

The Turkish Times

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On January 27, 1973, when an old Armenian man, George Yanikian, ambushed and assassinated two Turkish Diplomats in Santa Barbara, California, Armenian Terrorism bursted onto center stage. For about two decades, Armenian terrorists killed more than 70 Turkish diplomats around the world (four in the United States), and wounded and maimed hundreds of innocent Turkish or non-Turkish bystanders in the carnage they created at airports, markets, Turkish institutions, and on the streets. This brutal and utterly senseless terrorism engulfed the American academia as well. Armenian terrorists attempted to silence prominent history scholars in this country who refused to adopt the revisionist history fabricated by the Armenians. In October 3, 1977 they bombed the house of Stanford Shaw, a prominent history professor in U.C.L.A. just because he rejected the Armenian claims on historical grounds. They terrorized him and his family, and forced them off the campus.

Armenian terrorists, brainwashed and programmed by their hierarchy, calling themselves "Justice Commandos" proclaimed that they were out to "liberate" Armenia. Ironically, at that time Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. They also claimed to "revenge" a mythical genocide supposedly perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish government on the Armenians between 1915 and 1921. Those desperados killed not only innocent Turks who were not even born at that time but also desecrated and destroyed a part of history cherished by the Turks as well as the Armenians who lived together like brothers for centuries.

The extremist Armenians claim that their case was never fully heard. This is not true. Armenians have made several attempts in the past to pass off their cause as a valid case to gain recognition. They played the card of the persecuted minority under the Turkish yoke; they invoked Crusader spirit against Muslim Turks, they put forward the services they rendered to the British, Russians and the French during the World War I in an unprecedented betrayal to their own sovereign state, the Ottoman Empire. Yet, all these countries used the Armenians as a pawn against the Ottoman Empire during the war, and when the war was over, they turned their back to the Armenians.

The following Paper has been prepared by our *Editorial Page Editor Ayhan Ozer* based on in-depth study of the British and the United States archives. It proves categorically that the Armenian allegations had been heard several times in the past following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, yet all the British efforts to incriminate the Turks proved only their innocence – and resoundingly.

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HOW THE BRITISH AND U.S. ARCHIVES VINDICATED THE TURKS IN THE ARMENIAN ALLEGATIONS

By: AYHAN OZER

The Ottoman Empire was defeated at the end of the World War I, and the armistice was signed on October 30, 1918 with the British aboard the Agamemnon, a British battleship at anchor off the port of Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos. The Allied forces occupied the capital city of Istanbul. The British Rear Admiral Sir Somerset Arthur Gough Calthrope, the signatory of the armistice for U.K., was appointed the British High Commissioner of Istanbul. He formed a special staff for this new post headed by the Rear Admiral Richard Webb, the deputy High Commissioner. Also two members of the British Foreign Service, Mr. Hohler and Mr. Andrew Ryan were included in the staff. Mr. Ryan, an Irishman, had previously served as a "Dragoman" (official interpreter) at the British Embassy in Istanbul for 15 years (1899 to 1914) before World War I. He was a notorious anti-Turkish intriguer who was described later by Major J. Douglas Henry during his interview with General Rafet Pasha (November 27-December 5, 1921) as "the most hated man in Turkey... An intriguer of a kind who did not scruple to employ traitors and turncoats for his purposes." British Foreign Office Archives: PRO--FO 371/ 6480.

This time Mr. Ryan was appointed not only as a Chief Dragoman, but he also assumed the position of Second Political Officer. In that capacity, his portfolio included a special section of the British High Commission dealing specifically with the Armenian and Greek "victims of persecution."

The British High Commission immediately confiscated all the official documents, including the Ottoman State archives. An Armenian by the name of Haigazn K. Khazarian was appointed the head of the Archives Department, one of the most sensitive posts to be assigned especially to an Armenian. Mr. Ryan engaged several Armenian informers to his staff, among them the most notable were: Mihran Boyadjian, Former Ottoman civil inspector for the provinces of Bitlis and Musul;

Karageuzian, a member of the Bureau d'Information Armenien of Istanbul;

Dr. Armenak Mediatian, an Armenian from Erzurum province;

Hagop Minas Berberian, an Armenian from the province of Diyarbakir;

Hanna Hanoum (a woman), an Armenian from the province of Diyarbakir;

Dr. Armenak Abu Haytaian, an Armenian from the province of Urfa;

Eghia Bakalian, an Armenian from the province of Sivas;

Aram Tosbikian, an Armenian from the province of Kirsehir;

Hagop Terzi, an Armenian from the province of Kirsehir;

Memduhi Tomasian, an Armenian from the province of Erzincan;

Aroussiagh Yervant Iskian, wife of an antique dealer from Ankara;

Ardeshir Lepian, an Armenian from Batum, Georgia

The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul was in close collaboration with the British High Commission to orchestrate these activities. Between January 23, 1919 and April 7, 1919 with the instrumentality of the above informers, four "Black Lists" of the Turks accused of the alleged "Armenian massacres" were drawn up at the Armenian and the Greek sections of the British High Commission. The lists incriminated 140 former high-ranked Turkish government officials, including the Grand Vizier (equivalent of the Prime Minister), princes, cabinet members, the Speaker of the House, members of the Parliament, members of the Sublime Religious Council, Chief of the General Staff, Army commanders, governors, university professors, journalists, editors, and several prominent members of Turkish society at the time. As a safety measure, Admiral Calthrope decided to intern all suspects outside the country, and the island of Malta in the Mediterranean was chosen for this purpose. He urgently informed the governor of Malta of the situation, and asked him to make arrangements for a detention camp on the island to receive and intern those suspects for safe custody.
British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 4172/ 23004
Telegram No: 212, January 30, 1919

French Objection to the British Scheme:

However, at this juncture, the French High Commission in Istanbul raised an objection to the British plans. General Franchet d'Esperey, the commander of the French occupation forces in Istanbul, protested the British move as unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. No court of law outside Turkey would be competent, nor would have authority to judge or to gather evidence for a judiciary action about those "alleged" offenders seized and deported from Turkey for a trial. Because, such deportation process would create an impression of arbitrary action of revenge on the part of the victorious Allies.
2. Such a summary arrest of the high--ranked Turkish officials "presumed" guilty of alleged offenses is a blatant discrimination against a single category of enemies, i.e. the Muslim Turks, while the German, Austrian and Bulgarian war criminals were released and repatriated to their native countries before their peace treaties were ratified.

The French government shared the opinion of General Franchet d'Esperey and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pichon addressed a note on March 5, 1919 to Lord Derby, the British Ambassador in Paris, expressing his government's disapproval for this action.

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 4172/ 26160

Derby to Foreign Office, Telegram No: 454 March 5, 1919

Turkish Initiative to Involve Neutral Countries to Expose the British Design:

In view of the resolute determination of the British to smear the Turkish Nation with a horrendous crime, the acting Ottoman Government decided to carry the matter beyond the sphere of authority of the Allies, especially the British.

On February 18, 1919, Reshid Bey, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, appealed to five neutral European countries (Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands and Spain) and invited them to appoint two legal assessors or magistrates to the "Turkish Commission" already constituted for investigating the "alleged abuses" in connection with the relocation of the Ottoman subjects (i.e. the Armenians) of different race and religion.

Mr. Wandel, the Danish envoy in Istanbul, forwarded this official request of the Ottoman government by telegram to Copenhagen on February 28, 1919. The Chief British Censor in Istanbul was quite upset when he found out about this Turkish initiative without his information, as it could have foiled the willful scheme of the British to falsely incriminate the Turks before the world, and he tried to stop this message, but it was too late. Similar notes had also been sent to Dutch, Spanish, Swedish and Swiss legations in Istanbul. Upon this Turkish demarche, the British Foreign Office decided that " it might be worthwhile to give a 'hint' to the neutral governments concerned."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 4172/ 29498
Foreign Office Minutes, dated February 25, 1919

Meanwhile, the Spanish Ambassador in London, Senor Don Alphonso Merry Del Val, addressed a confidential note dated February 28, 1919, to Sir Ronald Graham in the Foreign Office, advising the British government of the fact that while his government was examining the matter he wished to know how the Ottoman proposal was being regarded by the British government.

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 4172 Private and confidential.
February 28, 1919

In an effort to contain the spread of this matter outside the British domain, the Spanish Ambassador was informed by the British Foreign Office on March 4, 1919, that "the acceptance of the Turkish invitation might, and probably would, run counter to the arrangements made at the Peace Conference, and could cause serious complications." This was a stern warning to the Spanish not to get involved in this matter, and to refrain upsetting the sinister British designs.

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 4172
Letter from Sir Ronald Graham to the Spanish Ambassador. March 4, 1919

Mr. Balfour too, the British delegate to the Paris Peace Conference, suggested to Lord Curzon in a note that the Spanish Government should be discouraged from appointing any legal assessor to the so-called "Turkish Commission."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 4173/ 47913

Note from Balfour to Curzon, Number:323, dated March 25, 1919

In view of this vehement opposition by the British Government, Spain and the other neutral countries declined the invitation of the Ottoman government either to take part actively in the process, or to act as an independent observers.

India Appeals to the British for Fairness in Treating the Armenian Allegations:

Another initiative that compelled the British to uphold the principles of law and justice in dealing with the Turkish case was launched by the Indian Muslims. In early 1919, a delegation representing the Muslims of India headed by Muhammad Ali arrived at the Peace Conference to express the sentiments of the 70 million Indian Muslims and 230 million Indians who belonged to other faiths but supporting their Muslim countrymen in their feelings that the Ottoman Turks should not be subjected to a revengeful act by the British. This delegation was first received by Mr. Fisher, representing Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of India, to whom the delegation underscored the possible serious consequences in their country if the conditions of Peace Treaty contemplated for Turkey are in fact carried out. Mr. Lloyd George (The British War Cabinet P.M.) also received the delegation on March 19, and in the course of the interview Mohammed Ali made the following remarks with regard to the alleged "Armenian massacres":

"The Indian Khilafat delegation must put on record their utter detestation of such (alleged) conduct and their full sympathy for the sufferers, whether they be Christian or Muslim. However, if the Turks are to be punished as a criminal on the assumption that they have been tyrants in the past, and their rule was intolerable, then the delegation claims that the whole question of these massacres must be impartially investigated by an **international commission** in which the All - India Khilafat Conference should also be represented. If, in fact, the supposed casualties have taken place, not only should their true extent be ascertained but the commission should go fully into the so-called 'massacres,' as well as the intrigues of the Tsarist Russia in Asia Minor (Turkey) after the success of similar intrigues in the Balkans (reference to the Bulgarian case).

It should also address the secret revolutionary societies organized by the Christian (i.e. Armenians) subjects of the sultan, whose rebellious character was subversive of his rule. It should further go into the provocation of the Muslim majority in the region by the Armenians through armed revolts, massacres of the civilians, and the terrorism acts. I have no brief for them; I have no brief for the Turks; I have only a brief for Islam and the Indian Muslims. What we say is this,

as I said to Mr. Fisher, let there be a thorough inquiry, and if it establishes to the satisfaction of the world that the Turks really have been guilty of these atrocities and horrible crimes, then we will wash our hands of the Turks. To us it is much more important that not a single stain should remain on the fair name of Islam. Otherwise, with what face could we go before the world if our brethren are murderers and massacrers? But we know the history of these massacres to some extent. It is only towards the Armenians that the Turk is said to be so intolerant; there are other parts of the world where he [the Turk] deals with Christian people, and where he deals with the Jewish community. No complaint of massacres come from those communities. Moreover, the Armenians themselves lived under the Turkish rule for centuries and never complained. Therefore, we earnestly appeal to you, to the whole Christian world of Europe and America, that if the Turk is to be punished on the assumption that he is a tyrant, and that his rule is a blasting tyranny then the evidence should be of such character that it should be absolutely above suspicion."

Yet, the British were intensely determined to take revenge from the defeated Ottoman Empire, and wipe it out from the surface of the earth; therefore, this appeal of justice and fairness of the Indian Muslims fell on the deaf ears. The so-called "Armenian Massacres" were a convenient pretext for their purpose. Thus, the British government callously pushed aside all the concerns for humanity, justice and morality, and reserved exclusively to itself the right to act as the judge as well as the prosecutor in the trial of the so-called "Turkish war criminals." The following telegram was sent by Admiral Richard Webb to the British Foreign Office in London in that spirit:

"To punish all persons guilty of Armenian atrocities, I suggest a retribution both on a national scale by dismembering the late Turkish Empire, as well as on an individual basis by a trial of high officials, such as those in my lists, whose fate will serve as an example."

British Archives: PRO-F.O. 371/4173/53351
Webb to F.O. telegram No:677 April 13, 1919

On May 28, 1919, the first group of the detainees (67 persons) was transported on board S/S H.M.S. PRINCESS ENA to Malta. With the subsequent transportations on July 23, August and September 21, 1919, the number of detainees in Malta amounted to more than one hundred.

In September 1919, Vice-admiral Sir J. de Roebeck became the new British High Commissioner in Istanbul. As far as realism and objectivity go, he was more trustworthy than his predecessor. He had not been intimately involved in this matter so as to be influenced by the massive Armenian propaganda, and to have

Let the hard facts be drowned out by his emotions. He reviewed the situation of the Turkish detainees accused of outrages to the Armenians, and he reported to Lord Curzon (The Foreign Secretary of the British War Cabinet) on September 21 the following:

"As I have determined, the selection of deportees was made hurriedly by applying the general principles in the process, rather than relying on known facts. It is obvious that in such circumstances it might be very difficult to sustain definite charges against many of these persons before an Allied tribunal."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 4174/ 136069

De Roebeck to Curzon. Telegram No: 1722/ R/ 1315 September 21, 1919

The new British High Commissioner was aware that the Turkish deportees accused of outrages to the Armenians might have been arrested and deported not on factual basis, but on a vicious slandering campaign waged by some Armenian informers and intriguers, and he felt that to sustain definite charges before a court of law against the deportees whose crimes seemed to have had a dubious provenance would be very difficult. Therefore, he ordered that further arrests be stopped, and made clear to his staff that it was politically unadvisable to deport any more Turkish detainees to Malta.

In December 1919, elections were held throughout the Ottoman Empire for a new Turkish Parliament, and on January 12, 1920, the new Parliament convened in Istanbul. On January 28, in a secret session the deputies voted to adopt the National Pact (Misaki Milli) drawn out by Mustafa Kemal (later Ataturk), who proved himself a national hero, and on February 17 they announced their decision to the public. On March 16, 1920, Britain led an Allied military occupation of Istanbul, they replaced the Ottoman police, declared martial law, and stormed the Parliament and dissolved it, arresting 30 deputies. Those deputees were put on board the S/ S BENBOW on March 18, and sent to Malta as "politically undesirable persons."

In view of the ongoing arbitrary detentions and then deportations of the high-level Turkish officials, Mustafa Kemal, who formed the Nationalist government in Ankara, in the heartland of Anatolia, ordered as a reprisal the arrest of a number of British officers in Anatolia. About 22 of them were arrested, including Colonel Rawlinson, the younger brother of Lord Rawlinson, a British spy and a relative of Lord Curzon.

Despite the French objection to the British action on the basis of the unlawful nature of the deportations new series of arrests continued. In the meantime, the ignominious Peace Treaty of Sevres was dictated and imposed on the puppet government of the Sultan on August 10, 1920. This Treaty was described by

Mustafa Kemal as the "death sentence of the Turkish Nation," and was never ratified. On the alleged Armenian massacres this Treaty contained the following Article:

"Article 230 - The Turkish Government undertakes to hand over to the Allied powers the persons whose surrender may be required by the latter as being responsible for the massacres committed during the continuance of the state of war on territory which formed part of the Turkish Empire on August 1, 1914 [the date the Ottoman Empire entered the war.] The Allied powers reserve to themselves the right to designate the tribunals which shall try the persons so accused, and the Turkish government undertakes to recognize such tribunals." In small groups transferred between March and November 1920, the number of Turkish detainees in Malta reached the total number of 144.

Around that time, the Allies, especially the British, working together with the Armenians began to get to know them better, and had an opportunity to look closer into their stories. There arose serious doubts about the veracity of the Armenian accounts, and when the character of the Armenians and their wild stories were superimposed the truth seemed to have evaporated. Naively to be given to propaganda, and prosecuting innocent people for spurious allegations before a historical tribunal were indeed quite different things. Thus, on July 19, 1920, Winston S. Churchill, the then Secretary of State in the British War Cabinet submitted to his Cabinet the following secret memorandum expressing his concerns in that matter:

"I circulate to the Cabinet a long list of prominent Turkish politicians, ex-ministers, generals, deputies and others whom we are still keeping as prisoners in Malta. It seems to me that this list should be carefully revised by the Attorney General, and that those men against whom no proceedings are contemplated should be released at the first convenient opportunity."

PRO--F.O. 371/ 5090 and C.P. 1649: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (Cabinet) on position of Turkish prisoners interned at Malta, dated July 19, 1920

Meanwhile, the Law Officers of the Crown were consulted on the subject, and they submitted to the Cabinet an interesting memorandum, which was reviewed in its meeting of August 4, 1920. According to this memorandum, the Law Officers were dealing only with a few Turkish deportees accused of ill treatment of the British prisoners of war, nothing about the alleged Armenian massacres. So, about one week prior to the signing of the Treaty of Sevres, in view of the lack of reliable evidence, the Armenian issue was quietly and unofficially dropped from the British agenda.

It had been about two years since the first party of the detainees was sent to Malta, that at last on February 8, 1921 the British Attorney General sent the following message to the Under Secretary of State:

"The Attorney General is of the opinion that time has come to ask His Majesty's High Commissioner in Istanbul to prepare the evidence against those interned Turks whom he recommends for prosecution on charges of cruelty to native Christians." Yet, the problem was that no such evidence ever existed in the files of the British authorities in London, and Lord Curzon was expecting a full report from H.M. High Commission in Istanbul which had initiated the arrests and deportations. On March 12, 1921, Lord Curzon requested Sir H. Rumbold to report back to him as soon as possible with all the evidence against each of the Turkish nationals accused of cruelties to the native Christians.

Sir H. Rumbold replied to the inquiry of Lord Curzon on the same day, advising him that the evidence in the case of those Turkish nationals whom he had recommended for prosecution would be forwarded in the next mailbag, leaving Istanbul on March 16th.

PRO – F.O. 371/6500/E.3552 Rumbold to Curzon, No: 268, March 12, 1921

The next day Mr. Rumbold confirmed this communication by a telegram.

PRO – F.O. 371/6499/E 3197 Rumbold to Curzon, Telegram No: 178

Dated March 13, 1921

In view of the excessive delay and inaction --20 months! -- on the part of the British government, the Turkish detainees in Malta formally requested the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief of Malta Field Marshal Lord Plumer that they be furnished with the "summary of evidence," or with the actual charges, so that they would know what offenses they were accused of, and be prepared to answer the charges. They further claimed that with this arbitrary and revengeful attitude by keeping them without any ground the British government was in violation of the basic principle of justice which considers them innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Thereupon, on March 16, 1921, an agreement was signed in London between Bekir Sami Bey, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Robert Vansittart, a member of the British Foreign Office, which stipulated the release of all 22 British prisoners of war in Turkey, and the repatriation of 64 Turkish detainees in Malta.

The much expected "evidence" or the "details of charges" against the Turkish detainees in Malta reached the Foreign Office in London on March 22 as enclosures in Sir Rumbold's dispatch to Lord Curzon. Sir Rumbold wrote that he forwarded "*a precis of information*" concerning each detainee. However, he pointed out that none of the Allied, associated and neutral powers had been asked to supply any information, that very few witnesses were available, and that

the Armenian Patriarchate had been the principal channel through which [the enclosed] information had been obtained.

"Under those circumstances," Sir Rumbold said, "The Prosecution will find itself under grave disadvantage." He further added: "The American government in particular is, no doubt, in possession of a large amount of documentary information compiled at the time while the massacres were taking place."

The "evidences" or "details of charges" described by Sir H. Rumbold consisted only of a few type-written pages for each detainee. The first pages of each file included the biography of the accused person, and the last pages, or paragraphs, contained the "accusations" which were drawn up by the Armenian and Greek Section of the British High Commission in Istanbul.

Mr. Ryan, the notorious Head of this section, apparently was in great pain when he tried to invent some sort of justification to those flimsy files, and must have tortured himself greatly when he wrote: "In practice, we have gone on the principle that **a sufficient presumption of guilt** to justify detention and ultimate prosecution existed against all members of the responsible governments of Turkey at the time when the massacres and deportations [meaning, relocation] took place, and all persons so high in the councils of the C.U.P. [Ittihat ve Terakki/ Committee of Union and Progress, the ruling triumvirate of the Ottoman government] as to be able to be credited with a share in directing its policy."

In short, this abject character, the anti-Turk intriguer laid down by himself a pervert "principle" that considers each detainee "a priori" guilty unless they proved their innocence, contrary to the basic principle of law and justice that considers each person innocent until proven guilty. In such a pathetic state were the so-called "dossiers" accusing the Turkish deportees in Malta of the "Armenian massacres." Sir Harry Lamb, one of Mr. Ryan's colleagues at the British High Commission, and who was appointed Consul General of Izmir, minuted on the dossier of Veli Necdet Bey, one of the deportees, the following:

"None of the deportees was arrested on any evidence in the legal sense. The whole case of the deportees is not satisfactory. No dossier exists in a legal sense. In many cases we have only statements of differing values by the Armenians. In some cases, including that of Veli Necdet, we have nothing but what is a common report and an extract from a printed pamphlet. It is safe to say that a great majority of the 'dossiers', as they stand now, will be marked 'No Case' by a practical lawyer. The present Sections (i.e. The Armenian and Greek Sections of H.M. High Commission) seem to have recorded all information concerning the 118 deportees guilty as charged... (But) none of this information in itself has a strict legal value."

To sum up, there was no evidence at all to prove that such a crime as alleged "Armenian massacres" had been ever committed in Turkey. Therefore, it was impossible to produce any dossier in the legal context against any of the Turkish deportees in Malta.

The officials at the British Foreign Office were disappointed when they received the so-called "evidence" or "dossiers" from the H.M. High Commissioner in Istanbul. However, they were not to give up so easily. They addressed for assistance to the U.S. State Department, and to the H.M. Attorney General's office. On April 1, 1921, the Foreign Office forwarded all available "evidence" to the Law Officer's Department for information of the Attorney General, and on April 29, 1921 they wrote again to H.M. Procurator General for a swift action on this matter.

On May 20, 1921, H.M. Procurator General's department returned the following reply (two years after the first group of detainees were transported to Malta):
"...in as much as those persons are charged with political offense, their detention or release involves a question of high policy, and is not dependent on the legal proceedings. The Law Office considers that their treatment is a matter for decision by the Foreign Office, and it does not desire to offer any view upon it."

PRO--F.O. 371/ 6502/ E. 5845: Procurator General's Department to Foreign Office. May 20, 1921

Thus, the Law Office of the Crown clearly expressed a view that the whole matter had nothing to do with legality, it is purely political. H.M. Attorney General refused to involve themselves with the alleged "Armenian massacres". They also carefully avoided to use the word "massacres," so wildly used by the Allied wartime propaganda machine. The following communication of the H.M. Procurator manifests their frustration with the case and records their difficult position in handling the matter:

"The Attorney General is concerned only with eight Turks whose prosecution he desires for cruelty to the British Prisoners of War. The Foreign Office, however, is concerned with 45 Turks (of whom two have escaped from Malta) who ought to be prosecuted for massacres under Article 230 of the Treaty of Sevres. The letter gives no guidance as to these 45 Turkish nationals. Our difficulty is that we have practically no legal evidence and that we do not want to prepare for proceedings which will be abortive. We asked Washington if the Americans could produce any evidence of massacres against the internees."

Searches in the American Archives:

The frustration and desperation were very visible in the British authorities in London as well as in Istanbul. "The American government is doubtless in possession of large amount of documentary information compiled at the time the massacres were taking place," wrote Sir H. Rumbold. This seemed quite a logical statement indeed. If the alleged massacres actually took place in 1915--1918 the American State Department must have been in possession of a mass of materials, since at that time the American diplomatic and consular agents, as well as the members of the "American Near East Relief Society" continued their work in Turkey.

In an unprecedented humanitarian gesture on the part of the Turkish Government this aid society was allowed to stay in Turkey and provide care for the Armenians during their relocations, even following the entry of the U.S. into war on the side of the Allies against Germany, an ally of the Ottoman Empire. (The U.S. did not declare war against Turkey, it only severed the diplomatic relations with Turkey.) This was a lofty gesture unparalleled in the history of mankind, and an ultimate magnanimity on the part of the Turks to have allowed the hostile agents and a fanatical religious organization to move about the country freely to provide help for the Christian Armenians, who were actively fighting against the country. The "Dissemination of Bible" societies in the United States raised funds with zealotry using slogans of "Starving Armenians under Muslim Turkish yoke!"

On March 31, 1921, Lord Curzon sent the following telegram to Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador in Washington:

"There are in hands of His Majesty's government at Malta a number of Turks arrested for alleged complicity in the Armenian massacres. There are considerable difficulty in establishing proofs of guilt. Please ascertain if the United States government is in possession of any evidence that would be of value for the purpose of prosecution."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 6500/ E.3552, Curzon to Geddes Telegram No 176, dated March 31, 1921.

No reply was forthcoming from Washington for about two months, and in the meantime, as noted earlier, H.M. Attorney General had refused to take any action against the Turkish deportees in Malta. Anxious for a reply, Lord Curzon sent a follow-up note to the British Ambassador in Washington on May 27, 1921: "We should be glad to know whether there is any likelihood that evidence will be available."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 6500/ E.5845 Curzon to Geddes, Telegram No 314 dated May 27, 1921

A few days later, Sir Auckland Geddes returned a reply, but it was not as promising as had been expected. He wrote:

" I have made several inquiries at the State Department, and today I am informed that while they are in possession of a large number of documents concerning the Armenian relocations, from the description, I am doubtful whether these documents are likely to prove useful as evidence in prosecuting Turks confined in Malta. Should His Majesty's government so desire, these documents will be placed at the disposal of His Majesty's Embassy on the understanding that the source of information will not be divulged." [An intimation that the available documents are flimsy, as such if their sources are revealed it would be embarrassing for the U.S. State Department.]

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 6500/ E.6311 Geddes to Curzon, Telegram No 374, dated June 2, 1921.

In reply to this telegram, the British Foreign Office forwarded to Washington a list of the names and brief particulars of 45 Turkish deportees "who are being detained in Malta with a view of trial in connection with the alleged outrages perpetrated on Armenians and other native Christians." And requested again Sir Auckland Geddes "to ascertain as early as possible whether the United States Government can furnish evidence against any of these persons."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 6500/ E.6311 Foreign Office to Geddes, Telegram no 775, dated June 16, 1921

On July 13, 1921, the British Embassy in Washington replied as follows: "I have the honor to inform your Lordship that a member of my staff visited the State Department yesterday in regard to the Turks who are at the present being detained in Malta with a view to trial. He was permitted to see a selection of reports from the United States consuls on the subject of the atrocities committed on the Armenians during the recent war. These reports, judged by the State Department to be the most useful for the purpose of His Majesty's government, being chosen from among several hundreds.

I regret to inform your Lordship that there was nothing therein which could be used as evidence against the Turks who are being detained for trial in Malta. The reports seen made mention of only two names of the Turkish officials in question -- those of Sabit bey and Suleyman Faik Pasha -- and even in these cases the accounts given were confined to the personal opinions of the writers; no concrete facts being given which could constitute a satisfactory incriminating evidence.

Department of State expressed the wish that no information supplied by them in this connection should be employed in a court of law. Having regard to this stipulation, and the fact that the reports in the possession of the Department of State do not appear in any case to contain evidence against these Turks which would be useful even for the purpose of corroborating information already in possession of H. Majesty's government.

I believe nothing is to be hoped from addressing any further inquiries to the Department of State in this matter."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 6504/ E.8515 R.C. Craigie, British Charge d'Affairs at Washington, to Lord Curzon, Telegram No 722 of July 13, 1921

Mr. W. S. Edmonds, a member of the British Foreign Office minuted:
"It never seemed quite likely that we should be able to obtain evidence from Washington. We are now waiting for the Attorney General's opinion as to whether there is a reasonable prospect of convicting any of the prisoners charged with massacres..."

British Archives: PRO--F.O. 371/ 6504/ E.8519: Foreign Office minutes.

Thus, the meticulous search conducted by the British for 30 months with an utmost zeal to vindicate the Armenian allegations produced nothing. The much-touted "eyewitness accounts," "hard proof" and "evidence" proved to be pure fabrication. The British, deeply embarrassed by this unexpected turn of events, offered to exchange their prisoners of war in the hands of the Ottoman government with the deportees of Malta. At that point, those prominent Turkish nationals detained arbitrarily and willfully in Malta were no longer suspects but hostages in the hands of the British government. To spare themselves further embarrassment, the British dropped the case. Field Marshal Plumer, governor and commander-in-chief of Malta reported that all the Turkish deportees in Malta, total 59, duly embarked on board H.M.S. CRYSTANTHEMUM, and R.F.A. MONTENAL on October 25, 1921. These two ships arrived at the Black Sea port of Inebolu on October 31. The exchange British prisoners were released, and they arrived in Istanbul on November 2, 1921.

EPILOGUE:

Those prominent Turks, accused of the persecution of the Armenians, were arrested and deported on the basis of hearsay and horror stories invented by the Armenians without any preliminary investigation by the British authorities. The British callously disregarded any concern for violation of the human rights of the detainees. They rebuffed the incommunicado detention of the suspects in secret prisons in a foreign country at that, the indefinite detention of the suspects without charge, and keeping them in their de-facto control without giving access to Red Cross or Red Crescent.

The main source of information of the British High Commission in the capital city of Istanbul was a massive Armenian propaganda machinery conducted by the Armenian Patriarchate. From the very beginning, there was a great deal of doubt on the part of the French, and even several British officials with a sense of justice, and who were knowledgeable about the Turkish affairs as well as the Turkish character. Admiral Webb, for instance, the Acting British High-Commissioner, wrote in March 1919 "... question of evidence in regard to massacres will be extremely difficult." French authorities were against those arrests as well as the deportations which they characterized as "political measures." Admiral de Roebeck, the British High-Commissioner in Istanbul, wrote in September 1919 that "... it was impossible to rely on the allegations presented as facts [by the accusing party], and that to sustain definite charges against these persons before an Allied Tribunal would be very difficult." In fact, none of the detainees had been arrested on the basis of any evidence, and no dossier in a legal sense ever existed to incriminate any of the detainees.

From a political standpoint, it was a dire necessity for the British Government that at least some of these deportees should have been brought to trial. The British Foreign Office had left no stone unturned in order to prove that the so-called "Armenian massacres" actually had taken place in Turkey, and consequently, some of these detainees must have been proven guilty. Yet, all efforts and zeal in that regard ended with a complete failure. There was no evidence, no reliable witness, no proof and no case! The only source that was counted on, the Armenian Patriarchate, furnished only rumors and hearsay fabricated and inflated by themselves. The Turkish Capital city was under Allied occupation, and all Ottoman state archives were easily accessible to the British authorities in Istanbul, and if there were any witnesses or any kind of evidence they could have been found easily. The British High Commission was unable to forward to London any legal evidence. There was nothing in the British archives that corroborated the wild accusations of the Armenians, nor did the American State Department archives have anything besides the war time propaganda materials, which, if contested in a court of law would have proven ridiculous.

Thus, the much propagandized and highly inflated so-called "Armenian massacres" proved to be a sheer fabrication even at the time they purportedly took place.

Yet, lately, notwithstanding the resounding exoneration of the Turks in the past, the Armenians, counting on people's short memories, have re-invented, revised and embellished their stories, and launched a new public relations stunt. The only effective antidote against this scourge is to preach the gospel of truth again and again, it is powerfull and enormously convincing.
