

BOOK REVIEWS

STEFAN IHRIG, JUSTIFYING GENOCIDE:
GERMANY AND THE ARMENIANS FROM BISMARCK TO
HITLER, CAMBRIDGE, MA: HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016,
ISBN: 978-0674504790; 472 PAGES.

Reviewed by Robert Tatoyan
Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

The question of involvement and complicity of Germany in the Armenian Genocide is one of the directions of research of the history of the Armenian Genocide. This question was put into agenda from the beginning of the Armenian deportation and massacres in 1915, at first by Entente powers with the aim to emphasize Germany's role in this process. Afterwards many foreign and Armenian scholars explored this question in dozens of books and articles.¹ Of recent years' research we would like to highlight the groundbreaking study of Vahakn Dadrian "German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity"² and a fundamental source book of Wolfgang Gust's "The Armenian Genocide. Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916".³

To these studies comes to contribute Dr. Stephen Ihrig's book "Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler," published in January 2016. Here the author, the Polonsky Fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, presents a broad picture and a continuous narrative of reception of the Armenian question and the Armenian Genocide topics by German policymakers, press and public from appearance of the Armenian question in the agenda of international diplomacy in 1878 up to beginning of WWII.

Ihrig adopts quite lively and unconventional style and structure for his book. This is obvious from the beginning of his study which actually has two preambles. The first is a short Prologue entitled "Franz Werfel Meets Adolf Hitler," there in full accordance with the Latin principle "in medias res" the author presents one of the "protagonists" of his

1. The Select Bibliography on German Involvement in the Armenian Genocide, composed by Zorian Institute in 22 November 2011 lists the names of 45 studies in English, French and German, which deal with this topic (see online at: <http://www.zoryaninstitute.org/bibliographies/Select%20Bibliography%20on%20German%20Involvement.pdf>):

2. Vahakn N. Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity* (Watertown, MA: Blue Crane Books, 1996).

3. Wolfgang Gust, *Der Völkermord an Den Armeniern 1915/16: Dokumente Aus Dem Politischen Archiv Des Deutschen Auswärtigen Amts* (Spinge, Germany: Яu Klampen, 2005).

book – the famous Austrian writer of Jewish origin – and ponders about the possibility of the meeting between him and Adolf Hitler in late 1932 in Breslau. The second is broader and more formal (in structure but not in content) Introduction, entitled “Questions of Genocide,” here the author presents the main topic, aims and objectives of the study.

After introducing Werfel’s famous book “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” as a warning of Hitler, Ihrig puts before reader the following questions: “Why would a German (-language) author use the Armenian Genocide to warn Germany of Hitler and Nazis? How could he think this was an effective narrative and use of his time?” The answer according to author is imminent: the Armenian Genocide was well remembered in Germany when Werfel published his “Forty days” in late 1933. (p. 4) Thus Ihrig states the core argument of his book: the Armenian Genocide was and is of towering importance for German history, even though its role there has been largely ignored. (p. 6) Ihrig again and again emphasize what his book is about: “it is the history of Germany’s understanding of the Armenian Genocide (in a broad context, beginning with the role of the Armenians in German history since Bismarck) (p. 11), “this book is about trying to understand how a society – German society – could possibly engage in a multilayer debate about genocide... full of details, horrors, and personal testimonies – only for that very society (or at least part of it) to commit another, even more unimaginable genocide merely a few years later.” (p. 8)

Author claims that his book is the first extensive study of the role the Armenian Genocide played for Germany and German history. (p. 11) The book covers the time from the 1870s to the Holocaust, and thus touches on many very different political and societal backgrounds, actors, relationships, and facts. To accompany the reader throughout the story the author at the end of introduction presents four “protagonists,” four men who, in different ways, and for different reasons, became “passionate warriors” against genocide: Johannes Lepsius, Max Erwin Scheubner-Richter, Armin T. Wegner, and Franz Werfel. “Who they are will become clear in what follows, – notices Ihrig. - One thing, though, unites them: their quest to raise the alarm in Germany about genocide.” (p. 15)

The book consists of four major parts with fifteen chapters. Part One, which have four chapters, is entitled “Armenian Blood Money” and serves as a background and introduction to German policies toward and discussions about the Ottoman Armenians prior to 1915. The first chapter - “Beginnings under Bismarck” – analyses the policy of German chancellor Bismarck in connection of the emergence and during first years of the Armenian question. Here Ihrig discusses the first famous German quote on the Oriental (=Armenian) question, Bismarck’s words that the Oriental question is not worth the “healthy bones” of even “one Pomeranian musketeer.” The author shows that on the contrary, Bismarck and his Germany were very much interested in the Ottoman Empire but not from the point of view of caring about the peoples inside of this state. From the beginning the Armenian question was used by the German chancellor as a means to promote the German-Ottoman rapprochement at the price of the Armenians. (p. 28) As author summarize “The aspiration of the Armenians were on the one hand a cumbersome nuisance to Bismarck and later to Wilhelm II as well, but, on the other hand, they also offered opportunities. ...The Arme-

nian question was constantly used by Germany as a pawn in its game to endear itself to the Ottomans: it was a pawn in Germany's quest for a place in the colonial sun as well as for its new place in the game of the Great Powers in Europe. Germany's silence on the Armenians was something like blood money that Bismarck, Wilhelm, the Foreign Office, and other political leaders were willing and even thought in necessary to pay. This constant and decades-long cynical use of the life and liberty of a people – and a Christian people – accustomed the German political elite and public to anti-Armenian views and discourses, to a “pragmatic” approach to the Armenian question, and, most crucially in the long run, to a “pragmatic” approach to *human* rights, life, and liberty more generally.” (pp. 29-30)

The Chapter 2 - “Germany and the Armenian Horrors of the 1890s” - is central both by its length (28 pages) as well as meaning for the Part I of the book. Here the author discusses the reactions to the massacres of Armenians in 1894-1896 by official Germany and then by the German press. Already in the introduction to this chapter Ihrig states that the Armenian massacres did little to change political Germany's position on the Armenians, quite the opposite: they gave Germany another chance to cement its role as Abdul Hamid's ally by “selling out the Armenians.” (p. 33)

Ihrig abundantly cites Kaiser Wilhelm's reaction to the massacres – comments made on the margins of German diplomatic reports from Constantinople: “Their [Armenians – R.T.] blood upon England's head,” (about Sasoun massacre, p. 37) “Artillery fire into Yildiz [sultan's palace] is the only thing that will have any effect now,” (about Zeytun conflict, p. 38) “This surpasses everything before, this is indeed a true St. Bartholomew's massacre! It is necessary to speak in a different tone with the Porte! Because these are Christians! And after all it is also against the other white Christians,” (on the massacres of Armenians in Trebizond, *ibid*) “And new as a Christian and a European, one has to watch quietly and even hand out good words to the sultan! Shame! On all of us!” (p. 39) As Ihrig notes, yet despite all the Kaiser's private outrage, for Germany it was not an option to intervene on behalf of the Armenians.

In this chapter Ihrig also introduces Johannes Lepsius, one of the “protagonists” of his book, the person, who popularized knowledge of 1890s massacres in Germany with his articles in press and especially by his volume “Armenia and Europe” (1896). (p. 47)

The author distinguishes the following features of the German reception of the 1890s massacres: 1) the 1896 debates saw the first mention of the direct German equivalent of the term “genocide” (*Völkermord*); 2) the conservative and pro-government press generally advocated and justified Turkish actions against Armenians by describing Armenians as “usurers” and “revolutionaries”; 3) Armenian massacres were considered as directed not against Christians but against particular race and thus used as argument against extending help and charity to the Armenians. (pp. 55-57)

Ihrig summarizes the chapter in the following sentences: “What is illustrative of the first large Armenian debate in Germany is the way the anti-Armenian faction – the majority of the press, the political leadership, and the Foreign Office – tried to stifle all criticism of Turkey. Not only did it attempt to justify what had happened – through racial qualifications,

appeals to German state interest, and warnings of a European war – but it launched an all-out war against any pro-Armenian sentiments. ...The Kaiser and the leaders of German politics knew what they were doing, whom they were backing, and what moral price they were in fact paying – despite all the whitewashing by the domestic press.” (p. 58)

Chapter 3, entitled “The Triumph of German Anti-Armenianism” focuses on discussions of the Armenian question in Germany from the end of Hamidian massacres up to Young Turkish revolution of 1908. Author rightly notes that due to Germany’s acquiescence to Abdul Hamid’s bloody policies, Germany became privileged economic partner of Turkey. Accordingly, the anti-Armenian stance of German ruling elite and imperialist press became clearer: this new racial discourse massively fostered the dehumanization of Armenians, thereby justifying and excusing all kinds of violence against them. Thus, the German anti-Armenianism became both a duplicate and an extension of modern German anti-Semitism. (p. 60)

Here Ihrig gives detailed analysis of anti-Armenian passages in Protestant pastor Friedrich Naumann’s book “Asia.” Published in 1898 it became one of the most-read books of his time, having seven editions by 1913. Ihrig shows that Naumann was justifying the killings of Armenians from the point of view of preservation of the Ottoman Empire and was defending inaction of Germany in the Armenian question as in accordance with German interests in connection with struggle with England for world domination. (pp. 63-69)

To substantiate and justify its anti-Armenian position Naumann in his book quotes and agrees with racist remarks on Armenian nation made by some German potter in sultan’s court, living in Constantinople: “The Armenian is the worst type in the world. He sells his wife, his still underaged daughter, he steals from his brother. The whole of Constantinople is being morally poisoned by the Armenians. ...It is Armenian who is practicing all the usury. ...An orderly means of protecting oneself against Armenians does not exist. The Turk is acting in self-defense.” Ihrig notes, that this “potter’s quote” became a key quote of German anti-Armenianism. (p. 64) Thus in 1890s debates the perception of the Armenians as the “true Jews of the Orient” emerged. In German public discourse the Armenians were understood to possess the same racial qualities as the Jews in the anti-Semitic worldview, but in more pronounced fashion, and even were often portrayed as something of “über-Jews.” (p. 74)

Ihrig notes, that the image of Armenians as “über-Jews” was a result of decades of anti-Armenian discourse in Germany sustained by a whole plethora of characterizations, images, and proverbs copied from modern anti-Semitism. The German anti-Armenian literature texts made no mention of the fact that the Armenians – unlike the Jews – were Christian. Total disregard for the Armenians’ religion became a central aspect of German anti-Armenianism over the coming decades. Ihrig shows and illustrates with examples how the Jewish-Armenian parallel, if not equivalence, was continuously reaffirmed in the German press up to World War I, and also how anti-Armenianism found its way into fiction – in work of Karl May, the one of the most successful German novelists of the time. (pp. 75-79)

Ihrig concludes the chapter by stating, that the German reactions to the 1890s Armenian massacres do not only constitute the historical background to the debates that would follow in the wake of the Armenian Genocide, they also were replicated in almost every respect in the genocide debate of 1920s. (p. 81)

The chapter 4 is entitled “From Revolution to Abyss” and deals with Germany’s response to the Armenian question developments from Young Turkish Revolution of 1908 till the beginning of World War One. Here author shows as repeatedly the Kaiser, the German Foreign Office and political leadership maintained their anti-Armenian stance. Thus, Ihrig sites the angry reaction of the Kaiser on the proposal of the German chancellor to send a ship to Cilicia during the Adana massacres in April 1909: “Why warships? The Armenians do not concern us at all.” (p. 83)

Ihrig also touches upon the German reaction to the Armenian reform plan of 1914. He notices that even the otherwise rather anti-Armenian German ambassador Wangenheim –who was to deny the reality of genocide for month in 1915 – acknowledged the need for Armenian reforms in 1913. (p. 88) Ihrig describes this attitude and Germany’s support of the need of reforms for the Armenians as “Germany’s temporary willingness to change its decades-old anti-Armenian policy,” with the main motivation to secure the stability of the Ottoman Empire. (p. 89)

We think that here the author exaggerates the factor of interventions in favor of Armenian reforms by Wangenheim. Actually, the German diplomacy did its best to limit the scope of the initial reform package offered by Russian embassy as much as possible. Anyway Ihrig rightly concludes that Germany was a rather unwilling participant in the Armenian reform plan developments and did not really do its best to speed up its implementation. (Ibid)

Part two, entitled “Under German Noses,” deals with the German reactions and knowledge of the Armenian genocide in progress. It consists of four chapters. The first chapter of the second part (chapter 5, entitled “Notions of Total War”) explores some of the backgrounds of the Armenian genocide. After touching upon the processes of radicalization that had taken place prior to the Armenian Genocide and which determined the Armenian genocide – “the end of empire,” “ethnic claustrophobia,” “military culture,” “atrocious propaganda,” “propaganda culture,” etc, - Ihrig notes that these can be served as explanations but not excuses for genocide. (p. 103)

The author puts the central question of the next three chapters of the second part as following: what could Germany have known about the Armenian genocide during genocide in progress? In chapter 6 entitled “Dispatches from Erzurum” Ihrig states and shows that official Germany knew in fact “everything”, yet it did not intervene. As there were many German diplomatic witnesses to genocide in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia and their reports could not all be discussed in the book, Ihrig focuses on German vice-consul at Erzurum Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter’s reports as an exemplary case. Ihrig highlights the reasons for choosing him as follows: 1) he not only reported extensively and was present at the center of the earlier deportations, but he continually petitioned to the embassy in

Constantinople to intervene on behalf of the Armenians, and he even personally attempted to save individual Armenians; 2) from the beginning, his reports are thoroughly detailed, and among his colleagues he was the most vocal opponent of the measures against the Armenian population; 3) in combination with the answers he received from his superiors, this diplomatic correspondence sheds light on what the German embassy and the Foreign Office knew, and what they did (and did not do) with this information. (p. 109)

Ihrig shows the early developments of the Armenian genocide in March-July 1915 by abundantly quoting from the Scheubner-Richter's reports. (pp. 108-128) Particular attention is drawn on his letters to chancellor on 10 August 1915 and on December 1916 (at that time he already returned to Germany), where at that time former German consul presents the big picture of the Armenian question and "grand resume" on the Armenian genocide. We consider it worth to cite from the last letter as well:

The fear I spoke of in my report from Erzurum, namely that the evacuation of the Armenians would be tantamount to their annihilation resp. that this was the purpose behind it, has unfortunately turned out to be true. Those evacuees of this tribe who are still living in Mesopotamia are in a desolate condition. It would not be saying too much if I tell you that the Turkish Armenians, with the exception of several hundred thousand living in Constantinople and other larger cities, have been practically wiped out....

I feel obliged to direct Your Excellency's attention to the following: a number of discussions with leading Turkish personalities left me with the following impressions:

A large part of the Young Turkish Committee is of the opinion that the Ottoman Empire should only be built upon a purely Mohammedan, pan-Turkish foundation. Those inhabitants who are neither Mohammedan nor Turkish should be made to become so by force or, if that is not possible, annihilated.

For these gentlemen, the present time seems to be the most suitable to put this plan into effect.

The first item on their program was the execution of the Armenians.

A supposed revolution prepared of the Dashnak Party was put forward as a pretext for those powers, who are allied with Turkey. Furthermore, local unrest and self-protection measures on the part of the Armenians were exaggerated and taken as an excuse to justify the evacuation of the Armenians from endangered border districts. At the instigation of the committee, the Armenians were murdered along the way by Kurd and Turkish gangs, in places also by gendarmes.

[Secondly, at] about the same time, the Nestorians in eastern Kurdistan, after brave resistance, were turned out of their domiciles by the Vali from Mosul, Haidar Bey, and annihilated in part. Their fields and homes were ravaged. ...

[Thirdly,] Halil Bey's campaign in northern Persia resulted in the massacre of his Armenian and Syrian battalions and the expulsion of the Armenian, Syrian and Persian population from northern Persia. It left behind a great bitterness towards the Turks. ...

"If we, the Turks, bleed to death in this battle for the existence of the Ottoman Empire, then there shall be no other nations in this empire either." This remark by a Young Turkish

politician characterises best the point of view held by the circles of the Young Turkish Committee. And the logical consequence of the weakening of pure Turkishness (the Anatolians), appearing more and more mainly because of a lack of organisation and foresight, is the violent annihilation of the other nations living in Turkey. (pp. 122-127)

Thus showing that by the end of 1915 the German embassy and its consulates time and again had internally acknowledged the extent and intent of the genocide as genocide, Ihrig switches his attention to how the German authorities reacted to what was happening with Armenians. First, Ihrig states that Germans knew that what had happened had been “wrong”, and that its own role, not just of the Ottomans, would be under scrutiny and attack in the future. Thus, from 1915 onward, Germany prepared this double strategy: on one hand, blaming the Armenians to justify whatever had happened to them; and on the other hand, defending itself by claiming it had helped the Armenians. This very much was Germany’s official line for the rest of the war and the postwar years. (pp. 128, 132)

Here Ihrig also touches upon the question of German’s guilt in the Armenian genocide. Opposing what he describes as “allegations by Armenian researchers, most prominently Vahagn Dadrian” who picture Germany as co-perpetrator, the author states that the claim that the Armenian Genocide was a result of joint German-Ottoman decision making cannot yet be proven. However, he continues, this does not mean that Germany was not guilty in another way: guilty in failing to stop the Young Turks. Germany knew what was going on and chose to accept the death of Armenians as part of the cost of doing business at war. (p. 134)

Chapter 7 bears the name “Interlude of the Gods” – the same name as one of the key chapters of Franz Werfel’s novel “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” where the author depicted the meeting of Johannes Lepsius with Enver Pasha, during which German Protestant figure tried to convince his powerful interlocutor to stop the extermination of the Armenians. Here Ihrig deals with activity of Lepsius and other German figures aimed at increasing of awareness of German public about the ongoing process of extermination of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire.

Following his trip to Constantinople in summer 1915 where he failed to persuade the Young Turkish leaders to stop anti-Armenian measures Lepsius returned to Germany and published the book “Report on the State of the Armenian People in Turkey” in 1916. About 20,000 copies of the report were printed and distributed among German officials, parliamentarians, public figures, journalists, missionary circles, clergy, etc. Ihrig gives the short description of Lepsius report as well as touches upon Armin T. Wegner pro-Armenian lobbying activity after his return from military service in the Ottoman Mesopotamia where he witnessed the Armenian genocide. (pp. 143-145)

In years of 1916 and 1917 two other German testimonies about the Armenian genocide were published abroad: these are “The horrors of Aleppo” by Martin Niepage, the teacher at a German school in Aleppo, and “Two War Years in Constantinople” by Harry Stürmer, the former correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung* in Constantinople. Ihrig provides summary of these reports here. (pp. 145-149)

The rest of the chapter 7 deals with the Armenian genocide debates in Reichstag, the German parliament during World War One. Particularly, Ihrig puts a spotlight on the question in writing to the German chancellor by Karl Liebknecht on 18 December 1915, where the famous Socialist leader inquired about whether the German government is aware of the fact that the Armenian population “were expelled from their places of residence and were butchered in the hundred thousand.” (p. 150) On January 11 this question was read aloud in the plenum of parliament and got an evasive answer of the government official. When Liebknecht tried to raise this question again, he was suppressed and halted by his fellow parliamentarians. (pp. 150-151)

The chapter 8 (“What Germany Could Have Known”) is mainly devoted to the coverage of the Armenian topic in the wartime German press. Extensive citing of major articles and debates in such newspapers as *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Vorwärts*, *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung*, *Berliner Tageblatt*, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Magdeburger Zeitung*, *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, etc allows Ihrig to come to the conclusion, that the Armenian issue was discussed and all the allegations of massacres and of the “annihilation of the Armenian nation” were treated in the very same fashion in which 1890s massacres were discussed, denying the full extent of violence and justifying violent measures against Armenians, including the killing of civilians. (p.185)

According to the author “virulent anti-Armenian bias,” present in the German press was not a result of total ignorance of the actual events in Anatolia. To argue this point Ihrig among others cites Karl Otten, a German wartime censor, who affirmed 1919 that not only diplomats but also the press had been well aware of the suffering in Armenia: “I remind you of Armenia whose suffering was known to our press and our diplomats as much as they were to me, who held news about them in my hands and was supposed to confiscate it.” (p. 189)

Part III of the book is entitled “Debating Genocide” and is dealing with the discussion of the Armenian question and the Armenian Genocide in Weimar Germany between 1919 and 1933. As the previous two parts it consists of four chapters of which in the Chapter 9 (“War Crimes, War Guilt, and Whitewashing”) the author shows how the Armenian topic was discussed in the first two years after the World War One. Ihrig notices that “what characterizes these years is the interplay between information and whitewashing, accepting the charges of genocide and denying of justifying what had happened.” (p. 193)

The defeat of Germany resulted also in lifting of censorship in German press, which allowed German pro-Armenian activists, most prominently Johannes Lepsius and Armin T. Wegner, to reveal in depth and condemn the Armenian atrocities. Ihrig emphasize that these texts and reports were first in postwar weeks to use fully fledged “genocide language:” terms such as “systematic annihilation,” “extermination,” “annihilation of the Armenian people,” “awful extinction,” “monstrous annihilation of Armenians” were frequently used to describe to what happened to Armenians. (pp. 194-195)

In this connection Ihrig extensively cites from the Wegner’s open letter to the American president Wilson on behalf to the Armenians, published 23 February 1919 in the *Berliner*

Tageblatt. Yet he also notices that this letter, though “thoroughly passionate,” fell on deaf ears – both abroad and in Germany. This convinced Wegner to come up with a series of slideshow public lectures on the “Armenian horrors” during which he also showed pictures taken by him at Armenian concentration camps in Syrian deserts. Many of Wegner’s pictures have since become iconic images of the Armenian Genocide. (pp. 196-204)

With the aim to whitewash and bury German involvement in and responsibility for the Armenian genocide the German government asked Lepsius to prepare a collection of German diplomatic documents where the reports of German diplomats, who complained against actions of the Ottoman government and tried to relieve the condition of Armenians, would be gathered. The result was *Germany and Armenia* which was published in the same year of 1919. The author surveys the reaction of the German and international press to the Lepsius volume. (pp. 209-219) As a whole, Ihrig evaluates this book positively, emphasizing that it sparked public interest in and a debate on the Armenian Genocide itself, although also succeeded in convincing German press and public that Germany was not guilty of conspiracy and coexecution of genocide. (pp. 209, 217)

But the acceptance of the charge of genocide leveled against the Young Turks by many German papers in 1919 did not last long. Ihrig names the year of 1920 a “backlash year,” when an overwhelmingly large part of the German press began again to deny intent and minimize the extent of the atrocities. Here again Ihrig illustrates this point by abundantly citing from the press of the corresponding year. (pp. 219-225)

The intensity of Armenian debates in Germany has significantly increased after the shooting of Talât Pasha, the key organizer of the Armenian genocide, by Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin on 15 March 1921. In Chapter 10, entitled “Assassination in Berlin, 1921,” author observed the reaction of German public and press to this incident. (pp. 226-233) Ihrig shows that the moods of sympathy toward Talât were prevailing; he was depicted as a “friend of Germany,” a “genuine and honorable statesman.” Correspondingly his role in the extermination of Armenians was downplayed and once again the full scope of the Armenian genocide denial arguments was presented.

The Chapter 11, entitled “Trial in Berlin,” is the lengthiest in the third section of Ihrig’s book. (pp. 234-269) Ihrig calls the topic of this chapter – Tehlirian (Talât Pasha) trial, which lasted only one and a half days (2 and 3 June 1921) – the “one of the most spectacular trials of the twentieth century” for two reasons: 1) from the very first hour the trial turned against Talât Pasha and, by extension, against the Ottoman Empire, 2) though Tehlirian repeatedly admitted that he had indeed killed Talât, he was acquitted and set free. (p. 235)

Ihrig continues by giving minute details from the proceedings of trial, which are read all in one breath: dialogs between judge and defendant, attempts of prosecutor to stop turning of trial into political one, interrogation of witnesses, among them Johannes Lepsius, the key defense witness, who presented the broad picture of the Armenian genocide, and concluding speeches of state prosecutor and defense attorneys.

The verdict of the jury to the question of whether Tehlirian was guilty of intentionally killing Talât Pasha was “No.” Ihrig stresses important point here: that contrary to specula-

tions in subsequent press and academic discourse, the jury did not necessarily find Tehlirian innocent because of “temporary insanity” – the jury did not deliver its reasoning, just a simple “no.” (p. 262)

The rest of the chapter Ihrig devotes to the observation of media coverage of Talât Pasha trial as it was a media event in and of early Weimar Germany. (pp. 263-269) The dossier of the trial shows that international papers such as the London *Daily Telegraph*, the *Chicago Daily News*, and the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* etc, had asked for tickets long in advance, as had German papers such as the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *BZ am Mittag*, the *Berliner Morgenpost*, the *Freiheit*, and the *Vorwärts*. (p. 264)

As Ihrig notices many papers now realized the full extent of the events of 1915 and expressed this in such terms as “unparalleled horrors,” or “a distressing image of Armenian Horrors.” Most German newspapers had also printed Lepsius testimony’s conclusion that what happened to the Armenians “was not resettlement but the open intent to exterminate a whole people. Only with the most brutal methods could one million people have been exterminated in such a short amount of time.” (p. 266)

Ihrig states that it was the outcome of the trial, the non-guilty verdict, which left most of the papers in shock. Among others, the *Vorwärts*, one of German newspapers present at trial, commented the verdict in the following way: “[the jury] followed the same moral law based on which Friedrich Schiller acquits the murderer William Tell. Tehlirian, too, can justify himself with the Tell saying ‘avenged I the holy nature.’ ” (p. 267) The *Berliner Volkszeitung* also applauded the verdict and characterized the trial as not being about the death of Talât Pasha, but about “the murder of an entire people,” “condemned to annihilation” by Talât. (p. 268)

The Chapter 12, which bears the title “The Victory of Justificationalism,” focuses on the Armenian genocide debate in Germany aftermath of Talat Pasha trial till the coming of Hitler to power in 1933. The trend in these debates is characterized by the author as no longer one of a denial, but of a “justification”, thus the dynamics of this process is described as rise and victory of “justificationalism.”

The author argues that after Talât Pasha trial Germany saw the relative predominance in the press of a new and radicalized kind of anti-Armenian argumentation that had repercussions for far more than just Germany’s understanding of what happened in Anatolia. This was the justificationalist argumentation, which accepted all the horrors and, indeed, even the full intent of genocide, but at the same time strove to justify what had happened – thus *justifying genocide*.” (p. 272) To illustrate this thesis Ihrig again extensively quotes from the German press. (pp. 273-283)

The next step in the Armenian genocide discourse in Germany was in finding similarities between the Armenian question in the Ottoman Turkey with the Jewish question internally. The year 1922 marks the emergence of articles in the German press there Jews were identified as the internal “illness” as the Armenians in the Ottoman Turkey. Ihrig notes that the implications of this discourse were dangerously obvious: “the Armenian question was

solved by the Young Turk “ethnic surgeon” – now something similar had to be done to resolve the Jewish question.” (p. 288)

The fourth part of the Ihrig’s book is entitled “The Nazis and the Armenian Genocide” and is devoted to reconstruction of how the Armenian Genocide impacted the Nazis, the Armenian-Jewish conflation - that is how the Armenians were understood as quasi-and even uber-Jews in German discourse. Author states, that in the decade and a half before the Nazi takeover, the Armenian Genocide had not only been widely discussed in Germany, it also involved a group that was typically understood the prism of contemporary anti-Semitism. “The Armenian Genocide was understood through another group that lived in Germany and throughout Europe and that was also perceived as “problematic” by nationalists, indeed one that was understood by anti-Semites to pose another “question,” that is, the “Jewish question.” To illustrate this point the author extensively sites from anti-Semitic and racial texts, published from the late nineteenth century up to and during the Third Reich (Felix von Luschan, Hans F.R. Gunther, Houston Chamberlain and others). Special attention is made for Hitler’s use of Armenians as an example of a “lesser race” similar to the Jews in his speeches before 1933 (pp. 316-318).

As Ihrig summarizes “if the Armenians were often rather peripheral to the overall arguments of these texts, the way they featured in them placed them right at the heart of anti-Semitic discourse: First, the “Armenoid race,” used synonymously with the Armenians,” was seen as the major parent race of, and thus responsible for, the negative characteristics found in the Jews; second, the Armenians were perceived as the same as or worse than the Jews, as depicted in modern anti-Semitic discourse...; third, they played a central role in the debate about the “Aryan theory,” that is, the existence of an alleged “Aryan race” in opposition to the “Semitic race.” Thus not only had racial anthropology and (popular) racial handbooks put the Armenians on the mental map of anti-Semites and Nazis, these texts also reaffirmed the core ingredient of the justificationalist argument: the Armenians’ (alleged) racial characteristics. The Nazis further affirmed and reiterated the Jewish-Armenian conflation.” (p 319)

The chapter 14, entitled “The Nazis’ New Turkey” explores the role the New Turkey and its leader Atatürk played in Nazi discourse. As author points out, in the Nazi vision the New Turkey was a state that had, on a grand scale, “solved” its minority question in a “final” manner and emerged as a kind of “postgenocidal wonderland.” (p. 320)

The author states that for the Nazis the Armenian Genocide was in many respects the precondition for the successful Kemalist national revolution and resistance and as usual confirms this thesis by abundantly citing relevant articles from the Nazi press of 1920s. (pp. 321-326)

Chapter 15 is entitled “No Smoking Gun” and surveys some examples of how and where the Nazis have come across the Armenians and the Armenian Genocide. Here the author presents the gallery of prominent Nazi affiliated persons who had been also linked to the annihilation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire; these are Count Friedrich-Werner von der Schulenburg, the consul in Eastern Anatolia in 1916, Bronsart von Schellen-

dorff, the war-era Ottoman chief of staff and, last but not, least Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, former consul at Erzurum.

To introduce these persons Ihrig returns to the days of Tehlirian (Talât Pasha) trial in the summer of 1921 in Berlin, trial on which they all were involved as witnesses of either prosecutors' or defense side. Erwin von Scheubner-Richter traveled to Berlin with his friend, no other than Adolf Hitler. This fact gives Ihrig the opportunity to speculate that Hitler would have made his way to the courtroom as a spectator, if any tickets had been available. (p. 336)

Ihrig again states that the first four and a half years of the Weimar Republic were saturated with the Armenian Genocide. According to author while Hitler was not directly part of the "great German genocide debate" of those years, he has to be thought as always there, because in fact, he was there: he was in Germany; he was in audience and was an especially attentive member of the audience. (ibid)

In this part of the book the figure of Scheubner-Richter is again one of the central – at this time as a Hitler's closest advisor and friend, a "Nazi Martyr", killed in the Hitler Putsch of 1923 and by the fact of his death one of the most important blood heroes of Nazism. (p. 339) Ihrig portrays Scheubner as a paradoxical figure in Nazi history. Extensively citing from Paul Leverkuehn's book on Scheubner entitled "Guard on Eternal Watch" and published during Nazi era (1938), Ihrig shows that despite his antigenocidal past in 1923 Scheubner openly called for the "most ruthless struggle against everything foreign in the German national body" and also advocated the "ruthless cleansing of Germany" of all foreign and inimical elements. At the same time, Ihrig calls the German diplomat's story, as presented by his former adjutant, "a monument against genocide in the Third Reich," because of presence there of extensive depiction of the anti-Armenian policy of the Ottoman government in 1915. (ibid)

The most debated issue in Armenian genocide- Nazi connection is the authenticity of Hitler quote "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of Armenians." Ihrig dismisses the attempts of denialist historians to use the controversy surrounding the question whether Hitler pronounced these sentence or not, as an argument that the Armenian Genocide never occurred at all. (p. 348) Ihrig states that the burden of proof is actually not on showing that Hitler and the other Nazis did know of the Armenian Genocide; it is quite reverse: there is no reason whatsoever to believe that the Germans had actually forgotten about the Armenian Genocide by 1939. There is every reason to believe that what Hitler meant in that part of the speech was that the Turks (as a whole) had never had to "pay" for the Armenian Genocide; they got away with it unscathed, without negative consequences. (p. 349)

Ihrig thus puts the Hitler's quote in context arguing that there is no doubt that the Nazis had incorporated the Armenian Genocide, its "lessons," tactics, and "benefits," into their own worldview and their view of the new racial order they were building. (ibid) Again according to Ihrig there cannot be the slightest doubt that the leading Nazis were well informed about the Armenian Genocide and they knew of it as what we would now call a

“genocide” – that is a deliberate attempt to exterminate an entire people. (p. 352) To substantiate this thesis Ihrig gives names of top political figures around Hitler before and during Third Reich which had served in the Ottoman Empire and had direct contact there with the Armenian topic: Scheubner, Humann, Schulenburg (Hitler’s ambassador to Moscow), Konstantin Neurath (foreign minister of the Third Reich in 1933-1938), Franz von Papen (Hitler’s first vice-chancellor and future ambassador to Vienna and Ankara), Rudolf Hoess (the commander of Auschwitz) and others. (p. 352)

Ihrig highlights aspects of inspiration and motivation for Nazis radiating from the Armenian Genocide. First, it must have taught them that such incredible crimes could go unpunished under the cover of war, even if one lost that war. (p. 353) A second major inspiration according to Ihrig was conveyed through the Nazis’ understanding and portrayal of the Ataturk’s New Turkey as a “postgenocidal paradise” of sorts. The role of the Nazis had assigned to the New Turkey in their beliefs, ideology, and propaganda – that of an “ethnic cleansing” success story, of a state that was now enjoying the benefits of past “cleansing” – must have constituted a perpetual reminder that Germany was not “cleansed,” and a strong motivation to think about “cleaning house.” (p. 354)

Another lesson from the Armenian Genocide according to author might have been the ability to find “willing executioners” among the population – from people organized in various civil and military formations to different kinds of civilians, from both the dominant and non-dominant ethnicities, including former neighbors and also, prominently, civilian women. (p. 355)

The author also shows the lessons from the genocide debate in Germany itself, these are: 1) no need to be afraid of such genocide debate, as it had no consequences, 2) it showed that it was incredibly hard to convince the public that genocide was indeed taking place or had happened. (ibid)

Author concludes the chapter by drawing parallels between the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, these are: killing under the cover of a major war; killing mainly away from major population centers and mainly after the target population had been physically removed from their former places of mixed residence; deportation itself as a part of extermination process; death by attrition; extermination as part of larger ethnic restructuring schemes, with “vacated properties” earmarked for and rapidly occupied by members of the dominant ethnic group; organized robbery of the group by structuring deportations so that most immovable and moveable goods stayed behind or were easily discoverable, all this in rather “orderly” fashion; the preparation for physical violence in form of an antiminority discourse, and so on.

In Epilogue Ihrig returns and takes to conclusion the destiny of four figures, the “passionate warriors against genocide” – these were Johannes Lepsius, Max Erwin Scheubner-Richter, Armin T. Wegner, and Franz Werfel. As in 1930s and afterwards only two of these “protagonists” were alive and continued their activity – Armin Wegner and Franz Werfel. Ihrig concentrates on the question of the contribution of the Armenian Genocide theme to Jewish life and identity by the examples of first’s “Open letter” to Hitler on de-

fense of the Jews and of reception of second's famous novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" among Jews in Nazi ghettos, its impact as a source of inspiration for struggle and ideological fortification.

Yet Ihrig chooses to end his book by citation of the "another warrior against genocide" Raphael Lemkin, who also was influenced not only by the Armenian Genocide but also by Talât Pasha trial. In his memoirs, Lemkin wrote: "Tehlirian acted as the self-appointed legal officer for the conscience of mankind. But can a man appoint himself to mete out justice? Will not passion sway such a form of justice and make a travesty of it? At that moment, my worries about the murder of the innocent became more meaningful to me. I didn't know all the answers but I felt that a law against this type of racial or religious murder must be accepted by the world. ...Sovereignty, I argued, cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions of innocent people." (p.371)

Thus Raphael Lemkin's "success" according to the author was much more visible and even more important as he fathered both the term "genocide" and the UN's 1948 Genocide Convention – the mechanisms aimed at deterring the states from butchering civilian populations and thus benefiting from genocides.

To conclude Ihrig's book is well researched; all his main theses and arguments, above all the continuity of presence of the Armenian question and the Armenian Genocide topics in German public discourse up to the beginning of WWII, are well grounded in sources and thus fully acceptable. Upon reading this book one fully understands that Hitler's famous words – "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of Armenians" – given on the eve of invasion to Poland in August 1939, were not made by chance but were the logical outcome of the long lasted Armenian genocide debate in Germany.

Special advantage of the book is the author's free and lively writing style which makes reader absorbed in narrative. Some minor observations on different occasions present in the book, which are not directly related to the main research topic, are also valuable. For example, while discussing the coverage of Talât Pasha trial in German press, the author ponders upon the power of media to set agenda of public discourse, summarizing that media and propaganda are never really successful in directing what the people think about a topic, but rather which topic the people should think about. (p. 264)

In summary, Ihrig's book is a very important contribution to the Armenian genocide studies, which provides researchers with huge amount of new data and insight and also paves the way for further similar studies on the impact of the Armenian topic in public discourse of other main actors in the Armenian question.