

# The armenian genocide

[Countries](#)



“ The Armenian Genocide” In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Genocide Convention, and in doing so defined the term “ genocide” as “ acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole, or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group” (Totten and Parsons 4). Indeed by many scholars, this is thought to be the case as to what happened to the Armenian population within the Ottoman Empire in 1915. Rouben Paul Adalian, author of the critical essay “ The Armenian Genocide” published within the book Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts edited by Samuel Totten and William S.

Parsons, claims this belief to be true. In his essay, Adalian describes what life was like before 1915, reasons why the genocide happened, how the genocide was committed, and the impact the genocide left on society. Before 1915 the Armenian people had lived freely in the region of Asia Minor for around 3000 years. However, around the 11th century Turkish tribes invaded the Armenians and took over the area while settling down permanently there.

Because the Ottoman Empire eventually expanded their territory to Eastern Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa, they needed an improved political system in order to govern everyone effectively (Adalian 55). As a result, Adalian notes that the Ottomans “ imposed a strictly hierarchical social system that subordinated non-Muslims as second-class subjects deprived of basic rights” (55). In spite of the Armenians being deemed second-class citizens socially, they were actually a middle-class group economically, leaving jealousy amongst the Muslims.

Even though life for Armenians was serviceable, it would soon take a turn for the worst. There are a few reasons as to why the Armenian genocide became certain by 1915. The first reason was because of the decline of power in the Ottoman government. Because the Armenians could see that the government could not guarantee the protection of their property and life, the Armenians looked for reform (59). As a result, this created an increased feeling of hostility and stubbornness between the two.

The second reason was because of the military weakness of the Ottoman Empire. According to Adalian, the military was “prone to resorting to brutality as a method of containing domestic dissent, especially with disaffected non-Muslim minorities” (60). The third and most important reason is because of the formation of the political organization known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The party originally advocated for constitutionalism, egalitarianism, and liberalism, but when the party overthrew the government in 1913 everything changed.

Radicals within the party were able to gain control and they were influenced by their German ally, leading to the promotion of turkification which was vehemently opposed by the Armenians (61). Shortly after the CUP gained power, they opted to invade Russia in order to gain more land. After the attempted invasion by the Ottoman Empire, they were quickly destroyed by the Russians and ended up losing territory. Because the CUP refused to accept responsibility of the embarrassing defeat, they used the Armenians as a scapegoat.

Adalian goes on to say, “the Young Turks placed the blame on the Armenians by accusing them of collaboration with the enemy. Charging the

<https://assignbuster.com/the-armenian-genocide-research-paper-samples/>

entire Armenian population with treason and sedition” (62). The genocide officially began on April 24, 1915 and the abuse that the Armenians took while being deported was horrendous. The genocide of the Armenians was a plan carefully devised into three parts: deportation, execution, and starvation. Intellectuals and scholars of Armenian communities were abducted overnight on April 24 to ensure that the plan would go smoothly and reduce the amount of resistance.

Soon after, women and children were ordered by the Ottoman government to leave town in the direction of the Syrian Desert. Most Armenians went by foot and were extremely unprepared for the length of the journey. According to Adalian, “ Only a quarter of all deportees survived the hundreds of miles and weeks of walking. Exhaustion, exposure, and fright took a heavy toll especially on the old and young” (58). This happened because the government purposely refused to give food and water to the Armenians.

However, some were able to escape from the convoys of deportees when they stopped at other towns. Also, the government created a special organization made up entirely of convicts whose sole purpose was to rob, kidnap, and murder Armenians along the way. The absence of men in the deportation process was because the Ottoman Government had summoned them ahead of time in which they were imprisoned and tortured (58). The amount of desperation within the Armenians began to grow, “ Men and women dying of thirst were shot for approaching the Euphrates River.

Women were stripped naked, abused, and murdered. Others despairing of their fate threw themselves into the river and drowned” said Adalian (59). When the Armenians reached their destination of Deir el-Zor, the remaining

survivors were murdered in cold blood. In all, around 1 million Armenians were killed during the deportation, scarring them for years to come. The genocide left a tremendous impact on the Armenian people. Whole communities were destroyed, leaving many in need of food, clothing, and housing (71).

Also, there was incredible trauma placed on the Armenians, and they had to face the fact that they were most likely not going to be compensated for everything they had lost. Even when the few survivors returned back to their homes, they were unwelcomed and forced to leave. Possibly the greatest impact the genocide had induced, was the fact that for the first time in over 3000 years, the Armenians no longer lived in their homeland (71). There is still resentment today between the Armenians and Turks mainly because the Turkish government refuses to acknowledge that the genocide ever occurred.

Adalian concludes, “ The experience of the Armenian people in the period after the genocide teaches another important lesson. Unless the consequences of genocide are addressed in the immediate aftermath of the event, the element of time very soon puts survivors at a serious disadvantage. Without the attention of the international community, without the intervention of major states seeking to stabilize the affected region, without the swift apprehension of the guilty, and without the full exposure of the evidence, the victims stand no chance of recovering from their losses.

In the absence of a response and of universal condemnation, a genocide becomes ‘ legitimized’” (77). Works Cited Adailian, Rouben Paul. “ The Armenian Genocide”. Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eye Witness <https://assignbuster.com/the-armenian-genocide-research-paper-samples/>

Accounts. Ed. Samuel Totten and William Parsons. 3rd ed. New York Routledge, 2009. 55-92. Print. Totten, Samuel, and William S. Parsons. "Introductions". Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eye Witness Accounts. Ed. Samuel Totten and William Parsons. 3rd ed. New York Routledge, 2009. 1-14. Print.