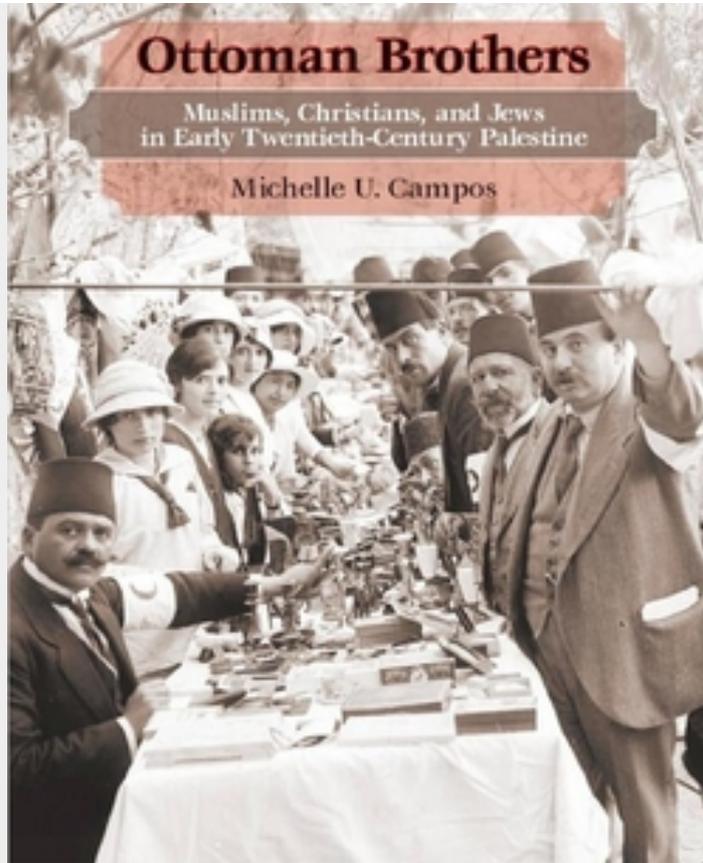


EXPLODING TWO REPUGNANT ANKARA CLAIMS

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By Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto, 29 June 2015

One of the ornate pillars of Turkey's Genocide denialism is to blame the victims for their slaughter. The repugnant layers of duplicity, supported by Turkish historians and the doctored state archives, claim that Armenians were deported (Turkey had no intention to commit genocide, the fairy tale goes) because they were plotting to rise against the Ottoman Empire, dismember it and establish an Armenian republic. Historians have shot down the self-seeking Turkish rationalization but the light-touch police state keeps churning out its packaged falsehoods. Another widely-disseminated Ankara fable is that Turkish government archives (1915-'23) are open to Armenian and third-party researchers.

LIE NUMBER ONE

Michelle U. Campos, the author of "Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine" (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2011), shatters the Ankara lie about Armenians planning to tear apart the Ottoman Empire.

Military Service

Here are excerpts from the Campos book which refute the tired anti-Armenian allegation. On the eve of the First World War, "...various groups and individuals proclaimed their willingness to serve in the Ottoman army. Armenian lawyer, famed novelist and Member of Parliament Krikor Zohrab, proclaimed given that 'military service for the various elements of the nation is the fundamental condition of safeguarding civil equality under the constitution,' the Armenian community was committed to 'serv the Motherland as citizen-soldiers..." Zohrab's words carried weight among Armenians since he was the most prominent voice of the community. He also was a friend of future genocidier Talat Pasha, the minister of interior.

Unfair Parliamentary Representation

Although the Armenians had supported the Young Turks during the coup which had brought down Sultan Abdul-Hamid II in 1908, they didn't complain when they were vastly underrepresented in parliament. Of the parliament's 260 members, 214 (82%) were Muslims, 43 (16.5%) were Christians, and 4 were Jews. "A visiting French deputy complained about the overall underrepresentation of Greeks and Armenians, starkest in the province of Edirne, which did not have a single non-Muslim among its nine elected representatives despite a sizable non-Muslim population." Armenians continued to cooperate with the government, demonstrating that they wanted to see a 'democratic' Ottoman Empire to become a reality. .

Support for Young Turks

To give the Young Turks another chance to put the country on the right track, the Armenian leadership restrained itself from coming down too strong in their condemnation of the government

when 20,000 Armenians were massacred in the Adana region in 1909.

Soldiers and Cash

Campos adds: "...in 1908, the Hebrew paper 'The Deer' published a notice that the Armenian organization ARF (Tashnagtsoutyoun) had publicly declared that there were forty thousand Armenians ready to give their lives to defend the empire against external aggression and internal anti-constitutionalists; likewise, the ARF claimed, if the government was short of cash the Armenians were prepared to raise two million Ottoman liras for its benefit. The 'Deer' noted that as a result the Ottoman Turkish press was unanimous in praising the 'loyal Armenians.'"

Despite the loyalty Armenians had repeatedly demonstrated, "among the official bodies there was a real reluctance to arm and train suspect minorities of the empire, particularly the Orthodox and Armenian communities. As well, the issue of conscription threatened to reawaken the conflict over electoral representation," says Campos.

No Demand for Independence

In the years preceding the Genocide, Tashnagtsoutune, the leading political party, advocated federalism. As Serouj Aprahamian wrote in 'Asbarez' (May 26, 2015), the party promoted "constitutional reform and equality among all nationalities. Their demands dealt with decentralization, parliamentarianism, universal suffrage, land reform, ethnic solidarity, and so on..." The party didn't talk about independence.

At their Erzerum meeting (August 1914) Tashnagtsoutune leaders stated that Armenians were obliged to support their respective countries. Shortly after, 1,080 Armenian shops were burned down in Diyarbakir. Three months later (Nov. 19) mass execution of Armenian soldiers began at a frantic pace. The following day, the order was sent to remove all Armenian functionaries serving in the government. In other words, despite the mass execution of Armenian soldiers, Armenians had continued to work for the murderous government.

Volunteering citizen soldiers, raising money for the national budget, acting as the commercial and cultural backbone of the country, taking the role of the modem between advanced European countries and Ottoman Turkey, and contributing to society in every possible way (per capita far more than Turks) were not sufficient proof of loyalty to convince Young Turks not to proceed with their "Turkey Without Armenians" conspiracy.

LIE NUMBER TWO

The second big lie perpetrated by Turkey is that its archives are open to qualified scholars, although they're shut tight as Fort Knox. Ten years ago Mehmet Uluizik, a Turkish researcher living in Germany, began collecting documents from the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives for historian Taner Akcam and for his own research. When he asked for documents related to the Armenian Genocide, he was interrogated by Turkish officials and asked whether he was a secret Armenian. He later

received death threats from more than one source.

Two years later, he learned that he was barred from entering Turkey. Government documents alleged that he was “among those who are coming to Turkey with the intention of harming the security and general order of the Republic of Turkey, or with the aim of collaborating on aiding such persons.” The researcher took his case to court and won. After winning, he assumed he would be free to study the archives, but Ankara had another trick up its sleeve. The National Intelligence Organization declared the researcher was a *persona non grata*, and was barred from entering Turkey.

Let's hear it again from the egregious President Erdogan piping that his country's archives are wide open.

Selective access is no access, Mr. President. Besides, after a century, how many of Turkey's documents are intact? How many have been destroyed, tampered or doctored? Would a murderer, who has had ample opportunity—a century to be exact—to remove incriminatory evidence, leave his fingerprints at the murder scene?

