

1st Place High School Category
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"Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" Quoted by Adolph Hitler on the eve of his planned mass annihilation of the Jewish race to his Generals as he deliberated the invasion of Poland. The statement is cold, evil and mostly sadistic. Who does remember the Armenians? Not the Turkish government, who continually denies any wrongdoing. Not the Turkish people, who for generations have been brainwashed to believe that the genocide did not exist and recently, the American Government who are led to believe that the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians was simply part of World War I instead of a deliberate act of race persecution.

We, as Armenians are haunted by Hitler's words. Even today, some 93 years later, the lingering images of the death march through the Syrian Desert, the starvation, the mass executions and the torture in unspeakable ways are forever embedded in the minds of not only the few survivors left. Millions of family members, who have heard the stories, read the books and felt the pain. Families were ripped apart, homes and lives were destroyed, traditions were lost all at the hands of the Turks. Turkey promotes a denial on the part of the perpetrators by distorting the truth through funding Turkish Studies Departments in some of the most prestigious universities around the United States including, Harvard, Georgetown, Princeton and The University of Michigan. In addition, Turkey has paid lobbyists up to \$1,000,000 to enter the United States Congress to petition against Armenian Genocide recognition and create organizations strictly designed to sway the public's opinion about the massacre.

Hitler's statement set off the beginning of the Jewish holocaust and is inscribed on the wall at the U. S Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. Because of

the initial denial and the fact that the Turkish Government had not been brought to justice for its horrific crimes against the Armenians. Hitler was led to believe that he would not be held responsible for his crimes against humanity. The denial of the Turkish government further cemented the belief of Hitler that what he was about to embark on was justified and not worthy of looking back. Failure of recognizing genocide gives fuel to future tyrants that anyone can commit crimes against a nation for religious beliefs, appearance, political viewpoints or race. It proves that no one ethnic group -is safe from persecution.

The Jewish Holocaust did occur with over six million Jews losing their lives. The Armenian Massacre did occur with almost 1.5 million Armenians losing their lives. Darfur continues to exist with estimates at 300,000 deaths. The Rwandan Genocide estimates between 800,000 and 1,000,000 deaths. To ignore the statistics is staggering and appalling. To see the world sit back and not take action is inexcusable, but to have it ignored for decades is horrifying and eventually denied is unspeakable. Standing up to those who commit atrocities is paramount in recognizing the truth in a face of lies.

On a personal note, it saddens me that my grandparents never experienced the love and nurturing of having grandchildren and extended family. If the Armenian massacre never occurred, then my family would not have lost an entire generation. Our Ancestors whose lives were taken in the most barbaric ways at the hands of the Turks had dreams and hopes that were shed because of who they were and where they lived. They never had the opportunity to achieve their American Dream and to build upon their dreams. It is important to me, as a third generation Armenian/American to continue to memorialize those who lost their lives in the genocide of 1915 and to bring it to the forefront of people everywhere.

Work Cited

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