

VOLUME 2

NUMBER 063

Armenian Agony - III

Lead: When the Armenians threatened to break away from the Ottoman Empire, the Turks tried genocide.

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

Content: The first decade of the twentieth century was not a good one for the Ottoman Empire. Often designated by the great powers with less justification than imagined, the "sick man of Europe," Turkey lost control of Crete and watched as large areas of the Balkans and North Africa

slipped from their jurisdiction. With imperial fortunes failing, Turkey became more determined to maintain control of it's Asian possessions. This included systematic oppression of the Armenians who inhabited a province bordering the Caspian Sea.

In 1908 a group of Turkish revolutionaries known as the Young Turks overthrew the Sultan and instituted a series of comparatively liberal reforms. Some Armenian fighters assisted in this coup hoping a new regime would bring an end to their people's suffering, but the Young Turk Revolution continued the massacre's of Armenians until intense international pressure forced them to back off for a time. The Turkish

government returned to the attack during World War I, when it fought on the side of Germany. This time the great powers were too distracted by the war to intervene.

One of the primary goals of Turkey during the war was to suppress breakaway provinces in central Asia. In the middle of this area was Armenia. The plan there was to deport all Armenians that could not be killed. Military aged young men were drafted and placed at the front of Turkish units facing the Russians. Many were trapped and killed by fire from both sides. Back home, the Turks softened up Armenian villages by raiding them, capturing and torturing community leaders, especially the clergy. In 1915,

surviving Armenian military units were disarmed and turned into labor detachments. They were systematically overworked, beaten, and starved. As the war went on, the Turkish government began to simply shoot them a practice Turkey's German allies disputed finding it to be a waste of good labor. Next time: ethnic cleansing.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Lang, David Marshall. The Armenians: A People in Exile. London: Allen and Unwin, 1981.

McCarthy, Justin. *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001.

Morgenthau, Henry. The Murder of a Nation. New York: Armenian General Benevolent Union of America, 1974.

Simpson, Christopher. The Splendid Blond Beast: Money, Law, and Genocide in the Twentieth Century. New York: Grove Press, 1993.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. Armenia in Twentieth Century. Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983.

Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.