

Brief Biography of Vartkes Yeghiayan

Vartkes Yeghiayan was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to a wealthy Armenian family. His father Boghos Yeghiayan was born in Isparta and was the only survivor in his family from the Armenian Genocide. His parents and four sisters being killed by the Turks, Boghos was picked up by nomads in the desert who sheltered him for four years. He eventually worked as an accountant for Seferian Import Export Company and made his way to an Armenian Orphanage in Aleppo, Syria. Boghos received his primary education in Aleppo Schools and later at Robert's College, Constantinople, and finally went to Ethiopia. He married Aroussiag Terzian from one of the local established families. They had three sons: Tigran, Vartkes, and Edi. All three boys attended American boarding schools in Cyprus, but Vartkes's father insisted that the boys all go to America as he explained "The future is in America".

Yeghiayan started as a pre-med major at The University of Berkeley and later switched to history, a course of study that explain his passion with the Genocide issues. Other Armenian students told him stories of their families' hardships in Turkey, and he pretended to know what they were talking about, until 1961, when his father died and he attended the funeral in Ethiopia. When communicating with his relatives and the aging friends of his father, Yeghiayan began to understand his family's – and his people's – unspeakable past. Yeghiayan realized that his family had sheltered him from the pain of the Genocide. His father's generation did not want to talk about the Armenian Genocide.

While in Berkeley, Vartkes co-founded the Armenian Students Associations, which still exists.

In his senior year, he organized the founding of the Armenian Chair at Berkeley, which continues as a funded professorship for Armenian Studies.

After graduation, Vartkes went to law school at the University of California, Hastings College of Law. He completed his legal studies at Lincoln Law School.

After his studies, Vartkes Yeghiayan joined the newly created, public-interest law firm, called "California Rural Legal Assistance", better known as CRLA. This was the era when class action lawsuits were first introduced, and the CRLA used them extensively for public-policy purposes. Vartkes rose from junior attorney to become the CRLA's Northern California Regional Director.

Because of Vartkes's political and legal experience, the President of the United States appointed him in 1974 to serve as Special Assistant for International Operations to Director of ACTION, resulting in Vartkes' move to Washington DC. He supervised the worldwide operations of the Peace Corps' 7,000 volunteers in 68 countries, as Assistant Director. He was reappointed by successive administrations and served for five years under three presidents----Nixon, Ford and Carter---in both Democratic and Republican administrations.

In 1966 Vartkes wrote his first work entitled "The Economic Commission and Associated States of Africa".

In 1979, Vartkes was commissioned by the American Enterprise Institute of Public Policy to write a position paper on the Horn of Africa. He became a consultant on the topic of starvation in Africa.

In 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Vartkes served as legal advisor to the new Republic of Armenia, and he authored the first draft of the Armenian Constitution.

Vartkes has written many books, including:

- "Volunteerism: The Real and Emerging Power"
- "The Horn of Africa: Challenges to American Foreign Policy"
- "Trial of the Young Turks in Constantinople"
- "The British Foreign Office Dossier on Turkish War Criminals", which exposed the crimes and evidence against the British brought to Malta for trial during the period between the Treaty of Serves and the Treaty of Lausanne. The book chronicles how the Turkish forces after invoking a War of Independence massacred innocent civilians and looted and appropriated Armenian and Greek cathedrals, monasteries, churches, institutions, fields, orchards, stores, and factories while the victorious Allies looked away. This book was recently translated into Turkish and published in Turkey. Entitled MALTA BEGLERI by publisher Zarakoglu.
- "They Refused to Die", a chronicle of the Armenian Genocide
- "Vahan Cardashian" Advocate Extraordinaire For The Armenian Cause
Yeghiayan published this book on Vahan Cardashian because he believes that this Armenian American lawyer who lived from 1883 to 1934 was the founder of the Hai Tad in the United States. For three decades from 1908 until his early death in 1934 Cardashian grappled with the most vital values and issues in the history of mankind. Outraged that so soon after the Genocide, the Executive Branch of the American government was established relations with Turkey, Cardashian rallied thousands of clergy and various publications and single-handedly persuaded the United States of America not to ratify the Lausanne Treaty.
- "Raphael Lemkin" and the Armenian Genocide
Is an important contribution for scholars and human rights activists seeking to know what the originator of the "father" of the Genocide convention had to say about the Armenian Genocide. This book is currently being translated into Turkish and will be published in Turkey by publisher Zarakoglu.
- Aaron Aaronsen "Pro Armenia" with Editor [In Print]
- The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian
"The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian" is a fascinating, multidimensional document. It is a trial transcript, which offers the reader a front row seat to a riveting trial which established a number of legal precedents. "The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian" was also instrumental in provoking Raphael Lemkin, who coined the word Geno-cide, to investigate the paradox of how a single man, Tehlirian, could be prosecuted for murder, yet the murdered man, Talaat, had almost gotten away after successfully planning and prosecuting the extermination of over a million souls!
- The Case of Misak Torlakian
"The Case of Misak Torlakian" is about the trial of Misak Torlakian, an Armenian Ottoman subject, by the British Military Court, which took place at 10:00 A.M. on August 11, 1921, on the charge of murdering Binbud Khan Jivanshir, Ex-Minister of Interior of Azerbaijan, outside the Pera Palace Hotel in Constantinople (Istanbul) on July 18, 1921. "The Case of Misak Torlakian" is the twin of "The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian." Both trials involved the murder of a tyrant, and both of the perpetrators were found not guilty. During

both trials, history, theology, philosophy, physiology, psychology, and politics were invoked by both sides to sway the Military Judge in the case of Torlakian, and the Jury of Peers in the case of Tehlirian. Thus in addition to being landmark legal cases, these two trials reveal the prevailing mindsets and political strategies of Germans, Turks, Armenians and Azeris in the aftermath of World War I. In order to prepare his publication Yeghiayan has spent numerous years in researching the British Foreign office archives, the United States National archives the Turkish Ottoman archives, the Jewish historical archives, German Ministry of Interior archives and the French Foreign archives.

Yeghiayan became interested in the issue of Armenian insurance claims in 1987, while reading U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau's memoirs. Eighteen years later, he finally won a \$38,500,000 judgment against New York Life and AXA Insurance companies. Together with co-counsels Mark Geragos and Brian Kabateck he continues his legal battle against Deutsche Bank.

Yeghiayan has received multiple awards and prizes from County, State and Federal government including Honors:

- Recipient of the 2006 California Lawyer's Attorney of the Year Award in Litigation.
- Finalist – Trial Lawyer of the year, Consumer Attorneys of California 2005
- Testified before the California Legislature
- Drafted insurance legislation
- Testified before the Helsinki Commission Washington DC

Has lectured extensively in the U.S. Europe, the Middle East, Canada, and Armenia on the legal ramifications of the class lawsuits regarding the Armenian Genocide and restitution of Armenian properties.

Mr. Yeghiayan practices law in Glendale, California, where he specializes in International law and complex litigations.

---END---