein - <i>Transnational Defense of Minorities: The Movement for Armenian Rights (1876-1915) and the Contemporary Movement for Soviet Jewry</i>	331

## PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE

George Wald - <i>Genocide in the Twentieth Century</i>	353
Phredd MatthewsWall - <i>Teaching about the Armenian Genocide</i>	357
John Loftus - <i>Genocide and Deterrence</i>	363
William B. Proxmire - <i>The Genocide Convention and the Prevention of Genocide</i>	373

## POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GENOCIDE

Irving Louis Horowitz, Vartan Hartunian, Israel W. Charny, Richard G. Hovannisian, Set C. Momjian - <i>Genocide and Governmental Responsibility</i> (Panel Discussion) . . . . .	383
Richard L. Rubenstein - <i>The Legacy of Genocide</i> . . . . .	413

APPENDIX: <i>Selected and Recent Forthcoming Studies on the Genocide</i> Prepared by Roger W. Smith . . . . .	427
--	-----

CONTRIBUTORS . . . . .	430
------------------------	-----

---

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The National Conference on Genocide and Human Rights ("Seventy Years after the Genocide: Lessons from the Armenian Experience") held at Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts, on April 18, 19, and 20, 1985, created widespread interest in the media and academic circles both because of the insights it provided into the causes and effects of genocide and also because of its emphasis on identifying the means to prevent future outbreaks of genocide. The observations of several participants concerning minority rights, human rights, and the responsibilities of governments and the worldwide community to secure these rights are especially pertinent today, in the post cold-war era, as nations search for new methods to deal with ethnic strife and international conflicts.

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research is therefore pleased to make these papers now available to a wider audience. Although it has been impossible to include all of the papers and commentary presented in the two-and-a-half day conference,\* the present collection provides ample material dealing with the major themes and issues raised by the participants concerning genocide in the twentieth century.

Thanks are due to a number of individuals who helped to make this publication possible. These include Bentley College faculty members David A. Fedo (English, now dean of students at Gordon College), Richard Geehr (history), and Herbert Sawyer (government), who were active members of the conference organizing committee and provided initial review of several of the papers. Roger W. Smith, author of the Foreword and the Appendix, was of immeasurable assistance in editing the papers for publication.

In order to secure the widest possible distribution, this collection is being issued both as a separate publication and as a special double issue of NAASR's *Journal of Armenian Studies*. Customary *Journal* features, such as book reviews, will be resumed with the *Journal's* next regular issue.

\*The papers which were published elsewhere in modified form and/or were not submitted for publication include the following: Levon Z. Boyajian and Haigaz M. Grigorian, "Children of Survivors of the Armenian Genocide: A Psychological Study"; Lucy Der Manuelian, "The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on Armenian Art and Scholarship"; Marilyn B. Feingold, "The Status of Education on the Holocaust and Genocide in the United States"; Gerard Libaridian, "The Armenian Genocide as a Paradigm for 'Political' Genocide"; Levon Marashlian, "Population Statistics, Politics, and the Armenian Question"; Donald E. Miller, "The Impact of the Turkish Massacres on the Survivors"; Allen J. Salerian, "Long-Term Psychological Effects of the 1915 Genocide on Armenian Survivors"; and Puzant Yeghiayan, "Historical References and Comparative Statistics of the Armenian Population in Turkey."

# Foreword

Roger W. Smith

Milan Kundera, the exiled Czech writer, tells us that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." By memory, Kundera does not mean remembrance alone, but remembrance that is accompanied by understanding, and understanding that leads to commitment and action. It is commendable, therefore, that a National Conference on Genocide and Human Rights was held at Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts, on April 18 to 20, 1985, a conference that coincided with the world-wide observances of the seventieth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The program, which was jointly organized by Bentley College and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, took as its overall theme: "Seventy Years after the Genocide: Lessons from the Armenian Experience."

The goals of the conference were to foster greater awareness and understanding of genocide and to promote further study of its causes, effects, and potential for recurrence. Emphasizing human rights and the responsibilities of governments and the international community, it also sought to build bridges between victims of genocide in order that they might work together in an attempt to end, to use the language of the United Nations Convention, the "odious scourge" of genocide.

I went to the conference on the Armenian Genocide as a relative innocent, though perhaps I was not "wholly innocent," since I later received a letter from the Turkish Ambassador to the United States rebuking my scholarship. My "mistake" was that I had mentioned the Armenian Genocide, something, he said, that never happened. But as I read these papers again, many vivid moments from the confer-

ence came back to me. It was there that I met Helen Fein, Israel Charny, and Richard Hovannisian, scholars whom I hold in the highest regard. It was there too that I met, for the first time, survivors of the Genocide, their children and grandchildren, all of whom shared their stories with me, bearing witness to a proud and tragic history. And it was there that the first evening of the conference I sat at the banquet table with a group of Armenians who began to sing in Armenian, a language I had never heard before, songs of home and long ago, songs sad yet sweet, coming from the heart, and accompanied with tears. Little did I know then that on April 24, 1990, I would stand before the Martyrs' Memorial in Yerevan, Armenia, and I too would weep. But, in the end, tears of sadness and anger are not enough; they must also become tears of resolution and action.

Many of you will be pleased, as I am, that the *Journal of Armenian Studies* is now making available to a wider audience many of the papers from the conference. Of course, not all the papers will appeal to every reader, but the collection does allow us to hear different voices and learn from different perspectives. We hear the survivors speak, listen to the voices of social scientists as they seek to understand why the Genocide occurred, why it has been denied, and what roles and responsibilities governments have in the prevention of possible future atrocities; we listen to the statesman who spoke out every day for more than twenty years on the floor of the United States Senate in support of American ratification of the Genocide Convention; we hear scholars draw parallels between the Armenian Genocide and the present; and we learn about both the importance of teaching about genocide and human rights and how we might go about that. Ironically, there is contained within these pages the voice of one who artfully denies the Genocide, claiming that there are two sides to the Genocide, that the Armenians were not "wholly innocent," that both sides suffered, that the Armenian deaths were not intentional, but rather the result of the breakdown of governmental control ("things got terribly out of hand in 1915"), and who writes euphemistically of deaths "suffered by" rather than "inflicted upon" Armenians. But let it stand as an exhibit of the continuing attempt to deny, rationalize, and trivialize the Genocide, and as a pointed reminder of the truth of Kundera's words.

The studies presented here go some way toward answering a number of questions about the Genocide, and more recent work (some of it listed in the Appendix) has taken our understanding further in

certain respects. But of equal importance, and despite the persistence of the conditions that allow genocide to take place (deep social and political conflict, nationalism and other ideologies, dehumanization of others, obedience to orders regardless of consequences, indifference to the destruction of other groups and peoples, and the cynical pursuit of narrowly conceived ideas of national interest at the expense of human rights and truths), these studies help to jar us out of our indifference to the plight of others and to overcome the feeling of powerlessness to affect the decisions of governments.

Scholarship, of course, bears the mark of the conditions under which it is produced and it also reflects the temperaments of its authors. Thus, the author of one of the papers published here asserted that: "As ethnic past and present collide, international political dynamics move ever further from circumstances favorable to the emergence of an Armenian state." In 1985 that was a statement that sounded reasonable enough, but today it reminds us that history is not the same as nature: that nothing in human history, except our individual mortality, is inevitable, least of all genocide; rather, choice and will play decisive roles in shaping society and its future. Can we not choose to act in non-genocidal ways? Can we not purge ourselves of stereotypes, hate, and indifference? Can we not find ways to insist that governments protect human rights and not align themselves with states that violate them? Can we not build bridges (a common theme in this volume) between victims of genocide, or must every group appropriate suffering for itself and turn its back on the tragedies of other peoples? Can we not insist that students be taught about human rights and citizenship, about how to overcome the tendency to be the passive bystander who watches as injustice is carried out, and about how one can resist obedience to orders when obedience means harming innocent persons? Can we not ask: What can *I* do to protect human rights and how may *I* do it?

Belief in fate and determinism can be comforting since it relieves us of responsibility. The openness of the future provokes anxiety in some, but, I believe, it also offers us hope, since it suggests that we can shape the kind of world we live in: whether human rights are protected, whether genocide claims new victims, depends upon what *we become* and what *we do*. Remembrance, understanding, commitment—these are what Kundera had in mind when he wrote, to say it once again, that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Yet there is no doubt that the struggle for truth, for the healing power that recognition of the Armenian



Genocide can bring to the survivors and their descendants, and for the prevention of atrocities against yet another people place heavy responsibilities upon us all.

The Armenian people have known tragedy and injustice in the extreme, but they have also known rebirth. The existence of men and women who care about the past, but are committed to defending human rights—above all, the right to life—in the present and future, provides grounds for cautious optimism.

# Preface

Gregory H. Adamian<sup>\*</sup>

Our coming together today constitutes a profession of faith. Although the subject of our Conference compels us to confront the darkest, most shameful chapters in the history of this century, we bring to our task the shared conviction that *knowledge* and *history* have the power to affect human behavior.

We recognize that justice and liberty can thrive only in an atmosphere of unflinching self-awareness—and we therefore propose to examine the moral blight that is genocide and to analyze it, much as a biologist might probe a mysterious and complex virus in an attempt to discover the secret of its deadly contagion.

That same confidence in the human capacity to understand the nature of our universe motivates us here today. Our task is to study the terrible facts of this infectious moral disease, to make sure they are acknowledged and understood in a public forum, and to develop working hypotheses that might lead to prevention or cure.

It takes courage to remind the world that, along with a noble striving for peace and justice and beauty, the horror of genocide has been a recurrent element of our human heritage. History teaches us that our human race carries within it a seemingly unlimited potential for good *and* for evil. As educators, scholars, statesmen and leading citizens, we are sometimes called upon to acknowledge the darkest side of our shared human nature in order to explore the means of overcoming—or at least *controlling*—the most hateful and destructive of human instincts.

---

<sup>\*</sup>Statement delivered by the President of Bentley College to open the Conference on Genocide and Human Rights.