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THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN CONTEMPORARY  
AMERICAN ENCYCLOPEDIAS

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The images of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide; the Encyclopedia of Atrocities, Massacres, and War Crimes; Women and War: A Historical Encyclopedia from Antiquity to the Present; the Encyclopedia of War Crimes & Genocide; the Dictionary of Genocide; the Greenwood Encyclopedia of International Relations, and the Encyclopedia of Human Rights Issues since 1945* have been used for the cover page of this book.

## INTRODUCTION

The Armenian Genocide is an approved fact of history, and a public knowledge recognized not only by specialists but also by the international community. For more than thirty years, the successive authorities of the Ottoman Empire have succeeded in cleaning out the native-born Armenian population not only throughout the Armenian Highland but also within the entire territory of the Empire by carrying out a genocidal policy of massacres and deportations, the culmination of which was the Genocide of the Armenians during the First World War. According to the *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*, "The campaign to exterminate the Armenian population and expel them from Ottoman Empire (which was superseded by Turkey) was so organized and systematic that it became a model for the prosecution of even more devastating genocidal programs later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>1</sup> The crime committed by the Ottoman authorities against the Armenian nation fully corresponds to the definition of the special convention of the UN General Assembly in 1948 "On Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" according to which, "Genocide means the acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group".

As a recognized public knowledge the Armenian Genocide should have been adequately and in a worthy manner be represented in world encyclopedias.<sup>2</sup> The author conceived this project when he read the entry Treatment of the Armenian Genocide in Representative Encyclopedias by Rouben Paul Adalian,<sup>3</sup> which appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Genocide* (1999). Adalian, rightly wrote that "Regrettably, the representation of the Armenian Genocide across a host of commonly referred to encyclopedias distinctly reflects the near complete absorption of the revisionist interpretation of the Armenian Genocide. ...The trend is an increasing dilution of the consequences of the atrocities, this in complete contrast to the growing body of scholarship about the Armenian Genocide emerging from new research that reveals the secret and extensive planning involved in the execution of the deportations and the massacres."<sup>4</sup> Having analyzed the entries of three general and two specialized encyclopedias, namely *Collier's Encyclopedia*, *Encyclopedia Americana*, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East*, and *The New Encyclopedia*

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<sup>1</sup> *Armenian Genocide*. In: Horvitz, Leslie Alan and Catherwood, Christopher (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2006, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia is a type of reference work created by specialists and holding a comprehensive summary of information from either all branches or a particular branch of knowledge, which plays a special and important role in disseminating approved and recognized knowledge for the use of the general public.

<sup>3</sup> Rouben Paul Adalian (born in 1955) is a Director of the Armenian National Institute in Washington, D.C. He received his Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Los Angeles. Adalian has taught at the Elliott School of international Affairs, George Washington University and Johns Hopkins University.

<sup>4</sup> Adalian, Rouben Paul. *Treatment of the Armenian Genocide in Representative Encyclopedias*. In: Charny, Israel A. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Genocide*. Santa Barbara, CA; Denver, CO; Oxford, UK: ABC-CLIO, 1999, Vol. 1, p. 71.

*Britannica*, Adalian came to the following conclusion: "Recent encyclopedia literature on the Armenians reflects an altered reality deriving from revisionism and registers the entry of denialist authorship into the domain of standardized encyclopedic historiography."<sup>5</sup>

The main reason, which has been influencing both the process of recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the state revisionism and denialism in the world historiography is grounded in Turkey's persistent position. Although the events of 1915-1916 which took place in the Ottoman Empire have been characterized in UN reports as "the first Genocide of the twentieth century" (1973) as well "as an example of genocide" (1985), and have been recognized as a genocide not only by international organizations but also by more than twenty countries, the "successive Turkish governments continue to deny or downplay the Ottoman's culpability for the massacres."<sup>6</sup> Today, the Republic of Turkey not only pursues a policy of denial of the Armenian Genocide but also refuses to establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Armenia. Despite the vast amount of indisputable facts and evidence that points to the historical reality of the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish authorities have and continue to deny it for a hundred years. Unfortunately some other governments and academic circles have further aided Turkey in rewriting of history.

With the introduction of the legal concepts of *crimes against humanity* and *genocide* scholars have started to apply them to specific cases and compare different historical and contemporary examples. The field of genocide studies emerged with the analytical and comparative books published in the 1970's and 1980's<sup>7</sup> and was formalized with the establishment of the International Association of Genocide Studies in 1994. According to Alan Whitehorn,<sup>8</sup> "Given that most individuals and scholars lack the global expertise to know sufficient detail about all of the major case studies, there was an urgent need for encyclopedias and dictionaries on genocide."<sup>9</sup> The first publication of this kind was the two-volume *Encyclopedia of Genocide* published in 1999, which was edited by one of the leading specialists in genocide studies Dr. Israel

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> *Armenian Genocide*. In: Horvitz, Leslie Alan and Catherwood, Christopher (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide...*, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Horowitz, L. *Genocide: State Power and Mass Murder*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1976; Fein, Helen. *Accounting for Genocide*. New York: Free Press, 1979; Kuper, L. *Genocide: Its political use in the twentieth century*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981; Kuper, L. *International Action against Genocide*. London: Minority Rights Group, 1982; Charney, Israel W. (Ed.). *Toward the Understanding and Prevention of Genocide*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984; Kuper, L. *The Prevention of Genocide*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986; Staub, E. *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989; Chalk F. and Jonassohn, K. *The History and Sociology of Genocide*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Whitehorn is a Professor of Political Science at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario.

<sup>9</sup> Whitehorn, Alan. *Genocide Encyclopedias and the Armenian Genocide*. In: *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, 2014, March 1.

Charny.<sup>10</sup> Since then several specialized encyclopedias and dictionaries were published in the United States, namely *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict* (1999), *Encyclopedia of Murder and Violent Crime* (2003), *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* (2005), *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide* (2006), *Dictionary of Genocide* (2008), *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (2010), *Atrocities, Massacres, and War Crimes* (2013).

All these as well many other contemporary thematic encyclopedias contain special entries on the Armenian Genocide, and other related articles. The authors of the entries are leading specialists in the field of genocide studies. This shows that the Armenian Genocide constitutes an important case study, which also reflects an academic consensus amongst scholars on the qualification of the massacres and deportations of the Armenians as genocide. Furthermore, the strong efforts of the researchers and academicians in the field of genocide studies, as well as the position of civil societies in many countries and the united policy of Armenia and Armenian Diaspora in this regard were able to radically change the situation in the world public opinion and historiography. The Armenian Genocide strengthened its position as both a public knowledge and a recognized fact of history.

The author studied and analyzed nearly forty specialized and thematic encyclopedias, dictionaries, resource guides and handbooks published in the United States during the last fifteen years. The respective material is divided in this book into chapters which are representing conceptual and factual aspects of the Armenian Genocide. The book consists of 16 Chapters, list of encyclopedias, list of entries, a bibliography of a literature related to the Armenian Genocide found in encyclopedias, and an index.

**Dr. Arman J. Kirakossian**

Vienna, Austria

April, 2015

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. Israel W. Charny (born 1931, New York) is an Israeli psychologist and genocide scholar, executive director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem, professor of Psychology and Family Therapy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, founder of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, editor-in-chief and executive director of GPN - *Genocide Prevention Now*.