Modern states and genocides: the fate of Turkish Armenians and European Jews

This thesis primarily explores the relationship between modernity, modern thinking and modern state on one hand and the Holocaust, Armenian genocide or other genocides, on the other. The purpose of my thesis is to answer the question whether a modern state can be considered a perpetrator of both these tragedies. Furthermore, in my thesis I investigate the causes of these genocides and mainly the influence of nationalism, bureaucracy and racism.

The first part of the thesis is devoted to genocide and implementation this concept in international criminal law. I deal with the emergence of this concept and its subsequent development as an independent crime under international law.

In the second part I deal with the classification of genocides. First, I deal with the typology of genocides by individual authors. I also examine the differences between traditional massacres and modern genocide, name the pivotal features of modern genocide and try to answer the question of whether it makes sense to use the term “traditional genocide” at all.

In the next chapter I focus on the Armenian genocide. This part begins with a short introduction of the Armenians, a quick overview of their history and a description of the Armenian situation in the Ottoman Empire before the genocide. I also describe the course of this genocide itself and the individual factors that had the greatest impact on this event. First, I describe the emergence and development of Turkish nationalism and the Ottoman effort to cope with Europe. An approximation of bureaucratic administration principles and the description of their influence on facilitating the process of extermination follows. In conclusion, I describe the impact of dehumanization of victims and the involvement of modern technologies on the Armenian genocide.

Jewish genocide, Holocaust, is analyzed in Chapter Four. Here, as with the Armenian genocide, I describe the course of this event. Next, I provide insight into the circumstances and factors that facilitated the course of the Holocaust. I discuss the influence of anti-Semitism and German nationalism, authority and division of labour, industry, dehumanization of victims and the influence of modern technologies.