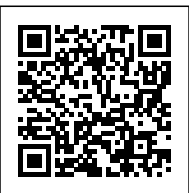


FIRST THE GENOCIDE, THEN THE VERICIDE

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By Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia, PA

It is common knowledge that the coinage of the word "genocide" had its genesis with the events of 1915 to 1922 in the Ottoman Empire when the Turks conceived, planned, and executed the attempted complete destruction of the Armenians--followed by that of the Assyrians and the Greeks, of course.

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When asked what he meant by the word that he coined, Rafael Lemkin (who lost 47 members of his family in the genocide of the Jews in World War Two) said "What the Turks did to the Armenians and what the Nazis did to the Jews."

What may not be common knowledge is that the Genocide of the Armenians has spawned another word: "Democide." Its creator, political scientist R. J. Rummel, defines it as "murder by government."

It follows, of course, that if a nation commits a genocide it is, indeed, murder by government. After all, who but a government can plan the death of a people in varying degrees of detail and then make available all the agencies of the country to execute those plans?

However, since Turkey and her apologists deny the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide, it is time to use another coined word: "Vericide," the killing of truth.

I would like to claim the coinage of that word. I cannot. It was created by my late brother, Aram, just a couple of years before his death in 2003.

Each time Turkey denies the fact of the Armenian Genocide, each time the American Government denies the fact of the Armenian Genocide, each time Britain denies the fact of the Armenian Genocide, each time the State of Israel denies the fact of the Armenian Genocide, they are committing the killing of truth.

It is a premeditated murder, since they all know the truth.

Therefore, as the Armenians maintain their campaign for the acceptance of the truth of the Armenian Genocide, we should also accuse the denialists of Vericide. If in our letters, in our reports, in our talks we use the word as often as possible, it will become common usage and will be associated with the Turks and their apologists.

We have seen how the Turks themselves instinctively associate themselves with the words "Armenian Genocide" whenever they

are written or uttered. By their reaction, the Turks are accusing themselves. There does not have to be the additional words: "...by the Turks" for them to protest.

We saw it with the 11-word French statement that aroused the anger of the Turks, although that statement did not mention Turkey, and we have seen it just recently with the nine-word statement etched on the *khatchkar* in the memorial in Cardiff, Wales.

Someone ignorant of his country's history could assume, in France (and now Wales), that it was the French (or the Welsh) who committed the genocide of the Armenians and were only now, belatedly acknowledging the fact. Yet, with no reference to Turkey, the Turks mount demonstrations, bluster, and try blackmail. They recognize that "Armenian Genocide" and "Turkey" are opposite sides of the same coin--whether that coin be Democide or Vericide.

It has been claimed that after killing (or ethnically-cleansing) a people, destroying their heritage is the final stage of genocide, let us now apply the word "Vericide" to that destruction, for what is destruction of a heritage but a denial of the fact of the existence of the destroyed people? And, in so doing, we can now include Turkey's cousins--the Azeris--of Vericide, as a result of their destruction of the *khachkars* in New Julfa Cemetery, not too long ago, as they try to deny that Nakhichevan was once Armenian.

Therefore, with due credit to my dear brother, let me say, "I accuse today's Turkey of Vericide."

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