

## Archives Reveal The Extent Of German Involvement In The Armenian Genocide

By Toros Sarian

The complete history of the Armenian Genocide which took place in the Ottoman Empire has not yet been fully examined. Newly discovered documents found in the archives of different countries have highlighted many of the details of the Young Turk regimes extermination policy. Of great importance has been the publication of numerous documents filed in the German Foreign Office Archives, which have aided in uncovering the criminal policies of the then ruling Turkish Government.

These German archive documents prove that Germany must also bear the responsibility for the events occurring during the First World War within the Ottoman Empire. The extent of German involvement in the Genocide is only slowly becoming apparent. Before the outbreak of war Germany and Turkey had signed an alliance treaty. Till now the exact contents of this secret alliance had been unknown, but since the archives have been opened to Historians the secret and uncomfortable details of this secret contract are slowly being understood.

Wolfgang Gust, who has been working through the archives for the last ten years has examined this contract in detail and has come to some astounding and explosive conclusions.

It was not the Turks who had the over command of the Turkish Army during the First World War I but the Germans. This fact could have wider implications for historians and for Germany.

The details of this secret treaty will not just encourage or invite the re-evaluation of many decisions and events but will also bring up many legal con-

siderations. However, the interpretation of this Secret document is not solely dependent on the wording of the document but as important is the historical background and events as well as comments, letters and internal reports of German Diplomats.

It will lead to an entirely new evaluation of the German Military Mission in Turkey under General Liman von Sanders, who had been there since 1913 active in training and supporting the Turkish Army.

What is certain is that War Minister Enver, Interior Minister Talat and Grand Vizier Said Halim were in favor of an alliance whilst German politicians declined such an attachment. They found an alliance with the Ottoman Empire unattractive as the military potential of the Turks was weak. This disinterested attitude of Berlin resulted in Enver giving up more and more to Germany, as the German Emperor finally declared himself willing to enter into an alliance with the Ottoman Empire the way was open for the signing of the German-Turkish alliance.

Germany drew up a five point contract. Point three stated that "For the duration of the war, the Turkish Army would stand under the German High Command." The German Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg assumed that this would not be acceptable to the Turkish Government. Therefore, he suggested a compromise whereby the actual commands of the army should go through the Military Missions.

Enver and the Grand Vizier would have accepted point three at the beginning in order to seal their wished for alliance. In the end a formulation was found which encompassed the suggestion of the German Chancellor. The

actual leadership of the Turkish army would be put in the hands of the German Military Mission.

To rid any remaining doubt the German Ambassador Hans Freiherr von Wangenheim informed his Government in Berlin "General Liman has officially informed me that he has completed a detailed agreement with War Minister Envers which allows the real High Command to run through the Military Mission." (Underlined by Wangenheim personally)

"If the German Empire held the real High Command then the mere suggestions made by Senior German Officers relating to the Armenian deportations have to be evaluated totally differently" declared Wolfgang Gust.

Otto von Feldman, the German Head of Operations at the Turkish Head Quarters wrote "It cannot and should not be denied that also German officers, to which I also belong, were forced to give advice at certain times to make certain areas free of Armenians thus protecting the armies rear."

The German Military were in the position to prevent deportations: as Liman von Sanders stopping of the Armenian deportations from Smyrna "for military reasons" clearly shows even the Interior Minister Talat Pasha was not in a position to override this German command.

If it should be proven that the deportation orders signed by Turkish officers also fell under German responsibility then the legal consequences for the carrying out these orders would be completely different.

The examination of the documents from the German Foreign Office which Gust has published indicates the Deportation Orders were generally accepted for "Military reasons". They only protested against the

manner and method of the deportations and consequent annihilation of the Armenian people.

In answer to the German protests, the Turkish authorities described the situation as an "Internal Matter". During the war the situation in the South Caucasus in 1918 was totally different. This was a pure military event. The German Ambassador Wangenheim had written in a letter to the Turkish Government agreeing that the Ottoman Empire should be allowed to create a direct connection to the Moslem people of the South-Caucases.

As the Turkish troops marched into the South Caucasus they occupied a large part of the Republic of Armenia. This occupation was justified by the Turkish authorities in that it enabled a direct connection with Azerbaijan.

As the German Ambassador made this concession to the Turks in 1914 of allowing them to create a direct connection with the Moslems in the South Caucasus, he was unaware of the grave consequences this decision would have later for the Armenian nation.

An intensive examination of this German-Turkish Secret Contract and the resulting events promises not just new insights into the role of Germany during the Armenian Genocide.

Wolfgang Gust wrote in a detailed article for the Austrian Journal "Historicum" that this Alliance Treaty "changes a German moral responsibility into a juristic responsibility".

If it transpires that it was not the Turks who were legally responsible for the deportation orders but the German Military then it is possible that the Armenians have a legal right to compensation from the German Federal Republic.

## Youth Debate: Saplings Keep Up 'Political Strife' Of The Seniors

By Gayane Mkrtychyan  
ArmeniaNow

Armenia has seen an intensified debate between the youth wings of the camps situated on the opposite sides of the political fence as the nation is looking for ways to break the current political deadlock.

While the young members of pro-government political parties insist that with Serzh Sargsyan's assuming the country's number one position the standards of democracy and freedom of speech have changed for the better, their coevals from the opposition camp assert the opposite.

Narek Galstyan, the leader of the Sargis Tkhruni student and youth league of the opposition Social-Democrat Hunchak Party (SDHP), says that it is in this period that Armenian citizens are not allowed to use their constitutional rights.

"After the state of emergency was lifted, the process of rallies was in fact stopped in Armenia. The center of the popular movement and supporting parties have submitted nearly 70 rally permission requests [to municipal officials]. Sixty-nine of the 70 have been rejected," says Galstyan.

According to him, the most negative conditions have been created for opposition political parties in Armenia. To be an oppositionist, in his view, is a direct comparison to being a criminal today.

The governing Republican Party's young member Menua Harutyunyan thinks that Armenia is a democratic state and continuously deepens its roots of democracy.

"President Serzh Sargsyan today takes steps for further strengthening democracy. The former situation has changed. I don't want to say that Robert Kocharyan hindered at that time, but perhaps Kocharyan's ideas of freedom of speech were such," Harutyunyan says. "But it is obvious that President Sargsyan's ideas about freedom of speech are for sure a step forward than Kocharyan's and two steps forward than Levon Ter-Petrosyan's."

The youths representing the pro-government wing are convinced that the first step is taken, the next step from the authorities will be holding free rallies.

Galstyan says that starting from 1988 Liberty Square has been the property of the people and regardless of the

political views people have raised their numerous questions and expressed their protest.

"There are no positive changes for me. Who has given a moral right to this government to place Liberty Square within barricades? Why after the state of emergency did they bring military there every day? Why did they block with truncheons the passage of people from Liberty Square to Northern Avenue?" says Galstyan.

"Alternative" public initiative representative Manuk Sukiasyan says in regards with the recent trials that there can be no word about democracy when a murderer gets a conditional sentence and walks free from court and a war veteran and generals are tried and sentenced to lengthy prison terms for keeping six cartridges.

Menua Harutyunyan says that after becoming president Sargsyan stated that all in the country are equal and he has no friends in the state.



Menua Harutyunyan and Narek Galstyan

"Simply the opposition's problem is that you don't see that positive. I see that negative which is ours, and you don't see our positive. If you see that positive too, at that time we will not have a problem. The authorities would reckon with you. However, you drastically criticize both the good and the bad. And here what you called a dialogue reaches an impasse from where there is no exit," he says.

As to what the Armenian authorities can show as fulfillment of Resolution 1609 of the Parliamentary Assem-

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