

From the Editor:

Slavic Review publishes letters to the editor with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be limited to one paragraph; comment on an article should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. The editor encourages writers to refrain from ad hominem discourse.

D.P.K.

To the Editor:

It appears that Ronald Suny did not read my book, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, either entirely or carefully (*Slavic Review* 55, no. 3). Among his criticisms are: (1) no "analytical narrative" on the genocide; (2) no indication as to who committed the 1909 Adana massacre and why; (3) no convincing evidence on the consistently genocidal Turkish policy of genocide.

(1) As the subtitle indicates, my book was not about the details of the Armenian genocide, but about the conflict-laden evolution of it; "the history of the Turko-Armenian conflict is cast sharply into relief" (xiii).

(2) The perpetrators of the Adana massacre were driven by "cupidity, religious dogmas" and fear of losing "their positions and jobs." Involved in "the organization of the bloodbath were . . . the governmental functionaries and the Ottoman military authorities" (182).

(3) The evidence about a sustained genocidal policy before and after 1915, when the genocide occurred, is ample and overwhelming. British ethnographer Ramsey and American Civil War expert Hepworth, *who investigated the massacres in Turkey*, prophesied the 1915 genocide already in the 1890s (175).

Harvard's William Langer, a favorite of Turkophile authors, wrote: "The Sultan was determined to end the Armenian Question by exterminating the Armenians" (163). A rare official Turkish document depicts the Kemalists ordering "the political and physical eradication of Armenia" in 1920 (358).

My conclusions were recently upheld by an expert on international law who declared that compared to "all the conflicting and contradictory literature on the subject Dadrian's [evidence] is the most legally convincing" (W. C. Bassiouni, *Crimes against Humanity in International Criminal Law*, 169). Nevertheless, one has always the liberty to refuse to be persuaded!

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Professor Suny replies:

My review of Vahakn N. Dadrian's *The History of the Armenian Genocide* perhaps took the title of the book too seriously and therefore regretted the absence of either a clear and convincing narrative of the events or "the kind of powerful explanatory synthesis that is so desperately needed" (*Slavic Review* 55, no. 3: 677) Dadrian's emphasis is instead on linking disparate and separate incidents of Turkish violence from the Balkans to the Caucasus and establishing a causative chain connecting military defeat, abortive reform, and western humanitarian intervention to the Turkish policies of systematic massacre. Rather than distinguishing the motives of the conservative Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who used massacres in the 1890s to restore a fragile repressive hierarchy in eastern Anatolia, from the revolutionary policy of the Young Turks in 1915, who sought to eliminate the Armenians from the region altogether, Dadrian collapses these distinct forms of state violence into a single genocidal program that persisted over many decades.

On the Adana massacres of 1909 I noted that Dadrian "does not make clear who *Slavic Review* 56, no. 3 (Fall 1997)