

# **Ethnic cleansing and Displacement in the Modern World**

- Lecture three: The Armenian Genocide

# Questions to think about

- 1) Can we compare the Armenian Genocide to the Nazi holocaust of the Jews?
- 2) How strong was the Ottoman Turkish state at the time?
- 3) How modern was the Genocide?
- 4) What is the case for intentionality?

# Lecture run-down

- Countries which recognise Genocide – Numbers and figures
- **Origins of the Genocide:**
  - a) The Ottoman Empire in the Nineteenth century – decline
  - b) the position of ethnic minorities in the empire – attempts at reform of the empire, the position of the Armenians in the empire, repression
  - c) The rise of the Young Turks (1900-1908), the Committee of Union and Progress, what they stood for?
  - d) Young Turks in power – 1908-1913 – Radicalisation, Adana massacres
  - e) The First World War, Total War and the Prelude to Genocide
- **The Genocide itself -**
  - a) The last moves to Genocide, How it was carried out, who carried it out?
- **The aftermath – intent, extent, geopolitics, property, refugees**
- **Conclusions**

# List of countries which recognise the Armenian Genocide

Uruguay (A Parliamentary Resolution was adopted in 1965, followed by a Law adopted in 2004)

Cyprus (A Parliamentary Resolution was adopted in 1982)

European Union (Parliamentary Resolutions adopted in 1987, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005)

Argentina (A Senate Resolution was adopted in 1993, followed by a Law adopted in 2004)

Russia (A State Duma Resolution was adopted in 1995)

Canada (Resolutions were adopted in 1996, 2002 and 2004)

Greece (A Parliamentary Resolution was adopted in 1996)

Lebanon (Resolutions were adopted in 1997 and 2000)

Belgium (A Senate Resolution was adopted in 1998)

France (Parliamentary Resolutions were adopted in 1998 and 2000, followed by a Law adopted in 2001)

# List of countries which recognise the Armenian Genocide

Sweden (A Parliamentary report of 2000)

Vatican (In 2000)

Italy (A Resolution adopted in 2000)

Switzerland (A Resolution adopted in 2003)

Slovakia (A Resolution adopted in 2004)

The Netherlands (A Resolution adopted in 2004)

Poland (A Resolution adopted in 2004)

Venezuela (A Resolution adopted in 2005)

Germany (A Resolution adopted in 2005)

Lithuania (A Resolution adopted in 2005)

Chile (A Resolution adopted in 2007)

# Numbers in the Genocide

According to Armenian sources upwards of 1 million were killed – mention 1.5 million

Turkish sources say that approximately 300,000 died

Mazower says 800,000, Winter says 500,000-1 million

# Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century

- **a) Decline in the nineteenth century**

- i) Capitulations

- ii) Loss of territory
    - lii) Growth in insecurity

- **b) Ethnic situation in the Empire**

- i) Millet system
  - ii) Discrimination integral to the system
  - lii) But, if loyal, minorities could do well

How could the Empire be saved from destruction? Increasing voices for reform and centralisation, but what would happen to the minorities within such a reformed system?

# Decline of the Ottoman Empire

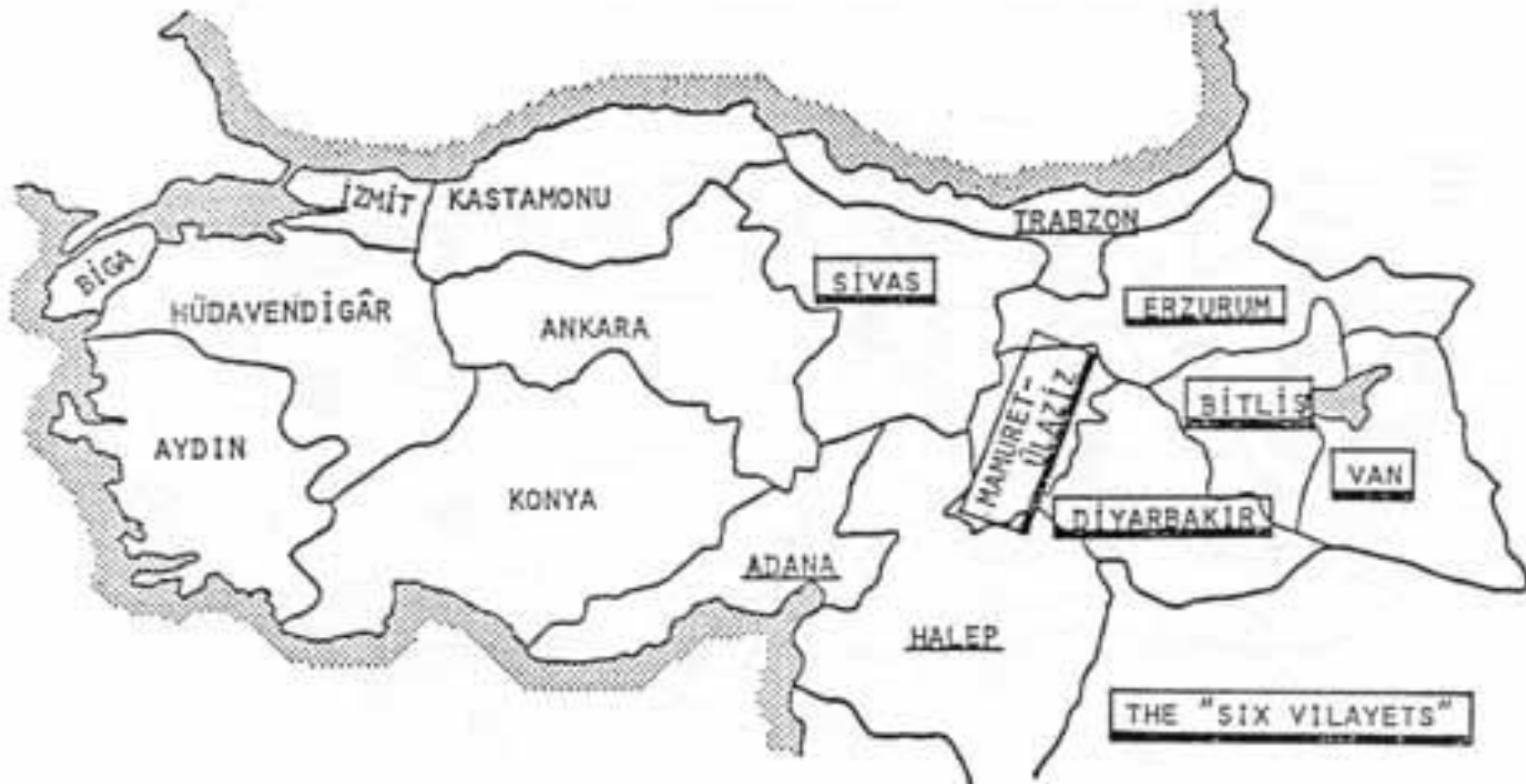




# Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century

- **c) Armenians in the Empire**
  - i) Thriving economic community, Ottoman bourgeoisie
  - ii) Mostly located in the six vilayets
  - iii) Relatively loyal inhabitants
- d) But second half of the 19th century - moves to reform the Empire – Conservative backlash – 1878 – Coming to power of Sultan Abdul Hamid II
- e) Rise of Armenian political groupings (Dashnaks – Socialists, Hunchaks – Nationalists) late nineteenth century
- f) Reactionary turn of the Ottoman Empire – massacres of Armenians in 1894-6 in Eastern Anatolia – 200,000 die – Pogrom violence

# The Six Vilayets



Map I. Ottoman Anatolia

# Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1842-1918)



# The rise of the Young Turks (1900-1908)

- a) Initially a progressive movement, against the corruption of the court – sought equality before the law, constitutional rule
- b) Made up of educated men, linked to medical academies, progressive nationalist, centralism and desire for reform
- c) Administrative body – Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) – Triumverate of Djemal, Enver and Talaat Pasha – meritocratic, different beliefs
- d) Nationalist ideologues – Ziya Gökalp – spread of Pan-Turkism

# Committee of Union and Progress

- Enver Pasha



Ziya Gökalp



# Pan-Turkism/Turanism

The Vision of Pan-Turanism



# Young Turks in Power (1908-1913)

- At first relatively tolerant – aim to work with minority nationalists – Turkify education system
- Radicalisation:
- Adana massacres of Armenians 1909
- Young Turk coup and purge of army 1913
- Important effect of the Balkan wars (1912-3)– increase anger towards Christians – rise of the Secret Organisation – often made up of criminals – conducts dirty war vs Christians
- Secret international agreement regarding Armenians 1914
- Discussions of deportations of minorities in some quarters even before the World War starts in 1914

# The first world War, Total war and the prelude to Genocide





# The first world War, Total war and the prelude to Genocide

- Jay Winter and 'Total war'
- Industrialised warfare
- Mass fatalities
- Inclusion of civilians
- The 'Cultivation of Hatred' – move away from liberalism/internationalism to patriotism/nationalism – rise of national(ist) propaganda

*'Total war did not produce genocide; it created the military, political and cultural space in which it could occur, and occur again.'*

# The first world War, Total war and the prelude to Genocide

- Ottomans enter the war on the side of Germans
- Armenians in a terrible position territorially and geopolitically – close to the Russian border – many Armenians live across the border – Russia on the opposing side
- Failure of Ottoman Caucasus campaign against Russia puts Armenians in a worse position
- Discussions over deportations of Armenians

# Ottoman Empire decline



# The Genocide

- a) The last moves towards Genocide – development of plans to deport the Armenians
- Mann:

*'It does not resemble a highly planned genocide, though it did rapidly escalate to that.  
Yes this was a genocide, though it was very rushed and initially disorganised'*

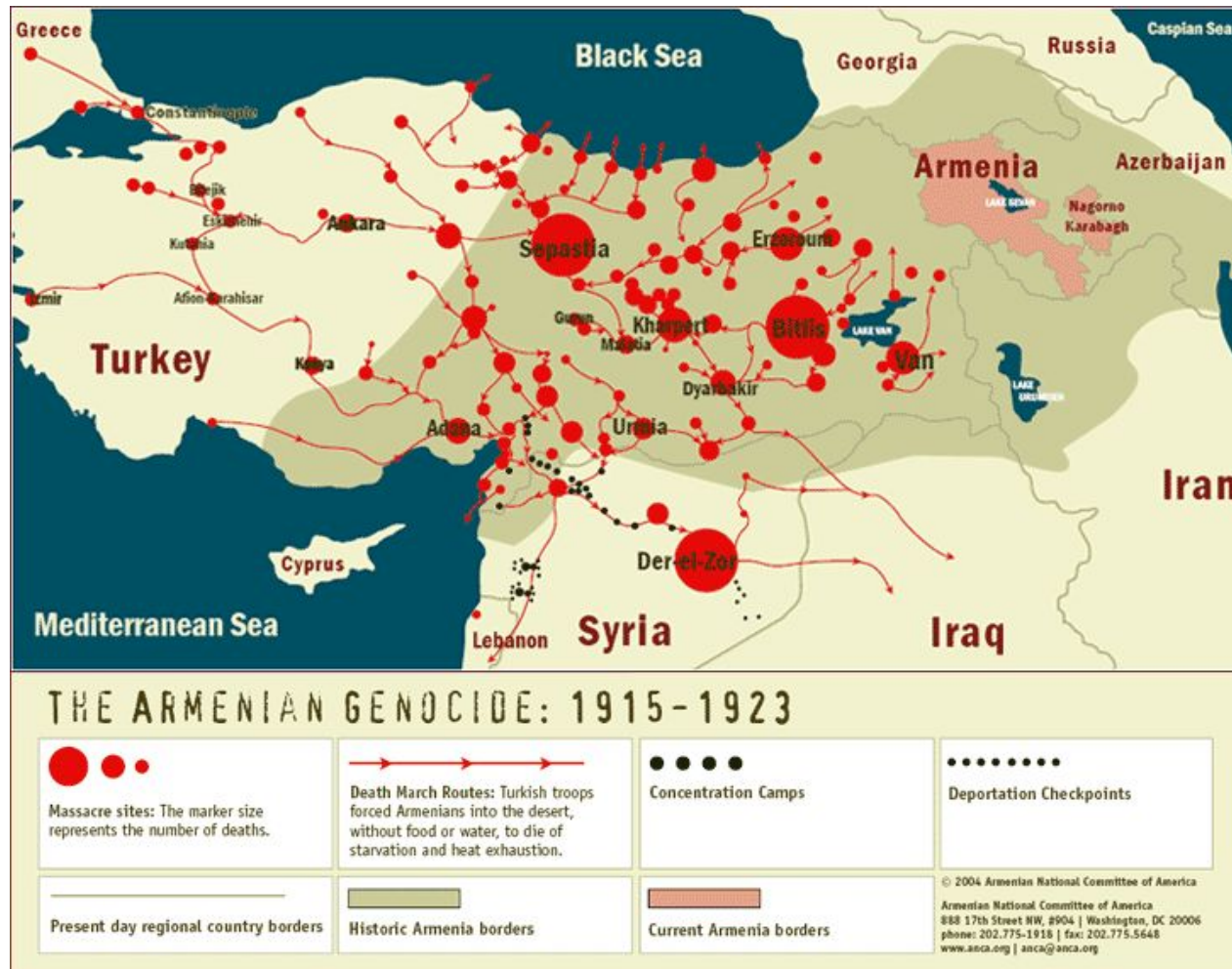
Winter:

*'What turned a war crime into a genocidal act was the context of total war, a context that translated deportation swiftly into the mass slaughter, abuse, and starvation of an entire ethnic group potentially troublesome to an authoritarian regime at war'*

# The Genocide

- February 1915 – Dordyol - first deportations of Armenian men
- February 1915 – 200,000 Armenians kicked out of the Ottoman army – considered traitors
- March 1915 – Zeitun in central Turkey – deportations
- April 1915 - Uprising in Van – classic example for the Turks of Armenian treachery
- April 1915 – Arrest and murder of important Armenian figures in Istanbul
- May-August 1915 – deportation orders sent across the whole country
- Begin in East Anatolia, spread to the West

# Map of the Genocide



# The Genocide

- How it was enacted:
  - 1) Community leaders arrested - killed
  - 2) Men arrested and killed
  - 3) Women and children marched out of towns towards Syria
  - 4) Lucky ones make it all the way
- Example of Marzovan (modern day Merzifon)
- Happens to thousands of other towns

# Merzifon



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# The Genocide

- Who carried it out?
  - a) The CUP leadership
  - b) Local governors
  - c) Special organisation
  - d) Ordinary Turks?

# The Aftermath

- a) Intent – difficult to find documents
- b) Extent – not as far-reaching as the Nazi Genocide
- c) Geopolitical issues- Russia/Germany/Greece
- d) Refugees and displacement – did they fuel the genocide?
- e) Property and the Genocide – resettlement, robbery
- f) Destruction and memory – the destruction of villages, websites, memorials, Genocide recognition

# Conclusions

- 1) State directed
- 2) Undertaken during war
- 3) Not as racist and far-reaching as the Nazi genocide but devastating levels of death – deportations definitely planned
- 4) Linked to organic nationalism – initially a progressive movement – war radicalises the situation
- 5) Turkish state relatively weak
- 6) Not a very modern genocide – technologically – but modern in terms of thought
- 7) Long-reaching effects – clash in the present Turkey vs the rest of the world