

GERMAN EYEWITNESS CONDEMNS TURKEY

Posted on August 19, 2014 by Keghart



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The below is from "World War I: The Global Revolution" by Lawrence Sondhaus (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Excerpts from a report by Dr. Martin Niepage, a teacher at the German Technical School in Aleppo, urging action by the German government to stop the Armenian genocide.

When I returned to Aleppo in September 1915, from a three months' holiday at Beirut, I heard with horror that a new phase of Armenian massacres had begun...which aimed at exterminating, root and branch, the intelligent, industrious, and progressive Armenian nation, and at transferring its property to Turkish hands.

...In order, I was told, to cover the extermination of the Armenian nation with a political cloak, military reasons were being put forward, which were said to make it necessary to drive the Armenians out of their native seats, which had been theirs for 2,500 years, and to deport them to the Arabian deserts...After I had informed myself about the facts and had made inquiries on all sides, I came to the conclusion that all these accusations against the Armenians were, in fact, based on trifling provocations, which were taken as an excuse for slaughtering 10,000 innocents for one guilty person, for the most savage outrages against women and children, and for a campaign of starvation against the exiles which was intended to exterminate the whole nation...In the neighborhood of the German Technical School, at which I am employed as a higher grade-teacher, there were...seven or eight hundred exiles dying of starvation. We teachers and our pupils had to pass by them every day.

..."Ta'alim el aleman ("the teaching of the Germans") is the simple Turk's explanation to every one who asks him about the originators of these measures...They cannot believe that their Government has ordered these atrocities, and they hold the Germans responsible for all such outrages, Germany being considered during the war as Turkey's schoolmaster in everything. Even the mullahs in the mosques say that it was not the Sublime Porte but the German officers who ordered the ill-treatment and destruction of the Armenians. The things which have been passing here for months under everybody's eyes will certainly remain as a stain on Germany's shield in the memory of Orientals.

...I know for a fact that the Embassy at Constantinople has been informed by the German Consulates of all that has been happening. As, however, there has not been so far the least change in the system of deportation, I feel myself compelled by conscience to make my present report...Even apart from our common duty as Christians, we Germans are under special obligation to stop the complete extermination of the half-million Armenian Christians who still survive. We are Turkey's allies and, after the elimination of the French, English and Russians, we are the only foreigners who have any say in Turkish affairs...It is utterly erroneous to think that the Turkish Government will refrain of its own accord even from the destruction of the women and children, unless the strongest pressure is exercised by the German Government."

(Dr. Niepage's report was first published in "Source Records of the Great War, Vol. III, ed. Charles F.

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