

APRIL 24
ARMENIAN MEMORIAL DAY

WHY ARMENIANS
COMMEMORATE
THIS DAY

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Why Armenians Commemorate This Day



THE INDICTMENT AGAINST TURKEY

The Armenians the world-over during 1965 are observing the 50th Memorial of the Turkish genocide of the Armenian people.

In 1915, the Turkish Government began the planned extermination of the Armenians, the first mass-murder of a people in modern times. The sporadic pillage and murder of Armenians for countless generations under the Sultans culminated in the premeditated mass-killing of the civilian Armenian population in 1915, with the avowed purpose of Talaat Pasha, Turkish Minister of the Interior, to eliminate permanently the question of the reestablishment of Armenia's political sovereignty.

From the files of the Turkish Government, a cipher-telegram, dated February 27, 1918, issued by the War Office to all commanding officers of the Army reveals and summarizes the official plans to exterminate the Armenian people. Taken in part from that order:

"In view of present circumstances, the Imperial Government has issued an order for the extermination of the whole Armenian race. The following operations are to be made with regard to them:

"(1) All the Armenians in the country who are Ottoman subjects from five years of age upwards are to be taken out of towns and slaughtered.

"(2) All the Armenians serving in the Imperial Armies are to be separated from their divisions without making any disturbance; they are to be taken into solitary places away from the public eye, and shot."

This order is signed "Representative of the High Command and Minister of War, Enver." This official order and others of the same tenor place the responsibility for the genocide of the Armenians upon the Turkish Government. In the face of these documented facts, the Turkish United Nations representative Eralp's January 25, 1965 statement, "the alleged massacres of the Armenians" becomes a deliberate perversion of history.

In pursuance of the official policy and orders of the Turkish Government, one and one-half million Armenian victims were added to the hundreds of thousands murdered during the Nineteenth Century. In addition, one and one-half million Armenians were deported under incredibly inhuman conditions, finally finding refuge in the friendly countries of the Near East, in Europe, and the United States. When one adds to this Turkish act of genocide approximately forty-five billion dollars of Armenian property destroyed or confiscated, the true extent of the official Turkish crime and Armenian losses are revealed.

This, in brief, is the indictment returned by documented history against the Turkish Government of 1915 and its predecessors and successors in office.

It does not serve the purpose of this paper to enumerate in detail the counts in that indictment, nor to offer the detailed supporting evidence of impartial historians, military observers, diplomatic representatives and Church people. For a more detailed and documented study, the reader is referred to the pamphlet — "Turkey, Author of Genocide" by James H. Tashjian, published in 1965. (*) The main purpose of this pamphlet is found in its title, "Why Do the Armenians Commemorate April Twenty-Fourth Each Year?"

MORE THAN AN ARMENIAN DAY OF MOURNING

April 24th has been designated as *Memorial Day*, and each year all Armenians observe the Anniversary of the Turkish crime of genocide that shocked the sensibilities of the civilized world. Why do the Armenians observe this Memorial Day? There is hardly an Armenian family today that has not lost one or more of its members in this Turkish act of genocide. The Armenian pauses on this day to mourn and to honor the memory of his kinfolk by appropriate religious and civil ceremonies.

The Armenian on this Memorial Day also mourns for those nations who by withholding justice from the Armenians because of political expediencies failed to respond to the moral demands of civilization.

But, April 24th is more than an Armenian day of mourning. The denial of justice is a moral loss affecting all mankind. Therefore, April 24th is a day on which, each year, the Armenians remind the world community that the problems with which it has been plagued without surcease will remain insoluble so long as justice is ignored. The Armenian Question is one of the outstanding among the many cases in which international justice has been withheld. The world must be reminded that the unpunished Turkish act of genocide of the Armenians in 1915 in no small measure contributed to the genocide of the Jewish and Polish populations in World War II. Adolph

(*) Copies may be obtained without charge by writing to the Hairenik Association, 212 Stuart Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

Hitler in a speech at Obersalzberg on August 22, 1939, to his army commander ordering the ruthless murder of the Polish people, said "who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?" A crime ignored is a crime encouraged. The trials at Nuremberg did not for the first time create the crime of genocide. These trials were merely a belated formal recognition of a law that from time immemorial was enacted by the divine conscience of man.

The world powers need be reminded that sheer naked power can make only uneasy and temporary allies of weaker peoples. A world tribunal dispensing equal justice under the law is the only agency that can create the atmosphere of faith in which world peace can take root and flourish.

AGENDA OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS

April 24th is the day the Armenians remind the civilized world that Armenian Rights remain on the agenda of unfinished business.

The United Nations was established as a civilized assembly of nations to hear the grievances of peoples and to render judgment based upon law and justice. It professed to replace physical force as the arbiter of national and human rights. The Armenian reminds the United Nations that a moral force must act morally.

The United Nations is in a sense the progeny of the spirit of the Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941, wherein a part of Article Three stated "and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government *restored* to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." The Armenian people were forcibly deprived of their sovereign rights by the Government of Turkey. The Armenian case against Turkey falls within the jurisdiction of the United Nations. There can be no legal or moral grounds upon which this jurisdiction can be refused. If the emerging nations of Africa can be granted nationhood for the *first time*, and the Armenians support their right nationhood, can it be rationally declared that the Armenian people with *a history of nationhood* for 2500 years have no valid claim for the restoration of its sovereignty on its historic lands?

TRUE HERITAGE OF THE UNITED STATES

On this day the Armenian would remind the United States of its great heritage. The words and spirit of the Declaration of Independence make it the greatest political epistle composed by man. It was the political philosophy of this document that motivated the oppressed of every land to transplant their roots to the United States and today this country stands as the conspicuous monument to the hope, faith and loyalty that

the Declaration of Independence instilled in the hearts of millions of freedom-loving immigrants. These people did not come to the United States as their adopted land but as freedom-seeking people coming as natives of a free country. The Armenian reminds this Government that it can fulfill effectively its role as a world leader only by remaining loyal to the great heritage bestowed by the Declaration of Independence, and if it provides a leadership inspired by that spirit. The Armenian people on this day would remind the United States that the position taken by President Woodrow Wilson on May 24, 1920, was in the true spirit of the American heritage. In his message to the United States Congress on that date he stated: "It was recognized that certain Communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized, subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. It is in pursuance of this principle and with a desire of affording Armenia such advice and assistance that the statesmen conferring at San Remo have formally requested this Government to assume the duties of mandatory in Armenia. . . I urgently advise and request that the Congress grant the Executive power to accept for the United States a mandate over Armenia. I make this suggestion in the earnest belief that it will be the wish of the people of the United States that this should be done. . . At their hearts this great people have made the cause of Armenia their own. It is to this people and to their Government that the hopes and earnest expectations of the struggling people of Armenia turn as they now emerge from a period of indescribable suffering and peril, and I hope that the Congress will think it wise to meet this hope and expectation with the utmost liberality." When the Congress did not approve President Wilson's request it repudiated America's great heritage. President Wilson had led the United States to the highest peak of international prestige by advocating the application of the universal principles of the Declaration of Independence to man everywhere. At that time the leadership of the United States stood unchallenged because it commanded the support of all peoples. On this Memorial Day, the Armenian people would remind the people of the United States that championing the cause of oppressed peoples is to act in the great tradition of the United States and suggests a return to the Wilsonian Doctrine. The first encouraging step in this direction would be the ratification of the United Nations Genocide Convention by the United States Government.⁽¹⁾

(1) The Genocide Convention, approved by 67 nations, outlaws the deliberate killing of a racial, ethnic, national, or religious group. Approval of this treaty remains without action in the Foreign Relation Committee of the U.S. Senate, as do other treaties dealing with Human Rights (Slavery, Forced, Labor).

BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO DEMOCRACY

On this day, the Armenian reminds the British Government of its great revolutions of the 17th Century which established the democratic principle that the minority has rights which must be tolerated and protected. The English sense of justice that placed even the sovereign under the law gave to the world the glorious principle of "a government of laws and not of men." The Armenian asks that the British extend this great heritage to the benefit of men everywhere.

The Armenian people ask that the British people and its government read "The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire," in the British Blue Book, 1916. Mr. Lloyd George, in the House of Commons on December 21, 1917, prompted by the innate British sense of justice stated: ". . .The question of Mesopotamia must be resolved by the Peace Conference, with the clear understanding, however, that neither that region nor Armenia can ever be put back under the blighting domination of the Turks." The British Premier repeated this pledge on January 8, 1918 before the Trades Union Conference.

". . .We insist, however, that Armenia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine have the right to separate national existence."

The Armenian people would remind the British people that these solemn pledges remain unredeemed.

"LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY"

On April 24th the Armenian would remind the French people of its great revolution of 1793. From the anguish of that struggle was born the divinely inspired principle of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." This principle stands as the simple formula for achieving world justice and world peace.

The words of Premier Aristide Briand in a note presented on behalf of the Allies to the American Ambassador in Paris on January 10, 1917, were in the true spirit of France when he stated as one of the objectives of the war, "the liberation of the populations subjected to the bloody tyranny of the Turks, and the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire as foreign to Western civilization." It is hoped that the French leadership can rediscover this true spirit of France.

On April 24th the Armenian reminds all nations to recall the truly great moments in their own history and to understand the reason for their greatness.

On April 24th each year the Armenian people remind the world that until the injustices on the international agenda become the first order of business there can be no world peace.

ARMENIA, A TEST CASE

This Armenian Memorial Day, each year, has become the day when the Armenian people renew their legal and moral claims against the Government of Turkey and again mark their case for trial before an appropriate international tribunal. The Armenian Question stands as a test case. A test whether the United Nations is prepared to do equal justice in all cases and thus strengthen the faith of all nations in its efficacy as an international force, or whether it is merely an arena where the discredited power politics of centuries past is applied to the problems besetting the tranquility and progress of this world.

The Armenian Question is the test case. Will the civilized world meet or avoid this test? A decision in favor of the Armenian Case will be a victory for justice and a great stride forward in securing the support of all oppressed peoples without whose alliance world peace and security can never be achieved.

On April 24th the Armenian people reassert that a people with 2500 years of history, of culture, and of nationhood has a legal and moral basis to deny the right of any nation or group of nations, by treaty or by a studied unawareness, to barter away or to withhold its unalienable right to live as freemen on their historic lands. Any nation or group of nations presuming to exercise this right is committing an act against the international institution and laws itself established and which can only prevent it from achieving its avowed and laudable objective of World peace.

TURKEY AND THE U.N.—A MEMBER OR DEFENDANT?

In 1965 January the Turkish representative in the United Nations condemned genocide and upheld the rights of Minorities and proclaimed self-determination as an absolute right of man. At the same time he refers to the genocide of 1915 as the "alleged massacres of the Armenians." While using the United Nations forum to assume the position of a civilized nation, the Turkish Government through its Acting Minister of War states to the Cypriots, "We are ready to land our troops on Cyprus within six hours, and will give the Greeks a blow from which they will not recover for fifty years."

One recalls the tragic boast of Talaat Pasha, Turkish Minister of the Interior in 1915, "we will give the Armenians such a blow from which they will not recover for fifty years."

Should Turkey sit in the United Nations as a member or as a defendant?

JUSTICE OR CONDONATION?

The Armenians observe this Fiftieth Anniversary of the Turkish genocide of the Armenian people to proclaim that Armenian culture, the Armenian

language, the Armenian Church, and the Armenian's love of liberty still live; and that the Armenian Case against Turkey is not dead.

The Armenian people call upon the United Nations to examine the legal and moral brief setting forth the Armenian Case. The Armenian's historic sovereignty has been usurped by the Turk, but the *right* to sovereignty cannot be usurped. The statute of limitations cannot bar a Nation's claim to an independence unlawfully abated, nor can it bar prosecution of the horrendous crime of genocide. It is submitted that so long as the United Nations ignores Armenian rights, it assumes the role of accessory after the fact to the Turkish crimes. When the official declarations and treaties of the Allied Powers condemning the Turkish Government for its illegal occupation of the historic land of the Armenians, as well as for its crime of genocide, remain impotent for lack of the necessary implementation, the accusers themselves assume the role of accessories after the fact to the Turkish crimes against the Armenian people. "Might does not make right" is a truism that applies with dramatic force to the tragic course of the Armenian Case.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD WORLD PEACE

On this Fiftieth Memorial of the Turkish genocide of the Armenian people, the nations of the world need to be reminded that the acts of expediency applied to the isolated international problems of yesteryear served only to produce a multiplicity of global difficulties that plague the peace and progress of the world today.

The Armenian people remain hopeful that the principles of justice will yet triumph. On that day the nations of this world will have taken the first step toward World peace.

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