



Thesis: The Centennial of the Armenian Genocide: History, Memory and Political Debate



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Abstract

The dissertation seeks to address fourth sets of issues: The Armenian issue in the period 1878-1915, The Armenian Genocide narrative, the post-war era, notably the military trials and the attribution of responsibilities, and the Turkish denialism that began in modern Turkey of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and continues until today in Erdoğan's regime. It also traces the annual commemoration policies by the Armenian diaspora from every edge of the world in order to build and define the next centennial of the community as a message of strength, perseverance, and hope for future generations. Finally, it examines the role of art in commemoration policies and Turkey's attitude towards the projection and exposure of the events of the past through art. The paper tries to relate the current denialism with the Armenian-Turkish debate.

It poses therefore the followed questions how and why do the Armenian and Turkish debates have different outcomes? What are the implications of these differences? It looks at how the Armenian diaspora and the Turkish state have used the unresolved conflict between competing Turkish narratives of denial and Armenian narratives affirming the genocide's reality to influence political actors in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East to support their arguments for and against the genocide's reality. This thesis provides a contribution to knowledge by demonstrating that genocide recognition is a political issue involving more than the perpetrators and victims. Recognition of genocide encapsulates other states and communities, just as genocide involves more than these two players. When this comes to the awareness of their obligations, bystander governments must consider what they do when genocide is perpetrated.

Essentially, the dissertation examines genocide from an international perspective, which is why it mentions the present government's attitude on the problem, as well as the most recent pronouncement by US President John Baiden, who openly recognized genocide as a crime against humanity. Therefore, the particular Master's thesis aims at providing a thorough explanation and understanding of Turkish-Armenian bilateral relations from the past to today. It focuses on analyzing the importance of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide in decision-making steps to improvement and to justice. It is also a step to humanization, a demand of alleviation and vindication for all the Armenian diaspora.

Keywords: Armenian Genocide, Memory, Armenian diaspora, Armenian-Turkish debate, human rights

Abbreviations

AGUS The Armenian Genocide in the U.S. Archives, 1915-1918 (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1991-1994), ed. Rouben Paul Adalian

CUP Ittihad ve Terakki (Committee of Union and Progress; members are Unionists)

SO Teşkilâtı Mahsusa (Special Organization)

ARF (Armenian Revolutionary Federation)

UNGC (United Nations Global Compact)

USHMM (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

PR (Public Relations)

PKK/PYD- (Democratic Union Party in Syria) YPG (Peoples' Defense Units)

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Introduction

The main goal of the present MA thesis is the Armenian genocide, its memory, and its political use on the occasion of the completion of one hundred years since its implementation. Undoubtedly, the Armenian genocide was an act against humanity, committed by Young Turks during the First World War. Since then, the Armenian Genocide has been historically well documented. On the occasion of the completion of one hundred years, the Armenian genocide has come once again in the spotlight. For Armenians, especially those living in the diaspora, it is the basic narrative of their national history. On the other side, for the Turks, the denial of the Armenian genocide still remains a key component of their own national narrative, which culminated during the last two decades, from the so-called “Erdogan regime”.

Today, the Turkish government denies the term “genocide” and the “Turkish responsibility”, underlining the absence of historical evidence that testifies to the Turkish responsibility in committing the Armenian genocide. Apart from the Turkish government, hardly any Turkish expert and analyst use the term “genocide” to characterize the policy of CUP, only Taner Akçam, a Turkish-German historian speaks publicly for the Armenian Genocide. Moreover, Turkish citizens who demanded an honest historical truth were still being treated as a national security risk, considered as traitors to their homeland or dupes of hostile foreign powers, and targeted with threats. To elaborate on the “Armenian genocide denialism” the MA thesis is based on the rich bibliography as well as on articles published in some newspapers in 2015, during the Commemoration Events. In addition, members of the Armenian community are interviewed to have a better idea on the paths of memory and its consequences in the public sphere. From the account of survivors given in this thesis, I was able to ascertain that the historical truth differs from much of the literature, which tends to distort past

My research aims to elaborate on specific “production” and “consumption” stages of the Armenian question in Turkey. The issue becomes more and more controversial today because the international political scene brings to light the Armenian genocide and the historical facts which involve a “black page” in human history. The descendants of the victims claim the restoration of memory as a sign of honor for their ancestors.

The thesis argues that survivors have been affected by painful memories of the past. The past often leads survivors to use memory to justify their political stance against the government and their constant demand for justice. Aida Alayarian writes in her volume, *Consequences of denial the Armenian Genocide* “Denying the genocide hurts its survivors and might lead to long-term psychological consequences”¹. To reshape the memory, the historical community must scrutinize all the historical records and testimonies that constitute evidence of genocide by Young Turks. The Armenian Genocide’s memory is also necessary for constituting the Armenian diaspora identity, being the official recognition of the Genocide “the sine qua non of the Armenian experience in the 20th and 21st century,” according to Anny Bakalian’s detailed study and interviews were given by American Armenians descendants.²

This study investigates who coordinated the genocide and who inspired the Turks to commit these atrocities in order to demonstrate the genocidal nature of the killings and the lingering effects on descendants' memories. We will learn how the Union and Progress movement was founded in Thessaloniki by a group of experienced Turkish officials, and how it rose to power in a short period of time. Using the word "national security," as Taner Akçam (2021) did in his book "Human Rights and Crimes Against Humanity," not only mentioned and explained the horrific events of the past but also supported the future building of genocide denial. In other words, he argues that the Armenian genocide and slaughter of Christian minorities were critical factors in the Holocaust.³

The methodology behind the study comes mainly from primary sources which give an answer to the question who was really responsible for the coordination of the crimes. Ottoman unpublished archives may shed light on the ethnic cleansing of the Armenian population of Anatolia. It is worth mentioning that the region first became important for the Russian policy after 1905 and then for Ottoman and Great power. In addition, the records unveil that the Russian-Armenian reformist agreement in February 1914 would bring the empire into dissolution, and the triumvir of the CUP, Enver Pasha, believed that non-Muslim subjects opposed to the State’s existence. So, the salvation of the State depended on taking measures against them. Another credible source of information is

1. Alayarian, 2008: preface

2. Bakalian 1994; Kasbarian, 2021; Tchilingirian, 2018

3. Akçam, 2021: preface

British and American documents. The reform itself led to the greater impact of the West by the adaptation of western practices, policies, and institutions. The Ottoman Empire of those years used commonly to be regarded as an object of the West, rather as an actor of its own right. Several factors raise doubts about the legitimacy of these archives, which have just been recently subjected to public scrutiny.

So, the dissertation is divided into four chapters and an introduction, which offers some preliminary thoughts on Armenian-Turkish bilateral relations based on the aforementioned literature. The first part contains a brief overview of Armenian presence in the Ottoman Empire in the years following the Treaty of Berlin (1878), which compelled the Sultan to enact beneficial reforms for Christian minorities. The narrative demonstrates that the Treaty more alienated rather than resolved the Armenian issue, since the fear for international intervention in the eastern affairs, led the Ottoman regime in the subsequent wave of Armenian massacres in 1894-96, in 1905-7, and finally in 1915. The second chapter unfolds the historical background of the Armenian Genocide and elaborates some scenes of Ottoman brutality based on primary sources such as testimonies, archives, and diaries. Moreover, the chapter puts much emphasis on the pre-organized character of Genocide, in order to prove the Turkish responsibility and refute Turkey's argument of happening under the shadow of WWI.

The third chapter, which is divided into two sub-chapters, focused on Turkish interpretation of the 1915 events from the period of the creation of the Turkish state until today. It also focuses on the Armenian Genocide as the subject of a political confrontation between Turkey and Armenia. Turkey having Azerbaijan on its side argues that Turkey drawn from the Nagorno-Karabach dispute uses the Genocide as a "weapon" for territorial gains. The fourth chapter analyzes the Armenian version of the Genocide events and the demand for their international recognition as the only path to reshape the Armenian memory. It also uses the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the genocide to shed light on the political controversy over this issue and articulates its impact in the Armenian diaspora for whom the recognition of Genocide is a matter of Armenian identity and reconciliation with the past. Finally, there is an attempt for an overall discussion of the importance of historical memory and the public's commitment to endorse every reference for the Armenian Genocide (conclusion).

Chapter 1: The Road to the Hell

The cardinal point of this chapter is to make a historical narrative of the Armenian presence in the Ottoman Empire, focusing mainly on the timeline after the Treaty of Berlin (1876) and the Russo-Turkish War (1877) until the period of the emergence of the Young Turks' movement. To have an explicit depiction of that period, we need to examine articles of the Berlin Treaty, archives, testimonies, official reports, and newspapers of the time.

1.1. "The Armenian Issue"

At the turn of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire covered a vast terrain that included all North Africa, except Morocco, the Balkan peninsula, Anatolia, Syria, Iraq, and sections of the Arabian Peninsula. It was a multiethnic empire, where Muslims numbered fewer than half.⁴ A very large part of its population consisted of Christians who belonged to various denominations (Orthodox, Catholic, Gregorian, Copts, Syro-Jacobites, etc.), while in the cities there were also communities of Romaniote, Sephardic or Ashkenazi Jews. Armenian territories located between the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Mediterranean, in an area that we refer to today as Eastern Anatolia or Transcaucasia. Before the Armenian Genocide, about 2.5 million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire, mostly gathered in the six provinces of Eastern Anatolia.

In the 20th century, Armenian peasants coexisted with the dominating Kurdish nomads in Eastern Anatolia. Even though Armenians did not make up the majority of the population in the Eastern province, they often lived in homogeneous villages and communities within towns and cities. Armenians had a rough time because of the Kurdish rulers' brutal treatment. Since local courts and judges generally favored Muslims, Armenians devised a contingency plan in the event that they were victims of violence or had their land, animals, or possessions stolen from them.⁵ Armenians were considered to be second-class citizens; Islam was not restricted only to religious affairs but also regulated every aspect of the social and political aspects. Under this

4. Davison, 1948: 481-505

5. "Armenian Genocide." Encyclopædia Britannica.

framework, one could consider the Ottoman state Islamic. In this state örfi or customary law cooperate alongside Islamic Sharia law. The limits between sharia and örfi have not been clearly defined, nor have been demarcated. Legal and administrative affairs are defined through decrees, known as the Sultan's firmans. Islamic law divides states into two groups: Islamic and non-Islamic. The ghiaour's (infidels) relationship with others was characterized by disloyalty. Ungratefulness is one of the core Arabic meanings of the trilateral, consonantal root kfr, which means "to be an infidel," "not to believe," and "to be ungrateful."

According to Gibb and Bauen, the relation between the state and the non-muslim population is articulated in two legal frameworks: dhimma and millet. The term dhimma (Arabic dhimma, ottoman Turkish: zimmet) refers to the regulations concerning the position of non-religious people as subjects of a Muslim sovereign, and which have a contractual character. The ruler (sultan, emir, etc.) guarantees the protection of their civil rights. In return, the dhimmi are obliged to show allegiance and loyalty to the Muslim class and pay a tax known as jizya.⁶ Under Ottoman law all Christian subjects who were not Greek Orthodox were included in the Armenian Gregorian millet.

Thus the Paulicians and Yakubites in Anatolia, as well as the Bogomils and Gypsies in the Balkans, were counted as Armenians, leading to substantial disagreements in later times as to the total number of Armenians actually living in the Empire⁷. 29th verse of the Ninth Shura of the Qur'an is the foundation of the legal position of the dhimmi. "Fight against the peoples of the Bible who do not believe in Allah, nor do they consider illegal what Allah and His Messenger have proclaimed as illegal, nor do they embrace the true faith, until they pay with their own hands and declare that they surrender." Throughout the history of Islam, this verse has served as a basis for the subordinate position of the dhimmi and regulates their relationship with the state. The millet system is attributed as a religious or ethnoreligious community regulating the subsidiarity of other religious communities in the Ottoman⁸.

The second important institution that determined the rights of non-Muslims living in the Ottoman Empire was the agreements, had been concluded between the Empire

6. see. Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, 2007, 46-47

7. see. Center of Strategic Research, "Armenian Claims and Historical Facts, Questions and Answers", Ankara 2005

8. For this issue, see. Hovannisian, 1969: 25

and foreign powers. The Ottomans considered these acts as violations of their sovereignty. Quite controversial was the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 with Russia. According to this Treaty, Christian subjects would be under Russian protection. The dynamics of foreign activities soon expanded, often reaching the point of behaving like local rulers. By 1830, the empire was on the verge of collapse, so Great Powers had the opportunity to present their ambition to dismember the Empire as a “humanitarian intervention”. “In this somewhat ominous fashion, the Ottoman Empire entered, upon the second crucial phase of its mid-nineteenth century, its attempts at reorganization and westernization, a period known in history as the Tanzimat,” writes Roderic Davison.⁹ Tanzimat, according to Taner Akçam, was a creation of individuals who felt that the Ottoman Empire might be salvaged by “a new form” of patriotism, Ottomanism..¹⁰

Notably, in the 19th century, the Ottoman empire was driven into financial collapse, being a puppet in the geopolitical antagonism among the Great powers. With the Imperial Edict of 1839, the ruling class accepted “reluctantly” a series of western institutions.¹¹ Furthermore, the concept of equality of all Ottomans, Christians, and Muslims tried to create something of common citizenship (Ottomanism or Osmanli), it was not stated directly in the adoption of western law, mixed tribunals, and secular education.¹² Reforms despite not achieving the objective, namely the denervation of nationalism and irredentism of the enslaved and the preservation of the loyalty of the subjects towards the Sultan, eventually led the Ottoman Empire to the creation of a modern army.

Following the end of the Crimean War and the declaration of the Hatt-hümâyün Edict, representatives from Great Britain, France, and Austria signed the Treaty of Paris on April 15, 1856, assuring joint and multiple defenses of Ottoman independence and integrity. Per the historiography, the Tanzimat statesmen worked not only on the “traditional task” of weeding out administrative misappropriations throughout 1856 and 1876, but also on adapting westernization, which established the foundation for representative governance and the secularization of government.¹³ Obviously, the Reform Proclamation of 1856 was highly important since the Great powers intensified their

9. Davison, 2019: 5-7.

10. Ibid 3

11. Akçam, 2007: 56

12. Davison, 2019: 45; Sfetas, 2018

13. Davison, 2019:7-8

interests in the Armenian ethnic group. Russia sought to gain Armenian support for dismembering the Ottoman Empire by promising to create a "Greater Armenia" in eastern Anatolia, which would include, in essence, terrains across the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. However, according to Turkish assertions under Russian or British influence, Armenians became pawns to advance their aspirations in the Ottoman Empire¹⁴.

The "Armenian Question" was being discussed in the second half of the 19th. One can easily consider it as a landmark the Russo-Turkish war (1877 -78) and the followed Congress of Berlin (1878), which terminated the war as marking the emergence of this question as a problem in Europe¹⁵. More specifically, after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, adjacent regions of Armenian Plateau were added to Transcaucasia while the Russian danger became visible. Armenian officers from an intermixed Russian-Armenian population served successfully in the Russian army. In the Ottoman Empire, prevailed the "Russophobia" syndrome, because during the campaigns, generals M. T. Loris-Melikov, A. A. Ter Gukasov, and I. I. Lazarev, Armenians in tsarist service, successfully stormed the fortress of Kars and advanced into Erzerum, simultaneously other armed Russian forces pushed down through the Balkans to the village of San Stefano, just outside Constantinople. By the Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878, the Ottoman Empire ceded its eastern provinces of Kars, Ardahan, Batum, and Bayazit, and the Plain of Alashkert. In 1878, three-fourths of the residents of the Kars were Moslems, but over the next two years, around 75,000 of them sought shelter within the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶

Furthermore, the Patriarch of Armenia sent a memorandum to the Tsar asking for a large part of the eastern Ottoman Empire occupied by Russia and historically considered Armenian territory not to be returned to the Turks. Moreover, if these territories were returned, the Armenians would have to guarantee reforms. After these peace talks, the result was to add Article 16 by which the Armenian question became one of the central issues of international diplomacy.¹⁷ Then, Great Britain under the fear of being Russia geopolitically a great power sent naval armies to Bosphorus. Analyzing the geopolitical chessboard, Russia sought the gradual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire,

14. Carzou, 1975: 78; Center of Strategic Research, "Armenian Claims and Historical Facts, Questions and Answers", Ankara 2005.

15. Ibid 8

16. Akçam, 2007: 68-69

17. Akçam, 2007: 56. Ροδάκης, 1988: 55

control of the Straits, and exodus to the Mediterranean Sea, while England - until the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 - insisted on the doctrine of preserving the Ottoman Empire by introducing reforms to modernize it and europeanize it by granting loans.¹⁸. Having allocated the European areas during the Berlin Conference, European colonialists' interference shifted from the Balkans into the Anatolian heartland of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹. We comprehend therefore why the so-called "Eastern Question" was essentially a European question and consisted of the Russia-England conflict.

After a few days, a new Great Power meeting was held, in which Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty addressed the Armenian issue in a European sphere. Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin promised reforms for the Balkan states, especially Macedonia, just as Article 61 of that Treaty promised reforms for the Armenians and guarantee safety and security against Circassian and Kurdish bands²⁰. The Treaty of Berlin had granted Bulgarians some autonomy, and the Balkans' secession process was about to commence. The United Kingdom and Austria-Hungary, viewing Bulgarian autonomy as a "Russian satellite," and, respectively, the reversal of the intra-Balkan balance and the shift of data on a larger scale, thought to militarily threaten Russia. Under these circumstances, Armenians aspired to establish a permanent presence in the portions of Anatolia captured during the war under these conditions. When the Sultan was obliged to establish a modern constitution on December 23, 1878, which granted more freedom for minorities, the enmity against Christians began. Actually, Article 61 replaced Article 16, according to the former the Russian forces had to withdraw from the eastern provinces and the Sultan had to implement the reforms.²¹

1.2 The massacres of 1895-96

The Treaty of Berlin, as mentioned in the preceding sub-chapter, made the Armenian question a topic of world diplomacy, albeit Armenians did not benefit from it. Instead, the Kurdish tribes were organized and equipped by the government, spreading a wave of cruelty and brutality in the Anatolian villages and mainly in the places where the Russian army had recently seceded.

18. Sfetas, 2018

19. Jung, 2010

20. Çetinsaya, 2020: 45

21. Δέσπος, 2015

The Armenians were deeply alienated by the eastern crisis of 1875-8 and the subsequent conflict with Russia. For two years, the European powers were sending memorandums, reminding to the Sublime Porte its liabilities to the treaty, as the article 61 prescribed to do.²²

According to the Article 61:

“The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the ameliorations and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and the Kurds...Circassians and the Kurds....It will make known periodically the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application”.²³

The international arrangements placed Armenians under the express protection and the control of the Great Powers as dictated by Article 62. That is why Armenians were deeply alienated by the eastern crisis of 1875-8 and the subsequent conflict with Russia. Ottoman Empire was obliged to interconnect itself with the States of the Treaty.

With the signing of the Treaty of Berlin, the issue of reform agenda across the empire, primarily in Anatolia and the Arab provinces, became a primary concern. Abdülhamid, along with ministers including Ahmed Cevdet Pasha and Küçük Said Pasha, understood the importance of domestic peace and stability for the implementation of a series of reforms. In the post-Berlin Treaty period, two events influenced the evolution of the Armenian issue. Firstly, the Russo-Ottoman Agreement was signed on February 8, 1879, just after Russian soldiers began their withdrawal from the Marmara Sea. Secondly, the shift in William Ewart Gladstone's government in London, and the election of a Prime Minister, known for his anti-Ottoman position, was another turning moment in terms of the treaty's remaining concerns²⁴. Great Britain now sought to propel its interests by dismembering the Ottoman Empire and founding smaller states under British domination in its periphery, one of those would be Armenia.²⁵

In the 1880s, the Armenian nationalist political parties were formed, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF: Dashnakzutiun) and the Hunchaks in the districts of Eastern Anatolia, Black Sea, Van, and Erzerum because of their failure to secure favorable reforms for the Armenian minorities. The movements aimed at renewing the attention of the Great Powers, sometimes through "ostentatious" terrorist

22. Ροδάκης, 1988: 53-56

23. Dadrian, 1989 in p. 24, mentions the content of Article 61.

24. Çetinsaya, 2020: 42

25. Çetinsaya, 2020: 44; Ροδάκης, 1988: 55

methods, as Donald Bloxham points out.²⁶²⁷The issue of Armenians' insecurity became a subject of extensive discussions by the National Assembly (Ermeni Millet Meclisi), considering the living conditions of the Armenians in the eastern provinces. Although the Assembly had prepared reports to present to the Ottoman government in 1870, the Ottoman government did not respond to the reform demands.²⁸

Then, in early May 1889, almost five hundred Armenians, most of whom had traveled from Mus to Stamboul stood in front of the Grand Vizier's windows waving petitions and howling for justice. Daily acts of violence inflicted on their communities, coupled with 'truly terrifying' reports coming out of Mus, roused the indignation of 200,000 Armenians.²⁹ Rebellions were explicit, if they did not compensate, they would pursue annexation to Russia. In 1890, local newspapers published the imperial decree of the Sultan, according to which the Ottoman government had created Kurdish tribesmen who were attracted by an exemption from recruitment and taxation. In the same year, founded the Armenian revolutionary association in Tiflis, the Dashnak. Meanwhile, violence directed at Armenians took on a routinized nature, especially with the state-promoted Hamidian Cavalry (1891)"Hamidiye". The academic literature contested whether it was the deliberate intention of the Ottoman Sultan to suppress Armenians or the escalation of events caused by a complex interplay between the Ottoman Empire, the British government, Christian minorities, Armenian nationalists, and Kurdish tribes.³⁰ The first revolt broke out at Erzurum in 1890, resulting in a massacre. The same year, the Kum Kapu demonstration occurred in the Kumkapi, a region in Constantinople, followed by the risings in Kayseri, Yozgat, Corum, and Merzifon the following years, in 1892 -1893.³¹

Apart from local newspapers, the British press influenced by the aforementioned events devoted significantly more space to the Armenians and commend the living conditions of minorities in Anatolia. Perhaps more importantly, at least from Abdulhamid's objective, during the summer the British paper, *The Times* made frequent mentions to the "the Armenian Question"³². In addition, an Anglo-Armenian Friendship Committee was constituted in London to influence public opinion in support of this new

26. Bloxham, 2003: 141-191

27. Dadrian, 1989: 25-26

28. Yilmaz, 2019: 329

29. Anderson, 2015: 259-283

30. Jung, 2010

31. See. "Armenian Claims and Historical Facts." Center for Strategic Research, 2005, 22

32. Anderson, 2015

endeavor. Committee of Anglo-Armenian Association has republished a formal declaration issued two years ago before the massacre of 1895, stating explicitly that its members desire solely to secure the protection of Christians in Anatolian provinces. It announced further their exempting from administrative and judicial reforms which in 1878 the Sublime Porte undertook to carry out in the Armenian Provinces of Asiatic Turkey, and to which expressly guaranteed the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin.³³

According to the President of Association:

“That the Armenians should be adequately protected, not only against the raids of the Kurds but against the exactions and oppressions of the Turkish officials, is a demand consonant with the provisions of the Berlin Treaty, and with the engagements upon which Europe and this country have entered.”³⁴

Francis Seymour Stevenson, President of the Anglo-Armenian Association.

House of Commons, May 10th, 1893.

Bellow, it is detachment from an appeal to the British Nation:

“As Turkey has always disregarded its solemnly contracted international engagements, and as its inherent incapacity for equitable government is a matter beyond dispute, it is our firm belief that a conference of the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty is urgently called for in the interests of humanity.”³⁵

G. Hagopian,

Petrus Aganoor, And others.

Loxpos, May 1st, 1893.

The British Ambassador in Istanbul reported that the Armenian Patriarch had said to him in 1876:

“If revolution is necessary to attract the attention and intervention of Europe, it would not be hard to do so.”³⁶

In 1894, a revolt broke out in the village of Sasun in Cilicia (near Mous) because Armenian peasants were forced to pay tax to the Kurdish tribes in addition to what they paid to the government. Hunckanian, the Armenian social-democratic party with revolutionary and nationalist inclinations organized a public demonstration of Armenians

33. *Daily News*, May 5th, 1893

34. A full report of the Speeches delivered at the Banquet in honour of the Right Hon. James Bryce, M.P., D.C.L., on Friday, May 12th, 1893. See. archives from the President of the Anglo Armenia Association, Francis Seymour Stevesnon, M.P, in his book: Stevenson, Francis Seymour. *The Case for the Armenians: With an Introduction*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1893, 11.

35. Ibid 34

36. British Blue Book, Nr. 6 (1894), S7.

in Constantinople with an instant consequence of the incitement of the peasants' revolting. When the news for the "Armenian rebellion" arrived at the palace, military forces were dispatched to the villages.³⁷ Turkish sources mention that these forces behaved in a brutal way towards the Armenian people and many of them were slaughtered. On 26 August 1896, supported by Macedonian revolutionaries and Russian fomentation, a commando of 26 Dashnaks attacked the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople, one of the main symbols of European interests in the Empire. As G. Minassian pinpoints, this operation, an extreme act of terrorism, was intended to remind European governments of their commitment to pressuring the Sublime Porte to implement the reforms outlined in Article 61 of the 1878 Berlin Treaty designed to safeguard and prevent the organized atrocities of Armenians in Anatolia's eastern vilayets³⁸

One of the Dashnak founders and ideologists, Dr. Jean Loris-Melikoff wrote that:

"The truth is that the party (Dashnak Committee) was governed by an oligarchy that put the party's particular interests ahead of the people's and nation's. They (the Dashnaks) made collections among the bourgeoisie and the great merchants. When these options were exhausted, they turned to terrorism, following the Russian revolutionaries' doctrine that the end justifies the means."³⁹

Over years 1894-1896, the first systematic massacres took place across the Empire. The regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II carried out extensive massacres of the Armenians. The first target was the villages of Sasun, in Bitlis, where in August 1894 the Turkish army numbered 10,000 victims and 40 villages destroyed. The massacres will continue in the vilayets of Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Marmuretu laziz, Diyarbekir, Sivis, Aleppo, Adana, Trabzon and Ankara. In total, there are about 300,000 victims. Parallely, over the course of these years, 150,000 Armenians were Islamized and about 100,000 emigrated⁴⁰. In other source is referred that the victims were more than 150,000 lives, among them women and children.⁴¹

37. Akçam, 2007: 74-76

38. For more detail, see. Alloul, Houssine, Edhem Eldem, and De Henk Smaele. *To Kill a Sultan: A Transnational History of the Attempt on Abdülhamid II (1905)*. London (GB): Palgrave Macmillan, n.d., 38.

39. See. Loris-Melikoff, 1920: 81. in "Armenian Claims and Historical Facts." Center for Strategic Research, 2005, 21.

40. See. Gaunt, 2018: 187-201; "1875 – 1900." Armenian Genocide 100. Available at the website:

<https://armeniangenocide100.gr/template/1875-1900>.

41. Ibid 21

An important source of information describing the Turkish atrocities under the Sultan regime is the diary of the wife of the French consul Carlier. Here are some points from the calendar:

November 15, 1895. The whole city smells of corpse in decay. We are obliged to close the windows.

Sunday 17 November. It is heartbreaking to see the bloodshed! Yesterday they quietly killed 44 Armenians

November 19. The cold is coming. Murders are dwindling. Yesterday they killed only 16 Armenians. One of the garrisons recounted to our servant, Sais, that they had crossed into the Guru where supposedly Kurds, who were in fact Turkish soldiers, invaded. "I know it well said" I was one of them.⁴²

Pogroms prior to genocide etched the memories of the survivors. Typical of this memories is an interviewed statement of a survivor from Marash, whose grandfather had been killed in 1895:

"Apparently, Sultan Hamid gave orders that there should be a massacre in Marash for one day. They started in the morning and it lasted all day. In the evening, the government gave orders to stop. Just in our city, about one to two thousand people were killed that day. Many of our relatives were killed, including my grandfather Topalian. He was one of the first to have been killed, apparently. They killed him on his horse as he was returning from the vineyards. Turks had announced that they had killed the "leader of the gâvurs."⁴³

According to an American observer, "it was generally believed that the massacre in 1895 was a bold and carefully devised plan to test the spirit of the European Powers, before entering upon a general slaughter throughout the empire"⁴⁴. To interpret his words, the incident in 1896 crystalized a coordinated act of consirancy. More analytically, the Ottoman government knew about the raid in the Ottoman Bank in advance and deliberately did not have any excuse in carrying out a large-scale massacre. Brachler (2011) further delineates the armed demonstration as causation that did result in -what appears to have been- a state-directed pogrom against Armenians in Constantinople, evolving in murderous assaults on Armenians in various districts of Anatolia in the months after the events in the capital.⁴⁵

To prove the state-orchestrated plan, an important element is the Ottoman passports. The central government was embarrassed by the emigration shaft to

42. To see more information from the diary: Jean Marie Carzou, *Armenia 1915, Un Exemple De Génocide*, trans. Χατζηδημιου, K. & Πάλλη, I. (Κέρδος, 1975), 80-84.

43. See. Survivor's testimonies: Miller & Miller. 1993. *Survivors: an oral history of the Armenian genocide*.

44. Sinan, 2013

45. Brachler, 2011: 122

implement more and more practices in order to control the geographical mobility of the Armenians due to violent events in 1894-1896. Government decrees outlawed their return, especially after the atrocities. The right to get Ottoman passports was removed from Ottoman Armenians who fled to other nations without registering. These documents depicted the policy's goal of removing unwanted individuals from the population by imposing travel restrictions. An edict issued on May 16, 1896, forbidding the issuance of internal passports to suspects and "fesad" people was one of the main initiatives to deter squatters from other parts of the Empire from entering Constantinople.⁴⁶ By introducing passports, the state did not aspire to be under their control the international traveling or migration but also to arrange the movement within a state for security reasons.⁴⁷ The State's monopoly over the means of movement was directly related to the legitimate monopoly of violence within a particular territory.

Taner Akçam notes in his academic work that the massacres of Armenians that occurred after the 1890s had a very different character from previous ones. The Ottoman state sought somehow national unity based on a pan-Islamic ideology in order to prevent the state from collapsing. Social exclusion began to be implemented as a conscious state policy during this period. The Armenians were the scapegoats.⁴⁸ Reports regarding the Armenian massacres in 1895-96 evince three major actors of this incident: the Armenian migrant laborers, the Hamidian government, and the Muslims but mainly Kurdish laborers.⁴⁹ The literature emphasizes the sociopolitical dynamics of the 1895-96 anti-Armenian riots, examining whether the riots were a spontaneous expression of anti-Armenian feelings or the result of a premeditated policy envisaged by state actors.

Besides that, some letters were sent to the perpetrators-many from surrounding villages and some of the Circassian tribes prove the killing orders.⁵⁰ Supplementarily, a memorandum of Great Powers asserts that the attacks began simultaneously at different points and the perpetrators wore the same clothing and had the same armament. However, Turkish historiography has taken an entirely different approach to the events of 1895. According to this approach, the Armenian Question is the history of a rebellious minority struggling for an independent Armenia. They describe the years 1894-1896 as a

46. For this issue, see. Yılmaz, İlkay. "Governing the Armenian Question Through Passports in the Late Ottoman Empire (1876–1908)." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 32, no. 4 (2019): 388–403.

47. See the previous reference

48. Ibid 23

49. For the reports, see. Dinçer, Sinan. "The Armenian Massacre in Istanbul (1896)." *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis/ The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 10, no. 4 (2013)

50. Morris and Ze'evi, 2019: 17-27

period of fussy activity by Armenian rebels, thus paradoxically details are avoided⁵¹. During the extermination and insecure environment of the Empire, mass conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres and the adoption of Islam became the single option for survival. Akçam estimates of the dead range from 80,000 to 300,000.⁵² Dinçer in inspiring article, pinpoints how the mass conversions were presented to the 'outside world', underlining the issue of being portrayed as a result of voluntary preferences rather than the forced choice of Armenians⁵³.

The question is why did Turks target the Armenians; Besides Armenians' economical domination, Turks turned their suspicion to non-Muslim minorities, considering them as traitors who collaborate themselves with foreign powers to dismember the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁴ The belief of Abdülhamid II "Muslims are undergoing constant persecutions and animosity from the Christian subjects" had acquired a solid foundation.⁵⁵ Sultan's purpose was to "inciting religious hatred" and persuade the Muslims that the massacres constituted a fulfillment of their religious duty. Armenius Vambery refers Izzet Pasa's words, who was the architect of Abdülhamid's II policies, "the elimination of Turkish problem will be feasible only if we get rid of the Armenians".⁵⁶ The Second Sasun Uprising broke out in 1903, followed by an attempted assassination of Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1905 and the Adana Uprising in 1909. All these uprisings and riots were portrayed by the Armenian revolutionary societies in Europe and America as the killing of Armenians by Turks and triggered considerable emotions among the Christian peoples with this kind of propaganda.⁵⁷

The Hamidian massacres as well as Europe's indifference infuriated the Armenians and prompted the ARF, at a second congress in Tbilisi in 1898, where they decided to shift their strategy to large-scale action, carefully avoiding any overt reference to a possible assassination of the sultan⁵⁸ On March 1904, the ARF committed a large-scale attack across the *Vishab* and *Vosgehank* regions⁵⁹. They planned two simultaneous zones of tensions, one near the Straits in the main ports of the Empire (Istanbul and Smyrna),

51. Verheij, 2012: 98-99

52. Akçam, 2006: 42

53. Dinçer, 2013

54. Morris and Ze'Evi, 2019:17-27

55. Akçam, 2007: 80

56. Haslip 1973: 222

57. Ibid 26

58. Houssine, Eldem, and Smaele, 2018: 40

59. According to Dashnak nomenclature, *Vishab* was (*Dragon, nickname for Istanbul*) and *Vosgehank* (Gold Mine, to designate Smyrna). See more. Alloul, Houssine, Edhem Eldem, and De Henk Smaele. *To Kill a Sultan: A Transnational History of the Attempt on Abdülhamid II (1905)*. London (GB): Palgrave Macmillan, n.d. 2018, 40-43

and the other in the *Yerkir*, along the border with Russia, the ARf deliberated to combine terrorism and guerrilla war, as well as to provoke military effervescence and foreign intervention. Indeed, this strategy was to replicate the Russian attack on the Ottoman Empire in the war of 1877-1878.

1.3 The Era of Union and Progress

It is significant to identify the historical context that pre-existed before the massacres of 1915 took place. Despite being a product of Ottoman policy, they had a local character. The occasions of 1915-1916 were totally different both in the extent of massacres and in the Ottoman goal. Going through Talat's letter, it is getting over and over-obvious that his final purpose was the annihilation. The nationalistic ideas had dominated in the bays of the party Union and Progress, which was governing during World War I and played a catalytic role in the Armenian Genocide. Among Muslims began to prevail the belief of the "sovereign nation" [Millet-i Hakime], according to which Turks-Muslims were superior to other peoples and nations of the empire and therefore had the inherent right to rule over them. The role of Islam was negatively promotional in the development of Turkish nationalist identity.

After the massacres of 1894-96, the authority of Abdülhamid II lost its prestige, causing dissatisfaction among opposition groups, who although they were few members, had a great influence across Turkey, and especially in military members, and students. Apart the opposition groups, the Sultan had to face on the one hand the economic weakening of the Empire, and on the other hand the foreign intervenience. Utilizing the words of Taner Akçam, the "eastern question" was one of the main issues dealt with by European diplomacy during the 19th century, namely how each imperialist power would benefit from the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁰ According to Gokhan Cetinsaya, the Porte determined to protect its interests of these British "transgressions", but without any direct confrontation.⁶¹ A new crisis erupts in this period, the Macedonian Question (1902-1908)

60. Akçam, 2007: 92

61. Cetinsaya, 2018

At the same time, a new movement is taking over the scepters of power. The Young Turks have been a patriotic movement of Muslim Turks, mostly high-rank soldiers whose prime objective was to remove an incapable and clumsy ruler and substitute him with a better government able to deal with the Empire's internal and external problems. For them, the Macedonian Question was the main incentive to accomplish a constitutional regime.⁶² At this point we need to make a clarification, Young Turks were divided into two categories; the liberals who advocated the decentralization and some autonomy for religious minorities, and nationalists who called for central authority and Turkish dominance. Through this vital movement, the Committee of Union and Progress, the influence of Young Turks grew rapidly, forming branches in Geneva, Cairo, Jerusalem, and other places and getting members the officers of the Fifth Army Corps.⁶³

In the years 1905 and 1907, the Black Sea and Eastern Anatolian provinces witnessed a series of popular disturbances led by local notables ([eşraf](#)).⁶⁴ The uprising events of that period such as in Erzerum exploited the opposition groups for their own advantages. To be more specific, the local disappointment was instrumentalized both by the CUP and the coalition of Prince Sabahaddin group and Dashnak. It is actually remarkable, as Gokhan Cetinsaya notes that throughout these crises, a ferocious circle remains the same: an internal uprising by non-Muslims, military reaction, and then interference by the Great powers to the military response.⁶⁵ In 1907 an Anglo-Russian convention took place in Paris.

The next year, in 1908 a revolt began with a coup in Thessaloniki, where the Unionists were clustered around the chief clerk of Committee Enver Pasha and Mehmet Nazim. These officers were nationalists and desired to sow the seeds of the salvation of the Empire since the Sultan was unable to resist the foreign pressures that became all the more threatening after the meeting of Tsar Nicholas II and Edward VII. Particularly important was the support of the Second Army Corps at Edirne as well as other troops sent in Salonika from Kosovo, Izmir, and Firzovik Detachment. So the Sultan saw that the situation was deteriorating and now isolated, proclaimed the restoration of the constitution of 1876.⁶⁶

62. Ibid 41

63. Carzou, 1975: 100-102

64. Ibid 41

65. Ibid 51

66. Lewis, 1969: 210

After this events, Turks started vandalizing Armenian schools, churches, and reaping their possessions. Many interviewed survivors recalled the second stage of massacres 1909 that brought to death over 20,000 Armenians⁶⁷. Spyridon Sfetas argues that the revolution of the Young Turks (1908), despite the proclamations of freedom, equality, and fraternity, practically functioned as a Turkification policy: the abolition of the autonomy of Christian communities, the compulsory introduction of the Turkish language in schools, the governmental control of school programs, the deportations of Christians in Asia Minor, the colonization of Macedonia with Bosnian Muslims, the shrinking of the privileges of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The policy of the Young Turks contributed to the formation of the Balkan alliance of 1912⁶⁸.

Considering the Unionist party and Turkish Revolution, a Turkish historian in a book published in 1940, has marked that “there are very few movements in the world that have given rise to such great hopes as the Ottoman Constitutional Revolution and very few whose hopes have been so swiftly and finally disappointed”.⁶⁹The committee with leadership Ahmed Riza was formed by people with different views, but with a common goal, the salvation of the faltering Empire. Mehmet Ziya Gökalp, one of the most important intellectuals of shaping Turkish nationalism, tried to apply the composition of the triptych "Turkification, Islamization, and Modernization".⁷⁰ Gökalp's culture-civilization duality, based on Durkheim's theory, helps us to fully understand the background of the Armenian Genocide. His theory is articulated in two basic points: (a) civilization is dependent on cultural unity, and (b) religion is the root of culture.⁷¹

As for the second point, the article "The Principles of Turkishness and a Sociological Analysis of the Kurdish Tribes" explains in detail why Goekalp was willing to accept non-Turkish Muslim subjects into the modern nation on the condition that they would adapt to Turkish culture. Islam played a key role in this. For this reason, Goekalp's program of Turkism established Islam as the religion of modern Turkey and excluded it. "Modernization would come after cultural unity, Goekalp said, and therefore it was the least important in the trinity."⁷²Having Gökalp's ideas as an ideological basis, the Unionists were driven by the commitment to what understood as the Turkish race. The

67. Miller & Miller, 1993: 65

68. Sfetas, 2018

69. Y.H. Bayur, *Türk İnk. Tar.*, i., 225. It is referred in Bernard Lewis (1969), *The Emergence of Turkish State*, 2nd ed. 210.

70. Ibid 39

71. Nefes, 2017: 5-30

72. Ibid 41

CUP sought the political union of all ethnic groups speaking Turkish languages, from China's Ughurs to Eastern Europe's Tatars and Turks.⁷³ Lewis writes in his classic study, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, of the particular threat that Armenian nationalism posed to the aspirations of Turkish nationalists:

*"For the Turks, the Armenian movement was the deadliest of all threats. From the conquered lands of the Serbs, Bulgars, Albanians, and Greeks, they could, however reluctantly, withdraw, abandoning distant provinces and bringing the Imperial frontier nearer home. But, the Armenians, stretching across Turkey- in- Asia from the Caucasian frontier to the Mediterranean coast, lay in the very heart of the Turkish homeland—and to renounce these lands would have meant not the truncation, but the dissolution of the Turkish state"*⁷⁴.

In 1910 the CUP congress at Salonika resulted in Ottomanizing "all Turkish subjects". Things have been worsening for the Turks after the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, when the empire was forced to cede more than 60 percent of its territory. In the first Balkan war in 1912, the Ottomans defeated by a coalition of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro. Valuing the exact numbers, more than 80 percent of its European lands had been lost, and nearly 70 percent of its European population. The defeat had a negative political impact within the Empire and gave the opportunity to the Young Turks to acquire a full state's control.⁷⁵

The Ottoman defeat in the Balkan Wars (1912-13) and the subsequent loss of many Ottoman territories degraded the status of the Ottoman elite and the authority of the army. A large influx of Muslim refugees from the Balkans settled in Asia Minor, throwing the Ottoman government into turmoil. Many historians argue that the end of the Balkan Wars and the settlement of thousands Muslims reignited Turkish ethnic nationalism. Going through the theoretical narrative of Turkish nationalism, such as Ziya Gökalp of Kurdish origin and Naci Izmail of Albanian descent, stress the need for the establishment of a Turkish homogeneous nation-state in Asia Minor (Anatolia) and the domination of a Turkish bourgeoisie. Turkey is now defined as Asia Minor. The term Turk, which in the Ottoman Empire was insulting and meant the unsalting peasant from Anatolia (bumpkin), is now gaining positive content⁷⁶. But how would the assimilation of Christian populations take place? The Christian populations were economically and culturally superior, did they have a clear national consciousness?

73. Morris and Ze'evi, 2019: 137

74. See. Lewis, Bernard. *"The Emergence of Modern Turkey"*,(2002) , 52.

75. Dadrian, 2002: 81

76. Sfetas, 2018

In January 1913, under the pressure of the migration wave of Muslims to the Ottoman Empire, a group of Mehmed Talaat, Ismail Enver carried out a coup against the government of Mehmed Kâmil Pasha, who was considered responsible for the Balkan disaster. “It is impossible to save Anatolia from the destiny awaiting Rumelia,” headlined the newspaper *Tanin*, the CUP’s party organ.⁷⁷ Kuşçubaşı Eşref an active member of the Special Organization (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa; SO) narrated his conversation with defense minister Enver Pasha.⁷⁸ According to the latter, “non-Turkish elements” were opposed to the empire’s continued existence, therefore had to be distanced away. The plan drawn up by the Young Turks’ leadership team provided for either the violent Islamization of Christians, their expulsion or their extermination. Islamization was the best means of Turkification, underlines Spyridon Sfetas. Additionally, Morris and Dror Ze’Evi pinpoint that the Young Turks abandoned the idea of a multiparty government and opened the way for a supranational state.⁷⁹ To accomplish this idea, the CUP initiated in 1915 what became known as the Armenian Genocide: the forced march of Anatolian Armenians south to Syria, Mesopotamia, and the massacres of myriads Armenians.

Chapter 2. The Armenian Genocide

Before examining the current Turkish-Armenian dispute and its global implications, a retrospective account of the events of the genocide is necessary. Recounting the events of 1915 is critical to reaching productive conclusions about who instigated the genocide, who was responsible for it, and why Armenian ancestors are still fighting for justice today. Many papers issued by the Ottoman and later Turkish governments prove the state’s project to expel Armenians forcibly.

In their book, Morris and Dror Ze’Evi underline the premeditated, calculated, and implemented operation of the Armenian Genocide.⁸⁰ The dual-line mechanism was used to establish the policy, according to Taner Akçam. As with Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, expulsion and dislocation were carried out bilaterally within the framework of

77. Akçam, 2012: preface

78. Ibid 52

79. Morris and Ze’Evi, 2019: 138

80. Morris and Ze’Evi, 2019: 244

population exchange arrangements.⁸¹To be more precise, in the post-war trial, the CUP stated in the indictment that "there are two conflicting dispositions (iki māhiyet-i mütezâdde): first, based on visible and public programs and internal regulation codes. Others are based on confidentiality and act according to unwritten verbal instructions."⁸²

The problem of historiography is the limited sources about the republican era, because of clearing and other methods of destroying documents. The genocide was the result of a geostrategical competition. The *ijtihad* fomentation started when Germany had identified itself as the protector of the Ottoman Empire, as confirmed by the visit of Kaiser William II to Constantinople and Jerusalem and his proclamation as the "Hero of Islam"! (October 1889). The situation regarding Germany's aspirations in Asia Minor is fully clarified when announced the Bosphorus-Baghdad railway pact with funds from powerful economic groups supported by Deutsche Bank, whose upper limbs would end up in Berlin.⁸³From the German objective, it was "*Weltpolitik*", a *Bid for World Power*, the exploitation of the Ottoman pan-Islamism would destroy the British Empire empire and assure the German hegemony in Middle East, from the Russian objective although, the construction of the Bagdad railway in the southern plains, along the Black Sea coast, and Caucasus area was *a casus belli*.⁸⁴

Three historical developments worked dynamically for the commission of the Armenian genocide. These are, in turn, a coup of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP-the ruling party at the time), the Ottoman defeat of the Balkan Wars, and the outbreak of World War I.⁸⁵According to Bloxham, maintaining territorial integrity was a prerequisite for national renewal. The war represented an opportunity to expand and include the eastern ethnically "trustworthy" Islamic states, a Pan-Turkish doctrine. The inspirers of this doctrine envisioned the unity of the empire with Turkic Muslims of Caucasus and then of central Asia, creating a buffer zone between Anatolia and Rumelia. The CUP saw their period plans collapse and felt their territory was below internal and external threats.⁸⁶ Notwithstanding the Armenians' advice and appeals, the Germanophile faction of the Young Turks, led by Enver and Talat, signed a secret agreement with Germany in August 1914 that provided a new Turkish state that would include Transcaucasia and Central Asia. Enver's closure of the Dardanelles in September

81. Akçam, 2012: 30

82. Akçam, 2012: 32-37

83. Máçıç, 2017: 585-56; McMeekin, 2010: 15-20

84. For more details, see. McMeekin, 2011: 37-38.

85. Akçam, 2007: 60; Akçam, 2012: 159; Morris and Ze'Evi, 2019: 136

86. Bloxham, 2003: 157

1914 made inevitable Turkey's entry into the war on the side of Central Powers, thinking at this way would strike Russia's most vital geopolitical interests and dismantle the possibility of resolving the Armenian issue through administrative reforms. The Regime of the Young Turks justified any act of violence to transform the heterogeneous empire into a homogeneous Turkish state⁸⁷.

To implement the pan-Turkism theory as a rationale for entering the war, the CUP established a Special Organization (Teshkilati Mahsusa).⁸⁸ There are a plethora of different references about its foundation. Most of them converge of being an organization founded by the Minister of war, Enver Talat, after the Ottoman defeat in the Balkan wars. The journalist Cemal Kutay, relying on the memoirs of Eşref Kuşçubaşı, argued that the Special Organization was established as an official entity by Imperial Edict. In addition to this, the memoirs of Tâlât testify that the SO was a state agency. However, the historical data is not enough to prove this. In the course of the post-war trials in Constantinople, according to defendants' verdict, the Special Organization operated as a unit within the Ministry of War and was launched on the initiative of the Central Committee.⁸⁹ As long as the SP is a state-mechanism, it is deduced that Armenian murders and deportations were state-orientated. Besides Pan-Turkism, the Committee intended to implement Pan-Islamism, in order to create a powerful homogenized Empire. Measures against Christian Armenians and Greeks culminated with anti-Christian terrorism, jihad (holy war), encouraged by Germany against every infidel to the State, in November 1914.⁹⁰

Before WWI, in the course of the years 1913 and 1914, the Ottoman Greeks residents of the Thrace and the Aegean coast have been subjected to a campaign of massacre and expulsion to Greece. This "ethnic cleansing," in current terminology, could be postponed after November 1914 under pressure from Germany, in particular. During the warfare years, the policy towards the Ottoman Greeks turned into relocation from the coastal regions into the interior because of military necessity.⁹¹ What is particularly important in the imposed movement of the Greeks from the Aegean region is that it was organized by the German general Otto Liman Von Sanders. According to the memoirs of Eşref Sencer Kuşçubaşı, a climate of terror and brutality erupted from gangs

87. Carzou, 2006: 66-67

88. For more information about the SO (Teshkilati Mahsusa) and the plan of Triarcy, see. "Η Γενοκτονία Των Αρμενίων." Αρμενική Εθνική Επιτροπή Ελλάδος, July 15, 2020.

89. Akçam, 2007: 149

90. McMeekin, 2010: 37-40

91. Akçam, 2012: preface

of irregular bandits "cheetses" as well as from the local population that assisted the work of the Ottoman gendarmerie.⁹² Igor Dodon, a Genocide's researches underline in his interview the similarities between Armenian and Greek massacres⁹³.

Internationally, the interaction between Russia and Armenian nationalists exacerbated the CUP's radical policies toward Armenians on the eve of war. As Russian troops advanced deeper into eastern Turkey, the Turks blamed the Armenians for supporting secretly however actively Russia.⁹⁴ In political terms, the aim of the Young Turk regime below the Ottoman Minister of War Enver Pasha turned into to get out of global isolation. To do this, they had to defend the Empire from foreign threats that encircled it: Russia in the Caucasus, Britain in Iraq and at the Suez Canal, and the combined armies of France and Great Britain in the Straits.⁹⁵ Bloxham underlines that the situation became worse when four volunteers battalions were formed and supported by the ARF dominated Armenian National Bureau in Tiflis to fight alongside the Russian army.⁹⁶

As the discussions were underway before Allied naval attempts in Dardanelles, Turkish authorities, more significantly Minister and Unionist triumvir Tâlât Pasha declared to have even before the war conceived an approach "to eliminate the Armenian problem in a comprehensive and absolute manner."⁹⁷ British political and military commanders targeted their interest on Turkey and at the opportunity of the present process, army operations to capture the Dardanelles, attack Constantinople, and open a line of communication. A union of naval and military powers organized an unexpected attack in the Gallipoli Peninsula, in order to field a British Fleet to the Sea of Marmara and finally dissociate Turkey. The dynamic was shifted on January 1, 1915, when Russia officially stated a "naval or military demonstration against the Turks to ease the pressure caused by the Turkish offensive driving through the Caucasus Mountains."⁹⁸ The British-French operation in Gallipoli proved to be a total disaster. Armenian nationalists reasonably believed that they might count on help from outside

92. For this issue see. Kuşçubaşı Eşref Sencer, Philip Stoddard, and Danişman H. Basri. *The Turkish Battle at Khaybar*. Kadıköy-İstanbul: Arba, 1999.

93. Oral interview: Dodon, Igor. *Armenian Genocide*.

94. Δέσπος, 2015

95. Jung, 2010

96. Bloxham, 2003: 159-160

97. Morris and Ze'evi, 2019: 249; Akçam, 2012: 32

98. see more for the battle in Gallipoli in Adams, Raymond. "The Gallipoli Campaign Learning from a Mismatch of Strategic Ends and Means." *The Gallipoli Campaign*, 2015, 96–101.

powers of their battle towards the central government. However, several scholars who are ardent supporters of the Armenian Genocide argue that much of the Western concern about the fate of the Armenians aimed at furthering territorial and other aspirations against the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁹ According to Donald Bloxham, the real purpose of the plea in favor of the Armenians was to persuade the United States to enter the war against Germany.¹⁰⁰

The Young Turks' movement had initially visioned and then applied a plan earlier than the First World War with an objective to free the Empire of non-Turkish subjects. Beginning from the Aegean region, the CUP afterward, beneath the cowl of war, accelerated this layout to encompass all of Anatolia. The essential purpose of this mechanism, which can be attributed as an “ethnoreligious homogenization” of Anatolia, was a reshaping of the region’s demographic character.¹⁰¹ Although insufficient documentation regarding the planning preceding the deportation decree of late May 1915, evidence shows a small group of CUP nationalists began the planning in the wake of the fiasco at Sarıkamış. Vahakn N. Dadrian a few months before on April 1914, writes: “The Van uprising “was a desperate and last-ditch effort to thwart the Turkish design to proceed with their matured plan of genocide by launching the massacre of that province Armenian population as an initial step”.¹⁰²The relentless violence images dominated after the uprising of Van and the general suspicion that Armenians had joined the Russian army. Kurds and Circassians slaughtered Armenian villages and plundered their homes. Van's military defeat, along with what followed in Sarıkamıs, failed due to the destruction of Russian and British troops. The Ottoman Empire was on the verge of disappearing when the idea of changing its ethnic composition was given a solid foundation.

On 24 April, 1915 was the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. On that day, about 235 outstanding members of the Armenian community of Constantinople were arrested on the grounds of an Armenian uprising in Van. These arrests, led by the “three Paşas” Talat, Enver and Cemal, continued in a systematic manner for three weeks. On May 24, 1915, the Triple Entente Allies responded to the Sublime Porte's violence against

99. Beachler, 2011: 126

100. Bloxham, 2003: 162

101. Akçam, 2012: 17

102. The view of Dadrian is referred in Bloxham, 2003: 155

the Armenians with the Joint Declaration of France, Great Britain and Russia, in which the massacres were described as "new crimes by Turkey against humanity and civilization." In response, the Ottoman government passed the "temporary law of deportation" in May 1915, and a month later Parliament passed the "temporary law of expropriation and confiscation".¹⁰³ From the aforementioned, we can comprehend that the Joint Declaration had a negative effect on Armenians, since the connivance of Ottoman authorities, led the latter on a large scale of massacres of Christian minorities.

At this point, we should make some clarifications. One kind of such clarification is the revolt in Van because despite taking place after secret decisions from the CUP's members, it was the main reason that used the Ottoman government excused the forced deportations. The local officers of CUP accused the Armenian volunteers of the Ottoman defeat during the years of 1914-1915, and that is why they seek for revenge. However, the opinions diverge. A part of Armenian historians underline the prominent role of Dashnak in these provinces. The Dashnak newspaper Hairenik in its issue of 28 June 1918 stated that "*The awakening of a revolutionary spirit among the Armenians in Turkey was the result of Russian stimulation.*"¹⁰¹What is more, the Armenian Patriarch Horen Ashikian wrote in his *History of Armenia* "*The protestant missionaries distributed in large numbers to various places in Turkey made propaganda in favor of England and stirred the Armenians to desire autonomy under British. The schools that they established were the nurseries of their secret plans.*"¹⁰⁴From narrative above, we can conclude that it was not the Armenians themselves who instigated the uprising, but the Great Powers of the time. Faced with the Eastern Question, the Armenians were used as geopolitical chessboard dolls. This does not deny the fact that they voluntarily killed Muslims in order to protect themselves and their property.

Concerning the instigation of Genocide, it coincided with the defeats of the Teskilat-ı Mahsusa withinside the Caucasus and Van regions, and with the Ottoman military defeat with the aid of using manner of the Russians at Sarıkamıs in January 1915. Bahaeddin Sakir, who experienced the Genocide and had slightly escaped death, became of the opinion of being a repercussion of "the conduct which the Armenians had shown towards Turkey and the help which they gave to the Russian army... one needed to fear

103. Latino, 2017: 206

104. Ibid 91

the enemy within as much as the enemy beyond."¹⁰⁵ *Governor-General Tahsin Bey admitted that the unrest in the region was the result of a policy of the Unionists, nevertheless agreed with the deportations from the border area.* An overall assessment of all the testimonies of rebellion leads to the conclusion that, indeed, the displaced Armenians obeyed the orders for deportation without any particular resistance. The most striking thing about all this is that this argument was used by Turkish works to justify the deaths of 80,000 people.¹⁰⁶ The legitimization of the crime was based on statements such as the following: The Ottoman Empire found itself between two major threats that surrounded Turkey and endangered its existence. In the west, it was the British-French campaign in Gallipoli, and in the east the Russian engulfment. Here, can be traced the problem of current Turkey. To elaborate on my view, it is acceptable from a religious community to try to annihilate another.

The Armenian population of the eastern regions suffered mass deportations and murders in May and August 1915.¹⁰⁷ Realizing the role of the church and the Christian faith of the Armenian nation, they slaughtered Armenian clergy, destroyed churches, historic monasteries and thousands of valuable medieval illustrated manuscripts. Yet, many Armenian men enrolled in military/working battalions, and only a few survived. The people who endured the harsh conditions of expulsion were coercively resettled in the deserts of what is presently Syria and Iraq, which left the six generally Armenian territories of eastern Anatolia totally purged of Armenians. By no coincidence, the targeted provinces were those wherein Armenians were permitted to participate in local government, as per the Armenian Reform Arrangement of February 1914. Vahram, an Armenian survivor recalled that Turkish troopers came through his village on their thanks to the Russian front which Armenians housed their troops in their churches, however amid this activity came an announcement that every one of the Armenians of Darman were to be reported. Vahram explained that being nearby the battlefield, they would temporarily relocate them. His oral testimony brings to the light some images of his drama.

"We believed that they could be temporarily relocated and, in a short time, allowed to go back home. I ultimately discovered the remnants of his family: his mother, who turned into nevertheless clutching

105. Akçam, 2004: 208-243

106. Ibid 102

107. Ibid 57

toddler Kenell to her breast, and his older sister Siroun who were wounded in warfare with many. I felt even though fortunate given that many youngsters misplaced their entire family. Kurdish and Turkish raids and abducts have been constant. Days wore on. We marched through mountain roads and valleys. Those who could not keep up have been placed out of their misery. Bodies have been discovered strewn via way of means of the wayside. The caravan turned into getting smaller every day.¹⁰⁸

Several survivors indicated that Turks used physical coercion for economic gain before the deportations began. A survivor from Jibin states:

“One of my father’s best [Turkish] friends, who used to come to our house several times a week, was now beating my dad and saying to him that he wanted all of his belongings.¹⁰⁹”

To make feasible the genocide, the Young Turks installed a widespread Turkish telegraph system, in order nationwide synchronize the Armenian massacre¹¹⁰. The aforementioned procedure increased bureaucracy and paperwork, and therefore accumulation of substantial records of information, despite the fact that most of them they destroyed. Several US consuls were positioned all over the Ottoman Empire together with staff. US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau deployed in Constantinople and US Consul Jesse Benjamin Jackson in Aleppo. US Consul Oscar Heizer deployed in Trabzon and US Consul Leslie A. Davis in Harput. According to Henry Morgenthau report, the Ottoman Armenians were systematically driven to their deaths by the CUP authorities. In his memoirs, the ambassador would write: “When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact.”¹¹¹ This thesis was also asserted by TNA’s records and more specifically a telegram, in which Henry Morgenthau makes obvious the State’s intention to exterminate the Armenian nation.

“Have you received my 841? Deportation of and excesses against peaceful Armenians is increasing and from harrowing reports of eye witnesses it appears that a campaign of race extermination is in progress under a pretext of reprisal against rebellion. Protests as well as threats are unavailing and probably incite the Ottoman government to more drastic measures as they are determined to disclaim responsibility for their absolute disregard of capitulations and I believe nothing short of actual force

108. see. Armenians’ testimonies: Miller and Miller, L.E. *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999.

109. *Ibid* 96

110. Alayarian, 2008: 18

111. For more details, see. Kifner, “Armenian Genocide of 1915: An Overview.” *The New York Times*, December 7, 2007.

which obviously the United States are not in a position to exert would adequately meet the situation. Suggest you inform belligerent nations and mission boards of this.”¹¹²

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR [Henry Morgenthau], Constantinople

“was no rope and pail to draw water but these were drowned and in spite of that the rest of the people drank from that well, the dead bodies still staying and stinking in it. Sometimes, in other shallow wells, when the women could enter and come out, the other people would rush and lick and such the wet dirty clothes, to quench their thirst”.¹¹³

This source supports that on the seventieth day, only 35 women and children remained from the original group of 3,000 exiles from Kharpert, and only 150 women and children survived from the entire caravan that arrived in Aleppo. One of the accounts was written by Rev. Haroutioun Essayan, vicar of the Apostolic Church in Aleppo, and transported illegally in a shoe sole by a fugitive, who gave it to the Armenian Apostolic Bishop of Cairo, who in turn had authenticated the manuscript at the time. In his letter, Father Essayan describes a group of ten thousand deported women and children whom he observed.

“They had been on the road for from three to five months; they have been plundered several times over, and have marched along naked and starving; the Government gave them on one single occasion a morsel of bread a few had it twice. It is said that the number of these deported widows will reach 60,000; they are so exhausted that they cannot stand upright; the majority have great sores on their feet, through having to march barefoot¹¹⁴.”

Concerning the Armenians deported from western Anatolia to the deserts of modern-day Syria and Iraq, the policy was appointed within the borders of certain provinces only when their numbers did not exceed 5 percent of the Muslim population. According to records, Western Armenians were even murdered as well as many underage girls were raped. While the sources still report that many Armenians became spies in order to escape. Some of the above wire messages to the provinces ordering the burning of documents had already fallen into British hands. Listed below a testimony found in the British archives concerning the orders given by the Ministry of Interior for the fate of the Armenian men and women of Constantinople. The writer declares that the Armenians morally and economically are utterly ruined:

112. The report was sent on July 16, 1915, at 8:10 AM, from Constantinople to Washington. The United States of America, National Archives and Records Administration (TNA) Record Group 59, Records of the Department of State Decimal File 867, Internal Affairs of Turkey Decimal File 860J, Internal Affairs of Armenia. Available online at <https://www.archives.gov/>

113. Ibid 112

114. Ibid 107

*“Orders were issued that only Armenians who had been born in Constantinople would be permitted to remain there. This was a signal for a house-to-house search by the police, as well as arrests in the open streets. The witness has seen batches of Armenians being led through the streets, the victims of the zeal of the police in fulfilling this order. Unfortunately there are some Armenians who act as police spies and sell their countrymen. The writer can give details of hundreds of young Armenian girls who have become prostitutes in Constantinople - the only means left to them by which they can support their parents.”*¹¹⁵

According to the previous testimony, it is worth noting that the requests for information from the central governments also gave priority to data on the economic situation and condition of the Christian communities, including reports on the occupations, jobs, and immovable property of individuals.¹¹¹ To support this thesis, we can base our narrative on Armenian testimonies that bring to light the Ottoman documents, such as this provided by Naim. Naim writes that the government (primarily Interior Minister Talat Pasha) frequently sought information about Armenians and their families. Characteristically, the letters mentioned persons from whom it demanded to return to the regions, from where they had long before ago deported or others who had received permission to remain been granted residence permits in Aleppo. As we could understand from Naim’s recounting, Talat was giving his orders via an encrypted cable. However, according to Taner Akçam, the research community discovered a Talat Pasha cable in the archives that did correspond to the one mentioned by Naim.¹¹⁶ It is remarkable that the Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archive keeps an encrypted cable signed by Talat Pasha and sent by the General Directorate of Security to several provincial governors (vali), provincial district governors (mutasarrıf), and other officials on June 22, 1915, which gives a series of orders to enforce religious converts among deportee convoys. The telegram closes, “inform those who will be executing the orders of our communication”.¹¹⁷

Far more conceivable is that the Unionists' ultimate goal was the assimilation of non-Turkish Muslims on the one hand and resettlement of the uprooted Muslim refugees on the other. All historical data show how demographic reasons and national security

115. Memorandum by the Committee of Union and Progress outlining the strategy for implementing the Armenian Genocide, 1914-1915. The British Archives, National Archives and Records Administration. Available online at <https://www.archives.gov/>

116. See. The story and authenticity of Naim Efendi and his memoirs, in Akçam, 2004, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*, 46-47.

208-243

117. Ibid 77

intertwined in a well-planned policy which would make genocide a possibility.¹¹⁸What is more, the Armenian requests for reforms and their evolving rebellion seemed to be catalysts for the explosive intensification of the Turko-Armenian conflict. Indeed, after the battle of Sarikamış prevailed the chaos. The extent of the Armenian revolt from the Russian Armenians was used as an excuse for the forced deportations and mass murders. This view, as I will elaborate in the next chapter, still remains a political debate between the two states. As a result, many historian researchers do not raise the issue of the activities of Armenian organizations, which suggests a causal link between the activities and genocide.¹¹³To add more, many historiographers, such Bernard Lewis who has delved into the Armenian Genocide and the emergence of present-Turkey, accepts the high toll Armenians deaths, albeit questions whether this was a deliberate act of genocide¹¹⁴.

Richard Kuhlmann's testimony unmistakably points out how CUP leaders contemplate a radical resolution for the Armenian people. Kuhlmann served himself as a special representative at the German embassy in late 1914 and as an ambassador there from November 1916 to July 1917. Before becoming German foreign minister, Kuhlmann wrote a detailed confidential report which analyzed the war crimes that Ottoman Armenians underwent by the Young Turks in cooperation with the Federal Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. In that report, Kuhlmann spoke of "the annihilation of the Armenians which was carried out on a large-scale". He further pinpointed the issue of being a result of "a policy of extermination" in German (*Ausrottungspolitik*), explaining that it carried out simultaneously with the first Armenian separatist activities, especially when Turkey was on the brink of collapse due to its territorial loss in the Balkan wars.¹¹⁹ A similar cumulative-radicalization approach relatively the Armenian case in 1914-16 is also given by Donald Bloxham.¹²⁰

The German involvement is clearly mentioned by Vahakn Dadrian. According to him, in December 1917, for example, Marshal Liman von Sanders alerted the German Ambassador Bernstorff about an order, given by war minister Enver and concerned the deportation of virtually all Greeks. Enver made a list involving five categories of

118. Ibid 56

119. Dadrian, 2002: 59-85.

120. Bloxham, 2003: 141-191

deportation orders. Having been threatened to resign, Sanders had personally interfered in Armenians' explosion and did the operation successfully. Yet, although the Federal Foreign Office opposed forced deportations, it then encouraged the efforts of Sanders and Ambassador Bernstorff. Dadrian also records that alongside the Armenians, many Greek villages were looted, burned, and followed forced resettlement of 70,000 Greeks from the coast from the regions in Aegean and the Black Sea. Many of the victims probably died suffering from deprivation.¹²¹

In addition to the previous data, the town of Konya was located on the Berlin-Bagdad rail line. As the rail line was still under construction through the Taurus Range, many German, and Swiss, engineers, and other civilian and military officials witnessed the deportation and mistreatment of the Armenians. Even more persuasive evidence was taken by the American medical staff who manned a hospital in Konya. One of them, Dr. Wilfred Post, took the risk of photographing the conditions under which too place the deportees. His unveiling pictures depict the exhaustion, exposure to unbearable conditions, starvation, epidemics, and brutal treatment by Turkish state and local officials that resulted in a rapidly rising death toll among the deportees.¹²² Armenian deportees transported in cattle cars on the Anatolian Railroad. On Oct. 30, 1915, Anatolian Railroad director Franz J. Günther reported to Bank Director Arthur von Gwinner remarking sarcastically: *“Enclosed I send you a little photo showing the Anatolian Railroad as an upholder of culture in Turkey”*. These are our so-called sheep-carts in which, for example, 880 people are transported in 10 carts. From other sources, we learn that Ottoman Martial Law prohibited taking photographs of the Armenian ejection, so those who violated this law were an act of resistance¹²³. In 1917/1918 the extermination of the Armenians and the Greeks of Pontus continued at a strong pace due to the fall of the Tsar, the withdrawal of Russian troops that provided, in 1916/1917, protection to the Christian populations and the capitulation of the Bolsheviks in Brest-Litovsk. In 1918 Asia Minor, the Caucasus and the Black Sea were controlled by the Young Turks and Germany.

121. For “Naim-Andonian Documents,” see. Dadrian, 1999: 359

122. The collection of photographs taken by the perpetrators’ German and Austro-Hungarian Allies is a project of the Armenian National Institute and the Armenian Genocide Museum of America, based upon a traveling exhibit prepared by the Armenian Assembly of America. Retrieved from: Deutsche Bank Archives / German Foreign Office Archives / Hilmar Kaiser Collection / German Federal Archives / Viktor Pietschmann Photographs / Stadigeschichtliches Museum, Berlin-Spandau / Deutsches Literatur Archive / Naturhistorisches Museum Wien Credits: Concept – Hilmar Kaiser and Aram Kaloosdian / Research and Narrative – Hilmar Kaiser / Institutional Sponsor – Armenian Assembly of America, through the generous support of Vartkes and Rita Balian, Hirair and Anna Hovnanian, and Carolyn Mugar. Additional Credits: Rouben Paul Adalian / Joseph Piatt / Aline Maksoudian. / For more information visit: www.Armenian-Genocide.Org. 2013, Armenian National Institute, Washington, D.

123. See the previous reference.

Turkish sources put the number of victims at around 300,000, while Armenian analysts put the number at almost 2.5 million. From the statistics on the pre-war and post-war Armenian population in Biledjik, Bardizag, and Hendek, taken from British official records, the scale of destruction and confiscation of property and the number of deaths are unimaginable.¹²⁴ What is certain is that historical data is not the same as presented in Turkish sources. In terms of migration, about 100,000 Armenians fled to the United States until the introduction of US immigration restrictions in the 1920s.¹²⁵ The resignation of the Talat Pasha government was followed on October 14, 1918, by the formation of a new government under Ahmed Izzet Pasha, who served as Grand Vizier and Minister of War. On October 31, 1918, Sultan Mehmed VI accepted the Armistice of Mudros, an unconditional capitulation.

To sum up, Turkey's atrocities identified with a "genocide process" and "crime against humanity" due to its multifaceted activities of ruin, including mass executions of Armenian elites, confiscation of Armenian property, deportation, forced proselytization in Islam, kidnapping of women and children, the conception of an artificially created famine, and the abolition of material cultures such as churches and buildings. Comparing the stages of the massacres, the 1895 and 1909 involved the violating of all Armenian property, in the 1915 perpetrators moved one step further and actually confiscated anything Armenian, from property to goods and real estate, as Alayarian (2008) characteristically notes, from them the maximum profit¹²⁶.

In addition, this insidious method was used from every possible viewpoint in order to besiege the Armenians into total starvation and extermination. Ottomans' initial purpose after WWI was to homogenize Asia Minor and the Eastern Thrace. Ottomans'

124. See. The British Archives, National Archives and Records Administration. Public British Record Office: PRO reference:-FO 371/3660/512/paper/40460/folios 8-11. Available online at <https://www.archives.gov/>; "Statistics on the pre-war and post-war Armenian population in Biledjik, Bardizag, and Hendek", Armenian Genocide Institute, Available online at <https://www.armenian-genocide.org/br-stats-text.html>

125. Pezeshkian, 2011: 10.; These calculations suggest that over 1.2 million Armenians had lost their lives due to government policies. These low estimates are based on government data and do not cover Armenian losses in 1917 and 1918. It has to be emphasized that most survivors suffered from physical injuries, diseases, and psychological trauma. Many had been maimed. These medical conditions, taken together with the survivors' age, gender composition, and the annihilation of the secular and religious elites, mean that the remaining Armenians were a disintegrating fragment of their former community rather than resembling just a numerically shrunken population. The conclusion of World War I in 1918 and the fall of the Young Turk government brought only a short respite as a subsequent series of atrocities claimed more victims had perished. By 1923, with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, an estimated 1.5 million, full three-quarters of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. A precise death count is still pending on the ongoing declassification of all Turkish archives.

126. Alayarian, 2008: 16

thinking was: the minorities are dominant in Asia Minor, so they must exterminate them. The bourgeoisie must be the Muslim. Admittedly, the governing Turkish elite was most hostile to the Armenians, who suffered many casualties during the years of massacres. CUP justified its own conduct towards Armenians as an answer to Armenian treason. Nonetheless, while the orders for annihilation and killing may have come from the Unionist Party apparatus, the deportation was official Ottoman policy, and all of the government's concerted efforts were put into action to carry it out.

The historiography's main point was that the atrocities were carried out to satisfy political purposes and personal agendas, and provided that there was a deliberate plan, the Armenian massacre as genocide, a crime against human rights, otherwise it would be a war crime. Based on British scholars' claims, independent eyewitness accounts, most notably that of Henry Morgenthau, who was United States Secretary of the Treasury during Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, on the Armenian testimonies, and the American representative in the Ottoman Empire, it becomes clear that the Ottoman Armenians were being systematically driven to their deaths by the CUP authorities. It derived from the Ottoman Empire's prevailing fear of foreign machinations and intervention, Turkish nationalism, ethnic rivalries, economic antagonism, and zeal for political and social prevalence. The whole idea was to remove people in Syria without planning for repatriation and relocate the Muhazis (the refugees from Balkans). Armenians were cut off their properties and means of living.

Analyzing the political faces of the Ottoman Empire, the reversal to the exclusive politics of Abdülhamid II was a manifest in the subsequent deportation and massacre of Armenians. One of the foremost startling perspectives of the Young Turks' administration was its methodology. Whereas the Sultan tended to utilize mob violence as a strategy of slaughtering, the Young Turks drew nearer the massacre of the Armenians as they would a military group, and included as numerous of their Turkish partners as they seem to guarantee their smooth route to the kill of two million Armenians. While the CUP's government's methods differed from the Sultan's, the purpose was exactly the same. To be more specific, the Sultan used the nobility class, diplomatic tolerance, and informal allies among eastern Anatolia's Muslim groups to carry out his campaign of massacres, whereas the Young Turks' adopted a more systematic policy, publishing orders,

overseeing the process, calculating the results with bureaucratic accuracy. So there was a continuation between the political regimes.

Chapter 3: Turkey's view of the 1915 events

This chapter deals with the post-war era and the trials for the crimes committed against the Armenians in the First World War. To assign charges to the real culprits, the court investigated the remaining Ottoman records (because the regime of the Young Turks took care of their liquidation), documents, and first-hand testimonies. So based on authentic narratives and the post-war military court's files may answer those who still are pondering if there was a state policy to devastate a racial and religious group. Besides that, the chapter explains how the genocide greatly affected the Armenian diaspora. This explanation is fundamental to recreating the authentic memory based on historical truth.

3.1. Post War Trial: The Turkish attitude towards the punishment of the Unionists' war crimes.

There was an international outcry over the crimes committed during the First World War. In May 1915, Great Britain, France, United States, and Russia condemned CUP's conduct against Armenians as crimes against humanity and pressed the Young Turks' government to assume its responsibilities. A compilation of some documentary publications of the World War I period allows a clear comprehension of the methodology of their actions, both in archival and in publication records. American and British released publications showed how the Turkish government embarked on a systematic project for destructing the Armenian people¹²⁷. Humanists and politicians such as Henry Morgenthau, Arnold Toibby, James Bruce, Henry Adams Gibbons, Anatole Frans, Albert Thomas, and Johannes Lepsius rejected Young Turks' pretended excuses for their crimes during WWI. According to Lepsius, the cause of the tragedy has not been treason itself, albeit the intolerant nationalism of the Young Turks extremists. The execution of the Armenian people would discourage the European intervention in favor of creating a Christian ethnicity among the Turkic people of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia¹²⁸.

127 . Hovanissian, 1999: 59

128. Carzou, 2006: 68

Although the moral indignation of the international community, there were no substantial actions to punish the policies of the Ottoman Empire nor to save the Armenian people from being beaten by extermination.¹²⁹

After Ottoman defeat in WWI, the Allies placed strategic regions of the Ottoman Empire under occupation according to the Sykes-Picot agreement. Actually, there was no Great Power to protect the Christian populations of Asia Minor since Tsarist Russia did not exist, the Bolsheviks cooperated with the Turkish nationalists, and after the fall of Wilson there was no American interest in an Armenian state¹³⁰. Procedures for legal punishment against the Ittihadists elbowed seven of the leadership Mehmed Talat, Ismail Enver, Ahmed Cemal, Drs. Mehmed Nazim and Behaeddin Sakir, and police and security chiefs Osman Bedri and Huseyin Azmi- in escaping from Ottoman capital on the night of November 1, 1918.¹³¹ By 1919, with Allied encouragement and promises of protection, most of the surviving Armenians had returned to their hometowns in Cilicia, while others fled to Russia.

A statement was published in the 7 November 1918 issue of the daily newspaper *Sabah*: Although the government's research, no documents containing information about the Armenian massacre have not been found; it is possible that before Talaat Pasha and his subordinate officers abandoning office, they had cleansed under his command all the documents of the general directives regarding instructions on the Armenian atrocities.¹³² In fact, the destruction of evidence continued after the post-war period. CUP's leaders ordered to destroy all telegrams and records containing orders for massacres. Right after the first publications, the Ottoman government recognized the massacres of Armenians and prosecuted some criminals. Ahmet Izzet Pasha and Reşit Akif Pasha created the first government of the armistice period. Reşit Akif Pasha made a memorable speech, according to his word "the Armenian Genocide began following a secret order for deportation that was issued by the Ministry of the Interior to all regional officers"¹³³

129. Αρμενική Εθνική Επιτροπή Ελλάδος, (2020), "Η Γενοκτονία Των Αρμενίων."

130. Sfetas, 2018

131. Dadrian, 1991: 552, Akçam, 2006: 123

132. Report of newspaper *Sabah* is referred in Akçam, 2006 i p. 127

133. Akçam, 2006 :140

A military tribunal was constituted by a special proclamation of the Sultan on 14 December 1918, in response to demand from the former Allied Powers¹³⁴. According to Taner Akçam's account, the treaty mentions the institution of military tribunals to investigate Armenian atrocities and deportations in Articles 226 and 230. Per the Vahakn N. Dadrian, the upper-class authorities, identified with the post-war Turkish government, lifted their voices to sharply condemn the Armenians' mistreatment during the war. They used the term "crimes against humanity" for the first time¹³⁵. The Sultan in Constantinople merely expressed his sadness at the aforementioned crimes ("Kanuni insaniyete karai ika edilen ceraim") under the Ittihadist government and promised that this would never happen again. In collapsed Ottoman Empire dominated a governmental split, one in Constantinople under the Sultan and another in Ankara under Mustafa Kemal¹³⁶. In May 1918, Great powers proclaimed an independent Armenian statehood in the former Russian province of Yerevan.

The incentive of offenders is an important criterion in determining the United Nations Genocide Convention. The United States has also contested the notion that heads of state are accused of "state acts" and that leaders are held responsible for their subordinates' conduct. During the Peace Conference meetings Nicolaos Politis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece and member of the Committee of the Fifteen, proposed a new type of war crime to be called "crimes against human rights" aimed at cover-up massacres against the Armenians¹³⁷. At the meeting of the Council of Four on 2 April 1919, Lloyd George said it was important to judge those who were responsible "for the acts against individuals, atrocities of all sorts committed under orders". Regarding Turkey, the Allies reflected on the persecution for mistreatment of prisoners, not only because many of them were British, but mainly for deportation and massacres, most specifically for the persecution of the Armenian people. However, the "cleansing of archives" disputes the intent of Ottoman authorities and their joining in organizing the genocide.¹³⁸ The remained reliable sources according to Taner Akçam can be retrieved from the indictment of what has come to be called the "Main Trial".

134. Akçam, 2011: 254

135. Dadrian 2006, also refers in p. 83, 86. "For the first time in history, high-ranking Turkish officials, including two wartime prime ministers, known as grand viziers, and a host of cabinet members, were being criminally arrested for crimes which had previously been disregarded as minor blunders.", "Referring to Interior Minister Talaat as the arch-conspirator, the indictment cites a certain encrypted telegram revealing Talaat's secret intention regarding the Armenian deportations".

136. Payaslian, 2007: 157

137. For this issue see. Schabas, "The Crimes of Crimes ." *Genocide in International Law*, 2000, 22.; Dadrian, "Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law", 1989, 278.

138. Akçam, 2006.

The proceedings of Turkish Military Tribunal highlighted how systematic organized the Armenian Genocide. Records of governments whose ambassadors had been in the Ottoman Empire were also of high importance; such as the official records of the triple entente France, Britain, and Russia, as well as the Central Powers Germany and Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire's main wartime allies. Several trial verdicts emphasized the dual factors of premeditation and centrally organized mass murder.¹³⁹ As the prosecutor pointed, proof of specific purpose may, due to the absence of direct or explicit evidence, be inferred from a display of facts and circumstances, such as the general context, the perpetration of other culpable acts systematically.¹⁴⁰ In the Yozgat Court-Martial verdict, the perpetrators of the Armenian massacres were accused of having violated the principle of "human sentiment" (hissiyatt insaniye).¹⁴¹ Below, we see some pillars of the trial's verdict and the punishment was being attributed to the criminals.

Five points projected by the Judicial court are then the following:

["(1) On the evidence of the trial which has taken place before this Military Court, it is obvious that the massacres which took place in the Kaza of Boghazlayan (Ankara), the Sanjak of Yozgat, and the Vilayet of Trebizond, were organized and perpetrated by the leaders of the Ittihad and Terakki Party".

"(2) The Defense argued that the news of these was communicated (to the Party) only after they had been committed. But even if this hypothesis were true, it is plain that even after the news was received of the atrocities, no steps were taken to prevent their repetition; nor were arrangements made for the punishment of the original criminals"/

"(3) From the testimony of former Prime Minister Ahmed Izzet Pasha it is clear that his resignation as Minister of War was brought about by the intervention of the Ittihad Party was the direct result of that Party's hostility to him.

"(4) The world congress of the Ittihad and Terakki Party, having come to an understanding on the subject of the logistical support of the army, the Party's Istanbul headquarters handed over the direction of that task to its representative, Kemal Bey. The Ittihad and Terakki Center interfered in Governmental operations was confirmed by the records of the Ittihad Congress of 1332 (1916) which show that a report to this effect delivered there was warmly received."

139. There is a thorough analysis in proceedings of military Tribunal in Dadrian Vahakn N. "The Documentation of the World War I Armenian Massacres in the Proceedings of the Turkish Military Tribunal." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, no. 4 (1991): 549–76. Altanian, 2017: 22-23

140. Dadrian, 2010: 78

141. Dadrian, 2010: 66; Dadrian, 1989

“(5) (5) Musa Kiazim Effendi, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, while consulting with the Senate on the matter of transfer of the religious court (Sheriye) to the Ministry of Justice, in replying to a question put to him, said: 'Do not ask for my vote. The Party (Firka) wants it that way and that way it shall be.' These circumstances were fully explained and understood during this trial.”^{142]}

Based on the above paragraphs of the law code, the court attributed death penalties to Mehmed Talaat, Enver, Djemal, Dr. Nazim, Djavid, Mustafa Sheref, and Musa Kiazim punished with fifteen years at hard labor. Although Rifaat and Hashim Beys would be released, this decision did not prevent the Supreme Court from summoning them to appear before it on matters relating to their offices.¹⁴³In the main trial, from top-secret cipher-telegrams, a large part of the responsibility was attributed to Katib-i Mesuller and mainly to Bahaeddin Sakir, the chief personality who organized the actual genocidal field operations in the Anatolian provinces.¹⁴⁴To these men rendered the charge of having committed “crimes against humanity” a term firstly emerged from the Great Power in May 1915. Governor of Diarbekir firstly arraigned for massacres. *New York Times* writes down that the persecutor of the trial said: “it was necessary to punish the authors of the massacres which had filled the whole world with a feeling of horror.”¹⁴⁵Other persecutors, numbering in the hundreds, were deported to Malta by the British, who later released them and repatriated them as part of a bilateral exchange with 22 British detainees agreed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's government.¹⁴⁶

Another telegram sent by a retired General (Irilksilii Mahmut), and former veteran cabinet minister revealed that the massacres were ordered by the ruling Committee of Union Progress Party (CUP) and were organized in specific provinces, like Kharpert, Trabazon for example, by Governor-General Cemal Azmi¹⁴⁷. Those documents that were not destroyed helped the military court to prove the culprits accountable. Chief Judge of the Military Tribunal sent information about the identities of persecutors

142. A translation of the official transcript of the verdict of the court martial conducted by the Ottoman Turkish government in 1919 against the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide. Published in the *Official Gazette of Turkey (Takvimi Vekayi)*, no. 3604 (supplement), July 22, 1919. The transcript was translated into English by Haigazn K. Kazarian and published in the *Armenian Review*, Vol 24 (1971, 4), pp. 19-26. Official Affirmations, Armenian Genocide Institute. https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.237/current_category.50/affirmation_detail.html.

143. Ibid 103

144. For details about the trial and the legal ramifications, see. Akçam, 2006: 141.; Dadrian, 2010: 79. Dadrian, 1989.

145. *The New York Times* (February 12, 1919), “Turkish Trials Begin, Governor of Diarbekir First to be Arraigned for Massacres”: Press Coverage of the Armenian Genocide, Armenian Genocide Institute.

146. Latino, 2019: 207-208.; Schabas, 2000

147. The telegrams for Province of Kharpert [Elazig – Elazığ] are found in Ottoman archival research of Guerguerian in corporation with Armenian Patriarche in Jerusalem. To see published and unpublished Ottoman archives see. Krikor Guerguerian Archive.

in vilayets in May-August, 1915 and find out where are now.¹⁴⁸Krikor's Guerguerian archival research evinces that with the telegram network, Talaat was able to detect the Armenian presence inside and outside the Ottoman territory. It is highly remarkable a telegram showing the Talaat's intention to examine Armenians' names, addresses, and departure dates even Armenian students have been sent to Europe on the state's account. Correspondingly, another telegram records Talaat's orders to the chiefs of provinces to wipe out all the Armenian corpses.¹⁴⁹¹⁵⁰All documents prove Turkish responsibility in committing shameful acts. The main objective behind this policy was, in the CUP's own words, "liquidating the concentrations of non-Turkish population that had accumulated at strategic points, and which were susceptible to negative foreign influences"¹⁵¹. They targeted all non-Muslim subjects, including Kurds who lived in Urfa and Der Zor.

The main goal of the deportation, according to documents' conclusions extracted during the trials, was the elimination of Armenians. Vehip Pasha, who had been appointed commander of the Third Army in February 1916, made his written confession to the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts in December 1918. This declaration confirms a pre-ordinated- strategy, a violation of human rights, and a clear desire to harm a people, firstly undertaken by political representatives of the CUP, and secondly, by leaders of state using like tools for the implementation of the personal agendas and intention of that party¹⁵². Mustafa Kemal alluded to "the atrocities of the Armenians" (Ermenilere karsi katliam) on April 24, 1920, the day after the Turkish Republic's new parliament was inaugurated, calling them "a shameful act" (fazahat).¹⁵³ Historians until the current time have questioned the judicial methods used in these cases, the veracity of the evidence used, and whether the Turkish government wanted just to satisfy the victorious Allies.

While the trial was already underway, the issue of the Ottoman Empire entered the heart of diplomacy. The High Commission urged that the Turks be punished for the

148. Krikor Guerguerian Archive, Chief Judge of the Military Tribunal on Deportation, To: Directorship of Personnel Matters, Ministry of Justice, Date: 8 March 1919, No: [blank]

149. Krikor Guerguerian Archive, From: Minister Talat, To: included, Date: 2 February [20 *Kanun-ı sani*] 1915, No: [blank]; From: Ministry of the Interior Talat, To: Province of Kharpert [Elazig - Elazığ], Date: 1 January [19 *Kanun-ı evvel*] 1915, No: [blank]

150. Similar referance make Akçam, 2006 : 142, Dadrian 2006: 90, 96

151. Ibid 123

152. Akçam, 2006: 137

153. Dadrian, 1991: 551

Armenian massacres by dismembering the Empire and a criminal trial.¹⁵⁴At the Congress of Berlin, a single punishment was decided for the Turkish nation, because according to the West, the whole Turkish nation was guilty of the Armenian massacres."Punishing those responsible for the Armenian atrocities entails punishing all Turks," wrote Webb, an admiral Deputy High Commissioner in Constantinople, at the 1919 conference.¹⁵⁵ In May, the Cabinet declared the unification of the Republic of Armenia.¹⁵⁶Although the European Powers did embrace a strategy of "humanitarian intervention" in Ottoman Turkey during the years leading up to World War I, and they established the concept of "crimes against humanity" in 1915 in response to the unfolding genocide, the powers never shared the unity of interests that they had following World War II. Most detrimental to the Armenians was the absence of a powerful state to support their goal. Thus, the victors of 1918 willingly lifted their humanitarian concerns in exchange for enhanced favor with the Kemalist regime that was enacting control of Turkey.¹⁵⁷For instance, Bolshevik leaders cooperated with the Nationalist party of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in order to eliminate Allied influence in Turkey and to control the regions in the Caucasus.

On 13 October 1921 signed the Treaty of Kars, one of the diplomatic contracts whom the Soviet Union aimed the restoration of neighbors' friendly relationships with herself, the prevention of the recurrence of new conflicts, a guarantee of peripheral safety, and a series of reformation deliberated to prevent the abuse of a territory. Article 15 of the treaty provides a double amnesty for war crimes committed on the Caucasus front during the First World. Paradoxically, it attributes responsibility for these crimes to the individuals directly be associated with this treaty.¹⁵⁸This implies that the disagreements between Turkish and Armenian officials about the wartime events are "dead letter" as far as the state of law between the two countries is concerned, regardless of what actually happened or who was truly responsible. After ratifying the Treaty, Turkey's eastern front was directed to the Western front. Yet, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan integrated into the Soviet Union, losing, therefore, their sovereignty..

154. Schabas, 2000

155. For this issue, see. Hovannisian, 1968: 148

156. Bolsajian, 2018 mentions that Armenian's independence lasted from 1918 through 1920, until the Soviet Union annexed Armenia as the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.; Payaslian, 2007: 158

157. Hovannisian, 1999: 146

158. Kalpakian & Ipek, 2011.

As propaganda war was in swing, atrocities were continuing in Anatolia. Analytically, from 1919 Kemal Ataturk completed the work of exterminating the Pontian Hellenism and Armenians under more favorable conditions. The Armenians of Hajen (Hadjin) underwent a new cycle of hardships with a result have been decreased by October 1920 to less than five hundred survivors, many of whom fled from a city completely burned by the besieging Turks.¹⁵⁹ From 1918 to 1922, had been killed about 300,000 Armenians and many Greeks. Despite a difference between the Greeks' wartime experience from the equivalent of the Armenians, there was a continuity among the methodology employed by Kemalists against the Greeks and Armenian residents in the coastal line of the Black Sea. As well as in Armenians, the new Turkish government's policy implemented a policy of expulsion, annihilation, and property confiscation in the 1920s towards Greeks. French reports spoke for "Systematic plunder and extermination of the Christians."¹⁶⁰ Adalian (1991), speaking from a scholarly perspective, refers to a dual way of examining the Armenian experience in the last days living in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶¹

Firstly he indicates that:

"A series of atrocities from the 1890s to the 1920s [are] evidence of continuity in the deteriorating status of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire...once initiated, the policy of exposing Armenians to physical harm attained its momentum. Victimization expanded because it was not countermanded or order or instruction should not be followed by prevailing outside pressure or mitigated by internal improvement and reconciliation. ..."

He further suggests that:

"Despotic regimes have a history of brutalizing disgruntled citizens all across the world. These regimes' repressive methods serve the restricted purpose of suppressing societal change and sustaining the status quo..."

A call for prosecution was continued after the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 which resulted in the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920, a peace agreement between the Triple Entente (Russia, France, and Great Britain) and the Ottoman Empire. The European powers discussed the prospect of "Greater Armenia" allowing access to Black Sea. At the mean time, humanitarian intervention obliged Turkey to restore Armenian

159. Atalian, 2015. "Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal." *Encyclopedia Entries of the Armenian Genocide*. Armenian National Institute.

160. Hovannisian, 1999: 120.

161. Adalian's perspective is referred in Alayarian, Aida. "Psychological Consequences for Those Who Survived." *Consequences of Denial*, 2018: 13.

property and repeal the law on abandoned property. Importantly, the Allies proposed to the Wilson administration the same border with Armenia.¹⁶² Since the European stance was very unfavorable for the Ottoman Empire, the concept "Sevres syndrome" was used to describe Turkey's fear of a strategic encirclement, which would threaten it both from the outside and from within the country.

Meanwhile, Turkey has adopted the tactic of denying incriminating evidence. For instance, a clumsy propaganda ploy involved an American reporter and a relief official. Correspondent Larry Rue of the Chicago Tribune reported that a NER official, Captain Harold C. Jaquith, issued to the official Anatolia Press a "Vigorous denial of allegations of atrocities" made by Major Yowell. The Daily Telegraph called Jaquith's statement "A Strange Denial". Meanwhile, Turkey adopted denial tactics to incriminate evidence. For instance, a clumsy propaganda ploy involved an American reporter and a relief official. Correspondent Larry Rue of the Chicago Tribune reported that a NER official, Captain Harold C. Jaquith, issued to the official Anatolia Press a "Vigorous denial of allegations of atrocities" made by Major Yowell. The *Daily Telegraph* called Jaquith's statement "A Strange Denial".¹⁶³

The direction of Kemalist powers towards the Greek army and the invasion of Smyrna (Izmir) in September 1922 sealed the final chapter of Armenians in Anatolia. Soon after, a fire broke out within the Armenian villages devouring the Christian subjects of the region and leading the civilians to the shore, whence they boarded dispossessed of all their possessions. With the exodus from the mainland, Mustafa Kemal completed what Talaat and Enver had started in 1915, annihilating the Armenian minority of Anatolia and putting a complete end to Armenian political aspirations in the Caucasus. The Turkification and Islamization of Asia Minor totally accomplished with the departure of the Greeks.¹⁶⁴ Given the turmoil of Turkey's nationalist revolution and Kemal Atatürk's war against Greece, the Armenian genocide went largely unpublished. Only two of the nine top officials involved in the genocide were convicted. Even though the Treaty of Sèvres, imposed on Turkey by the Allies, contained five provisions dealing with

162. Payaslian, 2007: 163-164

163. Hovannisian, 1999: 130

164. Atalian, 2015. "Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal." *Encyclopedia Entries of the Armenian Genocide*. Armenian National Institute.

war crimes and encouraged the establishment of an independent Armenia, they did not bring the perpetrators to justice.¹⁶⁵

3.2. Turkey's Denialism of the Armenian Genocide

This chapter thus unveils the consequences and controversial association between news discourse and the Armenian responses regarding the historical truth. It further elucidates the paradoxical politicization and commercialization of the Armenian question in Turkey. So, retrieving data from both a critical punditry of the Turkish Government's political statements and Armenian response, this academic essay desires to contribute to the growing discussion and research on the Armenian question and Turkish stance from the Lausanne Treaty to today.

Regarding the Armenian genocide, over the course of the years, not only the Turkish government did open a dialogue about it, but also adamantly and consistently denied having ever committed a genocide against the Armenians. Through the use of purposeful propaganda, "forged papers," repression and destruction of archives, and "bribing scholars" or, if bribery proved failed, "persecuting and executing" them, successive Turkish governments have adopted this official state denial for more than ninety years since the introduction of the official commemoration day of the genocide and more than a century from the beginning of systematic executions.¹⁶⁶ *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* underlines that while the victorious Allies' catastrophic predictions failed to materialize, the Armenian Genocide not only continues to be severely rewarded by impunity, but Turkey, both past and present, continues to deny the atrocity.¹⁶⁷

With rise of Republican People's Party (CHP) - or the "national liberation movement" - under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (who governed from 1923 to 1945), the contracts of the Treaty of Sèvres were perceived as a plan by the Allies to divide the Turkish Empire and obviously considered a threat to their nationalist objectives, since it indeed also entailed the drawing of new borders and autonomous regions for Kurds as

165. Ibid 161

166. Dadrian, 1995; Alayarian, 2008

167. Dadrian, 2010; Kirakossian, 2015; Bloxham, Donald, and A. Dirk Moses. *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013

well as Armenians.¹⁶⁸ The Lausanne Arrangement concluded between Turkey and the Entente Powers on July 24, 1923, with a conflict resolution between Greece and Turkey. More importantly, the signing of fixed Turkey's national borders reorganized Ottoman debts. The Republican People's Party of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the dominant ruling party from 1923 to 1945. As it may appear, the Treaty had a detrimental influence on the Armenian minority, because it theoretically recognized the rights of Turkey's non-Muslim subjects in Articles 37-45 of Section III, stripping Armenians of all rights and guarantees they had previously had.¹⁶⁹ Concerning the conflict over the Karabagh, Baku accepted Karabagh as an autonomous region at Stepanakert. However, the borders asseverated by the Communist leader, Asad Karaiev, did not chart a linchpin, between Armenia and Karabagh¹⁷⁰.

Furthermore, the Treaty of Lausanne seemed to overlook the punishment of war crimes under the pretext that the tribunals' decisions had already been declared null and void by the Ankara National Assembly, which finally decided on March 31, 1923 that "all those imprisoned by a decision from both civil and military courts were granted a general amnesty."¹⁷¹ Turkey has tried to sidestep the problem for years, opting for silence, diplomatic efforts, and political pressure wherever possible. Turkey lobbied the US State Department in the 1930s to prevent MGM Studios from making a film based on Franz Werfel's *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, a book that dramatized portions of the Genocide in the territory west of Antioch on the Mediterranean Sea, far from the Russian front.¹⁷² This tactic continues until today.

Russian sources are of core importance to delve deeply into the period of "silence" of the Armenian Genocide. The Russian archives give to prove the reality that the purposeful publicity which sought the Western states and Czarist Russia after started caring about the Armenians' living conditions inside the Ottoman State pointed at legitimizing the rationale of their plan to attack and dissolve the Ottoman Empire. Regardless of someone's nationalist perspective, history demands objectivity and truth and Russian records provide both. Overstated and misrepresented assertions were

168. Altanian 2017

169. Latino, 2019: 208-210

170. Payaslian, 2007: 174-175

171. Altanian, 2017

172. see. "Denial." Genocide Education Project. Available at the website link <https://genocideeducation.org/background/denial/>., Similar information in Hovannisian, 1999: 190.

fabricated in arrange to attract public opinion, and to legitimize czarism animosity in manner that a few of the fanatic historians composed the propagandist speculations around the living conditions of the Armenians in the Ottoman time. Western Europe and Russia were battling for control of Eastern Anatolia by manipulating the Armenians. Lenin and Stalin made those statements. Russian officials' reports highlight the British's provocations and instigation in the Armenian issue. The Soviet documents also provide evidence of Muslims 'mass killings by Dashnaks into the border-line of contemporary Armenia. Since they did intend to create an autonomous state, the Dashnak organization killed a great portion of the Muslim population¹⁷³.

By the end of World War II, Turkey set itself under the imperialistic sphere of East-West polarisation. The two basic points of the new Russian-Turkish alliance treaty were, in June 1945: firstly, a reconsideration of the status quo of two countries would force Turkey to turn back provinces that belonged to the Czarist Empire in 1878-1918, secondly, the validation of a Turkish-Russian defense military force would secure the Straits¹⁷⁴. Speaking in geopolitical terms, on the one hand, these treaty's conditions led the USA to recognize Turkey's strategic importance in intercepting the expanding of communism in Southern Europe and Middle East. Turkey's inclusion in the Marshall Plan and eventually in the Western bloc changed America's strategic policy. On the other side, during a key period of the Cold War, the Soviet Union thwarted any attempt by Western Armenian Diaspora officials to mobilize themselves for worldwide recognition of the Armenian Genocide.¹⁷⁵ Aharon adds that this Soviet stance partly owed to the Kremlin's decision for delegitimizing a Western pattern to protect human rights as hostile to the collectivist policy of communism.

After the defeat of the First Republic of Armenia and its accession into the Soviet Union, the Armenian Issue, including the reinstatement of Armenia via the incorporation of Eastern Armenia and Western Armenia, was "silenced" and not discussed in the international circles. The scattered voices of the survivors and their generations submitted to what Littell (1995:183) calls "mystification" of Genocide when the facts need to be distilled from experiential, emotional, artistic, and abstract images of the

173. For more information, see. Perinçek, Mehmet. "Armenian Issue as Reflected in Russian Archival Records," 2010.

174. Aharon, 2020 is mentioned in Zürcher 2004: 206–209

175. Payaslian, 2007: 182; Dekmejian, 2007: 510-525

past. Many voices of the survivors and their generations suffer from what Littell (1995:183) calls "mystification" of Genocide, especially when the facts fermented from experiential, sentimental, creative, and recollections of the past. In a post-genocide era, the "selected amnesia" was followed or preceded by the "chosen traumatic moments" when a group of people, after having experienced a traumatic experience, still feel defenseless and targeted by another group¹⁷⁶. Only after 1944 the term "genocide" was used in the context of the UNGC to describe the systematic mass killings of Armenians during World War I.¹⁷⁷ The intention behind mass killings was a central discussion and a matter of dispute in the debate in scholarship regarding the use of genocide.

Armenian survivors wrote historical novels and published them in the early 1940s. These memoirs and dramatized literature focused on the dual themes religion and life in America, where many Armenians had created their communities¹⁷⁸. Richard G. Hovannisian notes that after the massacre, scattered Armenian survivors concentrated their efforts on forming new diaspora societies while repressing their disappointment and trauma of the genocide.¹⁷⁹ More analytically, he records that Kerop Bedoukian, in the introduction to his memoir, *The Urchin: An Armenian's Escape*, as he elucidates his intentions in writing his memories, he associates his own experience to a collective remembrance: "The organized massacres of the Armenians by the Turkish nation during the first world war is a memory that the survivors cannot forget".¹⁸⁰ Moreover, Dirouhi Kouymjian Highgas remembers her arrival in 1929: "*For the first time in my life, I no longer felt like a refugee girl. I had the strangest feeling as if I had been away for a long, long time, and had just arrived home.*"¹⁸¹ A survivor's memory is a response in intended oblivion and represents what can simply attribute as "Armenianism".

Turkey until today adopts the policy of denialism in being responsible for the Armenian massacres. In a post-genocide country, the "chosen amnesia", according to Buckley-Zistel, may be followed or preceded by the "chosen trauma" which occurs when a group, "after the experience of a traumatic event, feels helpless and victimized by

176. Shushanyan, 2013:16

177. Walker, 1980: 379

178. Kay, 2015: 120.

179. Hovannisian, 1999: 182

180. Hovannisian, 1999: 170

181. Hovannisian, 1999: 173

another group."¹⁸² In the case of the Armenian Genocide, "the chosen amnesia" lasted almost forty years and then transformed into "chosen trauma", marked by resistances and protests against the Communist leadership of Armenia.¹⁸³ Turkish propaganda insists on portraying Armenians as the enemy and "a threat to national security". Still quoting the view of *New York Times*, Turkey refuses the term genocide, arguing that the massacres were not premeditated and there was no systematic intent to wipe out a people. Indeed, "insulting Turkishness" to even the matter of what happened to the Armenians is still considered a crime today.¹⁸⁴

Turkey's denial to tell "the truth about the Armenian Issue" and the state's policy in using an exceptional language and doctrine to recount the past is embodied in the state apparatus. Brachler, 2011 refers that Article 301 of the penal code, on "insulting Turkishness", has been used to prosecute prominent writers who highlight the mass killings of Armenians¹⁸⁵. More precisely, Turkey influenced journalists, professors, and public officials by providing "the opposite side of the story". Foreign academics were encouraged to rewrite the history of the Armenian genocide, promoting an account that mostly blamed the Armenians or, in another version, wartime conditions that killed more Turks than Armenians.¹⁸⁶

Since then, Turkey has prohibited any mention of the Genocide in UN reports and has succeeded in opposing Congressional votes designating April 24 as a national day of remembrance of the Armenian Genocide. The Turkish government has likewise endeavored to eradicate all references to the Genocide in American literature.¹⁸⁷ According to CIA data, Armenian terrorist organizations (the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia -ASALA) carried out 168 operations between 1975 and 1983, killing over sixty Turkish diplomats and their families.¹⁸⁸ Members of the Armenian diaspora sought to sensitize the world's public opinion with their tragedy, make known the Armenian trauma, and then demand reparations from the Turkish Republic. All these terrorist attacks targeted at compelling Turkey to recognize the Genocide.

Furthermore, Turkey strengthened its denialism campaign after western countries (Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Holland, Switzerland) officially denounced the

182. see. Buckley-Zistel, 2006: 134 is referred in Altanian 2017

183. Altanian, 2017: 25

184. See. Kifner, J. "Armenian Genocide of 1915: An Overview." *The New York Times*, December 7, 2007

185. Brachler, 2011

186. Ibid 126

187. see above.

188. CIA, 2013: 9; Dixon 2018: 50

recognition of the Armenian genocide. Turkey reacted quickly when the US House of Representatives passed a genocide resolution in 1984, employing many lobbyists, defense companies, and international corporations doing business in Turkey. Additionally, it used its NATO membership in conjunction with the Pentagon and legislative factions in Turkey to ensure that such a resolution would never become law.¹⁸⁹ While the European Parliament formally recognized the Armenian genocide in June 1987, US Congress did not do accordingly until 2019.¹⁹⁰ In 1989, the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (the Ottoman Archives section of the Prime Minister's Office) in Istanbul opened its doors to scholars from all over the world, regardless of nationality or research topic. The Imperial Council's records and the Grand Vizier's office records were the first two groupings of archives in the Ottoman Empire's central state archives¹⁹¹. These records date back to World War I provide worthy information on Turkish-Armenian relations.

In September of the year 2000, a senior Turkish diplomat repeated this position to US lawmakers.

“That the Turkish people firmly believe that what happened to the Armenians was not genocide. It was a relocation to other parts of the Ottoman Empire of only the eastern Anatolian Armenians away from a war zone in which they were collaborating with invading Russian armies, with the aim of creating an independent state of their own in areas where they were only a minority, by ethnically cleansing the majority Turks. Many Armenians were killed, but many more Muslims and Turks perished, as well¹⁹²”.

In the year 2000, professor Berktaş gave an interview on the genocide to a major Turkish newspaper.

“It was as if I was yelling very loudly, the emperor has no clothes. And they started yelling, traitor. Here is this traitor in our midst. Here is this person who is aiding and abetting the enemy. He should be instantaneously fired from his university. There must be punishment for him¹⁹³”.

By this speech and from others corresponding have been pronounced, it seems that Turkey rejects the genocide -most possibly- for psychological and political reasons. To begin with, I believe they continue to oppose it because it is officially classified as a heinous crime against humanity that could have a detrimental political consequence.

189. Stark, 2017

190. Aharon, 2020: 17-18

191. For this issue, see. Güçlü, Yücel. “Will Untapped Ottoman Archives Reshape the Armenian Debate? Turkey, Present and Past”, 2009, 35–42.

192. Diplomat's speech is mentioned in Beukian, 2018.

193. *Turkish Press (türk basını)* May 2000, “Ermenilere yönelik hiçbir soykırım olmamıştır”. See Trt's website link <https://www.trt.net.tr/greek/tourkikos-tupos>

Perhaps it is due to compensation that the Turks would have to pay. That's the political situation. Second, Turkey is a nationalist country, proud of its achievements in the 20th century, and admitting to such an act is an insult to the entire country. Moreover, we can conceive the State's mechanism in guidance the media of what they have to say. Simply put, the government was instructing the press to communicate in this manner. All were seemingly falling into a state-line.

Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, supports that the historical past itself appears to be responsible for what had been taken place and was itself called upon as the witness. According to him, "The Ottoman order did not suppress Armenian identity; on the contrary, it guaranteed its existence by including it in the melting pot and integrating it within official structures"¹⁹⁴. In 2009, Armenia initiated a movement of historical reconciliation with the intention of eliminating this worldview. The concept of "memory," which we have used several times throughout this process, is crucial since it emphasizes how history cannot be understood in a one-sided manner. Nowhere, however, does Davutoglu himself speak of genocide but for a time of "shared pain". Davutoğlu seems to be defending the Turkish stance and the reasons given by Erdoğan's message of condolence and recognition of historical memory.

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in Turkey escalates nationalism by denialism. A similar denial policy with Turkey for geopolitical and geostrategic reasons follows Israel. According to some geopolitical analysts, Israel's policy is a continuation of David Ben-Periphery Gurion's Doctrine, which represented the region's non-Arab states. More importantly, the territorial struggle between Azeris and Armenians over control of Nagorno-Karabakh, sparked by the Soviet Union's demise, converted Azerbaijan into a "participant" in the Armenian genocide discourse, leading to a widespread worldwide push against recognition¹⁹⁵. We understand that the Azeris, like the Turks, have a strong desire for Israel to refuse to recognize the Armenian genocide¹⁹⁶.

Turkey has used this conflict to verify its denial of the Armenian Genocide and the issue of the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia turned out to be an essential aspect of the 'Armenian question'. Many Turkish nationalists accuse Armenia of breaking the Kars Treaty, while Azeri lobbyists refuse to reconcile with

194. Davutoğlu, 2014

195. Aharon, 2020

196. Ibid 193

Armenians until the latter accepts the limitations imposed by Ankara on Azerbaijan, the Diaspora, and the categorization of the “Meds Yeghern”¹⁹⁷. Turkish-Azerbaijan bilateral relations were developed based on pragmatic policies in the service of both state’s national and economic interests. Turkey knows that Azerbaijan plays a vital role in the implementation of its regional- projects, more notably in Turkey’s movement from China all across Europe¹⁹⁸.

Turkish and Azerbaijani propaganda activities cover the historical facts in a defensive and protective cloak. In current terms, we talk about the warfare of words, and Azerbaijan had the advantage of being incorporated into European administrations, PR companies, and professional lobbyists, some of whom had academic qualifications. The most striking doctrine of this propagandism-historical revisionism was Erdoğan’s branding of Armenians as “occupiers” of Nagorno Karabakh or a threat to regional peace instead of indigenous people with the right to self-determination¹⁹⁹. What is more, Azerbaijan having Turkey on its side dared to continue its pre-war erasure of Armenian culture, renaming it publicly as “Caucasian Albanian heritage”. Besides the war of words, Armenians were physically targeted in Turkey, France, and the USA. Scores of Turkish and Azerbaijani thugs’ movements, who menaced Armenians and called for their deaths, led to France banning the Grey Wolves, the ultra-nationalist Turkish paramilitary organizations²⁰⁰. From every scope, we meet scope an organized disinformation designed to discredit and undestimate Armenians on all fronts.

Armenia accuses Turkey of “genocide” and seeks worldwide recognition despite historical facts, according to Turkey. The Armenian Declaration of Independence makes the same point. One of Armenia’s main foreign policy objectives is to have this fabrication accepted as fact by the rest of the world. Armenia refuses to recognize the shared boundary with Turkey, despite occupying nearly 20% of Azerbaijani territory for years. Another criticism levied against Turkey in respect to Armenia is that it continues to refuse to adopt a policy commensurate with internationally accepted standards and principles, putting regional peace and security at risk. The Armenian Democracy, using the concept of international recognition stands in support of asserting Western Armenia, expressing, therefore, territorial claims against Turkey²⁰¹.

197. Kalpakian & Ipek, 2011

198. Ibrahimov, 2021

199. Kasbarian, 2021

200. Ibid 165

201. Ibrahimov, 2021

Essentially, Turkey accuses Armenia of employing the “genocide” and the historical past for geopolitical and geostrategic objectives, for instance, the Nagorno-Karabach conflict or in common borders with Turkey.²⁰² Furthermore, Armenian propagandists say that the Sevres Agreement, which established an Armenian state in eastern Anatolia, is still legal and use it to justify their claims for the “return” of “Armenian lands,” according to Ankara’s viewpoint. Ankara denies this claim, arguing that the arrangement was never implemented. It was superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne, and hence has no legal standing. In addition, after establishing the Armenian Republic in Yerevan on May 28, 1918, the Dashnaks signed the Batum Treaty with the Ottoman Government on June 4, 1918.²⁰³

The leaders of Armenia and Turkey had made major efforts in 2000s to resolve tensions, aware of the dire need to do so. In the case of Armenia, because the country requires economic development and does not wish to be isolated geographically, the government agreed to establish a historical commission to investigate the events of 1915 and to recognize the present borders. However, President Sargsyan highlights the preconditions need to be in order to alleviate the bilateral tensions. We could conclude that the Armenian Genocide debate has been politicized, bringing disastrous repercussions for the Turkish-Armenian bilateral relations²⁰⁴. To elucidate and fully understand the Armenian side, we should question what exactly Armenian is expecting to achieve by Turkey’s recognizing the Armenian Genocide? The answer is located in de Waal’s book *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide*. Going through de Waal’s perspective in his book, he focuses on the unproductive results of the “politicization of the genocide debate”. He further says that “politicization of the genocide debate has obscured the real history behind it, throwing He further argues that politicization of the genocide debate has concealed the true history behind it, forming an obstruction against those who otherwise would be more willing to fully understand²⁰⁵.

In other words, the author supports that behind the curtain of rhetoric based on morality and justice, there is a specific political rationale of the demand on the recognition of the 1915 events as genocide. More notably, Armenian’s political

202. Center for Strategic Research, Ankara, 2005, “Armenian Claims and Historical Facts questions and answers”. Available at: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, 43.

203. Center for Strategic Research, Ankara, 2005, “Armenian Claims and Historical Facts questions and answers”. Available at: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, 44-47.

204. Coskun, 2013

205. see. Waal, *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide*, 2019: 186-195.

expectations may be land arrogations or Armenian retaliation for Turkish support on the side of Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabach issue. De Waal indicates the Armenians' argument that the Genocide is a basis of forming their identity, partly is relevant to the truth. Finally, he underlines the fakery of Andonian's *The Memoirs of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportation and the Massacres of Armenians* that served as evidence of the "genocide" has already been a proven fact²⁰⁶.

4. Armenia's answer in Turkey's Denialism

This chapter underlines the importance of the Armenian Genocide recognition is in order to deter humanity from future genocides. Memory and its relative's commemoration and commemoration are used as a bulwark against trauma²⁰⁷. Thus, Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide presupposes a dangerous act that makes future genocides a possible contingency. Adolf Hitler, before invading Poland, silenced the potential reservations of his generals by asking: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"²⁰⁸ It also points at the re-articulation of memory, evaluating the esteem of the verbal and composed testimonies for the foundation of significant knowledge and memory. I analyzed protocols and decrees commemorating and recognizing the Armenian Genocide to find the link between state-produced hegemonic discourse and first, second, third, and fourth-generation genocide memories. I watched films that unfolded the overflowing Armenian drama and represented fragmented stories from the time of the genocide. I also read up the academic literature regarding the state policy on the commemoration and acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide in the three aforementioned periods. These documents were kept in the Library of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute and were open for public access.

4.1. Re-articulation of the Armenian memory

The genocide had left an irrepressible memory on the survivors and the next generations. Survivors, witnesses, the offsprings of those who lived these stories, and all those who learn about it today seek the question of how to remember the past and how

206. Waal, 2019: 192

207. Beukian, 2018

208. "A daily Chronicle of the Armenian Genocide in the American Press 1915-1923". The Armenian Genocide Diary. See. diary's website at the link: <https://genocidediary.org>

that memory might shape our identity and our present world. The historical memory goes hand in hand with the historical truth, and that is what the Armenian people seek, justification for all those who were lost. The book of Aida Alayarian “*The Consequences of Denial the Armenian Genocide*” highlights the necessity of recognition for the beginning of the healing process for the surviving victims and their loved ones. The psychological impact, of denialism in the words of Alicia Chriagossian, is like “dying every day, we are invalidated through denial”, “We are not a nation, but a nation of survivors”, underlying emphatically the burden of transmitted memory²⁰⁹. When a great wave of Armenian refugees arrived in North America to settle and gather the remnants of their nation in the diaspora, their first cultural output included the memories of the survivors.

In *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, the text is generally based on the assertion made by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel that salvation lies in memory²¹⁰. Firstly, memory is a key element to vindicate victims and survivors’ “trauma” of victims and survivors and to reconstruct social civilization to a nation, as well as to seek political solutions to the conflict. Memory is yet the linchpin to constructing a national identity grounded on human rights. Secondly, the United Nations (UN) has adopted several soft-law instruments, including the right to remembrance, which is one of several sorts of redress acknowledged as a form of satisfaction for escalating human rights violations. The right to know is described as a societal right “drawing on history to avoid violations from occurring in the future,” as well as an individual right to know what truly happened (the right to truth).²¹¹ At this point, the historical perspective of an eyewitness participant in the events of the genocide, combines with a fictional element as part of the narrative structure of the story. To reshape the memory, we must create the national narrative as documented from written and un-written records and testimonies.

The revivalism of the Armenian nation become more obvious during the Cold War. The commemoration marked the time period of the so-called institutionalization of the Genocide memories. During the so-called “Khrushchev thaw,” also known as the Soviet modernization era, the state used symbolic reconstructions of lost Armenian land to link

209. Perroomian, 2015: 305

210. Volf, 2020: 30

211. Latino, 2019: 199

the survivors' terrible recollections with the state-building ideology. In 1965, when public demonstrations and meetings in Yerevan formally broke the quiet by forcing the Soviet government to recognize and remember the Armenian Genocide, the so-called institutionalization of Genocide memories began.²¹² In spring 1965, the Communist Party of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia officially announced organizing dedication for the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Armenian massacres in Anatolia.

Surin Manukian declared in his interview that after the traumatic events, the Armenian diaspora in different communities started discussing the past and dedicating ceremonies to Genocide²¹³. He also said that Soviet Russia adopted Turkish denialism because the latter was a member of NATO and Russia faced many problems in different parts of the world. But in 1965, the 50-year anniversary of the Genocide, Armenian started commemorative events in Yerevan. After then, the historical memory gained strong footholds. Naturally, this changed the geopolitical balance. In a few words, 1965 became a unifying factor, defining the Armenian imagined community. Finally, in 1967, Yerevan established the Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex, which became the symbolic focal point of the state's dominant narrative on the Armenian Genocide.²¹⁴ It was also created a memorial park identified with the human consciousness, a place of commemoration not only for victims but for lost homeland (Ararat plain)²¹⁵.

In 1985, the Armenian National Committee of America launched a website, the Armenian Genocide Diary, which provides a compilation of journals from major newspapers in the United States to local publications, depicting the Turkish atrocities, and offering a daily diary of American memory about the Armenian Genocide. It is noteworthy that the slogans located below these published articles leave the public opinion to know about Armenian trauma. A detachment of an article one is coming from American Press, posted in Indiana, in 1916 ²¹⁶.

DATE 10 Feb, 1916

POSTED IN Indiana, United States

212. Shushanyan, 2013: 17-18.

213. Manukian, Surin. *Armenian Genocide*. Oral interview.

214. Ibid 124

215. Ibid 162

216. see. "A daily Chronicle of the Armenian Genocide in the American Press 1915-1923". *The Armenian Genocide Diary*. See. diary's website at the link: <https://genocidediary.org>.

Geneva, Feb. 10- The Turks have resumed the massacre of Armenians who escaped previous outrages, according to dispatches printed by Geneva newspapers today. Thousands of men and boys have been shot, the dispatches stated, and girls sent to Constantinople to be sold into Turkish harems.

Let the World Know!

Archives, museums, libraries and memorials, research departments, and universities are directed simultaneously to this task. At the same time, the construction of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) was to be donated primarily by the American public as part of a memorial campaign. It was that moment when Carter's vision for human rights and his memorial campaign became a tangible reality. More analytically, the Armenian-American community believed that the forgotten memories of the Armenian Genocide could scrawl into public consciousness.²¹⁷ Gohash Hanemian, the head of Armenian Genocide Institute and descendant of genocide's survivors referred in her oral interview that today's donation and survey on the Armenian issue is made mainly by native Armenians and foreign students²¹⁸. According to Igor Dodon, a scholar specializing in the Armenian Genocide and Genocide Denialism, the Armenian Holocaust Museum contains personal testimonies of those who lived and suffered the Genocide. It is a part of memory through museum temporal exhibitions in various representations of memory. To put exactly Igor Dodon's words: "the Museum is a part of Armenians' identity", "like language and religion is very important for Armenians because it preserves and represents genocide's memory."²¹⁹

Furthermore, the role of Armenian diaspora had created a dynamic trajectory in forming Armenian genocide memory, namely the Armenian communities around the world are of vital importance in shaping the international memory. On September 21, 1991, the Republic of Armenia gained its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there have been positive steps to international recognition of the genocide and public discussions for reparations. In the same time, a gap emerged between the Armenian diaspora and the Republic of Armenia regarding the core of Armenian genocide recognition and Armenian identity. After the Armenian independence and the end of Karabagh war, the Armenian Genocide museum constructed in Armenian Republic²²⁰.

217. Aharon, 2020: 7-9.

218. Hanemian, Gohash. *Armenian Genocide*. Oral interview.

219. Dodon, Igor. *Armenian Genocide*. Oral interview.

220. Kalpakian & Ipek, 2011

Surin Manukian in his interview underlines the importance of an Armenian independence statehood for Armenian identity.

In this new state, the museum became a symbol of the struggle for recognition by recounting the past and directed to tell that the genocide was a genocide. The particularity of museum is based on human orientation and not internationally one. According to Surin Manukian, someone can find in the affirmations of the museum the states that have already recognized the Armenian Genocide. He also indicates the political process of Genocide underlining that the denial of the Armenian diaspora insults mainly the Armenian identity itself because it labeled them as "liars" who fabricate stories. The recognition would release them from this label²²¹. For Armenians, the Museum's core mission is to understand the Armenian Genocide as an important step in preventing similar incidents and future national tragedies.

Hundreds of architectural monuments and all Armenian inscriptions have been destroyed, and approximately ninety-percent Armenian cities, villages, and historical buildings in eastern Turkey, i.e. western Armenia, have switched from Armenian to Turkish nomination. Shushanyan argues that in 1996 was the year when the mourning wall was officially renamed "*The Road to Golgotha*", "geographical names and toponyms were carved on the wall, representing the memorial topography of places marked by Armenian loss, starting with Constantinople and stretching up to the Syrian desert steppes of Der-el-Zor."²²² Garbarini makes also emphasis on the testimonies to reshape memory and to debunk the baseless denialism. She points out that historians have only recently begun to examine testimonials generated by victims and survivors of the murders and deportations as sources worthy of serious scholarly inquiry, as she puts it.²²³ Some samples of these testimonies given below, which are of USC Shoah Foundation's Armenian Genocide collection:

Haroutune Aivazian, who got interviewed by Hagopian in 1993, told his story that survived since his mother dropped him off at a German orphanage built by evangelists to protect children whose parents had died in prior slaughters. In this interview, he depicts his mother's dilemma when requested to report for expulsion²²⁴.

221. Manukian, Surin. *Armenian Genocide*. Oral interview.

222. Shushanyan, 2013: 29

223. Garbarini, 2015: 115

224. An interview is taken by Hagopian, M.(1993). "Haroutune Aivazian." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

*J. Michael Hagopian interviewed an Armenian genocide survivor Mihran Andonian on February 8, 1987. When Mihran Andonian's family was exiled from Isparta in the Ottoman Empire in 1916, he was a little boy. During the genocide, he lost eight members of his extended family. He detailed a forced march of Armenians in this interview, during which eight family members died.*²²⁵.

I drive myself to adopt Alayarian's claim which she elaborates in her book. According to her, the survivors understand the Armenian identity to be largely associated with a culture of violence, not of their cultural origin. The way in which they comprehend their cultural origins is mostly drawn by the feelings of loss, anger, and rage of having lost their culture and are incapable to familiarize themselves with a new culture or integrate into it²²⁶. Still, we realize that beyond the ethnic genocide today the "cultural genocide" continues.

4.2 Commemoration of 100 years

In 2001, the French Parliament voted that Armenians were submitted to successive massacres from 1915 to 1917.²²⁷ The Armenian genocide received legal Dutch recognition for the first time in 2004 when "The Hague" accepted that crimes against human rights had been committed in the Ottoman Empire, albeit it did not use the word "genocide" explicitly.²²⁸ In 2005, the European Parliament stated that the recognition of the genocide is a precondition for Turkey's membership in the European Union and deterrence from deterioration in Turkey-EU ties.²²⁹ A few years later, in 2007, Yücel Güçlü indicates that US political leaders narrowly averted a resolution on the Armenian genocide in the House of Representatives. As Armenian activists lobby politicians to formally recognize an Armenian genocide, it is likely the first step toward demanding collective reparations.²³⁰

The United States served itself as a synergy in the Turkish government's campaign to cover up the massacres of over 1.5 million people. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House of Representatives set to vote on legislation requiring the US to recognize the Armenian Genocide on October 10, 2007. However, because Turkey alleged to be,

225. An interview is taken by Hagopian, M. (1987). "Mihran Andonian." an Armenian Survivor. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

226. Alayarian, 2008: introduction

227. *BBC News*, Jan. 18, 2001.

228. Aharon, 2020

229. Güçlü, 2009; Beachler, 2011; Açar and Rüma, 2007

230. Güçlü, 2009

for the USA, a strategic ally for the Middle East affairs, President George W. Bush promptly lobbied US lawmakers not to support a resolution declaring the Ottoman Turks' massacre of Armenians.²³¹ Furthermore, President Obama, when he took his office identified genocide prevention as a “core national security interest and core moral responsibility” of the United States²³². In 2010, Great Britain officially recognized the Turkish atrocities against the Armenian ethnos. Two years later, in 2012, the Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee Western USA was formed in Los Angeles to guide the diverse commemorative activities in the Western United States in preparation for the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 24, 2015.

The genocide-recognition milestone was Erdoğan's April 2014 statement when he recognized some of the basic facts of the Armenian genocide, even though there was no change in Turkey's genocide-denial policy. Erdoğan's public speech nudged Germans into recognition and led to action by the Bundestag without throwing German-Turkish relations into total havoc. The stage set to acknowledge the genocide and continue using soft power to advance the Armenian cause. Public recognition of the massacres of Ottoman Armenians in 1915 has been described, by many Armenian Americans, as a *sine qua non*²³³. The 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015 was not a turning point in developing more conciliatory relations with Turkey.

On the occasion of the 100 years commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in *Newsmax* newspaper shed light on the political controversy over this issue, he emphatically indicated that: “Turkey's President Recep Erdogan, one of President Obama's new best friends along with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, was extremely unhappy last week as truth-tellers worldwide observed the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide”²³⁴. In total, an estimated 1.5 million Armenians lay dead in Ottoman Empire. One could judiciously characterize President Erdoğan as a genocide denier. He contends that the Armenian propaganda highly inflated the death toll. According to Erdoğan, there was no orchestrated plan for the genocide. In response and the run-up to the centenary commemorations, Pope Francis dubbed it “the first genocide of the twentieth century,” prompting outrage²³⁵. Turkey's Foreign Minister

231. Alayarian, 2008

232. See, e.g., Barak Obama, “*Statement on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2018.*” Beginning with President Obama in 2009, annual White House statements (including those from President Trump) have continuously referenced the “*Meds Yeghern*,” an Armenian phrase that translates roughly to “great crime.”

233. Beachler, 2011: 126

234. *The Newsmax* (April 15, 2015), “Erdogan's Reaction on the the 100years-Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.”

235. “Q&A: Armenian Genocide Dispute.” BBC News. BBC, April 24, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16352745>.

Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted: “*The Pope’s statement, which is far from the legal and historical reality, cannot be accepted*”²³⁶. An official report of the U.S. Congress, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, quoting Pope’s Francis words underlining the negative repercussions of the denial campaign for the Armenian people, which demand desperately the official recognition of Genocide in order to heal their trauma.

April 23, 2015

A CENTURY OF DENIAL: THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AND THE ONGOING QUEST FOR JUSTICE

April 23, 2015, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, WASHINGTON, DC

“The Armenian Genocide is the only one of the genocides of the 20th century in which the nation that was decimated by genocide has been subjected to the ongoing outrage of a massive campaign of genocidal denial, openly sustained by state authority. This campaign of genocide denial is a slap in the face to the Armenian people, preventing reconciliation and healing. As Pope Francis said so eloquently at his Mass marking the 100th time period of the genocide, quote, “Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it.”²³⁷

Struggles related to post in the case of Armenian Genocide descendants, and what the centennial commemoration ultimately brought to light, do not have not necessarily divergences in the interpretation of what happened during the Genocide (historical explanations), but the historical memory is outlined: how we remember the past, who we recall, and how we consider about post-traumatic justice and reconciliation. Kasbarian’s recent article on the 2015 Centennial commemoration addresses that “the commemorations inspired many diasporans, both personally and collectively, to contemplate larger questions of who has the obligation and power to represent and manage the collective past and present.”²³⁸ Based on the bibliography and survivors’ words, we could drive ourselves to the conclusion that the collective remembrance of traumatic events contributes to the development of national identification and international policy.²³⁹

The Resolution of the European Commission in view of the 100th celebration of the Armenian Genocide calls on Turkey to confront history and formally recognize the

236. *BBC News*. “Turkey anger at Pope Francis Armenian ‘genocide’ claim”, 12 April, 2015.

237. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. “*A Century of Denial: The Armenian Genocide and the ongoing quest for Justice*” April 23, 2015. Armenian Genocide Institute website at the link: <https://www.armenian-genocide.org>

238. Beukian, 2018: 137

239. Supachalasai, 2017: 50-52; Beukian, 2015: 135; Edkins, 2017

Armenian Genocide and its subsequent deprivation, to call for the honor, and to proceed with the restoration that suits, including, but not limited to, a would-be European country, ensuring the right of return of the Armenian people and safe reconnection with their national home. In addition, calls on the Government of Turkey to revive and ratify, together with Armenia, the two protocols on the inauguration of negotiations and the normalization of bilateral relations signed in Zurich on 9 October 2009. Finally, reminds that official acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide reestablishes the dignity of the relatives of Armenian casualties and survivors²⁴⁰.

On June 2, 2016, the Bundestag recognized the extermination of the Armenians as a premediated-extensive massacre and a violation of human rights. The Chancellor Angela Merkel backed the deputies' verdicts and resisted the furious rhetoric emanating from Ankara²⁴¹. She avoided using the phrase "genocide" in her speech, avoiding a recurrence of tensions with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan that erupted after the German parliament declared Turkish misdeeds against Armenians in 2016. The vote went ahead despite the Turkish government's strong opposition, according to German newspapers. Der Spiegel, a news magazine, wrote ahead of the vote that passing the resolution would be "the right thing".²⁴² Despite not wanting to vote for fear of jeopardizing the EU-Turkey migrant deal, Merkel finally termed the Bundestag's 2016. Despite her refusal to vote for fear of damaging the EU-Turkey migrant accord, Merkel finally called the Bundestag's 2016 memory ceremony a "major milestone in the culture of remembrance", albeit she stressed that the terminology used was political rather than legal. "We are aware of the heinous acts that have taken place."²⁴³

The next country that officially recognized the Armenian Genocide was Denmark. Moreover, in 2018 the Dutch parliament announced the official recognition of the mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 as genocide. The same year, Donald. J. Trump in his speech honored the memory recalling the lives lost during the Meds Yeghern and reaffirm our commitment to a more peaceful world. He further recalled the commemoration of the American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, a person that tried

240. "Motion for a Resolution on European participation in the Hundredth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide." (2015/2590(RSP) European Parliament, April 13, 2015. see. the joint motion for a resolution at the website: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-8-2015-0343_EL.html.

241. Ibid 164

242. *BBC News*. "Armenian 'genocide' vote ignites press", 2 June, 2016.

243. See, e.g., Germany's Statement by the President on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2018. Merkel Angela, "*Atrocities against Armenians must not be forgotten.*" Armenian National Institute, April 24, 2018. Official affirmations, the Armenian Genocide Institute website at the link: <https://www.armenian-genocide.org>

with his written telegrams and his thorough descriptions to help the Armenians and sensitize the public opinion about the crimes: *“We also take this moment to recognize the courage of those individuals who sought to end the violence, and those who contributed to aiding survivors and rebuilding communities, including the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, who sought to end the violence and later raised funds through the Near East Relief to help the Armenian people²⁴⁴.”* France has a large Armenian diaspora and since 2019 it has officially commemorated “the Armenian genocide” on 24 April, including a ceremony at a Paris monument²⁴⁵.

The US changed its position in Congress in late 2019 when the House of Representatives voted to publicly recognize the Armenian Genocide. Alongside Germany, Washington has also played a crucial role in supporting Turkey's denial rhetoric over the past forty years. Turkey's geographic position is very important for US national security reasons, such as cutting off Soviet access to Western Europe and maintaining Washington's accessibility to the Persian Gulf through Turkey. American governments have been reluctant to confront Ankara, possibly sparking a crisis over the memory of the Armenian Genocide. The sudden change in congressional stance seen immediately after the violent clash between the Turkish army and the Kurdish minority (PKK/PYD-YPG) during Operation Peace Spring in northeastern Syria in September and October 2019²⁴⁶. The United States' anti-Turkish sentiment was voiced, in particular, at Erdogan and his hostile attitude toward the Kurdish minority, who aided the Americans in their fight against ISIS. Turkey supported Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region inside Azerbaijan held by ethnic Armenians since a war within the 1990s. Azerbaijan did enormous regional picks up and pushed Armenian powers out of adjoining zones.

President Joe Biden became the first US president to designate the mass death of Armenians during World War I as genocide on the eve of April 24, the 106th anniversary of the beginning of mass killings of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire. In part, his public statement read: *“Each year on this day, we remember the lives of all those who died in the Ottoman-era Armenian genocide and recommit ourselves to preventing such an atrocity from ever occurring again....The American people honor all those Armenians*

244. See, e.g., Donald J. Trump, *“Statement by President Donald J. Trump on Armenian Remembrance Day 2018”*. Vartan Matiossian, *“The ‘Exact Translation’: How ‘Medz Yeghern’ Means Genocide,” Armenian Weekly*, May 15, 2013. Official affirmations, the Armenian Genocide Institute website at the link: <https://www.armenian-genocide.org>

245. Ibid 221

246. Ibid 164

who perished in the genocide that began 106 years ago today.²⁴⁷ Erdogan responded to Biden's statement with the followed word: "If you say genocide, then you need to look at yourselves in the mirror and make an evaluation. The Native Americans, I don't even need to mention them, what happened is clear," he said, in reference to the treatment of Native Americans by European settlers. "While all these truths are out there, you cannot pin the genocide accusation on the Turkish people."²⁴⁸ As the Newsmax newspaper comments, Turkey's government and most of the opposition have shown a rare unity in their rejection of Biden's statement.

One of the basic reasons for recognizing the Genocide that Biden is that recognition, according to him, delivers a semblance of closure to nearly a century of suffering by "traumatized" people in Armenia and throughout the Armenian diaspora. Successive Ankara regimes' denials insult the killing of their forefathers, an open wound persisting until today, stating what happened was more than an outcome of wartime conditions, as well as the charge that Armenian arguments intend to stain official versions of the modern Turkish state's founding.²⁴⁹ According to specialists in Middle East affairs, Zanotti and Clayton, and official affirmations of the Armenian Genocide national institution, thirty-one countries today have recognized the genocide²⁵⁰.

4.3 Reshaping the memory through art

The films demonstrate that the collective memory of the Armenian Holocaust must not be forgotten, and also that history's distortion could finally be addressed in cinema as well. On the commemoration occasion, art is a way of honoring the past. Turkish government officially states that those who seek to define their country's

247. See, e.g., White House, Statement by the President on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2021. Biden Joe, "5 Reasons Why Biden's Recognition of the Armenian Genocide is significant-SIS professor Hrach Gregorian discusses why US recognition of the Armenian genocide is important." Armenian National Institute, 2021.

248. *The Newsmax* (April 26, 2021), "Erdogan Urges Biden to Reverse Saying Armenian Genocide."

249. *Ibid* 172.

250. The EU states listed as having recognized a genocide are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden. The European Parliament has also referred to the deaths as genocide. The non-EU states are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Lebanon, Paraguay, Russia, Switzerland, Vatican City, Venezuela, and Uruguay. In April 2015, the Republic of Cyprus's ethnic Greek parliament passed a resolution making it a crime to deny that the events constituted genocide. In 2007, Switzerland criminally fined an ethnic Turkish politician for denying that the events constituted genocide, and in 2012 France passed a law making it a crime to deny that the events constituted genocide—though the law was subsequently invalidated by the French Constitutional Council. Long-standing Turkish law criminalizes the characterization of the events as genocide. In 2021, the USA was added to the list. See. Zanotti, Jim, and Thomas Clayton. "Armenian Genocide' Issue Background and Pending House and Senate Resolutions (H.Res. 296 and S.Res. 150)." *Congressional Research Service*, October 28, 2019. <https://doi.org/www.crs.gov>; Armenian Genocide Institute website at the link: <https://www.armenian-genocide.org>

actions as genocide are suffering from “Holocaust envy”. However, the UK has supported a number of projects aimed at promoting reconciliation in Turkish-Armenian relations. These projects included a Turkish film festival in Yerevan, a touring theater production on Turkish-Armenian relations, and bringing together activists in both countries to discuss EU integration²⁵¹. Hollywood produced movies recounting the experiences of survivors. Illustrating the events even through films is somehow a way to reshape the Armenians’ memory and establish the historical justice.

According to Margaret Tadevosyan (The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature), “The traumatic memory of the Genocide, and the unfulfilled desire for justice have also left their mark on Armenian art and literature. While the diaspora Armenians established themselves into the societies and constructed their own communities, the traumatic events of 1915 and the subsequent exile and loss of the homeland still have a crucial and dynamic role in Armenian literature and art.”²⁵² Some of the topics of the diaspora’s creative world is nostalgia, the grief, the losing homeland and culture and others. The Genocide and its repercussions still influence artists today. Some poets did survive, and others who killed had already written gripping poetry about the Armenian massacres of 1909 in Adana and the 1894-1896 massacres during those about 250,000 Armenians massacred in the era of Sultan Abdülhamid II.

An example is the poet of the clergyman, Grigoris Balakian (1873-1934), who was arrested on April, 24, among 250 other intellectuals, but he managed to escape, and after the Genocide while he was living in Manchester, United Kingdom and later Marseilles, France, he wrote his memoir, *Armenian Golgotha*, which chronicles the genocide. However, poetry about the Armenian Genocide plays until today a vital role in honoring the descendants in the context of commemoration²⁵³. Diana Der-Hovanessian’s written poems are a typical instance of that. Her poems express the legacy of the genocide in a diaspora identity resulting in belonging to both Armenia and the United States. The “two Voices” is one of those poems including this series of questions and expressing her agony as an orphan who did not know about the fate of her relatives:

...do I think of my grandmother
at Ellis Island,

251. Stark, 2017

252. For this issue, see. Kirakosian A. Dzh. *The Armenian Genocide in Contemporary American Encyclopedias*. Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences, The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, 2015.

253. Ibid 179

or as an orphan in an Armenian village?

Or at a black stove in Worcester²⁵⁴...

Because this thesis focused on Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide, I believe it is equally stimulating, in terms of reading and historical interest for contemporary cinema, to highlight this issue. Cinema is yet another attempt by younger generations to reshape the memory of the historical past. Finally, I believe that the projection content of the films will be the subject of a debate both within and outside the historical community. Below I will adduce some of these movies: *Ararat* (2002) is a historical drama film directed by Atom Egoyan. Egoyan accelerates to introduce through his movie the Armenian Genocide is more than just mass murder, challenging its understanding through the fragmentation of narrative, storytelling, and denial. *Ararat* presents many truths about the past while keeping the dangers of revisionism in check by asking a crucial question.

What are the long-term ramifications of denying and being silent about a horrific and common history? While denial, a theme essential to today's anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, lies at the heart of *Ararat*, defacing one's history is intimately related to defacing the other. Egoyan intends to make a film bursting with viewpoints (memories/stories clouded by physical suffering and intangible recognition) of genocide because of the current Turkish government's attempt to deny the Armenian Genocide, as well as political personalities in the United States. The denial of not only crimes targeting groups of people, but also the right of individuals to be "Other," derives from the undervaluing of an "Other."²⁵⁵ *Ararat* challenges the "ethical" character of the past and present in the emergence of the "Other" in front of us, offering us a general view beyond a traditional understanding of genocide as mass killings. Essentially, Egoyan presents a convoluted narrative, portraying the denial of genocide as a reflection of the struggle to remain ethical. The characters are disturbed and disturbing, trapped in a state of despair or denial. Levinas effectively describes: "*I have described ethical responsibility as insomnia or wakefulness precisely because it is a perpetual duty of vigilance and effort which can never slumber. Ontology as a state.*"²⁵⁶

254. see. Diana's Der-Hovanessian poems were published on April 24th, the day annually honored as a day of recognition for the Armenian genocide, by Hendra, M. "Honoring the Armenian Genocide through Poetry." *Facing History & ourselves*, April 24, 2020. <https://lanetwork.facinghistory.org>.

255. see more. Frieze, Donna-Lee. "Cycles of Genocide, Stories of Denial: Atom Egoyan's *Sarat*." *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 3, no. 2 (2008): 243–62.

256. *Ibid* 135

"*Auction of Souls*" (1919) based on autobiographical book *Ravished Armenia* by Aurora Mardiganian. The film, which portrays the 1915 Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Empire from the point of view of Armenian survivor Mardiganian, who is the main actor in the film. Her autobiography entitled *Ravished Armenia: "The Story of Aurora Mardiganian, the Christian Girl, Who Survived the Great Massacres"* draw the attention of American filmmakers and stimulated the film *Ravished Armenia* (also known as *Auction of Souls*)²⁵⁷. Scenes of women who were regularly underwent violence from Turkish zaptiehs, kidnapping by nomadic Kurd and Chechen groups, famine, and rape, were prevalent throughout this memoir. Mardiganian was inspired by the death of her family to take a risk and flee. When Mardiganian came in the United States, she was welcomed into a country where the crimes were at least partially known. The film was well-received in North America, South America, and the United Kingdom, and transmitted the Armenian experience to the attention of a broader audience²⁵⁸.

"Intent to Destroy," a documentary film, is categorized into three parts, corresponding to the title Death, Denial, and Depiction, and begins with a 1991 videotaped testimony of an elderly survivor of the crimes. It's worth noting that the testimony takes place on the 100th anniversary of the genocide's start. The film records the extensive attempts of the Turkish government to cover the truth about the Armenian Genocide.²⁵⁹The film also entails an interview with Canadian director Atom Egoyan, who talks about the threats he faced when filming *Ararat* in 2002, a filmmaker working on a drama about Turkish crimes. *The Armenian Genocide—Edition Educator's* (2006), narrated by Julianna Margulies, is another documentary film that bravely examines the Armenian genocide, a devastating and long-suppressed incident in twentieth-century history. Rarely seen raw footage, unexpurgated photographic staff snippet of eye-witnesses testimonies, periodical articles, and interviews with survivors' relatives and a historical narrative with a vivid images of the trauma of Armenian people that haunts Turkey to this day.²⁶⁰

"*The Promise* (2017)" is also a distressing World War I drama concerning the Armenian genocide in Turkey. *The Promise*, depicts the Ottoman Empire's genocide of 1.5 million Armenians, may be the year's biggest shock. Both the protagonist's parents' families avoided certain death a century ago. As a result, he is a Holocaust survivor's

257. see. Brault, 2016: 23

258. Kay, 2015

259. Fagerholm, 2017

260. Ibid 207

son. The film makes the viewer feel compelled to revisit and share those memories once more.²⁶¹ Watching the film “The Promise”, springs back the past wound. Scenes create a representation of the atrocities, hangings, beatings, street riots, burning buildings, mass graves full of women and children, execution-style killings, and other brutal, intense images. The director Oscar Isaac tackles the Armenian Genocide in, somehow, a cinematic cliché but gripping romance. He focuses on romance, and one does wish that there were more context provided to the conflict itself and a wider view of the atrocities taking place²⁶².

Fatih Akin shifts his focus from the German-Turkish question to one of the biggest taboos in Turkish history and continues to dig deep into racial-ethnic world narratives in his film “The Cut” (2014). By honoring the memory of those who died during the infamous and often forgotten Armenian massacre, “The Cut” challenges current governmental tactics against Turkish ethnic cleansing, which claimed the lives of approximately 1.5 million Armenians between 1914 and 1923. The historical falsification and distortion is causing a dispute between Turks and Armenians and building tensions between countries that recognize the Genocide and those that deny it. The story concentrates on Nazaret, a religious man who has deprived his language, home, and religion and, on his journey to Cuba, becomes utterly homeless and even more marginalized. By depicting the crimes and atrocities and helpfulness of both the Armenian and Turkish people, Akin tries his best to convey a neutral point of view in the film, encouraging both sides to take moral responsibility for the events.²⁶³

Painting has also a remarkable role for the revival of memory. On the occasion of the centenary commemorating of the Armenian genocide and against the danger of a “genocide of memory”, the art gallery (Technohoros Gallery) of Armenian artists from all over the world, with Gagik Altunyan as the main artist, presents its exhibition entitled “100 years later²⁶⁴.” The painter has been living and working in Greece for the last 20 years and is the creator of the two main works of the exhibition. A large sculpture and a painting installation of mixed technique, 15 meters long. Quoting Gagik’s Altunyan words, “*Art captures the history of his family as his grandfather and sister were the*

261. see. Cavoukian, R. “Review: *The Promise*’s an Artful Reminder Of The Horror Of The Armenian Genocide”. The Armenian Genocide Institute, October 2018.

262. see. Catsoulis, J. “Review: *the Promise*’ Finds a Love Triangle in Constantinople.” The New York Times, April 20, 2017.

263. Bátor, 2018

264. Γιαννούλη, 2015; The exhibition, which is under the auspices of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Greece, also includes the Armenians: Gagik Ghazanchyan, Albert Hakobyan, Sarkis Hamalbashian, Haik Mesropian, Eozen Agopian, Anna Ghamaryan, Arakel Grigoryan, Irimi Mnatsakanian, Edouard Sacailan, Minas Semertzian, Mariam Tsakirian.

only survivors of an entire village and through many difficulties and trials, they managed to carry it off".He continues saying "My grandfather's family was eighty people living together and after the genocide there were two people left, my grandfather and his sister. I wanted to do something about the 100 years since the genocide"²⁶⁵.

Conclusions

Overall, the Armenian centennial commemoration attracts public attention because of denialism and the inability to recreate historical memory, which produces intergenerational suffering. An examination of Armenian history's social-historical narrative could lead to fruitful findings of the historical materialization of Genocide, trauma, commemoration, and collective memory. In fact, a historical narrative was required to completely comprehend current Turkish-Armenian ties. It's also a retort to Turkish denialism at the moment.

We managed to deduce the origins of the Armenian Genocide from brief historical accounts. In fact, the Russian-Turkish conflict resulted in the Ottoman Empire's connections with Armenians being shattered. Armenians' terrible living conditions attract Russian notice. The Armenian issue went to the international domain of diplomacy between the great powers, mainly Britain and Russia, with Germany and France playing a minor role, and the Ottoman Armenians were seen as "Christians in an emergency" during this period. The Hamidian killings followed when the Ottoman Empire's Armenians demanded the repeal of discriminating legislation, to which Sultan Abdulhamid II replied with a massacre.

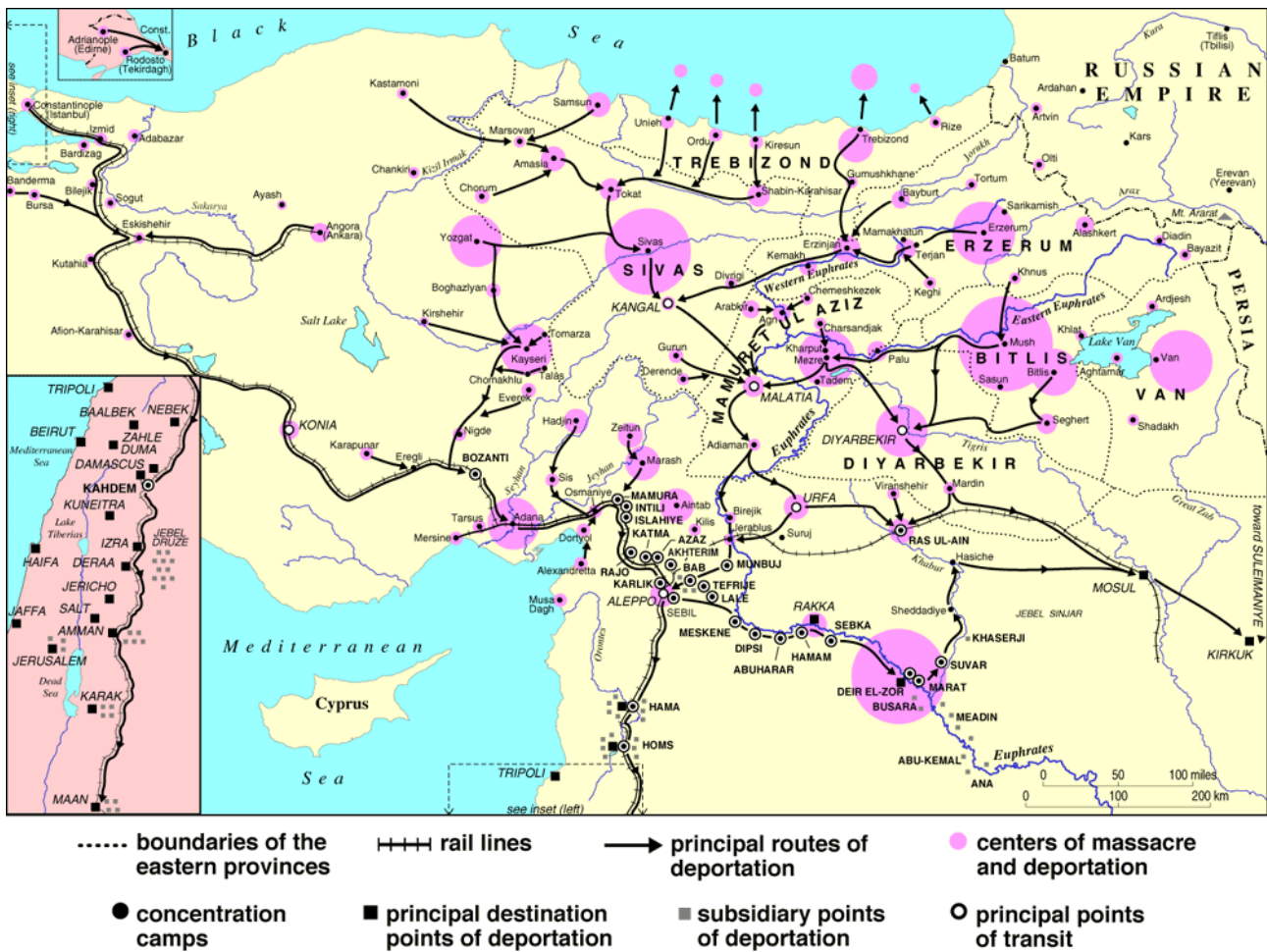
Furthermore, the thorough narrative of the Armenian Genocide by the Young Turks government, drawing productive and qualitative conclusions about the methodology and mechanism of Turkish, which -in some way- remains the same. When the Armenians, known by the Ottoman Empire as the most loyal subjects, were accused of collaborating with the Russians against the Ottoman Empire during World War I, the first implementation of the CUP "regime was the elimination of Armenians from Anatolia

265. Altunyan, 2019

in 1915 so as to create a homogeneous nation ”. The total number of Armenian deaths according to the sources and statistics data ranged from 1-1,5 million. From the historical analysis, conducted the Sultan, Young Turks, and -on a smaller scale- Kemal Ataturk aim not only to annihilate the Armenian population but also to erase their intellectual and cultural identity. Last but not the least, it is further noted that the mechanism of the Turkish state remains - with minimal differences - to this day.

Having over elaborated the historical narrative of Genocide, the academic discourse underlined the significance of memory for the self-identification of the younger generations in the modern world. The recognition is for them, the cornerstone not only to vindicate the "trauma" of victims and survivors but to reconstruct the social civilization of a nation as well as to seek political solutions to the conflict. Even though for the Armenians, the recognition is a prerequisite for the building of a common identity Armenians, the traumatic events are invoked by both states in order to legitimate their political discourse, to materialize the essence of the state by removing the specter of the past. The thorough analysis in the Turkish-Armenia debate unveiled the deviation in views between Turkish political discourse about the genocide and the narrative of the Armenian interviewees' as well as historical evidence. The historical analysis highlights a particular version of the genocide description, arguing that the "civil war" between the Ottoman Empire and the Armenians was not an actual genocide because many people were killed on both sides. Despite attempts to silence and suppress allegations of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey, there is considerable political pressure on the international stage to recognize it.

Map of the 1915 Armenian Genocide in the Turkish Empire



(Based on maps prepared by Z. Khanzadian for the Armenian National Delegation and Raymond H. Kevorkian and Eric Van Lauve for the Bibliothèque Noubar.²⁶⁶)

266. The map depicts three major features of the Armenian Genocide in 1915: deportations, massacres, and concentration camps. The majority of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were deported as a result of the deportations. Armenians were forcibly relocated to the Syrian desert from as far north as the Black Sea and as far west as European Turkey. Deportations were marred by atrocities from the start. Massacres on a big scale were carried out in a few locations. The survivors were scattered over Syria, Iraq, and even as far south as Palestine (see inset), where they were abandoned in desolate locations. Large numbers of prisoners imprisoned to these concentration camps died of starvation, thirst, and epidemic diseases. Many deportees were later slaughtered in further massacres in many detention camps. As you can see from the map, the total effect of the strategy of the Ottoman government was the mass destruction of the Armenian people.

Gagik's Altunyan Painting on the occasion of 100 years anniversary



(Altunyan, Gagik, 2015, Technohoros Art Gallery²⁶⁷)

267. See. Altunyan's Art Gallery in <https://www.avraart.com/collections/gagik-altunyan>

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