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On the left is the Review by Andrew Mango of Peter Bakian's recent book "The Burning Tigris" which appeared in the Times Literary Supplement of 17th September 2004.

On the right and below are copies of replies written to the Editor of TLS and copied to CRAG.

Whether the TLS will have the courage to publish all or any of the replies, remains to be seen

Book review in the Times Literary Supplement of September 17th 2004 (No 5294) By ANDREW MANGO

Peter Balakian THE BURNING TIGRIS The Armenian genocide 474pp. Heinemann.

It is easy to understand the anger and anguish of Armenian nationalists. They gaze at their terra irredenta, historic Armenia which lies almost entirely within the borders of the republic of Turkey, and which is dotted with the ruins of monuments bearing witness to the high culture of Armenian kingdoms before the Turkish con-quest from the eleventh century onward. But there are no irredenti - no unredeemed Armenians - in historic Armenia or elsewhere in Asia Minor. Nor are there any prospects of a reconquista. The population of the small landlocked Armenian republic in the southern Caucasus has fallen from over three million at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union to an estimated two million today. One-fifth of the territory of the neighbouring republic of Azerbaijan, which the Armenians have occupied, lies largely empty after the flight of close on one million of its Azeri inhabitants. There are not enough Armenians to hold on to recent conquests, let alone to peopple their terra irredenta in Turkey. Why have things come to such a sorry pass?

In his campaigning book, Peter Balakian seeks to persuade liberal Americans in general, and members of the United States Congress in particular, that the Turks alone are to blame, and that, for reasons of re-politick, the Christian West has failed to bring their crimes home to them. In Balakian's account, Muslim Turks have always oppressed Christian Armenians. Oppression turned to unprovoked massacre in the 1890s in the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and peaked in genocide when the Young Turks deported the Armenians from Asia Minor in 1915 during the First World War. It was he, he argues, the first genocide of the twentieth century and a model for the Jewish Holocaust. The historical record does not support Balakian's thesis.

For eight centuries - from 1071 when the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantines at Manzikert, in historic Armenia, to the congress of Berlin in 1878 when the Armenian Question entered the agenda of international diplomacy - the Armenians lived as a self-governing religious community perfectly integrated into the mosaic of Ottoman society. They provided the Ottoman State with most of its craftsmen - from humble farmers to imperial architects, from potters to jewellers, and in modern times, mechanics, train drivers and dentists. Not only did many, if not most, of them adopt Turkish as their mother tongue, but in a rare linguistic phenomenon, the grammar of the Armenian language was affected by Turkish morphology. The Armenian contribution to Turkish culture was immense: they set up the first modern Turkish theatre, they published books in Turkish, they devised Turkish translations for new Western terms and concepts, they were prominent in Turkish music, both as composers and performers.

Like other non-Muslim communities, the Armenians were among the main beneficiaries of the nineteenth-century Tanzimat reforms which proclaimed the equality of the Sultan's subjects, regardless of creed. The prosperity which the Tanzimat brought in its train drew the Armenians from their harsh homeland on the eastern Anatolian plateau to the great commercial centres of the Empire - to Trabzon, Istanbul, Izmir and the market towns of Asia Minor, where, together with the Greeks, they accounted for the bulk of a new middle class. The Armenians had always been renowned as merchants and bankers, under the Tanzimat many became senior civil servants. Right up to 1914 there were Armenian ambassadors and Cabinet ministers serving the Ottoman State. Balakian does not mention them. Of course, the Armenians had grievances, particularly in the mountainous areas of eastern Anatolia, where they were subject to the depredations of Kurdish tribes and of destitute Circassian refugees, not to mention wicked Ottoman officials. But most Muslims were much worse off.

As a result of Armenian emigration and the immigration of Muslim refugees fleeing from successive Russian advances in the Caucasus, Muslims came to outnumber the Armenians by a large margin in historic Armenia. There were prosperous Armenian communities everywhere, but they were not in the majority in a single province. This posed the biggest problem for Armenian nationalists, when they began to agitate for autonomous government. In his celebrated essay, "Minorities", Elie Kedourie described how ideas originating in the West destroyed the Armenian community in Asia Minor and the Jewish community in Iraq. In the case of the Armenians, these ideas came through two channels - from the Russian Empire where Armenian nationalism was born in the revolutionary ferment of opposition to the rule of the Tsars, and from American missionaries whose schools produced the unintended effect of alienating the Armenians from their Ottoman environment. Kedourie relates how Armenian nationalist terrorism was the pretext for the anti-Armenian pogroms of the 1890s - the first major inter-communal clash between Muslims and Armenians, who had earlier been known to the Ottomans as "the faithful nation". Even if one disregards the exaggerated figures put out by Armenian nationalists, and reduces the number of people killed to the more likely figure of 20,000-30,000, the pogroms were bad enough. But worse was to follow.

It was the decision of the Young Turks to enter the Great War on the side of Germany against Russia and the other Allies that sealed the fate of the Armenians. By 1914 there were roughly as many Armenians in the Russian as in the Ottoman Empire. Tom between two warring sides, the Armenians were bound to prefer the Christian Russians. One can argue about the extent of the threat posed by Armenian irregulars to the Ottoman army, which was trying to contain a Russian advance in eastern Anatolia in 1915. In the words of the American military historian Edward Erickson, "It is beyond doubt that the actuality of Armenian revolts in the key cities astride the major eastern roads and railroads posed a significant military problem in the real sense".

But it is hard to argue that the problem justified the decision of Enver Pasha and the other Young Turk leaders to deport almost the entire Armenian population of Asid Minor (outside Izmir and of course, Istanbul). The Young Turks issued a sheaf of orders and regulations which, in theory, were meant to ensure the humane evacuation and transport of deportees. But as Enckson points out, "Enver Pasha's plans hinged on non-existent capabilities that guaranteed inevitable failure". An earlier military historian, Gwynne Dyer, wrote "I believe that historians will come to see [the Young Turk leaders] not so much as evil men but as desperate, frightened unsophisticated men struggling to keep their nation afloat in a crisis far graver than they had anticipated, reacting to events rather than creating them, and not fully realizing the extent of the horrors they had set in motion".

The horrors involved, according to the careful calculations by the American historical demographer Justin McCarthy (whom Balakian does not mention), the loss of some 580,000 Armenian lives from all causes - massacre, starvation and disease (the fact that Muslim losses were much greater in the same theatre of operations does nothing to detract from the extent of the Armenian tragedy. Was it a genocide? Bernard Lewis was sued in a French court for saying sensibly that it all depends on the definition of genocide. But, whatever the definition, Balakian's insistent comparison with the Jewish Holocaust is misleading. The Turkish Armenians perished in the course of "a desperate struggle between two nations for the possession of a single homeland", in Professor Lewis's words. For the Turks, Lewis wrote, "the Armenian movement was the deadliest of all threats", to yield to it "would have meant not the truncation, but the dissolution of the Turkish state". The Jews posed no such threat to the German Reich. Turkish fanaticism was a factor in the Armenian tragedy, but not there is a much closer parallel with the eviction of Circassians and other Muslim mountaineers from Russian Caucasus in the nineteenth century. The figures are of the same order as those relating to the Armenians some 1.2 million Muslim Caucasians left their Russian-conquered homeland, 800,000 of them lived to settle in Ottoman domains.

The Burning Tigris fits in with the campaign waged by Armenian nationalists to persuade Western parliaments to recognize the Armenian genocide. It is not a work of historical research, but an advocate's impassioned plea, relying at times on discredited evidence, such as the forged telegrams attributed to the Ottoman interior minister, Talat Pasha, which were produced at the trial of his assassin in Berlin. Some of Balakian's assertions would make any serious Ottoman historian's hair stand on end. Like other similar books, it is replete with selective quotations from contemporary observers. Turkish historians have drawn from many of the same sources for material to rebut Armenian accusations. It would be better, if rather than ask parliaments to pass historical judgments, historians from all sides came together to research the horrors of the war on the Ottomans' eastern front. But it is better to lobby parliaments than to assassinate Turkish diplomats, as happened in a previous campaign by genocide-avengers, which Peter Balakian, to his credit, regrets. At present, Armenian nationalists refuse to engage in a dialogue with Turkish historians unless there is preliminary recognition of their genocide claim. Refusal is in their eyes tantamount to the crime of Holocaust denial. But acceptance would be a denial of the freedom of historical research, not to say of free speech.

(Published in TLS)

RESPONSE FROM MR. CHRISTOPHER J. WALKER, HISTORIAN, AUTHOR

Sir, At the risk of endorsing a well-trodden landscape, can I query Andrew Mango's revisionism (in his review, September 17) of Elie Kedourie's view that the sense of Armenian nationality - seen as fatal - within the Ottoman Empire came either from the bogeymen of the American missionaries or from the revolutionaries in Asia Minor? Armenians know they differ on account of their faith, >language and customs; Griгор Tatevatsi (1346-1409) had written, >A nation is divided from another nation by race, by language and by canon law". His text was printed in Constantinople in 1729. In the nineteenth century the community was strengthened by clerics of their own stamp (such as Khirman Hayrik), and by educators such as the man who set up a school in Van open to members of all Ottoman >communities.

The main problem was that the rule of law did not exist for Turkish Armenians. (It did for Russian Armenians.) Even the most pacific activities for Armenians resulted in destruction, rape and death, years before any Armenians took up weapons to defend themselves. Amid the deprivation and violent atmosphere fostered either by local non-Armenian magnates or the Ottoman government (or both), the Armenians strove in the first place to create a rational and law-abiding future for themselves. When that failed, some of them took up arms.

As for Mango's agreement with Bernard Lewis's claim that the Turkish-Armenian struggle of 1915 was a fight for the survival of Turkey: the Turks were fighting the Russians, not the Armenians, in World War I. They disarmed and killed their own Armenian soldiers, thereby weakening the Ottoman army's capacity to fight Yudenich. And if we accept the Lewis thesis, isn't it a bit odd that, although western Armenia had not been incorporated into the Ottoman state until 1878, more than a century after the conquest of Constantinople, there had been no hint in the interim of the empire's imminent collapse?

Yours sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER J. WALKER

TO THE EDITOR, TLS RESPONSE FROM MR MIKE JOSEPH - HISTORIAN

Dear Sir Andrew Mango (TLS, September 17 2004) exactly concedes that the Ottomans' eastern front" I have done exactly that. Germany was the Ottoman Turks' dominant ally, influencing its military operations and enjoying access to Turkey's internal affairs. I have studied the official and private papers of three German First World War intelligence officers, posted to the Ottomans' eastern front between 1914 and 1916. They are all personal witnesses and reporters of genocide. Amongst their conclusions we find:

"It was military nonsense to strip entire regions of their industries in wartime. The truth was they used this world war to radically clear out their internal enemies, the native Christians." "There was absolutely no evidence for a generally planned and prepared Armenian rebellion."

"These measures by the government were carried out in such a way that they meant the absolute extermination of the Armenians... I do not believe that it is possible in any other way to destroy a culture that is older and much higher than that of the Turks... the Armenians seem to me to be very resilient as a race, just like the Jews - only a violent extermination policy, a forcible destruction of a whole people, could lead the Armenians to their final doom."

"Of 1.8 million Armenians, at most there survived only four hundred thousand".

What became of these witnesses to genocide? One became a close associate of Adolf Hitler and founder of the Nazi Party. Another became a close associate of Konrad Adenauer and founder of the European Union, intended and funded by the Germans. But on this matter, they agree entirely: that there was a planned mass extermination (termed 'genocide' since 1944) and it was committed by Germany's ally, the Ottoman Turks.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Joseph

RESPONSE FROM MR. ANDREW KEVORKIAN, JOURNALIST

22 sep 04 Dear Editor: It was a bit mischievous--if not downright disingenuous--of you to ask a known and active Turkish nationalist to review Peter Balakian's book on the Armenian Genocide, "The Burning Tigris" (September 17). Would you have been so bold to have asked David Ingram to review a book on the Sho'ah?

As it is, Andrew Mango did concede that a few Armenians did suffer sprained ankles and a further few also suffered broken fingers during the genocide of 1915.

But, in furthering the Turkish cause of denial of a historical fact, Mango not only repeats the standard lies but also throws in a few interesting twists of his own.

He repeated places all the blame for the suffering of the Armenians on the Armenians themselves with his constant repetition of those nasty "Armenian nationalists." Is he suggesting that my father's 12-year-old sister was brutally raped and murdered because she, too, was an "Armenian nationalist"?

Mango accuses Balakian of being selective in his inclusions (and, by inference, his exclusions). This is a prime example of the kettle and the lid.

Mango suggests that what befell the Armenians was at the hands of the Kurds and a few rogue Turks. He ignores completely that the Turks formed The Special Organisation (TSO) with the sole purpose of filling its ranks with some of the most hardened criminals and murderers who were rounded up and "recruited" into the TSO and whose instructions were to kill the Armenians. The Political Director of TSO was Dr. Behaedin Shakir, one of the chief architects of the Genocide.

Mango also ignores the fact that valis (Provincial governors) were appointed and dismissed depending on their effectiveness in killing Armenians in their districts. One vali was even hanged because he refused to follow such orders--and was replaced by a relative of Talatat Pasha.

Mango also refers to the writings of Bernard Lewis--the doyen of Genocide denialists--but neglects to say that in his book, "The Emergence of Modern Turkey," Lewis refers (on page 268, second edition, 1968) to the events of 1915 not as a genocide but a holocaust! After Lewis joined the Turkish cause, he was asked by Dr. Israel Charny, editor-in-Chief of The Encyclopaedia of Genocide, in Jerusalem, why he changed his mind on the matter of the Armenian Genocide. Lewis replied "additional research." When asked what that "research" consisted of and asked to submit it for publication in the Journal, answer there came none. Charny has written extensively and at great length on this matter. Mango seems to have ignored this.

Instead, he quotes from one of the four founders of American Turphillie "academics" who not only deny the Armenian Genocide but also cite each other in their writings. In quoting Justin McCarthy, second edition, 1968) to the events of 1915 not as a genocide but that he holds a Chair of Turkish studies funded by Ankara--and whose entire meagre "academic" output has been to deny the Armenian Genocide, Mango shows the dearth of his sources.

Mango tries to deny a link between the events of 1915 and Hitler's later attempt to exterminate Europe's Jews, when the link is so strong. In 1931, Hitler referred to the Armenian Genocide when explaining his plans for the future of German in which there would be no Jews. He also referred to the Armenian Genocide in the now-famous Obersalzberg meeting, on August 22, 1939, when he was instructing his Turkish allies in the forthcoming attack on Poland. Hitler's early supporters were Army officers who served in or with the Turkish armies exterminating the Armenians.

Mango also ignores the July 1919 War Crimes Trial held by the Turks (how ironic that not only did the Turks commit the first Genocide of the 20th century, but also held the first War Crimes Trial) in which the seven leaders of the Young Turks were found guilty in absentia (they having fled the country). The counts for which they were found guilty included the killing of the Armenians. Interesting, Mango cites, yet again, the Turkish claim that the Talatat telegrams produced at the trial of Soghomon Telianian, the young Armenian who shot and killed Talatat Pasha on a Berlin street in 1921, were false, conveniently forgetting that the telegrams were among the most convincing evidence against Talatat and his colleagues in the War Crimes Trial!

Mango suggests that the matter of Genocide-recognition should be left to the historians and not to the politicians, but ignores the fact that historians--and genocide scholars and others have taken a stand on the matter. On April 23, 1999, 150 of them signed an ad in the Washington Post in which they not only recognized the Armenian Genocide as a fact but also called on the Turkey to do so--"Turkey Must Stop the Denial of the Armenian Genocide." Further, Mango ignores the fact that in 2001, 53 Jewish historians, genocide scholars and others also made the same declaration.

Whether or not Balakian successfully tells his story--it is, after all, not a history of the Armenian Genocide but is a story about the Armenian Genocide--the fact remains that the Armenian Genocide was a State-planned and State-executed attempt to rid Turkey of its Armenian minority. My mother's father--a judge in Smyrna--received advanced warning of the Genocide (and that his name was on the list) and fled for advance of the start in April 1915) and he was able to flee with his entire family, unlike my father's family the rest of whom died.

The link with the Jewish Holocaust is there for anyone to see in that every step taken by the Turks was repeated by the Nazis--from the laws making their respective minorities second-class citizens to the concentration camps to which they were transported "for their own safety."

Mango does not find it disturbing that if the Armenians were such productive subjects and were "the faithful nation," that they should have been selected for the mass murder.

No matter how often and how loud is the Turkish denial of the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide, and no matter how often those denials are repeated by their apologists, there was an Armenian Genocide.

And, what's more, Andrew Mango knows it.

Respectfully,

Andrew Kevorkian Philadelphia, Pa. USA

RESPONSE FROM DR. H. BESSOS, EDINBURGH

Dear Mr Mango Your Review Of The Burning Tigris (Peter Balakian)

On the face of it, the review you wrote in the Times Literary Supplement must appear to the general reader as a well written and fair article. However, to those of us who are close to the subject, the article's insincerity and attempts to fudge the truth are plain to see. It is hard for me to believe that a person like you who is so well versed in the region's history, cannot see that what the Turks perpetrated was an act of Genocide. Take me for example, a son of parents who were victims of the genocide and bore any charges, my uncle and other members of the intelligentsia in the region were suddenly rounded up and jailed in Aleppo prison. Shortly thereafter they were taken away and cut down by bayonets in cold blood. At the same time, my three great uncles on my mother's side were rounded up and taken away never to be heard of again. Shortly thereafter the families with my mother and father were forced to leave everything behind and made to march into the desert. Miraculously, my mother and father made it to Aleppo. About a million others did not. Yet here you are attempting to explain away this act of genocide as incompetence of the Ottoman Turks in handling a perceived threat from the Christian (mainly Armenian) community during WWI. Your apologetic stance for their genocidal act is in an effort to me and millions of descendants of the victims of the genocide.

Dr Hagop Bessos Edinburgh

RESPONSE FROM MR. ARMENAG TOPALIAN

Dear Sir I hope that the present Sudanese government have sight of Andrew Mango's review of Peter Bakian's book, "The Burning Tigris, (17 September). He has much to encourage them in the new Marjolei Darfur nightmare situation that exhibits more similarities than differences despite the elapse of years.

Here we have a people (who the authorities would claim were "perfectly integrated into the mosaic") different in ethnicity and religion within the boundaries (drawn by powers without consultation of their consent) of a state intent to exercise its sovereign rights without discharging its responsibilities to protect, nurture and develop all its inhabitants. Decades long discrimination and depravation results in a not unsurprising reaction leading to government supported violence with the janjaweed (bashi-bazooks for the Armenians) made worse by the protests of outside states.

How history repeats itself when the previous experience is glossed over by some historians! Usefully, Andrew has identified the Sudanese Government's final goal, the prospect of no "unredeemed" natives in their historic lands with the continuing unrestricted infusion of their own kin and kindred.

Of course, there is no current dimension of external invasion as there was in the First World War (declared by the Turkish government for which the Armenians paid the ultimate penalties). However, war was not necessary ingredient as the earlier massacres predated hostilities, involved unarmed civilians (once mostly well away from any war zone).

Historians may have an input but this issue will only be resolved when the people who suffered on the land (and not just in history books) recognise that it has been dealt with in a manner that they deem satisfactory. Andrew may need to reflect that the Azeri lands ou twenty yeld by the Armenians came about because of their reaction of "Never Again" after the 1988 pogroms in Sumgait and Baku as they recalled their treatment by the Turks in the early 20th century. This is a current issue with historical resonances and not just an academic debate.

Yours faithfully

Arne Topalian

DR TESSA HOFMANN WRITES: "Why does an otherwise respectable paper like the "Times" allow itself to be used, or rather misused, as a forum for the justification of genocide?" There is no such thing as a justified genocide. [FOR ADR BROTHERS MASS RESPONSE IS FULL PLEASE CLICK THIS LINK](#)

The history of Armenia

Sir, - Andrew Mango's review of The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide (September 17) misrepresents my book and uses a review as an occasion to launch a falsification of the history of the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire. It would seem that a reviewer's first obligation is to explain to the reader what a book is about. Instead, Mr Mango puts forth a view of the Armenian Genocide that is similar to the kind of propaganda the Turkish government has been issuing for decades. Mango claims that my book is not a work of historical research. Yet I make use of a wide range of US State Department documents, British Foreign Office records, German and Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office records, and numerous eyewitness accounts from diplomats, relief workers, missionaries, and survivors. I also use a variety of Turkish sources (in translation) and in particular the Ottoman Parliamentary Gazette, in which many high-ranking Ottoman officials confessed to their crimes of government-organised race extermination. These sources constitute some of the more than 1,100 footnotes in a twenty-eight-chapter book with an extensive bibliography.

Because Mango has refused to inform the reader what my book is about, let me briefly note that I have written a history of the Armenian Massacres of the 1890s and the Armenian Genocide of 1915, and half of my book explores how and why the movement to save the Armenian people from annihilation at the hands of the Ottoman government became the first international human rights movement in the US. I also write about some of the major British figures - James Bryce, Lady Henry Somerset, Bertrand Russell, and Prime Ministers Gladstone and David Lloyd George - who spoke out against the Turkish massacres of the Armenians.

Mr Mango spends most of the space allotted to a review of my book trying to give the reader a version of candy-coated historical and Ottoman history of a kind practised by many Ottoman historians of his generation (Mango was born in 1926, in Istanbul). Such history is reminiscent of the kind of apologists for American slavery wrote in the early part of the last century. He portrays the Armenians as a happy, prosperous minority that was in the end ungrateful to the magnanimity of their Ottoman rulers. Such a view reveals how little serious social history Ottoman historians of Mango's generation have done and how little scholarship such historians have undertaken on the minority cultures of the Ottoman Empire. The fact that Bernard Lewis, for example, allots two paragraphs to the fate of the Armenian people in 1915 in his The Emergence of Modern Turkey tells one something about how much research he had done on the subject and how much importance he accords it.

Mango also refuses to acknowledge my presentation of how meticulously the Young Turk government (the Committee of Union and Progress) in 1915 implemented the empire-wide deportation and massacre of the Armenian people - a defenceless, minority population designated as "Christian infidels" under Ottoman law. It was done through high-level bureaucratic planning, emergency executive legislation, the mobilization of killing squads that included some 30,000 convicts released from prisons, and an ingenious use of technology (the railway system and the telegraph). Although dozens of scholars have noted that the Armenian Genocide was a precursor to the Holocaust, as their of a state intent to exterminate these two genocides, He might start by reading what the Holocaust scholars Yehuda Bauer, Sir Martin Gilbert, Deborah Dwork, Robert Jan van Pelt, Yair Auron, Israel Charny and others have written about the Armenian Genocide, and he might want to read Robert Melson's Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust. The good news is that a new generation of Turkish scholars, among them Taner Akcam, whose work I have used in my book, also began to write honestly and with proper sources about the Armenian Genocide.

Andrew Mango claims that my book is campaigning in some kind of nationalist way to get Western governments to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. Yet if he had read it carefully he would know that, except for reporting the facts of Turkey's contemporary campaign to silence the history of the Armenian Genocide in a few pages of my epilogue and a couple of paragraphs of my preface, I have written a straight history that dates from 1894-1922. As a scholar who has worked in the fields of peace studies and human rights as well as in literary and cultural studies, I have no identification with nationalists. Rather, in blaming the Armenians for their fate and blaming the Armenian Genocide on everything from Russian nationalism to the migration of Muslim refugees into eastern Turkey, Mango reveals his own nationalist viewpoints.

Lastly, Mr Mango scoffs at the idea of perpetrators and scholars denying genocide. But scholars who write about genocide agree that denial is the final stage of genocide because it seeks to demonize the victims and to abrogate the perpetrators. The International Association of Genocide Scholars agrees that the Armenian case conforms to every aspect of the United Nations definition of genocide and that more than a million Armenians perished at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish government. Andrew Mango might also recall that Raphael Lemkin, the legal scholar who coined the word and concept "genocide", did so in large part on the basis of what had happened to the Armenians in 1915.

PETER BALAKIAN Coigata University

RESPONSE FROM MR. RAFFI SARKISSIAN, CHAIRMAN OF CRAG - LONDON

22 September 2004

Dear Madam / Sir:

Reference The definition by Andrew Mango on p13 of the TLS for the week of 17 September 2004 reviewing Peter Balakian's The Burning Tigris on the Armenian Genocide.

It is truly dishonest that some writers choose selectively their references or sources when attempting to deny the historical veracity of the Armenian Genocide. To every "denier", whether past or present, there are many more historians, academicians, researchers and eyewitness accounts both in the UK and elsewhere who confirm the truth of the murder of Armenians in such vast numbers and with such barbarous methods.

The malevolent intent with which Ottoman Turkey prosecuted the extermination of Armenians during WWI conforms also with the definition of the UN Convention on Genocide of 1948. It is significant that Raphael Lemkin (Polish-Jewish lawyer who coined the term "genocide" with reference to the "systematic elimination of a mass of a race or a nation") refers also to the "Armenian case" in his unpublished writings at the Archives at the New York Public Library.

Was it not Hans Wangerheim, German ambassador to Turkey whose government was the principal ally of Turkey, who reported in a confidential cable to Berlin that the Turkish government 'is really pursuing the aim of destroying the Armenian race' and that there has never been any historical doubt that the Turkish government tried to exterminate its Armenian population in the first years of WWI?

Taner Akcam, a Turkish research scholar in Hamburg, referred to the dynamics of the genocide when he wrote, "If you wish to understand" and analyse collectively committed cruelty, and you wish to prevent the repetition of such events, then you will not find a solution if you direct your attention primarily to the group of victims. Attention must be directed to the "perpetrators" in order to uncover a series of conscious or unconscious mechanisms which underlie their actions, for it is the activation of these mechanisms that makes these people "perpetrators" (Akcam, 1995, p353)

When such sadly vacuous attempts are made in the name of critical erudition, the cogent points of a review regrettably lose their impact too. I condemn any miscreant attempt to deny the genocide of any one people by another, and refer to Professor Israel W Charny that "the denial of genocide is a crucial symbolic and ideological process which not only follows every genocide after it has taken place, but is a process which is intended to desensitize and make possible the emergence of new forms of genocidal violence to peoples in the future (Charny, 1992a, 1999).

Is it not high time for scholars to express honest views without singing from the hymn sheets of politicians?

Yours Truly, Raffi Sarkissian, Chair, CRAG London

LETTER FROM CANADA TO EDITOR OF TLS

Dear Sir/Madam,

I began reading TLS more than a decade ago. Since then, I have recommended it to colleagues in political, academic and cultural circles. You can imagine my surprise and disappointment in seeing Andrew Mango's revisionist views on the Armenian Genocide, published in your esteemed journal.

The fact that Mango parrots the hoary Turkish propaganda, which no credible historian would give credence to, is no surprise. He is a well-known hired gun of the Turkish Government. Mango is also very close to the nationalist and extreme right factions of Turkish intelligentsia. One of his close collaborators is Dr. Azmi Suslu, founder and director of a Turkish think-tank whose primary mission is to present pre-1915 Armenian citizens of Turkey as criminals who had committed genocide against Turks! One of Suslu's notorious oeuvres is the creation of the "Genocide of the Turks Museum" in Van. He is also an ideologue of the Gray Wolves paramilitary movement.

During the past twenty years, Mango has been a frequent speaker at forums organized by Turkish organizations in Europe and in the US, to promote the Turkish official version of the Armenian Genocide.

The historical reality of the Armenian Genocide is well documented. It is not what the "Armenians say" but what international historians and genocide experts have said repeatedly.

More than 120 Holocaust scholars, among them Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, Yehuda Bauer, Israel Charny, Irving L. Horowitz, and Steven Katz, issued a statement on March 7, 2000, contradicting Mango's lazy assertions and stating the "Armenian Genocide is incontestable historical fact and accordingly urge the governments of the Western democracies to likewise recognize it as such."

In its 1997 convention, the International Genocide Scholars Association, the pre-eminent authority on genocides, passed a unanimous resolution reaffirming "the mass murder of Armenians in Turkey in 1915" as a "case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide."

In recent years many righteous Turks--particularly scholars and journalists--have spoken against their government's continued denial of the Armenian Genocide. In an interview with France's L'Express (Nov. 11, 2000), Halil Berkay, prof. of history at the University of Sabanci in Istanbul, said, "For decades we have been putting Turkish opinion to sleep with the same lullabies. Meanwhile, there are a ton of documents proving the sad reality."

More significantly, over 12,000 members of the German-Turkish Association Opposed to Genocide, signed a petition (Dec. 2000), asking the Turkish Government to repent for the crime of Genocide."

I find it careless journalism that despite overwhelming international assertions of the reality of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 you provided Mango an opportunity to repeat the Turkish Government's boiler-plate party line.

Genocide denial or out of ignorance or a false sense of "balanced journalism" or "political correctness" is irresponsible. Do we provide Holocaust deniers with such courtesies on platforms?

The denial of the Armenian Genocide is an encouragement for its repetition, as it eventually did happen in Ukraine, Germany, Cambodia and Rwanda. Yesterday Armenians, who tomorrow?

The credibility of TLS is in question. TLS owes an apology to its readers and to the Armenians. It should also distance itself from Mango and his libellous views.

I hope you find the space to publish this letter. Your readers--who might have been swayed by Mango's fictions--deserve the truth.

Sincerely,

Aris Babikian, President Armenian National Federation of Canada

(Published in TLS)

RESPONSE FROM MR. CHRISTOPHER J. WALKER, HISTORIAN, AUTHOR

Sir, At the risk of endorsing a well-trodden landscape, can I query Andrew Mango's revisionism (in his review, September 17) of Elie Kedourie's view that the sense of Armenian nationality - seen as fatal - within the Ottoman Empire came either from the bogeymen of the American missionaries or from the revolutionaries in Asia Minor? Armenians know they differ on account of their faith, >language and customs; Griгор Tatevatsi (1346-1409) had written, >A nation is divided from another nation by race, by language and by canon law". His text was printed in Constantinople in 1729. In the nineteenth century the community was strengthened by clerics of their own stamp (such as Khirman Hayrik), and by educators such as the man who set up a school in Van open to members of all Ottoman >communities.

The main problem was that the rule of law did not exist for Turkish Armenians. (It did for Russian Armenians.) Even the most pacific activities for Armenians resulted in destruction, rape and death, years before any Armenians took up weapons to defend themselves. Amid the deprivation and violent atmosphere fostered either by local non-Armenian magnates or the Ottoman government (or both), the Armenians strove in the first place to create a rational and law-abiding future for themselves. When that failed, some of them took up arms.

As for Mango's agreement with Bernard Lewis's claim that the Turkish-Armenian struggle of 1915 was a fight for the survival of Turkey: the Turks were fighting the Russians, not the Armenians, in World War I. They disarmed and killed their own Armenian soldiers, thereby weakening the Ottoman army's capacity to fight Yudenich. And if we accept the Lewis thesis, isn't it a bit odd that, although western Armenia had not been incorporated into the Ottoman state until 1878, more than a century after the conquest of Constantinople, there had been no hint in the interim of the empire's imminent collapse?

Yours sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER J. WALKER

TO THE EDITOR, TLS RESPONSE FROM MR MIKE JOSEPH - HISTORIAN

Dear Sir Andrew Mango (TLS, September 17 2004) exactly concedes that the Ottomans' eastern front" I have done exactly that. Germany was the Ottoman Turks' dominant ally, influencing its military operations and enjoying access to Turkey's internal affairs. I have studied the official and private papers of three German First World War intelligence officers, posted to the Ottomans' eastern front between 1914 and 1916. They are all personal witnesses and reporters of genocide. Amongst their conclusions we find:

"It was military nonsense to strip entire regions of their industries in wartime. The truth was they used this world war to radically clear out their internal enemies, the native Christians." "There was absolutely no evidence for a generally planned and prepared Armenian rebellion."

"These measures by the government were carried out in such a way that they meant the absolute extermination of the Armenians... I do not believe that it is possible in any other way to destroy a culture that is older and much higher than that of the Turks... the Armenians seem to me to be very resilient as a race, just like the Jews - only a violent extermination policy, a forcible destruction of a whole people, could lead the Armenians to their final doom."

"Of 1.8 million Armenians, at most there survived only four hundred thousand".

What became of these witnesses to genocide? One became a close associate of Adolf Hitler and founder of the Nazi Party. Another became a close associate of Konrad Adenauer and founder of the European Union, intended and funded by the Germans. But on this matter, they agree entirely: that there was a planned mass extermination (termed 'genocide' since 1944) and it was committed by Germany's ally, the Ottoman Turks.