

# THE PERFECT ETHNOCIDE: A REVIEW OF BAS KROMHOUT'S 'DE PERFECTE GENOCIDE'

(MÜKEMMEL ETNOSID: BAS KROMHOUT'UN 'MÜKEMMEL SOYKIRIM' YAZISININ DEĞERLENDİRMESİ)

**Armand SAĞ**

Ph.D. Candidate, Utrecht University  
Chairman of the Institute for Turkish Studies

**Abstract:** *There are a lot of claims surrounding the events of 1915 amongst academics. With the bicentennial of the events in 2015, it is accompanied by even more publications. The publication of Bas Kromhout is one of them. His article is entitled 'De perfecte genocide: 1,5 miljoen Armeniërs vermoord, over tot de orde van de dag' and is entirely in Dutch. It can be translated to English as 'The Perfect Genocide: 1,5 million Armenians killed, but on to today's news'. The article was published in the most read historical magazine in the Netherlands, which is called 'Historisch Nieuwsblad' in Dutch. This can be translated to 'Historical Newspaper' in English. It was featured on the front page of the magazine which had a special issue on the Armenian events of 1915 in January of 2015. Bas Kromhout's article was the so-called prime article of the magazine in the issue of January of 2015. Although Bas Kromhout is a young historian with a Ph.D. in Nazi-history, he now tried to change his field to the Armenian events of 1915 and wrote his first article about it. In my article, I will argue that Kromhout (willingly or unwillingly) is actually a great example of Ethnocide, which is a certain method within academic or scholarly debates to pollute objective and neutral discussions between scholars. Although I started out to review Kromhout's article, I was strongly convinced that Kromhout's article is suited to see in the light of Ethnocide and disturbing the scholarly methods surrounding the historical and juridical debate about the Armenian events of 1915.*

**Keywords:** *Bas Kromhout, ethocide, Armenian, denial, the Netherlands, genocide.*

**Öz:** *1915 olayları ile ilgili bilim adamları arasında birçok bilimsel tartışma vardır. Bu olayların yüzüncü yılı yaklaştığı için 2015 yılında her giden gün daha da çok yayın eklenmeye başlandı. Hollanda'nın genç tarihçisi Bas Kromhout'un yayını da bunlardan biridir. Yazısı tamamıyla Hollandaca olmakla birlikte 'De Perfecte Genocide: 1,5 miljoen Armeniërs vermoord tot de orde van de dag perfecte' başlığı taşımaktadır.*

*Türkçe'ye 'Ülkü Soykırım: 1,5 milyon Ermeni öldürüldü, şimdi güncel konulara geçelim' olarak çevrilir. Bu yazı Hollanda'nın en çok okunan tarih dergisinde yayınlanmıştır. Bu derginin adı 'Historisch Nieuwsblad', Türkçesi 'Tarih Haber Dergisi' olmakla birlikte Hollandaca'dır. Bas Kromhout'un bu yazısı 2015 yılının Ocak sayısında kapakta yer almıştır. Ocak 2015 tarihinde çıkan sayı, Ermeni meselesi ile ilgili bir özel sayıdır. Bas Kromhout'un yazısı başyazı olarak kapakta yer aldığı gibi, bu özel sayının en göze batan yazısıdır. Doktorasını tamamlayıp Nazi Tarihi'nde uzman olan genç tarihçi Bas Kromhout, bu yazı ile Ermeni Meselesi'ne de açılmak istemiştir. Ermeni meselesi'ne odaklanan bu yazısı, bu konuda olan ilk yazısıdır. Bu yazımda Bas Kromhout'un, bilinçli veya bilinçsiz, ahlak kırımının en güzel örneği olduğunu savunuyorum. Ahlak kırımı, bilimciler arasında tarafsız ve tek taraflı olmayan yayınları engellemeyi öngören bir çizgidir. Bas Kromhout'un yazısını değerlendirmeye başladığımda, bu yazının ancak ahlak kırımı çerçevesinde faydalı olduğu sonuca vardım. Bana göre bu ve buna benzer yazılar, 1915 yılında olan Ermeni olayları ile ilgili tarihsel ve hukuksal tartışma ortamlarını engelleyip olmamış gibi göstermeyi amaçlar.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *Bas Kromhout, ahlak kırımı, Ermeni, inkâr, Hollanda, soykırım.*

## Introduction

The most read historical magazine in the Netherlands is 'Historisch Nieuwsblad' (Historical Newspaper). Historisch Nieuwsblad focuses on past occurrences and puts them in a new light for a broad audience in the Netherlands. They are self-proclaimed 'sharp, clear of mind and objective'. Their audience is mainly Dutch men from 35 years and older.<sup>1</sup> The readers are high educated men who are either in the first or second class of wealth. His hobbies include going to theatres, concerts, museums; making him a culturally interested intellectual and a philanthropist while being careful with nature and the environment.

Historisch Nieuwsblad reaches 106.000 readers, comprising 0,8% of the 13.845.000 Dutch residents above the age of 13.<sup>2</sup> It is the most read historical magazine with 23.431 printed issues, which are mostly bought by organisations and libraries and therefore read by at least 106.000 people. The magazine is printed ten times a year and an average page costs € 2.965,00 to make. The price of one issue is a staggering €7,95, while the average price for other (non-historical) newspapers are between one and two euro's. However, seeing the audience, this 0,8% (or 1%) is the elite of the Netherlands; therefore making it a good statistical mode as a case study to see the outcome of Armenian efforts in the important year of 2015.

For the year 2015, Historisch Nieuwsblad has published a special hundred pages long issue on the Armenians as their first edition with the headline 'The Perfect Genocide: 1,5 million Armenians killed, but on to today's news'. Especially the article of Bas Kromhout, a young journalist with a Ph.D. in Nazi-history, is a good example of Ethnocide because this young writer seems to have adopted all the Armenian accusations in one article without being aware of the fact that his sources are all biased and subjective.

Even the first sentence of his article, beginning with the quote of Hitler, is interesting. The article neglects the fact that this so-called 'quote from Hitler' is never been proven, and that most academics such as Tom Segev, Heath W. Lowry and Leon Picon dismiss this quote as being true.<sup>3</sup> This first claim, which

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1 Zuiver, 'Historisch Nieuwsblad', from: [http://www.zuiverwiki.nl/index.php/Historisch\\_Nieuwsblad](http://www.zuiverwiki.nl/index.php/Historisch_Nieuwsblad) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

2 *Nom Print Monitor* 2010-II/2011-I, from: [http://www.zuiverwiki.nl/index.php/Historisch\\_Nieuwsblad](http://www.zuiverwiki.nl/index.php/Historisch_Nieuwsblad) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

3 Tom Segev, 'Mozart and the Armenian genocide', in: *Haaretz Daily News* (October 18, 2007); Heath W. Lowry, 'The U.S. Congress and Adolf Hitler on the Armenians', in: *Political Communication and Persuasion*, 1985, Vol. 3, No. 2; Leon Picon, 'Armenian "Hitler Quote" Proven To Be Fabrication', in: *ATA-USA*, Fall 1985/Winter 1986.

is presented as a fact by using the pattern of denial within Ethocide, is followed by the claim that “it was the first time a modern state had knowingly planned and executed the plan to annihilate an entire race, using advanced military technology and administrative apparatus”<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately there are no sources used at this sentence, making it impossible for us to know where it is based upon since most academics such as Boekestijn again agree that there was no systematical plan to exterminate the Armenians:

*“The Armenian side claims that the Ottoman government at the highest level had the intention to kill Armenians. So far, there is no such proof in the Ottoman Archives.”*<sup>5</sup>

Boekestijn is not alone in this, he is backed by Zürcher.<sup>6</sup> Seeing that both Boekestijn and Zürcher, as well as Kromhout are all Dutch with extensive publications in both Dutch and English, it is very surprising to see Kromhout neglect all these findings. It is a good example of the denialist approach to make it seem as if something is accepted by all scholars and that there is no scholarly debate while in fact it is dismissed by most academics. This pattern is evident throughout the article of Kromhout.

It does not stop there, in the same paragraph Kromhout states that there were 2 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1914. Again, this figure is based on nothing since Kromhout neglects to show any source. Stanford J. Shaw has published the official Ottoman population figures after his research in the French archives, since the last Ottoman census was in fact conducted by French diplomats in the population census of the Ottoman Empire in the year 1914.<sup>7</sup> The official head count of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was around 1,2 million, almost have lower then what Kromhout argues. Additionally, the French were assisted by the Armenian minority of the Ottoman government, since the Armenians conducted their own census within their own community (or ‘millet’). This was not ordinary, since in 1912 the Ottoman Minister of Interior was in fact an Ottoman of Armenian descent called Gabriel Noradunkyan (or Noradoungian).<sup>8</sup> Neglecting all this data and unknowingly

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4 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, pp. 30-37.

5 Arend-Jan Boekestijn, ‘Turkey, the World and the Armenian Question’, in: *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Winter 2005, Vol. 4, No. 4.

6 Erik-Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London 2004), p. 128.

7 Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2/2 (Cambridge 1977), pp. 315-317.

8 Yılmaz Öztuna, ‘The Political Milieu of the Armenian Question’, in: Türkkaya Ataöv (ed.), *Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period* (Ankara 2002), p. 49.

exaggerating the number of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire with almost half, is inexcusable for a scholar.

Yet again on the same page, Kromhout argues that most Armenians were poor peasants living under the yoke of the Kurdish tribes. Again the foundation for these statements is absent. During the siege of Constantinople (present day İstanbul) in 1453 against the Byzantines (the same Byzantines against whom the Armenians still had a grudge for the oppressing of so many Armenians Christians because they were not Orthodox like the Byzantines but Apostolic), the Armenians were eager to fight for the Ottomans. Afterwards the Ottoman ruler Fatih Sultan Mehmet II rewarded the Armenians:

1. The Armenians were given their own Church and Patriarch in İstanbul in 1453;
2. From that point on, the Armenians were known as the 'Sadık Millet'; a title exclusively given to the Armenians by the Ottomans in the history of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922). It meant 'The Most Loyal People', for their help and relatively peaceful way of live;
3. Trade was given to the Armenians, which helped the Armenians population to become wealthy during the Ottoman period of 1453-1918.<sup>9</sup>

*So if the Armenians were mostly involved with trade and one of the wealthiest minorities of the Ottoman Empire, how would the majority be a poor peasant as Kromhout claims?*

So if the Armenians were mostly involved with trade and one of the wealthiest minorities of the Ottoman Empire, how would the majority be a poor peasant as Kromhout claims? It seems that Kromhout, again, made a grand error in his article. Secondly, if the Armenians had a representative in the Ottoman capital İstanbul, founded by the Ottoman sultan himself (while the Kurds had no representation whatsoever, nor had the right to form their own community), how would the live under the yoke of the Kurds? Would it not be more logical if it was in fact the other way around? Kromhout unfortunately neglects these topics and therefore denies the academic discussions surrounding it.

On the next page, Kromhout makes the fatal error of stating that the Hamidiye regiments were busy "looting, killing and raping", after which the Armenians defended themselves in august 1894 in Sason.<sup>10</sup> This is peculiar again, since

9 Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File* (İstanbul 2007).

10 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 32.

Kromhout denies the happening of almost 30 rebellions of Ottoman Armenians, the first being in Zeytun in 1780.<sup>11</sup> The Hamidiye regiments were founded in 1890, the same year the Ottoman-Armenian nationalist Mıgırdıç Portakalyan (or Mekertich Portukalian) founded Ermeni Yurttaşlar Birliği (Union of Armenian Citizens) which aimed to spread nationalism among Armenian youth in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Armenians were able to massacre 2.000 people in Erzurum during 1890 and another 1.000 in Kumkapi during the same year. So it becomes clear that the Armenians did not revolt as a reaction to the Hamidiye, but that the Hamidiye were created as a reaction to the Armenian rebellions.

Although Kromhout mistakenly states that Sason resulted in 3.000 Armenian casualties, he denies the 9.000 casualties that were the victim of these Armenian militias.<sup>13</sup> Immediately hereafter Kromhout states that “the Armenians were not able to accomplish political appeasement” and were confronted with “a reign of terror” from the Ottoman government when they offered a petition. However, Kromhout again neglects the ongoing struggle between Armenian rebels and the Ottoman Empire. Armenian militias caused the death of 500 Ottomans in 1892 in Kayseri; 200 in Yozgat in 1892; 800 in Çorum in the same year; 1.350 in Merzifon in 1893; and the before mentioned 9.000 in Sasun in 1894. Even when Armenians wanted to protest in İstanbul, violence erupted when Armenian militias used the protest to attack Ottomans causing 10 deaths during what people call the ‘Sublime Porte Demonstration’. Even in the year when the some Armenians offered a petition in Istanbul in 1895, some 20.000 Ottomans were slaughtered in Zeytun by Armenian militias. The tight control of the Ottomans were a reaction to the violence at Zeytun, and not, like Kromhout pretentiously argues, to the petition of the same year.<sup>14</sup>

Kromhout further argues that in 1895 “hundreds of Armenians were killed by the police”, while in fact the Ottoman Empire had their first police force after the reforms in 1907-1909: some 14 years after the 1895-events making it impossible for the Ottomans to have a police force in 1895, let alone having them go around massacring random people. Prior to the reforms of 1907-1909, the task of police was taken on by local governors and other military

11 Nejla Günay, *Maraş'ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyanları* (İstanbul 2007).

12 Özlem Karasandık, ‘Criticism and the First Precautions of the Ottoman Empire Against The Armenian Political Separatist Organizations’, in: *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue: 16-17, Volume: Winter 2004-Spring 2005. Available online: <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=Dergiler&IcerikNo=14> (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

13 Armand Sağ, ‘Armeens Terreur’, from: *TurkseStudent.nl* Available online: <http://forum.turksestudent.nl/topic/25434-armeense-terreur/> (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

14 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 32.

organisation as a side activity.<sup>15</sup> However, this is not Kromhout's only major mistake. He claims that these non-realistic police crack downs inspired the Armenians to attempt to assassinate the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamit II on August 26th, 1896.<sup>16</sup> Kromhout combined two events into one, by (knowingly or unknowingly) listing the assassination attempt on Abdülhamit which was in fact on July 21st, 1905 with the Armenian assault on the Ottoman Bank on August 26th, 1896.<sup>17</sup> How an academic can intermix two events that are of such immense importance, is beyond me. Especially because the same article depicts a photograph with the statement: "After their raid on an Ottoman Bank, the Armenian perpetrators fled to France, Marseille, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1896." Despite the fact that Kromhout states it is "a bank" while in fact it was "the bank" (it was the headquarters of the Ottoman National Bank), this shows that even Kromhout knows that the raid on the Ottoman Bank was on that date (and not the assassination attempt), as well as that the Armenian rebels did get a free pass to go Europe.

It also diminishes the next arguments of Kromhout, that Abdülhamit "took revenge after the attempt on his life by killing 50.000-200.000 Armenians during 1894-1896" while firstly the unsuccessful attempt on Abdülhamit's life was not until 1905. Secondly, the raid on the Ottoman Bank only ended when European superpowers intervened and forced the Ottomans to enable the Armenians to leave the Ottoman Empire. The leader of the raid, Karekin Pastırmacıyan (or 'Armen Garo/Karo'), was even named the Ottoman parliamentary member for Erzurum during 1908-1912 under pressure of the Europeans. Therefore, the 50.000-200.000 Armenians Kromhout is referring to were not killed but migrated under protection of the European superpowers (mostly) to the Russian Empire and France.<sup>18</sup> Other skirmishes were mostly between the before mentioned Kurdish irregular forces (Hamidiye regiments) and Armenian nationalists, killing people on both sides and were not (like Kromhout is inadvertently insinuating) one-sided massacres on the Armenians since the Armenian rebels killed far more people.<sup>19</sup>

Kromhout continues by stating even more completely inaccurate dates. He argues that the contra revolution of 1909 prompted the largest Armenian

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15 Hasan Yağar, 'Osmanlı Polis Teşkilatı ve Yenileşme Süreci', from: *TarihTarih.com*. Available online: <http://www.tarihtarih.com/?Syf=26&Syz=293928> (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

16 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 32.

17 Armand Sağ, 'Categorizing Historiography: Turkish-Armenian Relations Throughout History', in: *Review of Armenian Studies*, No.: 26, Volume: 2012, p. 146.

18 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Utah 2005).

19 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (New York 1995).

terrorist organisation Dashnakzutyun made an alliance with the political movement of Young Turks who aimed to reform the Ottoman Empire with more rights for minorities. However, Dashnakzutyun did not agree with this alliance after the contra revolution of 1909 but years prior to it in 1907.<sup>20</sup> This renders Kromhout's argument that the alliance was a reaction to the contra revolution of 1909 completely useless. It was in fact the alliance of 1907 which made that the rivals of the Young Turks, mostly comprised of local religious conservatives, now also targeted the Armenian rebels. When tensions rose, the Armenian terrorist of Dashnakzutyun saw an opportunity when a contra revolution occurred and seized their opportunity using the slogan "For a Free, Independent and United Armenia" while killing two Turks civilians as well as 15 Ottoman soldiers. Their uprising, in a province where tensions were rising anyway, paved the way for a cruel and brutal civil war between Dashnakzutyun and religious conservatives. In the end some 15 to 30 thousand people lost their lives (and not 15 to 20 thousand like Kromhout argues), but these were victims from both sides and not (like Kromhout argues) from just the Armenian side. In the end, the Ottoman government stepped in and quelled the uprising by arresting 618 Turks, 77 Armenians and sentencing 47 (both Turks and Armenians) to death. This in fact shows that the incident in Adana was not instigated by the government, but that it (in fact) did everything in its power to prevent and stop it.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore the alliance between Dashnakzutyun and the Young Turks did not end in 1910, like Kromhout argues since he put the start of their alliance in 1909, but in 1912 since their alliance started in 1907. The end of the alliance started when the Armenian terrorist organisation Dashnakzutyun targeted innocent civilians which bothered the Young Turks and created serious antipathy between the two.<sup>22</sup> Even more bothersome is the fact that Kromhout states that "after 1910 the Young Turks abandoned all hope in a unity of Ottoman peoples and followed a scary-Turkish discourse".<sup>23</sup> In doing so, he neglects the mention of a new law in 1912 that gave minorities in a province the right to govern themselves to ensure the support of the Ottoman minorities for the Ottoman Empire. It also would not explain why all celebration cards of the Young Turks, printed in 1911 to celebrate the revolution of 1908, were

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20 Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden 1997), p. 78.

21 Yusuf Delikoca, '1909 Adana Olayları: İdam Edilen Türkler', from: *Ceyhan Haber* (December 10th, 2009). Available online: <http://ceyhanhaber01.blogspot.nl/2009/12/1909-adana-olaylari-idam-edilen-turkler.html> (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

22 Roderic H. Davison, 'The Armenian Crisis, 1912-1914'. In: Roderic H. Davison (ed.), *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West* (Texas 1990).

23 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 33.



printed in five languages; notably Armenian, Greek, Ottoman Turkish, French, and Hebrew.<sup>24</sup>

Kromhout's explanatory reason for the Young Turks targeting the Armenians also does not make any sense: "The Young Turks dreamt of one big empire, Turan, which would also incorporate the Turkmens of Russia. Exactly in the middle between the Turks and Turkmens, lived the Armenians, whose presence was increasingly seen as obstructing". However, looking at the map would in fact show us that most Ottoman Armenians lived in the East-Anatolian city of Van (37,8%) which is in the mid centre of the Ottoman Empire and close to only one border: the Ottoman-Persian.<sup>25</sup> The Turan-ideology was never an official part of the Young Turk-movement, and even the vast majority of the Young Turks was non-Turkish.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, the Young Turks were not focused on expansion of the Ottoman Empire, but on preservation of the collapsing empire, making this reasoning from Kromhout completely obsolete.<sup>27</sup> Despite of this, Kromhout continues to argue that the Young Turks did not only see the Armenians as obstructive, but all Christian minorities in general. However, this does not explain why the Young Turks founded the *Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası* (a socialist/communist party) in Istanbul in 1910 with the support of the Armenian and Bulgarian minorities.<sup>28</sup>

Kromhout also touches upon the Balkan Wars and states that these defeats were reason for radicalization of the Young Turks, and the Ottoman government suspected the Christians in Asia Minor of supporting the enemy. This is incorrect for a number of reasons. For one, the loss of the Balkans was a process that started in the seventeenth century and it is hard to defend why radicalization was not an issue in the first three centuries but "suddenly" would come up in the twentieth century. Secondly, the loss of the Balkans did stir up tension between the Young Turk movement and the Ottoman government cultivating in the Young Turk raid on the Ottoman parliament in 1913. This shows that the loss of the Balkans made the Young Turks wary of the autocratic elite and not the Christian minorities since most Young Turks themselves were

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24 Gazanfer İbar, 'Cumhuriyetten sonra da Meşrutiyet kutladık: Hürriyet İlamı İlk milli bayramımızdı', in: *Atlas Tarih*, Issue: 13 (June–July 2012), Istanbul, pp. 70–71.

25 Stanford J. Shaw, 'The Ottoman Census System and Population, 1831–1914', in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Volume: 9, Issue: 03 (August 1978), pp. 325–338.

26 Füsün Üstel, *Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)* (İstanbul 1997), pp. 15–42.

27 Sina Akşin, *Turkey, From Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to present* (New York 2007).

28 Eyal Ginio, 'El Dovér El Mas Sânto. The mobilization of the Ottoman Jewish population during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)', in: Hannes Grandits, Nathalie Clayer & Robert Pichler (eds.), *Conflicting loyalties in the Balkans: The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building* (New York 2011).

non-Turks.<sup>29</sup> Thirdly, since Kromhout does not provide any source for his statements, it is hard to understand where he bases his thesis on. Thirdly, since there were actual uprisings, rebellions and other acts of separatism amongst the Ottoman Christians in Asia Minor ever since 1895, the suspicion was in fact valid.<sup>30</sup>

Kromhout continues by arguing that the Young Turks established a “dictatorship in 1913”. However, the Young Turks were not organized in a political party, which made it impossible for them to seize power. There was no common factor among the various groups within the Young Turk-movement except for their demand for a constitution and a parliament, which would, in their view, stop the Ottoman Empire from disintegrating.<sup>31</sup> To bridge the differences among all these diverse groups, the Young Turks were content with the appointment of grand viziers not on the basis of their allegiance to the Young Turks but, rather, on the basis of their allegiance to the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, nine of the thirteen grand viziers that served the Ottoman Empire between 1903 and 1918 were in fact non-Young Turks making it impossible to establish a Young Turk dictatorship. Between 1913 and 1917 there were a total of three persons appointed as grand viziers (prime-minister) of the Ottoman Empire, of which only one was a Young Turk.<sup>32</sup> Therefore there is no logic explanation for calling the Young Turks “dictators”.

The statement that the Young Turks “immediately started turkifying the country” in 1913 by giving Armenian, Greek and Bulgarian villages and cities Turkish names. Again, this is impossible by a number of reasons. For one, the Greek and Bulgarians had already gained independence in respectively 1832 and 1878/1908. So there were virtually no more Bulgarian or Greek villagers and cities left within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, the campaign of turkification of names is simply incorrect. For one, the name of the parliament building was still the Ottoman version of the Arabic-origin word ‘Bâb-ı Âli’, and not the Turkish ‘Yüce Kapı’. Secondly, some Turkish geographical names were changed as well. This had nothing to do with the process of ‘Turkification’ or nationalism but with creating unity and uniformity through having one form of names applicable to all. For example, the Armenian village name ‘Vak’if’ is changed to ‘Vakıflı’ in order for all citizens to correctly pronounce them. According to the research of Harun Tuncel, other reasons

29 Taner Aslan, ‘İttihâd-ı Osmani’den Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti’ne’, in: *Bilig*, Issue: 47, Fall 2008, pp. 79-120.

30 Yunus Özger, *1895 Bayburt Ermeni Ayaklanmaları* (İstanbul 2007).

31 Alan Palmer, *The Decline & Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (New York 1994).

32 Yılmaz Öztuna, *Büyük Türkiye Tarihi* (14 volumes) (İstanbul 1983).

33 Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: a short history* (New York 2007).

were primarily: the confusion when two villages had the exact same name, as well as names that were seen as unacceptable (for instance: 'Stupid Village' or 'Whore Village'). The latter two included changing Turkish names, so the example Kromhout gives is not confined to non-Turkish geographical names. The Ottoman capital of İstanbul was officially still called 'Konstantiniyye' (derived from the Greek word 'Constantinopolis') in governmental documents until 1930, while it was called 'İstanbul' (derived from the Greek word 'Eistenpolin', meaning 'to the city') among its residents. Seeing that not all names were turkified, it is easy to wipe away Kromhout's conclusion. This becomes clear when looking at the examples with İstanbul (instead of Constantinople) and Diyarbakır (instead of Amed), which were respectively Greek and Kurdish names before they were changed. Both İstanbul and Constantinople are Greek names so it does not explain the name change in that specific case. The same applies with Diyarbakır, which is not Turkish but in fact Arabic: 'Diyar-ı Bekr', while Amed is not Kurdish but Assyrian. Kromhout mistakenly states that the cities received Turkish names while in fact the new names were mostly non-Turkish and pre-Ottoman historical names from the period prior to the Seljuks.<sup>34</sup>

Other arguments include that "only Turkish was allowed in state organisations", while in fact Ottoman (a combination of Arabic alphabet, Persian grammar and Turkish words alongside vocabularies from almost all minorities) was the official language within the Ottoman Empire until the Ottoman Empire disintegrated in 1922. Turkish only became an official language in 1928 in the Republic Turkey which was formed in 1923. Kromhout misses the point by a mere fifteen years, which is not the first time in his article.<sup>35</sup> Yet another invalid argument from Kromhout is that the Ottoman economy was forced to fall in Turkish hands, while this did not happen until much later. The only source that argues the earliest record of the switch for Ottoman merchants from being mostly non-Turkish and non-Muslim to being mostly Muslim Turkish is 1914, one year before Kromhout argues it took place without providing any source.<sup>36</sup> However, apart from this marginal thesis, most sources put the switch from the Turkish economy in 1942 with the start of the Varlık Vergisi (Tax on Wealth) in the Republic Turkey which is not only 29 years later than Kromhout argues, but also a different country (Ottoman Empire versus Republic Turkey).<sup>37</sup> The third argument Kromhout throws up is that

34 Harun Tunçel, 'Renamed Villages in Turkey', in: *Firat University Journal of Social Science*, Volume: 10, Issue: 2 (2000), pp. 23-34.

35 Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford 2002).

36 Various submitted papers, Conference: 'A Civilization Destroyed: The Wealth of Non-Muslims in the Late Ottoman Period and the Early Republican Era' (İstanbul 2015).

37 Faik Ökte, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası* (İstanbul 1951).

“Greek merchants along the Aegean coast were victims of state-organized boycotts, threats, confiscation, murder and deportation” in 1913. Again, Kromhout does not seem to know his timeline of history. The Greek merchants were traded from Turks living in Greece; involving one million Greeks from Anatolia and half a million Turks from Greece. This population exchange between Greece and Turkey was not in 1913, like Kromhout argues, but ten years later in 1923. Additionally, the population exchange, or agreed mutual expulsion, was signed during the ‘Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations’ in Lausanne, Switzerland on 30 January 1923 by the governments of Greece and Turkey under supervision of European

*Turkey wanted the half a million Turks living in Greece because of the ethnic cleansing Greece was perpetrating, to which Greece in return wanted one million Greeks in Anatolia. Therefore, Kromhout makes the fatal mistake of not only putting this in a wrong timeframe, ten years prior, but also mentioned it as if it was one-sided while in fact it was not.*

states.<sup>38</sup> Turkey wanted the half a million Turks living in Greece because of the ethnic cleansing Greece was perpetrating, to which Greece in return wanted one million Greeks in Anatolia.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Kromhout makes the fatal mistake of not only putting this in a wrong timeframe, ten years prior, but also mentioned it as if it was one-sided while in fact it was not. Lastly, it was a population exchange with the consent of both Turkey and Greece, as well as with the approval of the European superpowers. It was not, in any case, what Kromhout insinuates as an anti-Greek policy from the Ottomans.

Kromhout continues by mentioning that Armenians suffered from new Kurdish attacks in 1913 and 1914, but neglects to mention two important factors. For one, it were not only the Armenians that suffered. Kurds, Turks, Muslims and other non-Armenians as well as Ottoman-loyal Armenians, also suffered from massive, inhumane, brutal and cruel attacks from nationalist Armenian militias such as Dashnakzutyun (also ‘Taşnak’).<sup>40</sup> The sentences that “a lot Armenians were forced to become Muslims” and “the aim was to make Asia Minor homogenic” do not have any sources making them absolute rumours.<sup>41</sup> However, one must bear in mind that Kromhout’s own logic fails when he speaks of Kurds attacking Armenians in order to make Asia Minor a homogenic

38 Bruce Clark, *Twice A Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (London 2006).

39 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (New York 1995).

40 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Utah 2005).

41 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 34.

Turkish region; since Kurds are in no way Turks. The Kurdish attacks were not a systematic policy from the Ottoman government, nor the Young Turks, but mere tribal wars between two competing people: Kurds and Armenians. The Ottomans tried stopping these feudal differences and even went as far as sentencing both parties to death, which would be illogical if they instigated the tribal wars themselves in order to “make the Armenians disappear”.

The statement of Kromhout that shortly before the First World War started, Armenian lobby organisations succeeded in convincing European states to put pressure on the Ottomans to give the Armenians more autonomous rights and two inspectors (one from the Netherlands: Louis Westenek) were ordered to see to this. Kromhout uses the term “lobby by Armenian political organisations” to refer to Dashnakzutyun, who by that period had killed and massacred hundreds of thousands innocent people. Dashnakzutyun was actually an ultraviolent terrorist organisation, while the pressure of the European superpowers had started with the raid of the Ottoman Bank.<sup>42</sup>

Fellow-Dutchman Schmidt, a Turkish linguist at Leiden University, states that Louis Constant Westenek (1872 - 1930) was appointed, not to ensure that the Ottoman officials did anything against the Armenians, but to “prevent that local non-Armenian Muslims would not take revenge on the Armenians for the fact that Armenians were pursuing their dreams of independence”.<sup>43</sup> in which the non-Armenian Muslims would fear that they would be persecuted in the newly established Armenian state for simply being non-Armenian and non-Christian. Unfortunately Kromhout denies all of these undisputable facts as a part of his pattern of Ethnocide. Kromhout even continues by stating that the Ottoman Empire expected a lot from this war, amongst other things: the reconquest of the Balkans and the establishment of the dreamed empire Turan. Both are farfetched, since the Ottoman Empire only became involved in the war after it got attacked; and the Ottomans only waged a defensive war without invading the Balkans or Russia at any point during the war.<sup>44</sup>

Kromhout somehow also states that the Ottoman Empire saw the war as an opportunity to finish off all internal enemies without international supervisors, and Minister of War Enver Paşa held meetings in the Summer of 1914 with high-ranking military officers about “the elimination of the non-Turkish mass”. Again Kromhout has provided with no sources, but the happenings do point

42 Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File* (İstanbul 2007)

43 Jan Schmidt, *Nederland in Turkije, Turkije in Nederland: 400 jaar vriendschap* (Leiden 2012), pp. 19-21.

44 Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Greenwood 2001).

us in another direction. The first statement of Kromhout can easily be countered with the following argument. If the Ottomans were foreseeing that they were going to use force against their own minorities, why would the Ottomans mobilize only 150.000 soldiers in the early summer of 1914 of the approximately 3 million that were possible and eventually were mobilized during the remaining four year of the war? In my opinion, this shows that the Ottomans were in fact unprepared for war and in no way preparing a secret campaign against anyone.<sup>45</sup> Kromhout's second statement can also easily be encountered since the meeting of Enver Paşa is actually pretty known and there is no sheer mention of anything remotely related to Armenians. During the meetings, Enver Paşa gives the least attention to the General Staff, which prompts the Germans (allies of the Ottomans) to take over the position of first assistant chief of staff of the Turkish General Staff. Liman von Sanders (one of the German military officers send to the Ottomans to aid them) appoints Friedrich Bronsart von Schellendorf. Bronsart von Schellendorf began immediate preparation of mobilization and war plans in the absence of Enver Paşa, since he was no longer taken serious by the Germans. The meetings Kromhout is referring to, were therefore led by the Germans and no mention of Armenians is ever recorded during these meetings.<sup>46</sup> However, there are other sources that imply that it were the Germans that insisted on the Ottomans to take actions against the Armenians.<sup>47</sup> Kromhout chooses to neglect and deny these facts and pretend as if these discussions are not present in academia. Additionally, in July of 1914 the Young Turks started negotiations with various Armenian groups in Erzurum to see if a new alliance was possible. Since the Armenians openly stated to have strong ties with the Russians, the Young Turks were convinced that there were strong Armenian-Russian links with detailed plans aimed at the detachment of the region from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>48</sup>

Kromhout goes on by arguing that the Ottoman cry for drastic measures became more apparent after the disastrous winter of 1914, and the fact that the Ottomans were no match for the Russians. According to Kromhout, the retreating soldiers took revenge on Armenian villagers accusing them of treason. Again, Kromhout has no sources to back up his claims. In reality, the winter of 1914 was not as disastrous as Kromhout argues. The Russians

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45 Yücel Yanıkdağ, 'Ottoman Empire/Middle East', from: *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Available online: [http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/ottoman\\_empiremiddle\\_east](http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/ottoman_empiremiddle_east) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

46 Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Greenwood 2001), p. 5.

47 Selami Kılıç, *Ermeni Sorunu ve Almanya Türk-Alman Arşiv Belgeleriyle* (İstanbul 2003).

48 Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Greenwood 2001), p. 97

launched a surprise attack on November 1<sup>st</sup>, but it was soon unsuccessful. In fact, the Ottoman forces managed to maintain their positions at Köprüköy in November 1914 and by November 12th, the 3rd Army began to push the Russians back with the support of the cavalry. The 3rd Infantry Regiment of the Ottomans managed to invade Köprüköy after the Azap Offensive between November 17th and 20nd. By the end of November, the front had stabilized with the Russians clinging on to a small strip of land, some 25 kilometers into Ottoman lands. However, Armenian volunteers from the Ottoman Empire took advantage and occupied Karaköse and Doğubeyazıt, just north of the important Ottoman region of Van. After the capture, the Armenians carried out massive massacres, killings, raping and other forms of torture causing high Ottoman casualties.<sup>49</sup> It is striking that Kromhout denies this, since this explains why retreating Ottomans were forced to battle Armenians. It were Ottoman Armenians who took Ottoman cities behind the front which took the Ottomans by surprise. The Armenians were so successful that even the Russian Czar himself, Nicholas II of Russia, stated in December 1914 that “Armenians are hurrying to enter the ranks of the glorious Russian Army, with their blood to serve the victory of the Russian Army. Let the Russian flag wave freely over the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus! Let your Armenian peoples, who are remaining under the Turkish yoke, receive freedom! Let the Armenian people of Turkey, who have suffered for the faith of Christ, received resurrection for a new free life!”<sup>50</sup> And his efforts proved successful, where in the summer of 1914 Armenian volunteer units were established under the Russian Armed forces and numbered 110.000-120.000 Armenians<sup>51</sup>, this soon became 150.000.<sup>52</sup>

Even the before mentioned Karekin Pastırmacıyan, who led the attack on the Ottoman Bank in 1896 and then became an Ottoman member of parliament, united 20.000 Armenian volunteer soldiers under his command, and growing rapidly. To illustrate that not all Armenians were against the Ottomans, Karekin Pastırmacıyan's brother was director of the Erzurum-branch of the Ottoman Bank. Needless to say that he was soon assassinated by Armenian nationalists who saw all Ottoman-loyal Armenians as possible targets.<sup>53</sup> This also illustrates that Kromhout's use of the word “accused” is far from justified, seeing that

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49 Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Greenwood 2001), p. 54.

50 Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2/2 (Cambridge 1977), pp. 314–315.

51 Jacques Kayaloff, *The Battle of Sardarabad* (Paris 1973), p. 73.

52 Fridtjof Nansen, *Armenia and the Near East: Middle East in the Twentieth Century* (New York 1976), p. 310.

53 Wolfgang Gust, *Alman Belgeleri / Ermeni Soykırımı 1915-1916* (İstanbul 2012).

around 150.000 Armenians (including an Ottoman member of parliament) were actually occupying Ottoman villages and cities.

Kromhout goes on stating that the Ottoman government first fires all Armenian police officers and government officials, and then turned its attention to the Armenian at the Ottoman army. Kromhout states that the Armenian soldiers were put to work to labour battalions and were forced to build roads and strongholds behind the fort. Again, he has no sources backing his claims but one must bare in mind that since Kromhout states that “all” Armenian police officers and government officials were fired, this one example is enough to cripple his thesis. He is, like in most of his theses, coming off way to strong to prove his point and in doing so diminishes the impact of his own research results as well as his credibility as a scholar. One primary source of the American archives tells us the exact journey of some Christian Ottomans; one example is the testimony of Edward Tashji (or Taşcı). Tashji was the son of an Armenian mother, Zabel Tashjian, residing in the Ottoman province of Balıkesir in Western Anatolia at the start of the First World War; and a Syrian Orthodox father, Circi ‘George’ Tashji, who resided in the Eastern Anatolian city of Urfa at the start of the First World War. The education his father received (seemingly fluent in Arabic, French, Armenian, Ottoman Turkish and English) and the fact that he remained an Ottoman army officer during the entire First World War, are interesting findings and apparently enough to call out Kromhout.<sup>54</sup>

Kromhout’s other claim that Armenians were put to work behind the front can be seen in the light of a simple tactical and strategic decision since there was a serious threat of Armenian desertion to the Russians, remembering the 150.000 Armenians that fought for the Russians as volunteers. However, the example of Circi Tashji clearly shows that not all Armenians were put to work in these battalions, and that they could also still retain their high-ranking position within the Ottoman army. Kromhout continues to state that a lot of the Armenians in the labour battalions died due to the hard work, the bad care and the mistreatment. Kromhout mentions no source and when looking at the Ottoman archives there are no unusual large amounts of deaths in these labour battalions rendering Kromhout’s argument, yet again, useless.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the Ottoman archives also clearly show that Muslim Turks above the age of 40 were also put to work in labour battalions and that the amount of Armenians in the labour battalions was only 27,9%.<sup>56</sup> One can, however, detect the high

54 Edward Tashji, *Armenian Allegations: The Truth Must be Told* (reprint by Rose 2005), p. 20.

55 Cengiz Mutlu, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Amele Taburları* (İstanbul 2007).

56 Cengiz Mutlu, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Amele Taburları* (İstanbul 2007), p. 50.



rate of desertion in the Ottoman army, especially amongst the Armenians; who joined the Russians at large but with their Ottoman weaponry in a period of time where the Ottomans had a shortage of weaponry. This is the main reason for keeping Armenians in the labour battalions without weaponry.<sup>57</sup>

Kromhout states that the decision to destroy the entire Armenian population is “suspected” to have been taken in March 1915. It is striking that Kromhout can make such a great claim without any source and with just some “suspect”. It is also a contradiction since Kromhout himself had stated prior that Enver Paşa had organized meetings with the intent to eliminate all Armenians in the summer of 1914. Apparently, according to Kromhout, there were two decisions aimed at destroying the Armenians although none of the two have any evidence to back up his claims. Even fellow-Dutchmen Boekestijn and Zürcher, like stated before, argue that there is no evidence whatsoever that points to a systematic approach of the Ottomans to annihilate the Armenians, in the Ottoman archives. Therefore, it becomes even more interesting where Kromhout bases his claims upon. He fails to clear this up.

According to Kromhout, the decision to destroy the Armenian population was accelerated by two events. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1915, the Ottomans were decisively defeated by the Russians in Van, states Kromhout. And just three days later the British landed on Gallipoli in Western Anatolia. According to Kromhout, this caused panic with the Ottoman rulers and they wanted to finish off the Armenians before it was too late. Kromhout continues to state that “shrewd propaganda made the people of İstanbul believe that a fifth column of Armenians was on the verge of killing the rulers, taking over power and opening up the Bosphorus for the enemy”.<sup>58</sup> Again, Kromhout’s claims are unjustified and there are multiple reasons to conclude this. For one, the fall of Van was actually due to the Armenian volunteers who fought for the Russians. The city fell in hands of rebellious Armenians from Van, who decisively defeated the Ottomans.<sup>59</sup> This makes what Kromhout calls “shrewd propaganda” actually much more real than Kromhout makes it out to be. Secondly, the so-called panic amongst the Ottoman rulers is not solid when one keeps in mind that the Ottomans gained an important sea victory at Gallipoli on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1915. The landing of the British, Australians, New-

57 Tuncay Yılmaz, ‘Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Amele Taburları – Cengiz Mutlu’, from: *Gelibolu’yu Anlamak*. Available online: [http://www.geliboluyuanlamak.com/36\\_Birinci-Dunya-Savasi%E2%80%99nda-Amele-Taburlari---Cengiz-Mutlu-%28-Tuncay-Yilmazer-%29.html](http://www.geliboluyuanlamak.com/36_Birinci-Dunya-Savasi%E2%80%99nda-Amele-Taburlari---Cengiz-Mutlu-%28-Tuncay-Yilmazer-%29.html) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

58 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 35.

59 Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran & Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van* (Utah 2006).

Zealanders and French was not as serious as Kromhout argues, since they could not advance and the battle ended in a stalemate between the two armies. Yet again, Kromhout makes a grand mistake by dating the landing at Gallipoli on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 while in fact it was April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015.<sup>60</sup> This also cripples the rest of Kromhout's arguments.

Kromhout claims that the fear for the British landing in Gallipoli made that the police arrested 235 Armenians in İstanbul on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015, while in reality the British had not yet even landed in Gallipoli. In reality, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 was the day that suspected Armenian nationalists (mostly leaders of terrorist organisation such as Dashnakzutyun) were arrested after the fall of Van in which nationalist Armenians took control of the city and forced the Ottoman army to retreat. The arrest of the Armenians was aimed at crippling the Armenian terrorist organizations in Van and other Ottoman regions, as well as to stop the Armenian sabotages in order to prevent other Ottoman cities of falling in hand of the Armenians.<sup>61</sup> All 235 Armenians were leading personalities of the Armenian Revolutionary Party (ARF), or Dasnakzutyun, which was a terrorist organization founded in 1890 but already responsible for hundreds of thousands of dead Ottomans.<sup>62</sup> Kromhout continues that soon after the arrests of April 24, 2015, other arrests in other regions of the Ottoman Empire took place and even public executions were “daily business”. These arrests are only to be seen in the light of arresting Armenian nationalists from Dashnakzutyun to stop their spiral of violence against Ottoman citizens. The so-called “public executions” were nothing more than suspects who were arrested, found guilty by Ottoman courts and accordingly sentenced to a penalty. One must bear in mind that during the skirmished of Adana in 1909, even Ottoman cavalry soldiers were sentenced to death for cruelty against Ottoman Armenians; showing that the Ottoman penal code made no distinction between ethnicity nor public function.<sup>63</sup>

Kromhout continues to state that Minister of Interior, Talat Paşa, gave the order to “deport all Armenians from Asia Minor on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015”. Again

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60 Harvey Broadbent, *Gallipoli: The Fatal Shore* (Victoria 2005), p. 47.

61 Kemal Çiçek, ‘Relocation of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915’, from: *Turkish Historical Society*, July 2008. Available online: [http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=157:relocation-of-the-ottoman-armenians-in-1915&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13](http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=157:relocation-of-the-ottoman-armenians-in-1915&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

62 Kemal Çiçek, ‘Relocation of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915’, from: *Turkish Historical Society*, July 2008. Available online: [http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=157:relocation-of-the-ottoman-armenians-in-1915&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13](http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=157:relocation-of-the-ottoman-armenians-in-1915&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

63 Cezmi Yurtsever, ‘1909 Adana Olaylarında İdam Edilenlerin Listesidir’, from: *Adana 01 Haber*. Available online: [http://www.adana01haber.com/author\\_article\\_print.php?id=910](http://www.adana01haber.com/author_article_print.php?id=910) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

Kromhout makes some major mistakes. For one, 'tehcir' does not mean "deportation" but 'relocation' since the Armenians were taken from Eastern Anatolia and settled in North-Syria which were both still part of the Ottoman Empire. With the fronts being in Eastern Anatolia and the Arabian Peninsula (Yemen and Palestine), North-Syria was perceived as a relatively peaceful part of the Ottoman Empire, far from the war front where the Armenians could no longer sabotage the war effort. "Deportation" means the expulsion of a group of people from a country, which in this case is incorrect since they were relocated within the same country. Secondly, the Armenians were not forced from Asia Minor but from a couple of provinces in the far east of Asia Minor. Almost all Armenians in the west from Asia Minor were not relocated. Thirdly, the relocation did not start on May 23rd, 1915 but on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1915.<sup>64</sup> Lastly, the policy of Tehcir was a normal practice within the Ottoman Empire as a punishment for groups of peoples after a rebellion or uprising. Turks, like the Karamanoğulları, were also subdued to the Tehcir in the past. It was not a death measure intended to kill people.

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Kromhout continues to say that Talat Paşa wrote in a memorandum that "preparations were made" and that the Armenian problem had "a final solution". However, the preparations are a reference to the preparations of the Tehcir, while the final solution is just a final solution to the Armenian problem of rebellions in the past seven months which seriously crippled the war effort.<sup>65</sup> That Talat Paşa was not using euphemism for mass killings are clear when looking at the British archives. According to Oxford professor Hew Strachan Talat Paşa's is witnessed to have cried (or at least put his hands in front of his face) during an interview concerning the relocation. One can conclude that it at least shows that it wasn't premeditated by Talat Paşa or that even he himself did not expect so many victims during the Tehcir.<sup>66</sup>

One of the scarce sources Kromhout uses, is the letter of the German vice-consul in Erzurum, Max von Scheubner-Richter, who stated that the Ottoman

64 Justin McCarthy, 'The Light Millennium', from: *UNDPI/NGO* (April 21, 2009). Available online: [http://dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=48:what-drove-the-armenians-and-the-turks-apart-&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13](http://dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48:what-drove-the-armenians-and-the-turks-apart-&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

65 Justin McCarthy, 'The Light Millennium', from: *UNDPI/NGO* (April 21, 2009). Available online: [http://dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=48:what-drove-the-armenians-and-the-turks-apart-&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13](http://dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48:what-drove-the-armenians-and-the-turks-apart-&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

66 BBC/Discovery Channel, *First World War: Jihad 1914 - 1916* (part 4 of 10) (2003).

regime openly admitted to him that the actual aim of the relocations was the “total annihilation of the Armenians”. Richter added that “one of the prominent party leaders had said word for word that ‘after the war not a single Armenian would be found in Turkey anymore’.”<sup>67</sup> Kromhout accepts this as a fact without further hesitation but there are a number of questions about Richter’s statement. For one, why would the Ottoman regime officially deny that it was planning to annihilate the Armenians but admit it to a low-ranking German official? Secondly, even the German Embassy questioned the authenticity of the quote, as well as the reliability of Richter, since there was no written evidence to support the claim of Richter, nor any other witnesses who had heard the quote as well. Richter claimed that he was the only one to have heard the quote but could not give the name of the Ottoman official who stated it, when asked about it. Thirdly, even if one believes Richter, it is important to emphasize that Richter was talking about “party leaders”, and not the Ottoman government itself; and the quote that “no Armenian will be found in Turkey” does not imply that all Armenians would be killed, it can also refer to a well-orchestrated and thorough Tehcir. Fourthly, the German Embassy wrote some remarks about Richter on Richter’s letter calling him “a weird man” and “politically unfit”. Richter was known for his attitude to push towards acceptance in the world of nobility, for which purpose he marries a woman 29 years his senior to gain her old German surname as a form of having his own lineage ennobled. Richter was seen as an aggressively ambitious man, desperately trying to gain prestige. He had even volunteered to be put to work in the Ottoman Empire on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1914. Therefore the German Embassy in İstanbul was wary of his sightings, fearing it may have been to put himself in the picture and gain a higher position within the German diplomatic system.<sup>68</sup> Richter later joined Hitler to gain more political power, after which Richter was shot and killed by police during the Beer Hall Putsch in which he and Hitler (among others) tried to seize power in Munich on November, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1923.<sup>69</sup> Richter was to mastermind of this attempt to seize power unlawfully, walking arm-in-arm with Hitler on the day itself.<sup>70</sup>

Kromhout states that “killing 1,5 million people needed cooperation on a high level between different government organisations”. However, how is this possible if the official Ottoman census (carried out by Ottoman Armenians, while supervised by France) shows that only 1,2 million Armenians were

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67 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 35.

68 Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism, 1917–1945* (New York 2005).

69 Konrad Heiden, *Der Fuehrer: Hitler’s Rise to Power* (New York 1944), p. 184.

70 John Toland, *Adolf Hitler: The Definitive Biography* (New York 1976), p. 170.

present at that time?<sup>71</sup> Additionally, if it needed cooperation between so many different governmental institutions, why is it that there are no incriminating documents? Kromhout continues to state that Talat Paşa was the main organisator, instructing different provincial and district heads by means of telegraph of the procedures they needed to follow. This is peculiar since no Minister of Interior would bother to send out telegraphs himself. Kromhout continues to describe the procedures. First the Armenians were told that they would be relocated, and that they were therefore expected to be ready at a certain time. Muslims were then warned not to aid the Armenians, or they would be killed and their houses burned. Kromhout adds that “most of the time the police held razzias before the announced date. Sometimes the deportees would be transported through train or ship, but most of the time they were forced to walk making the trip a death march. The final destination for most was North-Syria, where the Armenians were put in concentration camps, waiting for their definitive fate”.<sup>72</sup> However, there are numerous mistakes in this passage. For one, the use of the word “deportee” is wrong since it needs to be “relocated” as explained before in this study. Secondly, if Talat Paşa did send specific instructions about the procedure to different provincial and district heads, why did they all follow other rules? One province used trains, others used ships, while yet others permitted the use of ox carts, and yet others only allowed to go on foot.<sup>73</sup> And if Talat Paşa had laid out thorough guidelines, why would (as Kromhout puts it) the police at random carry out razzias before the announced date? And not even at all times at that? Kromhout further states that Muslims were warned, but shows no sources. Since there are no sources, by my knowledge, to back it up, it can be seen as rubbish. The same applies to the mention of concentration camps in North-Syria. Even Kromhout himself fails to put up hard evidence to back this up: no sources, nor photographs. Additionally Kromhout uses the term “death march” but neglects the mention of Ottoman aid during these relocations in the form of baby milk for infants, medicine, beds, blankets, and food.<sup>74</sup> Kazım Karabekir Paşa, commanding officer in the East of the Ottoman Empire, even asks for more baby milk and doctors for the Armenians during the relocation.<sup>75</sup>

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71 Stanford J. Shaw, ‘The Ottoman Census System and Population, 1831–1914’, in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Volume: 9, Issue: 03 (August 1978), pp. 325–338.

72 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 36.

73 Gwynne Dyer, ‘Armenia: The end of the Debate?’, in: *Zimbabwe Independent* (October 22nd, 2009). Available online: <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2009/10/22/armenia-the-end-of-the-debate/> (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

74 Armand Sağ, ‘Leugens van de Armeniërs’, from: *Ooggetuigenverlagen Armeense Genocide*. Available online: [http://sargasso.nl/ooggetuigenverlagen\\_armeense\\_genocide/](http://sargasso.nl/ooggetuigenverlagen_armeense_genocide/) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

75 Balıkesir Üniversitesi, Conference: ‘Ermeni Meselesine Bir Bakış’, available online: [http://www.balikesir.edu.tr/~basin/haber\\_detay.php?id=298](http://www.balikesir.edu.tr/~basin/haber_detay.php?id=298) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

Kromhout continues to say that in “a lot of districts only the women and children were transported, while the men were immediately killed”. However, this is also a contradiction with what Kromhout stated about the strict procedures of Talat Paşa. If Talat Paşa had strict procedures for every district and province, how come did “a lot of districts” (like Kromhout states) go their own way by not following orders of their own Minister of Interior? Kromhout also does not mention the fact that only the Armenians in the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire (where there were Armenian rebellions and were close to the war front) were relocated. The Armenians in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, along with Catholic and Protestant Armenians, were not relocated.<sup>76</sup> Just as Catholic Armenians<sup>77</sup>, Armenian women (in most cases) and children<sup>78</sup> as well as sick Armenians<sup>79</sup> were excepted from the relocation.<sup>80</sup>

Kromhout goes on stating that the local authorities got help, not only from the police and the military, but also from the so-called Special Organisation: a paramilitary group with special rights. However, the Canadian military historian Gwynne Dyer explains why this was the case: “Regular Turkish troops could not be spared from the fighting, so most of the job of “guarding” the columns of Armenian deportees marching through the mountains to Syria was given to Kurdish tribesmen, who proceeded to rob, rape and murder them in huge numbers.”<sup>81</sup> Dyer also explains the other claims of Kromhout. According to Kromhout, Armenians all over Asia Minor were put together, shot dead, burned and drowned. However, this is no way an argument for a systematical plan to annihilate Armenians since Dyer explains that it were mostly Kurdish tribesmen who did the killing, without the central Ottoman government knowing, as revenge for the Armenian rebellions in recent year. The next sentence of Kromhout, about Armenian churches going up in flames or changed in mosques, can also be explained as an act of revenge by the local

76 Gwynne Dyer, ‘The Armenian massacres and the French presidential elections’, from: *The Georgie Straight* (January 24th, 2012). Available online: <http://www.straight.com/news/gwynne-dyer-armenian-massacres-and-french-presidential-elections> (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

77 Ottoman Archives, Ottoman Imperial Order 76. Available online: [http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/yayin/osmanli/Armenians\\_inottoman/ottoman\\_armenian.htm](http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/yayin/osmanli/Armenians_inottoman/ottoman_armenian.htm) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

78 Ottoman Archives, Ottoman Imperial Order 225 & 226. Available online: [http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/yayin/osmanli/Armenians\\_inottoman/ottoman\\_armenian.htm](http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/yayin/osmanli/Armenians_inottoman/ottoman_armenian.htm) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

79 Ottoman Archives, Ottoman Imperial Order 104. Available online: [http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/yayin/osmanli/Armenians\\_inottoman/ottoman\\_armenian.htm](http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/yayin/osmanli/Armenians_inottoman/ottoman_armenian.htm) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

80 Armand Sağ, ‘Leugens van de Armeniërs’, from: *Ooggetuigenverslagen Armeense Genocide*. Available online: [http://sargasso.nl/ooggetuigenverslagen\\_armeense\\_genocide/](http://sargasso.nl/ooggetuigenverslagen_armeense_genocide/) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

81 Gwynne Dyer, ‘Sucking up to Armenians’, from: *Hurriyet Daily News* (January 26th, 2012). Available online: <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/sucking-up-to-armenians.aspx?pageID=449&nID=12304&NewsCatID=418> (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

Muslims that were the surviving relatives or tribesmen of the victims of Armenian violence in recent years. There is no evidence that this violence was instigated by the Ottoman leaders, since this sparkled violence was only seen in a few districts in the far East close to the war front. Consequently, Kromhout's claim that "Armenians all over Asia Minor" can be seen as a major error from the side of Kromhout as well.

Towards the end of the paragraph Kromhout tries to downplay the role of the Kurds by stating that "Kurds often participated in the killings, but that there were also Kurds and Turks who helped the Armenians". It were in fact mostly Kurdish tribes doing the killing out of revenge for the killings of the Armenians, without any knowledge of the central Ottoman government. While Kurdish tribes attacked the Armenians, there were Turks and Kurdish trying to help the Armenians. This is probably the only sentence of Kromhout that is not wrong. However, the next sentences are again full of historical errors. Kromhout states that "whoever could arrive in Syria, would find themselves in the next hell". He adds that the American consul in Aleppo reported about the arrival of 300 naked Armenian women with burns from the sun, and that the local prefect, Ali Suad, tried to ease the pain of the "deportees". Firstly, Kromhout again makes the mistake of using the word "deportee" where "relocated" is the only correct word. Secondly, Kromhout claims that Syria was yet another "hell hole" but then proceeds to give an example of how kind the local prefect was, contradicting himself entirely. Thirdly, his example of women that are burnt by the sun are in no way an example of torture by the Ottoman Empire since the Ottoman Empire had no control over the sun. It seems, on basis of Kromhout's own example, to be just unfortunate circumstances that have led to turmoil. Fourthly, the number of 300 women arriving in Aleppo also shows that not all Armenians were attacked or killed during their relocation when they were on their way; and that except for the burning sun, this relocation was carried out decently. Fifthly, one must also bear in mind that an example of 300 women (on a total of 924.158 Armenians, and 702.905 non-Armenian Muslims being relocated in 1915-1916) is a marginal example with is (by itself) negligible if it is not part of a greater research.<sup>82</sup> Lastly, Kromhout again does not do a thorough work. Ali Saud Bey is not the local prefect of Aleppo but

*It were in fact mostly Kurdish tribes doing the killing out of revenge for the killings of the Armenians, without any knowledge of the central Ottoman government. While Kurdish tribes attacked the Armenians, there were Turks and Kurdish trying to help the Armenians.*

82 Murat Bardakçı, *Talat Paşa'nın Evrak-ı Metrukesi* (İstanbul 2013).

the governor (*vali*) of Deir Al-Zor which is a much higher position. Deir Al-Zor is also some 300 kilometers to the southeast of Aleppo. This shows the negligence and carelessness of Kromhout.

Furthermore, Ali Saud Bey is actually a good example of how the relocation was actually planned. Under Ali Suad Bey, the Armenians were encouraged to settle and develop the remote land to which they had been relocated. Some Armenians even began a small trade and said that they would be happy to stay in the town.<sup>83</sup> This eventually backfired for the Ottomans, when the trade made it possible to keep financing the Armenian nationalist movement from Deir Al-Zor. This made Talat Paşa replace Ali Suad Bey with Salih Zeki Bey. Kromhout states that Talat Paşa defended his choice to replace Ali Suad Bey by saying “the presence needs to come to an end, no matter how tragic the taken measures can be, without taking into account age, sex, or conscious”. However, Kromhout added three words, changing the quote to: “the presence [of the Armenians] needs to come to an end, no matter how tragic the taken measures can be, without taking into account age, sex, or conscious”.<sup>84</sup> In fact, Talat Paşa makes a reference to the presence of both sympathy for Armenian terrorist organizations, as well as the presence of a nationalist Armenian movement in Eastern Anatolia, close to the war front of the First World War.<sup>85</sup> This was only hastened when the relocated Armenians joined forces with the Armenians from Aleppo, fortifying and arming themselves while occupying the American missionary in Aleppo. Thousands of Ottoman troops could barely break the resistance.<sup>86</sup>

Kromhout continues to state that Suad Bey was replaced by “a less scrupulous man who used the caves of Deir Al-Zor to drive thousands of Armenians into and let them suffocate through the smoke of big fires”. However, this does not compute with the findings of others who state that there is only one cave near Deir Al-Zor, and not the plural “caves” as Kromhout bluntly claims.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, the suffocation Armenians in the cave are frequently seen as an accident, as the cave was the only place where Armenians could stay if they had no other place to stay (since there were no camps in Deir Al-Zor according to American historian William R. Everdell, which is also a contradiction with

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83 Ronald Grigor Suny, “They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else”: *A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton 2015), p. 315.

84 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 36.

85 Mehmet Talat Paşa, *Hatıralarım ve Müdafaa*m (İstanbul 1921/2006).

86 Ronald Grigor Suny, “They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else”: *A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton 2015), p. 320.

87 William R. Everdell, *The First Moderns: Profiles in the Origins of Twentieth-century Thought* (Chicago 1997), p. 124-125.



the claims of Kromhout that there were “concentration camps present”). When the cave became overpopulated by Armenians, the idea to warm themselves up by starting big fires backfired when the smoke of the big fires (in combination with the cave harboring way more people than it could handle) suffocated many. Kromhout mistakenly misinterprets this as an act of mass killings.

Additionally, Kromhout states that “most Armenians were simply dumped in the desert of the province Deir Al-Zor where they died or fell in hands of the murderous Special Organisation”. However, one must understand that there is, in fact, no desert near Deir Al-Zor since Deir Al-Zor is situated near the shores of Euphrates River, being the seventh largest city in Syria and the largest in the eastern part of Syria. The Special Organisation was only called in, when Armenians rebelled like in Aleppo where they occupied the American missionary (like stated before in this study). Kromhout continues to state that “the houses and belongings the killed en deported left behind were seized by the state. A Commission for Abandoned Property redistributed it. Armenian wealth went to the state treasury. Houses and companies were handed over to Muslims, in a lot of cases to Turkish refugees.” There are again a lot of contradictions from Kromhout in this paragraph. If the houses and buildings were given to refugees, how would the wealth go to the state treasury? And why does Kromhout not mention that A) the Ottoman Empire kept a record of which properties were from whom in order to give it back after the war; B) the Ottoman Empire in some cases sold the property against the official value but kept the money only to give to the rightful owner; C) gave Armenians money to come back to Anatolia after the Tehcir ended.<sup>88</sup> It becomes apparent that Kromhout neglects to mention that the Ottoman Empire did not seize property as it did save guard it and/or distribute it to refugees that were pouring into the Ottoman Empire in fear of ethnic cleansing from Russians, Armenians, and Balkan peoples.<sup>89</sup>

Kromhout also states that the Ottoman Empire saw an opportunity in the Tehcir to create space to harbor Ottoman refugees. This was not entirely true. The Armenians were not relocated to create space, but after the relocation their void was filled. This was mostly because those regions were thinly populated anyway and in need of loyal citizens. Kromhout continues that the “Ottoman

88 State Archives, number 53/303: *Göç Eden Ermenilerin Geride Bıraktıkları Mal ve Eşyalarla, Sevkleri Tehcir edilen Ermeniler*. Available online: <http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/icerik/1846/goc-eden-ermenilerin-geride-biraktiklari-mal-ve-esyalarla-sevkleri-tehir-edilen-ermeniler/> (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

89 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (New York 1995).

government was busy killing an entire nation of people and was not keeping this hidden for the outside world. Through diplomats and religious leaders the news rapidly spread. The American ambassador Henry Morgenthau reported that ‘there was a racial campaign of extermination’ that was controlled from higher above”. Firstly, even Kromhout himself did not give any evidence that would implicate the Ottoman Empire itself in these war time skirmishes. The Ottoman Empire even tried to stop it when after three months of Tehcir, Talat Paşa himself gave the order on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1915 to stop the Tehcir: “The Armenian question in the eastern provinces has been resolved. There’s no need to sully the nation and the government[’s] [honor] with further atrocities [*fuzuli mezalim*]”.<sup>90</sup> One must also wonder that even if the Nazi’s tried to hide the Holocaust from the world, why would the Ottoman Empire not try and hide it? The answer is simple. Since the Ottoman Empire had not intent to kill the Armenians, nor was carrying out massacres, it had no reason to hide anything because it was not doing anything wrong. Secondly, the eyewitness reports of diplomats and religious leaders are more diverse than Kromhout makes it out. Most eyewitnesses (including a Dutch reporter on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1920) reported that Armenians were attacking innocent Ottomans until the relocation, when victims and their relatives took revenge.<sup>91</sup> Lastly, using the documents of Morgenthau is very controversial ever since American scholars Heath W. Lowry (Princeton University) and Guenter Lewy (University of Massachusetts Amherst) concluded that after comparing Morgenthau’s memoirs with Morgenthau’s personal archives, there were some serious differences between the two. Therefore the memoirs of Morgenthau are seen as a record of “crude half-truths and outright falsehoods” and not useful in a scholarly debate.<sup>92</sup> It is sad that Kromhout still insists on using this tainted source, which is proven to be nothing more than falsified memoirs.

Subsequently, Kromhout continues with using Richter as a source, even after even the German Embassy itself discredited Richter’s letters. It is also interesting to see that Richter wrote his letter on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1915, some ten days before the relocations actually started, making it plausible he relied solely on rumors to gain the attention of the German Embassy in İstanbul for his wish to get promoted. The German Embassy did not fall for it. It is extra remarkable since Richter wrote the letter on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1915 but only started to travel in Anatolia in August 1915 until June 1916. Remembering that Talat Paşa had

90 Ronald Grigor Suny, “They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else”: *A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton 2015), p. 317.

91 Algemeen Handelsblad, ‘De Armenisch-Turksche kwestie’ (Amsterdam, 25.05.1920). Available online: [http://www.nrc.nl/redactie/weblogs/wereld/artikel\\_handelsblad.doc](http://www.nrc.nl/redactie/weblogs/wereld/artikel_handelsblad.doc) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

92 Heath W. Lowry, *The Story Behind ‘Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story’* (İstanbul 1990) & Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Utah 2005), pp. 140-142.

ended the relocations on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1915, it is easy to understand why the German Embassy did not believe Richter since he probably did not see anything. Richter's incompetence also becomes clear when he sends a report to his superiors, calling the Young Turks ('İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti' in Ottoman Turkish) a person while it was in fact the name of a political movement: "İttihad (a Turkish leader) will dangle before the eyes of the Allies the idea of an alleged revolution prepared by the Armenian leaders."<sup>93</sup> However, Richter had even written that wrong with not one but two letters: 'İttihad' instead of 'İttihat'. In the same manner Kromhout states that "the regime in İstanbul plays dumb" and Enver Paşa tells Morgenthau that the Armenians were only sent to "a new home". Richter was told that the "deportations" were done humanely, according to Kromhout. Firstly, Kromhout uses the "deportations" where he actually means "relocation". Secondly, both the statement Enver made to Morgenthau as well as the explanation made to Richter were in fact correct when looking at the Ottoman archives where one can see that the Ottomans in fact did everything in their power to stop excessive violence by sending out orders. It shows that the regime did not "play dumb" as Kromhout puts it, but merely told the truth as it was.

Kromhout then goes on to claim that Great-Britain, France, and Russia condemned the Ottoman actions in a joint declaration on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1915. This is again biased since Great-Britain, France, and Russia were at war with the Ottomans and tried to change the public opinion into an anti-Ottoman stance. Great-Britain and France had just invaded Gallipoli in the Dardanelles but were not able to defeat the Ottomans, and in turn started a rumor to gain more support from other allies in order to beat the Ottomans. The same can be said for Russia, since they had invaded the Ottoman Empire but were also halted by Ottoman forces. Additionally, one must not forget that the decision to relocate the Armenians was taken between May 26<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1915. This means that Great-Britain, France, and Russia condemned the Tehcir even before it began, and even before the Ottomans themselves had even decided to carry out the Tehcir.<sup>94</sup> Kromhout goes on to state that "after the Ottoman Empire laid down their arms on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918, Enver and Talat together

93 Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, *Situation in Ottoman Turkey*. Available online: [https://www.google.nl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fchs.ccsd.org%2Fapps%2Fdownload%2Fagq85GOnLvSwmlPUd4wdVvew38xpBrkVpGjyV9D4jZ1ReybU.doc%2FArmenian%2520Genocide%2520German%2520Telegram%2520about%2520Ottoman%2520Plan%2520%2528Doc%25202%2529.doc&ei=va\\_0VIKmKYatUdWUgvAH&usq=AFQjCNG3kP39T3gmaLg1WMjtOtJuApTkOg&bvm=bv.87269000,d.d24](https://www.google.nl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fchs.ccsd.org%2Fapps%2Fdownload%2Fagq85GOnLvSwmlPUd4wdVvew38xpBrkVpGjyV9D4jZ1ReybU.doc%2FArmenian%2520Genocide%2520German%2520Telegram%2520about%2520Ottoman%2520Plan%2520%2528Doc%25202%2529.doc&ei=va_0VIKmKYatUdWUgvAH&usq=AFQjCNG3kP39T3gmaLg1WMjtOtJuApTkOg&bvm=bv.87269000,d.d24) (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

94 Justin McCarthy, 'The Light Millennium', from: *UNDPI/NGO* (April 21, 2009). Available online: [http://dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=48:what-drove-the-armenians-and-the-turks-apart-&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13](http://dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48:what-drove-the-armenians-and-the-turks-apart-&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

with other leaders of the Young Turks fled on board of a German submarine boat to Odessa”.<sup>95</sup> It is striking that Kromhout again makes a huge mistake by dating the end of the war for the Ottomans on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918 while in fact it was October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1918.<sup>96</sup> Kromhout states that because Talat and Enver fled, they could not be “tried for genocide” by the Ottoman tribunal that was established by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet V. This is again impossible since Sultan Mehmet V had died on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1918; some three months before the courts were established. It is, yet again, very sloppy of Kromhout to make such an enormous error. It was in fact Ottoman Sultan Mehmet VI, becoming the Sultan on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1918, who established the Ottoman tribunals. However, these were meant to punish the Ottoman officials and military leaders who acted cruel against the Armenians during the relocation; not for genocide.<sup>97</sup> This is actually impossible since the term “genocide” did not exist until 1948, some 29 years after the tribunals were established. Another fatal mistake by Kromhout is seen here. Of the 1673 Ottoman officials who were arrested and put to trial in these tribunals, 67 were sentenced to death while 1397 were sentenced for the following crimes: A) inflict unnecessary harm the Armenian population; B) seize the possessions of the Armenians; C) being too loose with the organization of the relocation, unnecessarily killing so many relocated; and D) use the relocation to increase their own power, amongst other things by relocating innocent people (mostly local political opponents).<sup>98</sup> All of this actually shows that the Ottoman government did not intent to have so many Armenians die, undermining Kromhout’s thesis and being in contradiction with what he claims. If the Ottoman government, like Kromhout claims, was aiming to kill all Armenians, why would they sentence almost 1500 high-ranking Ottoman officials for carrying this out?

Kromhout states that the tribunals became a “fiasco” because Talat and Enver escaped, but not just because of that. He does not explain what he thinks are the other reasons for calling the tribunals a “fiasco”. However, seeing that 1673 suspects were arrested and 1464 were sentenced, it would hardly qualify as a “fiasco” in my opinion. Kromhout again makes a fatal error in the next sentence: “Shortly after the end of the war, the Young Turk-movement began to rise up again under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal or ‘Atatürk’”.<sup>99</sup> This is

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95 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 37.

96 Efraim Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East* (Harvard 2001), p. 327.

97 Bilal Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri* (Ankara 2008).

98 De Armeense Kwestie, ‘Rechtszaken’ (2009). Available online: [http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=8:rechtszaken&catid=1:artikelendearmeensekwestie&Itemid=3](http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8:rechtszaken&catid=1:artikelendearmeensekwestie&Itemid=3) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

99 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 37.

so wrong on so many levels, that one does not know where to start. We will try nonetheless. Firstly, the Young Turk-movement dissolved itself in 1918 after which most Young Turks fled in early November 1918.<sup>100</sup> It was never reestablished. Secondly, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was never a member of the Young Turks nor did he agree with their methods. This is evident through the pamphlet Atatürk wrote as a response to the Young Turks in which Atatürk advocates to keep military officers away from politics. Seeing that almost all Young Turks were military officers and that the Young Turk-movement was even founded by four military cadets, Atatürk's pamphlet is seen as fierce criticism on the Young Turks. Subsequently, Atatürk founded his own movement: Vatan ve Hürriyet Cemiyeti.<sup>101</sup> When Atatürk was absent (he was stationed away), his friends made Vatan ve Hürriyet Cemiyeti a part of the Young Turks and not long after the Vatan ve Hürriyet Cemiyeti was shut down in favor of the Young Turk-movement. Thirdly, Atatürk took every opportunity to state that he was denouncing the Young Turks in every manner, even calling the Young Turks "criminals".<sup>102</sup>

Kromhout goes on to state that Atatürk defeated the Armenian nationalist which declared their own state on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1918. This is an important fact undermining Kromhout's own thesis that the Armenians posed no threats and that the Ottomans "imagined" a fifth column of Armenians during the First World War.<sup>103</sup> In reality, the many rebellions of the Armenians during the First World War eventually cultivated in the Armenians being able to form their own state in Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus. This was partly because Talat Paşa ended the Tehcir so early on, after just three months, and allowing Armenians to come back to Anatolia.<sup>104</sup> However, the Armenians (who were occupying Eastern Anatolia) and the Greek (occupying Western Anatolia) were defeated by Atatürk and his generals (who were also opposing the Ottoman regime in İstanbul since the Ottomans had signed the treaty making it possible for the enemies to occupy Anatolia). Kromhout however, states that the victories of Atatürk made the tribunals end in 1920 while in fact the tribunals in İstanbul soon spread to Malta. After the end of the tribunals in İstanbul in 1920, the British started the Malta Tribunals to prosecute another 145 Ottoman officials. This tribunal only ended on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1921 when the British head prosecutor stated that there was "no evidence to implicate these high-ranking officials."<sup>105</sup>

100 Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London 1993).

101 Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (London 1999).

102 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Interview with *The Los Angeles Examiner* (August 1st, 1926).

103 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 35.

104 Sina Akşin, *Turkey, From Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to present* (New York 2007).

105 Bilal Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri* (Ankara 2008).

Kromhout goes on to say that “only three persons were convicted and sentenced for genocide”. This is however, complete rubbish. For one, during the İstanbul Tribunals 1673 were arrested and 1464 were sentenced for cruelty during the relocation; and not genocide since this did not exist for another 29 years. This is a much higher number than three. Secondly, during the Malta Tribunals 145 Ottomans were arrested but all were acquitted for governmental involvement in the killings of Armenians; and not genocide since again this term did not exist for decades. And again, also the Malta Tribunals did not convict any of the suspects, let alone three.

Kromhout continues to state that “Talat could not run away from his punishment. The Armenian socialist Soghomon Tehlirian had the chance to carry out the sentence. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1921, he shot Talat dead in front of Talat’s house in Berlin”. In these sentences, one can almost sense the sympathy Kromhout shows for a ruthless murder. However, Kromhout refers to a “sentence” while there was not a single sentence against Talat. Kromhout makes another error when he states that “Atatürk ended the power of the sultan in 1923”, while in fact Atatürk abolished the Ottoman Sultanate on November 1, 1922 and not 1923. Kromhout claims that hereafter a lot of “perpetrators” received high-ranking position yet again. However, he does not name them and also does not give a source. Subsequently, he also neglects the fact that Atatürk despises the Young Turks making it farfetched that he would offer them high-ranking positions. Kromhout goes on to make maybe his biggest scholarly misconduct by stating that “Winston Churchill calls it a ‘holocaust’ in his 1929-bookseries about the First World War”. This is actually a flat out lie, since Churchill calls it “Armenian Tragedy” and the word “holocaust” is nowhere to be found in Churchill’s book. Kromhout uses the quotation marks for “holocaust”, but the word is absent in the book.<sup>106</sup> With this blatant misquotation, Kromhout loses all of his credibility as a scholar in my humble opinion.

However, Kromhout does not stop there and goes on to state that “nazi’s were inspired by the Armenian genocide”, adding that “the influence of the Shoah should not be exaggerated”. There is actually no evidence that the Nazi’s used what Kromhout calls “genocide” as their inspiration. Even the example Kromhout gives, that Hitler states in a 1931-interview that he saw the Armenian “genocide” and Turkish-Greek population exchange as his envision for Germany, can not be found. The only interviews Hitler gives in 1931 are either focused on hailing Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as a hero, or on the accomplishment

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106 Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis - Volume 5: The Aftermath* (New York 1929). Available online: <http://www.armenian-genocide.org/churchill.html> (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

of Turkey against all odds (defeating all internal and external enemies). Not only Hitler but most contemporary European leaders viewed Atatürk in this manner.<sup>107</sup> If Kromhout wishes to dominantly and aggressively press his own interpretation of the facts on to the reader, he should openly state this instead of hiding it as if he is a subjective scholar.

Kromhout goes on to conclude that “it is not hard to think of a reason for Hitler to state this. The destruction of the Armenians was efficiently organized and almost entirely successful. Most of the perpetrators were unpunished and everybody went on with their lives. From the point of the perpetrators this was the perfect genocide.” However, seeing that Hitler never said this nor said the quote Kromhout used to start his article, it all becomes a blatant lie. The rest of his conclusion is also a big contradiction with earlier statements in his article. For one, he has described in detail that what happened to the Armenians was pretty much different in every province. So how can he conclude that “it was efficiently organized”? Secondly, he calls it “almost entirely successful” while only a small percentage of the Armenians actually perish.<sup>108</sup> Even the most over exaggerate estimates state that “approximately 50 percent of the Armenians” perished. But also the last sentences of Kromhout make no sense, since everybody suffered from the First World War. It is therefore perfectly normal that nobody gets punished in a world where everybody suffered from war. It would be rather peculiar if one would, amidst of all the war drama and trauma, single out less half a million Armenians on a total of 37 million deadly casualties. Therefore, it can only be said that from the point of Ethocide, Kromhout’s article is the perfect example of Ethocide.

Lastly, Kromhout uses some eight pictures and a timeline in his article. The first picture depicts a painting where Kromhout has added the caption: “Elimination. The Ottoman government deals with “non-Turks”.”<sup>109</sup> The painting is searched back to be an illustration of the French ‘Petit Journal’ from December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1915 as part of the French war propaganda against the Ottomans. The French were at war with the Ottoman from 1914 until 1918.<sup>110</sup> The second is the before mentioned photograph with the statement “After their raid on an Ottoman Bank, the Armenian perpetrators fled to France, Marseille, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1896” contradicting Kromhout’s statements about August 26<sup>th</sup>,

107 Hannibal Travis, ‘Did the Armenian Genocide Inspire Hitler? Turkey, Past and Future’, in: *Middle East Quarterly*, Volume: 20, Number: 1 (Winter 2013), pp. 27-35.

108 John D. Grainger, *The Battle for Syria, 1918-1920* (Suffolk 2013).

109 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 31.

110 Petit Journal, *Les massacres d’Arménie* (December 12th, 1915). Available on: <http://www.imprescriptible.fr/documents/petit-journal.htm> and <http://www.imprescriptible.fr/photographies/massacres-genocidaires> (Both retrieved on 10-03-2015).

1896 not being the day Armenians raided the bank, but tried to kill the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>111</sup> However, the latter was not until July 21st, 1905. Even Kromhout's caption ("Rebels. After their raid on an Ottoman Bank, the Armenian perpetrators fled to France") shows that there were Armenian rebels, although in his article Kromhout shrugs this off as "Ottoman propaganda"; but this is a big contradiction with his photograph.<sup>112</sup> The third photograph depicts an Ottoman woman with three kids. Kromhout has added the caption "Hunted. Armenians trying to fly en live in bitter poverty."<sup>113</sup> However, the original picture states that an Armenian woman and her children sought help from missionaries by walking far distances. There is no mention of "bitter poverty" and even the clothes of the woman and her children are in thick layers. They even look well-nurtured. Therefore the picture in no way gives the implication that the people on the photograph are living in "bitter poverty". This could be a biased add-on from Kromhout himself. The fourth photograph depicts Ottoman soldiers marching to the battle field. However, Kromhout added the following caption: "Weapons display. The Young Turks dream of one big empire."<sup>114</sup> But how can one see that on this picture? It seems a subjective add-on from Kromhout. The fifth photograph depicts a starving child with the caption "Orphan. The Armenians should be exterminated, despite their age."<sup>115</sup> When looking at the original photograph, which was taking by a missionary, the caption is as follows: "This little Armenian was a human skeleton when he was picked up by a relief worker and taken to the orphanage at Beirut."<sup>116</sup> This means that the boy was found wondering around and brought to an orphanage by American missionaries. If the boy was part of the so-called death march, where were the Turkish soldiers? And why would they allow the boy the wonder off and (more so) why would they allow missionaries to take the boy? It is more likely that the boy lost his family due to war violence and was wondering around aimlessly, and was starving by the lack of food he found on his way. The sixth photograph depicts a march with the caption "Death march. The Turks force Armenians to make long travels on foot to concentration camps in Syria".<sup>117</sup> In reality, this photograph was published by the American Red Cross in the United States prior to January 1, 1923. The original caption states that they were Armenians (probably Armenian rebels) who are being marched

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111 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 32.

112 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 35.

113 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 33.

114 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 34.

115 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 34.

116 Corbis Images, UWW459INP (1914-1918). Available on: <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/UWW459INP/view-of-starving-armenian-boy?popup=1> (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

117 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 35.



to a nearby prison in Mezireh by armed Ottoman soldiers. The photograph was taken in Kharperit (Harput in modern-day Elazığ) in Ottoman Empire during April 1915.<sup>118</sup> Therefore the caption of Kromhout is wrong for a number of reasons. For one, the photograph does not depict a death march but a convoy of prisoners heading to prison. Secondly, the final destination is not a concentration camp but a prison. And thirdly, the people are not heading for Syria but from Kharperit to Mezireh (both in Elazığ, Anatolia) within the border of modern-day Turkey. Therefore Kromhout's caption is wrong on every possible level. The seventh photograph depicts soldiers in a wrecked village with skulls and bones. The caption is "Mass grave. Remains of inhabitants of the Armenian village Sheyخالان."<sup>119</sup> That photograph is released by the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia. It is dated as 1915 and it shows soldiers standing over skulls of victims from the Armenian village of Sheyخالان in Muş, Anatolia, on the Caucasus front during the First World War. However, the soldiers are definitely not Ottomans (looking at the uniforms) and may even be British which is peculiar since there were only Russians and Ottomans on that front. That is why even the fierce pro-Armenian journalist Robert Frisk is careful in stating that it were Armenians.<sup>120</sup>

*The word 'Armenia' was only encouraged to be replaced by the word "Anatolia" in the press, schoolbooks, and governmental establishments. Not, like Kromhout argues, in "official documents". It was also not a measure against the Armenians, but a measure to support the new ideology of ottomanism which aimed to incorporate all Ottoman minorities as "Ottoman nationalists".*

The last photograph depicts Talat Paşa with the caption: "Punished anyway. Minister Talât flees to Berlin and gets killed there anyway by an Armenian." With his biased caption, Kromhout seems to imply that Talat deserved to be killed as a punishment showing only his disregard for human life.<sup>121</sup>

Kromhout's timeline starts with 1880 where Kromhout argues that "the Ottoman government outlawed the use of the word 'Armenia' in official documents by law". In reality, the word 'Armenia' was only encouraged to be replaced by the word "Anatolia" in the press, schoolbooks, and governmental

118 Marie Doucette, 'Inconvenient Truths', from: personal blog (November 7th, 2011). Available online: <http://mariedoucette.blogspot.nl/2011/11/inconvenient-truths.html> (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

119 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 36.

120 Robert Fisk, 'The Gallipoli centenary is a shameful attempt to hide the Armenian Holocaust', from: *The Independent* (January 19th, 2015). Available online: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-gallipoli-centenary-is-a-shameful-attempt-to-hide-the-armenian-holocaust-9988227.html> (Retrieved 10-03-2015).

121 Bas Kromhout, 'De Perfecte Genocide', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 37.

establishments. Not, like Kromhout argues, in “official documents”. It was also not a measure against the Armenians, but a measure to support the new ideology of ottomanism which aimed to incorporate all Ottoman minorities as “Ottoman nationalists”.<sup>122</sup> It goes on the state that in 1894 “the army of sultan Abdülhamid II killed 3000 Armenian peasants in the district of Sason for supposed nationalism”. However, it were Armenians causing a rebellion under the leadership of Dashnakzutyun and confronting Kurdish irregulars. The Armenians succumbed to superior numbers but the Ottoman army did not play a role in this battle.<sup>123</sup> Thirdly, Kromhout puts 1895 on the time line with the sentence “Some prominent Armenians ask the government to have a political say. State terror is what they get”. Kromhout is referring to October 1st, 1895, when two thousand Armenians assembled in Constantinople to petition for the implementation of the reforms.<sup>124</sup> When the Ottoman sultan saw which reforms the Armenians wanted, he was surprised about the amount of reforms the Armenians demanded. He is stated to have said that if the Armenians get their reforms “this business will end in blood”, expressing his fear that Armenians will misuse their power and start killing Ottomans if they get their reforms.<sup>125</sup> At the same time, the two thousands Armenians got impatient and tried to raid the Ottoman palace after which violence broke out. The Ottomans could stop the raid, only with difficulty. This is, in contrary to what Kromhout claims, not just “a few Armenians” but two thousand, and it is not just a request for “having a say” but reforms that would make all other (non-Armenian) Ottomans second-class citizens. Kromhout continues to state that in 1908 “The Young Turks (CUP) come to power. Armenian nationalists support this reformist movement.” However, the Young Turk revolution of 1908 was aimed at forcing the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamit II to reinstate the constitution. He was neither replaced, nor was he forced to form a new cabinet with Young Turks; making it very illogical to refer to this as “the Young Turks came to power”.<sup>126</sup> Kromhout continues to state that in 1910 “The CUP chooses a scary-Turkish policy and no longer tolerates Armenians in their large empire Turan.” However, this is impossible since the alliance between the Armenian Dashnakzutyun and the Young Turks ended in 1912. Additionally, although some members of the CUP showed some superficial sympathy to the creating of Turan, the CUP never actively supported nor acted towards this. Therefore, we can once again conclude that Kromhout reinterprets the facts in order to

122 Fuat Uçar, *Türkçülüğün Manifestosu: Osmanlılık- İslamcılık-Türkçülük* (İstanbul 2009).

123 Armand Sağ, ‘Categorizing Historiography: Turkish-Armenian Relations Throughout History’, in: *Review of Armenian Studies*, No.: 26, Volume: 2012, p. 146.

124 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response* (New York 2003), p. 57–58.

125 Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians: 1878-1896* (London 1993), p. 88.

126 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 33.

make his claim logical, while in fact he (deliberately or unconsciously) misinterprets almost everything. The Young Turks, in fact, never had any policy of either creating Turan, nor did they ever have any anti-tolerance against Armenians; especially since they still had an alliance with the Armenians during 1910.

Hereafter, Kromhout states in his timeline that in 1912-1913 “The Ottoman Empire loses European territory in two Balkan Wars. Muslims flee and the Young Turks establish a dictatorship.” Although the first two claims are in fact true, the Young Turks did not establish a dictatorship as we have seen prior in this study. Most members of cabinet were still in hands of non-Young Turks, and the Ottoman sultan and his grand viziers were not in hands of the Young Turks. Kromhout continues to say that in “March 1915 the regime starts to destroy the Armenian population. 1.5 million people will die.” This sentence in Kromhout’s timeline is a direct contradiction with his claims in his article, since Kromhout states throughout his article that “it is suspected” to start in March 1915, while he also states that it was the summer of 1914, and even May 23th, 1915 as dates. This shows that although Kromhout is haunted by the possibility of three dates (summer of 1914, May 23 1915 and March 1915), of which he calls one “suspected”, he (without any evidence, source or document) comes to the conclusion that it is in fact the date that he himself calls “suspected” as the inconclusive date on which “the Ottoman regime decides to destroy the Armenian population”. It seriously lacks any academic or scientific method, immensely damaging his scholarly credibility. The next date on his timeline is April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1915 where Kromhout states the following: “The police in İstanbul arrests 235 Armenian intellectuals. This is followed by arrests and executions on the country side.”<sup>127</sup> In reality, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 was the day that suspected Armenian nationalists (mostly leaders of terrorist organisation such as Dashnakzutyun) were arrested. All 235 Armenians were leading personalities of the Armenian Revolutionary Party (ARF), or Dasnakzutyun, which was a terrorist organization founded in 1890 but already responsible for hundreds of thousands of dead Ottomans.<sup>128</sup> These arrests are only to be seen in the light of arresting Armenian nationalists from Dashnakzutyun to stop their spiral of violence against Ottoman citizens. The so-called “arrests and executions on the country side” were nothing more than suspects who were arrested, and found guilty for terror by Ottoman courts and accordingly sentenced to a penalty, which may or may not have been the death

127 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 34.

128 Kemal Çiçek, ‘Relocation of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915’, from: *Turkish Historical Society*, July 2008. Available online: [http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=157:relocation-of-the-ottoman-armenians-in-1915&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13](http://www.dearmeensekwestie.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=157:relocation-of-the-ottoman-armenians-in-1915&catid=13:papers&Itemid=13) (Retrieved on 10-03-2015).

penalty. This was not only for Armenians, but also for non-Armenians and even Turks as we have seen prior in this study during 1909 and 1919. Kromhout continues with May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1915: “The government allows Muslim refugees to be allocated in the houses of the Armenians who were driven out.” However, if Kromhout himself even states that the relation of the Armenians started on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1915, how is it possible that one week prior there apparently already were empty houses? Even the very next sentence of Kromhout on his timeline is as follows: “May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1915. Minister Talât Paşa orders all Armenians from Asia Minor to be deported. Thousands are driven to the desert.” There are a lot of mistakes in this sentence. For one, the Armenians were not deported (outside of the borders) but relocated (within the borders of the Ottoman Empire). Secondly, not all Armenians in Asia Minor were relocated. The order was only for the Armenians in East-Anatolia with the exception of most Armenians (for instance Catholic Armenians). Thirdly, Talat Paşa did not give the order for relocation on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1915 but on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1915. Fourthly, Talat Paşa’s name is not “Talat Paşa” but Talat Paşa and even the phonetically written name is ‘Talat Pasha’. Fifthly, if like Kromhout unrealistically claims that “1.5 million Armenians were killed”, how come Kromhout speaks of “thousands”? Sixthly, when one keeps in mind that the Armenians were relocated to Deir Al-Zor (a very fertile city in present-day Syria) near the Euphrates River, were are these “deserts” Kromhout speaks of? In all, it shows the lack of any real knowledge of the situation by Kromhout. This is also shown by his next sentence on the timeline: “May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1915. Great-Britain, France and Russia declare that they also keep the Young Turks responsible for the mass killings.” Since Great-Britain, France, and Russia were at war with the Ottomans at that time, they tried to change the public opinion into an anti-Ottoman stance. Additionally, one must not forget that the decision to relocate the Armenians was taken between May 26<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1915, which means that Great-Britain, France and Russia made their declaration even before the Ottomans decided to relocate the Armenians at all, revealing that this declaration was only meant to stir up public support for the war against the Ottomans.

Kromhout states that on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918 “the Ottoman Empire disappears but soon the Young Turk-movement relives under the leadership of Atatürk.”<sup>129</sup> However, nothing happened on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918. Kromhout seems to be confused by peace treaty of the Ottomans, which was not on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918 (as Kromhout claims) but on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1918, and the end of the Ottoman Empire on November, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1922.<sup>130</sup> This is a huge mistake for a historian.

129 Bas Kromhout, ‘De Perfecte Genocide’, in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, January 2015, Number: 1, p. 35.

130 Efraim Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East* (Harvard 2001), p. 327.

Additionally, the Young Turk-movement did not “revive” after 1918 since it was dissolved in early November 1918 and never reestablished<sup>131</sup> Lastly, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk took every opportunity to state that he was denouncing the Young Turks in every manner, even calling the Young Turks “criminals”, making it very unlikely (if not impossible) that he would ever support the Young Turk-movement.<sup>132</sup> Kromhout then states that “in 1920 French troops retreated from the district Cilicia, after which the Turks killed a great number of Armenians there.” However in reality it was as follows: after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the French controlled Cilicia from December 1918 to October 1921 in order to make Cilicia an independent Armenian state under French authority.<sup>133</sup> The Armenians formed the Armenian National Union which acted as an unofficial Cilician Armenian government composed of the four major political parties and three Armenian religious denominations.<sup>134</sup> The Armenians in Cilicia were armed and trained by the French and soon violence broke out between the Armenians and the Muslims in that region. This resulted in the death of many people at both sides and not, like Kromhout states, “Turks massacring Armenians” which is a straight-out blunted inaccuracy.

Kromhout continues with 1920-1921: “Armenia is conquered by the Red Army and added to the Soviet Union as Armenian Socialist Soviet Republic.” Kromhout makes a blunted error as Armenia was not to become the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic until December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1922; and not 1920 nor 1921. Lastly, Kromhout states the year 1990: “Armenia becomes independent from the Soviet Union. Up until today, the Turkish government does not recognize the genocide.” It is typical for Kromhout that (along with the start of his article) the end of his article is also downright wrong. Armenia was not dissolved from the Soviet Union in 1990, but on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1991. Additionally, along with Turkey most countries (including Great-Britain) do not recognize the events of 1915 as genocide. This is also the official stance of almost all international organizations, such as the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). All of these errors are a perfect example of how Kromhout tries to create the “perfect Ethocide” by neglecting facts in order to create an alternative history.

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131 Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London 1993).

132 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Interview with *The Los Angeles Examiner* (August 1st, 1926).

133 Yücel Güçlü, *Armenians and the Allies in Cilicia, 1914-1923* (Utah 2009).

134 Robert Farrer Zeidner, *The tricolor over the Taurus: The French in Cilicia and Vicinity, 1918-1922* (Ankara 2005).

Britain) do not recognize the events of 1915 as genocide. This is also the official stance of almost all international organizations, such as the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). All of these errors are a perfect example of how Kromhout tries to create the “perfect Ethocide” by neglecting facts in order to create an alternative history.

At the end of his article, Kromhout compiles only three books: Taner Akçam’s Dutch translation of ‘A Shameful Act’ (2006) wrongly calling the sociologist Akçam “a historian” and “the first Turkish historian who openly uses the term ‘genocide’”, adding that “the government of Turkey still refuses to do this”. Although only a very small number of governments actually do call the events of 1915 “genocide”, most do not (including Australia and the United States of America). The second book is the Dutch book ‘Prosecution, seizure, and destructing: the deportation of the Ottoman Armenians during the First World War’ (2007) by Uğur Ümit Üngör, while the third one is the Dutch translation ‘The First Holocaust. About the mass killing of the Armenians’ (2003) by journalist Robert Fisk who claimed to have interviewed survivors of the events of 1915. Seeing that the book was compiled 88 years later, most survivors must have been either a small child in 1915, or elderly people, making it hard for them to have descent memories. It is again striking that Kromhout only uses these three books (of which two translations) as a tip for his readers to “read more” while the books are just rewriting one point of view and all have in fact the exact same conclusion. It would have been much better to have three books with each a different point of view and reflect different points of view. Kromhout’s choice for these three books, along with the long list of errors you just read, clearly and distinctively shows his pattern of Ethocide on this topic, as well as his failing to be an objective, independent and non-biased academic who is open to all perspectives and willing to read all academic discussions about this topic. Thus becoming an excellent example for our study of Ethocide, the “perfect Ethocide” if you will.

## Conclusion

An enormous list of huge factual errors, such as the implication that Turkish-Armenian relations were always troublesome in the nineteenth and early twentieth century’s, mar the article. However, the most egregious flaws in this article are its polemical tone, its sketchiness, and its overall failure to use Turkish archival sources. Therefore, while the article delivers intriguing insights into the mind-set of pseudo-scholars and their views, it does not constitute as a neutral scholarly work. However, in the light of Ethocide

Kromhout's article is a much valued example of how Armenian propagandists carry out their ethnocide. The scholar seems to focus on one-sided sources from Armenian propagandists, making it only suitable to see in the light of Ethnocide. It is thus unsatisfying as a whole. This article is more the work of a politically motivated activist-turned-writer than a solid scholar and is therefore not recommended, but this is also why it is so impeccable.

Ever since its inception, activists propagated the view that what befell the Ottoman Armenians was "the perfect genocide". Scholars close to the Armenian thesis have carried on their shoulders some very heavy baggage as a member of the Armenian lobby, but have still managed to portray themselves as part of the international community of neutral academics. How this was managed is an important question. This article is extremely valuable to see how this was carried out, including the methods. So although this article of Kromhout is not suited for academic purposes, it is however extremely suited as an example of the patterns of ethnocide in the field of Armenian propagandists.

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