THE ASSASINATION OF TALAT PASHA

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On 15 March 1921, former Ottoman Interior Minister Talat Pasha was assassinated in Berlin by Soghomon Tehlirian.

As the Ottoman Interior Minister, in 1915 Talat Pasha had assumed responsibility for the enactment and the implementation of the law for the resettlement of the Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire living in Eastern Anatolia to southern parts of the Empire. This decision was undertaken as a military measure, and was meant to deprive Armenian brigands and volunteer units fighting against the Ottoman Empire of the support they were receiving from the Armenian population.

Having lost some of his family members during the resettlement process, Tehlirian accused Talat Pasha of having masterminded a plan to purposefully exterminate Armenians. Based on his own convictions, Tehlirian assassinated Talat Pasha in Berlin to exact revenge. Following the assassination, he was arrested and put on trial. During his trial, the court examined Tehlirians motivations for having murdered Talat Pasha. Despite admitting his guilt and expressing absolutely no regret for having killed a person, the German court acquitted and released Tehlirian. From a legal point of view, this court decision was blatantly biased and erroneous. Whatever his convictions may have been for carrying out the assassination, the German court acquitted and released a self-confessed and self-righteous murderer.

Following his release, Tehlirian came to be treated as a hero by Armenian people. There is even a memorial erected in his name in Fresno in the US state of California.

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