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Case 01: German arms exports for genocide: Mauser rifles and Krupp cannons used in the genocide of Armenians by Ottoman armed forces (1895-1916)

by Wolfgang Landgraeber

with contributions by Otfried Nassauer, Bernhard Trauvelter, and Helmut Lohrer

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1. Summary

In almost all the actions of the systematic genocide of more than a million Armenians that began in 1915, Turkish regular troops and gendarmes – and sometimes their German comrades-in-arms – were involved. German officers serving in the Turkish Ottoman general staffs participated actively in some of the killings. Most of the attackers were armed with Mauser long rifles or carbines, and the officers with Mauser pistols, produced in the Mauser factories in Oberndorf on the Neckar.

Hundreds of Krupp cannons from Essen were also employed, for example in the assault on Mount Musa Dagh ("Moses Mountain"), occupied by Armenians. German arms exports supplied the material basis for the genocide, and German officers the ideological basis.

Period

1895 to 1916 (mainly in 1915 and 1916)

2. Arms suppliers

The government-ordered mass murder of Armenians by Turkish soldiers and gendarmes happened with the knowledge and consent of the highest circles of government in Germany. German officers were serving in Turkish general staffs and commanding Turkish regiments, divisions, and armies, which were equipped mainly with long rifles and carbines from the German arms-maker MAUSER in Oberndorf on the Neckar, as well as with Krupp cannons from Essen.

In February 1887, the ministry of war of the Ottoman Empire and a consortium of German firms, comprising the firms of Mauser and Ludwig Loewe & Co KG, signed a contract for the supply of 500,000 model M/87 long rifles, and 50,000 carbines of the same model. These rifles were delivered to the Turks by the end of 1893.

That same year, a new order was placed: 200,000 model M/93 carbines, whose magazine held ten cartridges. These carbines were delivered by the end of 1896.

Production of Mauser-Rifles (aprox. 1893)

In 1903, there followed the third large order, for another 200,000 rifles of the most modern model M/1903. So at the beginning of the twentieth century, Turkey possessed more than 900,000 Mauser long rifles and carbines. More than two-thirds of all soldiers in the Ottoman army and of the members of the paramilitary gendarmery were equipped with Mauser weapons.

Cannons from Germany were also greatly desired by the Ottoman military. Between 1861 and 1912, the firm of Krupp in Essen succeeded in routing all its French, British, and U.S. competitors. Krupp made use of his good contacts with the Prussian Emperor Wilhelm II and the court of the Sultan to obtain orders for manufacturing artillery worth 226 million reichsmarks. The Krupp cannons were employed by the Turks in the Balkan Wars, in the Russian-Turkish war, and in the First World War; but hundreds were also employed in attacks on Armenian guerrilleros who were resisting the Ottoman campaign of murder.

3. Arms manufacturers

3.1. Brief company profil: Mauser-Werke Oberndorf

(now Rheinmetall Defence / Rheinmetall AG)

The firm of Mauser, named for the engineer brothers Paul and Wilhelm Mauser, was one of the oldest and internationally best-known German arms manufacturers, especially of military and civilian small arms—long rifles, carbines, and pistols, which were already being exported to many parts of the world, particularly to the Near East and Latin America, in the nineteenth century. After both the First and the Second World Wars, the company had to switch to manufacturing civilian goods after a ban by the Allied powers on arms production – but this did not last very long.

After the seizure of power by the Nazis, and Adolf Hitler's "restoration of military sovereignty", full-scale arms production started up again in 1935. The Mauser 98k carbine became the standard weapon of the German Wehrmacht. At that time, Mauser employed more workers than Oberndorf had inhabitants – in addition came at least 5,000 forced laborers from the countries occupied by the Wehrmacht. The German surrender in 1945 again resulted in the complete collapse of production – until the Bundeswehr was founded in 1949, and the new army needed weapons. So three former Mauser engineers founded the firm Heckler & Koch, which made the G3 rifle for the Bundeswehr and various other NATO countries. The Mauser company was acquired by the Nuremberg arms company Diehl, and manufactured cannons for NATO aircraft and naval cannons for the Bundesmarine. After the civilian weapons division was sold in 2004, the military weapons division was sold to the Rheinmetall arms group, and renamed Rheinmetall Waffe Munition, a subsidiary of Rheinmetall Defence.

3.2. Brief company profile: Rheinmetall AG, Düsseldorf (today)

by Otfried Nassauer

The firm of Rheinische Metallwaren- und Maschinenfabrik AG, founded in 1889, doing business today as Rheinmetall AG, began its operations as an ammunition and cannon manufacturer, and is currently the largest arms maker based in Germany.

Rheinmetall consists today of two roughly equal-sized divisions, Defence and Automotive. Its headquarters are in Düsseldorf. The company is a global player, with 39 German locations and 78 foreign one in 30 countries. It stated that in 2017, it had holdings in a total of 186 firms, and customers in 146 countries. 23,726 were working for the group, of whom 11,798 at home and 11,928 abroad. The Defence division employed 11,232, and the Automotive division 12,277.

In 2017, the Rheinmetall group had sales of about 5.9 billion euros (2016: 5.6 billion). About 2.9 billion euros came from the Automotive division (2016: 2.7 billion), and somewhat more, a good 3 billion, from the Defence division (2016: 2.9 billion). The operative result of the group, that is earnings before taxes and special effects, amounted to about 400 million euros in 2017 (after 353 millions in 2016). With an order book of about 6.4 billion euros, at the end of 2017 the Defence division had a backlog of orders that made good capacity utilization and increasing profits in the future seem likely.

For 2018, the management expects a growth in sales in the arms sector of 12% to 14%. Even more pleasing for the Rheinmetall managers and their investors is presumably the expectation that investments in armaments are supposed to increase considerably in Germany and many other European NATO countries in coming years, and longer-term market growth is expected. Uncertainty and fear of war are good for business. Most analysts and investors seem to share this view, as well. The price of Rheinmetall shares increased over the last five years from about 36 euros to about 110 euros. In 2017, it rose by 66%, much more than the stock-market indexes DAX (13%) and MDAX (18%).

3.3. Brief company profile: The Krupp works and Thyssenkrupp AG, Essen

by Wolfgang Landgraeber and Bernhard Trautvetter

In the decades before the First World War, the Krupp works grew into the dominant arms supplier in Germany, and helped the German Empire, founded in 1871, to become a European Great Power. "From the mid-nineteenth century on, the factory in Essen built steel artillery pieces that could shoot further and more accurately than the conventional iron and bronze mortars. The best-known of the numerous models of gun was the 42-centimetre mortar 'Big Bertha'".

Krupp weapons were supplied not only to Germany's, but throughout the world, including to the Ottoman Empire and South America. Warships, such as the Goeben and Breslau, armor-clad with Krupp steel, in particular were of central importance for the Ottoman Empire. The Goeben catapulted Turkey at Germany's side into the First World War. It made the Black Sea practically into German inland waters, and blocked the Russians' access to the Mediterranean. In 1910, Berlin sold the later Torgud Reis -- formerly the HMS Weißenburg -- an armored vessel of the Imperial Navy clad with Krupp steel, to the Ottoman Empire.

The steel 28-cm guns of the Navy ships of this class were also products of the Krupp firm, as were the guns of the fortresses of the Dardanelles at the strait of the Bosphorus. The guns were almost all made in Germany, and until the middle of 1914, they could still be shipped by sea from Germany. The

installation of the heavy cannons under the direction of German specialists required much effort. Some fortresses were actually built around the guns.

Colonel Colmar Baron von der Goltz was assigned by Emperor Wilhelm, among other things, to offer the Ottoman Empire Krupp cannons. "Alfred Krupp himself regarded German diplomats in Turkey as his salesmen." Von der Goltz had already previously arranged the supply of large quantities of Mauser rifles with the Sultan. Thus he succeeded in creating, besides the rifle monopoly, a second monopoly on artillery in the Ottoman Empire -- at the expense of the French and British arms makers who had previously dominated this market segment.

Under Emperor Wilhelm II, the Krupp firm became the armory of the German Empire. During this period, Krupp grew into a worldwide business. Krupp armor plating for naval vessels and the artillery business made Krupp largest corporation and Germany's main supplier of armaments before the First World War. In Essen alone, the Krupps' headquarters, the firm already employed 40,000 people at that time.

Gustav Georg Friedrich Maria Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, who first as a member of the supervisory board [Aufsichtsrat] (1906), and then as its chairman (1909), of the industrial firm of Krupp played a decisive role in the orientation of many business deals, including with the Ottoman Empire, must be considered the main party responsible.

After his marriage to Bertha Krupp, Emperor Wilhelm II decreed that she was to be called Bertha "Krupp von Bohlen", and he Gustav "Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach". The Krupps' career showed the close links between the complex state apparatus of the Empire, industry, and the Krupp family. In 1910, Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach was made a member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society [the predecessor of the Max Planck society]. Upon the outbreak of the First World War, the company, under the direction of Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, concentrated its production largely on armaments.

That the Krupp firm must have known about the deportations and killings of the Armenian minority in the Ottoman Empire is suggested by contemporary sources: "The German military was also involved in the logistics of the deportations, as shown by a deportation order signed by Lieutenant-Colonel Böttrich, the head of transportation (Railway Department) in the Turkish Grand Headquarters in October 1915, which affected Armenian workers on the Baghdad Line. The Baghdad Line itself and the Anatolian Railway also served to transport captured Armenians before this." The Krupp company participated directly in the building of the Baghdad Line.

That Krupp also played an important role in the arming of Latin American countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was demonstrated by the historian Jürgen Schäfer. Even after the merger with the steel-making group Thyssen to form Thyssenkrupp AG, Krupp remained one of

the most important arms manufacturers and exporters of Germany and Europe.

Today, Thyssenkrupp presents itself on its company Web site as a diversified industrial group focused on steel working, with more than 158,000 employees at 500 locations in 79 countries throughout the world.¹

¹ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krupp_Gussstahlfabrik#Erster_Weltkrieg_und_die_Folgen

4. Types of weapons that were supplied and used

- At the time of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire was heavily armed: almost a million long rifles, carbines, machine guns, and pistols from Mauser of Oberndorf, as well as thousands of field-pieces from Krupp in Essen formed the backbone of their armament.
- Most of the regular Turkish soldiers and gendarmes were armed with Mauser rifles, and the officers with Mauser pistols.
- During the production run, several modifications were made to the model M/87 rifle: first the M/89 and finally the M/90, a repeating rifle with a mid-stock magazine for 7.65 mm caliber nitro-powder cartridges. Of this model, short-barreled carbine versions were produced specially for the cavalry.
- Between 1885 and 1912, Krupp supplied hundreds of field-pieces of the models L 20, 24, 27, and L 30 and 50, with calibers of 7.5 and 8.7 cm; model L 35 and KL 35 coast-artillery guns with calibers of 25 and 35 cm, and model L 6.3 and L 6.4 mortars with calibers from 12 to 21 cm to the Ottoman Empire. In addition, they supplied armor plating for naval vessels.²

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4.1. Recipients of the arms

Regular Turkish armed forces and police units (“Gendarma”) of the Ottoman Empire.

² Fahri Türk, Die deutsche Rüstungsindustrie in ihren Türkeigeschäften zwischen 1871 und 1914, Frankfurt am Main, 2004

³ Farina Türk, Die deutsche Rüstungsindustrie in ihren Türkeigeschäften zwischen 1871 und 1914, Frankfurt am Main, 2004

4.2. Sequence of events

Sequence of the massacres of the Armenian population

The massacres of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire, ordered by Sultan Abdülhamid II., occurred in phases:

1893/1894: Mass murders in the Sasun region as a result of punitive expeditions by Ottoman armed forces to enforce tax collection

1895: Massacres in the Armenian-populated regions of Anatolia as a result of riots in Constantinople, triggered by promises of reforms by the Sultan to the Armenians

1896: Riots in Van, with subsequent massacres of Armenians, mainly by Kurdish gangs and parts of the other Moslem population, tolerated by the Ottoman forces stationed there.

1915-1916: Deportations of more than a million Armenians from the regions where they lived into the Syrian desert, carried out by the Ottoman army and gendarmery. On the way, tens of thousands of men were massacred; the women and children died of deprivation, or of starvation or thirst in the desert, where they were left to their fate.

4.3. Violations of the human rights of Armenians

Murder by shooting, hanging, and beheading, as well as by allowing to die of starvation and thirst, and refusal of humanitarian aid to those in danger of death. There had never been a systematic genocide such as that of the Armenians on this scale, ordered by the highest officials in the Sultan's administration, and carried out or tolerated by the generals of the army and the gendarmery, in the history of civilized humanity.

5. Perpetrators and Victims

5.1. Brief profiles of the perpetrators on the German side

Goltz, Field Marshal Baron Colmar von der

(born on 12 Aug. 1843 in Adlig Bielkenfeld (Labiau County in East Prussia), died 19 April 1916 in Baghdad); general of the Prussian army, military writer and historian. Since 1883, Goltz had been a military adviser to the Ottoman court. He shared major responsibility for the genocide of Armenians by the Young Turk regime. Goltz became an unofficial sales agent, as it were, for the firms of Krupp and Mauser; during his time in Constantinople, he brokered the sales of artillery and rifles amounting to hundreds of millions of gold marks.

Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, Gustav Georg Friedrich Maria;

(Born on 7 August 1870 in The Hague, died on 16 January 1950 near Salzburg). After graduating in law, he joined the diplomatic service of the German Empire. By way of his marriage to Bertha Krupp in 1906, he got onto the supervisory board of Friedrich Krupp AG, and became its chairman in 1909. In 1910, he became a member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society. Under his direction, during the First World War, the company concentrated its production mainly on arms. He was one of those tried for war crimes in the Second World War in the Nuremberg Trials; the case against him was dropped "for reasons of ill-health".

Loewe, Isidor, Arms-making manager Ludwig Loewe & Co and Mauser Works

(Born on 24 November 1848 in Heiligenstadt, Eichsfeld). After his brother Ludwig Loewe died in 1886, Isidor took over the firm Ludwig Loewe & Co., where side-arms and ammunition were produced. In 1887, he converted the firm into a public limited company, bought two million reichsmarks' worth of shares in the Mauser-Werke in Oberndorf, and took over the chair of the supervisory board at Mauser. That same year, Mauser and Loewe obtained the Turkish order for the supply of 500,000 Mauser rifles. From 1889 on, Isidor Loewe controlled the entire German armaments industry, except for Krupp. During the First World War, when the Mauser 98 rifle became the German soldiers' standard weapon, the Loewe profits probably increased many-fold.

Mauser, Paul (since 1912 Paul von Mauser)

(born 27 June 1838, died 29 May 1914, both in Oberndorf am Neckar); German weapons designer and politician. Paul Mauser, who was later raised to the peerage by the King of Württemberg, was allowed to present his latest developments to the Sultan personally. In February 1887, the Ministry of War

of the Ottoman Empire and a consortium of German companies, consisting of the firms of Mauser and Ludwig Loewe & Co KG, signed a contract for the supply of 500,000 model M/87 long rifles and 50,000 carbines of the same model. Further substantial orders followed.

Others:

Bethmann Hollweg, Theobald von; Chancellor of the German Empire, authorizer of arms exports

Wilhelm II of Prussia; Emperor; authorizer of arms exports

5.2. Perpetrators on the Turkish side

Sultan Abdülhamid II

Sultan Mehmed V

Minister of War Enver Paşa

Minister of the Interior and head of the gendarmery Talât Paşa

5.3. Victims

About 1.2 million people died in the genocide of Armenians and other Christian minorities in the years 1895 to 1916

6. Use of German weapons of war today against Kurds in Turkey and Syria

by Helmut Lohrer

More than a century ago, the German firms Mauser and Krupp already made a fortune by exporting rifles and cannons to the Ottoman Empire. These weapons were used not only in the First World War, but also for the massacres of Armenians. These exports were explicitly promoted by the government, and brokered by the German Field Marshal Baron Colmar von der Goltz, as described variously and published as Case 01 here, on the Web site of Global Net – Stop the Arms Trade GN-STAT.

The principle of supplying weapons to regions in crisis for supposed reason of state, despite all legal and moral objections, continues to apply to this day, unfortunately. Two typical examples are the export of thousands and thousands of Heckler & Koch G36 automatic rifles, and the transfer of eight patrol boats from the Lürssen-Werft shipyards to Saudi Arabia, authorized in 2018. Saudi Arabia is also supplied by the German firm Rheinmetall – evading German rules – with bombs and ammunition via its subsidiary RWA Italia in Italy, and ammunition via its joint venture with the South African firm Denel (Rheinmetall Denel Munitions, RDM). These weapons and ammunition are used in the illegal war against Yemen.

To this day, our NATO ally Turkey purchases German dual-use goods, military equipment, and weapons of war. For decades, armored vehicles and small arms supplied by Germany – such as the G3 automatic rifle and the MP5 submachine gun, produced under German licence at MKEK in Ankara – have been employed against Kurds in southeastern Turkey, officially only against the Kurdish PKK. Disregarding these facts, exports of military vehicles, small arms, and tanks from Germany continue to be authorized and delivered, which is a clear violation of German export guidelines.

In 2018, the situation has become considerably worse: in violation of international law, as is the unanimous opinion of all the political parties represented in the Bundestag, Turkey has attacked Syria, and taken the city of Afrin, inhabited mainly by Kurds, in a brutal offensive. According to the Turkish government, Leopard 2 battle tanks, supplied by Germany and manufactured by Krauss-Maffei Wegmann and Rheinmetall, have been employed. And although even Chancellor Merkel, in her government policy statement, has denounced this attack on the Kurdish city of Afrin, arms continue to be supplied to Turkey. This has been confirmed by a reply by the Ministry of Commerce to a question by the Green party MP Omid Nouripour, and also by a reply by the Administration to a question by the Left party in the Bundestag.

According to this, the German government has authorized arms exports worth more than four million euros since the start of the Turkish offensive with the cynical name Olive Branch on 20 January 2018.

So everything remains as before, business is more important than morals. And neither German nor international law – Germany has ratified the UN convention on the arms trade, which clearly prohibits such arms deals – hinder the German government from authorizing arms exports which are then used directly in a war that violates international law.

7. Brief details about the authors

7.1. Author of GN-STAT Case 01 on the genocide of Armenians

Wolfgang Landgraeber, as an editor of the political news programs MONITOR and PANORAMA on the ARD network from the late 1970s until the mid-1990s, was a prominent investigative television journalist in public broadcasting in Germany. Since 1979, he has produced around thirty documentary films, television documentaries, and features, which won numerous prizes at national and international film and television festivals, as author or co-author. Their common characteristic was a critical view of the domestic and foreign policies of the Federal Republic of Germany, its representatives, and its history. His focus includes the topics "militarism" and "arms exports". From 2001 until 2012, Landgraeber was the head of the Culture, History, and Science Documentaries television programs group of the Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR). Since 2013, he has been working as a free-lance film-maker and lecturer in Munich.

7.2. Brief details on the authors of the supplementary texts

Author on Rheinmetall

Otfried Nassauer (born 1956) is a free-lance journalist and head of the Berliner Informationszentrum für Transatlantische Sicherheit. Contributions to television news programs (Monitor, Panorama, Frontal 21 int. al.), radio (Streitkräfte und Strategien, SWR2, WDR5, int. al.) and print media (Spiegel, Tagesspiegel, TAZ, Frankfurter Rundschau, Loyal, Wissenschaft & Frieden, Friedensforum int. al.), electronic media (Spiegel online, The European, Blättchen int. al.). Most publications can be seen on-line.

Author on Krupp

Bernhard Trautvetter is a peace activist, one of the spokespersons of the Essener Friedensforum, in the Peace Education working group of the GEW NRW (State teacher's union), representative of the VVN-BdA NRW in the Bundesausschuss Friedensratschlag, and author of texts on peace policies and peace education. He also presents his artistic creations publicly, such as in the exhibition "Kriege enden nicht im Frieden", and is initiator and promoter of peace actions related to conferences of NATO military and nuclear strategists in Essen. He is a critic of developments in the arms industry in the Essen area. He has been awarded the 2018 Düsseldorf Peace Prize.

Author on use of German weapons against the Kurds

Dr. Helmut Lohrer (born 1963) works as a general practitioner in Villingen-Schwenningen. After working for two years as a teacher in Cameroon, he studied medicine, and received specialist training in Manchester, England

and in Villingen-Schwenningen. Since his student days, he has been active in the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). He is an International Councilor of the German chapter, and an elected member of the international executive committee. In 2013, he organized the small-arms congress "Human Target" Zielscheibe Mensch, in which 300 physicians, scientists, and activists from throughout the world took part.

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