

Reader comment on: Lévy To Speak On Islamism, Genocide

Comment on Article, "Levy to Speak on Islamism, Genocide" Dated Mar 4, 2008

The New York Sun

Submitted by Erkin Baker, Mar 4, 2008 20:56

In this article, Mr. Levy argues that "Jews have a special responsibility to recognize as genocide the killing of 1.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923".

It is unfair to the memory of the six million Jews who have perished at the hands of the Germans during World War II to have their suffering to be compared to that of the Armenians during World War I. Of course, the Armenians did suffer. At the same time, three million Turks were killed and millions were thrown out of their homes too, many as a result of the Armenians' revolts. So have tens of millions of other ethnic and religious groups throughout history during times of war. Not all killings of civilians, along with the military, during armed conflicts, can be considered genocide.

Mr. Levy would like us to ignore the following facts:

The Jews did not have an army -- the Armenians did -- more than 100,000 armed militia during the said period;

The Jews did not attack their German neighbors and kill them -- the Armenians did attack their neighbors, the Turks, and other subjects of the Ottoman Empire;

The Jews did not demand territory to be carved out of Germany -- whereas the Armenians claimed land on which they were a minority from the Turks.

Thus, Mr. Levy is stretching the facts of history and limits of logic, claiming that the casualties of a civil war are similar to that of a genuine genocide.

Furthermore, it is a fact that Nazi Germany committed genocide on the Jews (along with gypsies and homosexuals) because there were the Nuremberg Tribunals that proved that a genocide did occur with the intent to destroy the Jewish race living in their territories. The Turks, however, have never been found guilty of a similar crime. After World War I, in 1919, 144 prominent Ottoman-era Turks were brought to the island of Malta to be tried for war crimes at a war-crimes tribunal set up by the British Crown. After over two years of examining documents available to them (and consulting with other allies, including the United States) no evidence was found to convict the Turks of war crimes. The evidence submitted by the Armenians to prove that the intention of the Turks was to destroy the Armenians as an ethnic and religious group, collectively known as the Andonian papers, was declared to be forgeries by the British, and all the Turks were sent back to home.

Turks have opened up their archives to historians for study, yet the Armenians refuse to do the same, keeping their archives in Yerevan and Boston closed to outsiders.

Perhaps, Mr. Levy should turn his attention and criticism to the restriction in the freedom of speech in his native France where there is a law that says that it is a crime to maintain that no genocide of the Armenians occurred. If in Turkey it is a crime to say that it occurred (which, in reality, it is not -- no one has been given a prison sentence despite claims otherwise), it should not be a crime to say that it did not occur in France, as well as in Switzerland, where, in both countries, people have been convicted to prison sentences, i.e. Professor Bernard Lewis of the United States (tried and convicted in France), and Mr. Dogu Perincek of Turkey (tried and convicted in Switzerland).

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