

# Germany's Nefarious Effort to Start a Holy War Against Christianity

The portion of Dr. Harry Stuermer's sensational book, "Two War Years in Constantinople," which was printed in THE SUN last Sunday fixed on Germany the ultimate responsibility for the massacres of Armenians by the Turks. The extracts from the book printed today cover Germany's attempt to enlist Mohammedans all over the world in a Holy War and the real aims of the Young Turks.

Dr. Stuermer served in the German army for six months at the beginning of the war and was then discharged on account of severe illness. Thereafter for two years he was correspondent of the "Koenigsche Zeitung" at Constantinople. His observations there converted him into an opponent of German war aims and methods and his conscience impelled him to publish the accusations he makes against Germany in his book.

By DR. HARRY STUERMER.

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It is a very painful task for a German who does not profess to be a "world politician," but really thinks in terms of true "world politics," to deal with the many intrigues and machinations of our Government in their relations to the so-called "Holy War" (Arab. *Djihad*), where in their quest of a vain illusion they stooped to the very lowest means.

Practically all their hopes in that direction have been sadly shattered. Their costly, unscrupulous, thoroughly immoral efforts against European civilization in Mohammedan countries have resulted in the terrific counterstroke of the defection of the Arabs and the foundation of a purely Arabian Caliphate under English protection. Thus England has already won a brilliant victory against Germany and Turkey in spite of Gallipoli and Kut-el-Amara. One could not have a better example of Germany's total inability to succeed in the sphere of world politics.

The so-called "Holy War," if it had succeeded, would have been one of the greatest crimes against human civilization that even Germany has on her conscience, remembering as we do her recent ruthless "frightfulness" at sea and her attempt to set Mexico and the Japanese against the land of most modern civilization and of greatest liberty. A successful "Djihad" spreading to all the lands of Islam would have set back by years all that civilization so patiently and so painfully won.

But the attempt against colonial civilization did not succeed. The "Djihad," proclaimed as it was by the Turanian pseudo-Caliph and violently anti-Entente, was doomed to failure from the very start from its obvious artificiality. It was a miserable farce, or rather a tragedy, comedy the present ending of which, namely the defection of the Arabian Caliphate, is the direct contrary of what had been aimed at with such fanatical urgency and the use of such immoral propaganda.

One could let it pass with a slight feeling of irritation against Germany if it were merely a case of the failure of the "Djihad." But unfortunately the propaganda, as stupid as it was unsuccessful, exercised in this connection, will be written down for all time as one of the blackest and most despicable marks against Germany's account in this war.

In order to demonstrate the role played in this affair by the German Embassy at Constantinople I will not make an exhaustive survey but simply confine myself to a few episodes and outstanding features. An eminent German Red Cross doctor, clear sighted and reliable, who had many tales to tell of what he had seen in the Caucasus campaign, said to me one evening as we sat together at a promenade concert:

"Do you see that man in Prussian major's uniform going past? I met him twice in Erzerum last winter. The man was nothing but an employe in a merchant's business in Baku, and had learned Russian there. He has never done military service."

"When war broke out he hurried to the Embassy in Pera and offered his services to stir up the Georgians and other peoples of the Caucasus against Russia. Of course he got full powers to do what he wanted, and guns and ammunition and piles of propaganda pamphlets were placed at his disposal so that he might carry on his work from the frontier of the then still neutral Turkey."

"Whole chests full of good gold coins were sent to him to be distributed confidentially for propaganda purposes; of course he was his own most confidential friend! He went back to Erzerum without having

won a single soul for the cause of the 'Djihad.' That has not prevented his living as a 'grand seigneur,' for the Embassy are not yet daunted and now the fellow struts about in a major's uniform, lent to him, although he has never been a soldier, so that the cause may gain still more prestige."

Numerous examples of similar measures might be cited, and instances without number given, of the German Embassy being made the dupe of greedy adventurers who treated them as an inexhaustible source of gold. First one would appear on the scene who announced himself as the one man to cope with Afghanistan, then another would come along on his way to Persia and play the great man "on a special mission" for a time in Pera while money belonging to the German Empire would find its way into all sorts of low haunts. And so things went on for two years until, with the Arabian catastrophe, even the eyes of the great diplomatic optimists of Ayas-Pasha might have been opened.

I will only mention here how even a bona fide connoisseur of the East like Baron von Oppenheim, who had already made tours of considerable value for research purposes right across the Arabian peninsula, and so should have known better than to share these false illusions, doled out thousands of marks from his own pocket—and millions from the treasury!—to stir up the tribes to take part in the "Djihad," and how he returned to Pera from his propaganda tour with a real Bedouin beard, and still unabashed, took over the control of the German Embassy's "News Bureau," which kept up these much derided war telegraph and picture offices known in Pera and elsewhere by the non-German populace as *sacs de mensonges* (sacks of lies), and which flooded the whole of the East with wagonloads of pamphlets in every conceivable tongue—in fact these with guns and ammunition formed the chief load of the bi-weekly "culture bringing" Balkan train!

I cannot leave this disagreeable subject without making more mention of a type that does more than anything to throw light on the morale of this German propaganda. Every one in Constantinople knows—or rather knew, for he has now feathered his nest comfortably and departed to Germany with his money—Mehmed Zekki "Bey," the publisher and chief editor of the military paper *Die Nationalverteidigung* and its counterpart *La Defense*, published daily in French but representative of Young Turk-German interests. Hundreds of those who know Zekki also know that he used to be called "Capitaine Nelken y Waldberg." Fewer know that "Nelken" alone would have been more in accordance with fact.

I will relate the history of this individual as I knew it from the months of reliable informants—the members of the embassy and the consulate. Nelken, a Rumanian Jew, a shopkeeper by trade, had been several times in prison for bankruptcy and fraud and at last fled from Rumania. He took refuge in the Turkish capital, where he continued his business and married a Greek wife.

Here again he became bankrupt, as is only too clear from the public notice of restoration in the Constantinople newspapers, when his lucrative political activity as the champion of Krupp's, of the German cause and "the holy German war," as much a purely pan-Germanic as Islamic affair, provided him with the wherewithal to pay off his former disreputable debts.

After leaving Constantinople he went to Buenos Ayres. From there he went to Cairo and edited a little private paper called *Les Petites Nouvelles Egyptiennes*. For repeated extortion he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, but unfortunately only in *contumaciam*, for he had already fled the country, not, however, before he had been publicly smacked on the face in the Flasche beer garden without offering satisfaction as an "Argentine General" should—a performance that was later repeated in every detail in Toklian's restaurant in Constantinople.

He told me once that he had been sentenced in this way because, on an understanding with the then German diplomatic agent in Cairo, Von Miquel, he had attacked Lord Cromer's policy sharply, and that his patron Von Miquel had given him the timely hint to leave Egypt.

Nelken then returned to Constantinople and devoted himself with unflagging energy to his previous business of agent.

He turned to the Islamic faith and became a citizen of the Ottoman Empire because he found it more profitable so to do, and could thus escape from his former liabilities. Then in spite of lack of means he managed to found a military newspaper, which, however, soon petered out. Nelken became Mehmed Zekki and a journalist, and of course called himself "bey."

Up to this point the history of this individual is nothing but a characteristic extract from life as it is lived by hundreds of rogues in the East. But now we come to something which is almost unbelievable and which leads me to give credence to his version of his relations with Von Miquel, which after all only shows more clearly than ever that German "world politics" are not above making use of the scum of the earth for their intrigues.

In full knowledge of this man's whole black past—as Dr. Weber of the German Embassy himself told me—the German Embassy with the sanction of the Imperial Government (this I know from letters Zekki showed me in great glee from the Foreign Office and the War Office) appointed this fellow to be their confidential agent with a large monthly honorarium and to become a pillar of "the German cause" in the East.

As publisher of *La Defense* Zekki received a large salary from Germany, one from Austria, afterward cut down not from any excess of moral sense but simply from excess of economy, and a very considerable sum from Krupp's. As representative of German interests he did all he could to propitiate the Young Turks by the most fulsome flattery, and more recently he was pushing hard to get on the Committee of Union and Progress.

But the Turks jibed at what the German Embassy had brought on themselves—seeing Zekki "Bey" moving about their sacred halls with the most imposing nonchalance and condescension. Zekki himself once complained to me bitterly that in spite of his having presented Enver Pasha with a valuable clock worth eighty Turkish pounds which Enver had accepted with pleasure, he would not even answer a written request from Zekki craving an audience with him. (This, incidentally, is a most excellent example of the working of Enver's mind, a megalomania as greedy as he was proud.)

From the Germans we now turn again to the Turks, to try to fathom the exact mentality of the Young Turks during the great war and to discover what were the intellectual sources for their various activities.

To give a better idea of the whole position I will just preface my remarks by stating a few of the outstanding features of the present Young Turk Government and their dependents. Their first and chief characteristic is hostility to foreigners, but this does not prevent them from making every possible use of their ally Germany or from appropriating in every walk of life anything European, be it a matter of technical skill, government, civilization, that they consider might be profitable. Secondly, they are possessed of an unbounded store of jingoism, which has its origin in Pan-Turkism with its ruling idea of "Turanism."

Pan-Turkism, which seems to be the governing passion of all the leading men of the day, finds expression in two directions. Outwardly it is a constant striving for a "Greater Turkey," a movement that for a large part in its essence, and certainly in its territorial aims, runs parallel with the "Holy War"; inwardly it is a fanatical desire for a general Turkification which finds outlet in political nationalistic measures, some of criminal barbarity, others partaking of the nature of modern reforms, beginning with the language regulations and "internal colonization" and ending in the Armenian persecutions.

All New Turkish nationalistic efforts at emancipation had as first principle the abolition of capitulations. The whole Young Turkish period we have here under review is therefore to be dated from that day, shortly before Turkey's entry into the war, when that injunction was flung overboard which Europe had anxiously placed for the protection of the interests of Europeans on a State but too little civilized.

As early as summer 1915 there were clear outward indications in the streets of Constantinople of a smouldering nation-ally ready to break out at any moment. The first sphere in which there was evidence of an attempt at forcible Turkification was the language. Somewhere toward the end of 1915 Talaat suddenly

## Stooped to Lowest Intrigue With Arabs and Paid Millions Fruitlessly to Levantine Adventurers, Says Dr. Stuermer



TALAAAT BEY, MINISTER OF INTERIOR, THE "UNCROWNED KING" OF TURKEY.

ordered the removal of all French and English inscriptions, shop signs, &c., even in the middle of European Pera. In tramcars and at shopping places the French text was blocked out; boards with public warnings in French were either removed altogether or replaced by unreadable Turkish seraws; the street indications were simply abolished.

Then came the famous language regulations, which even went so far—with a year of grace granted owing to the extraordinary difficulties of the Turkish script—as to decree that in the offices of all trade undertakings of any public interest whatsoever, such as banks, newspapers, transport agencies, &c., the Turkish language should be used exclusively for book-keeping and any written communication with customers. The possibility—indeed, the necessity—of employing Turkish hands in European businesses suddenly came within the range of practical politics—and that was exactly what the Turkish Government wanted.

Hand in hand with the nationalistic attempt to coerce European businesses into using the Turkish language there went more practical attempts to Turkify all the important branches of commerce by the founding of indigenous organizations and the introduction of reforms of more material content than those language decrees.

A very considerable step in advance in the way of Turkish sovereignty and Turkish economic patriotism was the organization and—since September, 1916—execution of the neo-Turkish autonomous customs tariff, which with one blow gives Turkish finances what the Government formerly managed to extract painfully from the great Powers bit by bit, by fair means or foul, at intervals of many years, and which with its hard and fast scale of taxes—which there appears to be no inclination in political circles at the moment to modify by trade treaties!—means an exceedingly adequate protection of Turkey's national productions.

The far flung net of the "Djemiet," that purely Turkish commercial undertaking with Talaat Bey at its head, regulating everything as it did, taking everything into its own hands from the realizing of the products of the Anatolian farmers (and incidentally bringing it about that their ally Germany had to pay heavily and always in cash, even although the Government itself owed millions to Germany and got everything on credit from flour out of Rumania to paper for their journals) to the most difficult rationing of towns forms a foundation for the nationalizing of economic life of the very greatest importance.

The establishment of purely Turkish trade and transport companies, often with pensioned Ministers as directors and principal shareholders, and the new language regulations and other privileges will soon

cut the ground away from under the feet of European concerns.

Then again there are the increasingly thinly veiled efforts to establish a purely Turkish national banking system. Quite lately there has been a movement in favor of founding a Turkish national bank with the object of supplanting the much hated Deutsche Bank in spite of the credit it always gives, and that international and preponderantly French institution, the Banque Imperiale Ottomane, which had already simply been sequestered without more ado.

The Turks have decided too that the mines are to be nationalized, and Turkish companies have already been formed, without capital, it is true, to work the mines after the war. The same applies to the railways, in spite of the fine German plans for the Bagdad Railway.

All these wonderful efforts of emancipation are perfectly justified from the patriotic point of view, and are so many blows dealt at Germany, who, quite apart from Rohrbach's *Weltpolitik*, had at least hoped to find a lucrative field of privileged commercial activity in the country of her close and devoted allies the Turks.

Not only were Europeans but the natives themselves affected by the series of measures that one might claim together under the heading of Turkish Internal Colonization and the Nationalizing of Anatolia.

The way this Turkification of Anatolia was carried on was certainly not lacking in thoroughness, like all their nationalistic efforts. The best means that lay to hand were the frightful Armenian persecutions, which effected a wonderful clearance among the population. "The properties of persons who have been despatched elsewhere" within the meaning of the proviso bill were either distributed free or sold for a mere song to any who applied to the committee for them and proved themselves of the same political persuasion or of pure Turkish or preponderantly Turkish nationality.

The rent was often fixed as low as 30 piastres a month (about \$1.44) for officials and retired military men. In the case of the latter Enver Pasha thought this an excellent opportunity for getting rid, through the medium of a kindly invitation to settle in the interior, of those who worried him by their dissatisfaction with his system and who might have prepared difficulties for him.

This "settling" was carried out with the greatest zeal in the exceptionally flourishing and fruitful districts of Brussa, Smyrna-Aidin, Eskishehir, Adabazar, Angora and Adana, where Armenians and Greeks had played such a great and to the Turks unpopular part as pioneers of civilization.

The semi-official articles in the *Tanin* were per-

fectly right in praising the local authorities who in contrast with their former indifference and ignorance "had now fully recognized the great national importance of internal colonization and the settling of mohadjirs (emigrants from the lost Turkish territory in Bosnia, Macedonia, Thracæ, &c.) in the country." There is nothing to be said in favor of the stupid, unprogressive character of the Anatolian as contrasted with the strength, physical endurance, intelligence, and mobility of these emigrants. The latter had also, generally speaking, lived in more highly developed districts.

The great drawback of the mohadjirs, however, is their instability, their idleness and love of wandering, their frivolity and their extraordinary fanaticism: As faithful Mohammedans following the standard of their Padishah and leaving the parts of the country that had fallen under Christian rule, they seemed to think they were justified in behaving like spoil children toward the native population.

It has occurred more than once that mohadjirs have crossed swords even with Turkish Anatolians living peacefully in their own villages. One can then easily imagine how much more the heretic gnomes ("Christian dogs," "unclean men") had to suffer at their hands.

But all the methods used are by no means forcible. Under the spiritual inspiration of Mehmed Emin, the national poet of Anatolian birth whose poems with their sympathy of outlook and noble simplicity of form make such a warm hearted and successful appeal to the best kind of patriotism, men have begun since 1916, even in the circles of the arrogant "Stamboul Effendi," to take an interest in the kaba turk (uncouth Turk), the Anatolian peasant, his needs and his standard of civilization. The real, needy, primitive Turk of the interior has suddenly become the general favorite.

A whole series of most remarkable lectures was delivered publicly in the "Turk Odjaghi" under the auspices of the committee, by doctors, social politicians and political economists, and these were reported and discussed at great length in all the Turkish newspapers. Their subject was the incredible destitution in Anatolia, the devastation wrought by dirt diseases, the lack of men as a result of constant military service in many wars, and they called for immediate and drastic reforms. It was with the greatest pleasure that I acknowledge that this first late step on the way of improvement, this self-knowledge, which appeals to me more thoroughly than anything else I saw in Turkey, is probably really the beginning of a happier era for that beautiful land of Anatolia, so capable of development but so cruelly neglected. For one can no longer doubt that the Government has the real intention to carry out actual reforms, for they must be only too well aware that the strengthening and healing of Anatolia, the nucleus of the Turkish race, is absolutely essential for any Turkish mastery, and is the very first necessity for the successful carrying out of more far reaching national exertions.

In little informed circles in Europe people are still under the false impression that the Young Turks of to-day, the intellectual and political leaders of Turkey in this war, are authentic, zealous and even fanatical Mohammedans, and superficial observers explain all unpleasant occurrences and outbreaks of Young Turkish jingoism on Pan-Islamic grounds, especially as Turkey has not been slow in proclaiming her "Holy War." But this conception is entirely wrong. The truth is that the present political regime is the complete denial of the Pan-Islamic idea and the substitution of the Pan-Turkish idea of race.

Abdul Hamid, that much maligned and dethroned Sultan, who, however, towers head and shoulders above all the Young Turks put together in practical intelligence and statesmanly skill, and would never have committed the unpardonable error of throwing in his lot with Germany in the war and so bringing about the certain downfall of Turkey, was the last ruler of Turkey that knew how to make use of Pan-Islamism as a successful instrument of authority.

Enver and Talaat and all that breed of jingoists on the Ittihad (Committee for Union and Progress) were upstarts without any schooling in political history, and so all the more inclined to the doctrinal revolutionism and short sighted fanaticism of the successful adventurer, and were much too limited to recognize the tremendous political import of Pan-Islam-

ism. Naturally once they had conceived the idea of the "Djihad," they tried to make theoretical use of Pan-Islamism, but practically, far from extending Turkey's influence to distant Arabian lands, to the Sudan and India, they simply let Turkey go to ruin through their Pan-Turkish illusions and their race fanaticism.

The Young Turks had scarcely come into power when they began with incredible lack of tact to treat the Arabs in a most supercilious manner, although as a matter of fact the Arabs far surpassed them in intellect and culture. They inaugurated a most unmodern campaign of shameless blood sucking, cheated them of their rights, treated them in a bureaucratic manner, and generally acted in such an unskillful way that they finally alienated forever the Arab element as they had already done in the case of the Armenians, the Greeks and the Albanians.

An attempt was made to bring the ethnic principle of "Turanism" within the region of practical politics, but it simply degenerated into complete race partiality and was not calculated to further the ideas of Pan-Islamism and the Turkish-Arabian alliance which were both of such importance in the present war. It is this idea of Turanism that lies at the back of the efforts being made toward a purely Turkish Turkey, and that of course makes it clear at once that it must to a very large extent oppose the idea of Pan-Islamism.

It is true that both principles may be made use of side by side as sources of propaganda for the idea of expansion and the policy of a "Greater Turkey." Turanists peep over the crest of the Caucasus down into the steppes of the Volga, where the Russian Tatars live, and to the borders of western Siberia and inner China, where in Russian Turkestan a race of people of very close kinship live and where very probably the Ottoman people had their cradle.

The Pan-Islamists want the alliance of these Russian parts as well, but from another point of view, and, above all, they aim at the expansion of Ottoman rule to the farthest corners of Africa and southwest Asia, to the borders of negro territory, and through Persia, Afghanistan and Baluchistan to the foot of the Himalayas, while on grounds of practical politics they strive to abolish the old, seemingly insurmountable antithesis between Sunnites and Shiites within the sanctuary of Islam.

Instead of uniting all these principles skillfully for the realization of a great end, making sure of the Arab element by wisely restraining their selfish and exaggeratedly pro-Turkish instincts and their despotic lust for power, and so giving their programme of expansion southward some prospect of succeeding, the Turks gave way right from the beginning of the war to such a flood of brutal, narrow minded race fanaticism and desire to enrich the Turkish element at the cost of the other inhabitants of the country, that no one can really be surprised at the pitiable result of the efforts to secure a Greater Turkey.

I should just like to give one small example of the fanatical hatred that exists even in high official circles against the non-Turkish element in this country of mixed races. The following anecdote will give a clear enough idea of the ruling spirit of fanaticism and greed.

I was house hunting in Pera once and could not find anything suitable. I approached a member of the committee and he said in solemn earnest:

"Oh, just wait a few weeks. We are all hoping that Greece will declare war on us before long, and then all the Greeks will be treated as the Armenians have been. I can let you have the nicest villa on the Bosphorus."

"But then," he added with gleaming eyes, "we won't be so stupid as merely to turn them out. These Greek dogs (kopek rum) will have the pleasure of seeing us take everything away from them—everything—and compelling them to give up their own property by formal contract."

The idea of "Turanism" is a most interesting one, and as a widespread nationalistic principle has given much food for thought to Turkey's ally Germany. Turanism is the realization, reawakened by neo-Turkish efforts at political and territorial expansion, of the original race kinship existing between the Turks and the many peoples inhabiting the regions north of the Caucasus, between the Volga and the borders of inner China, and particularly in Russian Central Asia.

Ethnographically this idea was perfectly justified, but politically it contains a tre-

mendous dissipation of strength which must in the end lead to grave disappointment and failure. All the Turkish attempts to rouse up the population of the Caucasus either fell on unfruitful ground or went to pieces against the strong Russian power reigning there. Enver's marvellous conception of an offensive against Russian Transcaucasia led right at the beginning of the war to terrible bloodshed and defeat.

The idea of Turanism has been taken up with such enthusiasm by the men of the Young Turkish Committee and utilized with such effect for purposes of propaganda and to form a scientific basis for their neo-Turkish aims and aspirations, that a stream of feeling in favor of the Magyars has set in in Turkey, which has not failed to demolish to a still greater extent their already weakened enthusiasm for their German allies.

And it is not confined to purely intellectual and cultural spheres, but takes practical form by the Turks declaring, as they have so often done in their papers in almost anti-German articles about Turanism, that what they really require in the way of European technique or European help, they much prefer to accept from their kinsmen the Hungarians rather than from the Germans.

To the great annoyance of Germany, who would like to keep her heavy hand laid on the ally whom she has so far guided and for whom she pays, the practical results of the idea of Turanism are already noticeable in many branches of economic and commercial life. The Hungarians are closely allied to the Turks not only by blood but in general outlook, and form a marked contrast to Germany's cold and methodical calculation in working her way into Turkish commercial life.

After the war when Turkey is seeking for stimulation it will be easy enough to make use of Hungarian influence to the detriment of Germany.

Turanistic ideas have even been brought into play to establish still more firmly the union between Turkey and her former enemy Bulgaria, and the people of Turkey are reminded that the Bulgars are not really Slavs but Slavic-Fine-Tatars.

In proportion as the Young Turks have brought racial policies to a fine art, so they have neglected the other, the religious side. It was not for nothing that Enver Pasha, the adventurer and revolutionary, went so far even in externals as to arouse the stern disapproval of a wide circle of his people. With true time serving adaptability to all modern progress—and who will blame him?—he even finally sacrificed the Turkish soldier's beloved traditional headgear, the *fen*.

This is in the harmless realm of fashion, or at any rate military fashion, exactly the same spirit as has caused the Turkish Government to undertake since 1916 radical changes in the very much more important field of private and public law. Special commissions consisting of eminent Turkish lawyers have been formed to carry through this reform of law and justice, and they have been hard at work ever since their formation.

What is characteristic and modern about the reform is that the preponderating role hitherto played by the *Shariat* Law, founded on the Koran and at any rate semi-religious, is to be drastically curtailed in favor of a system of purely civil law. This of course leads to a great curtailment of the activity and influence of the *kadis* and *mufis*, the semi-religious judges, who have now to yield place to a more mundane system. The first ineluctable consequence of the reform was that the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*, the highest authority of Islam in the whole Ottoman Empire, had to give up a large part of his powers and incidentally of his income.

The changes made were so far reaching, and the spirit of the reform so modern, that, in spite of the unshakable power of Talaat's truly dictatorial Cabinet which got it passed, a concession had to be made to the public opinion roused against the measure. The form was kept as it was, but the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*, Haidri Effendi, refused ostensibly to sign the decree and gave in his resignation.

Not only, however, was an immediate successor found for him (Moussa Kiamia Effendi), who gave his signature and even began to work hard for the reform, but—and this is most significant for the relationship of the Young Turks toward Islam—Haidri Effendi, the same *Sheikh-ul-Islam* who had proclaimed the *Tanin* for the "Holy War," gave up his post without

(To be continued in next Sunday's Sun.)