

Communists in China. Certainly China Incident No. 2 and China Incident No. 3 would result, and the repercussions at our loss of prestige would be keenly felt in Manchuria and Korea."

During his own Premiership (Oct. 18, 1941 to July 22, 1944) and up to the end of the war, Tojo asserted, Japan's policy was to preserve peace with Russia despite urgings from Germany, although the Soviet Union after Yalta² "actually had pledged itself to enter the war against Japan on the promise of territorial gains even while the (nonaggression) treaty was still valid and that nation actually attacked Japan while the agreement still was in force."

Japan has always been deeply concerned over communism in Asia, Tojo said.

"She realized that the activities of the Chinese Communist party were among the important causes preventing the establishment of peace between Japan and China in the China Incident," he went on. "Thus she made the joint prevention of communism one of the conditions for settlement of the Incident and also made prevention of communism an essential policy among the independent states of East Asia."

"This was all done with a view to saving East Asia from the danger of bolshevization and at the same time to making herself a barrier against world bolshevization. The present condition of the world two years after the end of World War II eloquently tells how important these barriers were for the peace of the world."

Tojo used a large part of his affidavit to set out what he argued was a "cold war" waged by Britain and the United States against Japan in the Nineteen Thirties and which, he argued, forced upon Japan nearly every step she took outside her borders, including her understanding with the Berlin-Rome Axis.

On more than one occasion, after Japan was cut off from food, rubber and petroleum by Allied economic measures after her credits had been frozen and after the United States began on a tremendously expanding arms program, Tojo said Japanese leaders feared armed attack in the Pacific.

"We did not anticipate at the time (1940-41) that America was so directing the war as to force Japan to make the first overt act," he wrote.

Such measures as the construction of air bases in French Indo-China, to which the Allies objected as presaging aggression, Tojo said were "protection against attacks from the south." From this direction, Japan's leaders thought, he said, might come an "onslaught by the 'have' nations against the Japanese Empire."³

Patterns of Genocide

Large-scale murders of the vanquished by victors have occurred at intervals throughout most of the history of civilization, but genocide—literally, "species-killing," the systematic attempt to eradicate whole ethnic groups seen as alien, hostile, and inferior—has been a more modern phenomenon, beginning with Turkish attempts to eliminate Armenians in

²In February 1945, three Allied leaders, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin, met at Yalta to confer on the execution of the war and the postwar settlement.

³"Have" nations refer, in this case, particularly to the United States and Britain.

territories under Turkish control after World War I. Indeed, the Armenian genocide of 1915, resulting in the death of more than a million Armenians, set the pattern for later twentieth-century genocides.

It was, however, the racially motivated Nazi mass murders that gave the most notoriety to the term "genocide." Adolf Hitler and his Nazi followers were determined to exterminate "racially inferior" Europeans—especially Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe. Between 1939 and 1945, 3 million Poles; uncounted thousands of Slavs, Gypsies, and Russians; and at least 7 million Jews were killed.

Genocidal efforts in the Balkans and in Rwanda have not yet approached the numbers of people killed by the Nazis in absolute terms, but in terms of population percentages the number of victims has been very high. Recurring instances of an inflamed desire to kill off members of an "enemy" ethnic group, with whom the group doing the killing has lived in peace for centuries, may well prove to be one of the most serious problems of the twentieth century inherited by the twenty-first.

69 Roupén of Sassoun, Eyewitness to Armenia's Genocide

All the belligerents in World War I had internal political problems, but the Turkish Empire had special problems with its large minority populations. Fearful that its huge Armenian population would be too sympathetic to its enemy, Russia, in the spring of 1915, the Turkish military authorities decided to remove Armenians from eastern Turkey and march them south to the city of Aleppo, where they would be sent into the Syrian desert or marched east into the Tigris-Euphrates valley. On April 24, 1915, the first roundup of Armenians began. Throughout the spring and summer of 1915, large elements of the Armenian population were removed from their homes, stripped of their property, and marched into the desert; in many cases, they were killed in their villages. Although the exact numbers are difficult to determine, it is likely that more than a million Armenians were slaughtered in 1915. Mr. Roupén, an Armenian resident of Sassoun District, provided this eyewitness account of the 1915 summer massacres in an interview with Mr. A.S. Safrastian. In his account, he refers to the Kurds, another minority under Turkish rule, who were frequently used by the Turks to attack the Armenians.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How would you compare this eyewitness account of "ethnic cleansing" with other accounts in this section? Are there any common characteristics?

2. Why would the Turkish military use Kurdish troops against Armenians?
3. Are Armenian women targeted for any special treatment? Why would women be a special target in genocide (see Reading 70)?
4. Were the Turkish concerns about Armenians supporting Russians justified? Why? Why not?

Early in July, the authorities ordered the Armenians to surrender their arms, and pay a large money ransom. The leading Armenians of the town and the headmen of the villages were subjected to revolting tortures. Their finger nails and then their toe nails were forcibly extracted; their teeth were knocked out, and in some cases their noses were whittled down, the victims being thus done to death under shocking, lingering agonies. The female relatives of the victims who came to the rescue were outraged in public before the very eyes of their mutilated husbands and brothers. The shrieks and death-cries of the victims filled the air, yet they did not move the Turkish beast. The same process of disarmament was carried out in the large Armenian villages of Khaskegh, Franknorshen, etc., and on the slightest show of resistance men and women were done to death in the manner described above. On the 10th July, large contingents of troops, followed by bands of criminals released from the prisons, began to round up the able-bodied men from all the villages. In the 100 villages of the plain of Moush most of the villagers took up any arms they possessed and offered a desperate resistance in various favourable positions. In the natural order of things the ammunition soon gave out in most villages, and there followed what is perhaps one of the greatest crimes in all history. Those who had no arms and had done nothing against the authorities were herded into various camps and bayoneted in cold blood.

In the town of Moush itself the Armenians, under the leadership of Gotoyan and others, entrenched themselves in the churches and stone-built houses and fought for four days in self-defense. The Turkish artillery, manned by German officers, made short work of all the Armenian positions. Every one of the Armenians, leaders as well as men, was killed fighting; and when the silence of death reigned over the ruins of churches and the rest, the Moslem rabble made a descent upon the women and children and drove them out of the town into large camps which had already been prepared for the peasant women and children. The ghastly scenes which followed may indeed sound incredible, yet these reports have been confirmed from Russian sources beyond all doubt.

The shortest method for disposing of the women and children concentrated in the various camps was to burn them. Fire was set to large wooden sheds in Alidjan, Megrakom, Khaskegh, and other Armenian villages, and these absolutely helpless women and children were roasted to death. Many went mad and threw their children away; some knelt down and prayed amid the flames in which their bodies were burning; others shrieked and cried for help which came from nowhere. And the executioners, who seem to have been unmoved by this unparalleled savagery, grasped infants by one leg and hurled them into the fire, calling out to the burning mothers: "Here are your lions." Turkish prisoners who had apparently witnessed some of these scenes were horrified and maddened at remembering the sight. They told the Russians that the stench of the burning human flesh permeated the air for many days after.

From *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fal-lodon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with a Preface by Viscount Bryce* (London: HMSO, 1916), pp. 85-87.

Under present circumstances it is impossible to say how many Armenians, out of a population of 60,000 in the plain of Moush, are left alive; the one fact which can be recorded at present is that now and then some survivors escape through the mountains and reach the Russian lines to give further details of the unparalleled crime perpetrated in Moush during July.

The Massacres in Sassoun.—While the "Butcher" battalions of Djévdet Bey and the regulars of Kiazim Bey were engaged in Bitlis and Moush, some cavalry were sent to Sassoun early in July to encourage the Kurds who had been defeated by the Armenians at the beginning of June. The Turkish cavalry invaded the lower valley of Sassoun and captured a few villages after stout fighting. In the meantime the reorganized Kurdish tribes attempted to close on Sassoun from the south, west, and north. During the last fortnight of July almost incessant fighting went on, sometimes even during the night. On the whole, the Armenians held their own on all fronts and expelled the Kurds from their advanced positions. However, the people of Sassoun had other anxieties to worry about. The population had doubled since their brothers who had escaped from the plains had sought refuge in their mountains; the millet crop of the last season had been a failure; all honey, fruit, and other local produce had been consumed, and the people had been feeding on unsalted roast mutton (they had not even any salt to make the mutton more sustaining); finally, the ammunition was in no way sufficient for the requirements of heavy fighting. But the worst had yet to come. Kiazim Bey, after reducing the town and the plain of Moush, rushed his army to Sassoun for a new effort to overwhelm these brave mountaineers. Fighting was renewed on all fronts throughout the Sassoun district. Big guns made carnage among the Armenian ranks. Roupen tells me that Gorioun, Dikran, and twenty other of their best fighters were killed by a single shell, which burst in their midst. Encouraged by the presence of guns, the cavalry and Kurds pushed on with relentless energy.

The Armenians were compelled to abandon the outlying lines of their defence and were retreating day by day into the heights of Antok, the central block of the mountains, some 10,000 feet high. The non-combatant women and children and their large flocks of cattle greatly hampered the free movements of the defenders, whose number had already been reduced from 3,000 to about half that figure. Terrible confusion prevailed during the Turkish attacks as well as the Armenian counter-attacks. Many of the Armenians smashed their rifles after firing the last cartridge and grasped their revolvers and daggers. The Turkish regulars and Kurds, amounting now to something like 30,000 altogether, pushed higher and higher up the heights and surrounded the main Armenian position at close quarters. Then followed one of those desperate and heroic struggles for life which have always been the pride of mountaineers. Men, women and children fought with knives, scythes, stones, and anything else they could handle. They rolled blocks of stone down the steep slopes, killing many of the enemy. In a frightful hand-to-hand combat, women were seen thrusting their knives into the throats of Turks and thus accounting for many of them. On the 5th August, the last day of the fighting, the blood-stained rocks of Antok were captured by the Turks. The Armenian warriors of Sassoun, except those who had worked round to the rear of the Turks to attack them on their flanks, had died in battle. Several young women, who were in danger of falling into the Turks' hands, threw themselves from the rocks, some of them with their infants in their arms. The survivors have since been carrying on a guerilla warfare, living only on unsalted mutton and grass. The approaching winter may have disastrous consequences for the remnants of the Sassounli Armenians, because they have nothing to eat and no means of defending themselves.