

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Etrüsk TÜRKER

Introduction

I would like to start my article by citing a story told in an ATA News Magazine in the USA about the affection held for Turks by a certain Jewish lady and its recognition by a Turk after he learned of her passing away.

ESTER HANIM by Mahfi Egilmez, excerpted from *Radikal*, 3 June 2001, translated by Oya Bain of ATA, DC;

One day as I was walking in Beyoğlu, I thought of Ester Hanım. Her family had settled in Istanbul where she had spent her childhood and youth. Later her family moved to the USA, she got married and had children. Whenever anybody asked her origins, she always told them she was an "Istanbullu".

I first met Ester Hanım in 1987 in Washington, DC. She was the secretary at the Commerce Counselor's Office at the Turkish Embassy. She wrote and spoke flawless English, French, Spanish and Turkish. Her Turkish was so good that sometimes she would correct the errors in the Turkish documents we prepared. She could single-handedly run the routine operation of our office. Her skills were such that she could easily have made more money at another job, but she preferred to work at the Turkish Embassy. Sometimes we would sit and talk about Turkey. She would follow the events in Turkey carefully and would express dismay when Turkey had problems. She would state that Turkey deserved a better place in the world opinion. She would reminisce about her youth in Turkey, her school days, walks in Beyoğlu after school, the highlight of her day which was having tea and pastries at the Markiz Patisserie. I had heard similar nostalgic stories about Beyoğlu from others, but I used to especially enjoy her accounts.

In 1991, when I went to Washington the second time with the same assignment as before, I found Ester Hanım still hard at work at the Commerce Counselor's Office, in spite of increasing health problems. Two years later her father passed away. During the

ceremony at the Jewish cemetery in Maryland, the rabbi finished his words as follows: "A life which moved from land to land without a country of its own ended today. To live and raise a family in exile is not an easy task, people who do not experience it, cannot comprehend the difficulties."

A year later, in April, the Armenians had organized a protest in front of the Embassy. We all had warnings about being careful with the protesters. In the morning, as I was coming to the office, I saw the protestors, gathered in front of the Embassy with signs in their hands. When they saw the diplomatic tag of my car, they started to approach me. I then saw a woman, with her back to me who was talking to the crowd trying to explain something. As I looked closer, I saw it was Ester Hanım. Ignoring the protestors, I got out of my car and walked towards her. The police started to move towards us. Ester Hanım did not notice me and continued speaking to the crowd: "Turks, shared their land with us at our most difficult time, you too had good lives in Turkey. Why are you so full of hate and betrayal?" She kept repeating these words. The protestors, who included some Americans, were amazed and quiet and did not know how to respond. They could not understand why an American Jewish woman would defend the Turks. Quietly I approached Ester Hanım, took her by the arm and led her to my car. The protestors were embarrassed and silent. Ester Hanım was crying and kept saying "Why are these people doing this? Don't they have a bit of decency? I could not respond as I was trying not to cry myself.

When I learned Ester Hanım passed away, all these memories came back to me vividly like a film strip. Whenever I take a walk in Beyoglu, I hear Ester Hanım's words: "Turks shared their land with us."

Historical Facts not Fiction

Looking at history, one can see that Armenians and Turks did indeed live together for centuries in the middle-Eastern region and as subjects of the Ottoman Empire from the 13th to the 20th century. In the Ottoman Empire, many citizens of Armenian descent were placed in crucial positions within the treasury and in other departments where they were responsible for running the affairs of the country. Ottomans appointed many ambassadors of Armenian origin and they were even entrusted with managing foreign affairs.

There have been many books written by Armenians living in the USA, most of which can be accused of exaggeration and of reflecting one-sided events of the history that took place during the Ottoman Empire in the early parts of the twentieth century. These writings have served to fuel Armenian ethnic groups to continue to hate Turks. Through their lobbying activities, Armenian groups are continuously trying to influence the internal and external affairs of the USA regarding Turkey. They campaign to change the history books taught in schools in the USA to reflect a more one-sided view of the affairs. One such book entitled "The Black Dog" (Ref. 3), written by Peter Balakian, was recognized as one of the best books of 1997 by the Los Angeles Times newspaper. Unfortunately it is full of inconsistencies, exaggerations and unjustified accusations. It is hard to believe that such a book obtained recognition without an independent investigation on the validity of its contents. The Los Angeles Times might have a wide circulation among the Armenians living in Los Angeles, but this action by the newspaper serves no justifiable purpose when one considers the sensitivity of this matter.

My objective with this article is to point out some of the inconsistencies in this book and to present an alternative understanding by citing references from well known historians. The American public and the Armenian community at large need to be informed of these facts. Furthermore, I asked a Jewish friend of mine to read this book and to provide her comments. She knows quite a bit about the events that took place at that time since her grandmother relayed to her many personal memories of the historical events. The following includes cited statements contained in the book and shows many instances where the author contradicts himself.

Peter Balakian Remembers

Peter Balakian asked his mother "Why are we Christians?" She replied that "Our people decided to follow the teachings of Jesus. There is a legend that Noah's Arc landed on Mt. Ararat in Armenia. That makes Jews and Armenians cousins" (p.40, Ref. 3).

My Jewish friend, in a way making fun of what Peter Balakian had written, remarked to me, "Can you see what this man has written. For somebody to claim for his own benefit to be relatives with us and to declare that Mt. Ararat was a holy place just like Jerusalem,

sets the best example of the cleverest Armenian attitude. It is amazing how soon they forget what they did to us during the Ottoman years." In a joking way, when I asked her if it is also possible for Jews and Turks to be relatives, she replied that it was certainly possible. When my Jewish friend went on to say that her grandmother had asked her to write her memoirs, I was deeply touched by her noble act and confirmed to her that exposing the realities of what really happened is an honest effort that I will cherish forever.

French, Maara Cannibals

During the Crusades a blind poet wrote the following words,

"People can be separated into two groups,

Those with brain but no religion

And those with religion but no brain" (p.61, Ref.8)

This shows how brave and free thinking this poet was while reflecting on the events of that time. It might be worthwhile to collect the pictures from the museums depicting the vicious incidents of the Crusades to show the Europeans of today what their ancestors did. I do not think such a barbaric genocide was ever witnessed before in the history of the world. The Frank (French) Knights arrived at dawn and sliced their victims with swords for three continuous days. The French historian Raoul de Caen wrote "Frank fighters in Maara would boil the non-Christians alive and would place their children on skewers and eat them after barbequing" (p.63, Ref.8). The author admitted that Turks would never forget the cannibalism of Europeans. When the news of these barbaric acts was relayed to Rome, their leader came up with an excuse that they had run out of food and to feed the starving soldiers they helped themselves to Turkish and Muslim corpses. Another French historian, Albert d'Aix wrote, "Our armies did not only cannibalize Turks and Muslims, they also ate dogs" (13 January 1099) (p.64, Ref.8).

Peter Balakian Remembers

My Jewish friend continued. "Turks are not known very well in the USA and you Turks don't know how to get the reality across. We understand you well since Jews did live in Turkey. The Armenian lobby activity in the USA is like an industry. Americans are well

intentioned people and the Armenians take advantage of that. Furthermore, don't forget that you Turks are disadvantaged since you are in the minority compared to Armenians in this country."

We continued to read page 40 (Ref.3). "Is Armenia in another country? No Mt. Ararat... well both Armenia and Mt. Ararat are in other countries. But we are Americans and that is the main thing. They are too ethnic."

Today it is necessary to question the meaning of being an American. If Armenians living in the USA are true Americans, how come they still carry such hatred? There are many ethnic groups in the USA who escaped from their countries of origins due to political or religious pressures and settled in the USA. Some Europeans escaped from religious persecutions and settled in the USA. Even more recently, over two million Iranians escaped from the Khomeini regime and made their home here in the USA. It is important to note that none of these ethnic groups continued to live with hatred and none of them taught their children or grandchildren the degree of hatred that they had in themselves. I am very grateful to our great leader Atatürk who never allowed hatred towards any ethnic group living in Turkey and we as Turks grew up together with Turkish Jews, Armenians, Kurds and Greeks in harmony. Based on what Peter Balakian has written and what his mother relayed to him, it is hard for me to believe that he is an American.

Some of the books I read mentioned a big Armenian nation. I would like to reveal what I have discovered. Mr. Toros was the mayor of Antakya, a city in the southern part of Turkey. The Frank Knight Boudine refused to be a missionary and requested to be adapted by Mayor Toros. The arrangements for adoption were agreed to be in accordance with the Armenian traditions. Mayor Toros was dressed up in a large white dress and Boudine, half naked, entered under the dress and they rubbed their bellies against each other. A similar ritual was repeated with Toros's wife. There was a large gathering of spectators mostly of the Muslim faith observing this ceremony. Later, in accordance with Boudine's orders, Mayor Toros and his wife were brutally murdered by Armenians. As an heir, Boudine obtained all of the possessions of Mayor Toros. Later, Boudine became the Count of Odessa and he appointed many Franks into prominent positions. Although Franks and Armenians shared the same religion, this did not stop Franks from destroying Armenians and their rule in that area (pp.53-54, Ref.8)

Looking for an Identity

My Jewish friend turned to page 41 (Ref.3) and said, "Look at what he has written here. He claims that things would be different if they were Jewish. This is a real inferiority complex. According to my grandmother, for their own personal gains they acted like Ottomans. Some of them even had furs sewn on the collars of their dresses just to look like the Ottomans in Istanbul. Now, they are trying to be relatives with those that have the strongest lobby in the USA."

Peter Balakian goes on to say, "We are American. We didn't go to church, Armenian bazaars or Armenian gatherings. We didn't talk about Armenia. I couldn't even speak the language" (pp.40-41, Ref.3). What Peter Balakian portrays in his book is full of inconsistencies, to say the least. At one point he shows them as a religious family and at another part of the book he writes that his mother did not even go to church. Balakian finds religious connection through Noah's Arc and on page 44 (Ref.3) he claims that he has nothing to do with religion. In the Spring of 1960, Peter Balakian told his mother "I am Jewish. I belong there and I know about Abraham and the Covenant" (p.44, Ref.3). On a following page he declares the contrary: "I feel strangely more American and more Armenian." So, it looks like his mood kept swinging back and forth, a sign of inconsistency.

Dear Peter Balakian should know that we could not stop laughing when we read this page with my friend. It appears that he was trying to get the sympathy of the Jewish people in the USA by trying to relate himself to them. How can he convince himself that this is his only salvage? My Jewish friend commented, "This is very funny. When is he going to decide whether he an Armenian or a Jewish? This is a good example of how Armenians manipulated the Ottomans and now in the USA they are trying to manipulate Jews to obtain the sympathy of the Americans."

It appears that we as Turks did not know Armenians very well. What were they trying to accomplish by such maneuvers? My Jewish friend had the answer "I think it is very simple," she continued "they are trying to get Jews on their side by muddying the water between Jews and Turks. Armenians love to create trouble as they did during the Ottoman times. You know the Turkish proverb "soul disappears but the habits never change."

Peter Balakian states on page 44 (Ref.3) "But in the Spring of 1960 my need to be a Jew had more to do with leaving Dickerson

Road than a deeper understanding of real kinship.” My Jewish friend said “You see, he finally revealed what he is trying to do. He is trying to establish a bridge with Jews so that he can claim what was inflicted upon Jews also happened to them.” My friend suggested that we should write back to him so he understands what he is. She began to draft the following:

“Dear Peter Balakian, you can neither be a Jew nor a true American. The only thing you are is a man full of hatred, an Armenian not even with a drop of love in his heart towards humanity as portrayed by Jesus and no matter where your destiny takes you, you will always remain as an ethnic poor soul. It is shame that all the education you had never taught you anything. You should know that as Jews when we lived in Turkey, we have given our love and devotion to the Ottomans. Jews never played two sides in 1914 as you Armenians did by providing military secrets trusted upon you to the Russians.”

Armenian Revenge

An Armenian man named Firuz, who had converted to Muslim religion, was in charge of making armored suits and shields. He had been punished since he was dealing on the black market. One day when the Frank soldiers surrounded the city, he made arrangements to let 500 Frank fighters into the city to take his revenge and also to capitalize on the money and land that was promised to him by the Franks. When the city fell to the Franks, Yagisiyon, the man in charge of the city, was shot, and fell off his horse while trying to flee. An Armenian woodsman passing by recognized him, cut off his head and brought it to the Franks in Antakya. This incident was another testimonial to the fact that Firuz, an Armenian, caused the death of many people living in the city of Antakya just to obtain money and land for himself (p.55, Ref.8). This incident was also similar to Armenians helping Russian soldiers to slaughter thousands of Ottomans in the Eastern part of Turkey.

My Jewish friend cited two poems written by Sephardim Jews in Turkey during World War I in support of the Turks (p.38, Ref.2):

Russia Russia what is your dream?

To conquer Turkey.

Let that day seen.

Hurry my brethren

Let us unite so that we do not become slaves to the Muscovite.

Poor Murad, unfortunate Mithat.

Who for liberty labored so hard.

Turks, Jews and Christians all Ottomans,

Let us join hands,

Let us pledge to be brothers!

We are parting for Istanbul

To combat the reactionaries

In order to preserve Turkish Liberty!

I embraced my Jewish friend and told her that I was really touched and I asked her to come with me so that I can make a Turkish coffee for her and tell her fortune. She went on to tell how the Haham Bashi and Talat Pasha had had a very friendly relationship and how the Alliance Schools were not closed during the War (p.39, Ref.2). As I was preparing the Turkish coffee, I noticed my Jewish friend continued to write her letter. After we both finished our coffee, we turned the small coffee cups over in their plates in order to tell the fortune after the plate cooled down. My Jewish friend remembered this song written in the early twentieth century by Turkish Jews. I had tears in my eyes and embraced my friend being very appreciative of her feelings.

My Jewish friend continued, "Istanbul is one of most beautiful cities of the world where people lived in harmony. However, the Western powers and the Armenians were very successful to muddy the waters to take advantage of the declining times of the Ottoman Empire. I know Armenians claim to be the first Christians and I believe they are also the first terrorists in the world."

My Jewish friend continued to talk about the history. "British, French, Russians and Germans ruined the whole area strategically and materially. Particularly the British divided up and carved out countries to sustain their influence in the area. Armenians played dual cards as citizens of the Ottoman Empire. At one point they teamed up with Russians to beat the Ottoman armies and at a later timeframe in history, they supported the French forces against the

Ottomans. Who benefited from all this? People living in the area died of hunger, sickness, disease and terrorist activities. My grandmother remembered that people were being relocated continuously, sometimes for their own safety and sometimes for the security of the state. As Turks escaped from Selanika in Greece, one could see roads full of dead bodies. Greeks as well as Bulgarians were attacking the people with vicious dogs. Unfortunately nobody has written about these events that took place against the Jews and the Turks. Europeans were requesting reforms from the Ottoman Empire, but they had no feeling towards the common people or those living in rural areas and villages. There was a tremendous religious bias and the Christians were trying to protect other Christians. Nobody cared about the Jews and the Turks. The villagers were being drafted into the military to fight and nobody was left behind to harvest the fields and as a result people were dying of hunger. Those being drafted were fighting on the fronts, protecting railroads, trying to stop the activities of the bandits and terrorist groups. The Europeans were continuously pushing for reforms but there was no money in the treasury to carry out the reforms and it was even difficult to impose a 3% customs duty on goods being imported. Capitulations were sucking the blood and the flesh of the country."

Ottoman Protection of Jews from Armenian Atrocities

I think Peter Balakian's grandmother did not tell him all of the things that went on or maybe he preferred not to write about them in his book. I think now he should list some of the actual events that went on during that time.

Armenians believed that Jews were using Christian blood in making "azyme" bread and that they were kidnapping Armenian children. Eastern Christians still are not convinced that Jews never used any blood. This belief leads to numerous atrocities conducted by Armenians upon Jews. Armenians would raid and search Jewish homes, attack Jews and in some instances even burn down their houses. When his ancestors did this to Jews, how can he claim to be a Jew? There were numerous such attacks. On January 8, 1872 a Rabbi wrote to the Ottoman authorities requesting help because Armenians were blaming Jews for kidnapping an Armenian and they had been threatening them for four days. On April 15, 1872 in Izmir a young Greek drowned in the sea. Greeks decided to remove the brain of the victim by cracking the skull. Although the autopsy

report revealed no foul play, Greeks blamed Jews, and then fanatic Greek gangs attacked Jewish homes with knives. Jews were terrorized and they lived in fear for the following three months (pp.74-75, Ref.6)

Dear Balakian made it look like Turks burned down Izmir based on his father's letter. On the contrary, Izmir was burned down by Greeks and, I am confident, also by some Armenians. A Greek newspaper reveals that the boy presumed kidnapped in Marmara Island in 1872 was in fact hidden by his mother (p.80, Ref.6). How can anyone believe Armenians? Ottomans were very patient when you consider they were occupied by the Armenian problems.

Armenian Easter is such a backward belief and I am sure that is still in their heads. I do not care what anybody says, but the type of person one should stay away from is the one that lies and makes false accusations. According to our beliefs they are guilty in front of God. These lies could have led to crimes by masses. I wonder what type of provocation tactics were used to influence poor people living in rural areas. How could these people, who proudly claim to be the first Christians and to be relatives with almost every civilization in Anatolia, accuse the Jews with such primitive ideas as "DRAWING BLOOD"? In Halep on 29 April 1875, Armenians threatened Jews and demanded that the so-called kidnapped child be returned or terrible things will happen to Jews. The situation returned to normal with the Ottoman Order (ferman) of 1840 when the so-called kidnapped child was again hidden by the Armenians in order to accuse Jews (pp.84-85, Ref.6). Those Armenians responsible were apprehended and put in jail by the Ottoman authorities. Let us not forget that these lies and false accusations could have led to riots resulting in the murder of innocent Jews. I am confident that those Armenians responsible for these actions continued their grudge against the Ottomans even after they migrated to the USA. Unfortunately Turks did not see the realities about Armenians like the Jews did. Mercy is God's gift to people and it should be upheld no matter what the religion is.

Carpet Story

Another unbelievable story is told by Peter Balakian in his book (pp.182-183, Ref.3), with the sole purpose of insulting Turks. One day when his grandmother went to the house of a wealthy Christian family in Halep to drop off a wedding dress she had made, she saw

a carpet in the living room. She told this family that this carpet had been stolen from her house by Turks and requested to take it back. Of course, her request was not granted and the Balakian family decided to go to court to get the carpet back. There were no marks on the carpet to prove that it belonged to them and the accusation that the carpet had been stolen by Turks was her imagination. Nevertheless, strangely enough, the court decided in the Balakian family's favor and they managed to get the carpet back. Later, his grandmother sold the carpet in the bazaar and using that money together with the money sent by her brother, she bought tickets to migrate to the USA. This is a very bizarre and unbelievable story. It appears that Peter Balakian would not hesitate to make-up any type of story to insult and downgrade Turks. How could his grandmother have known who stole the carpet? There were many different ethnic groups living in that area and he had to go ahead and place the blame on Turks, like he blamed all of the killings on Turks.

The Occupation of İzmir Hidden from the World Press

Peter Balakian stated (p.242, Ref.3) that "In the summer of 1922, my grandfather Murad Pasonian sent a telegram that read Smyrna (Izmir) has been burnt to ground, Greeks and Armenians are being slaughtered again." This incident is far from the truth and it amazes me how he can twist the facts. Let us look at what happened in Izmir at that time. "Greek armies were retreating full of vengeance and panic. As they were retreating towards the shore, their ultimate goal was to seek revenge on as much of the civil population as they could; they killed them, they beat them up, they burned down the towns and they filled the mosques with corpses of Turks that they killed together with the pigs they slaughtered"(p.90-91, Ref.14). This shows who was burning down Izmir and it appears that Murad Pasonian never noticed all those Turkish and Jewish civilians being murdered in Izmir by the Greeks and the Armenians. Probably Murad Panosyan did not want to see these realities. How can they be trusted when they ignore the realities?

In 1922, the country was very poor, people were dying of hunger, the nation had to deal with an overpopulated immigration problem and the country was fighting enemies on all fronts to gain independence. During such a difficult time, the Balakian family was enjoying a luxurious life in Geneva, Switzerland. Balakian himself admitted in his book that, "The great snowfields in the winter, my

father remembered the dreamy echoing of bells, bread and chocolate for breakfast. How could one do better?" (p.243, Ref.3). During this time, his grandfather was still in Istanbul and supporting the luxurious life style of his family in Geneva. This was a nice life and how could an Armenian in Turkey claim that they were being victimized while enjoying such nice living.

You Cannot Use a Turkish Song to Spread Hate

Dear Peter Balakian,

The song you have tried to recite on page 179 (Ref.3) of your book is a Turkish folk song and it was a representation of the plea by the public to the Ottoman Emperor regarding their suffering. I am amazed that you have mistranslated the song to your liking to portray hatred. I have lived with Christians ever since I was 23 years old and I have observed that there are two types of Christians: those that carry the cross in their heads and those that carry Christ in their hearts. I think you fit into the first category of those carrying the cross in their heads. You have been seeded with hatred and you fail to see what really went on. This is not unique to Christianity and a similar classification can be made among Muslims. I consider myself among the millions of Turks that belong to the generation of followers in the footsteps of Atatürk. We are thought to love mankind, to live in harmony with all and to seek peace in the World. I strongly believe in the teachings of Mevlana and Yunus Emre who had open doors to anybody and who have tolerated men and women of all religions.

Regarding the song, I would like to enlighten you by providing the correct translation, at least for the first few lines:

There is no cloud in the air, what is this smoke,
Nobody died in the neighborhood, what is this outcry,
Those Yemen hands are so terrible.
Ano is Yemen,
Roses are bitter,
I wonder why.
This is Mush,
The roads are steep,

Those that went there never came back,
One wonders why?

.....

My grandmother used to cry every time she listened to this song. All of her five brothers were sent to Yemen to fight in the war and only one came back like a skeleton, sick and almost starving.

In your book you claim that Mush was a big Armenian city and the song, part of it cited above, was a death march lyric. In the first place you need to know that Mush has been under Turkish dominance for centuries. Although today, some circles try to exclude Mush and other Eastern cities from the territorial unity of Turkey, these efforts are all part of a big game to divide people and cultures and to create hatred and racism. In the second place you should know that this folk song was written to commemorate those that sacrificed their lives for their country in the war. You have no right to call this song an Armenian death march and to use it as another excuse to accuse Turks to accomplish your personal aims and to preach further hatred.

The common people during the Ottoman times were too worried about their own problems to be concerned with Armenians. These times provided opportunity for Armenians for awakening, renewal and further progress. There was no country in the world at the time where subjects were given ample religious freedom without any interference from the state. Missionaries were also free to travel and to carry on their activities. Unfortunately, today, even Europeans do not give us any credit for such tolerance.

As stated in your book (pp.227-232, Ref.3), the Balakian family was in the furniture (French style) business in the city of Tokat. Your grandfather managed to send your father to a private college and later to Germany to study medicine at the university. After graduation, Germany would not allow your father to remain there, although a Christian, he went on to Egypt to work there. Since he did not like Egypt, your father ended up in Istanbul working for a German company, an opportunity not easily available for a Turk. Ottomans opened all the gates to foreign powers while the country was being divided. Although our ancestors went through pain and extreme hardships, we chose not to teach these to our children to minimize dislike and hatred as requested by Atatürk. Irrespective of whether what the Ottomans did was right or wrong, we prefer to

bury it in the past. Armenians and, especially, you have no right to complain about those times because your family enjoyed all the benefits provided by the Ottomans to minorities while not making a single sacrifice. I would not blame the common people, particularly those living in Anatolia, if they were to complain since they were the ones living in poverty and they were always called upon to sacrifice and to fight in wars.

Wishful Thinking

I am a strong believer that if Armenians had decided to remain in Turkey and to help to make prosperous the Ottoman Empire and later the Turkish Republic, both sides would have benefited. The guerilla groups that were killing innocent citizens would not have existed, peace and love would have subsided and Anatolian unity would not have been broken. Maybe it would have been possible to carry out a conversation with my lovely friend Mr. Ararat in Turkey. We are all born to share this world, not to destroy each other physically and psychologically. Let us all learn from the American song "This land is my land, this land is your land". For all these reasons Armenia/Armenians and Turkey/Turks should live in peace. Instead of spending all these monies on lobbying activities, let us join forces to erect a monument in the name of our ancestors who lost their lives during the early 20th century. Armenians and Turks should set an example for the whole world to admire and they should put an end to hatred and anger. In addition, we should invite our neighbors, including Azerbaijanis and Jews, to join us. Let us jointly build a PEACE MUSEUM in the city of Van and set our course towards "Peace in the Nation and Peace in the World" as dictated by Atatürk. I am proposing all these, knowing the facts that those Armenians living in Turkey have no problem and here in this country I have made many good Armenian friends.

Analogy with September 11

World War I was a conflict in which many nations participated. This is in fact a very intriguing issue and it must be the subject of a separate research to find out how the Ottoman Empire was drawn into this war. In trying to understand the era better, it would help greatly if one were to read Justin McCarthy's book entitled "Death and Exile" (Ref.10). The author states that the western world tolerated Armenian terror against the Turkish diplomats because

the Armenians are Christians. The claim was also made in Peter Balakian's book that "the deaths of few Turks are nothing when compared with mass destruction of the Armenian people" (p.167, Ref.11). He further stated "I don't think these kids should be found guilty, even if they killed some Turkish diplomats" (p.168, Ref.11). I wonder what Americans would feel if Armenians were to have the same attitude towards the events of September 11 and claim that those nineteen terrorists should not be found guilty because they killed some Americans. Undoubtedly, it is the same thing because in both cases innocent people were murdered by terrorists. We see a similar attitude by Armenians towards the activities of Tehlirian, although they were carried out nearly eighty years earlier. Tehlirian killed one well-known Armenian in Istanbul and later on he assassinated Talat Pasha in Berlin.

Freedom of Expression Should not be Bought by Lobbying

In later years, other Armenian terrorists killed more than fifty Turkish foreign staff working at various embassies. On page 167 of her book, Lorna Miller (Ref.11) states that the response of most of the Armenians interviewed was "If the boys are assassinating Turks! They do well!" One wonders if they would make the same statement for the terrorists of September 11. The historian Bernard Lewis stated to *Le Monde* newspaper on 13 November 1993 that the qualification of genocide, given the massacre perpetrated by Turks in 1915, was nothing more than "The Armenian version of this story" (Ref.15). The Armenian attitude towards terrorism is a typical Eastern Christian mentality: let a few more, that killed a diplomat, go to jail. It does not make a bit of difference.

September 11-Flight 93

We were watching on TV a small-built, noble and courageous mother in tears. She was proud as she heard her son's voice for the last time via an airline telephone as the plane was plunging down somewhere in Pennsylvania. I could hear others, with family members on the same flight, crying as they were listening to the relentless pursuit of the terror. Turkish Government officials had tried for years to convince Western governments to cooperate to put an end to the terror which was taking the lives of Turkish diplomats, innocent civilians and military personal. The requests of Turkish officials were ignored because, particularly Europeans,

always acted with pre-conceived ideas. When Einstein stated that "it is much more difficult to break-up a pre-conceived mind than an atom", he must have used this not only for Jews but also for those not sympathizing with Turks. We must be thankful to the Swiss government who took the terrorism very seriously and convicted those who were responsible. The French Government almost overlooked the Armenian terrorist activities carried out in France and France became the breeding ground for Armenian terror.

As the TV program continued, Bill O'Reilly, the anchorman, turned to this mother and said "you must be a very brave woman". When I heard this remark, as a mother, I was also crying for those heroes on the airplane. I could sense what this mother on TV felt as she buried her loss in her heart.

Lorna Miller continued in her book, "Is there a fedai (volunteer) who could drop a huge bomb on Turkey now? Is it a sin today? Isn't there one Armenian who could do that and this would be for revenge!"(p.167, Ref.11). What a twisted mind. Doesn't this show that there were many Armenian fedais during the Ottoman years that were willing to carry out terrorist acts? I guess Lorna Miller doesn't really care who else would die if such a bomb were exploded over Turkey. Still today there are Armenians, Jews, Greeks and other ethnic groups in Turkey. Turks were never after revenge and we were never taught such evil thinking.

Conclusion

The First World War was a tragic event and it caused hardships for the Turks as well as for the Armenians. It would be morally wrong to relate the consequences of this event to genocide. Ottomans were very tolerant and they shared their land as well as their wealth with people of different origins including Armenians, Jews and Greeks. There was no discrimination and on the contrary minorities benefited very nicely from the opportunities while sacrificing very little in return. As Ester Hanım, whose father grew up in Turkey, cried out loud to the demonstrating crowd "Turks, shared their land with us at our most difficult time, you too had good lives in Turkey. Why are you so full of hate and betrayal?"

We as Turks have not made our voices heard on this matter. One of the reasons might have been that we considered Armenians living in Turkey as one of us. When our diplomats were being killed by Armenians, the world reaction was weak and it was assumed to

be just some terrorist acts. However, after seeing all those books published by Armenians living in this country, it became obvious to me that, not only terrorists, but even the prominent individuals whether in business or in academic institutions were behind these activities. That is why we have to get our voices heard and solicit support of the whole world community. September 11 has shown what terrible tragedies terrorism can cause. In addition to stopping terrorism, it is essential to erase the pre-conceived ideas, to lead people to think and decide objectively and to modify the lobbying system to eliminate one-sided decisions.

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