

When Ideology Goes Wrong: Some Recent Books On Turkish-Greek-Armenian Wars, 1915-1923

A Review Article on

Twice A Stranger, How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece & Turkey,

By Bruce Clark

London: Granta Books, 2006, 274 pages,

ISBN: 9781862077522.

Paradise Lost, Smyrna 1922, The Destruction of Islam's City of Tolerance,

By Giles Milton

London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 2008, 426 pages,

ISBN: 9781444731798.

*Smyrna September 1922, the American Mission to Rescue Victims of the
20th Century's First Genocide,*

By Lou Ureneck

New York: Ecco Paperback edition, 2016, 490 pages,

ISBN: 9780062259899.

There Was And There Was Not,

By Meline Toumani

New York: Metropolitan Books,

Henry Holt & Co, 2014, 286 pages,

ISBN: 9780805097627.

The story of how Modern Turkey was created, a full century later, is still emotional, especially when it is linked with Greek-Turkish-Armenian relations. How the Turks, a defeated nation in 1918, were able to turn defeat

into victory, first over Armenians in the east, and then over Greeks in western Turkey, is miraculous. For the Turks, led by Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk), it is glorious.

Glory, however, came with tears and blood. The bloodbath of the Ottoman endgame 1914-1918, in which an estimated three million lives were lost, was a colossal human tragedy. When the Sultanate and its ideology of Ottomanism died, the victorious Allies had already decided on the partition of the Empire. With partition came ethnic cleansing. Competing ideologies took center-stage in the chaotic end of the Sultanate. Modern Greece, Armenia and Turkey emerged out of this shared chaos.

The Greek-Turkish War, 1919-22, was, first and foremost, an existential war, driven by ideology. It all began as an aggression, fueled by an irredentist Greek *Megali Idea* (Great Idea). In mid May 1919, the Greek army, a proxy for Allies, landed in Izmir in pursuit of a new Hellenic Byzantium, or Greater Greece in Asia Minor. It collided head-on with Turkish national awakening.

The Greek-Turkish War cost an estimated one million lives over and above the WWI loss. Yet, that is only a statistic of war casualties. After the war, under a Population Exchange Agreement in 1923, as part of the Treaty of Lausanne, over 400,000 Turks were relocated from Greece to Turkey and 1.2 million Greeks went in the reverse direction.

Why did this huge population exchange take place? Was it a humanitarian

project, or an early case of ethnic cleansing? Or, perhaps it was necessary as a long-range visionary exercise in nation-building? How was it executed? What have been its consequences?

The book by the Irish author Bruce Clark provides answers to these questions. Well-researched, highly readable and very timely, the book is a sad story, remarkably balanced and impartial, based on extensive eye-witness interviews on both sides of the Aegean. It is well worth reading today, if only to understand the shared history and the bitter legacy of Greek-Turkish relations. Bitterness still exists, and extreme ideology today haunts in places like Cyprus. Clark's message (*twice a stranger*) is accurate, and his capacity to enlighten, direct and indirect, are praiseworthy. In Clark's book, history is approached with rare objectivity and fairness.

Whose idea was the Population Exchange in 1923? Clark leaves no doubt: Venizelos was the self-confessed father of the idea (pp. 55-56). And in Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the Norwegian humanitarian in charge of the League of Nations Refugee Commission, Venizelos had found an influential collaborator to organize and carry out this huge exodus. The two collaborated throughout, from conception to execution, and they must carry the chief

responsibility, in law, in morality as well as in implementation of the policy.

In 1922, Venizelos was a broken man, out of Greek politics temporarily. Earlier, he had been the hero of ENOSIS in his home-island of Crete (union of the island with Greece), and in 1919 he was the architect of the Asia Minor invasion, in which, together with the philhellenic British PM Lloyd George, Venizelos began his biggest ideological project: The rebirth of Greater Greece in Asia Minor, the Second Byzantium. Greeks loved the idea, both those in Greece and in Asia Minor.

Then, in the fall of 1922, Mustafa Kemal's Nationalists, and a grateful Turkish nation, were celebrating total victory. The defeated Venizelos, in exile in London, was still the most influential Greek politician. He worked feverishly, selling his population exchange idea to Nansen. The Norwegian considered it a humanitarian project. Venizelos, as always, dreamt of the long-term: He wanted to "Hellenize" Thrace (p. 50), which had been acquired in the Balkan Wars. In 1919 Venizelos had negotiated a population exchange agreement between Greece and Bulgaria. Now, in 1922, Venizelos was a desperate man: With Greeks in Asia Minor on the run, he needed houses, towns and villages to accommodate the flood of fleeing Greeks, and he would have kicked

the Muslim Turks out of western Thrace, had Ankara rejected his idea of population exchange. Fortunately for Venizelos, Nansen's pleas found a receptive ear at the Congress of Lausanne, in particular with Riza Nur, the deputy to İsmet İnönü, the chief of the Turkish delegation. İnönü was, at the time, engaged in very tough peace negotiations with the British Foreign Minister Curzon and representatives of the Allies. In the end, a comprehensive Population Exchange Agreement was reached, with just two exceptions: Greeks in Istanbul and Turks in Western Thrace were allowed to stay.

For the next year or two, a huge exodus began: 200,000 Turks from Crete and at least an equal number from other parts of Greece were forcibly relocated. A total of 1.2 million Greeks from Asia Minor joined the exodus in the reverse direction.

Why the larger number for the latter? Anatolian Greeks, by and large, had taken part in the Greek invasion and they shared blame in large-scale atrocities against local Turks. In the summer and fall of 1922, the Greek armies burned Turkish towns and villages as they fell back in total disarray. Innocent civilian Turks were massacred by Greek soldiers in a wanton case of revenge killings. These atrocities were on such a scale that the Allies were forced to create a special commission.

The horror stories of Greek war crimes are all documented.

Sadly, Anatolian Greeks played a big part in these war crimes. From the moment of the Greek landing in Izmir on 15 May 1919, the Greek army had carried out a Scorched Earth Policy of killing indiscriminately the local Turkish population, burning homes and mosques, and destroying property. Anatolian Greeks joined the Scorched Earth Policy. For example, the Pontic Greeks on the Black Sea, had joined in active fighting with the invaders. The Orthodox Church and school teachers assumed special responsibility in ethnic cleansing against local Turks. Now in 1922 these Greeks, fearing retaliation, had no choice but to run. In the end, guilty or not, all Anatolian Greeks had become victims of the *Megali Idea* ideology. Even the peaceful Cappadocia Greeks were exchanged.

How did the refugees adjust to their new homeland? On the whole, Clark's evidence shows that Turkish refugees did better adjusting in Turkey than the Greek refugees in Greece. Europe provided financial aid to Greece for refugee settlement. Turkey adopted self-reliance. But the Kemalist nation-building proper did not really start until 1928 when all Turkish citizens, including newcomers, were put into the same melting-pot, learning the Latin alphabet, wearing European dress,

and enjoying the same citizenship rights. By contrast, in Greece, the Greek refugees from Asia Minor came with lots of Turkish customs in food, music, dress and many spoke nothing but Turkish. They faced open hostility and discrimination. In some cases, like the Pontic Greek refugees, newcomers tried to redeem themselves by fighting the Italians in the Second World War. However, many Anatolian Greeks vented their alienation by going Communist during the Greek Civil War in 1946-1949 (p. 231). Venizelos must have turned in his grave!

Venizelos' ideology, successful in Crete, ended up destroying the Asia Minor Greeks, the innocent with the guilty were lumped together, creating the greatest human and moral tragedy of Modern Greece. One thing which all refugees, Greek or Turk shared, was the loss of a homeland, the pain of which, according to evidence in Clark, never disappears.

Reading Clark's interviews with the few remaining survivors and their aging family members, is, to say the least, touching. The book starts with a Turkish poem, *İki Kere Yabancı* (Twice a Stranger), by Prof. Ayşe Lahur Kırtunç, whose family came to Turkey from Crete. Her poem captures the essence of the book. Everyone suffered twice: Those who survived the ordeal of

relocation did not find ideological bliss in their destination. They experienced deprivation and discrimination. Their hurt still haunts many to this day. When ideology goes wrong, people pay the price. And the heaviest price is psychological. There is no material compensation for an ancestral homeland that only exists in memory.

But how much progress has been achieved in healing past wrongs? What has been learnt from bitter history towards Truth & Reconciliation? As the philosopher, Santayana put it: "Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it." Regretfully, books are still penned more in the style of blaming rather than healing and reconciliation.

The Great Smyrna Fire

Today, in Spring 2017, we live in an age of Post-Truth. Fake news, lies and distortions are common daily servings in the US presidency of Donald Trump. Ethno-nationalist trends are on the rise in Europe. Building walls to keep out unwanted refugees and displaced persons has now become fashionable.

Post-Truth, as distorted historical events, has often long ideological roots. Thus, *Megali Idea* dreams ended

literally in flames in mid-September 1922 when Smyrna went up in smokes. Out of the ashes emerged modern Izmir. Mustafa Kemal, calling the fire "a regrettable incident," moved on to forge a new nation, a new Republic.

The controversy over the Fire continues to this day. Two recent books, one by the British journalist Giles Milton, the other by the American genocide scholar, Lou Ureneck, are the latest additions to the Post-Truth literature. Apparently, there must be a demand for such writing in the USA and other western markets. One thing is clear: The descendants of the Anatolian Christians in the Diaspora are active in ethnic politics, using money and influence for anti-Turkish motions if only to vent their frustration for a lost homeland.

The Turkish version of the Fire is clear enough. It was the work of Armenians and Greeks, their final act of atrocity in defeat. It was treason in the eyes of local Turks/Muslims. What were the motives of these Christian minorities who had lost with Greece? With all hope vanished, they were fleeing, together with the Greek soldiers, to the harbour in Izmir. Fanatics set everything on fire to destroy the stores of food and supplies in the city before the Turks could acquire it as war booty.

The Greek army, for the previous several weeks, had been retreating

from Dumlupinar. It had already burnt Afyon and other Turkish cities and towns. When the demoralized Greek soldiers reached Izmir, they had one objective in mind: jump on a boat and escape. Fear and insecurity engulfed the civilian population, expecting worse than the atrocities delivered on the local Turks/Muslims in the preceding four years. All flooded into the harbour, instant refugees on the Quay, searching, begging for passage out. It was human tragedy on immense scale. Future literary giants, including Ernest Hemingway, then a young reporter for the *Toronto Star*, wrote moving stories. A literary tradition was born from the chaos and suffering. The Smyrna Fire became an instant anti-Turk tradition. It continues to this day, a one-sided story of ethnic hate.

Sadly, the Turkish version, unfortunately, is largely untold. There are simply not enough books or historical research using archival sources, to document the Great Fire. Newspaper articles, secondary sources are inadequate. The net result of this failure, as Heath Lowry, quoted below, has expressed it in anguish, is this: Turkish history has been hijacked by others.

What is available in archival evidence on who actually started the Izmir Fire? The key non-Turkish source is Grescovich & Prentiss. The Austrian

Grescovich was the Commissioner of the Fire Department, and Prentiss was an American industrial engineer representing the US Near East Relief organization. They were both on the spot, directly involved in the course of the Fire. It burned non-stop from 13–16 September, 1922. The Austrian and the American witnessed it all. Hour by hour, day after day, Grescovich and Prentiss recorded how the Armenian and Greek agents and *cheteci* gangs, led by clergy and fanatic teachers, set houses and buildings ablaze, how, in desperation and in vain, Turkish soldiers tried to stop it. This is all recorded in a Report authored by Prentiss.

In January 1923, Prentiss forwarded a copy of his Report to Rear Admiral Mark L. Bristol, the US High Commissioner at the American Embassy in Istanbul. A short summary of the Prentiss Report is available on line at <http://www.ataa.org/reference/izmir.html> and a full Report has been published as a paper in the *Journal of Ottoman Studies* IX, Istanbul 1980 by Heath Lowry as “A Case Study on the Burning of Izmir.”

The two recent books by Milton and Ureneck fail to mention, let alone use, Grescovich and Prentiss. Instead, they rely on one-sided, pro-Armenian and pro-Greek, sources. Their work, while interesting reading, is no more than

distorted history, an early exercise in Post-Truth.

With this major limitation, there is much value in Giles Milton, making his book a worthwhile read. The reader gets a good understanding of the Levantine civilization, the great comprador families of the Whittals, Girauds, and de Cramers, and others, in magnificent isolation in *Paradise*, an appropriately named garden suburb of the port city, perhaps the wealthiest class in the Sultan's domains.

The comprador class lived, incredibly, till the Great Fire, quietly celebrating the Greek landing in May 1919, viewing it as a way of cementing existing trade links with the Greek and Armenian networks. It was an enclave society, organically connected only to the Christian minorities, as if they were unaware that they lived in a Muslim-majority land. They remained oblivious to the great Kemalist offensive, underestimating both the Turkish national sentiment and the Kemalist vision of a Turkish national homeland. Finally, when the triumphant Turkish army entered Izmir, the Christian minorities and the Levantines were alarmed. The Turkish army came like a thunderbolt and the Levantine world collapsed overnight. Like the Titanic sinking, a way of life vanished, taking all that wealth and artificial living down with it. Aristotle Onassis, the Greek local

shipping merchant, was wiser than most, taking his wealth out, one way or another.

Milton has chosen to sub-title his book, *The Destruction of Islam's City of Tolerance*. A more misleading choice is difficult to imagine, unless one's idea of tolerance is uni-directional, i.e. Turks tolerating privileged Christian minorities, but not in reverse. There is, in fact, a whole chapter in Milton devoted to what is nowadays called the 'double-standard' in EU-Turkey relations: "Enemy Aliens". It is a fascinating account of British hypocrisy in 1914, a poignant study in contrast¹.

While the Levantine privileged class lived in luxury in Izmir, thanks to the Sultan's hospitality, in Newcastle, England, Captain Raouf Bey and his naval officers, on orders of Churchill, the First Lord of Admiralty, were declared "enemy aliens." The two dreadnoughts built for the Ottoman Navy (the *Reshadieh* and the *Sultan Osman I*), were seized. They had already been paid for by a huge public donation

1 Coincidentally, in Canada, then effectively a British colony, a small group of Ottoman Turks living peacefully in Brantford, Ont., were suddenly arrested as enemy aliens and relocated to a POW Camp in the wilds of Northern Ontario for the duration of WWI. Their story is told in my forthcoming novel RELOCATIONS to be published in England in Fall 2017.

in Turkey. In Istanbul, the Turkish population was furious at the seizure in Newcastle. Halide Edib emerged as a feminist patriot denouncing the British impounding. It was one of the key reasons for the Ottoman entry into WWI on the side of Germany.

In Izmir, the comprador class carried on unconcerned. In their splendid isolation in *Paradise*, the Levantines' life was trade-based, a world purely profit-driven, mirroring a dependency in which the Greeks and Armenians functioned as the associated bourgeoisie. The Turkish/Muslim population were the underclass, mired in poverty, and representing the bottom of a highly rigid socio-economic pyramid.

Five Turkish notables are listed in the book as *persona dramata*: Rahmi Bey, Enver Pasha, Mehmet Talat Bey, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), and Halide Edib. The Ottoman authorities, principally the municipal government, were directly controlled by the Levantine families. Enver Pasha and Mehmet Talat were the leaders of the Young Turk regime, and, that regime's arch-rival, Mustafa Kemal, the victorious hero of the Turkish National Liberation. Halide, by the time of Izmir fire, had become the disillusioned Turkish feminist, though still sharing Mustafa Kemal's vision of a modern Turkey.

Though well-written and highly readable, it is not clear why Giles Milton wrote this book in the first place. He implies in the Acknowledgements that he is moved by a lost Levantine civilization, "the descendants of the Levantine dynasties of Smyrna – now scattered across the globe." It is indeed sad how many of these dynasties ended. In the final pages of the book, Milton quotes Morgenthau describing "once-prosperous families who were now walking around in shoes made of pieces of discarded automobile tyres. Their clothing, cobbled together from flour sacks was a fashion born out of necessity" (p. 373). These Levantines shared the same fate as many other privileged Ottomans. The Sultans had built a multinational empire, founded on tolerance between Islam, Christianity and Judaism, but in the age of nationalism and European imperialism, that Empire was doomed. The Ottoman minorities played their destructive part in the Empire's bloody demise.

The book by Ureneck is altogether different. It begins with a daring statement: "This is a true story." The sentence is incomplete. It should be: "This is a story, according to Greek and Armenian sources." Turkish books and sources are ignored. The bibliography at the end cites a few Turkish books,

such as Andrew Mango's *Atatürk*, and Turgut Özakman's *Şu Çılgın Türkler*, but nowhere in the text are they utilized. Ureneck's book has no Turkish content.

Ureneck writes only about missionaries and Levantines. That they lived in a Muslim-majority country seems irrelevant. The missionaries came and set up schools and charitable organizations in Turkish neighborhoods. Asa Jennings ran the Young Men's Christian Association. Minnie Milles was the director of the American Girls School, which had a whole teaching staff from the USA, Canada and other western countries. Dr. Esther Lovejoy headed the American Women's Hospital Association. A whole army of missionaries run orphanages and clinics and social clubs, funded by charity from churches and relief organizations back home. They did not provide service to Turks and Muslims. Theirs was *conditional* charity, benefits available only to Christians. The missionaries supported the Greeks and Armenians. Most lived prosperous lives in *Paradise*, in the high-rent enclave, linked to business and trade interests, in tobacco and other commodities, in insurance, shipping and banking.

Suddenly, their Levantine and missionary world ended in the flames of the Great Fire as Mustafa Kemal liberated Turkey. The missionaries

lost as much as the refugees and the displaced. Ureneck's book is all about these foreign missionaries and Levantines in Izmir. He documents how they worked and collaborated with the Christian communities. Turks got no help.

Unlike Milton's book, Ureneck makes no attempt to explain or provide the reader with any sense of Turkish/Muslim sentiment. It is irrelevant for him, because the author is writing for the outsider, as an outsider himself looking in, observing the lives and activities of aliens in an enclave in Izmir. Just because it was called Smyrna did not alter the Turkish/Muslim character of the environment. Ureneck takes the position, without any hesitation, that the Fire was all the fault of local Turks/Muslims, and that Christian minorities were all innocent victims.

That is not all. His evidence to back what he calls "Truth" is equally biased. Much of Ureneck's narrative is repetition of secondary, and distorted accounts from missionaries themselves, and Christian victims of the Fire. Of course, innocent victims suffered, but these victims included Turks as well. Ureneck's eyewitness accounts reflect only Christian suffering.

It is the job of an objective scholar to check alternative sources and reconcile conflicting accounts. Ureneck fails on this score miserably. He ignores key

sources such as Grescovich and Prentiss. For example, consider his account of the role of Minnie Milles, the director of the American Girls' School in the story of the Fire: "That morning she had seen Turkish soldiers break into nearby homes, light fires, and spread them with petroleum they poured from tins. The fires flared under the accelerant and drew close to the school...." (p. 200). Strong condemnation indeed, but it is not factual.

Milles' observation from a distance conflicts with the account in Grescovich and Prentiss: "Shortly in the afternoon (Wednesday, Sept. 13th) Grescovich, convinced that the city was doomed, again went to the military authorities to ask help, and again it was not forthcoming. It was not until six o'clock in the evening that he was given a company of 100 soldiers to serve under his direction, and it was not until eight o'clock at night before the soldiers began the destruction of the buildings by bombs, in order to check the spread of fire." In other words, Ureneck's selective referencing, turns truth on its head: fire-fighting Turkish soldiers are made into arsonists!

Ureneck's other sources on the Fire are equally flawed, e.g. on the 1924 London trial (pp. 206-11), only Armenians and Greeks speak, no Turkish voices were present, if only for cross examination. How on earth such a one-sided trial

ever took place is beyond imagination, but that, of course, is applying today's values to a time when Turks were Britain's enemy.

Ureneck's book, and to a lesser extent Milton's as well, written almost a century later, perpetuate, or regenerate a certain brand of ideology. This is ethnic ideology; especially in the Diaspora communities, a long way away from the location of bitter history where the ideological battles of long-ago took place. Arguably, the best pronouncement on the Fire is in the words of Shaw and Shaw: "Perhaps the last atrocity of the war was the suggestion, quickly taken up by the Western press, that the victorious Turkish army was responsible for burning the conquered second city of the old empire" (*History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol II, p. 303, Cambridge University Press, 1977)

Some degree of logic must also prevail in literature. In the month before the entry of the Turkish army into Izmir on 9 September 1922, the Greek army, defeated and demoralized, had put to torch the Turkish towns and villages. There were tons of war crimes. The Turkish army all this time was busy putting out the fires, while chasing out the Greek invaders. Why then would this victorious army suddenly reverse itself and go arsonist, setting

on fire the greatest war booty within its reach? It was well known that Izmir's warehouses and stores were full of food and valuables then desperately in short supply.

Undoubtedly, the Turkish majority resented the wealth and privileges of the Greek and Armenian comprador class, now desperately trying to escape. The missionaries and Allies ran away in panic, here and there, giving a helping hand to the departing Christians, in their last act of charity. It was never enough. Asa Jennings of the YMCA did manage a miracle to evacuate hundreds of thousands of refugees on commercial vessels. From the relative safety of Athens or some other site, when finally, these missionaries and Levantines reached safe harbour, contemporary writers vented their anger and frustration, as much as their moral burdens, in illogical outbursts of anti-Turkish ideology. Ureneck's account follows this bitter ideology in the name of ethnic truth.

In his Preface to *Smyrna, September 1922*, J. R. Russel, Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, has called the book "a masterpiece." He also talked of a "new generation of Turkish scholars." But neither he, nor Ureneck, recognize any Turkish losses or suffering during the period of 1915-23, which witnessed the Ottoman/Levantine world going

up in flames. The Turks, of course, got their reward with the birth of modern Turkey. That birth came however with lots of Turkish pain and sacrifice. Only "my loss counts", as is put forth in Ureneck, is no way to a hopeful future. Books in that style reflect ideological atrocity in an endless blame game.

Ideological atrocity occurs when ethnic bias closes the mind to empathy, others' feelings and emotions. In a bitter ethnic conflict, the task of an objective writer is to stay neutral, documenting *all* loss and suffering, stating the facts and letting the reader draw the moral lessons. Biased writing is intellectual manifestation of ideology gone wrong.

Happily, the final book review is a little more promising for a hopeful future based on healing and reconciliation.

The Armenian Genocide Ideology

How is ethnic ideology created? It starts at home with emotional development and identity formation. Historical memory is the catalyst. Schools and the Church carry on the task, with ideological development turning a captive and impressionable youth into ideological converts to the cause. Out of this long process, ideology as ethnic truth becomes life-long Dogma.

Youth and students, in particular, become ideological warriors, ready to do battle in defence of Dogma. In its most extreme form, ethnic or religious Dogma is the path for the modern suicide bomber and the terrorist.

Meline Toumani's book goes a long way in explaining this process. *There was and There was Not* is a personal account of how Armenian-Americans are raised on genocide ideology. In this Zero-Sum of Love & Hate, love comes with Dogma. Children are raised on Dogma as Truth. Accept it or be condemned as Denialist. No room exists for freedom of expression, academic or otherwise.

Toumani's title is a Turkish metaphor, *Bir Varmış Bir Yokmuş*, once upon a time. But, it is not, as in the original Turkish, of fables and fairy tales of princes and princesses told, as nursery rhymes by mothers and grandmothers. It refers to the dispossessed Armenians of Eastern Anatolia. This area, in Armenian ideology, is Western Armenia, an irredentist idea known as Greater Armenia. It is written into the Armenian Constitution and it is a big deal in American Diaspora politics. Ideologically, just as *Megali Idea* spawned Hellenic Asia Minor, so did Greater Armenia in the east and the entire genocide narrative as an irredentist project, justifying a land claim.

In *There Was And There Was Not* Toumani chooses an alternative path. Unsatisfied with standard brainwashing, the New York Times writer goes to Turkey, twice actually, spending a total of four years on a long search to find her own soul, to liberate the self in a "love thine enemy" experiment. She meets all kinds of people, ordinary citizens, officials, historians and, in particular Hrant Dink the murdered Turkish-Armenian journalist-pacifist dedicated to reconciliation. In the end, significantly due to Dink's influence, she succeeds, but no more than partially.

The author begins her odyssey with a confession. While a university student in Berkley, California, she comes face to face with the injustice of False Assumption. "There are so many layers of confusion in what happened..." she writes (p. 58) of the Algar Hamid affair at UCLA on 24 April 1998, when a British-born academic was assumed by Armenian students to be a Turkish historian and therefore became the target for harassment and a racist attack.

Toumani was revolted by the injustice of the Hamid affair. The unfairness pushed her into self-doubt and analysis. Is it likely that the "genocide" narrative is likewise based on False Assumption? In Armenian workshops and Youth Camps, she started questioning, but only got unpalatable doses of Dogma.

The author is a rare exception, standing against a stifling Armenian Diaspora schooling system designed for ethnic demonization and hate. She documents in vivid and painful detail how young Armenian children are brain-washed in their early years, in schools and youth camps, to hate Turks as a nation of “denialists” of the ultimate evil of genocide in WWI.

In the end, the author prescribes her own medicine for her growing doubts: Go to Turkey and find out for yourself. She prepares herself well, even learning Turkish.

In Turkey, she travelled extensively, and she tried to understand the Turkish mind. However, the book is sadly lacking in detail of the Turkish loss and suffering inflicted by the Armenian side in this conflict. The author’s Turkish friends are carefully selected for their pro-Armenian stance, like Muge Gokcen and Taner Akcam, and she offhandedly dismisses Turkish authorities on the subject, especially those connected, even marginally, with the Turkish government.

Yet, her project of search and self-discovery is still praiseworthy. The author visited Turkey twice, the first trip coinciding with the heinous murder of Hrant Dink. She admits his great influence, his passionate commitment to reconciliation between Turks and

Armenians, but, mysteriously, the author’s commitment to reconciliation is weak compared to Dink’s.

The author’s courage to make a public stand against the Armenian American Diaspora is to be lauded. Correcting wrong ideology begins with self-doubt and soul-searching. Courage is needed to confront historical truth. Hate and brainwashing merely replicate Dogma and reproduce closed minds. Real healing and reconciliation in past human tragedies are only possible with more voices like the author’s.

In conclusion, a few guidelines are in order to deal with ideological rights and wrongs in history.

Firstly, it should be remembered that History is not a monolithic discipline with an agreed upon methodology or norms of study. Nor are history writers always Historians or experts in archival research, competent in differentiating between reliable and unreliable sources. Popular history, like the books reviewed here, are books written by journalists and historical writers who may have more in common with fiction writers. In fiction, the plot and dramatic content are essential ingredients. Cold facts rarely sell books. Dramatic content, polished and embellished at the hand of gifted speech-writers, does. Historical truth, setting the record

straight, can and often does involve dramatic events, but dramatic writing is something other than History.

Official history writing is a State-approved record, subject to rules and regulations set by an authority. Political leaders have one eye on the past, the other on the future. What is legitimate and permissible is often determined with a subject's historical legacy. In the public relations and public opinion arena, popular history is far more significant. Often official history may be dismissed as propaganda. It is, therefore, extremely important that popular history writing is encouraged to ensure and safeguard a nation's historical heritage.

In the case of Turkish popular history writing, the genre is of recent origin. This review article has attempted to demonstrate how, when a vacuum

exists, it is easily filled by ideologically-driven books that represent nothing other than the intellectual hijacking of a national heritage.

In multinational Diaspora societies, there is a special challenge. The silent mainstream majority, including law-makers, often do not know the relevant ethnic history they are called to act upon as judge and jury. It is up to each ethnic group to safeguard its own heritage. For the silent majority, the guiding principle should be this: Each and every ethnic heritage must be held equal in law, and celebrated in peace and harmony without any racial preference.

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European Islamophobia Report

By Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez (Eds.)

Istanbul: SETA Foundation, 2016, 610 pages,
ISBN: 9789752459007.

Following the so-called refugee crisis, terrorist attacks in many European states, and the increasing visibility of far-right movements, a wave of anti-Muslim rhetoric and discourse has begun to dominate European politics. With regard to the developments on this phenomenon, the SETA Foundation, one of the leading think tanks started to publish the annual *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR), which was presented for the first time in 21 March 2016, the international day for the elimination of racial discrimination. It currently comprises nearly 27 national reports written by approximately 35 authors regarding the tendencies of Islamophobia in European countries. The report features the work of a broad group of specialists from different universities, Islamophobia observatories, and human rights activists.

As clearly stated in their introduction by the editors of the EIR, Enes Bayraklı from the Turkish-German University and Farid Hafez from Salzburg University, this long-time project is dedicated to documenting

and analysing trends in the spread of Islamophobia in various European states from a qualitative and not a quantitative research perspective; and aims to continue deepening understanding of the concept as well as funding for inquiry into this increasingly worrying phenomenon.

First of all, the term “Islamophobia” is defined by the editors in the 2015 version as follows: “*When talking about Islamophobia, we mean anti-Muslim racism. Islamophobia is about a dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilizing and widening their power by means of defining a scapegoat –real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the definition of a constructed we*” (EIR 2015, p.7).

Technically an executive summary at the beginning and a chronology at the end of each year’s report give the readers an overview on the state and the development of Islamophobia in the respective countries. The editors at the beginning and authors at the end of every report offer a couple of policy recommendations for political

bodies, civil society organizations and individuals in Europe. These recommendations include raising awareness in civil society of the problem of Islamophobia, recognition of Islamophobia by state institutions as a type of racism, as well as urging politicians to speak out against Islamophobia.

At the same time, several unique aspects of the EIR make a difference to current Islamophobia studies. For instance, unlike the former and current studies on Islamophobia, which have predominantly concentrated on Western Europe, this report is the first study that covers some Eastern European countries such as Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Serbia. Since the single national reports share the same structure (education, politics, employment, media, internet and the justice system), the EIR offers the possibility to compare Islamophobia in these countries as well.

The two volumes of the EIR in 2015 and in 2016 show that Muslim women are among the most vulnerable direct victims of Islamophobia. The editors explain this situation as follows: *“Women who are visibly Muslim are socially ostracised in many places. The combination of internal community problems, discrimination (education and employment) and hate crimes against*

Muslim women (data show that it is 70% more likely for a Muslim woman to be attacked in the street) are leaving their horrible mark on Muslim women”. Related to this, the editors argue that Islamophobia poses a great risk to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Hence, according to the editors, the protection and the empowerment of Muslim women have to be on the central agenda of states and NGOs. Also, regarding this fact the editors recommend that the response mechanisms should be made more available, accessible and clear while underlining that empowerment of the Muslim community is needed to allow citizenship and help European states deepen their democracies.

On the other hand, the findings of 2015 and 2016 editions of the EIR have been echoed in many international news agencies, including Al Jazeera, BBC, Der Standart, Huffington Post, Makkah Newspaper and Süddeutsche Zeitung. Also, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada used the information based on the 2016 national report of Finland to establish the “religion” section of Finland country profile. Moreover, International Network for Hate Studies (INHS), an internationally respected agency for hate crime studies, provides the whole EIR to its researchers as a useful source

on the field. In addition to this, the EIR has found attention in the European political level as well. For instance, the member of the European Parliament Paul Rübzig gave a question for written answer to the European Commission on 14th July 2016 to clarify whether any Commission expert involved in the writing of the report or not.

The European Islamophobia Report is an exceptional work that covers a broad spectrum of issues and challenges pertaining to the anti-Muslim wave in Europe. The report is very well-produced, the editing and proof-reading are of good quality. It is a welcome addition to the growing literature on an interesting and important issue on the world scene today. Despite the fact that the data in specific fields are not available as the

official bodies of many European states do not share the statistical data with the public, the report still facilitates an impulse for identifying research gaps; and it reshuffles many cards and opens many questions for further studies.

The EIR and its contributors should be congratulated for producing a truly valuable and detailed piece of work using an enormous amount of primary sources as well as providing new perspectives on Islamophobia studies. Hence, I would recommend the EIR series to scholars, policymakers, lawyers and judges who are interested in contemporary Islamophobia studies.

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Peacebuilding and NGOs: State-Civil Society Interactions

By Ryerson Christie

New York: Routledge Pub., 2013, 263 pages,
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This book focuses on the peacebuilding process and challenges in Cambodia by looking at state and civil society interaction. The peacebuilding process is a complicated step of conflict resolution stages to reach a durable peace in a post-conflict period. Christie's book is valuable for exploring in depth the relationship between the state and NGOs in the peacebuilding process. Additionally, a particularly important side of this book is the covering of a study about interaction between an authoritarian state and a civil society that tries to establish a sustainable liberal peace via the peacebuilding process despite the authoritarian regime.

Secondly, the author highlights that many peacebuilding analyses have tended only to look at the period of the UN mission. A durable peace, however, cannot be sustained unless we focus on the post-mission period of efforts to eliminate the socio-political reasons behind the conflict and violence. So, the composition of the interaction between the state and civil society is

vitaly valuable for reaching to the stable and durable peace in the post-mission peacebuilding process by uncovering challenges and difficulties in conflict studies.

The author of the book, Ryerson Christie, is a lecturer at the University of Bristol. His research revolves around critical security studies and analysis of peacebuilding. Especially the relationship between the state, civil society, and the local community stands at the center of his work. Among his recent work is research on the peacebuilding process in Southeast Asia, especially in Cambodia. *Peacebuilding and NGO's: State-civil Society Interactions* is among his publications on this topic. The author's research on Cambodia benefits from having accurate and enriched text from an inside perspective and because it gets around the usual problem of getting reliable information from officials in an autocratic regime. The author has coped with this problem by taking great support from academic and "development workers" in Cambodia.

The result is a tightly woven text of practical information from the field intertwined with theoretical explanations. Therefore this book genuinely contributes to the conflict resolution literature.

The book consists of nine chapters together with the introduction and conclusion. The first three chapters include the introduction and analysis of the peacebuilding process. The author explains the aim of the book in the introduction as being “*to understand how peacebuilding has served to dictate the nature and limits of politics that can take place within the targeted society and how it serves to define the very meaning of society, security and politics*” (p.4). The main purpose of the book is thus to try and develop a critical understanding of peacebuilding and to advance the ways in which CSS can be applied.

The second chapter covers *Critical Analyses of Peacebuilding*. The author reveals a relationship between security and identity by analyzing the political dynamic of country in a peacebuilding process. Hence, civil society and state interaction forms the main body of this chapter. The author has underlined the peacebuilding process by claiming that it’s not only a matter of conciliation between a conflicted dynamic in a society but also a dilemma of reconstruction of a democratic and liberal society. Therefore this chapter explains the

relationship between democratic peace and peacebuilding in the light of liberal theory, while providing a background for the Cambodia peacebuilding case at the same time.

The third section is focused on the criticism of NGOs in the peacebuilding process. Actually there are numerous critiques in the literature against NGOs’ role in the peacebuilding and development process, but this book deals with the potential problems that emerge from the modern practice of civil society-centric reconstruction and rehabilitation. This chapter includes therefore some points of criticism about neoliberalism, local economy, democratization/accountability, state relations and politics. NGOs are at the center of the critiques in this chapter because of their market solution character. Therefore, the results of the NGOs’ activities are argued to sometimes cause a distortion of the local character of the economy. Another criticism is about democratization and accountability, the argument being that NGOs do not often respond to all local needs and wants because their activities more often follow the interest of donors.

The following chapter explores the dynamic of conflict between the post-conflict state and the NGOs in the case of Cambodia. Firstly the author mentions about the brief history of

Cambodia at the beginning of this chapter to understand some challenges of the peacebuilding process in an authoritarian regime. In the way, this chapter also includes some critiques of imperialism in general. According to Christie “*the area of French colonial rule affected much of the social fabric of Cambodian society*” (p.66). Additionally, the author also finds a correlation between the authoritarian character of the Cambodian regime and its communist past. Military coups and political struggles have also demolished social networks and mutual trust in the society. Guerilla wars and external intervention destroyed not only Cambodian society but also the natural environment and resources. All of these negative effects are shown to complicate the peacebuilding process and rehabilitation of society in Cambodia.

The fifth chapter focuses on the conflict of interest between NGOs and economic and political elites in Cambodia and reveals some dynamics of mismanagement and abuse of authority over state resources. It goes on to claim that NGOs may play a leading role in society to resolve and ameliorate failed state syndromes by empowering understanding of democracy and its practices. In this context, Christie draws attention to the reason for state intervention into NGOs as based, in the Cambodian case, on conflicts of

interest. It’s obvious that there is a clear conflict between the needs of the community and the interests of the Cambodian elite especially on the natural resources of the state. Fisheries, lands and forestry have a prominent role in the Cambodian economy. The upper echelons of the business world and politics may manipulate the political and economic system for their advantage and individual interests. Public and private lines become blurred in the state management, at which point civil society and NGOs play an important role for the defense of community rights.

Another serious problem in Cambodian society is shown to be the sex trade. NGOs are seeking to halt or diminish prostitution and individuals who profit from this sector. The Cambodian government supports women rights and stands against the exploitation of women as well also, but Cambodian societal structure and culture complicates the applying of modern standards on women’s rights. Hence, NGOs are also dealing with cultural violation.

The sixth part has been allocated to bureaucratic problems. The authoritarian structure of the Cambodian state was mentioned before. NGOs may work freely and effectively only in a democratic society via the logic of a minimal state of neoliberal

thought. For full effectiveness therefore, the transition of the state also needs more time. According to Christie there are insufficient improvements in the liberalization of the state but many international organizations are working in Cambodia already. Additionally, the state has focused on the development goals to bring stability in Cambodia. Briefly, this chapter describes a “*gradually changing environment where the state is regaining financial and technical capacity and is beginning to reassert itself in some policy area*” (p.115).

The seventh chapter of this book is related with identity. Ethnic and religious diversity may be main sources of conflict in a society, and indeed, a strong Cambodian nationalism has been imbued with a strong anti-Vietnamese and anti-Thai character. Actually, nationalist and some religious characteristics of society were suppressed under the Marxist inspired Khmer Rouge rule, but the current situation on gender, race and religion has been at the heart of the narrative on what it is to be Cambodia now. Hence, some of the very same issues are also affecting the relationship between NGOs and the state.

The eighth chapter explores the dynamics of interaction between NGOs and the state that arise from a conflicting interpretation of what is and is not political. This chapter thus includes

some explanations and critiques about the issue of human rights, freedom of the press, and advocacy. The author reveals the difficulty of conducting a peacebuilding process in a society in which governance and social practices are not consistent with liberal values. In this context, the author mentions the creating of a democratic culture by means of developing associational behavior by peacebuilding practices. Yet, he does not touch on the potential role of the social and cultural character of Cambodians on the building of a democratic society.

In summary, this book focuses on how the peacebuilding process has served “*to dictate the nature and limits of politics that can take place within the targeted society*” (p.4) and how it serves to define the actual meaning of security and politics in a society. Christie tries to reveal how to improve the practices of civil society in Cambodia in this context. The author believes that the practice of peacebuilding theory may solve social and political problems by facilitating the liberalization of Cambodia because effective peacebuilding practices are based on the universalized notion of the nature of liberal civil society. Therefore, the Cambodian case is a peculiar example to expose how the post-conflict peace building process works in an authoritarian regime. The exclusive feature of this book is that it

looks at both sides of the peace building process, criticizing and discussing social and political interaction in a society. The role of the political culture of Cambodia provides an ideal case for discussing this subject. As a result, it can be mentioned frankly that this book is an authentic reference for

peacebuilding researchers and workers who are working on different cultures and other authoritarian regimes as well.

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