

Armenians And Turks In The Shadow Of Genocide

It has been more than a century since the infamous Armenian Genocide, an event that still casts a long and somber shadow over the relationship between Armenians and Turks. The genocide, which took place between 1915 and 1923, was a brutal and systematic campaign of extermination carried out by the Ottoman Empire against its Armenian population.

Over the course of these horrific years, an estimated 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives through mass killings, forced marches, and deportations. The consequences of this tragedy continue to shape the narratives and perceptions of both Armenians and Turks today.

The Armenian Genocide and Historical Denial

For decades, the Armenian Genocide remained a forbidden topic in Turkey. It was a dark chapter in history that the Turkish government was unwilling to acknowledge or discuss openly. Any attempts to recognize the events as genocide were met with vehement denial and resistance.



Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide by Thomas de Waal(Kindle Edition)

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However, over time, the international community began to recognize and condemn the Armenian Genocide. Many countries, including France, Germany, and Canada, officially recognized it as genocide, but Turkey steadfastly denied the allegations.

This denial has had a profound impact on the relationship between Armenians and Turks, as it fosters a continued sense of injustice and resentment among Armenians whose families were affected by the genocide. It hampers any prospects of reconciliation or healing between the two communities.

Genocide and the Armenian Diaspora

The aftermath of the Armenian Genocide led to a significant diaspora, with Armenians scattering across the globe in search of safety and a new beginning. This dispersion resulted in vibrant Armenian communities forming in various countries, including the United States, France, Lebanon, and Argentina.

Despite living far from their ancestral homeland, the Armenian diaspora has been instrumental in keeping the memory of the genocide alive. They have actively campaigned for recognition, justice, and reparations. Through community organizations, cultural events, and educational initiatives, Armenians in the diaspora have sought to raise awareness and ensure that the history of the genocide is not forgotten.

Armenians and Turks: Reconciliation Efforts

In recent years, there have been some efforts towards reconciliation between Armenians and Turks. Grassroots movements in both communities have

emerged, aiming to foster dialogue, understanding, and empathy.

One such example is the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, which was established in 2001. This commission brought together prominent intellectuals, academics, and activists from both sides, with the goal of overcoming historical animosity and paving the way for a shared future.

While these initiatives are commendable, they face numerous obstacles. The denial of the genocide by the Turkish government remains a significant hurdle, as it undermines the sincerity of any reconciliation attempts. The lack of an official apology and recognition further deepens the wounds carried by the Armenian community.

Remembering and Educating for a Better Future

One crucial aspect of reconciliation between Armenians and Turks is the recognition of the genocide and educating future generations about this tragic chapter in history.

Efforts should be made to include the Armenian Genocide in school curricula, both in Turkey and across the globe. By teaching the history and consequences of genocide, we can strive to prevent such atrocities from happening again.

Furthermore, meaningful dialogue and exchange between Armenians and Turks must be encouraged at various levels. Academic collaborations, cultural exchanges, and joint commemorative events can serve as avenues for fostering understanding and empathy.

An End to the Shadow of Genocide

Breaking free from the shadow of genocide requires acknowledgement, remorse, and justice. Armenians and Turks must come together and confront the painful

history that has shaped their relationship. Only through genuine recognition, apology, and reconciliation can both communities heal and look towards a brighter future.

The Armenian Genocide is a tragic reminder of the horrors humanity is capable of, but it also serves as a call to action. We must strive to create a world where genocide is not forgotten, denied, or repeated. Together, Armenians and Turks can work towards a future built on understanding, respect, and shared humanity.



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The destruction of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire in 1915-16 was the greatest atrocity of World War I. Around one million Armenians were killed, and the survivors were scattered across the world. Although it is now a century old, the issue of what most of the world calls the Armenian Genocide of 1915 is still a live and divisive issue that mobilizes Armenians across the world, shapes the identity and politics of modern Turkey, and has consumed the attention of U.S. politicians for years.

In *Great Catastrophe*, the eminent scholar and reporter Thomas de Waal looks at the aftermath and politics of the Armenian Genocide and tells the story of recent efforts by courageous Armenians, Kurds, and Turks to come to terms with the disaster as Turkey enters a new post-Kemalist era. The story of what happened to the Armenians in 1915-16 is well-known. Here we are told the "history of the history" and the lesser-known story of what happened to Armenians, Kurds, and Turks in the century that followed. De Waal relates how different generations tackled the issue of the "Great Catastrophe" from the 1920s until the failure of the Protocols signed by independent Armenia and Turkey in 2010. Quarrels between diaspora Armenians supporting and opposing the Soviet Union broke into violence and culminated with the murder of an archbishop in 1933. The devising of the word "genocide," the growth of modern identity politics, and the 50th anniversary of the massacres re-energized a new generation of Armenians. In Turkey the issue was initially forgotten, only to return to the political agenda in the context of the Cold War and an outbreak of Armenian terrorism. More recently, Turkey has started to confront its taboos. In an astonishing revival of oral history, the descendants of tens of thousands of "Islamized Armenians," who have been in the shadows since 1915, have begun to reemerge and reclaim their identities.

Drawing on archival sources, reportage and moving personal stories, de Waal tells the full story of Armenian-Turkish relations since the Genocide in all its extraordinary twists and turns. He looks behind the propaganda to examine the realities of a terrible historical crime and the divisive "politics of genocide" it produced. The book throws light not only on our understanding of Armenian-Turkish relations but also of how mass atrocities and historical tragedies shape contemporary politics.



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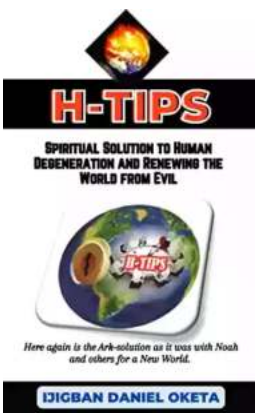
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