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Armenian Holocaust - I

Lead: In what many scholars consider the first modern systematic attempt to exterminate a complete ethnic community, the Turkish policy nearly succeeded in wiping out the Armenians.

Intro. : *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: At its zenith during the Roman Empire, the state of Armenia was about the size of England and Wales combined. It stretched from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, from the Mediterranean to Lake Urima in

present-day Iran. Since that time during century after century this ethnic group has suffered war, conquest, occupation, and internal political disunity.

As tortured as its history might have been prior to 1900, nothing compares to the torment inflicted on the Armenian people in the first two decades of the twentieth century. At the heart of this conflagration was serious conflict between the Armenians and the largest power in the region, Turkey, but their struggle was inflamed by one of the most powerful forces emerging during the nineteenth century, nationalism. The Armenians began to believe they had a right to national sovereignty and this

worried their Turkish neighbors.

Nationalism is not patriotism, the normal feelings of warmth and affection for one's country.

Nationalism is not xenophobia, the irrational and mindless hatred of any other group or country save one's own.

Nationalism is part of both and more.

It is the conviction that one's own geographic region or ethnic group or racial society or band united by language is first of all superior to all others and has a right to a separate place among the nations of the world.

Nationalism was one of the philosophical children born of the French Revolution. As the various governments of revolutionary France

first fought for their survival and then under Napoleon to spread the Revolution through conquest, the seeds of nationalism were scattered throughout Europe. As European nations expanded their empires around the world they carried with them their values, one of which was nationalism. In the end this powerful force would contribute to the end of the great empires of Europe.

In the 1880s intellectual Armenians began to dream nationalist thoughts, of a breaking away from the domination of Turkey and establishing a separate and autonomous Armenian state. Next time: The Empire Strikes Back.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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