

Genocides against the Assyro-Arameans

On 24th April 2014, it will be the 99th year of remembrance of the 1915 genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against all the Christian peoples: Armenians, Assyro-Arameans and Pontian Greeks living in the then Ottoman Empire.

And in fact, preceding the 1915 genocide, the Ottoman Empire perpetrated already mass killings of Christians. Indeed between 1894 and 1896, the Ottoman Empire killed only among the Assyro-Arameans about 100.000 people.

Later in early 20th Century, the Ottoman Empire took the “opportunity” of the WWI to make an ethno-religious cleansing to have one big homogenous empire with one nation: the Turks and one religion: Islam.

This conducted to mass killings of about 2.5 million of Christians which caused the death of about 1.5 Million of Armenians, about 750.000 Assyro-Arameans and about 350.000 Pontian Greeks.

Since then, the successor of the Ottoman Empire, namely the Turkish state never recognized these crimes and only admits “some massacres” due to WWI.

In addition to the denial of the genocide, Turkey has conducted a policy of *Turkifying* of the region and the remaining Christians including the Assyro-Arameans.

On the ground this was done by forcing the Assyro-Aramean Christians to take Turkish names, by changing the village names (e.g. in Turabdin all Assyro-Aramean villages changed their original Aramaic-Syriac names to Turkish ones), by banning the speaking and teaching of the Aramaic language (spoken by Jesus-Christ), Christian faith and culture, etc.

After many requests that were rejected by the Turkish government, it is only in 2013 that the Assyro-Arameans were able, through the court, to have the right to educate their children in Aramaic (language spoken by Jesus-Christ) in kindergarten.

However there are still a lot of obstacles before a full recognition of the Assyro-Arameans in Turkey and the genocide is one of them. Another important one is the Assyro-Arameans’ land confiscation by the Turkish authorities: the most famous case is the Mor Gabriel Monastery which is only the tip of the iceberg.

Shall we remind here that Turkey is willing to join the European Union?

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire (WWI), the Turkish state was established based on the Lausanne (CH) treaty in 1923. This treaty provided rights & protections for all non-Muslim minorities throughout the Articles 37-45.

Article 40 of the Treaty of Lausanne; *“Turkish nationals belonging to NON-MUSLIM minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security [guarantee] in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals. In particular, they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein”.*

To date these articles were never applied for the Assyro-Arameans by Turkey!!!

Therefore it is crucial that international institutions, governments and bodies officially recognize, like Sweden, the 1915 genocide against all Christian peoples of the then Ottoman Empire: Assyro-Arameans, Pontian Greeks and Armenians.

This is the least to be done for the millions of Christians murdered during the first genocide of the 20th Century and before 2015 which will complete the 100 years (century) of that genocide.

Sadly after the 1915 genocide, the horror occurred again against the Assyro-Arameans in newly established Iraq in 1933. Indeed the Iraqi government over reacted to a self-determination request by the Assyro-Arameans and committed the killings in Simele of over 3000 Assyro-Arameans and the sack of about 70 villages forcing many other thousands to exodus.

To emphasize that the well-known lawyer Raphael Lemkin had been inspired from these two tragedies in order to designate with the term of “genocide” these mass-killings.

The horror still continued in Iraq during March 1988, when Saddam used chemical agents in an attack of the Kurdish village of Hallabja, killing about 5,000 people, where 2000 were Assyro-Arameans. Unfortunately this is again less known and not recognized by the international community and is wrongfully only labelled Kurdish massacre of Hallabja.

Revolting is that this is again happening in the 21st century with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and now the war in Syria since 3 years. Thus the Christians in Middle-East, mainly the Assyro-Arameans, are again facing an ethno-religious cleansing without or very little international attention.

One could ask himself what all the big philosophers would think of us, being in the 21st century and allowing such horrors happening again and again without any reaction; letting a people that brought so much to the mankind and seeing it exterminated without any support from the rest of the world ...

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Some references among a long list

Sweden vote about the 1915 genocide

Yes to motion connected to the Middle East and North Africa (UU9)

The Riksdag has approved a multi-party motion containing the demand that Sweden should recognise as an act of genocide the killing of Armenians, Arameans (Assyrians/Syriacs/Chaldeans) and Pontian Greeks in 1915. The Riksdag therefore calls upon the Government to recognise the genocide. ...

International Association of Genocide Scholars

13 July 2007: IAGS Resolution on Genocides against Assyrians, Greeks, Armenians, and Other Christians by the Ottoman Empire:

http://www.genocidetext.net/iags_resolution_supporting_documentation.htm

Henry Morgenthau, "The Greatest Horror in History," Red Cross Magazine, March 1918

"Will the outrageous terrorising, the cruel torturing, the driving of women into the harems, the debauchery of innocent girls, the sale of many of them at eighty cents each, the murdering of hundreds of thousands and the deportation to, and starvation in, the deserts of other hundreds of thousands, the destruction of hundreds of villages and cities, will the wilful execution of this whole devilish scheme to annihilate the Armenian, Greek and Syrian (Aramean) Christians of Turkey — will all this go unpunished?"

Ambassador Morgenthau's Story by Henry Morgenthau (1856-1946) was United States ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1913 and 1916. He witnessed the Ottoman entry into World War I and the genocide of the Empire's Armenian, Aramaean/Assyrian and Greek population.

(Chapter XXII, page 290-91)

And now the Young Turks, who had adopted so many of Abdul Hamid's ideas, also made his Armenian policy their own. Their passion for Turkifying the nation seemed to demand logically the extermination of all Christians---Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians. Much as they admired the Mohammedan conquerors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ...

(Chapter XXIV; page 323-325)

The Armenians are not the only subject people in Turkey which have suffered from this policy of making Turkey exclusively the country of the Turks. The story which I have told about the Armenians I could also tell with certain modifications about the Greeks and the Syrians.

Atlantic Monthly, November 1916

"The extermination of the Armenians is well under way. Thousands of Nestorians and Syrians [of the Assyrian Orthodox Church] have vanished from the face of the earth. More than 300,000 Greeks have been deported from the Ottoman Empire, and many more sent to the interior. The fate that awaits the surviving Christians and Jews — in fact, of all the non-Turkish elements — depends on the term of the fratricidal war and its fortunes. The Young Turks are watchfully waiting to carry out their program: 'Turkey for the Turks.'"

Dépêche diplomatique du 9 janvier 1909 du Vice-Consul de France à Turabdin (Sud-est de la Turquie et région principalement occupée par les Araméens-Syriaques)

'Le génocide oublié. Chrétiens d'Orient, les derniers araméens'. Par Sébastien de Courtois :

« ... la Porte [l'Empire ottoman] poursuit depuis quelques années son but qui est d'anéantir petit à petit l'élément chrétien ... »

Dr Arthur de Nadamlenzki - Consul autrichien à Andrinople

Procès-verbal (extrait) envoyé le 6/11/1915, rédigé d'un commun accord avec Seraphimoff, consul de Bulgarie :

« Tout principe de civilisation et les sentiments humains que chaque chrétien ressent pour son semblable ont été foulés aux pieds. Le fait que ce qui se passe n'est évidemment que l'exécution d'un programme mûrement réfléchi, d'un programme qui poursuit comme but «l'anéantissement des éléments chrétiens en Turquie».

Holstein, Consul allemand à Mossoul Télégramme du 19 août 1915 (extrait)

« J'ai lu dans différents journaux allemands des communiqués par lesquels la Turquie dément officiellement les massacres des chrétiens et je m'étonne de la naïveté de la Porte qui croit pouvoir effacer par de grossiers mensonges la réalité des crimes commis par les fonctionnaires turcs. »

La précision et la factualité de très nombreux documents confirment d'une manière irréfutable et par des preuves inattaquables et concordantes la tragédie. Aux Etats-Unis, les comités de soutien pendant la guerre englobaient les deux communautés arménienne et assyro-chaldéenne, comme l'important *American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief*. Ce comité, très actif, fournissait une aide depuis novembre 1915, à laquelle contribua la Fondation Rockefeller.

Some books on the Assyro-Arameans Genocide

Professor David Gaunt. David Gaunt completed his doctorate at Uppsala University 1975 and is presently professor of history at Södertörn University. Professor Gaunt's 2006 book: *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I*

Par Jacques Rhétoré - Préface par Jean-Pierre Péroncel-Hugoz - Étude et présentation du document par Joseph Alichoran – Avril 2005
Les Chrétiens aux bêtes - Souvenirs de la guerre sainte proclamée par les Turcs contre les chrétiens en 1915

Sébastien de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: The Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004.

En septembre 1916, Abraham Yohannan, assyrien d'Ourmiah, Professeur de langues orientales à Columbia University aux Etats-Unis, a publié un livre, significatif déjà quant à son titre: *The Death of a Nation (la mort d'une nation)*.

Eugene Griselle, *Syriens et Chaldéens: Leur Martyre, Leurs Espérances*. Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1918.

Yusuf Malek, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians*. Warren Point, NJ: Kimball Press, 1936.

Mordechai Nisan, *Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Struggle and Self-Expression*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1991.

Yonan H. Shahbaz, *The Rage of Islam: An Account of the Massacre of Christians by the Turks in Persia*. Philadelphia, PA: Roger Williams Press, 1918.

Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation, or: The Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916.

Gabriele Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust: Die Vernichtung der christlichen Assyrier in der Türkei*. Gottingen: Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, 1989.

Le professeur William Walker Rockwell a publié un livre, de 72 pages, en 1916, consacré aux atrocités commises contre les Assyriens, intitulé: *The Pitiful Plight of the Assyrian Christians in Persia and Kurdistan*.

Le périodique mensuel arménien *Ararat*, organe de l'Association des Arméniens de Londres, publia en novembre 1915, un article sur le sort des Assyriens, par Paul Shimoun, représentant personnel du patriarche assyrien Mar Benyamin Shimoun.

L'abbé assyro-chaldéen Joseph Naayem, francophone, témoin oculaire des massacres, qui fut emprisonné et qui échappa de justesse aux massacres, a écrit un ouvrage en français, en 1920, paru à Paris, dont le titre, en lui-même, est très évocateur: *Les Assyro-Chaldéens et les Arméniens massacrés par les Turcs*. Enrichi de nouveaux chapitres, ce livre a été traduit en anglais, à New York, en 1921, et récemment en arabe à Bagdad.

Isaac Armalé, prêtre et savant syriaque de Mardin, un autre témoin oculaire de la tragédie, dont celle de l'Archevêque arménien de Mardin, le Bienheureux Ignace Maloyan, a composé un livre volumineux en arabe, avec une préface en français, paru en 1919, intitulé: *Al-Qousara fi Nakabat Annasara (Les calamités des chrétiens)*.

Juriste francophone, ancien attaché à l'Ambassade de Russie à Constantinople, André Mandelstam, a écrit un livre intitulé *Le sort de l'Empire ottoman*, dans lequel il évoque « le petit peuple nestorien ».

Les témoignages français sur les massacres sont également très nombreux. Le 24 mars 1917, paraît à Paris, le livre d'Eugène Griselle, (1861-1923) sous le titre: *Syriens et Chaldéens, leurs martyres, leurs espérances, 1914-1917* (108 pages) dans lequel l'auteur décrit les massacres d'après les mémoires recueillis auprès des Assyro-Chaldéens et des Sœurs de St. Vincent de Paul.

A partir d'octobre 1915, l'Angleterre s'intéresse de près au génocide arménien et des autres chrétiens de l'Empire. Le *Blue Book* britannique: "*The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*", dans sa version originale anglaise, traite aussi des massacres des Assyro-Chaldéens, où plus de 100 pages leur sont consacrées.

Etc.