

[...]

On one visit with my father, I told him of the book I was reading, *Hitler and the Armenian Genocide* by Kevork B. Bardakjian. In the book, the author recounts that in 1943, the remains of the man most instrumental in destroying the Armenians was returned to Turkey from Germany. At the end of the First World War, Talaat had escaped to Germany. He feared retribution from the victors, as Germany and Turkey lost the war, and revenge by the Armenians. He was assassinated by Soghomon Tehlirian, an Armenian genocide survivor, on March 13, 1921.

Bardakjian writes that it is unclear who negotiated in Turkey for the return of Talaat's body. However, Mustafa Ismet Inonu, the president of Turkey in 1943 (he assumed the position in 1938), was at one time a member of the Committee of Union and Progress. Inonu was also an avid supporter of Talaat's inhumane policies towards Turkey's minorities.

Examples would be the massacre of the Kurds and hidden Armenians in Dersim in the 1930s and the draconian taxes imposed on Armenians, Greeks, and Jewish minorities in the early 1940s.

I told my father about what happened to the remains of Talaat once he was returned to Turkey. The respect and praise heaped upon the monster deeply upset him. A special mausoleum had been prepared for him and he was interred with much pomp, circumstance, and high military honors. The place of internment is the Monument of Liberty (*Abide-i-Hurriyet*), located on a high hill in the Caglayan district of Istanbul.

My father was speechless, which was unusual, as he never ever was at a loss for words in whatever language he knew. He stared ahead and took a long, deep drag on his cigarette and said ironically, “Well, this monument for Talaat Pasha should be a very good place for all of the pigeons in Istanbul to fly over and take a shit!”

In 1996, the remains of Enver Pasha (1881–1922) were brought back to Turkey from Tajikistan, where he had been killed in the 1920s. He had vehemently hated all Armenians and the other Christian minorities, which included the Greeks and the Assyrians. On August 5, 1996, there was a state funeral for him, and his remains were buried in a newly built tomb that was next to that of Talaat. He was treated like a hero, whereas in reality he, too, had been a brutal fascist. It is a disgrace to honor such men.

How does one reconcile mass murder to the concept of heroism? Wouldn't the world be outraged if the remains of Hitler and Goebbels had been interred in a specially created mausoleum in the center of the city of Berlin? On top of that, be given overwhelmingly positive accolades for their actions? The outrage would be deafening. Not so for the internment of the mass murderers in Turkey. So few people across the globe have even heard of the Young Turks and their actions, and those who have heard and try to do something about it are subjected to harassment on a governmental level.

With a coterie of so-called historians backing them up, successive governments in Turkey have kept up the façade of “It was a civil war!” for the shameful events that the Young Turks perpetrated so many decades

ago. They will not acknowledge that the genocide actually happened. In Turkey, harassment and murder of Armenians continue to this day. Why are only sixty thousand Armenians remaining in Turkey? At one time, Armenians made up 20 percent of the population. The answer is that Armenians and other Christians are still treated as second-class citizens, and those that can, leave.

In the Armenian schools in Istanbul, only the Turkish version of history is taught, in which the events of 1915 are virtually ignored. Armenian priests need metal detectors at their churches because of the threats of extremists. The Turkish-Armenian newspaper *AGOS* receives a steady stream of abusive e-mails daily by Turkish nationalists.

In the so-called enlightened country of Turkey, Hrant Dink, the Armenian editor of *AGOS*, was murdered outside of his office: two bullets to the head and two bullets to his body. The crime took place on January 19, 2007. In the words of the great journalist Robert Fisk, “Hrant Dink was a man who tried to create a dialogue between Turks and Armenians to help them reach a common narrative of the 20th century’s first holocaust.” Just as the Turkish police stood proudly next to Hrant Dink’s alleged murderer after his arrest, so the current government of Turkey stands proudly next to the record of Talaat and the Young Turks. Woe to those who try to change the official narrative of the Turkish state.

In 1989, Aristide D. Caratzas published the book *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat’s Report on the Armenian Genocide 1915–1917* in New Rochelle, New York. Leslie A. Davis was the U.S. Consul in Harput during the years 1915–1917. Susan K. Blair, a historian and researcher, came upon Consul Davis’s report seven decades after he had sent it to the State Department. She saw how important it was, and after editing the report and writing a superb introduction, she showed it to a publisher who turned it down for publication, fearful of controversy. The book did find its publisher in Aristide D. Caratzas.

Even before it was published, trouble started. Word got out about the discovery of the long-lost documents and the forthcoming publication. Then the harassment began. There was a bomb threat. Consequently, law enforcement and security experts were called in to investigate. Ms. Blair and her family went into hiding.

During the massacres and deportations of the entire population of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire, Talaat insisted that absolutely no photographs were to be taken of the deportees. There was also to be no help given whatsoever: no food, water, or medical attention. Leslie A. Davis managed to take pictures, knowing he would be in great danger if found out. Some even appear in *The Slaughterhouse Province*. They are faded, but remain as witness to the events that took place.

[...]