

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The Armenian genocide was the slaughter of around 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey between 1915 and 1923 by the Young Turk leadership. The Armenians were the minority group in Turkey who inhabited the southern Caucasus region for around 3000 years. They were Christians and firmly believed and practiced their religion despite many centuries of imperial domination under the Ottoman Empire which was made up of mostly Muslims. By the late 19th century, they were one of the largest non-Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire. Throughout many centuries, the Christian Armenian population had received much discrimination in the Ottoman Empire. They were considered inferior in the eyes of the autocratic Islamic State and became scapegoats and targets of mass killings in the later parts of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries as the empire gradually started to decline in population and territory. The Armenians had suffered much violence and oppression during the rule of the Ottoman Empire. (Jones 2006, pp. 102-112)¹

1.2 Rationale

Even up to the 21st century, the reasons for the occurrence of the Armenian genocide is still not clear. The main reason that caused the genocide is still unclear. This paper attempts to shed more light and provide a better and clearer understanding on the causes of the Armenian genocide.

1.3 Research Questions

What are the external factors that caused the Armenian genocide?

What were the motivations of the perpetrators responsible for the Armenian genocide?

¹ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Routledge, 2006) p.102-112

How far was the Armenians' vulnerable position in society the main reason in which the Armenian genocide occurred?

1.4 Thesis statement

The main cause of the Armenian genocide was due to the vulnerable position of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

1.5 Scope of research

This paper will be putting the focus on the events that occurred between the mid-nineteenth century to 1915, where the Armenian genocide started.

This time frame was chosen as the Ottoman Empire started to decline during that period and the Armenians received harsh and unfair treatment.

This paper has also included certain events from the mid-nineteenth century as it provides insight into the treatment of Armenians in the years leading up to the Armenian genocide.

1.6 Significance of research

This research paper hopes to improve the current understanding of the causes of the Armenian genocide and relook the event to see if any areas of importance were left out. It will attempt to analyse the years leading up to the event so that a clear conclusion about the main cause of the Armenian genocide can be drawn.

1.7 Limitations

The Turkey Government did not release much information on the Armenian massacre. Thus, evidence used in this research will only be limited to the released documents of this genocide. Documents released by the Turkey Government could also have been tampered to portray the Turks in a better light, resulting in possible inaccuracies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Definition of genocide

The term “genocide” was coined by Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin (1943, pp.75-95). It is made up of two Greek words: “*genos*” referring to “a family, tribe or race” while “*cide*” referring to “killing”. He had defined the term as systematically destroying national and ethnic groups, citing the Nazi slaughter of the Jews as an example of what he meant by genocide. ²

2.1.1 Genocide with intent to destroy

The 1948 UN convention listed five different acts, stating that a genocide is any of the acts listed “*committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group*”.³ This definition places emphasis on the intent of one’s actions, such that these actions committed without the intent to destroy would not constitute a genocide. Similarly, Barbara Harff (2003, pp. 58), believes that a genocide is the implementation and encouragement of continuous policies by members of the government that are created with the intent to exterminate wholly or partially, “*a communal, political, or politicized ethnic group*.”⁴ Both definitions are similar in stressing the intent to destroy and not merely the act of destruction.

2.1.2 Premeditated genocide

Raphael Lemkin (1943) defined “genocide” as coordinated plans aiming to destroy national and ethnic groups,⁵ suggesting that a genocide can be said to be a premeditated or

² Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944) p. 75-95

³ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9 December 1948, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol.78, p. 280

⁴ Barbara Harff, ‘No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955’, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.97, No.1 (February, 2003) p.58

⁵ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944) p. 75-95

planned massacre of a specific victim-group and not just an accidental event that occurred by chance. Other scholars like Bauer (1984, pp.213) shared similar views, taking this feature into account when defining genocides. Likewise, Bauer proposed that genocide is the “*planned destruction, since the mid-nineteenth century, of a racial, national, or ethnic group*”.⁶ These three definitions use similar terms that suggest that a genocide is a planned action or event.

2.1.3 State-planned genocide

Certain scholars feel that the state and its officials are responsible for causing genocides. Horowitz (1976)’s definition of a genocide highlighted the fact that a genocide is a “*state bureaucratic apparatus*”. A “state bureaucratic apparatus” suggests that a genocide is a plan orchestrated by the government, which can thus be said to be state-planned. Jack Nusan Porter (1982) and Isidor Wallimann and Michael N. Dobkowski (1999) agree and have similar views, in which they believe that the blame of a genocide should be pinned on the state’s government or its agents. Porter believes that genocide is the intentional destruction, wholly or partially, by a government or its agents, of a “*racial, sexual, religious, tribal or political minority*”⁷. Wallimann and Dobkowski suggests that a genocide is a intentional, planned destruction in whole or in part of a racial or ethnic group by a government or its agents.⁸ These three scholars use similar expressions to define genocide and thus, it can be seen that they share the same view that a genocide is state-planned.

⁶ Yehuda Bauer, “The Place of the Holocaust in Contemporary History” in Jonathan Frankel, ed., *Studies in Contemporary Jewry, Vol. 1* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1984) p. 213

⁷ Porter, J. N., ed. (1982) “Introduction: what is genocide: notes toward a definition,” in J. N. Porter, ed., *Genocide and Human Rights: A Global Anthology* (Washington, DC: University Press of America)

⁸ Isidor Wallimann and Michael Dobkowski. Preface to the paperback edition, In: Richard Lowell Rubenstein. *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), x

2.2 Causes of the Armenian genocide

2.2.1 Vulnerable position of the Armenians

According to Ervin Staub (1989, pp. 173-187), the Young Turks who promised universal rights, freedom and equality, gained complete power in 1909. However, their promise was not kept after they rose to power and political disorder, violence, especially towards the Armenians and losing wars continued. After the Russo-Turkish war from 1877 to 1878, many conflicts between the newly arrived Muslims that moved into Turkey and Armenians developed.⁹ This suggests that the Armenians were not well-liked by the Muslim Turks and had a vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire, which would explain why the Armenians were targeted during the genocide.

Professor Stuart D. Stein believes that the Armenians were perceived as a social and economic danger and thought to be a potential problem to be kept away. This hints at how the Armenians were feared and not welcomed by the Turks which explains why the Turks had little objection in carrying out the genocide. The term “infestation” also suggests that the Armenians were seen as parasites by the Turks. Stein also noted that the Armenians were often identified to be enemies during the Russo-Persian war and the Russo-Turkish war as Armenians lived on both sides of the border.¹⁰ As the Armenians were perceived as enemies, it would explain why the Turks sought to exterminate them. Therefore, the Armenians’ vulnerable position in society is one of the key reasons for the genocide to have occurred.

⁹ Staub, E. (2007). *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 173-187

¹⁰ Stein, S. D. (n.d.). *A Lecture on the Armenian Genocide*. Lecture.

2.2.2 Desire for materialistic gain

According to Matthew Marasco¹¹, the Young Turks government were running out of funds needed to wage World War I and it can be assumed that a reason for the Armenian genocide was the desperate need for resources. Marasco stated that the wealth that the Armenians possessed were needed by the Islamic civilians of the area and also by the Young Turk government. Therefore, Marasco recognised the desire for materialistic gain as one of the causes for the genocide.

2.2.3 Humiliation of the Ottoman Empire

Adam Jones identifies the decline of the Ottoman Empire, which led to desperation and humiliation as one of the causes of the genocide. Jones believes that the military defeats in wars and the loss of thousands of people was highly damaging to Ottoman self-esteem. He also felt that the loss of land and population would have motivated the nationalistic Young Turk leadership to seek to save and to restore the reputation of the Ottoman Empire by ridding Turkey of the Armenians in the hope that they could bring Turkey back to its previous glory.¹² Therefore, Jones believes that humiliation is one of the contributing causes of the Armenian genocide.

Similarly, Marasco¹³ claims that the main purpose for the Young Turks to initiate the Armenian genocide was to regain the honour and recognition lost during the Balkan wars and to

¹¹ M. M. (2018, April 24). What Were the Main Causes of the Armenian Genocide? Retrieved June 28, 2018, from

<https://armenianweekly.com/2018/04/24/what-were-the-main-causes-of-the-armenian-genocide/>

One of the causes of the Armenian genocide is the desire for wealth from the Armenians populations.

¹² Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 27 Sep 2006), p. 103

¹³ M. M. (2018, April 24). What Were the Main Causes of the Armenian Genocide? Retrieved June 25, 2018, from

<https://armenianweekly.com/2018/04/24/what-were-the-main-causes-of-the-armenian-genocide/>

Another main cause that played a part in the Armenian genocide is humiliation.

establish dominance of the Ottoman Empire in the region. He stated that the Armenians had joined forces with the Balkan uprisers and Russians during the Balkan War. Marasco stated that the Turks were greatly humiliated by these defeats and were determined to exterminate the Armenians who they perceived as betrayers and the reason for the losses and defeats in the Balkan wars. Therefore, Marasco suggests that the humiliations was once of the main reasons for the decision of genocide.

2.2.4 World War One

Uğur Ümit Üngör¹⁴, claims that the Armenian genocide was the result of the outbreak of the First World War. He believes that the war “*fuelled a fear of disappearance*” in the Turks as there was a threat of invasion from Britain and Russia. A portion of the Armenians lived in Russia, which made them see those in Turkey as a threat and enemy. The fear of Turkish destruction, along with the perceived threat of the Armenians convinced them that the genocide was necessary. He also claims the start of the First World War to be the most important reason as the Ottoman Empire started taking heavy losses and the Young Turks used the Armenians as a scapegoat of the war failures.

Prof. Dr. Vladislav B. Sotirovic¹⁵ wrote the Armenian genocide were caused by three factors, in which one included the First World War. He believes that the most important reason for the Armenian genocide was the start of World War One. The Ottoman army’s commander

¹⁴ Üngör, U. U., & Polatel, M. (2013). The Dispossession of Ottoman Armenians. In *Confiscation and destruction: The Young Turk seizure of Armenian property*(p. 63). London: Bloomsbury.

¹⁵ Prof. Dr. Vladislav B. Sotirovic(2018), 2018 paper, issue 1 and volume 3 his Journal of Security Studies and Global Politics [PDF File]

Retrieved July 5, 2018 from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321706865_Article_The_Armenian_genocide_The_First_Modern_Islamic-Jihad_Ethnic_Cleansing_Journal_of_Security_Studies_and_Global_Politics_Vol_3_No_1_2018_Islamabad_Pakistan_online_httpsciplatformcomjournals_ISSN

Prof. Dr. Vladislav B. Sotirovic felt that the failure of World War 1 contributed to the Armenian genocide.

ordered the Ottoman navy to bomb Russia and this caused the Entente, which included of Britain, France and Russia, to declare war. He believes that this led to the fragile position of the Armenians then because there were Armenians living on the very border with Russia which resulted in the Young Turks suspected the Armenians to be working together with the Entente against the Turks. Hence, World War One resulted in the mistrust and the exacerbation of the conflicts between the Young Turks and the Armenians. When the war campaign was failing terribly, the Young Turks, perceiving the Armenians as a threat and the reason for their failures, decided to put the blame on the Armenians for their losses and made the decision for genocide.

Chapter 3: Methodology

First, an extensive literature review will be conducted to identify the various definitions of genocide and also the different causes of the Armenian genocide as proposed by different researchers. Second, qualitative research will then be undertaken with reference to reports and articles. Foreign reports and Turkish communication will be used as the primary sources to analyse the Armenian genocide and determine the main cause for its occurrence.

A reassessment of foreign government reports and documents using new arguments and perspectives gathered from many different sources will be also done to prove our thesis statement that the vulnerable position of the Armenians in society was the main cause responsible for the Armenian genocide.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Definition of genocide

Genocide is herein defined as *premeditated, state-sponsored killings with the intent to destroy a communal, political, or ethnic group and to extirpate the group from the social structure of society*. This definition of genocide sets it apart with mass killings and general massacres in terms of its premeditation and its intent to extirpate the victim-group. This definition also highlights the state-sponsored characteristic of a genocide.

4.2 Causes of the Armenian genocide

4.2.1 Desire for materialistic gain

The Young Turk government's desire for materialistic gain was a factor which motivated them to carry out such genocidal acts. The Armenians were thought to be wealthy and economically stronger and secure as they were dominant in internal and foreign trade. The Young Turk government sought to use the Armenians' money and property for other purposes. The Armenians' assets were mainly used in four areas: to extend the Muslim bourgeoisie; provide for the needs of new immigrants; meet the needs of the military and for other state needs.

I. To extend the Muslim bourgeoisie

Much of the Armenians' assets that were taken by the Young Turks were given to Muslim individuals or companies with the intent of creating a Muslim bourgeoisie class. An evidence of this includes the telegram sent by the Ministry of Interior's Office of Tribal and Refugee Settlement (IAMM)¹⁶, which states that it "*may be fitting that the properties owned by Armenians prior to the deportation be sold and transferred to the*

¹⁶ Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 54-346-1333.Ş24

Muslim population at a reasonable rate”. It can be seen that the government sought to extend the Muslim bourgeoisie by transferring the assets taken from the Armenians in the Armenian genocide to the Muslim population.

II. To provide for the needs of new immigrants

Property was distributed to Muslims who were settling in the areas previously inhabited by Armenians. Several communications sent to various regional offices provide examples of this. One evidence of this was the telegram sent by the IAMM to certain regional governments¹⁷ that discusses assigning empty houses to incoming immigrants. This once again shows how the government sought to achieve their own aims by using the Armenians’ resources that were obtained through the genocide.

III. To meet the needs of the military

Armenian property was also used to help the armed forces. An example of this is shown through a telegram from IAMM sent in response to a communication from the governor’s office in Urfa¹⁸ that refers to the milling and processing of abandoned Armenian crops and their consignment to the military. This implies that the government sought to use the genocide as a mean of obtaining resources to help the armed forces.

IV. To cover other state needs

In certain situations, Armenian-owned buildings were used as prisons or for other state requirements. An example of this shown through a telegram sent from the Office of Prisons to certain regional and governor’s office¹⁹ that inquires about the availability of abandoned buildings large enough to be converted to prisons. This suggests that the

¹⁷ Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 65-37-1134.Ş.17.

¹⁸ Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 54-382-Ş.27.

¹⁹ Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 64-18-1334.B.11.

government had sought to use the resources gained from the genocide to cover state needs.

These documents reveal the ulterior motives of the government in initiating the genocide, such that the government would be able to use the confiscated Armenian property for their own ends.

4.2.2 Humiliation of the Ottoman Empire

While the humiliations of the Ottoman Empire was one of the important factors which led to the decision for genocide, it is not, however, the main reason for its occurrence. The Ottoman Empire suffered much humiliation in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Such includes the Ottoman Empire's losses of Bessarabia, Serbia, Abaza, and Mingrelia in the nineteenth century.²⁰ The Armenians lost much of their territories over the years leading up to the Armenian genocide, and along with it, much of its people and resources. This shame was not taken well by the people in the Ottoman Empire and when the Young Turks gained power, they felt the need to restore the Ottoman Empire to its former glory. As what Whitehorn stated (Alan Whitehorn, 2015, p.7), they sought a scapegoat to push the blame away and they decided to use the Armenian minority as one²¹.

Bernard Lewis explains exceptionally well on how humiliation led to the resentment of the Armenians. He mentioned that military defeat and political humiliation had shaken the complacent trust the Turks had in their own superiority, but the ancient contempt they had for the "barbaric infidel" -- the Armenians, gave place to rancour instead of emulation.²² This suggests

²⁰ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 27 Sep 2006), p.103

²¹ Alan Whitehorn, *The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference Guide* (ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2015), p.7

²² Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) p.127

that the humiliations of the Turks had led to the bitterness and the resentment of the Armenians who were progressing reasonably well in comparison to the Turks.

On 17 October 1912, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria declared war on the Ottoman Empire, in which the Ottoman Empire was not prepared to fight. As the war progressed, the Ottoman Empire lost control of the entire Balkan peninsula. These massive losses in Ottoman territory, people and resources caused profound distress in Ottoman society, the failures in the war also humiliating the leaders greatly. Not only did the failures and humiliations of the Balkan War hurt the pride of the empire, it strengthened the idea that Ottoman Christians like the Armenians were treacherous, and had betrayed the empire.²³ These humiliations caused the Ottoman population and leadership to start turning against the Armenians due to their supposed betrayal of the empire, which eventually led to the Armenian genocide.

Akçam (1999) felt that the Turks, who were humiliated by the losses and failures of the Ottoman Empire felt the need to return to the old days of glory and punish those who were responsible for the weakening of the empire. He believed that the Armenians were seen as one of the key factors responsible for the deterioration of the Ottoman Empire, and were therefore seen to be enemies that they wanted to take revenge against. Therefore, the humiliations the Ottoman Empire suffered influenced the people to desire to take revenge on the Armenians, who they believed to be traitors of the empire. This eventually led to the genocide.²⁴

²³ Uğur Ümit Üngör. *The Armenian Genocide*, 1915 pp.49 [PDF] Retrieved August, 10 2018.

²⁴ Akçam, T. (1999). *The Genocide of the Armenians and the silence of the Turks*. New York: St. Martins Press.

This source was used to show that humiliation contributed to the start of the Armenian genocide.

4.2.3 World War I

The outbreak of World War I was one of the most important causes of the Armenian genocide. It provided the government with an excuse to carry out the genocide under the cover of wartime.

Lewis Heck, the American high commissioner in Istanbul felt that the Young Turk government were exploiting the opportunity provided by wartime conditions to attempt to eliminate the Armenian population.²⁵ This suggests that the war was one of the factors that caused the genocide as it provided the Young Turks with an excuse to commit such genocidal acts.

Wangenheim, a German ambassador to the Ottoman Empire believed that the Porte (The central government of the Ottoman Empire), desired to use the World War to get rid of “internal enemies” - referring to the local Christians, without being interrupted by diplomatic intervention of foreign countries.²⁶ It is clearly seen that World War I was an opportunity to the government in initiating the genocide without any foreign intervention. Therefore, the World War I allowed for the genocide to be carried out successfully and can be said to be one of the causes of the Armenian genocide.

Before World War I, tensions and anti-Russian sentiments peaked as the Russian Empire was going to war with the Ottoman Empire. Nearly half the Armenian population lived under Russian Tsarist rule. Therefore, during World War I where the Ottoman Empire fought against the Russian Empire and their allied forces, the Armenians were seen as a major threat to the Ottoman Empire as they were suspected to be fighting on the sides on the Russians. As the war

²⁵ British Foreign Office 371/3658/75852, Dossier 441.2 (19 May 1919)

²⁶ German Foreign Office, Political Archive/Bo. Kons./B. 169, Telegram from Ambassador Wangenheim, dated 17 June 1915

progressed, the Ottoman Empire suffered many huge losses. The government, who desperately sought to escape their responsibility for the failures, decided to use the Armenians as a scapegoat.²⁷ Thus, the World War provided the Young Turk leadership the opportunity to pin the blame of their failures on the Armenians to escape responsibility. The Armenians, who were perceived as threats and traitors to the Empire were resented by the people, eventually leading to the Armenian genocide.

4.2.4 The vulnerable position of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire

This paper argues that the Armenians' vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire was the key reason for the occurrence of the Armenian genocide. The Armenians held a vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire for much of their past and had often been mistreated, as seen in the Adana massacres and Hamidian massacres, in which many Armenians were targeted and massacred. Many conflicts had also occurred between the Muslims and the Armenians over the centuries.

One such example is the conflicts that arose after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878²⁸, during which around one million Muslims settled in Turkey, relocating in Armenian settlements. The groups opposed each other due to their different religious beliefs - the Armenians who were Christian, and the Turks who were mostly Muslim. This led to the unpopularity of the Armenians within the refugees as there were many conflicts and tensions between the two groups. As a

²⁷ Alan Whitehorn, *The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference Guide* (ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2015), p.6-7

²⁸ Staub, E. (2007). *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
This source shows that the vulnerable position of the Armenians was a key factor in causing the Armenian genocide.

result, the Armenians were resented by the Turks and developed a vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire, which worsened over time and eventually led to the genocide.

In an interview with the U.S. Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau²⁹, the Minister of the Interior of Turkey, Mehmet Talaat stated that he objects to the Armenians on three grounds. Talaat mentioned that the Armenians sought to “*domineer over us (them)*” and fight for independence. He also mentioned that the Armenians had openly supported their enemies. Talaat blames their loss to the Russians in the Caucasus region on the Armenians, whom he believed to have assisted the Russians.³⁰ This accentuates the fact that Talaat, as with many other Turks, perceived the Armenians as a threat, and believed them to be supporters of the Russians, who were considered the enemies of the Ottoman Empire. This led to the Turks’ distrust and hatred towards the Armenians, which caused the relationship between the two parties to further deteriorate, eventually resulting in conflicts and tensions.

The Armenians were also perceived as threats because of the appeals made by the Armenian revolutionary organisation to foreign powers that asked for Armenian reforms. As written by Halil Mentеше, an Ottoman-born Turkish politician, who was also a member Committee of Union and Progress, in a letter to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Russia had succeeded in obtaining England cooperation for imposing the Armenian reform plans. He also mentioned that had this policy been successfully implemented, Eastern Anatolia would have been taken away from Turkey. The Turks saw these actions as treason and this worsened the position of the Ottoman Armenians. In reaction to the demand for the Armenian reforms, Talaat Pasha, the Minister of Interior Affairs, mentioned that he would continue the

²⁹ Uğur Ümit Üngör. The Armenian Genocide, 1915 pp. 56 -57 [PDF] Retrieved August, 10 2018.

³⁰ U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau Sr., *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, Chapter XXV*, (1918)

work of Abdul Hamid, referring to the massacres of the Armenians from 1894-96.³¹The Armenians were hated by the Turks and held a very vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire. This eventually resulted in the decision of conducting the Armenian genocide.

³¹ The letter, dated 31 July 1919, was sent from Mondros, where Halil was being held by the British. Quoted in Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri*, p.276

4.3 Evaluation

An evaluation of the four causes was done to prove this paper's thesis that the Armenians' vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire was the main reason for the occurrence of the genocide.

The Armenians' vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire can be said to be the key reason of the Armenian genocide. The frequent conflicts and tensions arising from the Armenians' vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire caused much of the Ottoman leadership and the Turkish majority to develop a form of resentment and hate towards the Armenians in general. This is especially evident in Talaat Pasha, who had developed beliefs that the Armenians were plotting against them because of the appeals for better rights the Armenians had made to foreign power. The Armenians were perceived as traitors and it caused the Ottoman people to resent them. Their vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire caused them to be targeted by the Young Turks. This factor is significant as it influenced the Turkish majority and some of the most significant Ottoman leading figures to turn on the Armenians. The resentment, hate and anger towards the Armenians eventually compelled them to make the decision to initiate the genocide.

The desire for materialistic gains is another reason of the Armenian genocide. As listed above, the resources and wealth the Armenians possessed were needed by the Young Turk government. Furthermore, jealousy of the Armenians' riches caused them to be targeted by the Young Turks. While the government's desire for materialistic gain contributed to the decision for genocide, it is clear that this factor is not the main reason for its occurrence. It is unlikely that the government would go to such ends to commit such a great scale of killings and the extermination

of an entire communal group just for economic or materialistic gain. Even if the Armenians were not targeted for their wealth, it is likely that they would have still been targeted due to their vulnerable position in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, it can be seen that what really caused the genocide to occur was the vulnerable position of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, which fuelled hatred towards them and caused them to be perceived as threats to the empire by the government and the Turks. The government's desire for materialistic gain was merely a contributing factor of the Armenian genocide and cannot be said to be the main cause.

The humiliation and failures of the Ottoman Empire in the centuries leading towards the genocide was one of the reasons for its occurrence. As previously mentioned, the Ottoman Empire was suffering greatly from their various losses in the years leading up to the genocide. Their battles against other nations like Russia in the Russo-Turkish war from 1877 to 1878 led to further loss of land, resources and people. The humiliation from these failures led to the need for the Ottoman government to find an excuse or cover-up for their mistakes and also to the Turk's desire to punish those were deemed responsible for them. This paper argues that even without the humiliations the Ottoman Empire suffered, the Armenians would still have been targeted by the Young Turks. If Armenians did not have a vulnerable position in society, any amount of humiliation would still not have prompted the leaders of the Ottoman Empire to target the Armenians. Hence, the vulnerability of the Armenians gave the Young Turks an opportunity to push the blame away to the Armenians and thus it is the root cause and is a more important factor as compared to the humiliation of the Ottoman empire.

The outbreak of World War One was one of the reasons that caused the Armenian genocide. World War One was a major conflict involving many nations all over the world. As

such, foreign intervention to prevent or stop the Armenian genocide was not possible as other nations were busy with their own war efforts. This gave the Ottoman Empire the suitable conditions to execute the Armenian genocide without resistance. World War One can also be said to have been the trigger factor of the Armenian genocide. The Armenians were identified as traitors to the Ottoman Empire when they were blamed for the losses in the war. This sparked the beginning of the genocide as the government and the Turkish majority sought to eliminate them. However, World War One cannot be said to be the main cause of the genocide. The Armenian position was so terrible that even without World War One, the Armenian genocide was bound to happen regardless due to further conflicts. Without the vulnerable position of the Armenians, it would be likely that they would not have been suspected of being traitors, or used as scapegoats for the Young Turks in the first place.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The 20th century was one of the most brutal periods of history. It was plagued by two World Wars and many genocides were orchestrated during this period. In order to develop a better understanding of the reasons why such violence ever took place in history, it is important to examine examples of such atrocities.

This paper investigates the various factors that caused the Armenian genocide, which was a terrible event that destroyed the lives of millions of Armenians in Turkey. After surveying and analysing the different sources and existing research, this paper has identified four reasons for the occurrence of the Armenian genocide. This includes: The vulnerable position of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turk government's desire for materialistic gain, the humiliation the Ottoman Empire suffered in the years leading up to the genocide and the outbreak of the First World War. Careful consideration and further evaluation of these factors had been carried out and it has been concluded that the most significant cause of the Armenian genocide was the vulnerable position of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. With the horrifying consequences of the Armenian genocide in mind, we hope that people never forget the suffering these people went through, and thus remember for the rest of time to never condone such unjustified and terrible acts of violence in the future.

References:

- 1 Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Routledge, 2006) p.102-112
- 2 Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944) p. 75-95
- 3 UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9 December 1948, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol.78, p. 280
- 4 Barbara Harff, 'No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.97, No.1 (February, 2003) p.58
- 5 Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944) p. 75-95
- 6 Yehuda Bauer, "The Place of the Holocaust in Contemporary History" in Jonathan Frankel, ed., *Studies in Contemporary Jewry, Vol. 1* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1984) p. 213
- 7 Porter, J. N., ed. (1982) "Introduction: what is genocide: notes toward a definition," in J. N. Porter, ed., *Genocide and Human Rights: A Global Anthology* (Washington, DC: University Press of America)
- 8 Isidor Wallimann and Michael Dobkowski. Preface to the paperback edition, In: Richard Lowell Rubenstein. *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), x
- 9 Staub, E. (2007). *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 173-187
- 10 Stein, S. D. (n.d.). *A Lecture on the Armenian Genocide*. Lecture.
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- 12 Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 27 Sep 2006), p. 103
- 13 M. M. (2018, April 24). *What Were the Main Causes of the Armenian Genocide?* Retrieved June 25, 2018, from <https://armenianweekly.com/2018/04/24/what-were-the-main-causes-of-the-armenian-genocide/>
Another main cause that played a part in the Armenian genocide is humiliation.
- 14 Üngör, U. U., & Polatel, M. (2013). *The Dispossession of Ottoman Armenians*. In *Confiscation and destruction: The Young Turk seizure of Armenian property*(p. 63). London: Bloomsbury.
- 15 Prof. Dr. Vladislav B. Sotirovic(2018), 2018 paper, issue 1 and volume 3 his *Journal of Security Studies and Global Politics* [PDF File]
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Prof. Dr. Vladislav B. Sotirovic felt that the failure of World War 1 contributed to the Armenian genocide.
- 16 Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 54-346-1333.Ş24
- 17 Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 65-37-1134.Ş.17.
- 18 Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 54-382-Ş.27.
- 19 Priministerial Archive, Office in the Cipher in the Ottoman Interior Ministry, 64-18-1334.B.11.
- 20 Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (Routledge, 27 Sep 2006), p.103
- 21 Alan Whitehorn, *The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference Guide* (ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2015), p.7
- 22 Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) p.127

23 Uğur Ümit Üngör. *The Armenian Genocide*, 1915 pp.49 [PDF] Retrieved August, 10 2018.

24 Akçam, T. (1999). *The Genocide of the Armenians and the silence of the Turks*. New York: St. Martins Press.

This source was used to show that humiliation contributed to the start of the Armenian genocide.

25 British Foreign Office 371/3658/75852, Dossier 441.2 (19 May 1919)

26 German Foreign Office, Political Archive/Bo. Kons./B. 169, Telegram from Ambassador Wangenheim, dated 17 June 1915

27 Alan Whitehorn, *The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference Guide* (ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2015), p.6-7

28 Staub, E. (2007). *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This source shows that the vulnerable position of the Armenians was a key factor in causing the Armenian genocide.

29 Uğur Ümit Üngör. *The Armenian Genocide*, 1915 pp. 56 -57 [PDF] Retrieved August, 10 2018.

30 U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau Sr., *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story, Chapter XXV*, (1918)

31 The letter, dated 31 July 1919, was sent from Mondros, where Halil was being held by the British. Quoted in Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri*, p.276