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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

“Sabiha Gökçen’s 80-Year-Old Secret”:
Kemalist Nation Formation and the Ottoman Armenians

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Communication

by

Fatma Ulgen

Committee in charge:

Professor Robert Horwitz, Chair
Professor Ivan Evans
Professor Gary Fields
Professor Daniel Hallin
Professor Hasan Kayalı

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Chair

University of California, San Diego
2010

DEDICATION

For my mother and father,
without whom there would be no life, no love, no light,

and

for Hrant Dink
(15 September 1954 - 19 January 2007)

EPIGRAPH

“In the summertime, we would go on the roof...Sit there and look at the stars...You could reach the stars there...Over here, you can’t.”

Haydanus Peterson,
a survivor of the Armenian Genocide,
reminiscing about the old country [Moush, Turkey]
in Fresno, California 72 years later.
Courtesy of the Zoryan Institute Oral History Archive

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Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the two most important people in life, to my beloved mother and father, and to the memory of Hrant Dink.

VITA

EDUCATION

1996	Bachelor of Science in Economics, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania
2003	Master of Arts in Communication, University of California, San Diego
2010	Doctor of Philosophy in Communication, University of California, San Diego

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2001-2007	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Communication, UCSD
2002	Reader, Department of Communication, UCSD
2007-2008	Reader, Department of Sociology, UCSD
2007	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Eleanor Roosevelt College, UCSD
2005-2009	Lecturer, Department of Communication, UCSD
2009	Reader, Department of Communication, UCSD

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“Sabiha Gökçen’s 80-Year-Old Secret”:
Kemalist Nation Formation and the Ottoman Armenians

by

Fatma Ulgen

Doctor of Philosophy in Communication

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Robert Horwitz, Chair

This dissertation explores the socio-historical forces that account for the ongoing Turkish denial of the genocide of the Ottoman Armenians for ninety-five years after the event. I argue that because of the temporal proximity of and the institutional continuities between the two events – Armenian deportations and massacres (1915-1916) and the rise of the new Turkish nation-state with a legendary War of Independence led by Atatürk (1919-1922) – “Turkishness” invented by the

Kemalist elites during the inter-war era remained inextricably implicated with and ideologically positioned in relation to the absent presence of the Ottoman Armenians. To be able to deconstruct the relationship between the Turkish denial and the Kemalist nation formation, I tried to trace and recover these implications and the ideological repositionings along the axis of four main institutions: national press (the period from the Sabiha Gokcen controversy in 2004 until the assassination of Hrant Dink in 2007), national economy (and class formation), charismatic authority (Atatürk), and national education. My analysis showed me that what we today call “genocide denial” is more fundamentally related to the moral abyss constructed in the founding national narrations between the “Turks” and the “Armenians.” Another central premise of this dissertation is that even though Atatürk was not involved in the Armenian deportations and massacres of 1915, his memory and his charismatic authority that came to be routinized over all state institutions in Turkey as the moral compass of the nation remains profoundly entangled with the legacy of the Armenian genocide and the Unionists who orchestrated it.

In my analysis I do not separate state identity and its formative process anchored in Atatürk’s charisma, from national identity and its formative process; I argue that these two processes can’t be separated in the context of Turkish nationalism. Through rigorous historical analysis, I try to understand the ways in which this unity not only accounts for the eccentricity of the Turkish national project but also sustains the moral abyss between the Turkish “innocence” and the Armenian “evil” and the contemporary Turkish denial.

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Genesis: 22

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation began the day I saw the headline of the Turkish daily *Hürriyet* on its front page on 21 February 2004: "SABIHA GÖKÇEN'S 80 YEAR OLD SECRET." I was in the Giesel library of the UC San Diego casually surfing the Turkish news while trying to finish a seminar paper. Was Sabiha Gökçen, Atatürk 's adopted daughter, the world's first combat war pilot, the only heroine of the Turkish Republic, an Armenian? *Agos*, Turkish-Armenian community's weekly newspaper, had reported so, according to *Hürriyet*. I was captivated. It was as if I had been looking for something in this world, and I had finally found it one rainy afternoon on *Hürriyet* 's internet page.

I had never heard about Hrant Dink until I saw *Hürriyet* that day. I came home and immediately sent emails to a few colleagues inquiring about how I could get in touch with Dink. I got his email on the very same day. I wrote to him and asked if he could send me a few copies of *Agos* that had the coverage on Gökçen. He never wrote me back. One week later, I found *Agos* issues folded in a nylon bag in my UCSD mailbox in the Department of Communication. When I touched that package, this dissertation became a "matter of fate", as C.J. Jung mentioned it on writing.

I remember I almost feared touching that package. I quickly put it in my schoolbag and ran to the shuttle. I was almost relieved to see that my roommate was not around when I reached home. I entered my room, closed the door, and opened the package that came from Dink.

Reading, writing, memories, dreams, and nightmares, days of conviction and days of confusion followed. About three years after the Gökçen controversy shook the nation, Hrant Dink was assassinated in front of *Agos* on 19 January 2007. I was in California, 10 hours behind Turkey. Before I woke up and saw the news, I saw a dream: I was helping a pregnant woman in a cemetery. We were walking together and I was pleading with her to hang in there; I was telling her that we were close. “Close” to where? All of a sudden she collapsed onto the white marbles of the tombs. Her baby came...in the middle of the cemetery. I woke up. It was 5:00 am. I reached my laptop in sweat, went online, saw the news. Dink was gunned down by a 17-year old Turkish nationalist. He was right there...lying in the middle of an Istanbul sidewalk.

Blood oozing from his body trickled slowly... And mingled with the blood trickling from the Oppressed Nation Museum. The modern state and its menfolk—government ministers, municipal governors, policemen, judges, lawyers, diplomats, soldiers, and intellectuals talked and talked...and talked and talked...for days on end. And the babbling grew incessant, as if issuing from a many-headed monster. Sabiha, a secret, listened. 1915 was “history,” “document,” “archive”; the “historians” would find it all out. A “committee” would be set up. And graves dug up. We would have to dig up...graves...and graves...many more graves, grave upon grave. What did it all have to do with the Republic? It was an “imperialist plot,” horrible as it was... It was

*a dark, hellish cloud hanging over us, it was the swamp in which we kept sinking deeper, it was an embarrassing nightmare, a shadow that always followed us... A pitch-black notebook stuck in our throats.*¹ It was getting dark in San Diego. I was now all alone at the other end of the world with a baby that came into my arms in a cemetery.

This dissertation concerns the socio-historical forces that account for the resilience of the Turkish denial of the genocide of the Ottoman Armenians ninety-five years after the event. My argument can be summarized as follows: The debate about “1915” is rooted in the material circumstances that attended class formation and the salvation of the territorial integrity of Turkey. The Armenian massacres and the expropriation of the Armenian wealth nurtured a nascent Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie that gave its loyalty to the Kemalist elites. This class formation necessitated a distinct political culture and a highly instrumental national identity project that gained in pure artifice and that needed to be guarded for decades by the military-bureaucratic elites of modern Turkey. Because of the temporal proximity of and the institutional continuities between the two events – Armenian deportations and massacres (1915-1916) and the rise of the new Turkish nation-state with a legendary War of Independence led by Atatürk (1919-1922) – “Turkishness” invented by the Kemalist elites during the inter-war era remained inextricably implicated and ideologically positioned in relation to the absent presence of the Ottoman Armenians.

¹ Fatma Ülgen, “The Oppressed Nation Museum, Hrant, and Apology,” *The Armenian Weekly*, March 16, 2009, <http://www.armenianweekly.com/2009/03/16/the-oppressed-nation-museum-hrant-and-apology/>

In this dissertation, I try to trace and recover these implications along the axis of three institutions: national economy, charismatic authority (Atatürk), and national education. A central premise of this dissertation is that even though Atatürk was not involved in the Armenian deportations and massacres of 1915, his memory and his charismatic authority that came to be routinized over all state institutions in Turkey as “the founding father” remains profoundly entangled with the legacy of the Armenian genocide and the Unionists who orchestrated it. In this analysis I do not separate state identity and its formative process anchored in Atatürk’s charisma, from national identity and its formative process; as I also highlight in the theory section, these two processes can’t be separated in the context of Turkish nationalism. As this unity accounts for the eccentricity of the Turkish national project, through rigorous historical analysis I try to understand the ways in which it also accounts for the resilience of the contemporary Turkish denial.

It would not be wrong to call Turkish-Armenian conflict as “one of the world’s most enduring and bitter rivalries.”² As much as the temporal nexus of this conflict and its more scandalous aspects have remained fixed in 1915 under the influence of the international politics of “genocide recognition,” its roots can be traced all the way to the mid- 19th century. A conflict between the Ottoman state and the Armenians emerged when Ottoman State’s modernization efforts in the periphery – sedentarization of the Kurdish tribes and their recruitment to military- could not be sustained and supported by just administrative methods in the Eastern Anatolia. Up

² Dan Bilefsky, “A Family Tree Uprooted by a 60-year old Secret,” *New York Times*, January 5, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/06/world/europe/06iht-turkey.html>

until that stage, the Armenian peasant population living in the “six provinces”, known as the *vilâyat-ı sitte* – Sivas, Erzurum, Mamuretulaziz, Diyarbekir, Bitlis and Van had been living under the quasi-feudal oppression of the nomadic Kurdish tribal chiefs. Kurdish overlords would provide the Armenian peasants with protection in return for an unofficial protection tax. When the effects of centralizing efforts began to be felt in the 1870s, however, this balance of cohabitation between the Kurds and Armenians was shaken. Kurdish lords who controlled vast territories in the Eastern Anatolia would not yield power to the state so easily; Armenians began to suffer from double-taxation and the depredations of the Kurdish tribes. The Ottoman State’s incompetence in managing this process with effective administrative supervision, which Mustafa Kemal Atatuk calls a “calumny” foreigners “invented against us to satisfy their own economic and political interests” (see Chapter 5), has been an open invitation to great power intervention. From Britain to Russia, Armenians came to epitomize the “Christians in peril” in the biblical lands of the Near East. The subsequent developments of the late 19th century would show that the Christians of the Empire were indeed in peril, especially under Abdulhamid II’s rule.

In the context of the 19th century demise of the Empire whose foundations and the multi-national social fabric were shaken after the French Revolution by the rise of nationalism and massive social and economic transformations, every episode of great power intervention rendered the position of the Armenians more precarious before the Ottoman State. The kinds of demands the Great Powers were imposing on the Empire especially regarding the reforms in the Eastern provinces were entirely out of order for

a sovereign state.³ The Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 would yield important ramifications for the politics between the Christians and the Muslims within the Empire. In that war, the Empire lost some of the most valuable lands in the Balkans, triggering a real fear in the ruling elites that Anatolia – “the crucible of Ottoman power”- would go the same way.⁴ The Armenian affair had to be taken seriously, as the alliance of the Armenian elites with the Powers during the Berlin Conference of 1878 showed. Thus, the Armenian issue was already born as a serious conflict over the territorial sovereignty of Anatolia. It was after this conference, the Armenians lost their *millet-i sadıka* (the loyal millet) status in the eyes of the Ottoman ruling elites.

The Ottoman State recognized the developments as an opportunity to win back the loyalty of the Muslim Kurdish tribes to fortify the security of the Eastern Anatolian territories. It was during Abdulhamid II’s regime, which had turned to “official Islam” to keep the Empire together, Hamidiye Light Cavalry was recruited from the Sunni Kurdish tribes. These were Cossack-style irregular units and their official job was to quell what the state saw as “the perfidious and subversive activities of the Armenian brigands.”⁵ They had “a virtual license to raid.”⁶ During the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the Hamidiye regiments “became a well-known brutality.”⁷ Tens of thousands of Armenians were massacred by these units between 1894 and 1896, and as such these mass killings represented yet another turning point

³ Selim Deringil, “‘The Armenian Question is Finally Closed’: Mass conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895-1897,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2009; 51 (2), 350.

⁴ Deringil, “‘The Armenian Question is Finally Closed,’” 349.

⁵ Deringil, “‘The Armenian Question is Finally Closed,’” 349.

⁶ Deringil, “‘The Armenian Question is Finally Closed,’” 349.

⁷ Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants and Refugees* (Seattle and London: University of Washington, 2009), 119.

in relations between Armenians, the Empire and the other Muslim groups within the Empire.⁸ The Muslims of Eastern Anatolia, notables, dervishes, religious functionaries and the sheiks of Kurdish tribes were all terrified by the specter of an independent Armenia, which would render them once again immigrants (*muhacir*); it was why the massacres “spread like shockwaves” immediately after the Sultan’s acceptance of the reforms.⁹ About a decade later, another 30,000 Armenians were massacred in Adana.

Before the onset of the 20th century, then, the Armenians had already become the superfluous population of the Empire. While the empire was territorially shrinking, it was at the same time receiving thousands of Muslim refugees from the Balkans and Caucasia. By the end of the Balkan wars and on the eve of the Great War, a refugee problem of an unprecedented scale had developed. According to the special commission convened by the Carnegie Foundation, “the Turks were fleeing before Christians, the Bulgarians before the Greeks and the Turks, the Greeks and the Turks before the Bulgarians, the Albanians before the Servians [sic].”¹⁰ The Empire was in a nationalist inferno of unmixing populations intertwined with deportations and mass killings; all groups – Muslims, Bulgarians, and Greeks were going after one another using exactly the same tactics.¹¹

In sum, under the converging pressures of a number of traumatic macro-social conditions – the rise of nationalism in a multi-national empire, increasing debts of the state because of continuous wars and migrations, being disenfranchised and

⁸ Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 127.

⁹ Deringil, ““The Armenian Question is Finally Closed,”” 367.

¹⁰ Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 127.

¹¹ Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 126.

completely out of sync in the periphery with the world-historical transformations of industrialism and capitalism – the Turkish-Armenian conflict, which was born as a territorial conflict and was internationalized by the Berlin Congress of 1878, reached 1915 as a territorial issue exasperated by the economic and demographic concerns of a state in an existential struggle. While the Empire was entering the Great War, there was only one concern: to save the state.

The Armenian deportations of 1915 were orchestrated and executed by the Ottoman Government thousands of miles away from the center of the high drama of the Great War. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians all around Asia Minor were rounded up and forcibly driven to the deserts of northern Syria. Hundreds of thousands of them were murdered during the marches by regular and irregular troops of the Ottoman state. A great number of Armenian men were massacred in the labor battalions of the Ottoman army. Thousands were destroyed by the epidemics, exposure, and starvation. Thousands of Armenian women and children were taken into the Muslim harems (of both Turks and Kurds) and were assimilated. The property of the Ottoman Armenians was declared “abandoned” by the Ottoman state and became the dowry of the new Turkish state. It was allocated to the Muslim refugees who were re-settled in the provinces populated by the Armenians and it was used in the creation of a new Muslim bourgeoisie. Without this violence that resulted in the destruction of the Armenian population of Anatolia, there would neither be a Turkish national bourgeoisie, nor would Anatolia become the “Turkish homeland.” Many cultural monuments of the two thousand year old Armenian civilization in Anatolia from the monasteries to the churches were gradually destroyed during the Great War and during

the Republican period. The ‘Abandoned Property’ legislation of the Republic classified *only* the Armenians as ‘deserters and missing people’ (*fırarî and mütegayyip kişiler*)¹². After the victory of the Kemalists in the Turkish War of Independence, The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) made no provision for the rehabilitation, restitution or compensation of the Armenian survivors. In fact the revised peace treaty made no mention of the ‘Armenians.’ As Hovannisian puts it, ‘it was as if the Armenians had never existed in the Ottoman Empire.’¹³ Bloxham argues ‘within the wider history of inter-group massacre and forced displacement in the chain from central Asia through the Caucasus, Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Eastern and Central Europe from the mid-nineteenth century during the crisis and collapse of the Ottoman, Qing, Romanov, and Habsburg empires, the Armenian genocide constitutes an usually complete instance of communal obliteration.’¹⁴ Before the Great War, there were about 1,5 million Armenians in the Empire, by the 1927 census, this number came down to 65 thousand. At least a third of the pre-war population is estimated to have perished during the deportations and massacres of 1915. Modern Turkey rose on the ashes of these “missing people.” To a great extent, “the phoenix was Armenian.”¹⁵

After the offensives of the Turkish nationalist forces during the Turkish War of Independence, Armenia was driven to a rugged territory of Caucasia. The first

¹² See Salahaddin Kardeş, “*Tehcir*” ve *Emval-i Metrûke Mevzuatı* (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı, 2008), 177. Also see 120, 169, 170, 171, 173 for the use of the terminology in Kardeş’s work. I thank Mehmet Polatel for bringing this to my attention.

¹³ Richard Hovannisian, “Etiology and Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide” in *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimension*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994)

¹⁴ Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: imperialism, nationalism, and the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford and New York : Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

¹⁵ The articulation belongs to Prof.Ivan Evans of the Department of Sociology at UCSD; it was expressed during a private conversation. The “phoenix” is the genesis mythos of the new Turkish state, which suggests that Turkey rose out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

Republic's existence as a sovereign state was brief: 1918-1920. It was incorporated into the Soviet Union as part of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic in 1922. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and Armenia declared its independence. Today, one hardly comes across an article in the international press, written by Armenians or others, which does not mention that Armenia is a "small, landlocked, vulnerable state."¹⁶ The 11th article of Armenia's Declaration of Independence writes that "the Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia."¹⁷ The Armenian Constitution stipulates in its Preamble that "The Armenian People", recognizes "as a basis the fundamental principles of Armenian statehood and the national aspirations engraved in the Declaration of Independence of Armenia."¹⁸ Based on this, Turkey claims Armenia does not recognize its territorial integrity by constitutionally defining "Western Armenia," which is "Eastern Anatolia," within the domain of its "fatherland." Besides the Armenian state, Turkey faces another very important constituency in international politics: The Armenian Diaspora. Armenians abroad — estimated at 5.7 million — outnumber the 3.2 million living in Armenia itself. The largest communities are in Russia (2 million), the United States (1.4 million), Georgia (460,000) and France (450,000).¹⁹

¹⁶ Pierre Papazian, "Thinking the Unthinkable," *The Armenian Reporter*, December 17, 1994.

¹⁷ The Armenian Declaration of Independence is available online at the website of the Armenian Foreign Ministry: "Declaration of Independence," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, <http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/htms/doi.html>

¹⁸ The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia is available online at the website of the Armenian Foreign Ministry: "Constitution of the Republic of Armenia," <http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/htms/conttitution.html>

¹⁹ "Turkey Warns US Over Armenia Vote," *MSNBC*, March 5, 2010, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35731754/ns/world_news-europe/ Armenian Diaspora, from the

Semantics and Denial

Was what befell the Ottoman Armenians in 1915 “genocide”, “ethnic cleansing”, “holocaust”, “destruction”, “deportation”, or *tehcir*²⁰? All of them? Some of them? The central problem of this dissertation is not what the complex collection of violent events, as I just articulated above, that eventually came to destroy the entire Armenian civilization in Anatolia should be called. As I will argue in the context of a brief review of some of these terms below, the catastrophe that befell the Armenians during the Great War conforms to the definition of “genocide”; in fact, the Armenian plight was among the atrocities that inspired Rafael Lemkin who originally formulated the concept and its law.²¹

What I tried to understand in this dissertation were rather the reasons behind the century old denial of these violent acts by Turkey today: Turkey denies the “existence” of the majority of the events I summarized above regardless of what they are called; it denies that they were the very events that lie at the foundations of the Republic. First and foremost, it denies that there were massacres; it denies the confiscation of the Armenian wealth. It denies that the nexus of continuity between the Empire and the Republic rests on this violence and the economic transformation largely materialized as a result of this violence. It is true that the circumstances that necessitated a more organized denial in the international arena materialized only after

perspective of the politics of genocide recognition and the perceptions of Turkey, is not a monolithic formation. It has a multiplicity of institutions with different expectations.

²⁰ The term officially used by the Turkish state to define the deportations of the Armenians during the Great War as a war measure. Its universe of meanings coincides with that of “deportation” and “forced population transfer.”

²¹ Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 17, 21.

the assassinations of the Turkish diplomats by the Armenian militants during the 1970s and 80s. As I show in this dissertation, however, denial existed in highly sophisticated modalities before the term “genocide” came to bear prominence in the post-WW2 world order. This underlines the fact that the contemporary political euphoria around the “g-word” per se is not the whole story when it comes to understanding Turkish denial.

Turkey argues that the deportations were a war measure against the Armenian rebellions in the Eastern border, Armenians were “relocated” to northern Syria, deportations were largely carried out in an orderly fashion, food and water were provided, the security of the caravans were maintained, and Armenians were compensated for their property losses at their destinations. In the midst of such extraordinary circumstances as war, some “negligences” naturally occurred; those who did not obey the orders were punished by the Court Martial. Some number of Armenians died due to exposure and epidemics; and, certainly what happened was tragic. None of these, however, amounts to “genocide.” What happened was *tehcir* – a deportation. The official theses on 1915 defiantly deny that there were massacres, that there was the expropriation of the Armenian wealth.²² Why?

It is true that every nation may have its own “1915”, it is true that every nation-state has a bloody backyard, it is true that Muslim Turks also fled unspeakable

²² Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question* (İstanbul: Documentary Publications, 1988); Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File: The Myth of Innocence Exposed* (İstanbul: Rustem, 2001); Enver Ziya Karal, *Question Armenian (1878-1923)* (Ankara: Gündüz, 1975); Sedat Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması* (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu Yayın 1, 2005); Hikmet Özdemir, Yusuf Halaçoğlu, Ömer Turan, *Ermeniler: Sürgün ve Göç* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000); Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001)

atrocities in the Balkans. The central issue, however, is that the Turkish Republic has never acknowledged the violence Armenians suffered during the Great War, it has never acknowledged the role this violence and the expropriation that materialized during this violence played in its capitalist transformation: In the Turkish denialist narratives, Armenians backstab the Turks during the war, then they are kindly “relocated” to Syria, then they go missing. As the Armenian civilization was erased from the map of Anatolia through the inter-war period, Armenians were also gradually erased from the national narrations. Furthermore, throughout the Republican period the free debate on this violence was repressed with authoritarian and punitive measures. Today, any acknowledgement of the organized violence Armenians suffered, even in the absence of the use of the g-word, can be considered as “insulting the Turkish nation”, as I will discuss in Part I of this dissertation. Again, why? Why does the acknowledgment of the Armenian suffering insult the “Turkish nation”? What makes “Turkish nation,” and “Turkishness” so fragile?

In this respect, what concerns this dissertation is the relationship between the denial of the catastrophe that befell Ottoman Armenians during the Great War and the Kemalist nation formation. In deconstructing this relationship, I will take the liberty to use terms like “genocide”, “ethnic cleansing”, “holocaust”, “destruction”, “deportations and massacres” interchangeably. My dissertation involves the historical analysis of texts produced both before the World War II and after. Every time I use any of these terms, their referents will be the same collection of events I summarized above (see p.14 and 15) ; I will be using them to refer to and to mark a particular kind of modern state violence while I try to understand why the symbolic referents of this

modern phenomenon outrage the contemporary Turks. When I use the terms in quotation marks at specific junctures of this text, I will be doing that to underline their “historicity.”

In this vein, I deem it important to emphasize the fact that while both “genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” are legal terms recognized today within the legal frameworks of the international states system, they have, at the same time, become sociological concepts around which significant amount of knowledge-production already accumulated under the auspices of various disciplines from history to sociology.²³ In this dissertation too they are employed as sociological concepts in full cognizance of the fact that they were initially born as juridico-political concepts in the

²³ Selected works on the sociology of genocide that influenced this dissertation’s approach to genocide as a modern phenomenon can be listed as follows: Leo Kuper, *Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State vol. 1: The Meaning of Genocide* (London and New York, 2005); Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State vol. 2: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London and New York, 2005); Mark Levene, “Why Is The Twentieth Century the Century of Genocide,” *Journal of World History* 11.2 (2000), 305-336; Mark Levene, “A Dissenting voice; or how current assumptions of deterring and preventing genocide may be looking at the problem through the wrong end of the telescope,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6:2 and 3 (2004), 153-166, 431-445; A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); A. Dirk Moses, “Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the Racial Century: Genocide of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 4 (2002): 7-36; A. Dirk Moses, “Theoretical Paper: Toward a Theory of Critical Genocide Studies,” *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, published on 18 April 2008, <http://www.massviolence.org/Toward-a-Theory-of-Critical-Genocide-Studies>; A. Dirk Moses, “Genocide and Modernity,” in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed., Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 156-193; Dan Stone, ed., *The Historiography of Genocide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Helen Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage Publications, 1990); Isidor Walliman and Michael N. Dobkowski, eds., *The Coming Age of Scarcity: Preventing Mass Death and Genocide in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998); Isidor Walliman and Michael N. Dobkowski, eds., *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000). On “ethnic cleansing,” see Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Norman Neimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Robert M. Hayden, “Schindler’s Fate: Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Population Transfers,” *Slavic Review* 1996, 55 (4), 727-748; Andrew Bell-Fialkoff, “A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing,” *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3): 110, Summer 1993.

post-WW2 era. However, it is one thing to avoid falling into the traps of presentism in historical analysis, i.e. to be cognizant of the precarious routes questions such as “did Mustafa Kemal [who died in 1938] acknowledge the Armenian *genocide*?” may lead. It is yet another thing to get bogged down in excess legalistic terminology and debates that ultimately erode our human compassion, paralyze our faculties of intelligence and judgement, and preclude historical understanding, which is a radically different phenomenon from criminal investigation and prosecution. This dissertation is not a criminal investigation; it is a scholarly quest for the historical understanding of a specific phenomenon – Turkey’s genocide denial – that first and foremost implicates the social peace and democratic politics in Turkey.

In the final analysis, how should we make sense of the genocide resolutions circulating in the international parliaments after the Preamble of the UN Convention in 1948 recognized that “at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity”²⁴ (perhaps somewhat apprehensively after the provisions on “cultural genocide” and “political groups” were eliminated from the final draft of the Convention)? How should we make sense of these genocide resolutions and pressures exclusively on official Turkey while the same European powers had effectively sealed and legitimized the “genocides”²⁵ in Asia Minor with the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 without even mentioning the Ottoman Armenians? How did modern Turkey come to be singled out and foregrounded in this issue in the post-WW2 period? What follows

²⁴ The full text of the “United Nations Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” is available at the website of *Prevent Genocide International*: <http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/convention/text.htm>

²⁵ Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., *Late Ottoman Genocides: The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Young Turkish population and extermination policies* (London: Routledge, 2009).

briefly addresses this aspect of the matter as well, only to the extent that it helps clarify the main focus of this dissertation.

i. **“Genocide”:**

Suffocating the debate on the Ottoman Armenians with obsessive engagement in legal terminology is yet another modality of denial. A very common argument immediately relayed by the denialists during the debates on the Armenian genocide is that genocide is a “legal term [in] international criminal law” based on “intent.” Those who advocate the argument that Armenian case does not qualify for “genocide” rely exclusively on the definition of genocide given by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide in 1948 (hereafter, the Convention).²⁶ Not only some scholars in the West like Guenter Lewy and Justin McCarthy, but also Turkish diplomats and historians employed by the Turkish state frequently deploy the same argument.

Modern law and legal terms, however, do not descend from a divine power; they are first and foremost social texts constructed in relations of power within the very realm of politics; even a brief perusal of the drafting of battles of the Convention illustrates this.²⁷ In fact, the existence of numerous drafts of the Convention with

²⁶ Guenter Lewy, “Can there be genocide without the intent to commit genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, Volume 9, Issue 4, December 2007, 661-674. For instance, during an interview with Al-Jazeera’s Riz Khan on the Turkish intellectuals’ Apology Campaign of 2009, former Turkish diplomat Yalın Eralp immediately deployed the argument that “genocide was a legal term” and only an international court could decide whether there was genocide or not. The video of the interview is available online: Riz Khan, *Al-Jazeera*, 9 April 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/rizkhan/2009/04/2009498583951649.html>

²⁷ Leo Kuper, *Genocide*, 24-29; Helen Fein, “Genocide: A Sociological Perspective,” in *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*, ed. Alexander Laban Hinton (Malden, Massachusetts and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 74-89; Lawrence J. LeBlanc, “The United Nations Genocide Convention and Political Groups: Should the United States Propose an Amendment?,” *Yale Journal of International Law*, 268 (1988), 268-290; Lawrence J. LeBlanc, *The United States and the Genocide Convention*

substantive deletions and revisions and the presence of numerous sessions of deliberations on even a single provision to be added or deleted is evidence in and of itself that there was nothing essential about the text itself; that politics of and between the states in the context of the ideological climate of the era ultimately determined its contents.

For instance, the first draft of the Convention in the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Genocide extended protection to “political groups”; the extension was opposed first by the Soviet Bloc states, then by the other states after long deliberations. The first draft also criminalized “cultural genocide”; this was also opposed by Western states and by those in the Americas. In the final draft, references to both “political groups” and “cultural genocide” were deleted. I would like to briefly elaborate on the deliberations for the provision on “cultural genocide” since the process reveals not only the politics of the making of the Convention, but also the problems that were associated with the concept and the narrative of the law from the beginning.

In December 1946, the First General Assembly of the United Nations had passed a resolution declaring genocide to be “a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups.” The purpose of the Genocide Convention, drawn up by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, was to “prevent the destruction of racial, national, linguistic, religious, or political groups of human beings.” The Economic and Social Council set up an *ad hoc* committee, which decided to include

(Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1991); William A. Schabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crimes of Crimes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Ch.2. I found the most extensive account of the deliberations of the provision for “cultural genocide” in an article written by Johannes Morsink. See Johannes Morsink, “Cultural Genocide, the Universal Declaration, and Minority Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 21 (1999).

under the heading of “cultural genocide” the following Article III as part of the Convention draft:

In this Convention genocide means any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national, racial, or religious group on grounds of national or racial origin or religious belief such as:
 1. Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group;
 2. Destroying, or preventing the use of, libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship or other cultural institutions and objects of the group.²⁸

There was a clear overlap between this article and the minority rights article²⁹ of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights being drafted at the same time and those who initially voted against Article III or abstained (the USA, the UK, France, and China) also voted against inclusion of such an article in the Declaration. Those who eventually voted for the deletion of the “cultural genocide provision” was the UK, the USA, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Greece, India, Liberia, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Siam, South Africa, Sweden, and Turkey.

The US opposition was clear from the beginning and it asked that another formal declaration be added to the Ad Hoc Committee’s Report, which stated “ the act of creating the new international crime of genocide is one of extreme gravity and the United States feels that it should be confined to those barbarous acts directed against individuals which form the basic concept of public opinion on this subject.”³⁰ In the light of this, one would expect the US support for the minority rights article whose

²⁸ Morsink, 1023.

²⁹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has no article that protects the rights of the minorities. Morsink explains this omission based on the convergence of various factors: individualist ideology of the UN Charter that informed the Declaration, the overlap in drafting of the Genocide convention with the drafting of the Declaration etc. For a discussion of the adventures of the “minority rights” clause in the Declaration, see Morsink, 1013-1053.

³⁰ Morsink, 1024.

inclusion was being negotiated for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Mrs. Roosevelt, the US delegate of the Universal Declaration, however, was of the opinion that “provisions relating to the rights of minorities had no place in the declaration of human rights.” She suggested that “minority questions did not exist in the American continent.”³¹ Just before the deletion of the “cultural genocide” provision, another US delegate from the US, Mr. Gross, gave another rationale: “There were in fact grounds for asking whether it was more important to protect the right of a group... If the object were to protect the culture of a group, then it was primarily freedom of thought and expression for the members of the group which needed protection.” Morsink argues that this line of thinking misses the close connection between language and culture, and in some important respects, misses the very point of the article.³²

Likewise, Canadian, British, and French delegates were all firm in the distinction between the cultural and physical genocide. “[I]t was a far cry from the unspeakable crimes which had been perpetrated at the Nazi crematoria and which had so fundamentally shocked the mankind, to the prohibition of the use of a museum... inclusion of such indefinite concepts as cultural genocide... would render the whole concept meaningless and result in a highly controversial convention,” the UK delegate asserted. They were “extremely different concepts,” the French argued.³³ The Danish rep too asserted there was a huge difference between “mass murderers” and “the closing of libraries.”³⁴

³¹ Morsink, 1024.

³² Morsink, 1039.

³³ Morsink, 1042.

³⁴ Morsink, 1043.

Many North Atlantic nations actually did not think that the difference between the two kinds of genocides was as great as UK or others asserted. According to Morsink, the European delegations found themselves in a bind. They had had first-hand experience in Hitler's ethnic cleansing and understood the means-end connection between the cultural and physical genocide very well. Therefore, in their statements, many of them could not make such "blanket and unnuanced" objections to the provision. Therefore, after they voted against it, they handed out promissory notes about a similar article to be included in the Declaration. The omission of a minority rights clause in the Declaration could be avoided if these nations maintained their commitments to the issue. They did not. The Australian delegate affirmed that a minority rights claim "went beyond the scope of the declaration" because it confirmed "rights upon groups as such."³⁵ He pointed out that Australia had adopted the principle that assimilation of all groups was in the best interest of all in the long run.

With the exception of Venezuela, most Latin American delegations too showed a lack of interest in the cultural genocide provision (and a minority rights article for the Declaration). They all denied that there was any kind of minority problem in the American continent. Their denial was grounded in their policies of assimilation since before the 1940s, but they had also been worried about the "influx of undesirable aliens into their nation-states" from Germany just before WW2. They were worried that the war was spreading to their continent. Brazil, Peru and Chile, who were first positive about the provision, later voted against it. The delegate from Peru, for

³⁵ Morsink, 1024.

instance, had first spoken of his country's early experience with genocide in the case of the "destruction of Inca civilization." So he had addressed his colleagues:

History showed how many and how shocking were the repeated instances of genocide on record. The crime always began with the destruction of the spiritual and cultural symbols of the persecuted group, and then took as a pretext its alleged mental inferiority. It was natural that a racial group deprived of spiritual life should appear inferior. The law should intervene in time to protect human groups against persecution and destruction.³⁶

Peru later in the deliberations decided the provision was "too broad" and "the time was not yet ripe for the application of the Convention to cultural genocide." Brazil made a similar move; Brazilian delegate was first enthusiastic about the provision, then he came to argue that cultural genocide would intervene with a state's justification "in its endeavor to achieve by legal means a certain degree of homogeneity and culture within its boundaries."³⁷

Communist nations remained consistent in their support for an article on "cultural genocide." They had come from countries where Hitler had first practiced cultural genocide. They were firm in their convictions that there was an organic connection between theories about superior and inferior races and acts of cultural genocide that seek to wipe out those cultures or groups of people seen to be inferior. A USSR delegate, for instance, argued if genocide was "the intent to destroy a group in whole or in part, the physical destruction of members of the group was one way of carrying out that intention, and the destruction of the culture of a group was another" such method. Nuremberg verdicts had shown that the destruction of the culture of certain groups might constitute a method of destroying those groups. Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Luxemburg were prime examples. A delegate of the Byelorussian Soviet

³⁶ Morsink, 1038.

³⁷ Morsink, 1038.

Socialist Republic also told his colleagues how Hitler had used ghettos, concentration camps, and, finally, gas chambers in Minsk to “hasten extermination of the population.” “Experience under Hitlerism had shown that such barbaric acts [such as the suppression of a language and the destruction of libraries, museums, schools, or national monuments] constituted some of the elements of racial or national persecution aimed at the extermination of certain groups of the population.”³⁸

The moral visionaries of the Communist bloc were speaking based on their experiences. So were those from the Middle East. Morsink argues that there was a connection between the events unfolding in Palestine – with the displacement of thousands of Arabs after the creation of the State of Israel – and the interest of the Arab delegations in the “cultural genocide” provision.³⁹ Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, and Pakistan voted to retain the provision in the Convention. The Pakistani delegate stated that “for his country cultural genocide was a matter of vital concern, for thirty five million people, bound to Pakistan by ties of religion, culture and feeling, but living outside its boundaries, faced cultural extinction at the hands of ruthless and hostile forces.” He argued that physical and cultural genocides were “complementary crimes insofar as they had the same motive and the same object, namely the destruction of a national, racial, or religious group as uch either exterminating its members or by destroying its special characteristics.” The two kinds of genocide were “indivisible” for the Pakistani delegate, “cultural genocide represented the end whereas physical genocide was merely the means.”⁴⁰ He asserted that the goal of the

³⁸Morsink, 1031-1032.

³⁹Morsink, 1032.

⁴⁰Morsink, 1033.

cultural genocide provision could not be accomplished by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was, to him, “certain materialistic philosophies” that diminished cultural genocide “as a less hideous crime than physical or biological genocide.” Yet, he assured his colleagues, “for millions of men in most Eastern countries the protection of sacred books and shrines was more important than life itself; the destruction of those sacred books or shrines might mean extinction of spiritual life.”⁴¹ In the end, despite the pleas of the delegates from the Soviet bloc and the Middle East, the cultural genocide provision was defeated.

The man behind the Law: Rafael Lemkin

Besides an excessive engagement with the legal terminology during the debates on the Ottoman Armenians, a great lacuna exists in the Turkish denialist maneuvers: the real man behind the concept who inspired the UN convention is never acknowledged. If one turns on the Turkish TV any given night nowadays, s/he is very likely to come across at least one round-table discussion or one expert interview in one of the channels. No one heard in these programs ever explains where the concept came from; a man called Rafael Lemkin is never mentioned. All the debates and arguments are always anchored in the Convention as if the Convention existed from time immemorial out of politics and history.

The term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer. While he was studying linguistics at the University of Lvov, in 1921 he came upon a short news item on Talat Pasha’s assassination in Berlin in a local newspaper. He

⁴¹ Morsink, 1033.

became deeply moved by the act of Soghomon Tehlirian, Talat's assassin who had lost his family in a massacre during the deportations of 1915 in Anatolia. He was torn about how to judge Tehlirian's act; he was at the same time appalled that the banner of "state sovereignty" could shield those who tried to wipe out an entire community.⁴²

By 1933, he was already a lawyer trying to draw attention to Hitler's ascent in Europe with a draft law he submitted to the Madrid Conference on crimes of "vandalism" and "barbarism". The formulation of a law that would punish the destruction of both the physical and cultural existence of groups would occupy him for the next two decades. He did extensive historical studies on the genocide of the Native Indians and he also examined genocides in Africa committed by the colonialist European regimes.⁴³ He finally formulated the law that informed the Genocide Convention of 1948 in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* published in 1944 by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In *Axis Rule*, Lemkin wrote that "genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation." Genocide according to Lemkin was rather "a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves." According to Lemkin, "genocide" has two phases:

⁴² Power, *Problem From Hell*, 19.

⁴³ For the best systematic study of Lemkin's works, see the special issue of the Journal of Genocide Research on Rafael Lemkin, Raphael Lemkin: the "founder of the United Nation's Genocide Convention" as a historian of mass violence, *Journal of Genocide Research*, Volume 7, Number 4, December 2005, 441-561. The volume was published as a book as well: Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., *The Origins of Genocide: Raphael Lemkin as a historian of mass violence* (London: Routledge, 2009). Also see Tania Elder, "What you see before your eyes: Documenting Raphael Lemkin's life by exploring his archival papers, 1900-1959," *Journal of Genocide Research* (2005), 7 (4), December 469-499; Steven L. Jacobs, "The papers of Raphael Lemkin: a first look," *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol 1, No 1, 1999, 105-114.

One, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and colonization of the area by the oppressor's own nationals.”⁴⁴

Lemkin, from the beginning, did not intend for “genocide” as a term to exclusively connote the physical extermination of a group. He was struggling to come up with a concept that would define a “coordinated plan of different actions” – from assimilation to death – that would erase all cultural traces of a group. And, from the beginning it perceived to be a highly controversial term.

In May 1946, Lemkin attended the Nuremberg trials as a kind of a semi-official advisor and lobbyist; his aim was to get “genocide” incorporated into the prosecutors’ parlance and spotlighted in the Nuremberg trials. He partially succeeded; the third count of the October 1945 Nuremberg indictment had stated that all twenty-four defendants “conducted deliberate and systematic genocide, viz., the extermination of racial and national groups, against the civilian populations of certain occupied territories.” This was the first official use of genocide in an official international legal setting. In late 1946, however, Nuremberg tribunal’s final indictment made no mention of “genocide.” Lemkin did not give up; he went on to wage his new war at the United Nations as soon as he heard that a new convention on genocide was going to be deliberated. After endless drafting battles, deliberations, and with substantive deviations from his original formulations (as I have briefly discussed above), his law

⁴⁴ Power, *Problem from Hell*, 43; also see Rafael Lemkin, *The Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944). Lemkin’s book is dense; his arguments on genocide can be found in Chapter 9.

became the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which settled on a definition of genocide as

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole in part, a national, ethnical [sic], racial, or religious group, as such: A. Killing members of a group, B. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, C. Deliberately inflicting on the group the conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; D. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; E. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”⁴⁵

Although it was informed and inspired by his study of genocides over a long history from the period of colonialism through the rise of the modern nation-states, Lemkin’s law was nonetheless born into the climate of the Nazi policies of deportation and extermination. Especially within the post-Holocaust discourses whose rapid ascent followed the Eichmann trial of 1961, genocide became a more politicized term whose symbolic universe became infused with highly reductionist visual and textual tropes of violence anchored in sadism, racist madness, and evil.

ii. **Ethnic cleansing:**

“Ethnic cleansing”, on the other hand, is a more recent term that became popular during the conflict in Yugoslavia in the 1990s. It is a literal translation of the Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian “*etni cko ci scenje*.” While today we don’t know who first employed the term, some argue it was actually a part of the Yugoslav National Army’s (JNA) military vocabulary and was used by the JNA to denote their policy of removing Croats and Moslems from territory conquered and claimed by rump Yugoslavia (Serbia-Montenegro).⁴⁶ The concept was first publicized and popularized

⁴⁵ Power, *Problem from Hell*, 57.

⁴⁶ Jennifer Jackson Preece, “Ethnic Cleansing as an Instrument of Nation-state Creation: Changing State Practices and Evolving Legal Norms,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 20.4 (1998), 820.

by the journalists reporting Yugoslav developments in the West. By the late 1990s it entered the official language of international institutions and NGOs.

Ethnic cleansing may be a dramatic expulsion or it may occur gradually over a period of time. It can consist of a number of different actions committed by one ethnic group against another:

People may simply be rounded up, detained, and deported; or, their movement may be the result of other, more indirect measures including some or all of the following: the removal of elected authorities; the prohibition of ethnic associations and minority language use; forced homogenization or assimilation; work restrictions; restricted access to education, housing, medicine, food, or humanitarian aid; forced labor; confiscation of property; political violence in the form of pogroms and purges; or terror campaigns inflicting beatings, rape, castration, and even death. Regardless of the measures used, the end result is the same: a given area is eventually cleansed of a particular group of people defined in ethnic terms and the dominant ethnic group comes closer to achieving a homogeneous nation-state--that is ethnic cleansing.⁴⁷

What to a great extent accounts for the difference between the perception of the tragedy in the forced population transfers that effectively cleansed and homogenized national territories especially during the inter-war era and “genocide” is a normative shift in the international states system in the aftermath of the cleansing of the Nazis. Although this shift was initially expressed in the international legal frameworks with a commitment to punish and prevent the crime that they recognized to have occurred “at all periods of history”⁴⁸, in the subsequent decades it materialized more as an ideological and as a cultural movement that advocated a global transition from the supremacy of the national rights to the supremacy of a culture of human rights. Ottoman Armenians, however, were not even mentioned in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), which legitimized the entire cleansing that has been done in Asia Minor up

⁴⁷ Preece, 822.

⁴⁸ The text of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide can be found online: <http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/convention/text.htm>

until that stage through forced population transfers – an older expression used to describe practices associated with ethnic cleansing-, expulsions and massacres. As British Foreign Minister Lord Curzon put it in 1923, “[The establishment of a legal precedent for ethnic cleansing] is a thoroughly bad and vicious solution [to the problem of national minorities] for which the world will pay a heavy penalty for a hundred years to come.”⁴⁹ Lord Curzon’s words were prophetic.

Ethnic cleansing or forcibly moving populations defined by race, ethnicity, religion etc. to secure a piece of territory in the making of territorial, homogeneous nation-states became a significant element of European state-craft following the World War I. In fact, the Treaty of Lausanne, which came to legitimize the expulsion and mass murder of the Ottoman Armenians, became an oft-cited precedent for "orderly and humane" transfers of population throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

Germany, at the dawn of the Second World War, had already emerged as the principal protagonist of transfer agreements in Europe.⁵⁰ Even after the Second World War, under the ashes of extermination of European Jews, the victorious powers oversaw the expulsion of 14 million Sudeten Germans from Eastern Europe; almost 2 million died during this expulsion and the Eastern front of Germany was entirely depopulated.⁵¹ In the twentieth century, the practice of ethnic cleansing or forced population transfer has been so prevalent and its consequences so far-reaching that the UN Special Rapporteurs A.S. Al-Khasawneh and R. Hatano in their 1993 report *The Human*

⁴⁹ Preece, 817.

⁵⁰ Preece, 825.

⁵¹ Timothy William Waters, “Remembering Sudetenland: On the Legal Construction of Ethnic Cleansing,” 47 *Virginia Journal of International Law* 63 (2006); Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, *Nemesis at Potsdam: the Expulsion of the Germans from the East* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

Rights Dimensions of Population Transfer offered the following observation: "As much as population transfer has prevailed as an instrument of state-craft in every age in recorded history, ours could be distinguished as the century of the displaced person."⁵²

iii. ***Holocaust:***

"The Holocaust" on the other hand is a concept of memory; that is to say, it is a concept that today memorializes what has come to be identified as the most horrific event of the 20th century: the extermination of the European Jews by the Nazis during the Second World War. This connotation has become so prominent that a qualification like "the Jewish holocaust" today seems redundant; nothing more needs to be said. And yet, a reconsideration of the etymology of the word and how it came to memorialize the genocide of the Jews illuminates why it's not a concept that helps us understand much about the modernity of the event. More importantly, the power latent in words should not be taken lightly especially when they come to bear as much weight as "The Holocaust" in the modern world.

The term comes via the Latin *holocaustum* from the Greek *holocaustos*. *Holos* means "whole, entire, complete in all its parts" and *kaustos*, "burnt, red-hot." So the basic etymological meaning of "holocaustos" appears to "something wholly burnt up." More generally, "total destruction."⁵³ "Holocaust", before the WW2, connoted and was employed to characterize a particular sort of consumption by fire very few today are aware of: "the religious sacrifice." Garber and Zuckerman ask: "Why was this

⁵² Preece, 819.

⁵³ Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, "Why Do We Call the Holocaust 'The Holocaust'? An Inquiry into the Psychology of Labels," *Modern Judaism*, 1989 9(2), 198.

term the one that was chosen to characterize what Nazis did to the Jews in the first place?” After all, there were many other words that would have appropriately described the sense of destruction “holocaust” conveys without any religious connotations, some of which I already considered above: “genocide”, “ethnic cleansing”, “extermination”, “destruction”, “massacre”, “slaughter.” They argue that it was precisely because “holocaust” conveyed both a sense of total destruction and of religious sacrifice that it came to be the word of choice. “But if this is so, we must consider the motivation,” so they write:

-Whether intended or not – when one adopts the “holocaust label, one also implies a particular religious correspondence between the Jews and the Nazis: if the former are the holocaust sacrifice, then it implicitly follows that the latter are the sacrificers, the officiants who offer up the sacrifice...The sacrificial connotation also implies a third party...God, himself...the act of sacrifice involves a tacit religious agreement between sacrificer and deity; if the sacrificer offers the sacrifice, then the deity will benefit him. Indeed, often times it is the deity who demands the sacrifice; it is then the demanding god who must be propitiated by the slaughter and burning of flesh....Why then this choice [of word]? Why focus on a term that could be said to suggest that God and the Nazis were co-conspirators in the sacrifice of the Jews?

One possible explanation is that there was nothing special about the word choice. It was random. It was adopted as a term for the genocide of the Jews independent of the term’s religious connotations. After all, the word “holocaust” was in broad secular use well before the Second World War.⁵⁴ “L’holocauste” was used by the French to describe the carnage of the Great War and it was observed that this label was used by the French writers at the conclusion of World War II too to refer to the totality of deaths. Towards the end of the 1940s and increasingly in the 1950s, the word was used in the United States as a referent to nuclear war. The label has a solid

⁵⁴ For a solid historicization of the use of “holocaust” in reference to a great variety of atrocities in the 20th century and of the use of “Holocaust” in reference to the destruction of the European Jews, see Jon Petrie, “The secular word HOLOCAUST: scholarly myths, history, and 20th century meanings,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2000, Vol 2, pp 31–63.

history with the persecution of Ottoman Armenians as well. Balakian argues “perhaps the first use of the word ‘holocaust’ to describe a human rights disaster was on the front page of New York Times on September 10, 1895 in the headline ANOTHER ARMENIAN HOLOCAUST.”⁵⁵ Indeed, the Armenian “Holocaust” had left a lasting imprint in the European and American memory after the Abdulhamid II era massacres; it was in fact a cataclysmic event in the emergence of a humanitarian movement in the United States. It was applied to the mass killings of 1915 as well. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Britain between 1916 and 1922, in his 1939 memoir *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, wrote that “the action of the British government led inevitably to the terrible massacres of 1895-97, 1909, and worst of all to the holocausts of 1915.”⁵⁶ As late as 1961, Bernard Lewis wrote of “... the terrible holocaust of 1916 when a million and [a] half Armenians perished.”⁵⁷ However, the atrocities that befell Armenians were not the first case to which the term applied either, as Balakian surmised. Peter Oliver, the Massachusetts barrister, in *The Puritan Commonwealth* published in 1856 had used the word ‘holocaust’ in presenting the “the atrocious crimes of Puritanism” and he had concentrated on “butcherly expeditions against the Indians.” Oliver was especially offended by the Pequot war of the late 1630s; he had estimated that 180,000 Indians were killed in seventeenth-century New England, “owing nothing to Christianity but steel, gunpowder and gin.”⁵⁸ In conclusion, for the

⁵⁵ Peter Balakian, *Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003)

⁵⁶ George quoted in Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 62.

⁵⁷ Petrie, 44.

⁵⁸ H.C. Porter, “Cant, Colonialism, and Ethno-history”, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Sep., 1990), pp. 683-692. I thank Prof. Gary Fields for sharing this reference with me.

last 200 years “holocaust” has been employed to refer to a wide variety of conflagrations, massacres, wars, and disasters.

Setting aside the “randomness” argument, Garber and Zuckerman turn to Elie Wiesel. They write that “the man who has done most to establish ‘The Holocaust’ in the modern consciousness was well aware of what he was doing” and what the term meant in all its nuances.⁵⁹ The 15 October 1986 issue of the *New York Times* listed among the accomplishments of Wiesel the coining of the term ‘The Holocaust’ to characterize the Jewish genocide. Whether he was the first to use the label is beside the point. Wiesel was the man who put it on the map beginning in the late 1950s. The term and its popularization developed throughout the 1960s (especially stimulated by the Eichmann trial of 1961) and during the 1970s and 1980s, it came to its broad application.

Wiesel’s texts reveal that his motivation for using the term “The Holocaust” “had unmistakable religious overtones.” In invoking the holocaust terminology Wiesel had in mind a particular scene of sacrifice – the *Akedah*, the story in Genesis 22 where God orders Abraham to offer his son. In a statement he made in 1980, Wiesel explained why he related the genocide of the Jews to “sacrifice”:

The Akedah is the most mysterious, one of the most heartbreaking, and at the same time, one of the most beautiful chapters in our history. All of Jewish history can actually be comprehended in that chapter. I call Isaac the first survivor of the Holocaust because he survived the first tragedy. Isaac was going to be a burnt offering, a *korban olah*, which is really the Holocaust. The word “holocaust” has a religious connotation. Isaac was meant to be given to God as a sacrifice.⁶⁰

But which Isaac archetype informed the works of Wiesel; the Isaac, the silent sacrificial offering who goes to the slaughter without complaint or the Isaac as the

⁵⁹ Garber and Zuckerman, 202.

⁶⁰ Garber and Zuckerman, 203.

chosen victim – the “only son” (*yahid*), “the only one”? Garber and Zuckerman, based on the textual analysis of Wiesel’s works, argue that he gravitated towards the latter archetype. Wiesel chose the term Holocaust “because it seemed to him the only way to preserve the specialness of the tragedy as a Jewish tragedy.” Association of the genocide of the Jews with a sacrifice had far-reaching implications, however. First, it turned the atrocity into a “biblical event”, into a myth rather than an event of our time. Second, it turned the Nazis into perpetrators destined to make Israel suffer. A more humane model would see the Germans as ordinary human beings revealing a far more human story: That all ordinary human beings under certain circumstances are capable of extra-ordinary cruelty.⁶¹ As Garber and Zuckerman argue, the dreadfulness of the Jewish genocide comes into focus “only when Nazis are deemed to be ordinary.” Then the event cannot be so easily dismissed as an isolated instance, then it becomes a warning that genocide can happen at any time, with *anyone* in the role of the victim or the victimizer:

We should not be swayed by the arguments that six million, efficiently killed Jews represent a more horrific slaughter than one or two million inefficiently murdered Armenians. In fact, even the “six million” figure, often invoked in characterizations of ‘The Holocaust,’ points up the problem of stressing uniqueness and chosenness over commonality. The truth is that eleven million people were killed by the Nazis in the concentration camps. Nearly half of these are excluded in most characterizations of ‘The Holocaust,’ and this seems to imply that Gentile deaths are not as significant as Jewish deaths.⁶²

⁶¹ This is, with no doubt, a huge debate within the Holocaust studies torn between the ‘intentionalists’ and ‘functionalists.’ Nonetheless, one work that would be regarded as exemplary of Garber and Zuckerman’s argument is the following: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993). On the other hand, other works that came to epitomize the argument of Garber and Zuckerman in political philosophy has been Hannah Arendt’s and Zygmund Bauman’s: See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1994); Zygmund Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁶² Garber and Zuckerman, 208

Post-WW2 Knowledge-Production and Memory

The Genocide Convention drafted in the aftermath of the genocide of the Jews proved to be powerful rhetorical tool that awakened the Armenians to press their claims about the injustice they suffered during the Great War. The Delegation of the Armenian Republic immediately claimed “Armenians were the “first victims of genocide in this century”, that 1915 was “the first genocide of recent times.” As early as 1947, ANCA (Armenian National Committee of America), in a memo to Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, argued that “the monstrous plan of genocide, that is, the plan to exterminate an entire nation, was...first conceived and executed by the Turks, with connivance of Germans.” In 1967, another author observed that “in the struggle against fascism or for progress it emerges as the problem of problems , namely the problem of genocide which has continued its spell from Ter-Zor to Buchenwald, from Taleat [sic] to Himler [sic].”⁶³ Thus, the moral stigma of 1915 began to rise in the international arena, especially in the aftermath of the civil rights movements of the second half of the 20th century that promoted an uncompromising grassroots culture of state criminality and accountability.

The discourses on the Armenian genocide that proliferated in the West from the 1950s onwards were always colored by the connections with the genocide of the European Jews.⁶⁴ Given the fact that Nazi campaigns of genocide had given impetus to the construction of Genocide Convention, this could be anticipated. However, rather than the convincing studies of comparative scholarship resting on socio-historical factors, connections between the Armenian and the Jewish fate were forged on the

⁶³ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 217-218.

⁶⁴ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 217.

basis of “some form of organic, deterministic, relationship bonding 1915-1916 and 1941-5.”⁶⁵ Hitler’s August 1939 address to his military commanders at the Obersalzberg (“Who today remembers what happened to Armenians?”) has become the central object of fetish for the Armenian diaspora’s both political and academic projects, leading to a total co-identification with the genocide of the Jews. It was argued that the genocide of the Armenians was rather an inspiration for the genocide of the Jews, as the Unionists who orchestrated the Armenian deportations was for the Nazis. According to Bloxham, it was in time completely ignored that Hitler in his address was referring to the harsh measures the Nazis would employ against Poles in the forthcoming invasion of Poland, not to the final solution of the Jewish question.⁶⁶

As the Armenian Genocide scholarship developed from 70s onwards under the shadow of the early Holocaust Studies, the underlying concern of these works has largely been to prove state intention. The requirement of ‘intent’ in the perpetration of genocide was a last minute Cold War compromise integrated into the Genocide Convention.⁶⁷ Thus, the works that established the Jewish Holocaust as *sui generis* defined the field of genocide studies with enduring ramifications not only for sociology of violence, but also for the global politics of victimhood. Particularly Steven Katz’s influential definition, “actualization of the intent, however successfully carried out, to murder in its totality any national, ethnic, racial, religious, political,

⁶⁵ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 217.

⁶⁶ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 111.

⁶⁷ The insertion of the “intent” in the definition of “genocide” was an ideologically liberal move that was made to benefit the nation-states since all nation-states regularly employ technologies of governance that those who equate genocide with colonialism. Dirk Moses, “Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the Racial Century: Genocide of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust”, *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 4 (2002): 7-36.

social, gender or economic group, as these groups are defined by the perpetrator, by whatever means"⁶⁸ repositioned “genocide” as being limited to an “intent to total murder.” Proving the genocidal nature of any state-directed destruction of any other collectivity thus became a near-impossible task.⁶⁹ Rafael Lemkin’s original definition, which included non-murderous techniques of genocide, was marginalized and “genocide” was repositioned as an ideologically-motivated and state-executed program of one-sided mass murder.⁷⁰

That many Armenian women and children survived the deportations on the condition that they converted to Islam and accommodated the Muslim harems was acknowledged as the evidence that what happened to Ottoman Armenians was not genocide. The Nazis exterminated even the children, the Unionists spared them, as the argument went. Katz, for instance, argued that there were “seminal factors” that strengthened the morphological “disanology” between what he called as the “Armenian tragedy” and the Holocaust: 1.the possibility of Armenian Christian conversion to Islam as a way of avoiding the deportation or worse, 2.specific character of the forced deportations (they were not uniform events of forced annihilation, several hundred thousand Armenians could survive these horrific journeys), 3. the “nontotalistic” nature of the anti-Armenian crusade (a survival rate between 17.7% to

⁶⁸ Steven Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, Vol. 1, 132.

⁶⁹ Yehuda Bauer, “Comparison of Genocides” in *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, eds. Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian (New York: Pelgrave MacMillan, 1999), 34. Bauer’s own works have for a long time followed the footsteps of those of Katz in Holocaust exceptionalism.

⁷⁰ Dirk Moses, “Theoretical Paper: Toward a Theory of Critical Genocide Studies” in *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, <http://www.massviolence.org/Toward-a-Theory-of-Critical-Genocide-Studies>; also see Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, 1944), Ch.9.

26.% indicate that the Turks did not “require or demand the death of all Armenians”).⁷¹

When, through these discursive interventions, the “Holocaust” became the only case in which an intent to total murder could be proven, the consequence for the Armenian Genocide studies could be anticipated. The narrative on the destruction of Armenians with its main parameters and main tropes had to resemble the early narratives on the destruction of Jews with an obsessive preoccupation to establish and document the Turkish “intent to murder,” with infernal depictions of massacres accompanied by mountains of people being burnt alive, orgies of mass rape, and sado-masochistic indulgence of the perpetrators to torture. Turks had to resemble the ‘Nazis’ (Talat as the “Turkish Hitler”), the Special Organization’s organizational structure had to resemble that of the Einsatzgruppen, Reichsbahn (German state railway) had to resemble the Anatolian and Bagdat Railroads, temporary human collection centers by the railways during the Armenian deportations had to resemble the Nazi concentration camps, representations of female nudity emerging from the wreckage of the deportations had to compete with those of the Jews.⁷² And thus, Balakian argued, “the century’s first genocide began in part in the cattle carts of the Anatolian and Baghdad Railway” and he indicates that it is “ironic that Turks used the railway in ways that the Nazis would later, and that Germans in Turkey in 1915 were

⁷¹ Steven Katz, “The Uniqueness of the Holocaust,” in *Is the Holocaust Unique*, ed. Alan Rosenbaum (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), 66.

⁷² For an example par excellence, see Vahakn Dadrian, “The comparative aspects of the Armenian and Jewish cases of genocide: a sociohistorical perspective” in *Is the Holocaust Unique*, ed. Alan Rosenbaum (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996).

on site to testify.”⁷³ Hilmar Kaiser contends that while the male population of Zeitun was sent to the Syrian dessert, women and children were first deported by and along the [Baghdad] railway to the province of Konya to be sent to the desert later; thus “the Ottoman Government introduced into modern history railway transport of civilian populations toward extermination.”⁷⁴

For a long time, the only ‘memory’ trope missing from the Armenian Genocide narratives was the “gas chamber.” Informed by Dadrian’s works, this issue was also resolved in the late 90s and it was submitted to the consumption of the global public opinion by the British journalist Robert Fisk. “Turkish gendarmes lit bonfires at the mouths of the caves. The smoke was blown into the caves and the men were asphyxiated. The caves were the world's first gas chambers,”⁷⁵ so wrote Fisk in 2000. Within these narratives, modernity of the state violence was exclusively anchored in the ‘railroad’, in the ‘gas chamber’, in the ‘concentration camp.’ Thus, a considerable segment of the Armenian genocide scholarship “has crossed the line separating helpful comparison from a more or –less complete co-identification cases.”⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the visual ethos of these comperative tropes in popular culture was getting more mythical. The symbolic universe of the “Genocide” came to be hosted by perpetrators epitomized by an ‘Amon Goeth’ randomly shooting at Jews at breakfast time, or with Nazis madly shooting at the burning stacks of corpses. ‘Genocide’ came

⁷³ Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, 190.

⁷⁴ Hilmar Kaiser, “The Baghdad Railway and the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1916: A Case Study in German Resistance and Complicity,” in *Remembrance and Denial: the case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard Hovannisian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 75.

⁷⁵ See Robert Fisk, “Genocide and Holocaust,” *The Independent*, 5 August 2000, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/27/057.html>

⁷⁶ Donald Bloxham, “Organized Mass Murder: Structure, Participlation, and Motivation in Comperative perspective” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22, No.2 (Fall 2008): 203-245.

to mean ‘Nazis’. Nazis meant state madness; they were the ultimate icons of the ‘evils’ of fascism. By the end of the 20th century, they became *the* evil. When “The Holocaust” was understood as the failure of the [Western] civilizing mission, the implication was clear; genocide became the crime of the “barbars.”

As Turkey’s Prime Minister Erdogan recently indicated on the issue of Darfur while he was expecting Sudan’s President Omar al-Beshir for the Istanbul summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in November 2009, “a Muslim can never commit genocide. If something like this exists, there is no way it can’t be verified (*tespit etmemek mümkün değil*).” Turkey does not recognize the International Criminal Court, which in March 2009 issued an arrest warrant for Bashir. The court accused Sudan's leaders of orchestrating a campaign of murder, torture, rape and forced expulsions in Darfur. Erdogan said that he did not believe that Bashir was guilty of the crimes for which he was indicted and he accused Israel of committing greater crimes against Palestinians during its war in the Gaza Strip than those for which Sudanese leader had been indicted. “We should not mix up Gaza and Darfur,” Erdogan asserted, “500 thousand people were killed Gaza. If there was such a thing in Darfur, we would be chasing this to the end.” He assured the press that he did not feel comfortable discussing “these kinds of issues” [state killings of civilians] with Netanyahu, but, he said, “I can talk with Omar Beshir with great ease. I can tell him “what you are doing is wrong, indeed, I can say this to his face...Turkey at least has self confidence.”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ “Darfur’da Soykırım Yok”, *NTVMSNBC*, 8 November 2009, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25018860/>; Also see “Turkey PM: Israel war crimes worse than Sudan,” *Haaretz*, 8 November 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1126694.html>

Erdogan, months before he addressed the Turkish press on Omar al-Beshir's visit, had turned to President Peres during the Davos 2009 summit and said, "When it comes to killing -- you know killing very well. I know how you hit, kill children on the beaches." In Erdogan's dramatic rhetoric informed by his ideological investments and political expedience, modern state violence executed in the homogenization of a territory by a sovereign state was once again mythified and driven to biblical lands in the image of the cruelty of "killing children on the beaches." If the *Akedah* could be co-opted and turned on its head with the "baby-killers on the beaches" trope, would it be possible to project the Israeli perpetrators as baby-killer devils, sadist blood-sucker Nazis? But then, for whom were these tropes making the world a safer place? For the Palestinians, *or* for Turkey and Sudan? Wouldn't a modern Turkey that had a reckoning with its own holocaust be able to reinforce the most robust sanctions on Israel, be a real power-broker, a real moral force in the Middle East, and save more Palestinian lives?

Erdogan defined the Israel's military campaign against Hamas fighters as "barbaric" and following the angry spat he engaged with Peres, he left the stage in Davos in front of an international audience.⁷⁸ In the context of the ongoing denial of the Armenian genocide and in the context of a modern Turkey that succeeded in confusing the world about the events of 1915 for decades backed by strong American support, Erdogan's spectacles immediately scored high points in the domestic politics since the local elections were approaching. As Etyen Mahcupyan poignantly

⁷⁸ "Perez, Erdogan, in 'amicable talks' after Davos Spat," 9 January 2009, *CNN*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/01/30/davos.erdogan.peres/index.html>

commented on the Davos scandal, however, Israel was in fact “everybody’s state” and there has been a “Gaza” within Turkey for decades as well.⁷⁹ The immediate referents of Mahcupyan’s comments were Turkey’s war with its Kurdish rebels since the early 1980s and the atrocities committed on the Kurdish population since the foundation of the Republic. However, it can’t be ignored that in the absence of a judicious reckoning with the genocide of the Armenians that lies in the foundations of the modern Republic, modern Turkey’s official representatives can’t legitimately undertake any moral leadership in advocating recognition for the past wrongs, atrocities and genocides inflicted on others.

Muslims do commit genocide, as they did during the Great War, and as they are currently doing in Darfur. So do Jews, Christians, and atheists. So do those born into Western and Eastern civilizations. Mass murder is not, but genocide is a modern phenomenon. As Bauman argues in *Modernity and the Holocaust*, we can’t say the genocide of the Jews was a product of Western civilization, genocide is rather a *possibility* that modernity contains with all its ‘normal’ ingredients still existing within us.⁸⁰ In relating modernity to the the Holocaust, Bauman’s intellectual project is not about discrediting the Western civilizing mission and what it yielded in time for the humanity such as victory of reason over superstition, rationality against passion, science against magic etc. He rather takes issue with “the myth of the Western civilizing mission” for this “myth”, he argues, projects the Holocaust as the failure of the civilizing mission and as the product of the natural barbarous predilections in man.

⁷⁹ Etyen Mahcupyan, “Israel is everybody’s state,” *Today’s Zaman*, 9 January 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/yazarDetay.do?haberno=163561>

⁸⁰ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 6, 93.

The trope of the failure rests on the trope of an idyllic social peace accomplished by the civilization. The myth of the civilizing society puts utmost emphasis on the institutions that cooperate with each other to maintain a normative order and the rule of law, social peace and individual security. It rests on the suppression of irrational and essentially anti-social drives (society having a moralizing force on the individual) and the gradual yet relentless elimination of violence from the social life, looking away from its concentration under the control of the modern state.

This vision, according to Bauman, is not necessarily misleading; but like all myths, it is partial, one-sided. And the insistence on the one-sidedness of this Western civilizing mission mythifies it, at the same time, it either simplifies or obscures our understanding of modern state violence. So writes Bauman, “we need to take a stock of the evidence that the civilizing process is, among other things, a process of divesting the use and deployment of violence from moral calculus, and of emancipating the desiderata of rationality from interference of ethical norms or moral inhibitions.”⁸¹ In other words, Holocaust was an outcome of a unique encounter between factors, which are themselves quite ordinary and common such as the modern bureaucracy and rational spirit, principle of efficiency, scientific mentality, and the relegation of values to the realm of subjectivity. Holocaust style phenomena in this respect, Bauman insists, without succumbing to nihilism, must be recognized as a constant *potential* of the civilizing tendency; it is not destiny.

⁸¹ Bauman, 28.

Focus and the Structure of the Dissertation

Until here, I tried to elaborate on some of the important international developments and debates that became salient after the World War II, such as the normative shifts in the legal frameworks of the international states system after the genocide of the European Jews, the making of the UN Genocide convention, the issues around the terminology of “genocide”, “holocaust” and “ethnic cleansing”, the Armenian diaspora’s reactions to the convention, and the evolution of stigmatizing ideological underpinnings of the g-word within the popular and academic discourses of the Holocaust. The convergence of these factors explain how an increasingly deepening moral stigma was mobilized around the phenomenon of “genocide” after the extermination of the European Jews and how it was instrumentalized, and came to be politicized within the international states system. It can’t be denied that these factors are also embedded in the phenomenon of Turkish denial today. However, if we can conceive the Turkish denial as a building comprised of two floors, I argue that these factors explained above would constitute the second floor that necessitated the emergence of more effective tactics of denial to be staged on the international theater of genocide recognition.

In my work, I was rather curious about the foundations –and/or the first floor - of denial within Turkey. I wanted to understand the ideological justifications, repositioning, erasures and silences about our “missing people”, our oldest neighbors in Anatolia and how they altogether relate to “Turkishness.” I wanted to understand where the “missing people” went in national narrations and how they were repositioned, what role their absent presence played in the crafting of a “Turkish

nation”, in the making of “Turkishness.” As I continued to explore, I wanted to understand how these “missing people” related to the main pillars and institutions of Turkish nationalism.

Research and understanding haven’t been a smooth process; in fact it has been highly messy for two years. They required long journeys and continuous detours in and out of the literatures in the history of the Ottoman Empire and the early Republic, Holocaust history and memory, genocide studies, nationalism, sociology of violence, human rights, politics of memory, sociology of knowledge-production, historiography, and visual culture. If it is the faculty of “intuition” that weaves together seemingly unrelated intellectual threads, looking at Atatürk ’s discourse in the middle of this process and its desperate mess has been a rewarding intuitive act.⁸² Atatürk indeed remained as the intellectual agora of my work...I branched out from this agora and continuously traced my footsteps back to it. In a country where “one of every two people” still considers herself / himself an “Atatürkist”⁸³, the archeology of Atatürk ’s texts became a compulsive engagement. Already informed by the textual analysis of the Gökçen controversy in Turkish public discourse (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), I continued to excavate the impulsive reactions of the Turkish citizens to the Armenian issue often expressed in urgent (and sometimes virtual) escapes to the memorial enclaves of Atatürk embedded in daily life. At times, even moments of leisure and entertainment yielded mesmerizing insights. Why were my friends on Facebook running to “Eternal Atatürk ” or “I Bet I can Find 10,000,000 people on Facebook who

⁸³ Neşe Düzel, “Adil Gür: ‘Türkiye’nin ruh hali değişti,’” *Taraf*, 27 Ocak 2001, <http://www.taraf.com.tr/makale/9710.htm>

thinks Atatürk is the greatest leader of all times” or “Atatürk , the world’s greatest leader”⁸⁴ groups and fan clubs every time I posted something about the Armenians on my page? Why were the activities around Atatürk increasing on the walls even after I posted an old Armenian folk song?

As I continued to deconstruct the relationship between the Kemalist nation formation and the Armenian deportations, I found myself navigating more institutional and narrative angles and contexts where I found Atatürk ’s memory and legacy to be entangled with those of the Ottoman Armenians and the Unionists. I argue that the Turkish denial’s *foundations* should be articulated in relation to the project of “Turkishness” engineered and supervised by Atatürk during the 1930s. I observed that this project and its enduring effects on Turkish self-understanding could be separated from neither what Atatürk wrote about the Ottoman Armenians nor the particular class formation that crucially necessitated ideological justifications that would strip the Armenians of their human faces and reify them as fifth pillars.

In this respect, I argue that what we today call “genocide denial” is more fundamentally related to the moral abyss constructed in the national narrations between the “Turks” and “Armenians”. Before modern Turkey comes to terms with this abyss and the institutions that account for its ideological depth in Turkish national narrations, all of which are fortified with Atatürk ’s charisma, moral authority and narratives of unprecedented self-righteousness, no relief should be expected in the Turkish-Armenian relations. In other words, what I am arguing is that the first layer of denial is not anchored in the “g-word”, it is anchored in this abyss invested with

⁸⁴ Approximate name of the groups and fan clubs.

nationalist self-righteousness against the Armenians. As I argue in this dissertation, Atatürk's *Nutuk* (the Great Speech of 1927) is a central depository where the central tropes of this nationalist self-righteousness are enshrined.

Chapter 1, "The Crystal Palace of Turkisness" makes an introduction to the foundational story of this dissertation: The Gökçen controversy of 2004 and the subsequent three years of public discourse, which I consider as a primary text of Turkey's soul-searching about her Armenian past. The public discourse in this period including the writings of Dink provides a context to ask the main questions of this dissertation: How could we make sense of this public turmoil? Which national narratives, symbols, icons, memories, and maps were shattered in the crystal palace of 'Turkishness' when the 'Armenian' birds of memory buried in 'official history' hit the glass shields? What fantasies and images that conjure up 'Turkishness' are insulted by both the visibility and the invisibility of the Armenian? How and why does an Armenian corpse, skull or spirit come to insult 'Turkishness' and the "Turkish nation"? How do the Armenians bleed in and through the ideological and institutional pillars of the Kemalist nation formation such as the charismatic leader (*Milli Şef* vis a vis Atatürk), national economy and national education? What was the nature of the relationship between the Kemalist nation formation and the destruction of Ottoman Armenians? In order to be able to illuminate the excess that burst out in the public sphere and relate it to a peculiar kind of nation formation modern Turkey went through, I use this chapter as an opportunity to present a brief outline of the theories of nationalism and a brief history of "Turkishness" that is today guarded by a penal code. This brief history shows that the "Turkishness" around which the hell broke loose

during the Gökçen controversy was a category with no distinct referents by the Great War.

Chapter 2, “Spirits denigrating Turkishness: ‘Sabiha’s Gökçen’s 80-year old secret” provides a discourse analysis of the Gökçen controversy, the Mardin mass grave incident, and Dink’s articles on “Turkishness” in the context of the history of Turkishness I presented in Chapter 1. The rich repertoire of the representations of the national panic surfaced particularly in this period marked by nationalist excess (in the national media and the official institutions like the Office of the Staff General and Turkish History Foundation) proved to be an illuminating discursive terrain to observe the visual and narrative tropes of “Turkishness” in a more systematic way, the ways in which they are organized and mobilized against the acknowledgement of the “Armenian,” and the ways in which they remain entangled with Atatürk’s memory and legacy. I define the Gökçen controversy as the most traumatic encounter of modern Turkey with its Armenian past because ‘genocide allegations’ had never come so close to Atatürk - the moral compass of the Turkish nation on whose image the legitimacy of the Republic rests. Never in the Republican history before, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s memory, on which the heroic and noble reincarnation of the new Turkish state rests, bled into the memory of the Armenian deportations so vividly.

In Chapter 3 “The Making of a National Bourgeoisie “ and in Chapter 4 “Anatolia as the Turkish Homeland from time immemorial,” I turn to a discussion of the material foundations of the Turkish national identity, that is, class formation and re-imagining of the Anatolian landscape with the removal of the Ottoman Armenians. I deconstruct the crucial instrumentality of “Turkishness” in the context of the Young Turks’

policies of people-making that involved the removal of the Armenian civilization from Anatolia and the policies of national economy that created a native Muslim bourgeoisie that attended the Great War and the formation of the Turkish nation-state. In doing this, I explain the major demographic and economic macro-social movements that informed the Young Turk policies. In conclusion, I argue that the main pillars of institutional continuity between the Empire and the Republic that I present in these two chapters constitute the narrative of the historical context that highlights denial's main function in the making of a new national identity. Without an understanding of this 'continuity' – its ideological, institutional, and demographic features- it is not possible to make sense of the highly instrumental and pragmatic approach of the Kemalist elites to national identity that needed to be defended for many decades with draconian measures.

Chapter 5 “Mustafa Kemal Atatürk , the Father of the Turks, on the Armenian Issue and 1915”, the central chapter of the dissertation, delves into Atatürk 's texts and examines his role in the reification of the Turkish denial of the destruction of Ottoman Armenians. Based on a textual analysis of his entire corpus, including *Nutuk* (the Great Speech of 1927)—the master-narrative of modern Turkish history and national identity—I examine and document how his charismatic leadership helped to consolidate both the myth of ‘murderous Armenians’ and that of the Turks as an ‘oppressed nation’ (*mazlum millet*), monumentalizing both in official Turkish historiography. I argue that Mustafa Kemal’s portrayal of the Armenians and the Armenian Question has been generally consistent across the years and in various political documents. His view is consistent with contemporary Turkish representations

of 1915 as well. What really tips the balance toward Turkish innocence and self-righteousness in Atatürk's representation of this conflict is not his framing of the issue per se but the stark difference in the rhetoric he deploys in depicting Armenian and Turkish atrocities, and hence the Armenians and the Turks. The undeniable authority of this discursive regime should be placed at the center of the resilience of Turkish denial today.

In Chapter 6 and chapter 7, I turn to national education, which has been a prime ideological state apparatus since the foundation of the Republic and I analyze the major instruments of indoctrination in Turkey: history textbooks. I argue that because the national education has always been under the tight control of the state and because the schoolbooks has always been written under its close supervision, the textual universe of these books constitute a symbolic environment where a variety of political struggles are staged and myriad forms of ideological shifts and repositioning are observed. In other words, schoolbooks in Turkey can be regarded as reflections of “the mind” of the state.

In Chapter 6, I exclusively analyze the first history school textbooks written by Mustafa Kemal and his “Missionary-Historians”: *History I, II, III, IV*. I examine how denial along with the representations of the Ottoman Armenians has been managed in these texts. The most central observations of Chapter 6 are the following: In these books that remained in circulation until the early 40s, we do not encounter a total erasure of the Ottoman Armenians. In fact, Atatürk's arguments and justifications for the deportations and the ‘abandoned’ property of the Armenians, which are in line with the arguments of the contemporary Turkish denial, crown the very beginning of

History IV. There also exists in these books an abundance of narratives that confine Armenians to a meaningless, incoherent, rootless – superfluous- existence with no human face within the Turkish national narrations. I argue that this ‘narrative superfluity’ precedes more radical erasures that I present in the next stage of my analysis in Chapter 7, which involves the textbooks written after Atatürk died.

The most remarkable development of the period I analyze in Chapter 7, with no doubt, belongs to the new “History IV” revised by Enver Ziya Karal in 1944. In this textbook, *History of the Turkish Republic (1918-1944)*, Nutuk’s account of the Armenian deportations, which was present in *History IV* supervised by Mustafa Kemal, was removed and never again appeared in any history textbook of the Republic. I show how the 1953 edition of the same textbook reflects the state’s response to a number of converging political developments within and outside of Turkey in the aftermath of the WW II. I argue that it is particularly a significant textbook through which one can catch a glimpse of the state’s response to the post-Holocaust world order in reference to the economic enrichment that was engineered by the property of the Armenians in the South. I also observed that in the History I, II, and III of the period between 1940s and 1950s and those written after the 1950s by Akşit and Oktay and remained in circulation until the mid-1980s, an increase in the narrative tropes of the Turkification of Anatolia went hand in hand with a decrease in the representation of the Ottoman Armenians. With Akşit and Oktay’s textbooks, modern Turkey finally entered a stage of silence about the ethno-religious cleansing that lay in its foundations.

Sections on “Esat Uras” in Chapter 6 and section on “Enver Ziya Karal” in Chapter 7, on the basis of their biographies and a close reading of select segments from their works, aim to expose the knowledge-production and institutional power relationships on the Armenian issue in the new Republic. In conclusion, in the context of my analysis of these textbooks, I also underline the fact that the total absence of reckoning in Turkish history textbooks with the world-historical violence of the World War II – 11 million people exterminated by the Nazi Germany- and with the normative changes that were born out of the catastrophe of this war should be regarded as an iceberg into which Turkey keeps crashing with its dismal human rights record and existential fears. While the reform history textbooks that remained in circulation between 1940s and 1980 gave a brief summary of Turkey’s diplomatic relations before and during this war, only a few of these books mentioned that some Jews were killed, and WW II sections were completely removed from the history textbooks written after 1980.

In the Epilogue, I come back to a discussion of Atatürk ’s legacy and, again on the basis of my analysis of the textbooks that remained in circulation between 1930s and 1980s, I examine the ways in which his memory remained entangled with the legacy of the Committee of Union and Progress. Can modern Turkey come to terms with the Committee and its crimes when Atatürk has been established as the spiritual father of it, I ask. Can a modern Turkey that monumentalizes the mausoleums of Talat and Enver Pashas reconcile with their violent legacy?

In conclusion, this dissertation was researched and written with no funding received neither from the United States, nor from Turkey, nor from Armenia, nor from

any institution affiliated with these states. I would like to acknowledge all the teaching and assistantship jobs that I received from the University of California San Diego during this labor with gratitude. In addition, it has no policy implications for any institution and for any sovereign nation-state; it took me a long time to appreciate this as one of my work's strengths in the context of the corruption of knowledge-production on the Turkish-Armenian conflict.

It does, however, I believe, have one very important implication for the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation and it may matter to the extent that it is appreciated by the Armenians living around the world in various diasporas. Here is what I would wish to tell them, if I had the opportunity to address them all from here: The “Turks” you encounter in your daily lives are the historical subjects of some of the central discourses analyzed and deconstructed in this dissertation. They are also subjects of an ongoing state propaganda on this issue the entire apparatus of which –from media organizations to think-tanks, from universities to NGOs- couldn’t be all analyzed in this dissertation. Don’t expect “genocide recognition” from them five minutes after you meet them. Don’t be angry with them because they don’t know what you know. Rather, seize the opportunities to be good friends with them, if you are able to overcome your painful memories and what you came to internalize about the “Turk” through your own nationalist indoctrination and mythologies. Give them a chance to recognize the fact that you are no different from them; let them appreciate your human face. And don’t overestimate the power of indoctrination. I assure you they will be the people who will acknowledge your pain and accompany you in your struggles for justice. This dissertation is one evidence of it, there will be many others. I am

sincerely optimistic that Turks and Armenians, the two most beloved children of Anatolia, will re-discover each other's humanity somewhere in between the million dollar lobbying frenzies and genocide resolutions, gas pipes, oil reserves, and protocols, billion dollar defense contracts and military air bases.⁸⁵

Mark Twain was wrong; a lie well told is *not* immortal. Because, "*the heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing.*"

⁸⁵ Dan Eggen, "Armenia-Turkey Dispute over Genocide Label sets off lobbying frenzy," *The Washington Post*, 4 March 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2010/03/03/AR2010030303786.html>

*...In Turkey one can't believe anything with his mind...
because everything is fake here. Everything is an imitation! ...
Who is our Rousseau? Namik Kemal? Can you read him?*

...
-Orhan Pamuk, Cevdet Bey and his Sons

*"The events here are very fascinating to me. I
find Turkey more fascinating than the mystery of
a woman, than the creation of the universe.*

-Tarhan Erdem, President of Konda that conducted
"Who are We?" – the largest civil opinion poll in Republic's history.

*"Yes, we are doing the propaganda of the Turk to the
Turk."*

-Yusuf Halaçoğlu, President of Turkish Historical
Society (His quote is also on the front cover of
History is Future – his recent book on the
Armenian Issue)

PART 1:

The Armenian fault zone of Turkishness and the "trembling wobbling motion of"⁸⁶ being a Turk in the Age of Human Rights

Chapter 1: The Crystal Palace of Turkishness

1.1.Introduction

In 2004, Turkish-Armenian newspaper *Agos* claimed Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's adopted daughter and modern Turkey's one and only heroine, the first woman combat war pilot of the world, Sabiha Gökçen, was in fact an Armenian: She was one of the thousands of orphans of *tehcir*⁸⁷ (deportation) in 1915. The allegations would prove to be devastating not only for *Agos*, but also for modern Turkey: For the first time in Republic's history, 'genocide allegations' under the cloak of allegations on Gökçen's

⁸⁶ I borrow the expression from Hannah Arendt's essay "Truth and Politics": "The experience of a trembling wobbling motion of everything we rely on for our sense of direction and reality is among the most common and most vivid experiences of men under totalitarian rule." See Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 253.

⁸⁷ The official term used in Turkey for the deportations of 1915. It means "deportation."

Armenian roots directly haunted Atatürk 's memory and legacy. Regardless of what the intentions of *Agos* were, for the first time in Turkey, 'Atatürk ' came to be centered in the ferocious debate over '1915'. As one columnist put it during the controversy, Gökçen, among all the adopted children of him, was "Atatürk 's most successful (and the only successful) project child."⁸⁸

In the Turkish Republic, the cultural memories on Gökçen remain deeply entangled with those of Mustafa Kemal's. Search her name within the google images today; many of the images that come up will show her with Mustafa Kemal (See Figure 1-14). Memory does not simply reside in a photograph; it is also produced by it.⁸⁹ As images can trouble the memories of the nation, they also shape histories, "often providing material evidence on which claims of truth are based, yet they also possess the capacity to capture the unattainable."⁹⁰ They offer compelling versions of the past that often eclipse more in-depth historical texts. They are also a primary mechanism through which individuals participate in the nation.⁹¹

⁸⁸ "...Atatürk'ün en başarılı (ve tek başarılı) proje çocuğu!" See Perihan Mağden, "Sabiha Gökçen günahı," *Radikal*, 11 Ekim 2007, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=235377>

⁸⁹ Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic, and the politics of remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 19.

⁹⁰ Sturken, 20.

⁹¹ Sturken, 20.



Figure 1.1: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.2: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.3: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.4: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.5: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.6.: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.7: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.8: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.9: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.10: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.11: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen

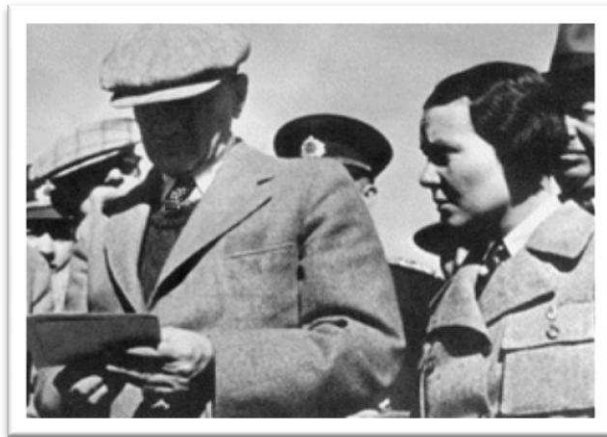


Figure 1.12: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen

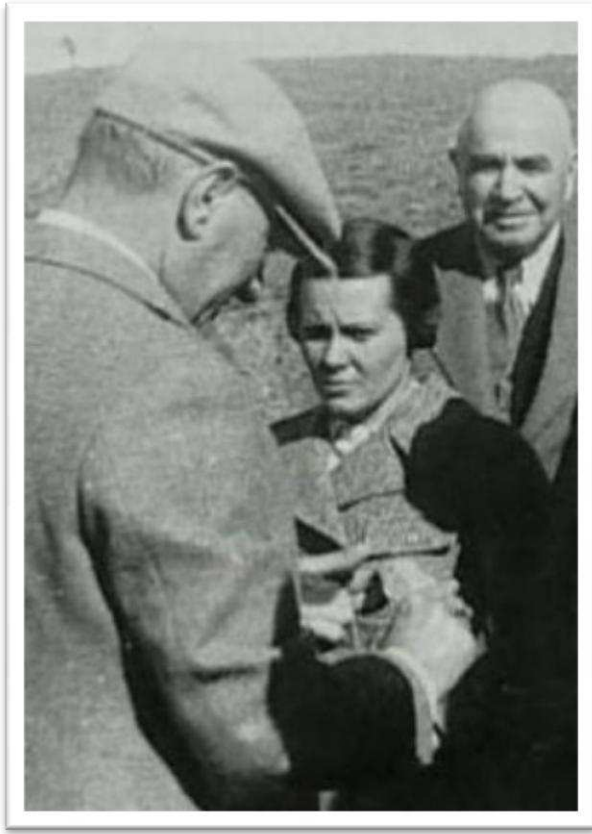


Figure 1.13: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.14: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen



Figure 1.15: Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen

Indeed, national stories are often mediated through specific camera images.”⁹² Regardless of how “shallow” Turkey’s civilizational shift from Islam to the West has been, especially the ritual, symbolic and aesthetic manifestations of modernity have

⁹²Sturken, 20.

been the constituent elements of Turkish collective consciousness since 1920s.⁹³ In this respect, the national devotion invested in the images of Gökçen and Atatürk should be understood in the context of the cultural work to which they contributed for decades in making this civilizational shift “attainable” for the imagined community of the “Turkish nation.” In other words, they are perhaps some of the most powerful visual tropes of the ethos of making a modern nation out of the ruins of an old Empire that suffered from traumatic demise and humiliation for at least two centuries. If Gökçen was indeed an Armenian, what would it signify for the Turkish Republic? How would it revise the “pictures in our heads”⁹⁴ – the very “fictions” that were not only constitutive of the modern Republic, but also constitutive of “Turkishness”?

Between 2004 and 2007, Hrant Dink, the Chief Editor of *Agos*, who had prepared the news on Gökçen, was tried and convicted under the Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for “insulting Turkishness.”⁹⁵ Throughout these three years Dink

⁹³ Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, “Introduction,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, 5.

⁹⁴ Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York, Macmillan 1960).

⁹⁵ The prosecution of the internationally acclaimed novelist, Orhan Pamuk, for “denigrating Turkishness” after his remarks in a Swiss publication (‘One million Armenians were killed in my country’) was instrumental in bringing public attention to a restrictive law which muzzles peaceful dissenting opinion in Turkey. Article 301 on the denigration of Turkishness, the Republic, and the foundation and institutions of the State was introduced with the legislative reforms of 1 June 2005 and replaced Article 159 of the previous penal code. It had been introduced as a part of the package of penal law reform for the European Union accession process. It states that: “1. Public denigration of Turkishness, the Republic or the Grand National Assembly of Turkey shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and three years. 2. Public denigration of the Government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial institutions of the State, the military or security structures shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and two years. 3. In cases where denigration of Turkishness is committed by a Turkish citizen in another country the punishment shall be increased by one third. 4. Expressions of thought intended to criticize shall not constitute a crime.” In the aftermath of Hrant Dink’s assassination in March 2007, as a response to the increasing criticism of the article, the article was slightly amended; ‘Turkishness’ was changed to ‘Turkish nation.’ It is now also obligatory to get the approval of the minister of justice to file a case in order to prevent the possible misuse of the article. See Amnesty International USA, “Turkey: Article 301: ‘How the Law on Denigrating Turkishness is an insult to free expression,’” <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?id=ENGEUR440032006>

was systematically subjected to the racist propaganda of the Turkish media and built as a target for nationalist violence. He received numerous death threats none of which was taken seriously by the state authorities.

Meanwhile, in October 2006 in Nusaybin a mass grave was discovered by the locals with skulls and bones in it. The national media that had gone berserk over the Gökçen controversy remained exceptionally quiet about the grave, but the publicity the mass grave received in the local Kurdish media led to a series of forensic maneuvers designed by the Turkish Historical Society ('Turk Tarih Kurumu', hereafter THS) and its President Yusuf Halaçoğlu. A few months later, on 19 January 2007 Hrant Dink was murdered in front of *Agos* by a 17-year old Turkish nationalist. The civil response in the history of assassinations of Turkey was remarkable: Thousands marched in his funeral in Istanbul carrying placards that read "We are all Armenians." In April 2007, the preliminary forensic investigation of the mass grave by the Swedish genocide scholar David Gaunt and THS's President ended disastrously; the skulls and bones had disappeared from the mass grave before Gaunt could reach Turkey.

The public controversy around the Armenianness of Atatürk's adopted daughter...the mass graves of a modern nation-state...the assassination of Hrant Dink – the first Armenian murdered after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The period during which the public tremors of these three incidents shattered the most cherished symbols of Turkish nationalism marks the beginning of the most traumatic

and cataclysmic soul-searching of modern Turkey about its Armenian past.⁹⁶ This traumatic trajectory and its rich symbolic environment that overwhelmed the Turkish public sphere and the Turks' self-understanding delivered the most powerful and inspiring signals for the questions that informed and shaped this dissertation: *First and foremost, very simply, what was going on?* How could we make sense of this public turmoil? Which national narratives, symbols, icons, memories, and maps were shattered in the crystal palace of 'Turkishness' when the Armenian birds of memory buried in official history hit the glass shields? What fantasies and images that conjure up 'Turkishness' are denigrated by both the visibility and the invisibility of the Armenian? How and why does an Armenian corpse, skull or spirit come to denigrate 'Turkishness' and the Turkish state? How do the Armenians bleed in and through the ideological and institutional pillars of the Kemalist nation formation such as the charismatic leader (*Milli Şef* vis a vis Atatürk), national economy and national education? What was the nature of the relationship between the Kemalist nation formation and the destruction of Ottoman Armenians?

All three incidents in the shadow of Atatürk and Gökçen publicly aimed at the foundational myths of Atatürk's Turkey, centering the genocide of the Ottoman Armenians together with the Christian, non-Turk past of Anatolia. And hence they challenged and decentered some of the most cherished founding symbols of

⁹⁶ Fatma Ülgen, "The Oppressed Nation Museum, Hrant and Apology", *The Armenian Weekly*, 16 March, 2009, <http://www.armenianweekly.com/2009/03/16/the-oppressed-nation-museum-hrant-and-apology/>

Turkishness⁹⁷: a heroic War of Independence (*Kurtulus Savasi*), the myth of Anatolia as the Turkish homeland, Gökçen as the symbol of modern Turkish woman... All these symbols of “Turkishness” today remains anchored in one and only historical subject: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the savior and the founder of the Turkish Republic. And in the modern Republican memory, they altogether conjure up one unified image that constitutes the center-piece of Turkish self-understanding: Turkey was in total darkness before the War of Independence, Atatürk shone on us like a sun, and we became a modern, civilized Republic. In the national memories, the heroic actors of the War of Independence whose resistance to the imperialist occupation of Anatolia at the end of the Great War had inspired many post-colonial movements of the Muslim “third world” now had to make room also for the perpetrators and the beneficiaries of a mass killings during which thousands of Armenians perished.

All modern societies, including liberal ones, depend “functionally” on similar national myths of some sort.⁹⁸ Myths are not simple lies or “fabrications”; but they over-dramatize true incidents, omit important historical details, or add details for which there is no evidence. They are willfully selective. As Renan argued, forgetting

⁹⁷ According to Yıl dız, these founding symbols are National Resistance, TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly), Ankara (where the Kemalist resistance forces were assembled in 1920), Sakarya and Dumlupınar (important theaters of war against the Greeks during the War of Independence), the victorious army, 19 May (the day Atatürk arrived in Anatolia and launched the War of Independence), 23 April (the day Grand National Assembly in Ankara was opened, today commemorated as ‘Children’s Bayram’ in Turkey), 30 August (the date of last conclusive offensive in the War of Independence, commemorated as the ‘Victory Day’), 9 September (the day Smyrna was taken over by the Turkish forces), 29 October (the day Turkish Constitution was amended and Turkey became a Republic, today known and commemorated as the ‘Republic Day’), the abolition of the sultanate and caliphate, the Latin alphabet, laicism, etc. and all these founding symbols are anchored in one historical subject: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Ahmet Yıl dız, “*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*”: *Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 147.

⁹⁸ Arash Abizadeh, “Historical Truth, National Myths and Liberal Democracy: On the Coherence of Liberal Nationalism,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Volume 12, Number 3, 2004: 291-313.

or what may also be called as ‘historical error’ is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, and this is why the progress in historical studies constitutes such danger for the principle of nationality. “Indeed,” as he put it, “historical enquiry brings to light deeds of violence which took place at the origin of all political formations, even of those whose consequences have been altogether beneficial. Unity is always effected by means of brutality...”⁹⁹ Tilly associates this seemingly ‘legitimate’ brutality that lies at the foundation of the state formation – warmaking coupled with coercive extraction and capital accumulation – with “the largest examples of organized crime.” Without branding all generals and state-makers as murderers or thieves, at least for the European experience of national formations of the past few centuries, he argues that “a portrait of coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs” bears a far greater resemblance to the facts.¹⁰⁰ But the essence of a nation is that all individuals have forgotten many things, to begin with, the very brutality that is invested in becoming a nation. For instance, “no French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have forgotten the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, or the massacres that took place in the Midi in the thirteenth century.”¹⁰¹ Rather, a heroic past, great men and glory constitute the social capital upon which the national idea is based.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1990), 11.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Tilly, ‘War Making and State-Making as Organized Crime’ in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169.

¹⁰¹ Renan in *Nation and Narration*, 11.

¹⁰² Renan in *Nation and Narration*, 19.

In this respect, what needs to be problematized and interrogated in the Turkish case and in the context of the violent trajectory launched by the Gökçen incident is what invests the Turkish foundational myths with such uncompromising authority especially in relation to the destruction of Ottoman Armenians. It is true that “myths”, as opposed to history, are always laden with authority. They determine both the system of morality and the values of a particular collectivity or nation. According to George Schopflin, myths “create an intellectual and cognitive monopoly in that they seek to establish the sole way of ordering the world and defining world views. For the community to exist as a community this monopoly is vital.”¹⁰³ Regardless of the power of this monopoly for social integration, in liberal democratic societies, official and unofficial versions of national histories co-exist; citizens don’t receive ‘death threats’ for their advocacy of unofficial versions, they don’t get harassed with penal code articles that dramatically limit freedom of thought and speech¹⁰⁴, and as much absurd as it sounds to articulate it here, they don’t get murdered when they question or refute national myths.

The day after Agos’s coverage on Gökçen was aired in the national media, however, Turkish Armed Forces condemned the coverage of Agos, Hrant Dink was called to the Istanbul Governor’s office, received a ‘warning’, and thereafter continued to receive numerous death threats none of which were taken seriously by the security

¹⁰³ George Schopflin quoted in Hulya Adak, “National Myths and Self-Nar(rra)tions: Mustafa Kemal’s Nutuk and Halide Edib’s Memoirs and The Turkish Ordeal,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:2/3, Spring/Summer 2003.

¹⁰⁴ Erol Önderoğlu, “BIA 2009 Annual Media Monitoring Report: Getting Rid of Freedom of Thought...”, *Bianet*, 4 February 2010, <http://bianet.org/english/freedom-of-expression/119836-getting-rid-of-freedom-of-thought>

forces and finally on 19 January 2007 he was gunned down in front of *Agos*. By the time he published the Gökçen case in *Agos*, Dink had already become an outspoken critic of both Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian diaphora's campaign for international recognition¹⁰⁵, and he had already been taken to court for his statements on the Armenian massacres under the article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for "denigrating Turkishness."

Then, again what invests Turkish foundational myths with such authority that especially free speech on the Armenian massacres becomes such a *life and death* struggle in modern Turkey? What are the institutional underpinnings of this authority? I argue that Turkish denial can not be explained by the nature (i.e. extravagancy etc.) of the founding myths per se; it should rather be explored in the context of the peculiar nature of the Turkish nation formation. The trembling wobbling motion of being a Turk in the midst of 'genocide' allegations should be understood in the context of this peculiar nation-formation, which created a distinct political culture resting on citizenship "duties" rather than "rights" and prevented the emergence of a mature civil society for decades.

Turkish nationalism rose after the losses of the Balkan wars and a Turkish national identity was conceived as a political solution to the survival of a disintegrating state. It was a completely empty symbolic category with no corresponding national consciousness by then and its referents were invented by the Kemalist elites to legitimize the colossal ethnic cleansing of the native Christians from

the Anatolian peninsula and hence to reinforce the state power of the new Republican regime. “The Turkish political elite was looking way out of relative decline and had to find an ethnic group,” as Gellner puts it. The state, in other words, was looking for its “nation” and the predominantly Muslim peasantry was available in Anatolia. The critical event of the invention of a new nation was the unmixing of Muslim and non-muslim populations. The Anatolian peasantry was imagined as the “Turkish nation” with new narratives of modernity written during the the inter-war period. Thus, national identity (“Turkishness”) and state identity can’t be separated in modern Turkey. And this is why the former, with its banal and violent manifestations – i.e. Hrant Dink’s murder suspect Ogun Samast posing with Turkish security officials shortly after his detention in front of a Turkish flag and Atatürk ’s words - operates as an every day technology of state-power in Turkey. In this dissertation I am trying to understand the social power of this identity since I will argue that it is what informs and sustains the belligerent power of the Turkish denial of the genocide of the Ottoman Armenians. In this respect, I regard the photograph leaked to the press during Ogun Samast’s detention (see Figure 16, also 17,18,19) as the most sociologically-significant photograph in the Republican history. Good Turk who killed an Armenian in the name of the fatherland, posing in front of a Turkish flag and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ’s words -*Vatan Toprağı Kutsaldır; Kaderine Terkedilemez* (“The land of the nation is sacred, it can’t be left to its fate”)¹⁰⁶, and state security (personified by the policemen posing with Samast): The quintessential image of “Turkishness.” All these symbols, I argue, did not coalesce by co-incidence in the tiny visual space of this

¹⁰⁶ “Vatan topragi kutsaldir; kaderine terkedilemez.” (My translation).

photograph. What I imply here is not intentionality (neither do I deny the intentionality behind it; with no doubt, a message on ‘how to be a good Turk’ may have been intended here); what is more interesting for me is to read this as an ideological snapshot - a visual map of the “epic encounters” of a historically specific set of ideological narratives.¹⁰⁷ Regardless of how absurd it sounds, if someone one day wanted us to capture the picture of “Turkish denial”, this would be the most precise one. It, then, would not be wrong to argue that this dissertation is also an attempt to deconstruct the ideologically over-charged texture of this photograph of “Turkishness.”



Figure 1.16 : Ogun Samast at the Samsun Gendarmerie Station

¹⁰⁷ See Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and U.S. Interests in the Middle East 1945-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).



Figure 1.17: Ogun Samast at the Samsun Gendarmerie Station



Figure 1.18: Ogun Samast at the Samsun Gendarmerie Station



Figure 1.19: Ogun Samast at the Samsun Gendarmerie Station

1.2.Theories of Nation-Formation:

The nexus of the debate within the nation-formation / nationalism literatures is anchored in the following question: Are nations strictly modern entities (modernist perspective) or are they reconstructed out of the existing inventory of ethnic / cultural symbols and sentiments (the perspective of perennialists, primordialists and ethno-symbolists)? While the former examine the relationship between modernity (capitalism, industrialism, militarism, modern professional state etc.) and the nation, the latter group work through a set of questions concerning historic continuity of the cultural memory of the nations; that is, the cultural and institutional processes that transfer the ancient / antique symbols into the modern era and assimilate them into national consciousness. In this dissertation, for reasons that I conveyed above, I will try to understand the endurance (and at times, the violence of) Turkish denial in the

context of the modernist theories of nation-formation, mostly drawing from Hobsbawm and Gellner. However, a brief discussion of primordialism, perennialism and ethno-symbolism are also pertinent in order to be able to articulate the uniqueness of the Turkish case.

The origins of primordialism can be traced all the way to Rousseau who had argued for the return to the state of nature to recover a lost innocence; likewise, nations too were ancient and existed in the nature. The contemporary version of this approach to nations found its most systematic application in the works of German Romantics like Fichte and Herder who conceived nations in “organic” and essentialist forms.¹⁰⁸ To the “organicist” version of primordialism, two other versions should be added: “socio-biological” version, which holds that nations and ethnic groups can be traced to their underlying gene pools of individuals; thus myths of ethnic origins can correspond to real biological origins.¹⁰⁹ In this approach, cultural group is treated as a wider kin network and cultural symbols like language, religion etc...are treated as markers of biological affinity. In another version of primordialism, Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz showed how ‘primordial’ attachments persisted alongside the secular and civil ties of the industrial societies. Especially Geertz, in the context of the new states of Africa and Asia, observed that the desire for efficiency and order in these new post-colonial states exacerbated the primordial attachments among the ethnic groups.¹¹⁰ What Geertz means by “primordial attachment” is one “that stems from the

¹⁰⁸ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁹ Pierre Van den Berge, “Does Race Matter?” *Nations and Nationalism* 1 (3) 1995; 357-68.

¹¹⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Fontana, 1973); also see Edward Shils, “Primordial, personal, sacred, and civil ties,” *British Journal of Sociology*, 1957(8), 130-145.

‘givens’ – or more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed ‘givens’ of social existence....”¹¹¹ He argues that many people’s sense of self is bound up in the “gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion or tradition.”¹¹²

Perennialists, on the other hand, subscribe to the notion that even if the nationalist ideology or nationalism as a political movement is modern, some nations, if not all, have existed for a long period of time, that their origins can be traced back to middle ages. For instance, Seton-Watson argues that ‘old, continuous’ nations like France, England, Spain and Scotland can be distinguished from those that were later deliberately created. He argued that a population’s sense of immemorial nationhood derives from the longevity of these ‘old, continuous’ nations. Perennialists regard nations as updated versions of immemorial ethnic communities but they refuse to see them as ‘natural’ or ‘primordial’; their explanations remain strictly historical and social.¹¹³ Up until the 1940s, many approaches in the literature on nations and nationalism subscribed to some version of perennialism, including Renan who emphasized ‘historical errors’ and the importance of ‘forgetting’ for social integration.

According to the modernist paradigms, which today represent the orthodoxy of the field, nations, nationalism, and national states are all products of modernity and modernization. When it comes to explaining the main social forces and conditions that led to the rise of the nations, however, more than a few divergences arise between

¹¹¹ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 259-60.

¹¹² Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 259-60.

¹¹³ Joshua Fishman, “Social theory and ethnography: neglected perspectives on language and ethnicity in Eastern Europe,” in *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter Sugar (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1980); Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States* (London: Methuen, 1977).

socio-economic, socio-cultural, political, ideological and constructionist approaches.

Socio-economic paradigms foreground the role of industrial capitalism, regional inequality and class conflict in the rise of nations. National sentiments and identity struggles are aroused by the tensions between the underdeveloped periphery and developed core.¹¹⁴ Nairn in *The Break-up of Britain* foregrounds particularly the unevenness of capitalist development in the formation of nations. When capitalism arrived to the periphery, he argues, it came in the fetters of imperialism. Faced with this exploitation, the elites of the colonized periphery had only the indigenous people. So the elites mobilized the people, channeling their mass sentiments into national resistance movements. This, according to Nairn, underlies the populist and cross-class features of nationalism and explains why nationalism always feeds off the ethnic sentiments of the masses.

Gellner, who offered perhaps the most instrumentalist paradigm for the formation of nations, holds that nations and nationalism are sociologically necessary phenomena of the modern, industrial epoch. What makes them look so natural is their necessary link with industrialism; indeed, this ‘naturalness’ gives nationalism its power. Their emergence was neither an “ideological aberration” nor social manifestation of “emotional excess”, nor “the consequence of a new form of social organization” nor can it be traced to “deep roots in the human psyche.” What is rather “very deep” for Gellner is “the roots of nationalism in the distinctive structural

¹¹⁴ Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975); Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Liberalism* (London: Verso, 1977).

requirements of industrial society.”¹¹⁵ It was an inevitable consequence of a new form of social organization. This approach renders nationalist ideology irrelevant to Gellner: Nationalism sometimes takes preexisting cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes ‘invents’ them, and often obliterates preexisting cultures... Those who are its historic agents know not what they do, but that is another matter.”¹¹⁶ And hence Gellner rules out not only the role of ideology, but also of human agency in the formation of nations: “Although those who participate in it generally, indeed almost without exception, fail to understand what it is that they do, the movement is nonetheless the external manifestation of a deep adjustment in the relationship between polity and culture which is quite unavoidable.”¹¹⁷ Gellner attributes utmost importance to the “centralized exo-education” as an obligatory norm in this cultural adjustment of industrial society. He asserts that for the modern industrial society “the monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence.”¹¹⁸ Its only effective protector is the state.

Since the early 80s, a number of post-Marxist theories have stressed the relative autonomy of the state in the formation of nations; all of them have been modernist and instrumentalist; all of them emphasize the role of centralized political power, that is, the role of the modern bureaucratic state and its political and military forces as keys to explaining the emergence of nations and nationalism.¹¹⁹ Mann,

¹¹⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 34.

¹¹⁶ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 47.

¹¹⁷ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 34.

¹¹⁸ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 33. Later he adds “national communications system” to his equation as well. See Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 50.

¹¹⁹ Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Vol. II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); John Breuilly,

Giddens, Breuilly foreground the relationship between the modern professionalized state and the society; all of them consider nationalism to be intimately linked to the modern state.

In the first volume of *The Sources of Social Power* Mann concedes that there might have been loose ethnic networks in antiquity but that they can't have constituted the basis of modern polities; nations could not have emerged before the rise of the democratic mass politics in the West.¹²⁰ In the second volume of *The Sources of Social Power*, he distinguishes five phases of nationalist development. In the first phase, the church's ability to spread its own central vernacular through its literary networks, Mann argues, displaced the local dialects and reduced the intensity of localized social networks in favor of state's official ideological channel paving the way for a broader notion of identity. From 1700 onwards, a second phase begins in Europe: As a result of the secularizing forces of emergent capitalism, institutionalized as a form of 'commercial-statism', discursive literacy expanded beyond the church networks to a broader class through a variety of institutions (i.e. standardized military manuals, administrative texts, development of independent universities, trade-based literary links, the advance of the legal profession and its texts etc.) encouraging a shared notion of civil citizenship among the upper classes. Mann identifies these two initial phases as 'proto-nationalism'; in these phases we can only talk about a limited sense of elite-based (national) consciousness. In Mann's typology, cross-class nations

Nationalism and the State (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993). It should be mentioned that both Mann and Giddens in their works are interested in formulating a sociologically significant theory of (social) power. Theirs are not exclusive studies of nationalism or nation-formation.

¹²⁰ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 527-30.

emerge in the third phase under the pressure of fiscal crises and state militarism towards the end of the 18th century. Greater conscription, increasing war taxes and regressive war loans imposed on the populations in order to support the geopolitical commitments of the states encountered the resistance of the propertied classes in Europe who responded by demanding representative government and political citizenship. These classes comprised of mostly male, bourgeoisie citizens gradually defined themselves as a 'nation' to which the state should be coterminous. In the emergence of cross-class nations in this third phase Mann clearly emphasizes the role of fiscal-military pressures rather than capitalist development; struggles for representative government were born of the pressures of state militarism. Finally, in the fourth phase of nation-formation, Mann foregrounds industrial capitalism as a factor that reinforced nations through the agencies of an expanded state. During this stage, driven by a desire for universal capitalist growth, the state became increasingly responsible for mass communication, mass education, health and welfare; as the state's pedagogic engagements increased, it became more representative and 'national', and hence more homogenous. Mann emphasizes the close links forged between state and nation in this final stage when both civilian and military networks expanded in this stage forming the core of aggressive nationalisms.¹²¹

For Giddens too, nationalism is intimately linked to the modern state. Before the modern epoch, religious myths and symbols might have contributed to the formation of 'tribal' identities, however, in the modern epoch nationalism can only be understood strictly as a political movement: nations are formed through the processes

¹²¹Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume II*, 215-247.

of state centralization and administrative expansion as a result of the reflexive ordering of the state system. In this respect, Giddens argues, the modern nation-state is “pre-eminent power-container of the modern era.”¹²² He explores the relationship between the coercive power of the expanded administrative apparatus of the modern state (administrative monopoly), sovereignty and exercise of violence including mass murder. As much as he recognizes the importance of psychological and symbolic factors in the formation of nations¹²³, nonetheless, it wouldn’t be far-fetched to argue that Giddens understands the ‘nation’ as state-power reproduced as social relation as a result of this administrative expansion. He defines nationalism as the “cultural sensibility of sovereignty, the concomitant of the coordination of administrative power within the bounded nation-state.”¹²⁴

Breuilly considers nationalism to be a political movement purely about the control of the state. To the extent that politics is about the control of the state, it is the modern political institutions and relations that shape the goals of all nationalisms; nationalism is best seen as a technology for the control of the state. He considers ideologies to be secondary. For instance, Breuilly argues, the creation of the German state in 1871 had nothing to do with culture, Romanticism or ideologies. German national formation should rather be understood as a specific configuration of power politics, economics and geopolitics. He does not think cultural elements from the pre-modern periods are carried into the modern era; he insists “national identity” is modern. So are all institutions – parliaments, schools, popular literature, labor markets

¹²² Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1985), 120.

¹²³ Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, 216.

¹²⁴ Antony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, 219.

- that construct and transmit national identities and which connect those identities to interests are modern. Breuilly asserts that “any useful approach to the subject must begin from this premise.”¹²⁵

On the question of whether nations are created by the nationalist intelligentsias or they are reconstructed out of existing cultural resources, perhaps the most radical stand-point has thus far been represented by Hobsbawm who emphasizes social engineering and ‘invention’ at the center of his paradigm for the formation of nations. He argues that nationalism and nations owed much to ‘invented traditions’ flourished in Europe from 1830 onwards; the decades before 1914 saw a flood of invented traditions. ‘Invented traditions’ mean a set of deliberate and innovative practices of a ritual or symbolic nature that seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition. This repetition implies a factitious continuity with “suitable historic past.”¹²⁶ According to Hobsbawm , ‘invented traditions’ were deliberate instruments of social control by the ruling classes and nationalist intelligentsias who had to counter problems of cohesion, cooperation and loyalty with the rise of mass politics. To what extent new traditions had to use old materials and inventory of symbols, Hobsbawm concedes that can’t be known. Nonetheless, he asserts so many political institutions, ideological movements and groups proliferated in the modern era that “even historic continuity had to be invented” either through semi-fictions, or by “forgery.”¹²⁷

Symbols and devices that came into existence as part of national movements and

¹²⁵ John Breuilly, “Approaches to Nationalism,” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London and New York: Verso, 1996), 154.

¹²⁶ Eric Hobsbawm and Tracey Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

¹²⁷ Hobsbawm, *Invention of Tradition*, 7.

states, such as the national anthem, the national flag or the personification of the nation in symbol or image were entirely new. All invented traditions, Hobsbawm argues, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion. In the context of France and the institutionalization of her invented traditions, Hobsbawm finds three major innovations particularly relevant: primary education (a secular equivalent of the church), invention of public ceremonies, and mass production of public monuments.¹²⁸

In *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality*, Hobsbawm summarizes his position as follows: 1) the ‘nation’ belongs to a historically recent period and is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a modern territorial state, “it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to it”, in short, nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around, 2) nations exist not only as functions of a particular kind of territorial state but also in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development, i.e, standard national languages could not emerge before printing, mass literacy, and mass schooling, 3) nations are constructed essentially from above, but can’t be understood also analyzed from below in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people.¹²⁹

In his fourth and final summary point, Hobsbawm affirms the insights of Miroslav Hroch’s comparative studies of small European national movements, which, he argues, opened a new era in the analysis of the composition of new national

¹²⁸ Hobsbawm, *Invention of Tradition*, 271.

¹²⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9-11.

movements. Departing from his conviction that ‘national consciousness’ develops unevenly among the social groups and the popular masses – workers, servants, peasants – are the last to be affected by it, Hobsbawm attempts to understand this in the context of Hroch’s model of national movements comprised of three phases. The Phase A of Hroch’s paradigm is purely cultural and folkloric with no political or national implications. In the Phase B, which constitutes the bulk of Hroch’s work, he analyses the origins, the composition and the distribution of a body of pioneers and militants of ‘the national idea’. Only in the phase C, nationalist programmes acquire mass support or some of the mass support that nationalists claim to represent. Hobsbawm regards the transition from phase B to phase C as a crucial moment in the chronology of national movements. Finally, Hobsbawm concludes with his oft-quoted assessment: “...no serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist...Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so.”¹³⁰ For Hobsbawm too nationalism is intimately linked to the modern state, ‘ethnicity’, ‘nation’, ‘language’ are all ambiguous concepts; “the idea of ‘the nation’, once extracted, like a mollusk, from the apparently hard shell of the ‘nation-state’, emerges in a distinctly wobbly shape.”¹³¹

Benedict Anderson’s constructionism epitomized by his concept “imagined community” goes beyond Hobsbawm’s emphasis on “invented traditions.” According to Anderson, nationalism / nationality are a form of discourse, a type of narrative; they are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. He defines nation as “an imagined political

¹³⁰ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 11-12.

¹³¹ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 190

community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” According to Anderson, members of all communities larger than small villages of face-to-face contact are imagined; communities should not be distinguished by their falsity/genuineness but by the style in which they are imagined.¹³² Therefore, “members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”¹³³ Regardless of the actual inequalities and exploitation, a nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship, and it is ultimately this sense of fraternity which makes it possible for so many millions of people to willingly lay down their lives for their nation.

His main argument is that nationalism can be understood not by self-consciously held political ideologies, but by the large cultural systems that preceded it. Anderson situates the rise of the modern nation at the junction of three developments: a change in the conceptions of time, the decline of religious communities and dynastic realms and the rise of ‘print-capitalism.’ Anderson regards decline of the ‘great religiously imagined communities’ and dynastic realms, which began in the 17th century, as cataclysmic for the rise of the nations. While these communities were dissolving, however, more fundamental transformations were taking place in the modes of apprehending the world. Anderson puts the new conception of time that emerged in this period at the center of these transformations. The medieval Christian conception of time was based on the idea of simultaneity. In this conception of

¹³² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

¹³³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6-7.

messianic and cosmological time ('simultaneity-along-time'), events were situated simultaneously in the past, present and future. The new conception of 'linear' and 'homogenous' time made it possible to imagine the nation as a 'sociological organism' moving down history. Anderson examines the popular novels and the simultaneous mass consumption of newspaper ("one-day best sellers") as two cultural forms whose performances embodied this notion of linear time and which made national imagining possible for their consumers who are largely unaware of one another.¹³⁴ Especially, daily newspaper reading is like a mass ceremony performed in silent privacy; yet

each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion...fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.¹³⁵

The rise of commercial book publishing ("print capitalism") is the third important factor Anderson considers as a techno-cultural transformation that made a national imagining possible. The works of the Humanists on cultures of antiquity, the impact of Reformation, and the rise of administrative vernaculars all led to the demise of the Latin in ecclesiastical and everyday life and created large reading publics in the vernaculars. Print capitalism created unified fields of communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars, they gave new fixity to language, and they created languages of power different from the centralized administrative vernaculars. What made the new national communities 'imaginable' was this "half-fortuitous, but explosive interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print) and the fatality of human and

¹³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 33-34.

¹³⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35.

linguistic diversity.”¹³⁶ This is how, according to Anderson, print languages came to lay the foundation for national consciousness.

The bulk of the debate within the nationalism literature has for some time been between the modernists and “ethno-symbolists” who hold that modernists exaggerate the role of the modern state in the formation of nations. They particularly take issue with the top-down approach of the modernists resting on paradigms of elite-manipulation, which according to ethno-symbolists like A.D. Smith, John Armstrong, and John Hutchinson, can not explain popular resonance and mass consent to the nationalist messages.¹³⁷ Without neglecting or ignoring the role of political and economic factors in the formation of nations, ethno-symbolists focus on more subjective and symbolic aspects of ethnic identity. They conceive the process of nation-formation as not so much one of construction, let alone deliberate ‘invention’, as of reinterpretation of pre-existing cultural motifs and of reconstruction of earlier ethnic ties. The ethnic past can’t be treated like a *tabula rasa*. However, the ethno-symbolists recognize that the relationship of nations to ethnies is a complex one; nations and nationalism can only be understood through an analysis of collective cultural identities over *la long duree* and only by conducting investigations over several generations and centuries the place of ethnies and nations can be understood.

Smith asserts that state-building and nation-building should not be confused with the formation of a national identity because establishment of state institutions is no guarantee that the population will identify with the national myths promoted. In

¹³⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 43.

¹³⁷ A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); John Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana, 1994) .

fact, the “assimilative myth” formulated by the ruling elites may alienate those groups who refuse to identify with it. He illustrates this point by the experiences of the new states of Asia and Africa and argues that in many cases “there has been not the fusion of *ethnies* through a territorial national identity but the persistence of deep cleavages and ethnic antagonisms that threaten the very existence of the state.”¹³⁸ The narratives, myths and memories can not be pure fiction; they must strike a chord with the people to whom they are designed to appeal and the people should contribute to the process. According Smith, only when elites represent to the mass of population an acceptable and inspiring image can the elites exert any influence. In this respect, Hutchinson stress the relationship between various elites and the lower strata they aim to represent. He argues that people through their cultural traditions and vernacular mobilization do influence the intelligentsia, political leaders and the bourgeoisie. He also examines the ways in which pre-modern cultural repertoires of myths and memories can be carried by institutions into the modern epoch.¹³⁹

In *Nations Before Nationalism*, Armstrong’s analysis concerns the ways in which earlier forms of ethnic identity can influence the rise of nations. He stresses the need for investigations of myth-symbol complexes over a long period of time to understand the persistence of ethnicity while considering many ruptures and discontinuities in the historical record. For Armstrong, the ‘nation’ is simply a modern equivalent of pre-modern ethnic identity, which has existed all through recorded history. Throughout history the distinction between members of the ethnic community

¹³⁸ A.D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, 38-39.

¹³⁹ John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation-State* (London: Allen and Unwin 1987).

and strangers has permeated every language and provided the basis for durable ethnic group boundaries. According to Armstrong, the clusters of perceptions and attitudes that we call ‘ethnicity’ have formed and dissolved in every period of history. Some of these clusters, sustained by various myths and symbols, have endured for centuries, and have provided the bases for the later emergence of ‘national’ identities. On the other hand, Armstrong distinguishes between ethnicity in pre-modern epochs as a persistent group identity that “did not ordinarily constitute the overriding legitimization of polity formation”, and nations in the nationalist era, “when consciousness of ethnic identity became a predominant force for constituting independent political structures.”¹⁴⁰ He does not suggest an unproblematic continuity between the nation and the ethnic; rather, his analysis concerns the recurrence of national and ethnic identities with ruptures.

1.3.The Phoenix is Armenian

Turkish modernity was a conscious imposition by the Kemalist modernizers who had the entire post-empire state apparatus in their arsenal, as Gellner, Hobsbawm and Hroch’s models largely articulate. The modernizing elites denied the two most universal discourses of the Empire – Ottomanism and Islam- in the painful shadows of a colossal ethnic cleansing performed in less than a decade (1913-1918) in a tiny peninsula and having finally survived the imperialist partition of Sevres finally at the Lausanne table (1923). In an urgency to emulate the West whose only material

¹⁴⁰ Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 4.

referents in the Empire had been eliminated by the mass expulsions of the Christians and in the absence of an intellectual tradition that had synthesized or assimilated the liberal values of Enlightenment, the new legitimating discourse for this grand civilizational shift always remained self-conscious of its inferiority and vulnerability. Informed by this inferiority, vulnerability and urgency, the more arduous task of inventing a new “Turkish nation” out of the ruins of the empire required a utopian vision translated and pursued by authoritarian means. Turkish nationalism raises its red flag precisely over the nexus of the ethno-symbolists’ assertion (mostly pursued by Smith) that the masses will not respond to pure inventions, that the ruling elites and national intelligentsias have to adhere to the popular perceptions and traditions of people in their reconstructions. There were certainly groups – leaders of religious orders, Kurds and remaining Christian groups – whose status conflicted with the new nationalist ethos of the Republican elites as a result of their uncompromising secularist and assimilationist élan. The leaders of the popular religious orders (*tarikats*) whose intellectuals advocated an Islamist version of reform were harassed, persecuted and shunned through the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁴¹ Numerous Kurdish uprisings until 1937 – Koçgiri, Seikh Said, Sheikh Abdurrahman, Ağrı and Dersim – were suppressed by violent military means. And finally, the articulation of a new Turkish nationalism continued to take its toll on the remaining non-Muslim minorities: imposition of a special wealth tax of up to 75% on the properties of non-Muslim businessmen culminating in the government instigated riots of September 6-7, 1955 when the

¹⁴¹ Reşat Kasaba, “Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, 28. There were numerous mystical orders and fraternities in the Empire such as the Mevlevi, Naksibendi, and the heterodox Bektasi orders, which had established a closely knit network of lodges (*tekkes*) all over the empire.

businesses of the non-Muslims were ransacked in government instigated riots. As Kasaba argues, however, during the early decades of the Republic “the tired and defeated people of Anatolia were in no position to debate or resist Atatürk ’s radical message” and some “were even enthusiastic in supporting the national leader in his determination to remake the Turkish state.” Keyder too asserts that among the nationalist movements of the Third world, the Turkish case constitutes an extreme example of a situation in which masses remained passive recipients of the nationalist message propounded by the nationalist elites and the modernizing elite did not attempt to accommodate the popular resentment.¹⁴² He explains this with the absence of a contesting bourgeoisie and of big landowners during the transition from empire to republic. After the war-time destruction of the Christian bourgeoisie, the nationalists of Ankara closely determined the allocation of economic positions and of their remaining property; thus in modern Turkey capitalist development was guided without a corresponding bourgeois transformation and the bourgeoisie did not have the occasion to give themselves a separate identity.¹⁴³ Even after the 50s, when they began to struggle against the coercive bureaucratic tradition, they demanded only market freedoms rather than political democracy. Principal events of the nationalist struggle – the colossal ethnic cleansing of the Anatolian peninsula during the Great War- were repressed in the collective memories of the masses and this repression was secured by the material rewards associated with the physical removal of the Anatolian Christians. In the absence of any popular challenge, the Kemalist version of the

¹⁴² Çağlar Keyder, “Wither the Project of Modernity,” *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, 43.

¹⁴³ Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London and New York, Verso 1999), 199.

national historiography and identity and all their associated myths “gained in pure artifice” and they were institutionalized through the national education (see Chapter 6 and 7). Even the anti-authoritarian wave of 1950 and after, Keyder succinctly articulates, “did not make much of a dent in the norms of the educated elite.” The political culture was institutionalized by the Kemalist elites such that:

‘Saving the state’ summarized an entire range of evaluations which, for example, sacrificed civil rights for *raisons d’etat*, economic for fiscal strength, participation and democracy for solidarity behind leaders. This was a self-evident choice for the bureaucracy; in the absence of any challenge it became institutionalized as the dominant concern of the population as a whole. Kemalist education reproduced this concern in churning out graduates who thought in exactly the same fashion, feeling themselves to be natural candidates for ‘saving the state.’ This educational priority was so entrenched that, until the late 1960s, the educated considered their prerogatives to be self-evident...they defended the Republican model and worked to extend it further toward state-controlled industrialization, while labeling the newly prospering businessman as provincial upstarts. In addition to the impoverishment of the institutions which might have provided the basis for a civil society, the dominant tendency in economic policy also worked toward inducing the bourgeoisie to passivity. The authoritarian character of the 1930s had been reinforced through the relative closure of the economy which persisted until the end of our period, with the exception of a few years in the 1950s. As a result the developing bourgeoisie was an exceptionally ‘national’ one in its practical orientation. Deprived of a strong international connection and able to restrict the extent of foreign investment, it became a full supporter of the centrality of the state. In fact, the international connection which existed boosted this centrality by moving the level of economic commerce to inter-state platform. Thus there was no desire on the part of the bourgeoisie to challenge the normative concerns of the bureaucracy; they were robbed of their imputed revolutionary will despite their economic success.¹⁴⁴

Modern Turkey did not rise out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire like a ‘phoenix’; it was invented by and in the image of Mustafa Kemal and the Kemalist elites.¹⁴⁵ It was *La Turquie Kemaliste*, as the title of the official national publication

¹⁴⁴ Keyder, *State and Class*, 199.

¹⁴⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), ix.

that was in charge of disseminating the new image of Kemalist Turkey abroad portrayed.¹⁴⁶

The massive ethnic cleansing of the Christians during the Great War and their capital changing hands in the making of a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie accounts for an important part of the social origins of the Turkish politics and the ideological landscape of modern Turkey.¹⁴⁷ The denial of the violent incidents of the Great War served a vital function in the process of myth-making about the origins of modern Turkey and in the formation of Turkish national-identity.¹⁴⁸ The ‘islamisation’ of the lands of the ‘fatherland’ (*vatan*) constituted the very first stage of the Turkish nationalism and the Armenian deportations during the Great War were the first leg of this undertaking.¹⁴⁹ During the War of Independence, the brotherhood of Muslims (*anasır-ı İslamiye*) and enmity against the Armenians emerged as the common denominator of the Turkish-Kurdish alliance. Especially, the nationalists’ propaganda that the territories populated with Kurds would be relinquished to an independent Armenia was highly influential in securing Kurdish support for the national resistance.¹⁵⁰ As much as the Republican nationalists forged alliances that they would never maintain (and that they did not) once they established the political order they were fighting for, the success of these alliances that became so *unimaginable* once the Republic was established unveils the constructive power of nation-building through

¹⁴⁶ All 49 issues of *La Turquie Kemaliste* published between 1933 and 1945 are currently online: <http://www.boyut.com.tr/kemalizm/> The magazine was published in every three months in three languages: English, French, and German. The issues online are the French ones.

¹⁴⁷ Keyder, *State and Class*, 2.

¹⁴⁸ Bloxham, *Great Game*, 207.

¹⁴⁹ Eren Deniz (Tol) Göktürk, “1919-1923 Dönemi Türk Milliyetçilikleri” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, Cilt 4, 103.

¹⁵⁰ See Eren Deniz (Tol) Göktürk, “1919-1923 Dönemi Türk Milliyetçilikleri,” 112; Ahmet Yılmaz, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*, 98.

criminal means, as Tilly would affirm.¹⁵¹ The official historiography foregrounds the Greek occupation as the cataclysmic event of the War of Independence; I argue it was rather the fear of the returning Armenian deportees after the Mudros Treaty and of the emergence of an independent Armenia in the east. My reading of Mustafa Kemal's discourse on Armenians (See Chapter 5) and my archeology of especially the first Kemalist history textbooks support this (Chapter 6). The temporal proximity of the two phenomena in the making of modern Turkey – genocide and nation-making – during the traumatically swift transition from Empire to Republic on a multi-ethnic territory necessitated and resulted in the invention of an almost totalitarian notion of 'Turkishness' that needed to be guarded in the hands of the military elites for decades. If, today, the integrity of "Turkishness" needs to be protected with a Penal Code, its critical urgency should be situated in this very temporal proximity and its memory self-reflexively enshrined in the "phoenix" ethos.¹⁵² The phoenix, however, was Armenian.

Furthermore, despite all the initiatives of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in the promotion of a national economy beginning with the Balkan Wars, the great project of the making of a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie had not been successful until the Great War; the Armenian massacres constituted a sudden turnaround in this undertaking as well. The project of establishing a new system of sovereignty on land and breaking existing socio-economic patterns of ownership in the making of a

¹⁵¹ Charles Tilly, "War Making and State-Making as Organized Crime" in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁵² I should make it clear that Penal Code 301 does not only target discourse on the Armenian Issue; its spectrum is broad (ie. Kurdish issue) because of the ambiguity of its language. Nowhere in its text, it is indicated the law applies to incidents where "genocide", "Armenian genocide" etc...are mentioned.

national economy eventually pressurized “demographic impacts in the form of population *transfer*.”¹⁵³ Belge argues that the Unionists were prepared for the worst outcomes of the war and “they did not want to leave anyone who would seek justice in Anatolia which they regarded as the last refuge”.¹⁵⁴ These former Unionists (members of the Committee of the Union and Progress), “now describing themselves as nationalists,” assumed the leadership of the national resistance.¹⁵⁵ Without an understanding of these events, their memories and their institutional legacies neither Turkish nationalism nor the excess around the ‘genocide allegations’ in the Turkish public life can be understood. In this vein, in this first chapter, a discursive analysis of the contemporary states of excess in the Turkish national press on ‘Armenians’ in the first decade of the 21st century aims to shed the first light on the central theses of this dissertation: First, the denial of the destruction of Ottoman Armenians is an issue that essentially concerns the narrative formation of the state / national identity of the Republic of Turkey. Second, despite the fact that the literatures on the Turkish

¹⁵³ Gary Fields’s italics. See Gary Fields, “Landscaping Palestine: Reflections of Enclosure in a Historical Mirror”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (42) 2010, 67. Fields, in the context of his work that looks at “enclosure” and nation-making in Palestine, argues that “transfer, however, is not only an outcome of overt force involving a change in the location of populations. It is also a more subtle process involving a change in the social standing of populations. Often, these processes are interdependent, a change in status being the prelude to, or bound up with, a change in location. When enclosing land, dominant groups transfer populations by resorting to different gradients of force including outright expropriation, and by less overtly coercive measures, manipulating the conditions of existence on the land through application of the law and the built environment, enabling populations to “choose” migration or alternative means of making a living as a remedy for enclosure. This process of moving populations spatially and socially to remake land is both a mechanism and a final goal of enclosure.”

¹⁵⁴ Murat Belge, “Türkiye’de Zenofobi ve Milliyetçilik” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 186.

¹⁵⁵ Ahmad, *Making of Modern Turkey*, 8; also see Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).

nationalism identify the ‘other’ of ‘Turkishness’ with various other identities¹⁵⁶, I argue that Turkish nationalism’s founding ‘other’ was the Armenian.

As I have pointed out above, the state lacked a social base during the Empire. How this base was finally created and made beholden to the state during the expropriation of the Great War is key to understanding modern Turkey. The silence of the masses, particularly the new bourgeoisie, during the fashioning of a nationalist discourse by the Kemalist elites in exchange for the material rewards determined the content of the nationalist historiography and identity ‘imagined’ in legitimating the new Republican regime. In the absence of any popular accounting and/or negotiation over the events of the Great War that “loomed largest” in the experience of the Anatolian peasants, the story “suffered from the all-too-obvious concealment of a crucial episode and instead gained in pure artifice.”¹⁵⁷ How did the official and the unofficial narratives struggle vis a vis this instrumentality in the national press even 80 years after the painful events that transpired in the Anatolian peninsula during the Great War? In this vein, this chapter aims to chronicle a series of highly eccentric and tragic cultural significations of an extreme case (observed between 2004 and 2007) in the Turkish public discourse and aims to articulate that the destruction of the Ottoman

¹⁵⁶ Birol Akgün and Şaban H. Çalış argue that first due to the hegemony of the religion, than due to the hegemony of the state, Turkish nationalism was born and continues to exist as a nationalism with an “other.” See Birol Akgün and Şaban H. Çalış, “Tanrı Dağı Kadar Türk, Hıra Dağı Kadar Müslüman: Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Terkibinde İslâmcı Doz,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 587; Mesut Yeğen argues during the foundation of the Turkish nationalism the fundamental elements that constituted the “other” have been the Islamic and the cosmopolitan past. Mesut Yeğen, “Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Kürt Sorunu,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 891; Herkül Milas argues that the “Greek” is one of the principle enemies of Turkish nationalism, in fact, compared to the Russian, Armenian etc., it is perhaps the number one “other.” See Herkül Milas, “Millî Türk Kimliği ve ‘Öteki’ (Yunan),” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 194.

¹⁵⁷ Keyder, “Wither the project of modernity?” , 44.

Armenians constituted its fundamental undercurrent. But first, what exactly do we understand from ‘Turkishness’?

1.4. History of “Turkishness”

Until after the Great War, ‘Turkishness’ as national consciousness did not have a concrete point of reference.¹⁵⁸ Miscegenation in the Empire had pervaded all ranks.¹⁵⁹ This was in fact a rule in the dynastic family; the *valide sultan* (mother of the heir apparent) would always be a converted Christian from a far corner of the Empire. The ruling elite was Ottoman and up until the early 20th century there was no opportunity for a sentiment of ‘Turkishness’ to arise naturally as an ethnic supremacist ideology of the imperial centre.¹⁶⁰ What the constituent elements of a Turkish culture would be neither theorized, nor available as a political platform. Turkish nationalism had been perceived as a self-defeating undertaking and postponed by the Ottoman state elites for their concern for the preservation of the state (*devletin bekaası*) in a multi-ethnic empire even as they battled fierce separatism after the French revolution.¹⁶¹ While the Ottoman Empire rested on a Turkish ethnicity before the conquest of Istanbul, the institutionalization of the religious plurality with the millet system coupled with the *gaza* ideology (which motivated imperial conquests in the

¹⁵⁸ Francois Georgeon, “Türk Milliyetçiliği Üzerine Düşünceler: Suyu Arayan Adam’ı Yeniden Okurken,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 36; Also see Çağlar Keyder, “A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism” in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, eds. Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas (London : Routledge, 2005).

¹⁵⁹ Cengiz Aktar, “Osmanlı Kozmopolitizminden Avrupa Kozmopolitizmine Giden Yolda Ulus Parantezi,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 78.

¹⁶⁰ Keyder, “A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism,” 4.

¹⁶¹ Ahmet Yıldız, *‘Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene’*, 63; also see Keyder, “Wither the project of modernity,” 41.

name of Islam) submerged the notion of Turkishness in the cultural and political landscape of the Empire; for the Ottomans only religious difference mattered. In the aftermath of the violent expulsion of the thousands of Muslims from the Balkans and from Caucasia, Turkish nationalism began to take shape through wars and through bloody conflicts with the competing nationalisms over Asia Minor. In other words, it was more a political choice by the elite to save the state than the result of accumulating sentiment incited by pioneering nationalist intellectuals.¹⁶² Turkish nationalism neither emerged as a bourgeois ideology nor had an indigenous / local intellectual history.¹⁶³

The very appellation of ‘Turk’ was imposed from the West on the empire and its population and the Ottomans would not like it. The empire had long been perceived by the West as a despotic state where a Turkish yoke had been established by force on especially other Christian peoples. And within the Empire, the term ‘Turk’ was used to designate the Turcoman nomads or the Anatolian peasantry considered ignorant, wretched, uncouth, and without comprehension.¹⁶⁴ It had strong derogatory connotations; to apply it to an Ottoman gentleman would have been an insult.¹⁶⁵

Until the 19th century Turks thought of themselves as primarily Muslims and their loyalty belonged, on very different levels, to Islam and to the Ottoman house; in fact even the Anatolian peasants themselves did not take ‘Turkishness’ easily, at least not until the Great War. Two anecdotes, one from Sevkettin Aydemir, another

¹⁶² Keyder, “A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism,” 4.

¹⁶³ Birol Akgün and Şaban H. Çalış, “Tanrı Dağı Kadar Türk, Hira Dağı Kadar Müslüman: Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Terkibinde İslâmcı Doz,” 586.

¹⁶⁴ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1-2.

¹⁶⁵ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2.

from Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu highlight this. During the Great War, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, a teacher, asks the soldiers comprised of Anatolian peasants in his battalion: ‘What is our religion’? He assumes they would altogether say ‘*Elhamdülillah Müslümanız*’ (‘Thank God we are all Muslims’). On the contrary, he receives a quite confusing cacophony of response: Some say they belonged to the ‘*İmam-ı Azam*’ sect (Sunni), some say they belonged to ‘Hz.Ali’s sect’(Shiite). Some don’t say anything; some say ‘Islamiz’ (‘we are Islam’). The compass completely breaks down when he asks the soldiers who their Prophet is. “Unbelievable” prophet names come from the crowd. One even says “Our Prophet is Enver Pasha.” “The first course was surprising to me,” writes Aydemir. “This battalion was a part of the nation at that time. They were all Anatolian peasants. We would know Anatolian peasants as religious and conservative. However these ones were merely ignorant.” He then indicates that the real surprise was in the next episode of his inquiries. So he asks to the soldiers: ‘What nation do we belong to?’ (*biz hangi milletteniz?*) and again encounters a cacophony of responses. This time, he asserts, ‘aren’t we Turks?’ They altogether respond: ‘*Estafurullah.*’¹⁶⁶ So concludes Aydemir: “This battalion that was not unified in its religion and nationality...did not know the state’s form of government, the name of the state, the name of the Sultan, the center of the state, the Commander in Chief and his deputy either.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Arabic expression that means “Not at all; please don’t say that” when someone either criticizes himself or praises you’.

¹⁶⁷ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1991), 109-111; also see Francois Georgeon, “Türk Milliyetçiliği Üzerine Düşünceler: Suyu Arayan Adam’ı Yeniden Okurken,” 23-36.

A dialog in Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu's *Yaban* shows that even during the War of Independence, 'Turkishness' carried derogatory connotations for the Anatolian soldiers. A military officer one day finds a Sergeant complaining about the advance of the Greek army from Izmir towards the Anatolian inlands. "I wanted to slap him on the face with the back of my hand," says the Turkist (*Türkçü*) officer Ahmet Celal, and for the last time Ahmet Celal wants to give this Sergeant an idea about the unity of the fatherland: "For a Turk, Izmir and Sivas are the same. Diyarbakir and Samsun are the same. If Izmir is occupied, then it means the entire Anatolia is in the hands of the enemy. If that place is not liberated, this can't be liberated either." Sergeant Bekir interrupts Ahmet Celal, they have an argument, and in the end Sergeant Bekir gives up:

- I know, *beyim*, you are too one of them.
- Who are 'them'?
- Those who support [Mustafa] Kemal Pasha....
- How come a Turk does not support Kemal Pasha?
- But we are no Turks, *beyim*.
- Then what are you?
- We are Islam, elhamdulillah....Those you are talking about live in Haymana.¹⁶⁸

The meaning of 'Turk' was no less ambiguous to the members of the last Ottoman parliament (Meclis-i Mebusan), which met three weeks after the National Pact was declared, and majority of whom was constituted by the Unionists. In February 1920, a debate takes place among the deputies concerning what is meant by the terms 'Turk' and 'nation' (*millet*), and Karesi (Balikesir) deputy Abdulaziz Mecdi Efendi rises in the Chamber demanding that the meanings associated with the term "Turk" should be clarified. Abdulaziz Mecdi Efendi's plea unveils that the nationalist

¹⁶⁸ Central Anatolian town in Ankara where nomads used to live. See Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*, 66-67.

elites, let alone the masses, were not clear about not only the meaning of ‘Turk’, but also ‘Anatolia’, later imagined as the ‘Turkish homeland from time immemorial’:

Abdulaziz Mecdi Efendi - Within the debate that has been going on here arose some important words that have to be handled with care by the Assembly. Right here in the expression “to the nation itself” (*milletin kendisine*), one of the words that needs to be paid attention is the word ‘Millet’. The expression ‘Anadolu’ (Anatolia) is also one of those words. I don’t wish to say anything about the boundaries of ‘Anadolu’ in our geography books. What I am concerned about most is the comprehension of the people (*halkın*) and the laypeople (*avamin*). Regarding the expression ‘Anadolu’, one of our esteemed friends rose and asked what will happen to the Turks in the Rumelia and he was justified in his objection. A friend of ours who did not join the debate, regarding the expression ‘Anadolu’, said “what is happening to certain locations included by Diyarbekir and Erzurum?” Likewise that person also derived a variety of meanings from the word ‘Turk’ used in this debate. I submit this issue to the attention of the General Assembly and if our General Assembly sees fit, I request that the meaning of ‘Turk’ is defined. From what I understand at this lectern, whenever ‘history of the Turk’ (*Türk tarihi*) is mentioned, what is intended is various elements of Islam like the Turk, Kurd, Laz, Circassian. Is this right? (“Right, right, that is right” chanting and applause). If the meaning of the word Turk is not this, please, whenever a speech is made here “peoples of Islam” (*anasir-i Islamiyye*) is used rather than ‘history of the Turk’ (*Türk Tarihi*). There is no problem if the meaning attributed to the word ‘Turk’ is as such and the Grand Assembly understands it accordingly.

Rıza Nur Bey (Sinop) – Yes, right.

Hüseyin Bey (Erzurum) – Even the Jews are included.

Abdulaziz Mecdi Efendi (Continues) – After the Assembly acknowledges and expands the meaning of the word Turk this way...let’s use...an expression like peoples of Islam.

Tunali Hilmi Bey (Bolu) – Muslim Ottomans.¹⁶⁹

After all this long debate, Abdulaziz Mecdi Efendi stated that Christians also live in this country, therefore instead of the word ‘millet’, ‘millet-i Osmaniye’ should be adopted. The Assembly accepted his proposal. The three anecdotes together highlight how the concepts ‘Turk’ and ‘Turkishness’ were devoid of any distinct referents at least through the War of Independence. The accounts of Aydemir and Karaosmanoglu illustrate that the “Turk” was a pejorative for the Anatolian peasants, who perceived themselves only as “Islam”, who were tired of constant mobilization and warfare, and to whom *İstiklal Savaşı* (War of Independence) and the war against

¹⁶⁹ My translation. See Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*, 130-131.

the Greek was just another military campaign to be endured against an outside aggressor. As for the Ottoman elites, as the last account shows, it was not perceived as a pejorative but the scope of its ethnic signification was broad and unclear; the only thing that seems to be clear is that 'Islam' had already taken over the signifying core of the "Turk." This was the very substance from which Kemalists created an ethnic 'Turkish' supremacy once they consolidated their power in the new Republic.

In summary, there was no ethnic ideology of 'Turkishness' for the masses until after the Great War. The supremacist mythological and emotive contents of Turkishness – which until that point were ambiguous, at best- were invented during the Kemalist revolution after the foundation of the Republic. In fact, this is what renders the Turkish case "profoundly eccentric," according to Gellner.

Gellner argued that the basic underlying pattern of nationalism was congruity between state ("political groom") and culture ("cultural bride"). Turkey, however, he argues, fits nowhere in his famous typology of nationalisms comprised of "time zones" from the West to East. In the west along the Atlantic coast the two partners have been cohabitating for a long time (i.e. French case). In the next time zone to the east (i.e. Germans and Italians) the bride had been ready long time long and she was waiting for her groom. In the eastern part of Europe, there was neither groom nor bride and it was in this region where nationalism created great havoc. None of this, he asserts, applies to the Turkish case:

Whereas in Italy and Germany, a self-conscious culture had to look for its political patron (Prussia and Piedmont were available), in Turkey it was the other way around: a political elite was looking for a way out of relative decline and needed to find an ethnic group. The way to religion was blocked because the religion was too closely linked with the declining ancien regime, so the elite had to look for an ethnic bride. The Anatolian peasantry was available. The bride hardly knew what was happening to

her and continued to think for some time in religious rather than political terms. But again, the pattern contrasts interestingly both with the rest of Islam and with the three or four different patterns of relationship in Europe.¹⁷⁰

Without the events of the Great War, however, it would have been impossible for the Kemalists to fashion an ethnic-nationalist myth.¹⁷¹ In other words, Gellner's "ethnic bride" needed to be prepared through the unmixing of ethno-religious populations in Asia Minor. The implication was that the entire symbolic universe of 'Turkishness' remained ontologically entangled with the massive, violent ethnic cleansing of some three million Anatolian Christians (around one-sixth of the Anatolian population at that time) during the Great War and the Turkish War of Independence. 'Turkishness' was invented to present the remaining populations in Anatolia - non-Muslims and Muslims (Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Laz, Gypsies, Bosnians etc.)- as homogeneous. While the new history thesis desperately peopled Anatolia with ur-Turks in the shape of Hittites and Sumers as the ancient Turks¹⁷², "Turkishness" was anchored in powerful referents – first and foremost, in Atatürk, then in the War of Independence, the military nation, Anatolia etc. - to legitimize the radical emptying by ethnic cleansing that lies at the foundation of the regime. The implication is clear: I argue that the punitive measure articulated as "insulting Turkishness" in the Turkish Penal Code essentially articulates and rehabilitates the legitimacy crisis of the regime, which needs to be disciplined and contained with "law." The punitive measure also operates as a social performative tool – vis a vis the

¹⁷⁰ Ernest Gellner, "The Turkish Option in Comparative Perspective," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity*, 242; also see Ayşe Kadioğlu, "Milliyetçilik- Liberalizm ekseninde vatandaşlık ve bireysellik," in *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 287.

¹⁷¹ Keyder, "A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism," 6.

¹⁷² Keyder, "A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism," 7.

“301” trials of prominent Turkish intellectuals - that safeguards the consent of the polity for the hegemonic definition of “Turkishness.”

1.5. Conclusion:

Atatürk and Gökçen, the mass graves of a modern nation-state, the assassination of Hrant Dink.... What the nation had internalized about the Armenians for decades was wildly contrary to the new narratives signified by Gökçen as ‘an Armenian orphan,’ or by the Armenian bones and skulls that resurfaced in Anatolia “the Turkish homeland from time immemorial.” The young Republic’s invented historical narratives for decades enshrined the Turks as victims (“oppressed nation”) and conceived the new state as a phoenix that rose from the ashes of Ottoman Empire through the heroic, anti-imperialist War of Independence led by Mustafa Kemal. Within these narratives, Armenians show up as ruthless murderers and treacherous fifth columns against the backdrop of a saintly Turkish innocence (see Chapter 5).

It is no co-incidence that Turgut Özakman’s *Those Crazy Turks* (*Şu Çılgın Türkler*), a 750-page blockbuster on the Turkish War of Independence was released in March 2005 in the midst of this national panic triggered by the Gökçen controversy. It instantly became a publishing phenomenon, selling more than 500,000 copies in less than 6 months.¹⁷³ The President of the Turkish Republic at that time, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, personally congratulated Ozakman on “transla[ting] our feelings.”¹⁷⁴ Sezer had

¹⁷³ Nobody knows how many black market editions have been sold within the past 3 years. See Nicholas Birch, “Those Crazy Turks,” *Dublin Review of Books*, 28 August 2008, http://www.drb.ie/more_details/08-09-28/Those_Crazy_Turks.aspx; also see Rober Koptaş, “Hesap Basitti,” *Agos*, 11 Temmuz 2008.

¹⁷⁴ Birch, “Those Crazy Turks,” *Dublin Review of Books*, 28 August 2008.

neither contacted nor congratulated Orhan Pamuk when he received the Nobel Literature Prize in 2006. Pamuk, during an interview in February 2005 with a Swiss publication *Das Magazin* (a weekly supplement to many Swiss dailies) had said, "30,000 Kurds and a million Armenians were murdered. Hardly anyone dares mention it, so I do. And that's why I'm hated"¹⁷⁵. He was charged with “denigrating Turkishness” under the Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code and after the massive international attention on his case, the charges against him were dropped in January 2006.

While Orhan Pamuk was leaving the country, Hrant Dink was going through his second episode of 301 trial that had resulted in a six-month suspended sentence; he appealed and it was rejected in May 2006. He was still invisible to international public opinion that was so influential in the acquittals of Turkey’s famous novelists Elif Safak and Orhan Pamuk. In September 2006, another 301 case –the third one- was opened against Dink for an interview he had given to Reuters in July 2006 in which he had referred to the events of 1915 as genocide. Dink was slowly marching to his death. Three months later, he fell. In June 2007, six months after he was murdered for “denigrating Turkishness”, the charges against him were dropped.

In order to understand what feelings Ozakman’s book translated for the Turks, and how the Turks perceive themselves and their relationship with the rest of the

¹⁷⁵ Orhan Pamuk, up until this interview he gave to the Swiss publication, was not particularly known in Turkey with any public statement on the Armenian issue. And up until this interview, he was never a particular target of “hatred”, or nationalist reaction in Turkey. At the time he has given this interview and said “30,000 Kurds and a million Armenians were murdered. Hardly anyone dares mention it, so I do. And that's why I'm hated,” Hrant Dink, an outspoken critique of Turkey’s denial of the Armenian Genocide, had already become a target of nationalist hate speech in Turkey, as the next chapter will convey. On Penal Code 301 and Orhan Pamuk’s trial, see Amnesty International USA, “Turkey: Article 301 is a threat to freedom of expression and must be repealed now!”, 1 December 2005, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGEUR440352005>.

world, it is in fact sufficient to have a quick glimpse of the back cover of *Those Crazy Turks*: “*The book that has been awaited for 80 Years. A surprising contemporary epic of one of the world’s most legitimate, most moral, most just, most sacred wars, the novel of the first war of liberation waged and won against imperialism, of a revolution of nation-making.*”

Even if what was at stake in the Gökçen controversy was not necessarily the total revision of the War of Independence myths but the inclusion of the painful memories of the destruction of Ottoman Armenians that preceded it - perhaps a mere re-calling of the latter to the memories of the Republic, their total impact on Turkey was still one of turmoil. All collective memories simplify, mythify; they are all partial. This very mythical partiality determines the moral boundaries of identities within the territories of memory and as the next chapter aims to document, these boundaries are defended as violently as the territorial boundaries. As Anderson’s oft-quoted concept ‘imagined community’ connotes, it is in fact these memorial boundaries which delineate the spiritual map of *the nation*. A purgatory does not exist in the secular nation-state; those sitting on the purgatory, calling for a reconciliation of the memories, and hence contaminating the pure categories of the “Turk” and the “Armenian” are sacrificed like Dink.

In conclusion, whether the Gökçen controversy, Dink’s assassination, and the mass grave incidents were related or not, or how they implicated each other’s contingency and causality within the clandestine intricacies of state-media relationships in Turkey in a time span as tight as three years is not the subject of this dissertation. It is undeniable that the Gökçen affair triggered a violent trajectory in

Turkey that not only injured the social peace with unprecedented racist bashing, it also ended in Dink's assassination. In this dissertation, I am particularly interested in reading these incidents as different types of "textual instances" to understand their cross-references, repetitions, overlaps and shared assumptions. In other words, I am interested in understanding their "inter-textuality" – the intertextuality of the visual and narrative tropes of "Turkishness" and Turkish denial - in which a common logic, deep-seated desires and fears of a nation are arrested.

Chapter 2: Spirits insulting Turkishness: “Sabiha Gökçen’s 80-year old secret”

2.1.Introduction

On 21 February 2004, ‘modern Turkey’ was shaken with the following headlines on the front page of its best selling daily *Hürriyet* -- the long-standing leader of popular nationalism in the Turkish press best known for its every day logo of “banal nationalism” composed of a Turkish flag and a motto “Turkey belongs to the Turks”:

‘SABIHA GÖKÇEN’S 80-YEAR OLD SECRET.’

Hürriyet, having picked up the story published in *Agos* on February 6, reported that an Armenian citizen Hripsime Gazalyan claimed Turkey’s first woman pilot, the world’s first woman combat pilot and the adopted daughter of modern Turkey’s founder Kemal Atatürk was in fact her aunt:

“We are from Antep. The mother of the family is Mariam Sebilciyan. The father is Nerses Sebilciyan. Nerses died during the *incidents of 1915*¹⁷⁶. Maryam and Nerses had 7 children, 2 of them, girls. One of the girls was Diruhi, my mother. The other was Hatun. And this Hatun is Sabiha Gökçen. She is my aunt...My grandmother Mariam had already taken the responsibility of many children. So, she had taken my mother and aunt to the orphanage in Cîbin¹⁷⁷. Atatürk came at that time. Since he did not have any children, he told everyone that he would look around the orphanage and adopt the cutest of the girls. He had seen my aunt, since she was a pretty girl, he had pointed to her and taken her in his arms.”¹⁷⁸

One did not need to read further...the message was clear: Modern Turkey’s one and only national heroine, the feminist icon of Turkish modernity and progress, more importantly, one of the most precious and honorable icons of the Turkish ‘military nation’ – “Girl Flyer is War Hero,” so read the headlines of *New York Times*

¹⁷⁶ My italics.

¹⁷⁷ A village in Sanliurfa’s Halfeti town. Now, known as Saylakkaya.

¹⁷⁸ My translation. See Ersin Kalkan, “Sabiha Gökçen mi Hatun Sebilciyan mı”, *Hürriyet*, 21 Şubat 2004, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?viewid=373270>

on 17 June 1937¹⁷⁹, and the “Flying Amazon of Turkey” on 19 September 1937¹⁸⁰ - might in fact have been an Armenian by birth. Gökçen’s Armenian origins, as *Hürriyet* reported summarizing the claims of Agos, had been disclosed for the first time in Simon Simonyan’s book, *Ler Yev Cagadagir* (In Armenian, “Mountain and Fate”) published in Beirut in 1972. The official account of Gökçen’s identity, as verified in her own memoirs¹⁸¹, is that she was born in 1913 in Bursa as the daughter of Vilayet Secretary Hafız Mustafa İzzet, a Young Turk sent to exile to Bursa by Abdulhamid II. She lost her father while she was going to the primary school and continued her education with the support of her siblings. She was noticed by Atatürk in 1925 during one of his national tours and was adopted by him.

According to one of Sabiha Gökçen’s closest friends, Turkish-Armenian historian Pars Tuğlacı whose interview with *Hürriyet* was published the day after *Hürriyet* broke the news, Gökçen “was an Armenian.”¹⁸² Tuğlacı said Gökçen herself knew this but she never considered to publicly disclose it because of the possible reactions she feared and he couldn’t talk about everything he knew either because he promised Gökçen. But, he told *Hürriyet*, Gazalyan’s story was not true: Gökçen’s family was indeed from *Bursa*. Gökçen, according to Tuğlacı, was born in Bursa in 1913, her family who thought she would not be able to survive the long deportation marches during the “incidents of 1915”, as he put it, had to abandon her to an

¹⁷⁹ “Turkey Combats Uprising of Kurds – 30,000 Troops sent to Dersim Area and Insurrection Reported Stamped Out – Girl Flyer is War Hero- Adopted Daughter of Atatürk Receives High Honor for her Bravery in Action,” *New York Times*, 17 June 1937, 15.

¹⁸⁰ “The Flying Amazon of Turkey,” *New York Times*, 19 September 1937.

¹⁸¹ Sabiha Gökçen, *Atatürk’le Bir Ömür* (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 2000); Sabiha Gökçen, *Atatürk’ün İzinde Bir Ömür Böyle Geçti* (İstanbul: Türk Hava Kurumu Yayınları, 1982); *Bulutlarla Yarışan Kadın. Halit Kıvanç Sabiha Gökçen’le Söyleşiyor* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998).

¹⁸² “Gökçen Ermeni’ydi,” *Hürriyet*, 22 Şubat 2004, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=204371>

orphanage.¹⁸³ Atatürk, when he came to Bursa in 1922, visited the orphanage and thought “Sabiha Gökçen was very cute and very smart.” He took her to Ankara right away and adopted her. Tuğlacı told *Hürriyet* that he did not know anything about ‘Hafız Mustafa İzzet’ who shows up as her father in the official records and that “this did not reflect the truth.” According to Tuğlacı, Gökçen did not remember her parents, and found out that she was an Armenian for the first time when her relatives from Beirut found her while she was living in Ankara with Mustafa Kemal. She, in fact, even went to Beirut to talk with her relatives, Tuğlacı told *Hürriyet*.

Tuğlacı also refuted the allegations that Gökçen knew Armenian and that there were letters in Armenian written to him by Gökçen: “She did not know Armenian. But, I don’t know where she picked it up, once she came up to me and said ‘I love you’ in Armenian. When she was abandoned to the orphanage at the age of 2-3, she knew neither Turkish nor Armenian.” But, *Hürriyet* asked, did Atatürk know she was an Armenian? Tuğlacı said it did not matter. Perhaps he knew, “but Atatürk was such an important leader and a humanist that no other nation on earth could reach him...what he understood from nationalism was to love his people and, he believed, he who loved his people would love all the peoples of the world. In other words, Atatürk would not categorize peoples according to their nationality.”

¹⁸³ Here, the implication is that there was a deportation from a city as west as Bursa contrary to Turkish official theses that Armenians were removed only from the war zones during the Russian offensives.

2.2.Sabiha Gökçen: ‘Atatürk ’s Most Successful Project Child’

According to Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, women are central to the creation and reproduction of ethnic and national projects. They are the biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities, they play a central role in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and they function as transmitters of its culture. They are, at the same time, signifiers of ethnic/national differences— a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories, and they participate in national, economic, political and military struggles.¹⁸⁴ They symbolize and express the purity of the nation. They are the symbolic bearers of the nation’s identity and honor.

So was Gökçen. She was not only Atatürk ’s adopted daughter, she was also a proud symbol of the “military nation.” As a icon, as a myth, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to regard her as one loaded gun of Turkish nationalism. As Rosenfeld put it, “a sense of the past seems to be shaped less on the basis of information contained in historical documents than through the projection of single images of ubiquitous and compelling power.”¹⁸⁵ Gökçen was one such image of compelling power in Turkey. It is, therefore, not surprising that the General Staff immediately intervened in the controversy and called the allegations about her identity “dangerous.”

Before I go forward in deconstructing the controversy and the outrage of Turkey about the allegations, I shall briefly navigate through Gökçen’s powerful iconography – the “Daughter of the Turks, Daughter of the Skies, Daughter of Atatürk

¹⁸⁴Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, eds., *Woman-Nation-State* (London: Sage, 1989), 7.

¹⁸⁵ Alvin Rosenfeld, “Popularization and Memory: The Case of Ann Frank,” in *Lessons and Legacies : The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, ed. Peter Hayes (Chicago: Northwestern University Press , 1991), 243.

” cult-, the meaning systems attached to her name, and what she came to signify for the modern Republic.

Sabiha Gökçen was not only the first woman pilot or the first woman military pilot of Turkey. She was the world’s first woman *combat* pilot; in other words, she was the first military woman in the world to fly combat missions and drop bombs in a war.¹⁸⁶ In World War I, Helene Dutrieu of France and Princess Eugenie Shakhovskaya of Russia both had served only as reconnaissance pilots.¹⁸⁷ Gökçen was always acclaimed in Turkey as the epitome of progressive Turkish womanhood and was regarded by the State as the exemplary modern Turkish woman. In 1996, at USA Maxwell Airbase, her name was recorded as one of the twenty aviators who changed the world aviation.

Gökçen obtained her title “The Flying Amazon of Turkey” in 1937; it was a title coined by *The New York Times* during Turkey’s military campaign against the uprising Kurds in the Dersim region (now, Tunceli).¹⁸⁸ It was a campaign that lasted for three months and cost 5000 lives.¹⁸⁹ According to Altınay, the unofficial casualty figure was much higher.¹⁹⁰ In a 1987 interview, when Gökçen was asked if there were any casualties among the Kurdish people during the Dersim operation, she gave the following response: “No [casualties]. It was just a reconnaissance campaign, the army had intelligence as well. They knew where these bad people were hiding. It would be

¹⁸⁶ Ayşe Gül Altınay, “Ordu-Millet-Kadınlar: Dünyanın İlk Kadın Savaş Pilotu Sabiha Gökçen,” in *Vatan Millet Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 247.

¹⁸⁷ “Wonen [sic] in Aviation's 100 most influential women in the aviation and aerospace industry,” *Aviation For Women Magazine*, <http://www.wai.org/resources/100womenscript.cfm>

¹⁸⁸ “The Flying Amazon of Turkey,” *New York Times*, 19 September 1937.

¹⁸⁹ “Turkish Paradox,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1937.

¹⁹⁰ Altınay, “Ordu-Millet-Kadınlar,” 258.

inhuman to destroy places where there would be children. No. There has never been such a thing....I will not dwell on the reasons and consequences of Dersim operation here.”¹⁹¹ So had written the *New York Times* on 17 June 1937:

Details of a campaign in the Dersim region, one of the most secret military operations in history, in which 30,000 Turkish troops and a fleet of airplanes were required to subdue an insurrection in an almost inaccessible region...Although 5000 were killed in bitter fighting...it was not known that anything was going on....The campaign ended when Sabiha Gueukschen Honoum¹⁹², one of adopted daughters of President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, made a direct hit on the house of Seyyid Riza, one of the insurgent leaders, killing him and several of his principal supporters.¹⁹³

A 20 June 1937 commentary in the *New York Times* would call the whole campaign and Gökçen’s contributions in it as a “Turkish Paradox”, and would identify Gökçen as the symbol of modernity and progress:

The effect on the shaken Kurds of the appearance of a woman military flier must have been a bombshell in itself. The advance in little more than a decade from the veil and the harem to the air pilot’s helmet and the battlefield is a leap that makes even the Western imagination reel. In the juxtaposition of the phenomena like Sabiha Hanoum, the Turkish act, and censorships [the author refers to the secrecy of the operation both in Turkey and in the world] that revive the conditions of the Dark Ages, the strange whirl of progress and reaction in which we grope is fantastically illuminated.”¹⁹⁴

As soon as Gökçen returned from Dersim, she became a national heroine.

Prime Minister İsmet İnönü was among the first who congratulated her: “We are watching your work, your success, and your courage as closely as Atatürk ... You are one of those women who carried ammunition around throughout the War [of Independence]. They were doing this on the ground; you are doing this in the skies,

¹⁹¹ Altınay, “Ordu, Millet, Kadınlar,” 261; Gökçen during her narration of Dersim Operation for *Atatürk’le Bir Ömür* edited by Oktay Verel mentions a similar argument; she says, “Here, I will not dwell on the reasons and consequences of Dersim operation. In this operation, I together with my friends tried to accomplish the duty given to me by my country.” My translation. See Gökçen, *Atatürk’le Bir Ömür*, 125.

¹⁹² “Hanoum” or “hanım” is a courtesy title, like Bey and Pasha. I consider it surprising that New York Times did not use her official last name, “Gökçen” in this report, which was given to her by Atatürk with the Law of Family Names in 1934.

¹⁹³ “Turkey Combats Uprising Turks,” *New York Times*, 17 June 1937.

¹⁹⁴ “Turkish Paradox,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1937.

and will continue to do it.”¹⁹⁵ Atatürk too was very pleased with Gökçen’s performance:

I am proud of you Gökçen!... You too can be as proud as you wish to be with yourself since you showed to the whole world one more time what our young women can do... We are a military nation... We are a nation of natural-born soldiers, men and women (...*kadinından erkeğine asker yaratılmış bir ulusuz*). But our understanding of militarism is never a product of an imperialist ideology... The position of a military-nation driven by peace should be right next to the flag of peace in the world.¹⁹⁶

There was, however, a striking silence in Turkey about what made Gökçen a hero: Since Dersim Campaign was censured in the media, there was a profound silence around what kind of a war she fought, against who she fought and what kind of heroic sacrifices she went through; or everybody knew but remained quiet.¹⁹⁷ When she received a medal of honor for distinguished service as a volunteer pilot in the Turkish Flying Corps, which was the highest honor for an aviator in Turkey at that time, she in her brief speech on 28 May 1937 did not mention anything about Dersim either.¹⁹⁸ According to Turkish Aviation League’s monthly periodical *Aviation and Sports* (‘Havacılık ve Spor’), Gökçen received this medal for her distinguished contributions in the Thrace and Aegean war manoeuvres of Turkish Air Force held before the Dersim Campaign. After these manoeuvres, she was promoted to the rank of flight lieutenant. So would an article with the title “Daughter of the Turks, Daughter of the Skies, Daughter of Atatürk ” celebrate her mysterious success story in *Aviation and Sports*: “Turkish race has once again created a Tomris¹⁹⁹ who used to lead the

¹⁹⁵ Altınay, “Ordu, Millet, Kadınlar,” 255.

¹⁹⁶ Gökçen, *Atatürk’le Bir Ömür*, 125-126.

¹⁹⁷ Altınay, “Ordu, Millet, Kadınlar,” 257.

¹⁹⁸ Altınay, “Ordu, Millet, Kadınlar,” 257

¹⁹⁹ The oldest Turkish woman ruler known in history.

invaders on her horse leaving all the men behind: Sabiha Gökçen in her plane.”²⁰⁰

When she received her military aviation diploma on 30 August 1937, the Commander of Eskisehir Air Force Academy called her a “national saint” because “she had showed that she could rise in the skies as fast as her male brothers” and “she was ready to shed the noble blood of the Turkish woman for the fatherland any time in the skies.”²⁰¹

When the ministers of Balkan Entente²⁰² came to Ankara in 1938 for diplomatic talks, Atatürk wanted Gökçen to be present during the reception dinner at Cankaya.²⁰³ During that reception, the Balkan Entente invited Gökçen to fly for a Balkan tour of friendship. In June 1938, she carried out a five-day flight around the Balkan countries with great acclaim. Gökçen in her memoirs recalls what Atatürk had told her before she took off:

In a few hours, all world radios will announce that you embarked on a great Balkan tour and that you represent the Turkish womanhood in the skies with pride... Tell them that you are a peace-loving daughter of a peace-loving nation, that you wish for peace at home and in the world... Tell them how we, as the Republic of Turkey, developed in this short period of time, how we became one nation fastened as a fist... Tell them, one by one, about the Turkish woman, the new Turkish society and the point where Turkish woman rose to in our society, that we will progress further... explain that we will become an even more civilized country.²⁰⁴

So would declare Gökçen when she reached Athens, her first stop in her tour, where she was welcomed with a military ceremony:

I am happy to be the first Turkish military woman pilot. I guess I will be the first one in the world to have accomplished this. I wanted our friends to witness what the Turkish women can accomplish in every field. You can see me an ambassador of

²⁰⁰ “Sabiha Gokcen,” *Türk Hava Kuvvetleri Internet Sitesi*, <http://www.hvkk.tsk.tr/PageSub/Kurumumuz/Tarihce/TarihtenYansimalar.aspx?pid=031119829>

²⁰¹ My translation. “Sabiha Gokcen,” *Türk Hava Kuvvetleri Internet Sitesi*, <http://www.hvkk.tsk.tr/PageSub/Kurumumuz/Tarihce/TarihtenYansimalar.aspx?pid=031119829>
“O, Türk kadınının, temiz kanını havada, her an yurt için akıtmağa hazır olduğunu ispat için yükselmiş milli bir azize olmuştur...”

²⁰² Pact of Balkan Entente was the first Balkan initiative signed in 1934 for regional cooperation by Greece, Turkey, Romania, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

²⁰³ “White House” of Turkey where the Presidents of the Republic reside.

²⁰⁴ My translation. Gökçen, *Atatürk'le Bir Ömür*, 273-274.

peace as well....After the National War of Independence, as you all know, with the [new] Republican administration, we have joined those rare countries who have created miracles in the world. We will progress even further. We will try to rise to the same level with the most powerful states. As our Atatürk puts it, we are a nation who wants peace at home and peace in the world...We must love peace, not war. We should be comrades, not enemies. Here comes a Turkish woman military aviator to remind you of peace, to strengthen the friendship.²⁰⁵

Turkish Aviation League's periodical memorialized her trip with the heading, "An Eagle passed from the Balkan Skies" and claimed in the same nationalistic spirit that "The Balkan skies so far have seen hundreds of eagles; but the sound of the wings that are swaying (*dalgalandıran*) the skies this time is the sound of the new Turkish history. The passing this time is the passing of an honorable achievement" (*Bu seferki geçiş, şerefli bir eserin geçişidir*).²⁰⁶ Gökçen thus came to symbolize the new Turkish history.

She was later appointed as chief trainer of the Turkish Aviation League's Turkish Bird (*Türk Kuşu*) Aviation School where she served until 1955. Later, she became a member of the Turkish Aviation Executive Board. She flew around the world until 1964. When she died on her birthday, on 22 March 2001, many flags flew at half-mast in the nation. In his message of condolence, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer said, "In addition to having the honor of being Atatürk 's adopted daughter, she will always be remembered by the Turkish people as a symbol of the modern Turkish woman."²⁰⁷ Conveying his condolences to the aviation world and to all of Turkey,

²⁰⁵Gökçen, *Atatürk'le Bir Ömür*, 278-279.

²⁰⁶ My translation. "Balkan Göklerinden Bir TürkKartalı Geçti," *Havacılık ve Spor Dergisi*, 1938/218. See "Sabiha Gokcen," *Türk Hava Kuvvetleri Internet Sitesi*,

<http://www.hvkk.tsk.tr/PageSub/Kurumumuz/Tarihce/TarihtenYansimalar.aspx?pid=031119829>

²⁰⁷ "Sabiha Gokcen (1913-2001)" *Hardgrave The Pioneers: Aviation and Aero-Modelling*, <http://www.ctie.monash.edu/hargrave/gokcen.html>

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said, “Turkey was proud of her.”²⁰⁸ Gökçen’s death in the official website of Turkish Air Force was narrated as follows:

The rain that started in the evening of March 22 continued through the morning of March 23, until 11:00am. Then it stopped, suddenly, as if it knew the time of the ceremony. The skies too were tired of crying. Then came a wind...whatever you say, this wind that followed the rain was the applause of the skies to Gökçen who could not be defeated for 88 years.²⁰⁹

In conclusion, Gökçen, whose achievements especially in the 1930s made a significant contribution to the ‘military nation’ discourse and to nation-formation, was one of the most important symbols of the Republic and hence, “Turkishness.” The fact that a 1956 book about her has been re-published by the Turkish Airlines in 1998 for the 75th Anniversary commemorations of the Republic is an example that demonstrates this.²¹⁰ As Yeşim Arat puts it, “Sabiha Gökçen in her air force uniform, with respectful male onlookers, including her proud father, is ingrained in the collective consciousness of at least the educated urbanites in Turkey.”²¹¹ She was the new image of Turkey. And her memory was so tangled with that of Atatürk that her autobiography in an Ankara bookshop was once observed to be located on the Atatürk shelf.²¹² The role of the book’s title in this highly revealing misplacement can’t be overlooked: *So Passed A Life In The Path of Atatürk*. She was the human embodiment of Atatürk’s dreams realized for modern Turkey, for the modern Turkish woman and, for “Turkishness” and for Turkish civilization.

²⁰⁸ “Sabiha Gokcen (1913-2001)” *Hardgrave The Pioneers: Aviation and Aero-Modelling*, <http://www.ctie.monash.edu/hargrave/gokcen.html>

²⁰⁹ “Sabiha Gokcen,” *Türk Hava Kuvvetleri Internet Sitesi*, <http://www.hvkk.tsk.tr/PageSub/Kurumumuz/Tarihce/TarihtenYansimalar.aspx?pid=031119829>

²¹⁰ Altınay, “Ordu, Millet,Kadinlar”, 273.

²¹¹ Yeşim Arat, “The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, 98-99.

²¹² Altınay, “Ordu,Millet,Kadinlar,” 250.

2.3. Reactions in the Turkish Press (1): ‘Discuss but don’t Scratch’

Was she “a magnificent Turk or Armenian?” wrote the *Economist* baffled by intensity of the debate that arrested the Turkish public life over the ethnicity of Gökçen almost overnight.²¹³ Atatürk’s other adopted daughter Ulku Adatepe organized a press conference the day after *Hürriyet*’s story: “The defamation of such a respectable person who carries Atatürk’s name with honor makes me upset...the real purpose behind the news like this is to defame Atatürk.”²¹⁴ While the Turkish Aviation League joined the debate with a press release and declared “with sadness” that “...knowingly or unknowingly, one more value of Turkishness is being destroyed,” a group of military aviators who signed their press release as “1958 graduates” said “this is the greatest disrespect against the memory of a national hero who has printed her name in history regardless of her ethnicity. Those of us who know this very well as woman aviators of the 1958 term ferociously condemn those misers who want to create a storm in a tea cup.” They claimed that the real target of the allegations were the “Great Leader Ataturk and the secular republic and the contemporary Turkish woman, which were his accomplishments” (*asılsız iddialarla gündeme getirilmesindeki asıl hedef Ulu Önder Atatürk ve onun eserleri olan lâik cumhuriyet ve çağdaş Türk kadınının...*).²¹⁵ Istanbul University was also among the institutions that condemned the allegations.

²¹³ “An historical heroine; Turkey and the Armenians (Sabiha Gokcen, a Turkish aviator),” *The Economist*, 27 March 2004.

²¹⁴ “Ermeni iddiasını, ilk uçuş tarihi çürüttü,” *Milliyet*, 23 Şubat 2004, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ermen-i-ddiasini--ilk-ucus-tarihi-curuttu/guncel/haberdetayarsiv/30.03.2010/265366/default.htm?ver=54>

²¹⁵ Taha Kıvanç “Sabiha Gökçen Uzerine”, *Yeni Şafak*, 26 Şubat 2004, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2004/subat/26/tkivanc.html>

To *Hürriyet*'s Emin Çölaşan too, the allegations were slander: "...I could have never imagined that one day such games would be played behind her back and she would be declared an Armenian. The dead can't respond to the lies, to slanders. Playing games behind them is the easiest. What a *shame*, what an embarrassment, what a sin (*Yazık, ayıp, günah*)."²¹⁶ Ironically, Çölaşan had began his column by writing, "let's say she was an Armenian – so what? Is it a *shame* to be an Armenian?"²¹⁷ What matters is the inside of her brain, her life, what she left behind." Melih Aşık of *Hürriyet* too was as ambivalent as Çölaşan in his judgment of what it meant to be an Armenian in Turkey and where its implied "shame" had to be located intellectually in this "nonsense debate...initiated by a cleaning woman from Armenia":

Neither being an Armenian nor being an orphan is a shame....But, if Sabiha Gökçen was an Armenian and this situation was concealed, it comes into open that Atatürk and his adopted daughter have been lying to the public for years. Besides, it makes people think that Atatürk and her adopted daughter regarded 'being an Armenian and an orphan' as a shame. [This] leads to judgments about the heroes of the Republic who are not with us anymore that render them shallow. We don't think *Hürriyet* had any bad intentions in its evaluation of this news. What happened probably was an inability to see the consequences that lied ahead in the hassle of journalism. And we hope this time it has been understood that we should collectively be sensitive about the noble and respectable names of the Republic."²¹⁸

Celal Şengör, a prominent geologist of Turkey at Istanbul Technical University who regularly writes at *Cumhuriyet*, also struggled with this question of where to situate the "shame" of the incident. He too launched his column titled "Sabiha Gökçen, Earthquakes and Critical Newsmaking in the Press" initially with a *so-what-*

²¹⁶ My italics. Emin Çölaşan, "Sabiha Gökçen," *Hürriyet*, 22 Şubat 2004, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=204333>

²¹⁷ My italics.

²¹⁸ My translation. Melih Aşık, "Sabiha Gökçen -2," 24 Şubat 2004, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/sabiha-gokcen---/melih-asik/guncel/yazardetayarsiv/30.03.2010/27538/default.htm?ver=41>

if-she-is-Armenian coolness.²¹⁹ Firstly, in the Republic of Turkey, argued Şengör, citizenship was constitutional; a Sabiha of Rumelia descent would be as sacred as a Sabiha of Armenian descent. But Şengör, an expert in seismic phenomena, was especially uncomfortable with the timing of the incident. “What is the purpose of this allegation now?” he asked, “..it is implied that Sabiha’s *so-called family*²²⁰ was slaughtered during the incidents of 1915. Within every society there are historical wounds. Civilized societies discuss these wounds *to completely remove them*²²¹ but they don’t scratch them. That Atatürk’s adopted daughter was an Armenian...is news that scratches this social wound. If Sabiha was of Armenian descent why would she hide it?” Indeed, why would she hide it? Şengör was in agony. He was torn between his scientific rationality and nationalist passion. He was trying to resolve his dilemma repositioning the problem as pedagogic lessons on the principles of good journalism: For social peace, journalists had to be responsible which, according to Şengör, meant knowing the difference between the “scratching” vs. the “discussion” of the social wounds. “Scratching”, rather than “complete removal [of the social wound] through discussion” was not only bad journalism; it was also “uncivilized.” Journalism was not about gossip-mongering, it wasn’t about sensationalism.

Şengör’s most dramatic critical evaluation came in the conclusion of his article. He related the Sabiha Gökçen coverage of *Agos* and *Hürriyet* to national media’s reporting on the earthquakes [of Turkey]. Given how the controversy shook

²¹⁹ Celal Şengör, “Sabiha Gökçen, depremle ve basında eleştirel habercilik,” Cumhuriyet, 28 Şubat 2004.

²²⁰ Şengör, “Sabiha Gökçen, depremle ve basında eleştirel habercilik.” My italics.

²²¹ Şengör, “Sabiha Gökçen, depremle ve basında eleştirel habercilik.” My italics.

the nation, perhaps there was nothing surprising about the fact that most revealing moment of the Gökçen controversy was delivered by a geologist:

“Haven’t we read news also on the issue of the earthquake²²² that did not rest on any serious research or data, that were all products of sophistry on the first pages of our renowned newspapers.... ? Didn’t news like this constructed on a horrible catastrophe like the earthquake which threatens our national (and individual) security cause confusion, anxiety among our citizens, and even the failure to implement the most important programs of security measures?....Journalism is not about gossip mongering...Sabiha Gökçen is as important a character as not to be made gossip material. As I have several times mentioned before societies who do not have idols can’t raise people who have the capacity to be idols. One of the most effective ways of dragging a society to misery is to smear their idols with the mud of unfounded allegations.”²²³

So explained Şengör, finally revealing the real force of the relationship he forged between the Gökçen controversy and the earthquake debates in Turkey. Both were equally powerful to lead a nation to misery; the former in national history and identity, the latter in national territory.

While some columnists attacked *Hürriyet* for being “irresponsible,” for some, the borders of responsibility in the Gökçen controversy lay far beyond the ethics of journalism. The legend of the “Great Game” was back. According to Emin Pazarcı in *Tercüman*, the whole incident was “minority racism”: “It has been two years since Sabiha Gökçen died. Why didn’t anyone say something then...? What is the purpose? To give the message that a woman with a leadership quality can’t come out of the Turkish society? If this is the purpose, what has been done should be called a very

²²² A 7.4 earthquake struck western Turkey on 17 August 1999 (also known as the Kocaeli, Turkey, earthquake). It occurred on one of the world's longest and best studied strike-slip (horizontal motion) faults: the east-west trending North Anatolian fault. The official death toll was placed at 17,127 killed and 43,953 injured, but many sources suggest the actual figure may have been closer to 40,000 dead and a similar number injured. Şengör is referring to the media coverage after this earthquake and the debate on a similar earthquake expected in Western Turkey again within the next 30 years.

²²³ Şengör, “Sabiha Gökçen, depremle ve basında eleştirel habercilik.”

banal minority racism.”²²⁴ Another colleague of Pazarcı in *Tercüman* was also suspicious of the motives behind the news: “The Armenian paper did not launch these allegations for nothing. If you ask me, this is the first stage of a very big ploy in preparation. If we remain silent about these allegations, the rest of this is yet to come.” It did not take the die-hard leftist, Kemalist and anti-imperialist İlhan Selçuk of the similarly inclined *Cumhuriyet* to unveil what kind of a “big conspiracy” was just about to unfold. Selçuk wrote on the issue two days in a row, on February 24 and 25 respectively. On the first day he wrote, he stabbed it at its heart. Imperialism, he said:

“...with its face turned to the Turks says: Nation-state is finished. And it turns to the Kurds and says: Establish your own nation-state. In the meantime so many bloody dramas have been lived; imperialism was never satisfied with the episodes of revenge during the period Ottoman Empire was being split..and it keeps heating up those conflicts....Two words: Exchange (*mubadele*) and Tehcir (*deportation*)...The deportation was too painful!...In the Eastern Anatolia, the Ottoman administration had to force the Armenians collaborating with the occupying Russians to deportation; during the process, bloody incidents happened....But who is to blame? Is this [even] a question? Of course Turks are!...According to imperialism barbarian Turks hung, butchered, deported, massacred the Christians. European parliaments and also Americans are getting ready to bring us to account; “genocide resolutions,” are passing from the parliaments one by one; what will happen tomorrow is evident from today...In the meantime, news in the dailies...in the headlines indeed: “Atatürk ’s adopted daughter was an Armenian...” Now go and open up the old books, “Armenian genocide, deportation, what happened to Christian children”, right or wrong, let all be refreshed...The more you fuel the animosities between the Armenian, the Kurd, the Greek, the more you grease the wheels for imperialism...and what our media does, in the name of journalism, is nothing else but this. Who does it harm if one more episode is staged of the scenario written about destroying Turkey.”²²⁵

Selçuk continued his deconstruction of the Gökçen controversy the next day, this time with a more clear title: “Sabiha Gökçen and the Deportation.” He relayed citations in his article from the “French social scientists,” bringing an expert closure to

²²⁴ My translation., Hüseyin Tekin, “Sabiha Gökçen tartışmasında kim ne yazdı,” *Hürriyet*, 28 Şubat 2004, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=205913>

²²⁵ My translation. İlhan Selçuk, “İşimiz zor,” *Cumhuriyet*, 24 Şubat 2004.

the debate on “1915” and reiterating the conspiratorial underpinnings of the allegations:

“... she is regarded as one of the children Armenians left behind... Documentation and evidence..? There is none! In the Republic of Turkey, a new hasty group hostile to Turkey has come up. How did this happen? Such things don’t happen out of the blues, everything has a reason. Turkey is wanted to be dismembered, split and shared. The external forces of this are fuelling the media inside; everywhere a strange conspiracy is being set up.”²²⁶

It was when all the ghosts of this “strange conspiracy” paradigm invested with all the memories of the great games were reincarnated in the mortal body of Hrant Dink, did the Sabiha Gökçen controversy become a tragedy in the real sense of the word. Its catharsis would eventually unfold on January 19, 2007. As the images disseminated to the nation from the gendarmerie station where Dink’s alleged murderer was taken into custody relayed, *the land of the nation [was] sacred; it [couldn’t] be left to its fate*. A national indictment for Dink was in process.

Deniz Som in *Cumhuriyet* was perhaps one of the first journalists who openly initiated the excommunication and the collective lynching of Dink, a trajectory that grew like a forest fire fuelled and orchestrated by the Turkish media. For Sabiha Gökçen and the Turkish innocence to be redeemed in the glorious narratives of a military nation, Dink had to be satanized first. Som began his column titled “Sabiha Gökçen”²²⁷ with the first sentence of an article Hrant Dink had written on 13 February 2004 in *Agos*. This was the eight article in a series of eleven articles²²⁸ Dink had

²²⁶ My translation. İlhan Selçuk, “Sabiha Gökçen ve Tehcir,” *Cumhuriyet*, 25 Şubat 2004.

²²⁷ My translation. Deniz Som, “Sabiha Gökçen,” *Cumhuriyet*, 24 Şubat 2004.

²²⁸ I was informed by the Hrant Dink Foundation in Turkey on 21 March 2008 that he had in fact written 11 articles, 9 of which was published in *Agos*. By the time he was taken to Court for denigrating Turkishness, he had only 8 articles published...and the ones that paved the way to his conviction by Penal Code 301 were the 6th, 7th and 8th ones. See “Hrant Dink'i 'yakan' yazılar,” *Radikal*, 10 Ekim 2005, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=166485>. The 6th, 7th, and 8th articles are available on the

published under the title “On the Armenian Identity.” I argue that a brief evaluation of what Dink had been talking about in *Agos* a little before the Gökçen news was sensationalized in February 2004 and how his fragile and already vulnerable words were plundered and made prey to Turkish nationalism not only illuminates the larger plateau of deep-seated fears of this pure artifice called “Turkishness.” It also reveals a case in which mass media became an effective vehicle for the articulation of the hate speech and hate crimes of a modern nation-state. I will get back to Som’s discourse on Dink after this brief detour.

2.4.Dink on the Armenian Identity

The series of articles titled “About Armenian Identity” were Dink’s critical treatise on the future prospects for the Armenian identity. In this serial he launched on 7 November 2003, Dink addressed the Armenian world, primarily the diaspora Armenians. He argued that the role the “Turk” as *the other* historically played in the formation of the Armenian identity had finally become too problematic for the Armenians. Dink, already in trouble with Article 159 (a previous version of Article 301), was careful, cognizant of the fact that he was treading on thin ice: He used the word the “Turk” in quotation marks throughout these articles to make it clear that he was alluding to the Turk, *the constitutive other*, discursively and historically constructed within the narratives of the Armenian identity. This “Turk” lying at the core of the Armenian identity today became a source of pain, a trauma that “poisons

website of *Turquie Européenne* in both Turkish and English. For Turkish, see <http://turquieeuropeenne.eu/article1414.html>, for English see, <http://turquieeuropeenne.eu/article1403.html>.

the Armenian blood.” This prevented the development of a positive Armenian identity, wrote Dink in the 6th article “The ‘Turk’ of the Armenian.”²²⁹ The world that was so sensitive to the Jewish genocide had no interest in the Armenians, and this...according to Dink...this stubbornness to seek justice and “truth” had become the central vector moving the Armenian identity today. Besides a world that denied the truth for the Armenians, the real damaging factor for them, however, were the Turks who showed no signs to move a finger on the issue – for it couldn’t be denied, Dink asserted, that the compassionate role Germans had played for the Jews after the Holocaust is the central factor that accounts for an healthy Jewish identity, for the Jewish healing today.

The current stage of the Turkish-Armenian relations was in a painful stalemate, argued Dink:

Turks and Armenians and the way they see each other constitute two clinical cases: Armenians with their trauma, Turks with their paranoia...As long as Armenians do not liberate themselves from wallowing in this unhealthy situation...it does not seem to be possible that they will reconstruct their identity...Especially, unless Turks will take an empathic approach on the issue of 1915, the agony of the Armenian identity will continue. In conclusion, it is evident that the “Turk” is both the poison and antidote of the Armenian identity.²³⁰

The real important problem was whether the Armenian would be able to liberate herself/himself and his identity from this ‘Turk.’

30 January 2004 delivered Dink’s 7th article in the series under the title “To be liberated from the ‘Turk.’”²³¹ “There are, it appears, two ways to emancipate the

²²⁹ Hrant Dink, “About Armenian Identity (6): The ‘Turk’ of the Armenian,” *Agos*, Issue 408, 23 January 2004.

²³⁰ Dink, “About Armenian Identity (6): The ‘Turk’ of the Armenian.”

²³¹ Hrant Dink, “About Armenian Identity (7): To be liberated from the ‘Turk,’” *Agos*, Issue 409, 30 January 2004.

Armenian identity from ‘the Turk,’” so began Dink. The first was that Turkey could empathize with the Armenian nation and display an attitude that would show that it was sharing the grief of the Armenian nation. But this, for now, seemed impossible. The second way was that the Armenian himself/herself could uproot the influence of the “Turk” from his/her identity. And this was the preferred way, according to Dink. It was a huge mistake to abandon the health of the Armenian identity to the recognition of the genocide by the French, the American, the Turk. The way Dink concluded this 7th article together with how he launched the 8th article on 13 February 2004 would finally render him the most memorable convict of Penal Code 301 in modern Turkish history:

“Those who believe that the Armenian world would experience an emptiness when it emancipates itself from the “Turk” and that especially the disintegration of the identity of the Diaspora Armenians would be accelerated, are mistaken. There exists a much more vital phenomenon that will fill the void left behind from the “Turk” and this is the existence of the independent State of Armenia. This new enthusiasm that didn’t exist 15 years ago is expected to play a much greater role on the Armenian identity above and beyond every other influence. The fact that the Armenian world ties its future to the prosperity of this little country and to the happiness of those living there, will also be a sign of its liberation from all the pains disturbing its identity. The way to emancipate the Armenian identity from the “Turk” is very simple: Not fighting with the ‘Turk’. And the new territory where the Armenian identity will search for its new sentences is ready already: Working on Armenia.”²³²

2.5.Reactions in the Turkish Press (2): A Mediated Operation of ‘blood vessel cleaning’

“The Editor of weekly *Agos*, Hrant Dink is beginning his column as follows,” so wrote Deniz Som of *Cumhuriyet* on February 24: “The fresh blood that will replace that poisonous blood that will stream out of the Turk is present in the noble veins of

²³² Ibid. The title of his 8th article was “Meeting Armenia” (*Ermenistan’la Tanışmak*). See Hrant Dink, “About Armenian Identity (8): Meeting Armenia,” *Agos*, Issue 410, 13 February 2004.

the Armenian in Turkey²³³, which he will cultivate with Armenia... Provided that, this existence is realized.” This way, Som perilously decontextualized the arguments that Dink had so patiently articulated over eight articles since 2003, he did not put the “Turk” in the quotation marks, and by changing “the Armenian” in Dink’s text into “the Armenian in Turkey” his version came to articulate how dangerously divisive Dink could be for the nation. In fact, with all these textual manipulations, Dink’s first sentence lifted from his eight article stripped off its meticulous context could only mean the following: *We will suck the poisonous blood of the Turks and our noble, fresh blood will become the great Armenia. We just have to be conscious of this power!* None of these distortions, however, was as fatal as Som’s further deliberations on Dink’s arguments: “This opinion is nothing other than racism and this is an operation of “blood vessel cleaning” (*damardan kan temizleme operasyonu*²³⁴) that has not been conceived even by the world’s greatest fascist Adolf Hitler!” It is only after establishing who Hrant Dink was (*a fascist*) and what his intentions were (*cleaning the blood vessels of the Turks*), Som moved on to his commentary on the Gökçen controversy by first referring to what appeared in *Agos*. “And the owner of this article is also Hrant Dink,” he exclaimed in the midst of his column. After he established Dink as the primary culprit of the controversy, Som this time attacked *Hürriyet*:

²³³ My italics. Dink addresses all Armenians in his series titled “About the Armenian Identity” and he does not mention “Turkey” in the original version of this sentence, he just says, “the Armenian.” He clarifies who he addresses in these series in his very first article titled “On Generations”: “Whether Turkish Armenians can be defined as ‘the Diaspora’ or not, these discussions – regarding the Diaspora or anything else- closely concern almost everyone and all Armenians including even the citizens of Armenia.” My translation. See Hrant Dink, “Ermeni kimliği üzerine (1): Kuşaklara Dair,” *Agos*, 7 Kasım 2003.

²³⁴ If I had to translate more precisely, this expression read as “an operation of cleaning blood from the vessel.”

But, the task of bringing to the public the information that Gökçen is of Armenian descent has been undertaken by *Hürriyet* and by quoting from *Agos* it [*Hürriyet*] has disclosed ‘Sabiha Gökçen’s 80-year old secret.’ Even if the disclosure has been relayed as an allegation, the details do not matter because at one corner of the mind of the public opinion (*kamuoyunun aklının bir köşesinde*) the words ‘Sabiha Gökçen’ and ‘Armenian’ have been brought side by side. ...As the General Staff explained, what lies under this and what has been intended need to be interrogated. What is essentially happening is the preoccupation of the public agenda with unfounded allegations and the issuing of an invitation to the blood vessel cleaning operations of some. It was not in vain that the Commander of the Aegean Armies General Hurşit Tolon talked about the treacherous among us.”²³⁵

So the damage was already done, as Som put it, and he reminded his readers that the treacherous was now among us.

In terms of channeling the national anger on Hrant Dink, Hasan Pulur of *Milliyet* was perhaps even more provocative than Deniz Som. “How many people would know Hrant Dink, even if he showed up in a few TV programs? How many people would know that in Istanbul a newspaper called ‘Agos’ is being published and he is the editor-in-chief of that paper? But now many more people know both him and his paper. Why?” So were the questions with which Pulur launched his column. It was evident that he was profoundly upset that some skeletons had finally left the closet:

²³⁵ General Hursit Tolon’s evaluation of the issue as publicized by many papers was in fact squarely contrary to the General’s Staff’s reaction. What he said on the issue was as follows, “I do not know this but suppose she is an Armenian. What would happen? I mean, would this decrease our value or hers? It [that she is an Armenian] is even better. This situation would be the most important evidence that shows the greatness of Atatürk and the Turkish nation. It shows what a leader of great vision Atatürk was. This means Atatürk established years ago that in a globalizing world ethnic roots had no importance whatsoever. This nation, with her Turk, Kurd, Laz and Armenian, is an indivisible whole. And this is what this news shows. That Gokcen was an Armenian does not make us sad, on the contrary, it makes us happy.” Although Tolon’s words on this issue should not be taken at their face value, the real issue is where Som picked up the words like “treacherous among us” he attributes to him. Tolon had mentioned “the treacherous” in a very different context when he was talking about the Cyprus issue weeks ago but in my survey of the media coverage of the Gökçen controversy I could not locate any news where Tolon mentioned the ‘treacherous among us.’ All newspapers published the same statement of Tolon on the controversy, with very minor variations. The statement “it was not in vain that the Commander of the Aegean Armies General Hurşit Tolon talked about the treacherous among us” is therefore the product of Deniz Som’s creativity in hate speech. For Tolon’s words on the issue, see Murat Eğilmez, “Bizi üzmez sevindirir,” *Hürriyet*, 22 Şubat 2004, <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2004/02/22/416898.asp>

This Armenian called “Hrant Dink” and his “Armenian” paper “Agos” were now public. If Dink did not publish some nonsense by a “cleaning woman” who came from Armenia no one would know Dink or his paper. Puler’s objective was to show his readers that Dink was not worthy of this attention. He summarized what Dink had thought on the social life and the justice in the Ottoman Empire vs. the Republic, on public administration and education, on even the teaching of the alphabet in Turkey, quoting from a public address of Dink during an Istanbul conference on “The experience of living together.”²³⁶ While Puler was pretending to be informative with a little edge in his narrations of the various faces of Dink, his conclusion was no less perilous for Dink than that of Som: “Hrant Dink is also a humorous person,” wrote Puler, and quoted one last segment from Dink’s public address: “Once I mentioned as a joke, let me repeat it again, for god’s sake, you’ve never appreciated your minorities. At least from now on appreciate them, learn well how to live together with us who are different. Tomorrow, or the other day, if you enter the European Union, you will be living with the fifty giaour²³⁷ of the foreign lands. Now let ours be an exercise stage, don’t you think so?!” Puler as one could tell from the direction his narrative was taking was not taking Dink’s remarks easy: “It is evident that Hrant Dink knows Turkish well...I wonder then, if he has also heard an expression like “showing the

²³⁶ Hasan Puler, “Sabiha Gökçenin Ermeniliği nereden mi çıktı?” *Milliyet*, 25 Şubat 2004, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/sabiha-gokcenin-ermeniligi-nereden-mi-cikti-/hasan-puler/yasam/yazardetayarsiv/31.03.2010/27621/default.htm?ver=67>

²³⁷ Means “the infidel non-muslim.”

stick under the cloth (*acaba "Aba altından sopa göstermek" deyimini de hiç duymuş mu?*)”²³⁸

Even if Hrant Dink never heard the expression, he would feel its meaning under his skin when the Turkish Armed Forces finally spoke on the Gökçen controversy. On February 22, a press release that originated from the office of the Chief of General Staff was published by all Turkish dailies and covered by the local news on TV. The military manifesto on Gökçen fervently conveyed that the memories of the Turkish nation would be defended with military might, and perhaps it was this military coup in the realm of memories that undeniably, and, perhaps for the first time, officially revealed the fragility of “Turkishness”:

She is, having been the first woman war pilot of Turkish Armed Forces, is an honorary name of the Turkish Aviation. Sabiha Gökçen is at the same time a precious and reasoned (*akilci*) symbol that shows the position Atatürk wanted the Turkish woman to occupy in the Turkish society. Whatever the purpose is, throwing such a symbol into a debate is an approach that does not contribute to our national unity and social peace. Great Atatürk has defined the Turkish nation as ‘the Turkish people who founded the Turkish Republic is called the Turkish nation.’ Atatürkist nationalism, as it can be seen, is not founded on ethnic and religious foundations. In the 66th article of our Constitution as well as Turkish citizenship is defined as ‘Everyone who is committed to the Turkish State with a citizenship bond is a Turk.’

It is not possible to accept the reporting of an allegation like this, that which abuses the national sentiments and values, as newsmaking. Here the real important issue is what has been intended by this news. Lately, besides the unfair and unfounded criticisms targeting Atatürkist nationalism and the nation-state form, it has been observed with concern that dangerous and unhealthy ideas proposed to replace Atatürkist nationalism are given place in some segments of the media deliberately or not deliberately and irresponsibly.

At a time that our national unity and togetherness must be the strongest, to what purpose such reports targeting our national unity and togetherness and national values serve has now been understood and has been observed with great concern by the large segment of the Turkish society. It is clear that defending the unity and togetherness of

²³⁸ A Turkish expression that means “threatening the other while looking soft and calm.” Close to “iron fist in a velvet glove” expression in English but this one does not connote “threat” as strongly as the Turkish one. The Turkish version may perhaps be a little closer to a political slogan coined by Roosevelt, “the big stick diplomacy” supposedly inspired by an African proverb “Speaking softly and carrying a big stick.” In the Turkish version, the connotation is that one who speaks softly hides the “big stick.”

the Turkish nation, the social peace it deserves, Atatürk 's moral being and system of thought with a responsible approach in a way that is appropriate to the Turkish nation is an obvious duty to be undertaken by every Turkish citizen and by all institutions besides the Turkish Armed Forces. In this respect, it is expected by the nation that Turkish media exhibits more sensitivity to Atatürk 's moral being, system of thought, Turkish republic's fundamental principles and values, Turkish nation's unity and togetherness and it reviews its principles of publishing in the light of these considerations.²³⁹

At this stage there was no longer a need to read in between the lines in the media:

Military's manifesto on Gökçen was a revelation on what cherished symbols of "Turkishness" would be driven to a precarious existence by "the allegations" on Gökçen's identity (read: the genocide in the founding moment): Atatürk , Atatürk ist nationalism, Great Atatürk , Atatürk 's moral being, Atatürk 's system of thought, Turkish Republic's [read: Atatürk 's] fundamental principles and thoughts, Turkish nation's unity and togetherness [read: living as one unified whole in the image of Atatürk], Turkish nation's [read: Atatürk 's] values. The manifesto shows what an ideologically over-determined symbol Gökçen was.

"At my home, in the TV news I heard this long manifesto. I was not at ease that night. I knew something for sure was going to happen the next day. And my experiences and intuitions did not fail me," wrote Hrant Dink in *Agos* on 12 January 2007 in his column titled "Why have I been chosen as a target." It was now three years after the Gökçen controversy and one week before his assassination. He was given a six-month suspended prison sentence in July 2006 following an October 2005 conviction on charges of "denigrating Turkishness" in his series "On the Armenian Identity." Why did the other suspects of the same crime – novelists like Orhan

²³⁹ My translation. "Genelkurmay: Gökçen Ata'nın armağanıdır," *Hürriyet*, 22 Şubat 2004, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=204466>

Pamuk, Elif Safak, and many other Turkish journalists- having denigrated the very same “Turkishness” enjoy a variety of technical and legal remedies together with the attention of Europe, but he did not? He wanted to know if his “Armenianness” played a role in this. He knew for sure some were seriously disturbed by his increasing presence in the public sphere and they were eager to teach him a lesson. He knew he has been “going too far” ever since 1996 when *Agos* was founded; since then he had been expressing the issues of the Armenian society, claiming their rights, or conveying his position on “history” that was so wildly out of sync with the Turkish theses. Dink, however, openly declared to his readers on 12 January that “the real last drop that made the cup run over was the “Sabiha Gökçen” news that was published in *Agos* on 6 February 2004.” “All I have is a hypothesis,” he told his readers, “the only thing I can do is to share with you what I have gone through and my intuitions.”²⁴⁰

Dink began with General Staff’s press release on the Gökçen controversy, struggling to articulate that uneasy moment he heard it on TV news. “My phone rang the next day. One of the Deputy Governors of Istanbul was calling. With a harsh tone of voice, he told me I was expected at the Governor’s office with the documents I have on the Gökçen coverage.” When he got there, the Governor asked Dink if he would mind if the “two other people” in his office stayed during their talk, kindly telling Dink they were “his relatives.” Dink did not mind, but, as he told his readers, he felt there was something in the air. So began the Deputy Governor:

Hrant Bey... You are an experienced journalist. Don’t you need to make news more carefully? And, what is the use of news like this? Look, how it all got topsy turvy.

²⁴⁰ Hrant Dink, “Neden hedef secildim?” *Agos*, 12 January 2007. Dink’s article is also available online at Bianet. Hrant Dink, “Neden Hedef Seçildim,” *Bianet*, 21 Ocak 2007, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/kategori/bianet/90517/neden-hedef-secildim>

No, we know you, but what would the man on the street know? He can think you are making these news with other intentions...Don't you think we should be more careful with news like this?...Based on some of your works, even if we do not agree with your style, we can understand that you don't have bad intentions, but everyone might not get it that way and you might attract the reactions from the people.²⁴¹

When he was leaving the Governor's office, Dink asked if they were interested in seeing the documents he brought (on Gökçen) but it was obvious, he wrote, that they have never been interested in seeing them. "I had to know my place...I had to be careful...Otherwise, it wouldn't be good for me!", he wrote, and beginning with the day after he was called into the Governor's Office, he had become the target of a national lynching campaign:

Many columnists in many newspapers had plucked that sentence 'The fresh blood that will replace that poisonous blood that will stream out of the Turk is present in the noble veins of the Armenian, which he will cultivate with Armenia' passing in the series I had written [on the Armenian identity] and so began a collective campaign that I was provoking hostility against Turks. On 26 February, a group of Idealists (*Ülkücüler*)²⁴² came to *Agos* and chanted slogans and threats against me. All TV stations and reporters from all dailies were informed, they were all in front of *Agos*. The slogans of the group were very clear: 'Love it or leave it (*ya sev ya terket*)',²⁴³ 'Damn with ASALA!'...The target in the speech of the group's leader was very clear: 'Hrant Dink, from now on, is the target of all our anger and hate, he is our target (*hedefimizdir*).'²⁴⁴

The next day neither the TV stations (except for Kanal 7) nor the dailies (except for *Özgür Gündem*) covered the incident. "It was evident that the force that directed *Ülkücüler* to *Agos*'s door had also succeeded in blocking the media (with a few exceptions)..."²⁴⁵ Another protest in front of *Agos* was organized a few days later by a group called "Federation to fight with the so-called Armenian allegations." And following that came Kemal Keriñsiz and his Great Union of Jurists (Büyük

²⁴¹ Dink, "Neden hedef secildim?" *Agos*, 12 January 2007.

²⁴² Radical right-wing pan-Turkist faction originating from the Idealist Hearths founded in 1969 by student supporters of the MHP (nationalist movement party).

²⁴³ A very popular nationalist slogan attributed to Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

²⁴⁴ Hrant Dink, "Neden Hedef Seçildim," *Bianet*, 21 Ocak 2007, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/kategori/bianet/90517/neden-hedef-secildim>

²⁴⁵ Dink, "Neden hedef secildim?" *Agos*, 12 January 2007.

Hukukçular Birliği)²⁴⁶ and a flood of 301 trials against ninety-two Turkish journalists and authors.

Kerimçiz's mission in life, as he articulated it, was to protect the Turkish nation from "Western imperialism and global forces that want to dismember and destroy us."²⁴⁷ "Look what happened in 1920: they divided up the Ottoman Empire, even though they had pledged not to do that. People call us a paranoid, but we're not," he told a *Time* correspondent.²⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the number of charges pressed against Dink under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code had reached three by 2006. During these three years, especially after 2005, the number of ultra-nationalist protestors in front of the court houses where his trials took place increased...the racist slogans chanted and flagged against him became louder and more threatening: "Hrant Dink: Tashnak, Hinchak, ASALA and Converts are proud of you. [Signature] The Great Turkish Nation."²⁴⁹ ...After each hearing, Turkish media kept reporting that Dink said "Turkish blood is poisonous." Hundreds of threats via e-mail, phone calls and letters were pouring to his home, his office, his computer every day.²⁵⁰ "The issue of Article 301 should not be exaggerated," told the Justice Minister to the reporters, but

²⁴⁶ Kerimçiz belongs to an ultra-nationalist influential circle in Turkey that encompasses members of the military and judiciary that vehemently oppose EU membership, and the changes to Turkish law and customs that would require; unitary nation-state, national economy, anti-imperialism are among the principles they advocate. The movement they represent is also known as "Ulusalcılık." For more information on 'ulusalcılık,' see "Tanıl Bora Yazı İşleri'nde ulusalcıları ve ulusalcılığı tanımladı," *NTVMSNBC*, 22 Ocak 2009, <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/473042.asp>

²⁴⁷ "Waving Atatürk's Flag," *The Economist*, 8 March 2007.

²⁴⁸ Andrew Purvis, "Continental Divide," *Time*, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1112777-1,00.html>

²⁴⁹ "Dink davasında yine Kerimçiz ve protesto," *Radikal*, 13 Aralık 2006, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=207172>

²⁵⁰ Hrant Dink, "The dove skittishness of my soul," *Agos*, 19 Ocak 2007. This column was published in *Agos* on the very day he was gunned down. The article is also available online at bianet.org: Hrant Dink, "A dove skittishness in my soul," *Bianet*, 22 Ocak 2007, <http://bianet.org/english/politics/90552-a-doves-skittishness-in-my-soul>

Kerinçsiz was a believer: “If 301 is abolished, the Constitution loses its foundations, Turkey gets dismembered.” “Turkishness”, then, whose “denigration” was being guarded by a Penal Code, constituted the foundations of the Constitution. In other words, it was Kerinçsiz’s argument that “Turkisness” was the legitimizing narrative of the founding moment. Regardless, Dink knew that “the forces behind him were not confined to Kerinçsiz and his group” and he “knew so well they were not that ordinary and visible.”²⁵¹ Dink was right, as this dissertation will also convey.

“I am like a dove,” he told his readers in his very last column in *Agos*. “Like a dove I have my eyes everywhere, in front of me, at the back, on the left, on the right. My head is moving as the one of a dove...And fast enough to turn in an instance...Yes I feel myself as restless as a dove but I know that in this country people don’t touch and disturb the doves.”²⁵² On 19 January 2007, around 3pm, he received a phone call and hurried out of *Agos*. A little after he stepped out, a 17-year old Turkish nationalist teenager wearing a white beret was heard: “I shot the Armenian.” The ordinary visibility of the sound, the image and the message captured in three seconds and three bullets had finally salvaged “Turkishness.” Secrets of the nation were once again sealed with a sacrifice. After all, regardless of race, language, material interest, religious affinities, geography and military necessity, a nation was, first and foremost, “a soul, a spiritual principle,” and those engaged in illegitimate spirit calling along the fault line of forgotten memories had to be reminded that “of all

²⁵¹ Hrant Dink, “Neden Hedef Seçildim,” *Bianet*, 21 Ocak 2007, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/kategori/bianet/90517/neden-hedef-secildim>

²⁵² Hrant Dink, “A dove skittishness in my soul,” *Bianet*, 22 Ocak 2007, <http://bianet.org/english/politics/90552-a-doves-skittishness-in-my-soul>

the cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are.”²⁵³

While hundreds of thousands marched in his funeral carrying signs reading as “We are all Armenians,” images of Ogün Samast were already in the national press. As digital images leaked to the media showed, Samast was treated as a hero at the gendarmerie station in Trabzon with the police lining up to have their photos taken with him and the Turkish flag bearing the words of Mustafa Kemal: “The nation’s land is sacred, it can’t be left to its fate.” The white beret that Samast wore when assassinating Dink became another symbol of “banal nationalism” for his sympathizers. Then came the news of crazed masses chanting in football stadiums or marching in the streets of big cities: “We are all Ogün Samast,” “We are all Turks,” “We are all Mustafa Kemal.” Which Turk would prevail? Which Turk would determine the future of Turkey?

2.6. Nusaybin 2007: A mass grave full of suspicious skulls and skeletons denigrating “Turkishness”

2.6.1. One Rainy Investigation:

On 17 October 2006, a mass grave was found in Kuru (Xirabêbaba) village of Nusaybin in Turkey with about forty-fifty skulls and bones found in it.²⁵⁴ The news

²⁵³ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge), 19.

²⁵⁴ When the First World War started, Mardin was a *sancak* of Diyarbakir vilayet. It was extending from Cizre to Derik. At this time, Dara’s population was comprised of approximately 150 Catholic Armenian and 120 Catholic Assyrian male heads. In an interview with Nuri Fırat from *Gündem*, Swedish historian David Gaunt, one of the very few Western historians who has extensively studied the WW1 massacres of the Christians in this region, stated that he thinks the ruins in the burial may be from the 14 June 1915 massacre. For Nuri Fırat’s interview with David Gaunt, see Nuri Fırat, “Deliller Yok Edilebilir,” *Gündem Online*, 14 Aralık 2006, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=25972>

story was broken by the Turkish-language Kurdish newspaper *Ülkede Özgür Gündem* (“Free Agenda in the Country”) on October 19 with photos of the mass grave and with the title “A Mass Grave in the Armenian Village.”²⁵⁵ The national media that went berserk over the Gökçen controversy for days and nights in 2004 and over Hrant Dink’s deliberately misunderstood and distorted comments on the Armenian identity barely covered the story of the grave. *Hürriyet*, for instance, made its first story on the grave for the first time on 12 February 2007²⁵⁶, four months after the discovery of the mass grave. Finally a news magazine called *Nokta*²⁵⁷ – well known in Turkey for its taboo-breaking reporting especially between mid-1980s and 2000 – brought the mass grave to national attention. After *Nokta* published the story, international news agencies too picked up the story and finally historian David Gaunt from Sweden’s Soderton University, who is an academic expert on the massacres of the Christians in the region, demanded an on-site investigation. In his interview with *Ülkede Özgür Gündem*, Gaunt claimed that the remains may belong to Assyrians, Chaldeans, or Armenians. Gaunt also argued there were a lot of mass graves in the region and noted

For more information about the massacres in the region, see David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press LLC, 2006).

²⁵⁵ Bergüzar Oruç, “Ermeni köyünde toplu mezar,” *Gündem Online*, 19 Ekim 2006, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=21953>. In November 2006, the newspaper *Ülkede Özgür Gündem* was closed for 15 days by the İstanbul 10th High Criminal Court after it was ruled that the paper had violated Article 6 of the new Anti-Terror Law by allegedly conducting propaganda for the PKK and praising crimes committed by the PKK in 13 of its issues. The paper had already been closed once before in August 2006. Its website was also blocked. See, “Turkey: Ongoing Restrictions on Freedom of Expression: Human Rights Watch Letter to the Turkish Prime Minister,” *Human Rights Watch*, 12 April 2007, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/04/13/turkey15692.htm>.

²⁵⁶ Sefa Kaplan, “Toplu mezarı açalım,” *Hürriyet*, 12 Şubat 2007, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5935046.asp>. And as I will point out later in this discussion, it was very obvious that this news item was prepared to provide an outlet for the propaganda of Turkish Historical Society and its mouthpiece Yusuf Halaçoğlu about the mass grave.

that it was because the region was replete with caves, debris and pits, many deported Christians were massacred there.²⁵⁸ In the meantime, Assyrian organizations in Sweden with the support of the Left Party's member Hans Linde escalated the issue to the government level and on 12 December 2006, the discovery of the mass grave was debated in the Swedish Parliament between Hans Linde and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt. During the Yugoslav conflict of the mid-90s, it was again Bildt who had discussed the mass graves in Bosnia and Kosovo in the Swedish parliament.²⁵⁹

Only after this publicity in international scale – particularly after the Swedish parliament's involvement - the President of Turkish Historical Society, Yusuf Halaçoğlu, broke the silence and claimed that the grave was from the Roman times. In the meantime, reports were coming out of Turkey that “the authorities cordoned off the cave, and only some government agencies had access, finally in December the site was closed off and the opening was buried.”²⁶⁰

When the international attention on the grave grew, Halaçoğlu openly challenged Gaunt in the Turkish press that the bones found were from Roman times and that he should “come to the grave”. Gaunt in a letter he wrote to Halaçoğlu in mid January 2007 stated he would appreciate to be a part of an international researchers' group: Among the things he suggested was “that an international group of crime scene investigators (or the like) from, for instance, South America would be the first persons

²⁵⁸ Nuri Fırat, “Deliller Yok Edilebilir,” *Gündem Online*, 14 Aralık 2006, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=25972>

²⁵⁹ Dikran Ego, “Turkey, Mass Grave and the Three Monkeys,” *AssyriaTimes*, 12 December 2006, <http://assyriatimes.com/engine/modules/news/article.php?storyid=3264>

²⁶⁰ Talin Sucuyan, “Mass Burial Debate Continues,” *The Armenian Reporter*, 3 March 2007.

to enter the site. Their role would be to ascertain if the site had been manipulated in any serious way... Only if and when this team gave a clear OK signal, would any of the other investigators enter the site.” Gaunt was genuinely certain that the Turkish side could not argue against this procedure.²⁶¹ All in all, Gaunt had three requirements for a serious scientific investigation: first, researchers should have full access to any site that could have the probability of being a mass grave, second, they should have the full access to interview the local people concerning the mass grave, and third, they should have complete freedom in investigating the burial and around it.²⁶² A couple of days after this mail correspondence, on January 19, Hrant Dink was assassinated and the process came to a halt.

On 12 February 2007, after Dink’s grave was sealed, his funeral was taken care of, and the national media attention waned, Halaçoğlu re-emerged. *Hürriyet* in a news story titled “Let’s open the mass grave” reported that “Prof.Yusuf Halaçoğlu, invited both David Gaunt and other scientists interested in the issue, and proposed to open the mass graves together.”²⁶³ In this story – that seemed to have been prepared exclusively by *Hürriyet* again (the same daily that had broke the news on Gökçen exactly 14 days after Agos) - Halaçoğlu summarized Gaunt’s requests and said, “We very naturally accepted all these demands. Moreover, we have told him that we will accommodate the needs of him and his delegation. For the excavation, we have proposed the end of March when the weather will collaborate. Now we are expecting

²⁶¹ David Gaunt, E-mail to Armenian-Turkish Scholarship Workshop List (WATS), 27 February 2007.

²⁶² Talin Suciyan, “Mass Burial Debate Continues,” *The Armenian Reporter*, 3 March 2007.

²⁶³ Sefa Kaplan, “Toplu mezarı açalım,” *Hürriyet*, 12 Şubat 2007, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5935046.asp>

to hear from him.”²⁶⁴ Halaçoğlu in the same report emphasized that if the graves turned out to be belonging to Armenians or Assyrians, in a joint press conference, they [Turkish Historical Society / Turkey] would apologize; otherwise, they would expect Gaunt to apologize. Who was apologizing to whom for what? Apparently, the grave’s presence, the identity of the bones, and Gaunt’s request for a scientific investigation were perceived to be denigrating Turkishness. If the bones were not “Armenian,” Gaunt had to apologize for debating the indivisible unity of the grave and the indivisible togetherness of the bones in Anatolia - the Turkish homeland from time immemorial- with slanders. In the report, Halaçoğlu also expressed his enthusiasm that something like this had never happened and a mass grave was going to be opened for the first time with the participation of scientists from various countries. Scientists from many other countries were welcome, “first and foremost, those from Armenia,” Halaçoğlu emphasized.

Although he was challenged by Halaçoğlu in *Hürriyet* before the national public opinion on Feb 12, Gaunt – who had been having a regular communication with Halaçoğlu up until Dink’s murder- did not hear a word from him as of February 27. He had “repeatedly written to Halaçoğlu” after *Hürriyet*’s report. When he complained about this publicly,²⁶⁵ communication resumed between Gaunt and Turkish Historical Society and finally an agreement was reached and announced with a press release:

²⁶⁴ Kaplan, “Toplu mezarı açalım,” *Hürriyet*, 12 Şubat 2007, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5935046.asp>

²⁶⁵ With his message to Turkish-Armenian Scholarship Workshop; see David Gaunt, E-mail to Armenian-Turkish Scholarship Workshop List (WATS), 27 February 2007.

“Between 23-24 April 2007, the Turkish Historical Society and the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation will initiate discussions about a possible investigation of a mass grave in the Mardin Province. The proposed investigation will seek to clarify conflicting claims about the origins of the mass grave through a forensic and historical investigation that will continue until the autumn of 2007 when a joint expert opinion will be issued...The aim of this visit is to make a preliminary survey to establish whether the site is suitable for a future interdisciplinary investigation by forensic medical experts, archaeologists, physical anthropologists and historians. If such a result can be verified, forensic experts will be involved to assist the Turkish Historical Society and the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation in their work.”²⁶⁶

However before Gaunt could reach the grave, news reports were coming out that the site was already damaged. The villagers were testifying to the local reporters that the grave was opened and the ruins were removed.²⁶⁷ Even the village chief spoke up: “We had seen many bones. We immediately informed the police station. Authorities from Ankara also came. And then they collected the bones...there are a lot of caves around our village. While we were building our houses, we had seen graves too. There were bones in some graves that we thought were families.”²⁶⁸ According to the villagers, ever since its discovery, “dozens of people” had entered the grave, in fact, there were even journalists who claimed to have entered the grave at least three times.²⁶⁹ The Governor of Mardin, Mehmet Kılıçlar, as of 29 December 2006, had

²⁶⁶ “Mass Grave Investigation in Mardin Province – PRESS RELEASE” is posted on the website of the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation: <http://historyandreconciliation.org/blog/?itemid=59>.

²⁶⁷ Nuri Fırat, “Mezarda Kemik Oyunu,” *Gündem Online*, 22 Nisan 2007, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=34327>. The report also has two photos, the first taken on 19 October 2006, the other taken on 21 April 2007. The former image of the site shows lots of skulls and bones, the latter shows simply dirt and soil. The earlier photo was taken by Anatolian News Agency (AA), the latter was by Dicle News Agency (DIHA).

²⁶⁸ Fırat, “Mezarda Kemik Oyunu,” *Gündem Online*, 22 Nisan 2007, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=34327>.

²⁶⁹ Elif Görgü, “Toplu mezardaki kemikler sızladı,” *Evrensel*, 25 Nisan 2007, http://www.evrensel.net/haber.php?haber_id=8817

claimed that the grave was not examined in any way, the bones were not touched and the grave would stay closed until an official examination.”²⁷⁰

On April 24, under heavy rain, a total disappointment was awaiting David Gaunt at the grave site, which was enclosed. The villagers who knew the grave had been open to many up until that day were chuckling around it. There was a huge crowd of people ready to jump in to it with Gaunt. And they did, all in happy banter. *A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade, For and a shrouding sheet: O, a pit of clay for to be made for such a guest is meet.*²⁷¹ As Evrensel’s correspondent Elif Görgü observed, if the grave was full of bones, all the bones would be broken at that moment.²⁷² “First a villager jumped in, then the district official, then Halaçoğlu and the archeologists, and then I and the journalists. And thus we had no opportunity to work. A respectful investigation was supposed to be conducted. Everything was a mess and shuffled around,”²⁷³ told Gaunt.

The site was full of soil and mud, skulls were gone and there were very few bones left. There were also earthenware jugs lying around now, which were not in the photos before.²⁷⁴ Halaçoğlu claimed the heavy rain was to blame and the bones were under the mud. “They gave me a shovel,” Gaunt continued, “dig it, you will find the bones, they said, suggesting they might have been stuck under the mud. But the site was so damaged, I refused it...a scientific investigation could not be conducted with a

²⁷⁰ “Mardin’deki toplu mezarda TTK oyunu,” *Gündem Online*, 24 Nisan 2007, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=34431>

²⁷¹ From Hamlet, Act 5, Scene 1. Gravediggers singing...which bothers Hamlet.

²⁷² Elif Görgü, “Ölürsem Kabrime Gelme İstemem,” *Evrensel*, 29 April 2007.

²⁷³ Bergüzar Oruç, “TTK, meğer kürekle çalışıyormuş!,” *Gündem Online*, 26 Nisan 2007, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=34632>

²⁷⁴ Elif Görgü, “Toplu Mezardaki Kemikler Sızladı,” *Evrensel*, 25 Nisan 2004, http://www.evrensel.net/haber.php?haber_id=8817

shovel.” Halaçoğlu, on the other hand, insisted that the grave was of the Romans: “I said, would you like specimen, will you make the analysis of the soil? He said ‘no’. Because, the bones were from the Romans. We gave him both a shovel and a digger. He didn’t even look.”²⁷⁵

The investigation was over in about 15 minutes. “They were actually disgraced,” Halaçoğlu murmured²⁷⁶ as he was exiting the grave, and turned to the journalists:

Everybody who sees this grave will see for themselves that this is not a mass grave. Since David Gaunt also knows that this is not a mass grave, he did not bother to collect specimen from here. Nobody can present us as murderers. All the facts are out there. All our documents are open to everyone. In this region, those who have actually been subjected to massacres were not Armenians, they were Turkish, Kurdish and other Muslim communities. However much it is said that the Armenians were massacred in this region, it is our 530 thousand citizens who were subjected to massacre here.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ İsmail Saymaz, “Bu kemikler nereye gitti?,” *Radikal*, 26 Nisan 2007, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=219468>

²⁷⁶ Elif Görgü, “Toplu Mezaradaki Kemikler Sızladı,” *Evrensel*, 25 Nisan 2004, http://www.evrensel.net/haber.php?haber_id=8817

²⁷⁷ “Halaçoğlu’ndan soykırım açıklaması,” *KentHaber*, 23 Nisan 2007, <http://www.kenthaber.com/guneydogu-anadolu/mardin/nusaybin/Haber/Genel/Normal/halacoglundan-soykirim-aciklamasi/28a9c801-4a43-4e8b-9ea4-8bf5a0052dc3>.

As far as I could track, the number “530 thousand” for the Muslims massacred by the Armenians first emerged in the national press for the first time in April 2005. First *Milliyet* reported it on 17 April 2005, then the story was picked up by *Hürriyet*, *Zaman*, *Tercüman* and *Vakit* on 18 April 2005. See “Ermeni çeteler, 523 bin Türkü katletmiş...,” *Milliyet*, 17 Nisan 2005, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/04/17/son/sontur06.html>; also see Nuray Babacan, “Ermeni çeteleri, 523 bin Türkü katletmiş,” *Hürriyet*, 18 Nisan 2005, <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/04/18/629487.asp>. Also see, Timuçin Binder, “Ermeni çeteler, 523 bin Türkü katletmiş,” in *Bir Zamanlar Ermeniler Vardı* (İstanbul: Birikim, 2008). Needless to mention, April 24 was coming up and the Turkish side was preparing its letter to the US President (who was G.W.Bush at that time). On a different note, it is true that there have been terrible massacres of the Muslims / Muslim Turks by the Armenians especially between 1918, when the Transcaucasian army of the Ottomans withdrew at the end of the WW1, and 1922. David Gaunt, an authority on the massacres of that region does not deny this either – please see his interview with Talin Suciyan: Talin Suciyan, “İsveçliler Konsensüs Sever, ya Biz?” *Bianet*, 12 Mayıs 2007, <http://bianet.org/bianet/bianet/95871-isvecliler-konsensus-sever-ya-biz>. But as Gaunt also expresses, there are differences in “chronology, in the extent and systematic nature of the massacres. One does not neutralize the other.” In conclusion, Turkish Historical Society and all its resources have been mobilized to produce research on these massacres, which in turn are instrumentalized to deny the state-administered destruction of the Ottoman Armenians. THS has also been opening lots of mass graves in eastern Anatolia to prove that it was actually Turks who have been massacred by Armenians.

And Halaçoğlu declared in utmost confidence: “From now on wherever and whichever grave they show, we are ready to go and open it (*bundan sonra nerede mezar gösterirlerse açmaya hazırız*).”²⁷⁸ So became the bones “documents,” and the graves “archives” for Turkey. Turkey’s all archives, even the underground ones, were open, Halaçoğlu declared. Two sides could set up a joint-commission and examine each other’s bones. *We would have to dig up...graves...and graves...many more graves, grave upon grave.* That was no good news.

2.6.2.Halaçoğlu announces the lab results of the Nusaybin mass grave

After the mass grave investigation, there was a joint press conference with Gaunt and Halaçoğlu. Halaçoğlu spoke first and said their objective was to initiate a joint investigation on the grave and specimen needed to be collected to be examined by forensic experts, archeologists, historians and anthropologists. Despite the rhetoric of “specimen collecting”, “forensics” and “investigation” (only “DNA testing” was missing in this carnival of science), he repeated that the grave belonged to the Roman era and Gaunt, while he was here, had to collect specimen, which Halaçoğlu regarded as crucial for a preliminary survey. “As Turkish Historical Society, we are ready to support research of all sorts on the massacres of Turks, Arabs, Armenians and Kurds in the region....He [Gaunt] came to Turkey with a bias. A scientist needs to make an objective research.” “Objectivity” was again the usual artillery of Halaçoğlu – his most notorious joker card always spared for the last minute to effectively blur the line between his tactics in scientific propaganda and in the propaganda of science. In

²⁷⁸ “Toplu mezarda inceleme başlatıldı,” *Sabah*, 24 Nisan 2007, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/04/24/haber,40839C6035D04534B127145712238610.html>

Turkey, positivism had always been black magic. Halaçoğlu, faithfully invested in the contingent character of facts, has been changing and reordering the world – including the underworld of modern Turkey with its skeletons, skulls and bones – on behalf of the Turks for the past 15 years.

Gaunt, on the other hand, was essentially disadvantaged next to this “man of action”²⁷⁹ and he truly had a miscarriage in the midst of this officially organized lying where “the reverse of truth [had] a thousand shapes and a boundless field,”²⁸⁰ including the underworld of Anatolia - its graves, caves, canyons and pits. As Arendt argues, where a community has embarked upon organized lying in principle, where everybody lies about everything of importance, the truth-telling becomes a political factor of the first order and the truth-teller, whether s/he knows it or not, has begun to act, he has made a start towards changing the world.²⁸¹ But the “facts” also have a contingent character; they possess by themselves no trace of self-evidence or plausibility for the human mind.²⁸² In this respect, the truth-teller always finds himself at an “annoying disadvantage,” since the liar is always free to fashion his facts to fit the profit or pleasure of his audience; he always has the plausibility on his side. Gaunt had nothing to compete with Halaçoğlu in Turkey, in this “wide-open horizon of potentiality drifting from one possibility to the next,” where the very sense by which we take our bearings in the real world – the category of truth vs. falsehood is among

²⁷⁹ Arendt, in her essay “Truth and Politics” identifies lying, because it is an attempt to change the world, as a form of “action.” See Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 245.

²⁸⁰ Hannah Arendt quotes Montaigne in “Truth and Politics”. See Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 253.

²⁸¹ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 247

²⁸² Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 247.

the mental means to this end²⁸³ – has been destroyed long time ago. In Nusaybin, the facts and events of 1915 were transformed back into the potentiality out of which they originally appeared; the grave was emptied. If there was anything Halaçoğlu knew for fact it was *the fact* that “*History is Future*” for the Republic.²⁸⁴

Gaunt had photos of the grave from October and the grave where he has been taken to was not the same grave anymore, therefore he did not need to collect specimen from the site. “Even if the graves here belong to the Roman –Byzantium period, we think that the caravans of Armenians who have been brought from Diyarbakir and Erzurum were massacred and left in these graves.”²⁸⁵ Gaunt knew for fact a serious forensic investigation would determine the age, the gender, the number of victims and the reason for their death. He knew for fact pieces of fabric (a piece of leather that endured), a personal belonging like a comb (hair for DNA), broken pieces of wood (a simple cross...), little pieces of paper (for language), perhaps a piece of newspaper (frequently found in shoes) or a page from a religious book could indicate the date or where the people were from. For instance, it could indicate whether this was a convoy from Erzurum.²⁸⁶ And he knew for fact there were four episodes of massacres in the Dara region. “We know the dates and the names of the victims and more or less where they are from,” he told *Gündem* on 14 December 2006.²⁸⁷ But so

²⁸³ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 253.

²⁸⁴ “History is Future” is the title of one of Halaçoğlu’s recent books. See Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Tarih Gelecektir* (İstanbul: Babıali Kültür Yayın cılık , 2007).

²⁸⁵ “Halaçoğlu’ndan soykırım açıklaması,” *KentHaber*, 23 Nisan 2007, <http://www.kenthaber.com/guneydogu-anadolu/mardin/nusaybin/Haber/Genel/Normal/halacoglundan-soykirim-aciklamasi/28a9c801-4a43-4e8b-9ea4-8bf5a0052dc3>

²⁸⁶ Nuri Fırat, “Deliller Yok Edilebilir,” *Gündem Online*, 14 Aralık 2006, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=25972>

²⁸⁷ Fırat, “Deliller Yok Edilebilir,” *Gündem Online*, 14 Aralık 2006, <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=25972>

did Halaçoğlu. According to an article titled “An Early Roman Grave, not Armenian” published by *Türkiye Gazetesi* on 1 June 2007 (posted on the website of Turkish Historical Society as well), “...when some European countries began to support the allegations [about the mass grave], the issue was investigated by the official authorities of Turkey. The issue even went to National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*). According to a decision taken by the Council, it was demanded that the allegation was investigated and the task was given to Turkish Historical Society.”²⁸⁸

A few weeks later in a press conference in Nusaybin, Halaçoğlu would continue to defend the Roman grave argument: “What writes underneath the photo published in *Nokta* is that it belongs to a mass grave in Slovenia. Bones were piled up in that photo. From no grave, a photo like that can come out. If I damaged the grave, they could have documented this. As soon as he saw it, he [Gaunt] understood that this was a Roman grave. That’s what all this demagoguery is all about.”²⁸⁹ On 24 May 2007, he finally announced the lab results of the specimen collected from the mass grave in a press conference²⁹⁰:

The time period the soil specimen, collected from the surface of the bone particles brought to the lab, have been exposed to light for the last time has been calculated to

²⁸⁸ As far as I could observe, no one in the national press reported that Mardin Mass grave was discussed in the National Security Council and the task of handling the issue was officially assigned to Turkish Historical Society other than *Türkiye Gazetesi*. I find it remarkable that the issue was discussed in the National Security Council. The information on the National Security Council comes from the online press archive of the Turkish Historical Society. See Türk Tarih Kurumu, “Ermeni Degil, Ön Roma Mezarlığı, Kaynak : Türkiye, Günlük Ulusal Gazete, 01.06.2007,” <http://www.ttk.org.tr/index.php?Page=Basinda&HaberNo=231>. I keep a screengrab of this page.

²⁸⁹ Zülfikar Ali Aydın, “Toplu mezarda tahrip tartışması,” *Sabah*, 2 Mayıs 2007, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/05/02/haber,F3829B3AC056457BBFB479AA6D8425F9.html>

²⁹⁰ “Ermeni iddiaları yine asılsız çıktı,” *Yeni Şafak*, 24 Mayıs 2007, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Gundem/?t=24.05.2007&i=47018>

be between 257 B.C. and 597 B.C. As per the analysis of the soil and ceramic²⁹¹; it has been concluded that they belong to the period between 53 B.C. and 227 A.C., and the third specimen, between 63-383 BC. Once the Roman graves are closed, it is not that they never open up again (*Roma mezarları bir kere kapatıldı mı bir daha açılmamazlık yapmaz*). People of the same family in time can be put in other sections [of the graves] again with the bones being piled up in the middle. It carries this meaning. I mean, this grave, the grave that we opened, that we saw, is dated, as the latest period, 227 A.C. years (sic) at least (sic). The period that is closest to us is 227 A.C. years [sic]. If we think about this from today's perspective, from this date the closest period that belongs to approximately 1800 years ago.²⁹²

....I had proposed the following to [Gaunt]; if this grave has been damaged, if there is another grave, let's go together, let's open it together, I mean, *let's make the grave together (yani mezari birlikte yapalım..)*.²⁹³

...they have assumed an attitude as if the Turkish scientists were not believable. We are not behind European scientists; on the contrary we are more objective.²⁹⁴

And there Halaçoğlu had done his “god-trick”²⁹⁵ again with his magic of

“objectivity” promising transcendence, omnipotence and immortality for the Turkish

²⁹¹ Ceramic from the earthenware jugs that did not exist in the mass grave when it was first discovered by the villagers, according to Evrensel's reporting.

²⁹² Halaçoğlu's use of Turkish language in this statement is incredibly problematic. The second part of his sentence “it is not that they never open up again” is a literal translation to indicate his bad commandment of the Turkish language. In his statements, it sounds like the graves can open or close themselves up... The whole quote as it appeared in *Yeni Şafak* is as follows: “*Laboratuvara gelen kemik parçalarının çevresinden alınan toprak numunelerinin en son ışık gördüğü süre M.Ö. 257 ile 597 arası hesaplanmıştır. Toprak ve seramik analizleriyle ilgili de M.Ö. 53-MS 227 Yıl larına ait olduğu, üçüncü numunenin ise M.Ö 63-383 yılları arasındaki döneme ait olduğu sonucuna varıldı. Roma mezarları bir kere kapatıldı mı bir daha açılmamazlık yapmaz. Aynı akrabadan olan insanlar zaman içerisinde diğer kemikler ortaya yığılarak yine öbür taraflara konulur. Bu anlamı taşıyor. Yani bu mezarlık, açtığımız, gördüğümüz bu mezarlık en yakın dönemi olarak M.S 227 Yıl a en az tarihleniyor demektir. Bize en yakın dönemi M.S 227 yıldır. Bugünkü anlamda düşünecek olursak, bu tarihten aşağı yukarı 1800 sene öncesine ait en yakın zamanı.*” See “Ermeni iddiaları yine asılsız çıktı,” *Yeni Şafak*, 24 Mayıs 2007, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Gundem/?t=24.05.2007&i=47018>. Halaçoğlu's meaningless statements in this press conference are now in *Ekşi sözlük* (Sour Dictionary), a cyber dictionary for popular culture in Turkey, under the title “*Bu kemikler nereye gitti Yusuf* (where did these bones go Yusuf?).” The user who had quoted Halaçoğlu's statements from this press conference jokingly notes that to preserve their “original values” s/he did not correct his sentences (*cümleler orijinal değerleri gözetilerek düzeltilmemiştir*). See *Ekşi Sözlük*, “Bu kemikler nereye gitti Yusuf,” <http://sozluk.sourtimes.org/show.asp?t=bu%20kemikler%20nereye%20gitti%20yusuf>.

²⁹³ My italics. “*Çünkü, kendisine şunu teklif etmişim, 'madem bu mezar tahrip edildi, bir başka mezar varsa birlikte gidelim, açılımını birlikte yapalım, yani mezari birlikte yapalım' Ermeni komitelerinin yaptığı katliamlara ilişkin mezarları da açalım. Ama istemedi ve ülkemizden ayrıldı.*” See “Bir Ermeni yalanı daha çürütüldü,” *Samanyolu.com*, 23 Mayıs 2007, http://www.samanyoluhaber.com/h_164594_.html.

²⁹⁴ “Bir Ermeni yalanı daha çürütüldü,” *Samanyolu.com*, 23 Mayıs 2007, http://www.samanyoluhaber.com/h_164594_.html. “*Türk bilim adamlarının söylediğine inanılmaz gibi tavrı takındılar. Biz Avrupalı bilim adamlarından geri değiliz, tam aksine biz daha objektifiz.*”

nation. Thanks to the doctrine of objectivity whose political possibilities he had mastered, the saga of the first mass grave raped in Nusaybin *objectively* came to end “having lost the track of its mediations just where someone might be held responsible for something.”²⁹⁶ Halaçoğlu accomplished this in the image of the undisputable innocence of “the lab”, the “first specimen”, the “second specimen” and the “third specimen”. Also in objective innocence, he proposed to Gaunt to “make the grave together.” “Making graves” are indeed part of the daily reality for the Turkish Historical Society and modern Turkey where the past –with its graves, skulls and bones - is always open to action and has to be constantly shifted and shuffled in utter sterility... Arendt defines this – that is, the political realm that loses its main stabilizing force this way and the starting point from which to change - as the characteristic of many new nations that had the bad luck to be born in an age of propaganda.²⁹⁷ In a nation-state where mass graves are always open to action, identity – and hence the totalitarianism of Turkishness – remains as a “trembling wobbling motion” that substitutes reality. But... *Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?....Cudgel thy brains no more about it...when you are*

²⁹⁵ The term is informed by Donna Haraway’s “Situated Knowledges” where she makes the argument for an “embodied objectivity” – situated knowledges that accommodate critical science projects. To her, the visualizing technologies in the history of science have always signified a perverse capacity tied to militarism, colonialism, capitalism and male supremacy: “vision in this technological feast becomes unregulated gluttony; all seems not just mythically about the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere, but to have put the myth into ordinary practice. And like the god-trick, this eye fucks the world to make techno-monsters.” See Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14, no.3 (Fall 1988), 581.

²⁹⁶ Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 579.

²⁹⁷ Arendt in “Politics and Truth”: “...Not the past – and all factual truth, of course, cōns rns the past – or the present, in so far as it is the outcome of the past, but the future is open to action. If the past and present are treated as parts of the future – that is, changed back into their former state of potentiality – the political realm is deprived not only of its main stabilizing force but of the starting point from which to change, to begin something new. What then begins is the constant shifting and shuffling in utter sterility which are characteristic of many new nations that had the bad luck to be born in the age of propaganda.” Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 254.

*asked this question next, say "a grave-maker": the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee in, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.*²⁹⁸

2.7.Conclusion:

This chapter, and hence this dissertation, departed from the Gökçen controversy of 2004 and traced the media representations and the public reverberations of this controversy through the Mardin mass grave incident and the assassination of Hrant Dink. I define this three year long trajectory between Gökçen's *re-birth* and Dink's *destruction* as the onset of the period of Turkey's soul searching vis-à-vis its Armenian problem. Why did the possibility of an 'Armenian' Gökçen denigrate 'Turkishness?' Why did Hrant Dink's public discourse on 'Turkishness' and 'Armeniannes' escalate the tensions? What was the official panic about the Mardin mass grave? The rich repertoire of the representations of the national panic surfaced particularly in this period that burst out with nationalist excess (in the national media and the official institutions like the Office of the Staff General and Turkish History Foundation) proved to be an illuminating discursive terrain to understand the visual and narrative tropes of "Turkishness," how they relate to the founding moment of modern Turkey, and the ways in which they are organized and mobilized against the acknowledgement of the "Armenian." The sheer rhetorical violence of the public discourse of this tumultuous period unveiled not only the instrumentality of the "invented traditions" attached to the myths of "Turkishness" in maintaining a suitable past and hence the legitimacy of the state. It also unfolded to expose the ontological

²⁹⁸ From Hamlet, the gravediggers in happy banter...Act 5, scene 1.

relation of the founding myths - on Gökçen, Anatolia, War of Independence, and the rise of the Turkish nation like a phoenix - to the Ottoman Armenians and their destruction during the Great War. Gökçen was, first and foremost, Atatürk's adopted daughter; she was the epitome of modernity and civilization, and perhaps, after Atatürk, she was the most quintessential symbol of 'Turkishness' Atatürk had imagined for the Turkish nation. She was his project – a photograph in his mind, a myth of purity that he had engineered. It is true that there had been a long period during which Turkish diplomats had been assassinated one after another for years (1973-1986) by the Armenian militants who wanted to recall the global attention on "1915", but the period that encompassed the Gökçen controversy and Dink's assassination was different: 'Genocide allegations' had never haunted Atatürk – "father of the Turks", the myth-maker, the moral compass of the Turkish nation on whose image the legitimacy of the Republic rests- in such a vital way before.

Giddens defines nationalism as "the cultural sensibility of sovereignty." To the extent Atatürk embraced and embodied all the cultural sensibilities of Turkish nationalism, an allegation about his adopted daughter –a symbolic bearer of the Turkish nation's identity and honor – could easily be conceived and perceived as an attack on him, on his legacy, and hence on the sovereignty of the nation. Should it be considered a co-incidence, then, that all the powerful tropes of "Turkishness" that surfaced during the Gökçen controversy came together in the decorum of "Turkishness" communicated to the nation through the digital images of Ogun Samast –Dink's murder suspect- from the Trabzon gendarmerie station? The Armenian needed to be destroyed and for this one heroic Turk had to sacrifice himself, because

as the words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk forcefully signifying on Turkish flag poster positioned behind Samast indicated, *Vatan toprağı kutsaldır; Kaderine Terkedilemez* (“The land of the nation is sacred; it can’t be left to its fate”). The following chapter can be considered a historical deconstruction of the sacred foundations of the fatherland and therefore of Atatürk’s words, that is, the myth of “Anatolia as the Turkish homeland from time immemorial.” Why did the Gökçen controversy constitute such an existential threat to the indivisibility of the fatherland and the unitary nation-state? In Part II, I turn to the material foundations of this issue.

We headed this nation. However, Anatolia, to us, is a black box. I believe we should first understand what is inside, and then we should provide services that this nation deserves.
-Talat Pasha, (1913?)

PART II: “The land of the nation is sacred; it can’t be left to its fate”: The Vectors of Saving the State from Empire to Republic

Chapter 3: The Making of a National Bourgeoisie

3.1.Introduction

To what extent the Republic of Turkey, a rump state in Anatolia legally founded as a new state by the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, constitutes a continuation of the Ottoman Empire remains at the heart of the Armenian Genocide debates. What is at stake in the ‘continuity’ debate is not only the problem of reparations. It is also the problem of state/national identity. In fact, as the previous chapter conveyed, the latter factor and its significance in Turkish denial is what this dissertation aims to work through. The Gökçen incident dropped bright lights on this continuity, violating the most sacred symbol of its ontological negation: ‘Atatürk,’ in the charismatic image of whom the past was erased and forgotten.

This chapter’s aim is not to resolve the thorny problem of who bears the historical responsibility for the Armenian massacres. The issue, first and foremost, is laden with legal complexities due to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Treaty within the international states system was its retroactive character. It not only constituted the legal foundation for the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey, it also legitimized all of the –

largely forced- deportations and transfers done since 1912 during the Balkan Wars. This was the first time that compulsory deportation was legalized under international law.²⁹⁹ The Lausanne Treaty, drafted by the Entente, essentially bore the spirit of the Cold War. The sole objective was to create a strong ‘modern Turkey’ that would be a bulwark against the USSR and Islamic movements. And this was secured on paper at the expense of diplomatically and legally legitimizing an ethnic cleansing “that had not been encountered until then.”³⁰⁰

However, the main pillars of institutional continuity between the Empire and the Republic will be at the heart of this discussion as the narrative of the historical context that highlights Turkish denial’s main function in the making of a new national identity. Without an understanding of this ‘continuity’ – its ideological, institutional, and demographic features- it is not possible to make sense of the highly instrumental and pragmatic approach of the Kemalist elites to national identity construction that gained in artifice and that needed to be defended for many decades with draconian measures. What I wish to convey in this chapter is that the debate about “1915” is rooted in the material circumstances that attended class formation in Turkey. The massacres and the expropriation of the Armenian wealth nurtured a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie that gave its loyalty to Atatürk ’s nation-building project. I will unpack the ideological justifications that legitimized this class in the following two chapters on

²⁹⁹ Erik Jan Zürcher, “The Late Ottoman Empire as laboratory of demographic engineering,” Conference paper, Napoli, 16-18 September 2008. Zürcher’s paper is available online: http://www.sissco.it/fileadmin/user_upload/Attivita/Convegna/regioni_multilingue/zurcher.pdf; Erik Jan Zürcher, ed., *İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete Türkiye’de Etnik Çatışma* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 12.

³⁰⁰ Hans-Lukas Kieser, *İskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilayetleri’nde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet 1839-1938* [Der Verpasste Friede. Mission, Ethnie, Staat in den Ostprovinzen der Türkei, 1839-1938], (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 714.

Mustafa Kemal (Chapter 5) and National Education and schoolbooks (chapter 6 and 7).

Modern Turkey is a conscious creation of a small band of nationalist officers led by Mustafa Kemal who managed to survive the post-World War I crisis and established a sovereign state with a national resistance movement. The wave of reforms unleashed from 1924 onwards known as the ‘Kemalist Revolution’ aimed to create a whole new modern nation-state modeled after the European examples by a group of officers who themselves largely hailed from ‘Europe.’³⁰¹ The mentality of the remaining population in Anatolia had to be changed with a robust social and cultural revolution. This was essentially a nation-building program designed to turn Anatolian Muslims (Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Circassians, Georgians, Gypsies, Pomaks etc.) into a ‘Turkish ethnic’ that would foundationalize the imaginings of a new “Turkish nation.” Ninety-eight percent of the total population in Anatolia was Muslims of various ethnicities after the massive ethnic cleansing of the Christians completed by the end of the Great War.

The program of modernization from above was the only novelty of the Republic. However, it represented more of a transformation by coup than a revolutionary break in the class basis of the state with the *ancien regime*.³⁰² There was no overthrow of the Ottoman state structure after WWI. Most aspects of social and cultural life after 1923 underwent change through gradual evolution without clear breaks with the past. For instance, no anti-clerical movement preceded the abolition of

³⁰¹ Erik Jan Zürcher, “How Europeans adopted Anatolia and created Turkey,” *European Review* (2005), 13(3):379-394.

³⁰² Keyder, *State and Class*, 200.

the caliphate (1924), there was no women's movement before equal rights were won, no worker's movement brought about the right to organize and strike. As Keyder points out, in fact by pre-empting such movements, "reforms from above exercised a suffocating effect on societal dynamics and a civil society lost its chance of learning-by-doing in the ways of participation."³⁰³

When the War of Independence was won, one of the first major reforms of Mustafa Kemal was to abolish the caliphate, much to the disappointment of those in the Islamic world who hoped to forge a struggle against colonialism. An uncompromising 'westernization' remained as the only mobilizing ideology of the Turkish project of 'modernization-from-above.' Keyder argues that in contrast to the anti-colonial sentiment which fuelled the majority of third- world national movements, Turkish nationalism never exhibited an "anti-Western nativism." On the contrary, despite the fact that they did not constitute a bourgeoisie in the Marxist or socio-economic sense, what the Kemalist elites understood from cultural modernity especially was the European bourgeoisie way of life.³⁰⁴ They never challenged the norms of European civilization in a civilizational relativism. Mustafa Kemal never wrote a text implying difference based on authentic difference; all his aphorisms aimed to instill national pride and self-esteem in order to exhort the population to advance on the Western path.³⁰⁵ That the Turkish war of independence was a victorious anti-colonial struggle – in fact, that it was the 'first' anti-colonial struggle of the Third World - was created by a leftist strand in Turkey. The empire was never

³⁰³ Keyder, *State and Class*, 200.

³⁰⁴ Zürcher, "How Europeans adopted Anatolia and Created Turkey," 391.

³⁰⁵ Keyder, "A history and geography of Turkish nationalism," 13.

colonized. Modern Turkey was founded not through a war waged against ‘imperialism,’ but through the dismantling of the empire and the unmixing of its populations.

3.2.The Empire: An Overview

The Ottoman Empire, extending from the Balkans to Iraq, Syria, and Palestine, was perhaps one of the most enduring polyethnic and multi-religious empires in history. Along with the various Muslim ethnic groups, such as the Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Albanians, Bosnians, and Circassians, there was an equally colorful mixture of non-Muslim populations comprised of Greeks³⁰⁶, Armenians³⁰⁷, Jews, Christian Arabs, Syriacs (Suryani), Chaldeans, Slavs and Georgians.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ The term ‘Greek’ (Rum) originally encompassed all Orthodox Christians of the Empire. In the 19th century it acquired a narrower meaning, and those who retained their allegiance to the İstanbul Patriarchate and to other Greek churches (e.g. the Church of Greece, the Church of Cyprus) came to be called ‘Orthodox Greeks.’ During the nationalist inferno in the Balkans, the Orthodox church was broken up into various churches (Bulgarian, Serbian, Romanian), which continued to use the Orthodox rites. By the end of 19th century, ‘Greek’ had come to mean ‘Greek-speaking peoples.’ Karpas points to the fact that the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 led to an increased competition between the Greek and Bulgarian clergy to control the Orthodox churches. The issue was as of vital importance because the priest had become instrumental in deciding the ‘nationality’ of a given group. If an individual or a group was affiliated with the Greek church, it meant that the individual or the group had been decided to be ‘Greek’ regardless of the language or the background. The breakdown of the universal Orthodox community in the age of nationalism made nationality a matter of individual preference. The fierce struggle between the Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian communities led to a fierce manipulation of population statistics. See Kemal Karpas, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914 Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 35, 108.

³⁰⁷ The term ‘Armenian’ (Gregorians) was originally used to designate members of the Armenian Orthodox church; as by mid-19th century Armenians began to accept other faiths with the entry of Protestant and Catholic missionaries into Asia Minor, the term ‘Catholic Armenians’ and ‘Protestant Armenians’ were introduced as their separate millets were also established. As we will later see, these distinctions have been functional during the deportations of 1915, ‘Catholic Armenians’ for a while have been spared by the Ottoman state while first Gregorians were deported.

³⁰⁸ See Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982).

According to the 1881/83-93 Ottoman census registers that were published for the first time by Kemal Karpas in 1978, there were twelve different ethno-religious groups in the Ottoman Empire: Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Latins, Syriacs, Non-Muslim Gypsies, Foreign Citizens. In the last official Ottoman census of 1906/7, we observe the emergence of nine new

In Anatolia,, substantial Christian populations existed until the Great War. According to the census of 1906, the Ottoman population within the border of present-day Turkey was about 15 million. Approximately 10% of this population were Greeks, 7% Armenian and 1% Jews. Muslims counted over 80%.³⁰⁹ Karpas argues that the Muslim population of the Empire was undercounted more often than the Christian population, the latter being mostly sedentary, compactly settled and easily accessible. For the first time with the census of 1881/83, Ottoman State, as a part of its ongoing centralization efforts for military and administrative purposes and the growing importance of population statistics in informing foreign intervention, made a systematic effort to provide estimates on the tribes and on areas that have not been subject to actual count until then. Throughout the 19th century, the government made a sustained effort to settle various Turkmen, Kurdish, Arabic and other nomadic tribes throughout Anatolia, Syria, and Iraq wherever cultivable land was available. The conflict that emerged between the nomadic Kurdish tribes and the Armenians during this period of state centralization constituted the genesis of the Empire's "Armenian Question," which was essentially an agrarian issue. In other words, what is known as the 'Armenian Question' in Turkey and what was coined as the 'Eastern Question' in the West from 19th century onwards was initially an Armenian-Kurdish problem.³¹⁰ In this conflict that avalanched into Armenian pogroms in late 19th century, Ottomans

groups: Cossacs, Wallachians, Maronites, Chaldeans, Jacobites, Samaritans, Yezidis, Greek Catholics and Armenian Catholics (instead of a single 'Catholic' designation). See Karpas, *Ottoman Population*.

³⁰⁹ See Karpas, *Ottoman Population*; Keyder, *State and Class*, 79; Ronald Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 107. Suny's numbers are coming from Justin McCarthy's "Foundations of the Turkish Republic: Social and Economic Change," *Middle Eastern Studies* XIX, 2 (April, 1983), 139-51.

³¹⁰ Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış*, 171.

initially emerged as only corrupt and incompetent imperial administrators who failed to set up and manage just administrative mechanisms for security and taxation in the most rugged territorial peripheries of the empire. Systematic ethnic cleansing of the Great War, however, can only be understood in the context of the Balkan inferno and the subsequent awakening of Turkish and Armenian nationalisms in the tiny landscape of Asia Minor.

At the end of the Great War, nine-tenths of the Christian population, which was around one-sixth of the total population in Anatolia, was cleansed through forced expulsion, massacre and population exchange.³¹¹ In the 1927 census of Turkey, the total population was 13.6 million; of which non-muslims accounted for 2.6%. There were approximately 120,000 Greek speakers and 65,000 Armenian speakers left. In other words, before the Great War, one out of every five persons living in present-day Turkey was non-Muslim, after the war, only one out of forty.³¹²

Each ethno-religious group within the empire constituted a *millet*³¹³; for administrative convenience, each millet under its own ecclesiastical head was recognized as a semiautonomous body from the time of Mehmed the Conqueror. Millets in the Ottoman Empire until the mid-19th century were the Jewish Millet, the Armenian Millet and the Greek Millet. With the arrival of Christian missionaries to Anatolia around 1830s, a Protestant Millet and a Catholic Millet were also established.

³¹¹ Keyder, "Wither the project of modernity," 44.

³¹² Keyder, *State and Class*, 79.

³¹³ The word 'millet' comes from the Arabic 'milla' that appears in Koran and means religion. In the Empire, there was a Muslim *millet* known as *millet-i hakime* –the ruling millet- (but no Turkish, Arab or Kurdish *millets*), Greek, Armenian and Jewish *millets*. Until the second half of the 19th century, the term millet denoted a specific religious group. After this period, it began to be used by Turks to mean 'nation' in the sense of the whole people.

Membership to these millets followed the lines of religious allegiance. Every non-Muslim *millet* was headed by a patriarch (or in the case of the Jews, a grand rabbi) who was confirmed in office by the Ottoman Government. In addition to the supervision of his ecclesiastical subordinates, the patriarch had an extensive civil authority over matters of internal millet administration. They controlled not only the clerical, ritual and charitable affairs of their flocks, but also education and regulation of matters of personal status like marriage, divorce, guardianship and inheritance.³¹⁴ The ecclesiastical chiefs had also jurisdiction over legal cases between members of the millet except for criminal cases for which they were under the jurisdiction of Seriat, the Holy Law, of the Muslims who were the Ruling Millet (*Millet-i Hakime*). Some taxes were collected through the millet organization. The chiefs of the millets would cooperate with the Ottoman Government from which their civil authority derived its legitimacy and with which their interests were closely aligned. They had a high standing within the Ottoman elite frequently taking part in the imperial divan. It is argued that it was largely this organization of autonomous religious communities known as the ‘millet system’ that explains how the Balkans were able to survive almost five centuries of Muslim rule as an overwhelmingly Christian region.³¹⁵

However, merits of the millet system coupled with a powerful discourse on quintessential ‘Ottoman tolerance’ (almost always crowned and justified by the acceptance of Sephardic Jews escaping the Spanish Inquisition in the 16th century) was

³¹⁴ Roderick Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 13.

³¹⁵ Fikret Adanır and Hilmar Kaiser, “Migration, Deportation, and Nation Building: The Case of the Ottoman Empire” in René Leboutte, ed., *Migrations et migrants dans une perspective historique. Permanences et innovations / Migrations and Migrants in Historical Perspective. Permanencies and Innovations* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000), 273-292.

mainly constructed within the mainstream Ottoman studies whose canons developed in the shadow of Turkish nationalism and it deserves historical analysis. What did Ottoman tolerance mean for subject peoples? Was it the absence of discrimination or the absence of persecution? If we define tolerance as the absence of discrimination, Bernard Lewis argues the Ottoman Empire was not tolerant since non-Muslims were not the civic and social equals of the followers of the dominant faith and were subject to a number of legal disabilities.³¹⁶ According to Lewis, however:

...complete toleration is new and insecure even in the most enlightened modern democracies and there have been appalling lapses from it. It would hardly be reasonable to look for it in the old Ottoman Empire. If we define toleration as the absence, not of discrimination, but of persecution then Ottoman record until the late 19th century is excellent.³¹⁷

According to Aron Rodrique, on the other hand, in order to be able to reconstruct the relationship between the state, non-Muslims and Muslims in the Empire prior to the 19th century, we need to move away from both the nationalist historiography of the “Ottoman yoke”, which considers Ottoman State oppressive to non-Muslims, and the historiography of an almost idyllic, harmonious co-existence.³¹⁸ Before the 19th century, the society of the Empire can be defined as one in which “difference” instead of “sameness” was paramount and there was no political will among the ruling elite to transform this difference into sameness.³¹⁹ Difference was given and accepted as such; it was vertically integrated into the political system. Rodrique asserts that in this respect we can not even talk about this relationship before

³¹⁶ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2002), 355.

³¹⁷ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 355.

³¹⁸ Aron Rodrique, “Difference and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire: Interview with Nancy Reynolds,” *Stanford Humanities Review* 5, no. 1 (1995).

³¹⁹ Rodrique, “Difference and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire: Interview with Nancy Reynolds.”

the modern period (before 19th century in the Empire³²⁰) in terms of majority/minority paradigm that is rooted in the appropriation of the public sphere by the nation-states in the post-Enlightenment period. ‘Tolerance’ in the Western democratic public discourse today connotes an attitude that is closer to “putting up with the other.”³²¹ However, in the Ottoman context, it was predicated on the notion of the acceptance of difference but it did not imply a lack of discrimination. In this respect, Rodrique’s evaluation only resonates with Braude and Lewis’s definition of tolerance in the Ottoman context prior to 19th century as “discrimination without persecution.”³²²

The relativization of the concept of tolerance overlooking the changes in the periodization of the Ottoman State, if not the whole society per se, is an important element of the Turkish nationalist historiography that constructs the Armenians as seditious bodies that violated this harmonious co-existence. Rosa Luxemburg affirms that this was also the approach of a part of the European press. In 1896, reflecting on the material conditions behind the national struggles in Turkey, she anchored the problem of Turkey in the lack of an economic transformation that accompanied the modern reforms. So she diagnosed the problem:

Until recently in part of the press, Turkey was still being portrayed as a paradise where ‘different nationalities have coexisted peacefully for hundreds of years’, ‘possessed the most complete autonomy’, and where only the interference of European diplomacy had artificially created dissatisfaction, by persuading the happy

³²⁰ The periodization of the Ottoman History is itself a contentious issue. In my own paper, I would like to follow the periodization of Eric Zürcher, in which he situates the emergence of modern Turkey in the 19th century of the Empire, taking the dominant development to be the influence of Europe on the Empire and the reactions it brought about in the Ottoman state and society. For Zürcher’s argument on the modern period in the Empire and hence the beginnings of the modern history of Turkey, see Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 1-7.

³²¹ See Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 131.

³²² “Introduction” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 3.

peoples of Turkey that they are oppressed and at the same time obstructing the innocent lamb of a Sultan from carrying out his 'repeatedly granted reforms.'³²³

I argue it is precisely this "harmonious co-existence" narrative³²⁴, which can only be anchored and legitimized within the pre-modern period of the Empire, that anachronistically lays the infrastructure for the 'provocation thesis' to justify the Armenian persecution of 1915. This Turkish nationalist thesis holds that Armenians themselves caused their own destruction by engaging in revolutionary and subversive activities giving in to the external agitations; as a Turkish historian Selahi Sonyel puts it "...[Armenians] enjoyed the best fruits of Ottoman society, until a minority of self-seeking, sanguinary and adventurist terrorist leaders decided to convert them into pawns in the power game..."³²⁵ It is also this narrative that consistently ends up with attributing a higher moral ground to the Turkish nationalism, marking the Armenian aspirations for their own nation-state as terrorist, seditious, evil endeavors.

Consequently, one important ramification of the 'Ottoman tolerance' discourse is that it assigns too much importance to foreign intervention for the break-up of the Empire into a group of ethnic-national states from 1815 to 1920. Great power intervention was one of the factors that accelerated the disintegration of the Empire. However, the gradual disintegration had actually begun in the 19th century due to fundamental changes in its economic and social structure caused by the introduction of

³²³ Rosa Luxemburg, 'Social Democracy and the National Struggles in Turkey', *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, October, 8,9,10, 1896, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1896/10/10.htm>.

³²⁴ For this, especially see the Preface of *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler* [Armenians in the Ottoman Documents], 1915-1920, (Ankara, 1994) published by the Directorate of State Archives; also see Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File: The Myth of Innocence Exposed* (İstanbul: Rüstem, 2001); Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question* (İstanbul: Documentary Publications, 1988). Almost all the introductions of works representing the Turkish denial thesis begin with this narrative.

³²⁵ Quoted in Ronald Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 96.

a capitalist economic system and the adoption of national statehood as a new principle of political organization after the French revolution. As Karpas argues, these events manifested themselves not only in the emergence of a new social order but also in a variety of economic, political and ideological alignments conditioned as much by economic interest as by religious or ethnic identity. In addition, it should not be overlooked that massive population movements (both immigration and emigration) on the axis of Balkans, Anatolia and Caucasia coupled with the settlement of millions of nomadic tribesmen in Anatolia, Syria, and on the outskirts of the Arabian peninsula increased the number of sedentary population, created enduring conflicts, and thus become both the agent and chief consequence of structural transformation in the Empire.³²⁶

3.3.Economic Pressures in the Periphery

Nothing determined modern Turkey's ideological landscape more than the lack of an indigenous bourgeoisie and the imperial bureaucracy's responses to the gradual integration of the Empire into the world capitalist system.³²⁷ The Ottoman Empire was not feudal; its class structure was fundamentally different from the pre-capitalist order observed in European feudalism. Just like the Byzantine central authority, the Ottoman palace was also instituted on the basis of an independent peasantry. A strong central

³²⁶ Kemal Karpas, *Ottoman Population*, ix. Also see, Eric Zürcher, "The late Ottoman Empire as laboratory of demographic Engineering," Unpublished Conference Paper, Napoli, 16-18 September 2008; Fikret Adanır and Hilmar Kaiser, Migration, Deportation, and Nation Building: The Case of the Ottoman Empire, *Migrations et migrants dans une perspective historique. Permanences et innovations / Migrations and Migrants in Historical Perspective. Permanencies and Innovations*, ed. René Leboutte (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000), 273-292.

³²⁷ Caglar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London: Verso, 1999). This is one of Keyder's major arguments. In my opinion, *State and Class in Turkey* is one of the best books written on Turkey. It surprises me how little it gets cited in the studies pertaining to the Turkish-Armenian, or Turkish-Greek conflict.

bureaucracy was established to secure the conditions of this independent peasantry in possession of similar amounts of land. They were expected to pay an annual tax to center-appointed state functionaries. These functionaries either transferred the tax to the center or delivered military service in exchange for the taxes they collected (*timar*). Any challenge to this established relationship between the rural producers and state functionaries – cyclical emergence of local potentates - would threaten not only the rural producers (especially, in the form of corruption and double taxation) but also the social position of the bureaucracy (losing its share in the surplus). It was this centralization of power by the Ottoman dynasties continuously safeguarding the independence of the peasantry which arrested the development of an aristocracy in the Empire in the western sense. The lack of alternative social design implying more local autonomy – failure of the *ayan* institution of the 18th century that resembled the formation of a feudal-aristocratic class³²⁸ meant that only cycles of centralization and

³²⁸ Fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the heyday of the Empire's military prowess. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Empire began to suffer from a growing fiscal crisis coupled with a population explosion after years of expansion. In addition, during the seventeenth century, due to the European overseas expansion of the 16th century, transit through the Ottoman lands declined and many of the Empire's overland trade routes lost their importance causing a significant revenue loss. Due to the growing fiscal crisis, many state functionaries of the *timar* system had to abandon their patrimonies and 18th century witnessed the rise of the *ayan* ('*notables*'). *Ayan* were influential people of diverse origin with local power base. Some were Ottoman governors, some were rich merchants or bankers, others were landowners or religious dignitaries. All had money and regional power base and the palace had to accept them as powerful intermediaries between itself and the population of the provinces. Especially during the second half of the 18th century both for troops and tax – collection. But the demise of the *timar* system gave rise of *iltizam* – tax-farming- controlled by the *ayan*. Tax-farming was the institution in which the right to collect taxes on behalf of the state was given to the highest bidder, who would pay a sum to the state in advance. For the central government the system had many advantages ; its income was assured, its revenues were no longer dependent on the harvest, and they were prepaid. It was their stronghold on the tax-farming system which gave the *ayan* much of their strength. But in the 18th century Ottoman lands came under the increasing domination of local notables who controlled the tax-farming. During the latter half of the 18th century *ayan* councils began to function as urban patriciates, deciding on internal trade, guild permits, etc. The palace, through the institution of tax-farming, had created an explosive marriage of political and economic power. *Ayan* rights were hereditary and they had become a power sharing institution. During the recentralization efforts of the Sultan (Mahmud II), the Porte succeeded in curbing the military and financial power of the *ayans*

decentralization would impact the social organization and social relations in the Empire.

Until the 19th century these cycles were contained and controlled by state violence. However, the state's re-centralization efforts especially in the Kurdistan region for administrative and military purposes in the 1830s and 1840s planted the first seeds of explosive ethno-religious conflict between the nomadic Sunni Kurds and sedentary Christian Armenians³²⁹ in a geography where the largest Sunni Muslim and Christian populations of Eastern Anatolia had been co-habiting.³³⁰ As Kasaba highlights, military campaigns and violence were only one part of the Ottoman response to the growing power of tribes and local families; new laws and institutions were also in the making. One of the laws issued between 1841 and 1867 stated that "all the nomadic tribes in Anatolia would henceforth be settled in their winter pastures and included in imperial censuses."³³¹ This meant the tribes would now be expected to engage in agriculture and pay taxes accordingly. In 1854, the title "sheikh", which was an official recognition all tribal sheiks had enjoyed, was incorporated into the provincial administrative hierarchy along with titles such as *kaymakam* and

through the appointment of officials directly controlled by İstanbul, dismantling of their holdings, and through the mobilization of a modernized army against the ayans military power. Early 19th century centralization efforts of the Sultan was successful; ayans continued to exploit their domain farms but they were no longer rulers in the image of the sultan. Tax-farming reverted to the center's control, and the peasantry emerged again as independent family farmers. Keyder calls the ayan institution a failed attempt towards the formation of a feudal-aristocratic class. See Keyder, *State and Class*, 13-17. Also see Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 29-45.

³²⁹ Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış*, 61-169.

³³⁰ 'Kurdistan' and 'Armenia' have never become administrative units in the Ottoman Empire, however, both terms were being used both by the Ottomans and the West. In fact, even Mustafa Kemal liberally uses the terms in *Nutuk* and other documents. It is very difficult to designate where Kurdistan ends and where Armenia begins since for centuries these territories and their populations have co-habited. But approximately, we can say the region between Arapkir, Musul and Van was called 'Kurdistan', the region between Erzincan, Kars and Van was called 'Armenia'. These coordinates situate Armenia to the north of Kurdistan in Eastern Anatolia.

³³¹ Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 103.

mutasarrıf.³³² Finally, one of the most important initiatives was the land code enacted in 1858, which was a “direct blow to the foundations of tribal life.” Individual households could now acquire the land they had been cultivating simply by registering with the central government. Although the overall thrust of the law was to undermine the large landholding notables and the harmful effects of the tax-farming system, and it was to replace the institution of communal property with the principle of individual ownership, the actual implementation of the law did not go as the central government planned. As Kasaba explains:

People feared that if they registered with the authorities, they could face new taxes and conscription into the army. The tribal chiefs and the sheiks took advantage of the fears of the rural population. Especially in southern Anatolia, they stepped into the vacuum and registered tribal land in their own names. Consequently, tribal chiefs, who had been the main targets of this law, ended up benefitting from its implementation. In addition to becoming landlords and hence acquiring some stake in the success of sedenterization, the tribal leaders maintained their traditional authority over their communities by reinforcing their role as protectors of the tribe and intermediaries in dealings with the state. This was a major blow to the government’s plans to break up tribal communities. In subsequent years the Arab and Kurdish landlords, especially, became more adamant in resisting any effort by the Ottoman government to undermine their status or strip them of their new-found wealth.³³³

The presence of powerful Kurdish overlords in the periphery creating the burden of double-taxation over the Armenians (and stealing from the surplus of the central authority) together with the state’s efforts to rehabilitate them by using excessive amount of violence not only explains the birth of the Kurdish-Armenian conflict essentially as an agrarian problem. It also reveals that historically the Armenian Question and the Kurdish Question can’t be separated.

Even though there were great numbers of large farms than in the 16th century, they were dwarfed by millions of small holdings. The absence of a landed oligarchy

³³² Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 103.

³³³ Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 103-104.

when the Empire's contact with the world markets increased in the 19th century required a parallel dispersion of mercantile activity in the Empire. Thus a numerically large class of intermediary merchants proliferated ranging from villages to ports of trade engaging in selling peasant surplus. Merchant capital quickly became dominant in areas where agriculture was integrated into the world markets, strongly allied with interest-bearing capital. Often large traders advanced money loans to smaller merchants; merchants doubled as money lenders. The state's bureaucratic class found itself in conflict with these merchants and "were loath to see the peasantry slipping into the realm of the market."³³⁴ The growth of the trade had naturally increased the value of production and the taxation system of the traditional order was based on assumptions of simple production. This was a fundamentally novel situation for the central bureaucracy; an ever growing economy managed by traditional tax, fixed in money terms for a number of years, meant that greater amount of the surplus was being largely expropriated by those who engaged in the circulation of money and traded commodities.

Petty traders and moneylenders in the 19th century were identified with the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. There was supposed to be a division of labor as well; Greeks were involved in commerce, Armenians in moneylending (although 70% of the Armenians were still poor peasants). 19th century travelers to the empire expressed their impression that Muslims had no business sense and were fit only to till the soil, while Greeks and Armenians were industrious and forward-looking. By the mid-19th century a good proportion of the non-Muslim population of the empire had

³³⁴ Keyder, *State and Class*, 19.

developed as a class of compradors³³⁵, mediating between peasant producers and foreign capitals. The economic integration of the Empire into the world markets was carried mostly by this class.

For the Muslim population of the Empire, the ideal social role had always been to serve either in state bureaucracy or the army; occupations that had anything to do with commerce, crafts and trade were always looked upon with scorn or distaste. Islam's moral cosmology invested in the "other world"; fatalism, and poverty and its virtues had also been an important cultural impetus behind the Muslim aversion to wealth and money-making. So, the commercial positions were taken up by the Christian minorities as long as the opportunity to achieve a high position in the bureaucracy or the army remained closed to them. For instance, the Trade School opened in Istanbul in 1882 was soon closed due to lack of students.³³⁶ Even if this school re-opened in 1905, the graduates had preferred to be civil servants rather than engage with commercial entrepreneurship. Akçam argues it is precisely this social philosophy of life of the Muslim population that played a significant role in the loss of their dominance and, in this respect, he contends, one can compare the attitude of the Muslim majority toward the Christian population with the attitudes that developed in Europe toward the Jews.³³⁷ Especially after the edict of 1856³³⁸, the Muslims

³³⁵ Feroz Ahmad, "Vanguard of a Nascent Bourgeoisie: The Social and Economic Policy of the Young Turks 1908-1918" in *Social and Economic History of Turkey (1071-1920)*, *Papers Presented to the First International Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey*, Hacettepe, Ankara, July 1977, 329.

³³⁶ Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004), 81; Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Ekonomi ve Toplum (1908-1950): Türkiye'de Milli İktisat - Milli Ekonomi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995), 99.

³³⁷ Akçam does not make the argument that these anti-Christian attitudes in the Ottoman Empire have reached the level of anti-semitism seen in Europe. Braude and Lewis also caution their readers against

perceived their statesmen to be more attuned to the interests of the Christian communities whose wealth and power were rising considerably.

On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that some fundamental institutional innovations had structured the unequal relation between the Empire and the European powers, and hence between the Christian and Muslim merchants. The

similar comparisons. See “Introduction” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis eds.

³³⁸ Fiscal and military crises the Empire experienced in the 18th century with the great power interventionism showed the weakness of the Empire and led to a series of European-inspired military, economic, educational and political reforms that were pioneered by Mahmud II (1784-1839) and that would transform the Empire in the 19th century. The period between 1839 and 1871 is known as the period of *Tanzimat* (reforms) *par excellence* in the Turkish historiography. After the death of Mahmud II in 1839 and following the coronation of Abdulmecid, a leading reformer and the Foreign Minister Resit Pasa promulgated a new imperial edict entitled as ‘The Notable Edict of the Rose Garden’ (since the edict was announced at the square of the Rose Garden of the Palace) before an assembly of foreign diplomats and Ottoman dignitaries. The Ottoman Government in this edict –which resembled a constitution, also known as *Hatt-I Serif of Gulhane*- promised the establishment of guarantees for the life, honor and property of the Sultan’s subjects; an orderly system of taxation; a system of conscription for the army; and the equality before law of all subjects, whatever their religion although this last article was formulated somewhat ambiguously in the document. The edict did not unequivocally set forth the freedom of religion (although in practice non-Muslim communities did have freedom of religion) and proclaim the political equality of Muslims and non-Muslims. The equality of Muslims and non-Muslims were introduced for the first time in 1843 with a new penal code. Seriat was never abrogated but its scope was limited almost completely to family law. Only toward the end of the Crimean War, however, Ottomans began to be more specific about how the principles of egalitarianism should apply to the entire society of the Empire; in 1855, for instance it was announced that non-Muslims should be admitted to the military service through the grade of colonel, to civil service without limit of grade, and that the poll tax should be abolished. It was also with the “Imperial Rescript” known as the Hatti-I Humayun of 1856, the ambiguity around this last provision of the earlier decree was clarified: this edict explicitly stated that Ottoman citizens, regardless of religion, maybe accepted into government service and are free to enroll in both military and civilian state schools. The same decree also affirmed the liability of non-muslim subjects to military recruitment but permitted the sending of substitutes or the purchasing of exemption. It should be noted here however the purchasing of exemption from the military service became institutionalized with a special tax on non-Muslims called *bedel* (means ‘cost’) and there has been no effort to draft non-Muslims until 1909, when the exemption tax was abolished. This issue would soon become a major source of resentment among the Muslims. After 1856, non-Muslims took positions in administrative judiciary and educational system of the Empire. Within a decade, non-Muslim presence especially within the Ottoman civil bureaucracy became very pronounced; they formed the majority of Ottoman diplomats abroad. See Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd Publishers, 1998), 53-54; Carter V. Findley, “The Acid Test of Ottomanism: The Acceptance of Non-Muslims in the Late Ottoman Bureaucracy” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 339-368; Roderick Davison, “The Millets as Agents of Change in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 325; Enver Ziya Karal, “Non-Muslim Representatives in the First Constitutional Assembly, 1876-1877” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis eds, 388.

Ottoman Empire had a long-standing regime of capitulations, which until the 18th century served the Ottoman center to exercise strict control over economic relations. Sultans were unilaterally able to distribute privileges to foreign states. These privileges were not absolute; they needed to be renegotiated upon the ruler's death. With the expansion of European inter-state system coupled with ongoing military defeats, the Empire was pushed into accepting bilateral agreements through which Ottoman subjects could also engage in business in Europe in exchange for the same rights granted to Westerners in the empire. With these bilateral agreements the rights of the foreign ambassadors to administer foreign affairs and legal problems were extended to extra-territoriality. This was fundamentally a system through which the envoys of European states enjoyed sovereign rights and could grant protection to their passport holders. Thus, groups of assumed or true national identity were created outside the reach of the political authority. This was “a potentially explosive situation.”³³⁹

In the core areas of the Empire, ambassadors were willing to distribute or sell hundreds of thousands of passports to Greeks and Armenians, who were thus liberated from the Ottoman citizenship. During the 19th century, the number of passport holders further increased while immigrants from all over Mediterranean began to arrive in commercial prominent port cities. These privileged passport holders of the European states living and trading in Turkey popularly came to be known as the Levantine and they formed the principal link between the European markets and local producers thanks to their lower taxes and extraterritorial status. Representative agencies of

³³⁹ Keyder, *State and Class*, 20.

merchant houses were established in port cities that engaged non-Muslims to serve as intermediaries. European traders preferred to work with Christians for not only cultural but also institutional reasons; Christians with foreign passports could be brought to court under the consular legal system. But the cultural element could not be ignored; Christians were much more privileged in their dealings with European businessmen through their affinity of tradition, religion and language. In the context of a rapidly increasing trading activity, Muslim merchants could not benefit from the increasing trading activity and they survived in subordinate status.

It should be noted that although this class of Christian merchants engaged in bourgeois activities such as banking, commerce, and industry, they did not constitute a 'bourgeois class' that exercised any significant political power over the state and they had no demand for political rule. When the Greeks and Armenians had become political, the inter-state system had already condemned the Ottoman state to dissolution. Essentially a comprador bourgeoisie, they had aligned their interests with those of European powers and they hardly perceived Ottoman state as their state. In fact, their interests were better served the more the authority of the Ottoman state weakened.³⁴⁰ Since during the demise of the Empire, the conflict between the Christians and Muslims was paramount, "the fact that merchants, bankers and manufacturers were all minorities served to congeal this group as members of a single bourgeoisie class."³⁴¹ Keyder conjectures that the political situation might have been

³⁴⁰ Ahmad, "Vanguard of a Nascent Bourgeoise," 330.

³⁴¹ Keyder, *State and Class*, 46. Also see Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye 'de 'Milli İktisat'* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1982). Toprak's work is still a classic in this field (the making of the Turkish bourgeoisie). However, as Eric Zürcher also states "Toprak essentially tells half the story. Focusing on the creation of new Muslim businesses but leaving out the destruction of Greek and Armenian business." See Eric Jan

different if there was a Muslim preponderance of manufacturers agitating against Christian merchants and moneylenders. Under the circumstances the bureaucracy had no natural allies to aid it in attempting to formulate policies required to change the mode of integration of the empire into world capitalist system. In other words, a “Turkish bourgeoisie” did not exist until the Unionists set about creating one.³⁴²

Besides the Christian merchants and moneylenders, from 1881 onwards there was a new breed of organization men in the lives of the Muslim merchants: Public Debt Administration (PDA). In 1875, following the financial crash of 1873, the Ottoman government finally declared its inability to continue making interest payments on the official loans that it had been receiving since 1854 (Crimean War). Between 1875 and 1881, the Ottoman bankruptcy was negotiated among the representatives of European bondholders and palace bureaucracy. With the formation of PDA to safeguard the rights of European investors holding Turkish bonds, the Ottoman government basically lost its fiscal sovereignty. PDA was acting as an intermediary between the government and foreign investors both for direct investments and public loans and it rapidly became large enough to rival the Ottoman Finance Ministry, controlling about one-third of the total public revenue of the Empire. Thus, it served “as an alternative to the formation of a colonial apparatus.” Like the *fermiers généraux* of France it represented a committee of creditors to the sultan and constituted a barrier against fiscal reform. It was essentially a compromise

Zurcher, “The Late Ottoman Empire as laboratory of demographic engineering,” http://www.sissco.it/fileadmin/user_upload/Attivita/Convegni/regioni_multilingue/zurcher.pdf, footnote number 12.

³⁴² Ahmad, “The Vanguard of a Nascent Bourgeoisie,” 329-347, Keyder, *State and Class*, 49-69.

among the rival imperial powers whose attitudes towards Ottoman reforms remained ambivalent.

On the one hand, PDA rendered the Ottoman government a more creditworthy interlocutor in the international area, on the other hand it prevented any radical change. Ottomans had mortgaged their future in the hands of European creditors – peasant surpluses were being converted into interest payments by foreigners on money capitals of foreign origin. Keyder argues PDA did have one unexpected effect on the ideological development of the bureaucratic class; it has been instrumental in contributing to the creation of the bureaucratic movement of etatist social transformation that I will discuss in the ‘Administrative Change’ section below. As the organization grew to rival that of the Ottoman Administration, it also “personified the nefarious impact of the European connection on the traditional functions of the state” and the bureaucracy, which became defensive, was pushed to embrace the resentment of the traditional orders against European impact.³⁴³ “It was impossible to find a way out of this situation... Turkey cannot regenerate itself as a whole,” argued Luxemburg, “the remedy could only have been achieved through a total transformation of economic and social life, through a transition to capitalist forms of production. But there did not exist and do not exist either the basis for such a transformation or a social class which could come forward as its representative.”³⁴⁴ Young Turks saw a way out of this situation; Luxemburg as of 1896, even in the face of the pogroms of the Armenians in the midst of Anatolia, could not have foreseen what would transpire

³⁴³ Keyder, *State and Class*, 41-42.

³⁴⁴ Rosa Luxemburg, “Social Democracy and the National Struggles in Turkey,” *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 8-9-10 October 1896, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1896/10/10.htm>.

there in less than few decades. Turkey indeed regenerated itself *as a whole* and that regeneration accomplished with expulsion, massacre and plunder was in the new Republican history immortalized in the image of a heroic ‘phoenix bird’ rising from the ashes of the Empire through anti-imperialist struggle.

3.4.The Rise of the Young Turks and Administrative Change

Ottoman centralization efforts around 1820s and 1830s following military defeats of the empire gave rise to a new civil bureaucracy located outside the Porte (Palace). Especially the modernization of the local administration had inflated the number of functionaries associated with civil bureaucracy; their numbers may have reached one hundred thousand before the end of the 19th century. While the palace bureaucracy still remained strong during the Abdulhamid’s conservative regime (1876-1909), there were qualitative changes in the emerging civil bureaucracy due to the establishment of new imperial schools of engineering, medicine and administration. From these new modern educational institutions rose the new revolutionary cadres of the empire. One important aspect of these schools was their imperial character; their students came from many diverse regions of the empire. Recently migrated Muslim Turks from the Russian Empire gained a special importance in the intellectual life of the imperial center. Graduates of these schools either joined the civil bureaucracy or the military.

The rise of the reformist and revolutionary intellectuals, who would be called the ‘Young Turks’ in the late 19th and early 20th century³⁴⁵, coincided with the radicalization of an official disillusionment with the empire’s integration into the world capitalist system and the greater involvement of the Western powers in the empire’s economy. As I have discussed above, the empire went bankrupt in 1875, and PDA was established in 1881. This tormented economic transformation not only eroded the legitimacy of the imperial elites it had also marginalized the Muslim masses. The constitutional reform efforts since the Tanzimat Reforms of the mid 19th century were always perceived to be serving the immediate commercial needs of the non-Muslims. For the *Milleti Hakime* (the ruling millet) of 600 years, the attempt to change this balance of power so dramatically with no popular support was insulting.

In 1889, a group of young students in the army medical school founded a secret committee, which would later become known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The CUP initially emerged as an opposition movement against the regime of Abdulhamid II and until the years prior to the Young Turk revolution of 1908³⁴⁶, it maintained “its peculiar characteristic of being a political opposition

³⁴⁵ See Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Sina Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1987); Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: Young Turks 1902-1908*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), Eric Zürcher, “The Young Turks: Children of the Borderlands?” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (2003): 279–81. Since I do not have access to this journal, I will be using a version of this article from the Working Paper archives of the Leiden University, that can be found in the following link: http://tulp.leidenuniv.nl/content_docs/wap/ejz16.pdf. “Young Turks” was a generic name used in Turkish historiography denoting the groups which strove for the regeneration of the empire during the late 19th and early 20th century.

³⁴⁶ Also known as the “Constitutional Revolution of 1908.”

movement³⁴⁷ with no clear political aims other than replacing the sultan's regime with a parliamentary one. By 1896, they were powerful enough to consider taking over power, but on the eve of a coup their secret network was exposed by the Sultan. Following large number of arrests, the Young Turk movement was silenced until the next decade. From 1905 onwards, the movement reorganized itself through the cell structure and secret communications. In 1908, a group of CUP officers took their troops to the mountains and succeeded in pushing the Sultan to restore the constitution. After the 1908 revolution, CUP re-organized itself as a political party taking part in elections and parliamentary debate. However, the secret organization of the party remained effective and the real power of CUP remained in the hands of the Central Committee of this organization. In 1909, a conservative counter-revolution carried out in the name of the restoration of Islam and *seriat* drove the CUP from power and in 1911 they were also ousted from the government.³⁴⁸ Following the disastrous Balkan defeats in 1912, the CUP carried a coup in January 1913, and until the end of WW1 they ruled the Empire as a one-party dictatorship.

The Young Turk opposition was informed by a radical positivism acquired through the contacts with French Comteans. They shared the social engineering perspectives of most late nationalisms. While they were influenced by contemporary European currents of thought, what distinguished them from their European counterparts was their technical and military education designed to serve the state.

They neither excelled in the efficient management of the state nor did they represent a

³⁴⁷ See Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

³⁴⁸ On the kinds of opposition the CUP faced after the 1908 revolution, see Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 100-108.

humanistic or critical culture. For instance, as Keyder argues, they were devoid of the intellectual richness of the Russian revolutionaries and among all the Third World revolutionary movements they were theirs was the least anti-imperialist.³⁴⁹ That they all belonged to the bureaucratic class endowed them with a state-centered perspective. Literally, “there was not a single Ottoman intellectual even in letters whose immediate concerns lay outside this framework.”³⁵⁰ Debates were always played out within the narrow field of saving the state “in order to better cope with internal conflict and external pressure.” In the face of the dismantling of the Empire, growing success of separatist nationalisms, and the increasing bondage of the Porte under the PDA tutelage, their immediate concern was to establish the autonomy and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman State. They had no political agenda and no interest in social change.³⁵¹ Their discourse was primarily anti-absolutist and this initially helped them win the European approval. Restoring the constitutional government for them was initially only a means to curb the power of the sultan and control the demise of the empire. They tried to satisfy the minorities by giving them equal rights in an age marked by the French Revolution and subsequent Balkan nationalisms. They, however, saw the parliament as an extension of modern bureaucratic apparatus being managed by an enlightened governing elite. Balkan secessionism – independence of Bulgaria, the annexation of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary, and the catastrophe of the Balkan wars particularly, ended the short constitutional spring and efforts to keep the Empire together under a common Ottoman identity. Young Turk ‘Jacobins’ took over

³⁴⁹ Keyder, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Gerileyişi ve Çöküşü,” 8.

³⁵⁰ Keyder, *State and Class*, 50

³⁵¹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 15; Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation For a Revolution*, 314.

the state in 1913 in a coup. And thereafter “they totally bypassed the parliament and ruled the country through thousands of so-called temporary laws.”³⁵²

Young Turk concern to salvage to state, however, was merely a symbolic formula to safeguard the traditional order with the privileged status of the bureaucracy. It was not accompanied by an understanding of the forces that caused the loss of autonomy and economic subordination to Europe. They, Keyder argues, always remained ignorant of the economic consequences of their administrative reforms.³⁵³ In fact, if the first and foremost impetus behind the constitution of the Young Turk movement was salvaging the state³⁵⁴, the second most important impetus was a very ill-understood desire to overcome economic dependence.³⁵⁵ They lacked a national bourgeoisie whose interests would be served through the construction of a national economy but were in a position to take over the entire state apparatus, and they believed this “all-powerful position could be used to create a client group which would serve as a surrogate bourgeoisie.”³⁵⁶

The leading ideologues of the Young Turks, Ziya Gökalp had been influenced by Friedrich List and John Rae and argued that “poor Turks” had for decades been slaves to British economics (Gökalp refers to liberal Manchester school) and thus had been copycats in morality, law, and literature. The creation of a national economy,

³⁵² Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 311.

³⁵³ Keyder, *State and Class*, 54. Here Keyder also makes the argument that a general analogy between the Young Turks and Meji restoransists is not valid. The Meji, Keyder argues, were much closer to an ends-means scenario and they saw obtaining state power as a step towards economic restructuring.

³⁵⁴ There is full consensus on this in the young Turk literature.

³⁵⁵ Keyder, *State and Class*, 53.

³⁵⁶ Keyder, *State and Class*, 54.

according to Gökalp, could only be accomplished with ethnic sameness.³⁵⁷ A society where the division of labor was organized around the ethnic lines – Muslims in military and bureaucracy and Christians in commerce and money-lending- could not become a modern state. Under the influence of Durkheim, Gökalp anchored and resolved the economic problems of the empire in sociology; he conceived a national economy resting on an organic solidarity and defended corporatism.³⁵⁸

Yusuf Akçura too believed that the greatest obstacle lying ahead of economic progress was the lack of a Turkish bourgeoisie. In one of his talks entitled “The economic foundations of the Turkish nationalism,” Akçura stated that the Turkish nation could only be rescued by way of “population and economic forces” (*miktar-ı nüfus ve iktisadi kuvvet itibariyle*): “Enabling the economic progress of the Turk during the Great War, establishing a middle class (*mutavassıt bir zengin sınıfı*), a bourgeoisie, and for this, to create industries in the country held by the Turks or the state, to follow a serious policy against the superior and competitor communities (*kavimler*) can be explained by this objective.” Ahmet İnel, based on this talk of Akçura, emphasizes that among the conditions of national progress, *changing the population balance* besides creating a new class of national nouveau riches was also present.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Toprak, *Milli İktisat -Milli Burjuvazi*, 19.

³⁵⁸ Ahmet İnel, “Milliyetçilik ve Kalkınmacılık” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce* Cilt 4 / *Milliyetçilik*, 764-767; Also see Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm* (İstanbul: Deniz Yayınları, 2009).

³⁵⁹ My italics. See İnel, “Milliyetçilik ve Kalkınmacılık,” 766.

While all the European powers were cultivating client groups within the Ottoman mosaic through commerce and missionary institutions³⁶⁰, slowly and surely planting the seeds of ethnic differentiation in Asia Minor, Muslims were the only constituents who could rely on for a privileged relationship with the state. The non-Muslim class that was enjoying extra-territorial privileges under the protection of European states and which had no political stakes in the transformation of the Ottoman state could not be trusted and reintegrated into the governance of the Empire. The bourgeoisie of the Empire, like the bourgeoisie of Poland, was not national and could not be trusted. These convictions proved to be all the more urgent in the aftermath of the Balkan devastation, the consequences of which delivered a reactionary Muslim mob that would help the CUP realize its ideals of national economy.

Some wealthy Anatolian Greeks were known to have helped Greece with their donations during the war and this led to a large-scale Muslim boycott of the Greek merchants and traders between 1913 and 1914. During this boycott, Muslims were urged not to shop from the non-Muslim traders and in Istanbul in a short period of time near 500 new grocery shops were opened by the Muslims. The CUP strengthened its ties with the guilds in Istanbul; they collected the thugs (*fedailer*) they needed from the Muslim guilds and artisans' associations, whose position in the traditional economy was being rapidly eroded by the advance of European capitalism. These 'depressed classes', as Feroz Ahmad emphasizes, were hardly the entrepreneurs who would form the backbone of a bourgeoisie class. They were generally backward

³⁶⁰ By far the best work on the political and cultural work of the missionaries in Anatolia is Hans Lukas Keiser's *Der Verpasste Friede*.

looking, conservative people seeking the protection of the state. One important feature of this new class used by the CUP was that they were unable to distinguish between profit and profiteering.³⁶¹

Thus, the overwhelming theme of the great war years was the creation of an indigenous bourgeoisie designed to further the Muslim enterprise. Numerous nationalist journals promoting the ideal of ‘national economy’ proliferated. Nationalist intellectuals promoting ‘national economy’ in these journals sponsored by the CUP attacked liberalism as a doctrine of free trade, economic dependency and the comprador class. In these journals, “1915” was declared as the ‘beginning of history’ (*mebde-i tarih*) in terms of ‘national economy’. According to *Türk Yurdu* journal, historians writing the history of modern Turkey in the future would refer to “1915” as the “greatest year of seeding for the Turkish national economy.”³⁶² The first issue of *İktisadiyat Mecmuası* (Journal of Economy) that began to be published in 1915 argued that Turks should take the German nation as a model since Germans in less than half a century succeeded in establishing their national economy. In fact, for the CUP, even half a century was way too long. The Minister of War and the Commander of the Ottoman Army Enver Pasha, for instance, in the heat of the war in 1915 travelled from Istanbul to Adana for the opening ceremony of a new iron and wood manufacturing plant owned by Muslim joint-stock and emphasized during his opening speech that Ottomans had to close the gap with Europe “in one year”, demanding a rapid development era.³⁶³ It is notable that leading intellectuals of the period like Ziya

³⁶¹ Ahmad, “Vanguard of a Nascent Bourgeoisie,” 330.

³⁶² Toprak, *Türkiye’de Milli İktisat - Milli Burjuvazi*, 15.

³⁶³ Toprak, *Türkiye’de Milli İktisat - Milli Burjuvazi*, 203.

Gökalp was also advocating an idea of progress resting on a fantastic notion of time, and hence utopian expectations: “We shall skip five hundred years and not stand still,” Gökalp said. A concern for speed and restlessness to catch up with the center can be regarded as a feature of all late nationalisms. I argue, however, that this utopian notion of progress that informed such expectations such as closing the gap with Europe “in one year” or skipping “five hundred years” should be understood as an explanatory factor of violence and the scale of ethnic cleansing that occurred in such a small peninsula in about four years.

The greatest problem of the project of ‘national economy’, however, was the absence of national capital. The CUP knew that political problems could not be solved without capital accumulation; the only effective way to render the Muslims dominant in economic life was to further the economic goals from the top and direct capital accumulation by developing allocation mechanisms that totally bypassed the market, regardless of how illegitimate they would be. Without national capital accumulation, there would be no national consciousness.³⁶⁴ And only after the development of a national bourgeoisie, could a national state be constituted. As Ziya Gökalp wrote, ‘one of the factors which will give the Turks the character of a nation and contribute to the formation of a Turkish culture is the national economy.’³⁶⁵ Accordingly, the name of the Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture was changed to the Ministry of National Economy.

³⁶⁴ Toprak, *Türkiye’de Milli İktisat - Milli Burjuvazi*, 124.

³⁶⁵ Ahmad, “Vanguard of a nascent bourgeoisie,” 339.

In line with this vision, the government project during the Great War was to increase the profitability of Muslim business. Especially in the field of trade (distribution of foodstuffs and military materials), shortages imposed by the war economy meant that even the most minimal favorable treatment would yield high profits and political privilege came to make a difference in terms of mercantile profit. The Turkish government was an important source of demand, but the German Central Commission of Purchases was also in Istanbul, procuring the local produce for the needs of the German army. The newly completed Anatolian Railroad had also created immense market opportunities. In this climate, an active black market along with political patronage mechanisms emerged, with the natural result of accelerated accumulation of mercantile profits through the mobilization of a ‘mob.’

There was a tremendous public outcry against the wartime profiteering, and by the end of 1915 the CUP government was forced to intervene. A committee – Commission to Prevent Profiteering (*Men-i ihtikar komisyonu*) - was set up by the government, but the new emerging Muslim profiteers under the protection of CUP was in a position to influence the press and the government as well. The CUP were divided over the issue, but it did not “commit infanticide by taking serious measures against the activities” of this class. The policy of the notorious ‘merchants of 1332’ (1916) was debated in the press, but in the end none of the laws against profiteering were enforced; they were temporized in typical bureaucratic fashion.³⁶⁶

Muslim businessmen were brought together under the aegis of the party organization to found ‘national companies’ for the financing and carrying out of trade.

³⁶⁶ Ahmad, “Vanguard of a nascent bourgeoisie,” 346.

As Keyder points out there was usually one-to-one correspondence between the roster of the CUP local organization and the shareholders of the new companies.³⁶⁷ Most companies set up in the towns of Anatolia were set up under the initiative of the local CUP clubs. For instance, the Cooperative Ottoman Joint-Stock Company of the Tobacco Growers of Izmit and Duzce was one such example. It was set up at the local club with a capital of TL 100,000 divided into 20,000 shares of TL 5 each. One of the founders of the company was CUP deputy for Izmit. In 1917, in another Anatolian city, Afyonkarahisar, the secretary of the Afyon CUP, Besim Bey, came together with deputies of Afyon – Salim and Agaoglu Ahmet Beys, and founded an industrial firm with capital worth TL 50,000; the members immediately subscribed TL 200,000. In Manisa, another CUP deputy took the initiative to found a Viticultural Bank (*Bagcilik Bankasi*) with a capital of TL 150,000, half of which was snapped up by local growers. As Ahmad points out, almost every Anatolian town of any size had a trading company and in most cases the local branch of the CUP was responsible for setting up these enterprises.³⁶⁸ Between 1914-1918, during the heyday of the Great War rose an unprecedented number of Muslim-Turk joint-stock companies. During the first five years of the Constitutional Revolution (1908-1913), a total of 113 joint-stock companies were established and the majority of them were owned by the non-Muslims.

Between 1914 and 1918, on the other hand, were established 123 joint-stock companies and most of them were founded by the Muslim-Turks. These companies,

³⁶⁷ Keyder, *State and Class*, 63.

³⁶⁸ Ahmad, "The Vanguard of a Nascent Bourgeoisie," 343.

with political power behind them, made immense profits. As Yunus Nadi observed in *Tasvir-i Efkar*, “before the great war, in order to be able to establish the most secure, the most beneficial, and the most profitable company, in a huge village (*liva*) collecting five, ten thousand liras would be very difficult. Now, to establish a company worth forty, fifty, eighty, one hundred thousand liras, it is enough for five people to come together and chit-chat a quick accounting comprised of a few words.”³⁶⁹

Thus, a group whose fortunes until then had depended on their relations with the wealthy Christian merchants was elevated to a more significant role by becoming *grands commercants* linked to CUP and the state mechanism. But the constitution of a Muslim bourgeoisie and new CUP protégés would not have made a significant impact (their numbers could not have exceeded a few thousand...) alongside the overwhelming presence of Armenians and Greeks. This does not mean that ethnic destruction of 1915-1923 was determined by the economic project of the bureaucracy. The struggle between the traditional ruling class and the challenging non-Muslim bourgeoisie was ideologically displaced to the realm of ethno-religious conflict.³⁷⁰ The Young Turks’ attempt to build a European nation-state was opposed by the very system they aspired to emulate living and breathing as ‘capitulations’ and ‘Public Debt Administration’ within the empire. They were unprepared for their sudden accession to power, they had no specific program to implement, and they had to change very fast

³⁶⁹ Toprak, *Türkiye’de Milli İktisat -Milli Burjuvazi*, 111-124. Yunus Nadi Abahoğlu was a renowned Turkish journalist and the founder/owner of the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. He was a loyal supporter of Mustafa Kemal during the War of Independence and it was he who read the new constitution in 1923 in the Parliament after the proclamation of the Republic.

³⁷⁰ Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, 64.

in dizzying swirl of violence with only a tiny peninsula left to rescue. In this climate all the social and economic problems of the empire appeared as consequences of coexistence with Christian minorities. The Balkan wars were a turning point in CUPs' relations with Greeks and Armenians.

The Greeks – especially those living along the Aegean littoral- were frustrated with boycotts and forced expulsions before the Great War started. CUP Secretary in Smyrna/ Izmir was instructed by the Minister of Interior (Talat Pasha) to cleanse the Western seaboard of Asia Minor. With the help of the militias of the the so-called 'Special Organization' (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*)³⁷¹ – whose rank and file was particularly dominated by Circassian refugees, the CUP succeeded in forcing, through veiled threats and intimidation, approximately 150,000 Greek Orthodox to flee the coastal provinces and move to Greek islands across the mainland. Those most affected were Greek businessmen and commercial farmers, as the drive behind the intimidation

³⁷¹ The organization was in effect a secret service directly responsible to Enver and paid out of secret War Ministry funds. The Committee of Union and Progress always had shock troops comprised of a group of officers known as *fedais* (volunteers) who did the Party's dirty work such as political assassinations and suppression of uprisings. This circle of officers was very close to Enver. On August 2, 1914, the day general mobilization of the Empire for the Great War was announced, these irregular bands of *fedais* were formalized under the command of the Department of Defense and put under the direct control of Enver. The activities of the *Teskilat-I Mahsusa* covered a wide spectrum of "more or less secret tasks", such as propaganda for Panislamic and Panturkish ideals among the Muslim and Turkish subjects of the Colonial powers, subversion and guerilla activities behind the enemy lines (the SO attempted to start an anti-British revolt in Egypt to support the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal, for instance), counterespionage and also strengthening of the Turkish trade and industry at the expense of the Greek and Armenian minorities by forced 'Turkification' –Celal Bayar (Republic of Turkey's third President) was very active in this field as SO agent in Izmir. And their domestic mission included the "persons to be liquidated at home." See Eric Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement* (Leiden: Brill, 1984); Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic : Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London and New York : Zed Books, 2004); Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1995); Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdim: Milli Mücadeleye Giris*, Cilt 5 (İstanbul : Baha Matbaası, 1967), 1572-82. Also see Philip Stoddard's 1963 dissertation thesis: *The Ottoman Government and the Arabs, 1911-1918. A Preliminary Study of Teskilat-Mahsusa*.

campaign was economic as much as political. As we will see in the next section, Armenians to be deported were forced into selling their property either for very low prices that came to nothing or their property was declared 'abandoned.' Immediately before the war, Armenian merchants had begun to purchase land in Eastern Anatolia and in the fertile lands of Cukurova. Especially in the Cilicia region there was considerable concentration of land in the Armenian hands³⁷²; after the war, land ownership was reversed. As Insel points out, "otherwise why would the National Security Council have the necessity to declare the late Ottoman Empire land registers a national security issue?"³⁷³ The Muslim merchants who benefited from the new nationalism while retaining a provincial base played a very significant role in the War of Independence.³⁷⁴ As mentioned above, the government had no qualms about totally supporting such 'national' concerns and during the war it consolidated its power over the economy. What emerged at the end of the great war in Turkey was a proto-etatist³⁷⁵ social transformation: It was an initial stage of a practice where the political

³⁷² Keyder in his footnotes quotes an entry in the Encyclopedia Britannica (vol.XXX, as of 1922) written by WJ. Childs: "Armenian land-owners, already in possession of the richest areas of the Cilician plain, were rapidly increasing their holdings; and...the Armenian population prospered and multiplied while the Moslem population declined. The Muslims of Cilicia, indeed were, gloomily brooding over Armenian affronts to their patriotism, and economic Armenian encroachments on their position as the dominant and ruling race. These matters combined forced a mass of inflammable material..." See footnote 28 in Keyder, *State and Class*, 236.

³⁷³ Ahmet Insel, "Özür dilemek artık bir zorunluluk," *Radikal*, 16 November 2008, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&Date=&ArticleID=908503>. Although Toprak's works are all on the making of national economy, his accounts, as Zürcher also argues, they tell only half of the story without integrating the pillage and plunder of non-Muslim property in the making of a native bourgeoisie. Partly because the archival data on the plunder is rare or non-existent and partly because the issue is top-sensitive, there is not yet research that gives us the full story of the making of Turkish national bourgeoisie. Acknowledgements like Insel's can only be found in some footnotes or articles written by liberals in some Turkish dailies.

³⁷⁴ Keyder, *State and Class*, 65.

³⁷⁵ I say "proto-etatism" because full-fledge etatism was really a feature of European fascism during the inter-war era (Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece), and that is when Turkey's etatism matured as well very much under the admiration of Mussolini's party...As of 1918, we can't talk of a mature working class

elite and the nascent bourgeoisie would join forces to isolate national economic space in which heavy oppression of the working class and exploitation of the agricultural sector would allow for rapid accumulation. This would be achieved under an ideology of national solidarity, more or less xenophobic, which denied the existence of conflicting class interests in favor of a corporatist model of society.³⁷⁶

Modern Turkey's etatism matured during the inter-war period: Turkish bureaucracy openly admired the Italian experience, borrowing many of the ideological and institutional motifs (i.e. adopting Mussolini's penal code in 1927, which still endures in Turkey). If the category of 'fascism' is reduced to a 'developmental dictatorship' and oppression of the working class, Turkish experience during the 1930s did indeed share certain dimensions of the fascist ideal, most of which imposed from above. In this respect, it would be difficult to distinguish European fascism, Turkish etatism, Peron's or Vargas's regimes in Latin America, or Third World nationalisms.³⁷⁷

A legacy of the CUP regime, anti-liberalism has remained the dominant intellectual posture in Turkey, propagated by the bureaucrat –bourgeoisie bloc. There has not been any social reaction to the traditional polity (other than a few Kurdish

in Turkey...and also there were debates whether this weak and immature new bourgeoisie was influential enough to defend itself and promote its interests. Keyder somewhere in his work argues that the presence of Public Debt Administration (a form of 'debt imperialism') as of 1881 urged a bureaucratic transformation of etatist nature during the demise of the Empire...but in his discussion of the inter-war economy of Turkey, he makes the argument that Turkish etatist model – its administrative structure and ideological underpinnings derived directly from European fascism, as if he forgets his previous argument. But Turkey during the Great War was already seeing Germany as its ideological model for national economy. Feroz Ahmad, for instance, points to the fact that as of 1918, major economic ideologue of the CUP, Tekin Alp, was talking about etatism and suggesting that the model of Turkey should be Germany's wartime economy where the state's functions were supervision and control. See Ahmad, "Vanguard of a Nascent Bourgeoisie," 347.

³⁷⁶ Keyder, *State and Class*, 107.

³⁷⁷ Keyder, *State and Class*, 108.

rebellions until 1937, all of which were violently repressed), and no mobilization against the implications of the economic development. Although Turkish nationalism was born in the liberal climate of the 1908 Constitutional revolution, it progressed and radicalized especially in the aftermath of the Balkan wars as a reaction to economic liberalism – the collapse of the economic life of the Muslims during the heyday of economic liberalization that only ended up benefitting the Christians has been an important impetus behind the anti-liberal tendencies that Turkish nationalism came to harbor. This anti-liberal mentality remains to be the most enduring legacy of the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkey, explaining why the past continues to create so much turbulence and violence in the present.

Chapter 4: Making Anatolia the “Turkish homeland from time immemorial”

4.1. The Myth of Purity

The claim of purity is the most crucial dimension of the Turkish nationalist discourse and constitutes its founding myth.³⁷⁸ There is no place for fusion or mixing of ethnies in this myth. Until the construction of the Turkish History Thesis³⁷⁹ during the inter-war period, the Ottoman historiography projected Turks as gradual conquerors of the Anatolian peninsula after the defeat of the Byzantine army in 1071. Despite the centuries of religious conversion and inter-marriage, despite the economic difficulties and insecurities that hugely contributed to the demise of the Byzantine population, Christians still constituted one-fifth of the population in the inherited lands. This was neither denied nor omitted. The subsequent formulation of the Turkish history thesis, however, did not even acknowledge the previous existence of non-Turkish populations in the land. According to this thesis, today's Turks living in Anatolia were “direct and uncontaminated” descendants of a people who inhabited Central Asia, which became the spatial referent of the nation. Turks had to leave Central Asia after major ecological transformations. This land of origin was not only distant and irreclaimable, it was also irreversibly altered. Otherwise, as Keyder puts it, the national history was devoid of territorial reference; “the elites did not adjust easily to the loss of empire and to the rump peninsula they ended up with.”³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ Keyder, “A History and geography of Turkish nationalism,” 6.

³⁷⁹ See Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye'de 'Resmi Tarih' Tezinin Oluşumu, 1929-1937* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006); Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931- 1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk- İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006)

³⁸⁰ Keyder, “A history and geography of Turkish nationalism,” 8.

Besides the elision of the traumatic ethnic cleansings of the Great War, this extravagant claim to purity conveniently bypasses embarrassing questions such as the size of the Turkish population that settled Anatolia and the process of conversions to Islam during the intervening centuries. It is still very difficult to research population estimates for the early Turkish settlement of Anatolia; conversions continued in Anatolia until recently. There must have been an additional wave of conversions during the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923-24, Keyder conjectures; since the basis of the exchange was religious, not ethnic, many must have found it easier to declare themselves as Muslims.³⁸¹

There is no documentation of Armenian conversions and the transfer of Armenian women and children to the Muslim households during the Great War. There is no question that their figures are in thousands. Especially the number of Armenian orphans is a sensitive issue to both sides – Turks and Armenians. While Turks dread the number of Armenians who may be potentially living among them, Armenians fear that the research on the orphans might potentially harm the politics of ‘genocide recognition’ by revealing the number of Armenians who have been alive and living among the Turks.³⁸² According to the 1922 report of Near East Relief, there were 30,858 Armenian orphans in Anatolia. According to the 1921 figures of the Armenian

³⁸¹ Keyder, “A History and geography of Turkish nationalism,” 8.

³⁸² Erhan Başyurt, ‘Anneannnem Bir Ermeniymiş, *Aksiyon*, Sayı:577, 26 Aralık 2005, <http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/detay.php?id=23084>; also see Ayşe Gül Altınay and Fethiye Çetin, *Torunlar* (İstanbul: Metis 2009).

Patriarchate, the figure was 63,000.³⁸³ Another factor that complicates the figures regarding the Armenian orphans is that after the Allied Occupation of Istanbul in 1919, Armenians, mostly with British support, reclaimed their orphans and a commission was established that began to collect the orphans literally one by one. According to the American missionary Mary Caroline Holmes, from Urfa (a city in the southeastern part of Turkey) alone, for instance, 1200 orphans were collected by the British and French support; some girls were already pregnant and wished to stay with their Muslim husbands.³⁸⁴ Both the Near East Relief and Armenian Patriarchate figures are much higher than the figure in Talat Pasha's black notebook: 10,314 (*see below*).

A recent incident in Turkey, however, poignantly conveys how vexing these issues remain to the guardians of the official line. When about two hundred Turkish intellectuals launched their web-based apology campaign for the 'Great Catastrophe' of 1915 around mid-December 2008, the Turkish president Abdullah Gul's reaction was initially diplomatic, sound, and balanced. "In Turkey," he said, "it is a state policy that every opinion can be openly debated."³⁸⁵ Gul, however, immediately came under attack for his seemingly and initially 'balanced' reaction to the apology campaign. A parliamentarian of CHP (Republican People's Party), Canan Aritman, made a provocative statement the next day, which made the national headlines in many

³⁸³ Erhan Başyurt, 'Anneannem Bir Ermeniymiş, *Aksiyon*, Sayı:577, 26 Aralık 2005, <http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/detay.php?id=23084>

³⁸⁴ Erhan Başyurt, 'Anneannem Bir Ermeniymiş, *Aksiyon*, Sayı:577, 26 Aralık 2005, <http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/detay.php?id=23084>. İbrahim Ethem Atnur, in his book 'Türkiye'de Ermeni Kadınları ve Çocukları Meselesi' claims that between 1919-1922, 22,883 Armenian orphans were collected from Anatolia.

³⁸⁵ Hakkı Devrim, "Ermeni turistlere de indirim," *Radikal*, 19 Aralık 2008, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Default.aspx?aType=HaberYazdir&ArticleID=913360>

dailies. “You’ll see if you research the ethnic origins of Gul’s mother,” she said. “A colleague of mine...had told his assistants that the ethnic origins of Gul’s mother was Armenian...I never question the ethnic origins of people...but I would expect my President, as our ‘President’, to cry out to the entire world that the Turkish nation has never committed a crime of genocide. I strongly condemn him for not fulfilling this duty.”³⁸⁶ Gul’s response to Aritman was much less diplomatic: He said Aritman’s allegations were “delusional” (*deli saçması*) and that he can’t take them seriously.³⁸⁷ In the absence of more information from Gul, many dailies, under headlines reading as ‘DELUSIONAL’, referred to his biography present in the website of the Republic of Turkey Presidency (Cumhurbaşkanlığı).³⁸⁸ He was born in Kayseri. The family tree went back to 1200s. The last name ‘Gül’ (*Rose*) came from their ancestors who were one of the first imams of the Gülük Mosque constructed by the Seljuk Turks in Kayseri. His grandfather was a War of Independence veteran....

Gul, however, did take the allegations seriously. The press release that appeared in the Turkish press the following day, often under the titles that read as

³⁸⁶ Süleyman Demirkan, “Cumhurun Cumhurbaşkanı olsun, etnik kökenin değil,” *Hürriyet*, 18 Aralık 2008, <http://www.Hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/10592629.asp?gid=229>. Arıtman’s attack resonates with the history of the ‘Armenian’ ethnic origins as a pejorative in Turkish political culture.

³⁸⁷ Turan Yıl maz, ‘Deli Saçması, *Hürriyet*, 19 Aralık 2008, <http://www.Hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/10601239.asp?gid=229>

³⁸⁸ See <http://cankaya.gov.tr/sayfa/cumhurbaskani/>

Gül’s family biography reads as : “Abdullah Gül 29 Ekim 1950 tarihinde Orta Anadolu’nun en önemli ticaret kenti sayılan Kayseri’de doğdu. Ailenin soyağacı 1200’lü yıllara dayanmaktadır. Gül soyadı, Selçukluların Kayseri’de yaptırdığı Gülük Camii’nin ilk imamlarından olan atalarından gelmektedir. İstiklal Savaşı Gazisi olan dedesi Hayrullah Efendi ticaretle uğraşmıştır. Annesi Advieye Gül, kentin köklü Satoğlu ailesine mensup şair ve öğretmen bir babanın kızıdır. Kayseri’nin ilk sanayi tesisi sa Yıl an Tayyare Fabrikası’nda ustabaşı olarak çalışan babası Ahmet Hamdi Gül, sosyal hayata katkılarıyla çevresinde tanınan ve sevilen bir kişidir. Aile çok sayıda öğretim üyesi, şair, yazar ve bürokrat yetiştirmiştir. Emekliliği sonrası 1972’de kendi işyerini kuran Ahmet Hamdi Gül, halen sanayi alanında faaliyet göstermektedir; bir kız, bir erkek evladı daha vardır.”

“Our past is *Muslim and Turk*”³⁸⁹ or “Our origins are *Muslim and Turk*”, was carefully prepared. The first paragraph was his affirmation of the political equality of citizens in a liberal democratic state. “All my citizens, without being subjected to any sort of discrimination, are equal. No one is superior than the other. That everyone is entitled to the same rights and laws is guaranteed by the constitution. I am proud that our country has reached this level,”³⁹⁰ wrote Gul. However, the rest of Gul’s statement was an evidence that Dink’s assassination had not made a dent in the norms of the state elites on the Armenians. It also underlines that, when it comes to Armenians / Armenian-ness and the denial of their destruction, both the secular state elites (i.e. Gökçen controversy) and Islamic oriented ones (ie. current AKP government) are in consensus even if their concerns are anchored in and articulated by different issues. That is, for the former Atatürk’s legacy and the ethos of secular nationalism remains at stake, for the latter the Islamic heritage of the national identity (anchored in the legacy of the Empire). Saving the state against the Armenian threat, however, was the single most important principle that unified all the ethnicities of Islam in Asia Minor. In the rest of the statement, Gül called the allegations a “sinister lie” and he continued:

...I felt obliged to inform my reverend nation to correct a lie that some has been trying to spread in a sinister way and felt obliged to leave a note to history in the name of truth...the recorded past of our family extending back to centuries is Muslim and Turk. Our family tree that has been meticulously updated from the past to this day, existing official census registers, and all my fellow countrymen from Kayseri are witnesses to this.

³⁸⁹ “Gül:Geçmişimiz Müslüman ve Türk”, *Milliyet*, 22 Aralık 2008, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&Kategori=siyaset&ArticleID=1031018&Date=22.12.2008&b=Gul:%20Gecmisimiz%20Musluman%20ve%20Turk&ver=43>

³⁹⁰ “Gül:Geçmişimiz Müslüman ve Türk”, *Milliyet*, 22 Aralık 2008, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&Kategori=siyaset&ArticleID=1031018&Date=22.12.2008&b=Gul:%20Gecmisimiz%20Musluman%20ve%20Turk&ver=43>

4.2. Refugee Influx and and Demographic Change

Demise of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent violence that transpired in the Anatolian peninsula can't be understood when isolated from the Russian expansion in the Caucasus and the rise of nationalism in the Balkans in the 19th century, resulting in the expulsion of thousands of Muslims.³⁹¹ Although the population movements of this period have recently been analyzed by the paradigm of 'demographic engineering'³⁹², at least until the second half of the 19th century, the underlying factor that unified them all was power politics shaped by religious prejudice. They were attempts to create homogeneous populations initially marked by religious identity

³⁹¹ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1995).

³⁹² Within the past decade, demographic engineering (or 'ethnic engineering' as Fuat Dündar calls it) field has exploded especially among the young Turkish historians investigating the violence in the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republic. Whether it is 'demographic', 'ethnic' or 'social' engineering, they all, more or less, seem to be fascinated by the 'rationality' deployed by the modern state (through statistical analysis, censuses and maps etc...) in the management of populations during the demise of the Empire, especially with the rise of Young Turks. These works revise the traditional Ottomanist perspectives or victims' perspectives produced by the diaspora historians (i.e. Dadrian, Kevorkian etc.) and attempt to re-read the violence that transpired between 1908-1922 (or, some stretch the continuities all the way to 1950, like Ugur Ungor) from the modern state's perspective. See Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi / İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008); Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913-1918)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), Erik Zürcher, "Giriş: Demografi Mühendisliği" in *İmparatorluk'tan Cumhuriyete Türkiye 'de Etnik çatışma*, ed. Erik Zürcher (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), Nesim Şeker, "Demographic Engineering in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Armenians," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.43, No.3, 461-474, May 2007, Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Seeing like a nation-state: Young Turk social engineering in Eastern Turkey, 1913-50," *Journal of Genocide Research* (2008), 10(1); Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Geographies of Nationalism and Violence: Rethinking Young Turk 'Social Engineering'," *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, No.7, <http://www.ejts.org/sommaire2073.html>; Kerem Öktem, "The Nation's Imprint: Demographic Engineering and the Change of Toponymes in Republican Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, No.7, <http://www.ejts.org/sommaire2073.html>. For demographic engineering in the Western literature, see Amir Weiner, *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Milica Zarkovic Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power: The Political Economy of Demographic Engineering in the Modern World*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997); Myron Weiner and Michael S. Teitelbaum, *Political Demography, Demographic Engineering* (New York: Berghahn, 2001). On 'social engineering', see James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). On 'bio-politics' and population management, see Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (New York: Pelgrave McMillan, 2007).

within the boundaries of a state claimed exclusively by the titular majority community. It would be safe to regard the Jewish Pale of Settlement established in 1791 (and which, by the 19th century, included much of present-day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Bessarabia, Ukraine, and some parts of Western Russia) as the beginning of this process.³⁹³ After the assassination of Czar Alexander in 1881 until the Great War in 1914, thousands of Jews in the Pale were murdered and their property regularly plundered and vandalized in routine pogroms “outsourced,” so to speak, to Russian Cossacks by the Russian Army. Abdulhamit II modeled the Hamidiye Regiments (comprised mostly of Sunni-Kurdish tribal militias), used in the suppression of Armenian national agitation with severe pogroms from 1894 to 1896 that left thousands of Armenians dead, after the Russian Cossacks example. The conquest and occupation methods of both Empires bore striking similarities to each other.³⁹⁴ In both sides armed colonists provided willing militias to expel native populations and incorporate their lands into greater Russia or Ottoman Empire. Both sides saw the Christian (Armenian) and Muslim (Tatar, Circassian, Kurdish) religious groups within their populations as ‘treacherous’ extensions of the other side and therefore an unofficial population exchange that ensued in the context of every war. Those crossing the border attacked those of the other religious faith inducing more expulsions on each side. Throughout the 19th century, what went on between the Russian and Ottoman Empires was a “population war” based on religious faith.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Zürcher, *İmparatorluk'tan Cumhuriyete Türkiye 'de Etnik çatışma*, 9.

³⁹⁴ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 48; Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 43-52.

³⁹⁵ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 42.

The ramification of the Russian expansion in Crimea and Caucasia for the Ottoman Empire was the influx of hundreds of thousands of Muslims into the Anatolian peninsula. The wars of 1768-1774, 1792, and 1828 brought the northern shores of Black Sea known as Crimea under Russian control. The Muslim Tatars were the most numerous of the old, pre-Russian population there and they had evolved their own unique culture.³⁹⁶ The entire Cossack army was settled on the Crimean coast after the 1828-29 war and 1854-56 Crimean War led to the forced removal of Crimean Tatars. Many were massacred and forced to flee, some to the interior of Russia. Their ancestral lands were taken over by the Russian and Ukrainian peasants and Cossacks. Approximately 300,000 Tatars were resettled by the Ottoman state mainly around Western Asia Minor.³⁹⁷ The remaining Tatar presence in Crimea ended when they were deported by Stalin after the World War II.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Aleksandr Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and fate of Soviet Minorities at the end of the Second World War* (New York: W.W.Norton Company, 1978).

³⁹⁷ McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 16-17.

³⁹⁸ During the WWII, Nazi occupiers of the Crimea wished to use the Tatars as a foreign policy tool to bring Turkey over to their war effort and plans in the Near East. Even though Kemalist movement has never been decisively irredentist, “the fate of the Turkic peoples” living on the territories of USSR has always remained a cōnce rn of Turkey at the unofficial level. General Erden and General Erkilet from Turkey visited Crimea to study the German tactics on the Southern front in the Fall of 1941. In April 1942, Turkish Premier Saraçoğlu informed von Papen, the German Ambassador in Ankara, that the Turkish government could not support any pan-Turkish movement officially but that he gave permission for persons not holding official positions to establish contacts with the German government. Turkish leaders, in their subsequent talks with Hitler’s diplomats, frequently emphasized their interest in the defeat of the USSR and in the fate of the Turkic peoples. It was this “interest” of the Turkish officials in the peoples of Crimea that rendered the Tatars as treacherous in the eyes of USSR. Although Crimean Tatars took part in the war against Hitler’s Germany just as much as any of other peoples of the USSR, all Crimean Tatars were nevertheless stereo-typed as the enemy of Russia and agents of Turkey. On May 17-18, 1944, the entire Tatar population of the Crimea was deported. The men were separated from the women and children and sent to serve in work battalions. All Crimean Tatars in the Soviet armed forces were demobilized and assigned to construction units. The remaining population was shipped off to special settlements in Central Asia, and Kazakhstan, some ended up in the Urals. For over thirty years, they lived far from Crimea. Immediately after the deportation of Crimean Tatars, measures were taken to eradicate all traces of Tatar culture – all settlements, rivers, hills whose names reflected Tatar, Greek or German origins were renamed. New Ukrainian settlers were attracted to the area. See Aleksandr Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples*, 3-35, 168-179. According to Nekrich, as of 1939,

The Russian conquest continued to the South, taking its toll this time on the Abkhaz, Circassians, Chechens and others. The forced expulsion of almost 1.2 million Circassians in 1860 totally overwhelmed Ottoman authorities and, after thousands perished, 800,000 lived to settle in the Ottoman domains.³⁹⁹ The Russian method was a classic system of forced migration that would be repeated in the Balkans as well. Homes and fields would be raided and destroyed regularly, leaving the native population no choice but flight or starvation. The areas depopulated then would be populated by more congenial populations –in the Russian case, Slavs and Cossacks. After the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, which ended with the collapse of Ottoman armies and which was a disaster of unprecedented proportions, another 1.5 million Muslims crossed the border to Anatolia. According to the first reliable Russian census taken in 1897, ethnic cleansing of the Muslims from Crimea and Caucasia was near total: Christians outnumbered Muslims by more than ten to one.⁴⁰⁰ The Circassian immigrants who were expelled from the Caucasia because of their faith strongly identified with the Islamic empire – especially during the conservative Islamic regime of Abdulhamid II. This was to prove significant considering this period also coincided with the emergence of separatist nationalism among the Christian communities of the Empire. They had brought with them a considerable hatred of Christians whom they saw as those who stole their homes.⁴⁰¹

the population of Crimea was 1,127,000. Half of the population was Russian (because it was Russified during the Crimean War with the Ottoman Empire), and Tatars constituted 25%. So, the deported population after WWII should be roughly around 300,000.

³⁹⁹ McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 36.

⁴⁰⁰ McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 36.

⁴⁰¹ McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 114.

Dündar argues that the exodus of the Muslims from Caucasia did not solely result from the Russian expansion, expulsion, and intimidation. Ottoman authorities also encouraged the Muslim influx especially during the Abdulhamid regime, which aimed to increase the Muslim populace and benefit from them militarily (mainly Circassians). For instance, to the treaty agreed between Ottomans and Russians in 1860, Ottomans had pressured the Russians to integrate an article that would stipulate that “Russia would permit the immigration of Caucasian Muslims.” Russia accepted this article on the condition that the émigré populations would be settled far away from the Ottoman-Russian border. In the meantime Russia also encouraged the immigration of thousands of Armenians to Russia by offering very special incentives (real estate and land allocation, tax exemptions for 10 years, 15-years of military exemption etc.)⁴⁰² Dündar concludes that what had transpired between these two empires throughout the 19th century was the removal of two peoples from their historical ancestral lands in line with imperial interests. The goal of both sides was homogenization of especially the border regions and the autochthon peoples were the victims of these policies.⁴⁰³

The demographic catastrophe to the west of the Anatolian peninsula came at the end of the Balkan wars in 1913. The wars ended with the complete independence of Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria; Albania gained more land; the Ottoman Empire was eliminated from Europe; in only a few weeks, the Empire lost 83% of its land and 69% of its population in Europe, as well as much of the tax revenues and food.⁴⁰⁴ Near

⁴⁰² Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 45.

⁴⁰³ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 47.

⁴⁰⁴ Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 298.

300,000 Muslim Turks were expelled. In Dadrian's words, "as a result of the Balkan war catastrophe...the streets, mosques, and other communal places of abode in Istanbul were full of destitute and emaciated Muslims who had fled the war zones, or were dislocated as a result of Greek, Serb, or Bulgar territorial conquests in the former Ottoman provinces in the Balkans."⁴⁰⁵

The end result of all these population movements was an increase in the population of Muslims in the Ottoman Empire and a decrease in the available and fertile lands. According to the official Ottoman figures, the Muslims constituted % 60 of the Ottoman population as of 1820; this figure rose to % 76 in 1890. However, many Ottomanists continue to exaggerate and inflate the population figures regarding the Muslim influx "in an effort represent Turks and Muslims as an oppressed (wronged) people and as forever refugees."⁴⁰⁶ While Tekeli projects a figure of almost 6 million Muslims immigrants (1783-1922), Justin McCarthy projects a figure of 4.5 million (1827-1922), and Kemal Karpat estimates that the figure of almost 9 million. Dündar argues all these figures are dramatically exaggerated and he estimates that the number of Muslim immigrants as the result of both the Russian expansion in Caucasia and Balkan wars didn't exceed 2.8 million (1878-1913).⁴⁰⁷

While the Muslim refugee figures are not as high as they are traditionally represented, the greatest impact of the Muslim influx has been on the land ownership in the Ottoman Empire. One direct consequence of this has been the State turning to the lands owned by the non-Muslims. While in the 1870s, the average amount of land

⁴⁰⁵ Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 193.

⁴⁰⁶ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 49.

⁴⁰⁷ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 49.

allocated to the Muslims was 100 donum⁴⁰⁸ per refugee family, by 1890s this amount decreased to 1 donum. According to one state report, during this period, almost 9 million hectares of the 10.5 million hectares of available land was infertile and useless. By 1914, the land issue entered a crisis status; a new law was passed that would authorize the state to confiscate land.⁴⁰⁹ New villages had to be built for the Muslim immigrants, who had to be granted fertile lands to be the productive citizens of an already bankrupt state. The Ottoman government calculated that a state budget of 15 million liras would be required for the project. We know on the basis of an exchange between a Greek deputy and Talat Pasha, the Minister of Interior, that the state at that time did not have this much money. On 23 October 1915, the Ottoman Parliament discussed the inquiry submitted by 14 Greek deputies about the expulsion of the Greeks upon the arrival of the Balkan immigrants. Greek deputy Emmanuel Effendi urged the state to put an end to this and demanded the settlement of the new immigrants and immigrants on the vacant lands rather than in the villages of the Christians. Speaking on behalf of the State, Talat Pasha responded to Emmanuel Effendi that they were obliged to settle the immigrants in the “available houses” since “in order to settle the immigrants on the vacant lands, first and foremost they would need 15 million Turkish liras and they did not have that much money.” How Talat Pasha continued in this exchange with the Greek deputy in the Parliament on October 23, 1915, provides one of the best pieces of historical evidence that what was ‘intended’ by the “deportation” of the Armenians was a ‘final solution’ to the

⁴⁰⁸ 1 donum is about a quarter of an acre.

⁴⁰⁹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 49.

Armenian issue: Talat Pasha “reminded” Emmanuel Effendi that if they did not settle these immigrants in these houses, “but sent them to those places [to Basra] and spread them along the deserts, all of them (*cumleten*) would die of starvation.”⁴¹⁰ Only 8 months later in the thick of the Great War, Talat would issue the first deportation orders for the Armenians. The Ottoman state had explored for the last time in 1912 whether the Zor region could be rehabilitated for new settlements and according to a report issued in March 1912 the expert decision had turned out to be negative again.⁴¹¹ In Dündar’s words, what we today know as ‘Tehcir’ in Turkey and the ‘Armenian Genocide’ abroad can be summarized as the deportation of a people that could not be ‘rehabilitated’ to lands that could not be ‘rehabilitated’ either. Or, the CUP perhaps thought some Armenians, after their treacherous elements were carefully weeded out and the remnants were subjected to a robust cultural assimilation program, could rehabilitate even the deserts, which a modernizing state failed to rehabilitate.

4.3.Turkification of Anatolia and the Changing Fate of the Ottoman Armenians

4.3.1.Armenians: Who Were They?

Armenians, along with the Jews and the Orthodox Greeks, were one of the three minority peoples of the multi-religious Empire in which Muslims were the ruling *millet* and within the political structure of the Empire determined by the Islamic law, they were considered as *dhimmis* –protected unbelievers. While epic-biblical traditions trace their lineage back to Noah whose ark was said to have rested on Mount Ararat

⁴¹⁰ Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913-1918)*, 249.

⁴¹¹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, 252-258.

(currently, Agri Dagi in Turkey), there seems to be consensus in the literature on their origins that Armenians emerged as an identifiable people sometime around the 6th century B.C.⁴¹² Their ancestral lands lay between the Mediterranean, Caspian and Black seas on both sides of the present day Turkey and Georgia, Turkey and Armenia, and Turkey and Northern Iran borders, known as the “Armenian Plateau”. They are known to have adopted Christianity as the state religion at the turn of 4th century A.D. By the end of the 14th century, the last Armenian Kingdom collapsed, and most of the Armenian plateau came under the Turkish rule by the 16th century, except for the eastern sector. During the long years of Ottoman rule, they were governed indirectly by the Sultan through the Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul. The Armenians of the Russian Empire too were united into a single religious community under the authority of Catholicos in Echmiadzin. After the Russian entry into the Transcaucasia in the 19th century, Armenians in the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire were dramatically divided both geographically and by social class.

The majority of Ottoman Armenians were living in the six eastern provinces of Anatolia: Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Kharput, Diyarbakir, Sivas. These were the provinces commonly referred to as the ‘Turkish Armenia.’⁴¹³ Accurate statistics concerning the population of the Empire do not exist but according to the Armenian Patriarch’s figures in 1912, a total of 2,100,000 Armenians lived in Turkey: 1,018,000 in the Turkish Armenia, 145,000 in the other parts of the six vilayets, 407,000 in Cilicia and

⁴¹² Ronald Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia In Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Richard G. Hovannisian, ed. , *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), 19.

⁴¹³ Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road To Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 34.

530,000 in European Turkey (mainly in the capital city which was then called as ‘Constantinople’, today’s Istanbul) and the remainder of the Empire. Despite the sharp controversy associated with the population figures, Hovannisian, based on his survey of both Ottoman and Armenian census figures, argues that “it can be deduced with relative certainty that there were more than one and a half million but fewer than two million Armenians in all Turkey”⁴¹⁴ where the population was about 15 million.

Armenians never constituted a majority in the Eastern Anatolia.

The Armenians of the Ottoman Empire by the late 19th century were significantly poorer, less educated, less urbanized, less aware of the outside world than their compatriots in Russian Armenia. The Armenian peasants of Eastern Anatolia (70% of the Armenian population) were hundreds of miles away from and had little contact with their urban, wealthy commercial elite populated in Constantinople (Istanbul) and Smyrna (Izmir). Russian Armenians enjoyed a much greater degree of physical security under the tsarist rule than did the Anatolian Armenians who were frequently threatened by their Turkish and Kurdish neighbors. Especially in many areas populated by the Armenians, Kurdish *Beys* had formed a *de facto* autonomy and constituted the most powerful authority, ruling over the Armenian peasants with little interference from Ottoman state officials.

Substantial Armenian communities also existed in urban centers such as Istanbul, Bursa, and Adana. While these groups engaged mostly in handicraft production, they included merchants, commissioners for European countries, bankers,

⁴¹⁴ Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road To Independence*, 37.

physicians, lawyers, architects and the like.⁴¹⁵ Especially in the 19th century with significant program of reforms that granted non-Muslim populations legal equality with Muslims – including equal access to public office, Armenian professional and commercial elites secured a predominant position in the socioeconomic life of the Empire together with the Greeks, while Muslim influence especially in the commercial life diminished. Armenians controlled 60% of the import business, 40% of the exports, and over 80% of the domestic trade.⁴¹⁶ Armenians were also highly influential in the Ottoman cultural life as well. Of the 47 papers and journals published in Istanbul in 1876, 13 were in Turkish, 9 were in Armenian. Of the 90 printing houses in the capital at the end of the 19th century, only 23 were owned by Muslims, 32 belonged to the Armenians. Modern theater and opera were introduced to Turkish speaking public by the Armenian artists.⁴¹⁷ The first modern novels written in Turkish were the works of either Ottoman Armenians or Greeks.⁴¹⁸

4.3.2. The Near-History of the Armenian Deportations

In contrast to the Orthodox Anatolian Greeks (*Rum*) and the Christians of the Balkans, Armenians were called *millet-i sadika*, the ‘loyal nation’ until the Berlin Conference in 1878. The increasing subjection to misgovernment, arbitrary treatment and violence of the Kurds and the lack of legal recourse led to the emergence of

⁴¹⁵ Fikret Adanır, “Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915” in *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions*, eds. Daniel Chirot and Martin E.P. Seligman (Washington, DC.: American Psychological Association, 2001), 71.

⁴¹⁶ Adanır, “Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915,” 77.

⁴¹⁷ Adanır, “Armenian Deportations and Massacres,” 72.

⁴¹⁸ Fikret Adanır and Hilmar Kaiser, “Migration, Deportation, and Nation-Building: The Case of the Ottoman Empire, 278; Also see, Günay Göksu Özdoğan, Füsun Üstel, Karin Karakaşlı, Ferhat Kentel, *Türkiye’de Ermeniler: Cemaat-Birey-Yurttaş* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009).

Armenian revolutionaries and series of local uprisings in the early 19th century.

Kurdish tribes always considered ‘wintering’ in Armenian quarters their hereditary right despite the legislation to the contrary in 1842 and the state’s centralization efforts between 1830s and 1840s broke client-protector system between the Kurds and the Ottoman central bureaucracy. Powerful Kurdish landlords emerged; many Kurdish tribes simply turned to pillage, rape, and kidnap on a much greater scale than hitherto.

⁴¹⁹ Karal summarizes the relationship between the Armenians and Kurds in Eastern Anatolia in this period as a “master and slave relationship.”⁴²⁰ Especially in the second half of the 19th century, Armenian population continuously suffered as its lands were appropriated “in little more than legalized theft” by sedentizing Kurdish nomads and also allocated to Muslim refugees fleeing from Russian rule and from the new Balkan states.⁴²¹ Between 1870 and 1910, about 100,000 Armenians emigrated to Russia or to the United States, between 1890 and 1910, at least 741,000 hectares of Armenian property were illegally taken or confiscated by the representatives of the state.⁴²²

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and its aftermath was a “disaster of unprecedented proportions” for the Ottoman Empire. Two-fifths of the entire territory (Eastern and Southern Bulgaria, Bosnia, Kars, Ardagan, and Batum) was lost together with 5.5. million people; half were Muslims who were expelled. In Berlin Conference of 1878, where the statistical struggle over the number of Ottoman Armenians in Anatolia began, Armenians officially turned to the Western powers to demand

⁴¹⁹ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 42.

⁴²⁰ Karal, “Non-Muslim Representatives in the First Constitutional Assembly, 1876-1877,” 484.

⁴²¹ Karal, “Non-Muslim Representatives in the First Constitutional Assembly, 1876-1877,” 484.

⁴²² Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 48.

extensive reforms and administrative autonomy in their provinces. For the Armenians the conference was a mixed blessing from whose ramifications they would suffer throughout the next two decades. They finally raised their voice internationally but failed to obtain any enforceable reforms. Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty stripped Russia of its coercive power, of its protectorship of the Armenians and placed the responsibility of the reforms on Sultan again calling for a superintendence of the European Concert of Nations. Article 61 read as follows:

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...It will make known periodically the steps taken to this effect to the powers, who will superintend their application.⁴²³

With the insertion of the ambiguous word “superintend” to Article 61 the specific functions of which were left undefined, the powers left the reforms to the discretion of the Sultan and abdicated their responsibilities. As England’s Duke of Argyll noted, “what was everybody’s business was nobody’s business.”⁴²⁴ Article 61 could be considered as an expression of the rivalry between Russia and Britain, which directly affected the plight of the Armenians. Russian influence in the region was a direct threat to British colonial interests in India, and Britain would engage in all sorts of diplomatic maneuvering to decrease this influence. As longtime French Ambassador Paul Cambon once put it, the Armenian Question once again proved to be an expression of the antagonism between Russia and Britain. Lloyd George’s reflections in his 1939 memoir *Memoirs of the Peace Conference* resonate with the diagnosis of Cambon:

⁴²³ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 107.

⁴²⁴ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 107.

Had it not been for our sinister intervention, the great majority of Armenians would have been placed, by the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878, under the protection of the Russian flag....The treaty of San Stefano provided that Russian troops should remain in occupation of the Armenian provinces until satisfactory reforms were carried out. By the Treaty of Berlin (1878) –which was entirely due to our minatory pressure and which was acclaimed by us as a great British triumph, which brought “Peace with Honor”- that article, was superseded. Armenian was sacrificed on the triumphal altar we had erected. The Russians were forced to withdraw; the wretched Armenians were once more placed under the heel of their old masters subject to a pledge to “introduce ameliorations and reforms in the provinces inhabited by Armenians.” We all know how these pledges were broken for forty years, in spite of repeated protests from the country that was primarily responsible for restoring Armenia to Turkish rule. The action of the British government led inevitably to the terrible massacres of 1895-97, 1909, and worst of all to the holocausts of 1915. By these atrocities, almost unparalleled in the black record of Turkish misrule, the Armenian population was reduced in numbers by well over a million.⁴²⁵

In the context of Abdulhamid’s conservative regime that brought the liberalization of the Empire to a halt and saw Anatolia as the seedbed for Muslim revival, the condition of the Armenians in the Empire dramatically deteriorated. Encouraged by their revolutionaries, Ottoman Armenians began to resist the arbitrary treatment of both the state and the Kurdish *beys* and refused to pay customary taxes to Kurdish tribesmen. Violent response of the Turkish authorities instigated further resistance of the Armenians and a cycle of violence continued in the Eastern provinces until the end of the 19th century. Unofficial ‘removal’ or coerced migration of Armenians, as discussed above, became routine during the regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), and was accompanied by Kurdification and resettlement of Muslim migrants from the Balkans and Caucasus.⁴²⁶ In two years stretching from 1894 to 1896, thousands of Armenians were massacred in pogroms by the Hamidiye regiments – a Cossack type militia, paramilitary units designed by the regime of

⁴²⁵ George quoted in Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 62.

⁴²⁶ See Hans Lukas Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış*; Hans Lukas Kieser, “Removal of American Indians, Destruction of Ottoman Armenians. American Missionaries and Demographic Engineering,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Thematic Issue N° 7 , No. 7 | Demographic Engineering - Part I, URL : <http://www.ejts.org/document2873.html>

Abdulhamid II and comprised of Kurdish tribesmen and ex-con Kurds. The large-scale pogroms especially during the autumn of 1895 had a huge impact in terms of demography and property relations.⁴²⁷

While there seems to be a consensus in the literature that the massacres of the Armenians during the regime of Abdulhamid were strictly administrative measures to restore the political order, to abort their renaissance and to keep them in their assigned place within the millet system of the Empire⁴²⁸, some have also argued that persistence of the impunity of the Abdulhamid era massacres of the Armenians set the stage for the genocide of 1915 perpetrated during the First World War.⁴²⁹ In this sense, while the former consider the ‘final solution’ of 1915 as a contingent event -as the byproduct of the Great War-, the latter contend it can hardly be considered as an aberration in the history of Turco-Armenian relations. This debate became especially salient between two prominent Armenian historians, Ronald Suny and Vahakn Dadrian in 1998.⁴³⁰

Bloxham, in this debate takes the middle ground: He argues while 1915-1916 genocide was of a different intensity and scale to anything that preceded it, ‘internationalization’ of the issue at the Berlin Conference in 1878 and great power involvement provoked the ultimately annihilatory answer to the Armenian question “that justifies a focus on the Armenian fate as markedly different from the multitude of repressions affecting subordinate groups in all empires at all times.” While Muslim-

⁴²⁷ Kieser, “Removal of American Indians, Destruction of Ottoman Armenians.”

⁴²⁸ Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat*; Hovannisian, *Armenia on The Road to Independence*; Akçam, *İnsan Haklarive Ermeni Sorunu*; Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*; Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁴²⁹ Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

⁴³⁰ See Ronald Suny, “Empire and Nation: Armenians, Turks, and the End of the Ottoman Empire,” *Armenian Forum* 2 (1998): 17-51; Vahakn Dadrian, “The Armenian Genocide and the Pitfalls of a ‘Balanced Analysis’: A Response to Ronald Grigor Suny,” *Armenian Forum* 2 (1998): 73-136.

Christian polarization stemming from the 19th century civic reforms and the influx of Muslim immigrants constituted a ‘necessary’ ingredient for genocide, Bloxham considers the ‘internationalization of the issue’ as the ‘sufficient ingredient for genocide.’⁴³¹ It intersected with the agrarian question, the Russian expansion in Caucasia, the Muslim influx, and the development of Armenian national consciousness. Even if Armenians could not receive any attainable reforms at the Berlin table, the greatest implication for the most ‘loyal millet’ of the Ottomans in the context of Abdulhamid’s pan-Sunni fundamentalism was that they became instant objects of suspicion and their situation became ever more precarious.

The ‘agrarian question,’ that is, the question of lost or stolen Armenian land, was the main issue of Ottoman politics after 1908, both nationally and internationally. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and the Armenian Dashnaksutiun⁴³² reached a consensus in 1907 that the stolen land would be restored and safety for life and property established. However, after initial serious efforts by both CUP and Armenian representatives, the matter dragged on, and after the catastrophe of Balkan wars, the CUP lost faith in the liberal politics, and increasingly resorted to authoritarian measures. When the CUP staged a coup in 1913, introducing a single

⁴³¹ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 15.

⁴³² ‘Dashnaksuthiun’ or the Armenian Revolutionary Federation of Armenia was founded in 1890 in Tiflis. Their aim was to unite all Armenians in both empires in a single independent state. Dashnaks differed from all other revolutionary organizations (ie. Hinchaks) on an important point: Their program stressed the need for reconciliation with the Muslim populations who represented the majority in the prospective Armenian territory. The party made considerable efforts to persuade Kurdish opinion to take joint political action against the Ottoman state. This approach explains why Dashnaks were able to cooperate with the Committee of Union and Progress at least until the Balkan wars. See Adanir, “Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915,” 74. For a more detailed discussion of Armenian political / revolutionary parties established in this period including the Dashnaksuthiun, also see For a more detailed discussion of these parties, their programs and differences, see Ronald Suny, “Populism, Nationalism and Marxism among Russia’s Armenians” in *Looking Toward Ararat*.

party dictatorship that would last until 1918, Armenian representatives once again turned to European diplomacy. This was considered by the CUP as an act of high treason.⁴³³ The core of the dispute continue to be the Armenians' insistence that only the sedentary population should be granted civil rights in the prospective autonomous region. The fulfillment of this demand "would have amounted in the CUP perspective to an unwarranted affront to the largely nomadic Kurds."⁴³⁴ Armenians wanted to keep the Muslim immigrants out of their future autonomous province.

A 'Compromise'⁴³⁵ Reform Measure, sanctioned by all six European nations, was finally signed on February 8, 1914.⁴³⁶ It was to be supervised by two European Christian Inspector-Generals; one was Westenenk, chief provincial administrator in the Dutch East Indies, the other was Major Hoff of Norwegian Army.⁴³⁷ The plan signed by the Ottoman state and Russia entailed serious modifications to the original Russian plan; as a concession to the CUP rulers, for instance, the reform plan did not mention the terms "Armenian" or "Christian," instead "ethnic elements" or "non-

⁴³³ Kieser, "Removal of American Indians, Destruction of Ottoman Armenians."

⁴³⁴ Adanır, "Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915," 75-76.

⁴³⁵ Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road to Independence*, 38.

⁴³⁶ The original reform plan of Russia entailed 1) unification of the six Armenian vilayets, with the exclusion of certain peripheral districts, into a single province, 2) selection of an Ottoman Christian or European governor for the province, 3) establishment of an administrative council and a provincial assembly consisting both Moslem and Christian elements, 4) formation of a mixed Moslem-Christian gendarmerie commanded by European officers in Turkish service, 5) dissolution of the former Hamidiye Kurdish cavalry units, 6) publication of official decrees in Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian with permission to use those languages in legal proceedings, 7) extension of the franchise only to sedentary elements, 8) right of each nationality to establish and administer private schools for which special taxes might be levied on members of that community, 9) selection of a special commission to investigate the extent of Armenian losses caused by usurpation and to supervise restitution in the form of currency or land, 10) exclusion from the province of Moslem refugee-immigrants, 11) institution of similar improvements outside the province for areas inhabited by Armenians, particularly by Cilicia, 12) obligation of the European powers to ensure the enactment of the program. The final accord signed between the Ottoman state and Russia came with some substantial compromises: First, the creation of two provinces was demanded, a foreign inspector-general was to be selected for each province. No mention was made about the restitution of the Armenian losses, exclusion of Muslim immigrants and the obligation of the European governments to guarantee the execution of the program.

⁴³⁷ For their duties and rights, see Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road to Independence*, 38-39.

Muslims” were used. The agreement did not pertain to “Turkish Armenia” but to “Eastern Anatolia.” No mention was made about the restitution of the Armenian losses, exclusion of Muslim immigrants and the obligation of the European governments to guarantee the execution of the program. Nevertheless, the CUP knew that the Armenian reform measure was a part of the Imperial Powers’ partitioning scheme for Anatolia, and therefore they were convinced that with this latest Armenian Reform scheme, that project was complete.⁴³⁸ Hans-Lukas Kieser calls the period that is launched with the Reform Measure of February 8, 1914 as the “near history of the annihilation of the Armenian community in Anatolia.”⁴³⁹ On the eve of the Great War, the Armenian autonomy had finally become a reality, but the relations between the Armenians and the CUP was strained permanently.

Cemal Pasha, the third man in the CUP leadership between 1908-1913 and who was the commander of the Fourth Army and Marine Minister during the Great War, already in 1913 warned his Armenian colleagues that if they insisted in trying to get in their [Ittihadists’] way with the help of the Great Powers, “the Muslim population...will rise in arms, and three hundred to four thousand Armenians will be massacred.”⁴⁴⁰ Cemal Pasha, again, stated in his memoirs, “Our sole objective with this war was to free ourselves from all measures imposed upon our independence...As we wanted to abolish the capitulations and the stipulation on the autonomy of Lebanon, we also wanted to tear up the agreement on the reform of the Eastern

⁴³⁸ Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 207.

⁴³⁹ Kieser, “Türk Ulusal Tarihçilik golgesinde ‘Ermeni Tehciri,’ Tarih ve Toplum, Yeni Yaklaşımlar,” March 2005, <http://www.hist.net/kieser/pu/halac2001.html>

⁴⁴⁰ Adanır, “The Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915,” 76.

Anatolia, which to us, was a product of Russia's calculations and influence."⁴⁴¹ The official Turkish nationalist historiography's narrative on the Great War and the Ottoman Empire is that the Empire was forced into entering the Great War as a result of imperialist games. Some, however, provide plenty of evidence that the CUP, especially Enver Pasha, made a conscious effort to enter the War in alliance with the Germans.⁴⁴² Akçam, mainly based on German, Austrian and American Embassy reports argues that a final solution of the Armenian Question has been "among the primary motivations of the CUP" to enter the war. Among the other factors were the Panturanist objectives and Ittihadist ambition to regain the territories lost during Balkans.⁴⁴³

4.3.3. Deportations

What happened to Ottoman Armenians in 1915, in the aftermath of the Sarikamis defeat, has been the subject of volumes of studies / monographs on the 'Armenian Genocide / Armenian Massacres' in the West⁴⁴⁴. In fact, as Bloxham puts

⁴⁴¹ Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 207.

⁴⁴² See Shaw & Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 310-311; Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road to Independence*, 40-41; Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 199; Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 203-209; Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, 500-501; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 111. The CUP signs the secret alliance with Germany one day after Russia had mobilized against Austria and Germany.

⁴⁴³ Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 199-213.

⁴⁴⁴ For some of the well-known works, see Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of Ottoman Armenians*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 1995); Raymond Kevorkian, *Le génocide des Arméniens*, (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006); Hans Lukas Kieser, *İskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilayetlerinde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet [Der Verpasste Friede]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005). The best edited collection for comparative perspective (with articles in German and English): Hans Lukas Kieser and Dominique J. Schaller eds., *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah / The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah* (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2002). For Most well-known eye-witness accounts, see Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Wayne State University Press, 2003), Leslie Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide* (Aristide Caratzas Pub, 1989).

it, beyond the Jewish Holocaust, the Armenian genocide - in terms of the weight of literature around it- is one of the most discussed cases in history:

Within the wider history of inter-group massacre and forced displacement in the chain from central Asia through the Caucasus, Anatolia, the Balkans, the eastern and central Europe from the mid-nineteenth century during the crisis and the collapse of the Ottoman, Qing, Romanov, and Habsburg empires, the Armenia Genocide constitutes an unusually complete instance of communal obliteration. This is something that the later, even greater extremity of the Holocaust has tended to obscure.⁴⁴⁵

Up until the late 1990s, the wartime destruction of the Ottoman Armenians between 1915-1916 was understood as a series of state-directed massacres based on the archival information present in German, Austrian, United States, British State Archives. Eye-witness accounts and official documents of missionaries⁴⁴⁶, and foreign office staff, council, council generals etc. who were present in Anatolia mostly as allies of the Ottomans (German and Austrian) during the war were heavily employed. The historical narratives that emerged from these accounts inevitably resembled an inter-communal violence model embellished by victims' perspectives although the state's role in directing the massacres through the para-military Special Organization was heavily researched.⁴⁴⁷

In the light of the growing literature on the social engineering in the Anatolian peninsula⁴⁴⁸, I argue that the Armenian deportations can be re-conceptualized as the part of a larger re-location and re-settlement project that involved the transfer of a multiplicity of Muslim and Turkish populations in the Turkification of the Anatolian peninsula while most of the Christian populations were deported and expelled. What,

⁴⁴⁵ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 6, 10.

⁴⁴⁶ The most complete account remains to be Han Lukas Kieser's seminal work, *Iskalanmış Barış*.

⁴⁴⁷ Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 1995).

⁴⁴⁸ See footnote 393.

then, transpired in Anatolia between 1913-1918 can be defined as the Turkish ‘lebensraum’ project – at a much more primitive scale. Forced assimilation –transfer of women and children to Muslim families and their forced assimilation- , deportation and exposure to the rough climatic conditions, and massacres were all technologies of homogenization through which the CUP aimed to ‘decrease’ the Armenian population, after the expulsion of the Greeks, to make space for the Muslims and Turks.⁴⁴⁹

Reconceptualization of the Armenian deportations as a part of larger settlement project that homogenized Anatolia in the making of a Turkish ‘living space’ paradigmatically foregrounds how a considerable portion of the Anatolian Muslims, even if they had nothing to do with the massacres in the deportation routes, became the beneficiaries of the mass violence and plunder Armenians suffered from. Plunder in both the Jewish⁴⁵⁰ and Armenian cases bears considerable explanatory power as to how bystander masses became complicit to mass murder both during and after the war. Especially, in the Turkish case, the enrichment of the killers and local elites through Armenian property and possessions was a “useful means to assure their loyalty to the Kemalist regime.”⁴⁵¹ Expropriation of the property of the victims is also one of the factors that explains why the specter of returning deportees troubled both

⁴⁴⁹ For an excellent article that helped me think about ‘when a genocide can be considered complete’, see Dirk Moses, “Why the Discipline of ‘Genocide Studies’ Has Trouble Explaining How Genocides End?” in *How Genocides End*, Published on 22 December 2006, SSRC, <http://howgenocidesend.ssrc.org/Moses/>

⁴⁵⁰ For the German case, see Gotz Aly, *Hitler’s Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War and Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Company, 2007); for the Armenian case and the Turkish plunder see Hilmar Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies” in *The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2006); see also Donald Bloxham, “Organized Mass Murder: Structure, Participation, and Motivation in Comparative perspective” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22, No.2 (Fall 2008): 203-245.

⁴⁵¹ Bloxham, “Organized Mass Murder,” 232; Keyder, “Wither the project of modernity?”

sets of perpetrators. While in the Jewish Holocaust, the fear of the returning deportees can't be easily detached from an enduring anti-semitism, in the Turkish case, the same fear can easily be coupled with the specter of an independent Armenia in eastern Anatolia.⁴⁵²

The available Ottoman records in the cipher telegrams collection of the Interior Ministry (*Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi*) have traditionally been cited by Turkish nationalist authors to support the argument that Armenians were deported to be resettled and that Talat Pasha took a special interest in the well-being of deportees.⁴⁵³ However, recent published works that analyzed these ciphered telegrams show that the deportation of the Armenians was part of a much larger and general program for the Turkification and Islamicization of Asia Minor. These telegrams show that the government, despite its limited administrative penetration, had the ability to move hundreds of thousands of people. As Armenians moved out, their properties were taken over by the state authorities and redistributed to Muslim immigrants – Turks, Caucasian Muslims, Arabs and Kurds. Between 1913 and 1918, there were also intensive efforts to sedentarize the Kurdish population and redistribute them among the Turkish population for their forced assimilation.⁴⁵⁴

The 'living space' the CUP first considered between 1908-1913 was in fact Macedonia, not Anatolia.⁴⁵⁵ After the annexation of Bosnia by the Habsburg Empire and Bulgaria's declaration of its independence after 1908, CUP's major preoccupation was the transfer of Bosnian and Bulgarian Muslims to Macedonia, initiating a

⁴⁵² See the chapter 5.

⁴⁵³ Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File: The Myth of Innocence Exposed* (İstanbul: Rustem 2001).

⁴⁵⁴ Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 399-419.

⁴⁵⁵ Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 175-181.

campaign to encourage their emigration. Meanwhile, they began to intimidate the Christian landowners and forced them to flee. Dündar argues that one of the major reasons that brought together the Balkan states in alliance against the Ottoman Empire and provoked the Balkan wars was the CUP's operations to change the ethno-religious fabric of Macedonia. In the Article 5 of the Balkan Alliance, the Balkan states urged the Empire to stop relocating national groups for the settlement of Muslims.⁴⁵⁶ On 18 October 1912, the First Balkan War began and the CUP understood that they would not be able to change the population texture (*nüfus dokusu*) of Macedonia. After the Balkan trauma, particularly after the loss of Macedonia (also the birth place of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), they turned their attention to Anatolia, one "terra incognita" for them.

The CUP took over the state with a coup in 1913 and in the same year they established the Directorate For the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants (IAMM)⁴⁵⁷. As the name of this new state institution highlights, for the CUP there were two population sources: Muslim immigrants and nomads (tribes, ashirets etc.). IAMM also functioned as a knowledge production and the distribution center; it was responsible for ethnological research on the different ethnicities that existed in the Anatolian peninsula. As we will see in the next section, the CUP, with the help of IAMM, was not only resettling the Muslim immigrants who were expelled from the Balkans and Caucasia; it was actively working to transfer Turkish and Muslim population from the Balkans. In some cipher telegrams, it can be observed that IAMM particularly

⁴⁵⁶ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 177.

⁴⁵⁷ IAMM has anticipated the founding of the Romanian State Undersecretariat of Colonization and Evacuated Populations in the 1940s.

requested the transfer of ‘hard working and Turkish’ population groups to settle in areas critical for the security of the Anatolian peninsula. They banned the transfer of Albanians and Gypsies. Large-scale expulsions of the Anatolian Greeks particularly from the Western littoral can be considered as a major rehearsal for the Armenian deportations.⁴⁵⁸

As opposed to the Turkish thesis that defends the Armenian deportations in the Eastern Anatolia as a security measure for the war zones between the Ottoman and Russian empires, the first deportations began in February at the Mediterranean littoral of the Empire miles away from the Russian border. While there is consensus in the literature that the first operations against the Armenians began in the Cilicia region in Dörtol and Zeytun in February 1915⁴⁵⁹, there is considerable amount of diversity in the explanations offered regarding the factors that account for the onset of deportations in this region. Bloxham argues that during the Dardanelles build-up, in February 1915 Armenians from the mountaneous Zeytun had contacted the Russian Caucasus Army HQ and proposed that if supplied with arms and ammunition via Alexandretta they could provide a 15,000-strong interior uprising which would both benefit a simultaneous assault on Cilicia and on the line of communications in Erzurum. This proposal, Bloxham asserts, was based on the Hinchak committees in several Cilician regions to stir their communities to revolt and it matched the plans outlined from the diaspora, as “the national liberation, unrealistic as it was, was the aim of the revolutionaries from within and without.” In the end, Zeytun Armenians did

⁴⁵⁸ See Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*; Akçam, *Ermeni Sorunu Hallolunmuştur*; Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*.

⁴⁵⁹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 265-272; Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 252; Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 80-81.

not receive the arms they demanded as “it was surely a revolutionary’s fantasy.” But, Bloxham contends, “the important thing about these projections is less their accuracy than how they illustrate the strength of belief among nationalist activists” on both sides. If the Armenians themselves were able to predict such a significant participation for an irregular guerilla warfare, what makes it surprising that the Ottomans too readily subscribed to the notion? Bloxham argues Zeytun plan corresponded to Ottoman suspicions and was a contributory factor in the upcoming deportations.⁴⁶⁰

Akçam and Dündar on the other hand argue that an intelligence report about an expected British offensive in Alexandretta and Armenian spying in its service must have played a role in the onset of the deportations. Akçam contends, although there was no connection and organization between the British and the Zeytun Armenians on a serious scale, German Consul reports confirm that some Armenians were in collaboration with the British in preparation for a potential British offensive and State’s security measures in Dörtöl were taken to prevent the possibility of an Armenian-British collaboration after the first British fleet was spotted in the region.⁴⁶¹

Dündar on the other hand provides the most nuanced analysis: Even if the possibility of a British-Armenian collaboration might have triggered the first deportation from this region, what really was behind the deportations was the CUP policy to cleanse all coastal areas of non-Muslims and secure the safety of the littorals by the relocation of loyal elements, that is, the Muslims. He points to the fact that especially after the loss of the Balkans, the thugs and gangs of the CUP were being

⁴⁶⁰ Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 81.

⁴⁶¹ Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 255.

frequently spotted in the region intimidating and attacking the civilian population based on their experiences in Macedonia. Cilicia region had been the scene of Abdulhamid era massacres (1894-96), then of Adana massacres (1909), and in the aftermath of the Balkan wars, of CUP's intimidations. The history of the tension between the Muslims and Armenians was deep. Also, it should be recalled that Armenian landowners were in possession of the richest areas of the Cilician plain and were rapidly increasing their holdings before the Great War⁴⁶². In this context, and against the backdrop of the arguments conveyed in the previous chapter (Chapter 3), Dündar's thesis becomes more plausible. Although the intelligence concerns presented by Bloxham and Akçam were real, they nevertheless must have been a welcome pretext for the CUP. The second pretext for the Cilicia operations was the Armenian deserters but deserters were common among the men of all ethnicities including the Turks. The reason for particularly the Armenians militating against the conscription had nothing to do with political activism. The real reason, against backdrop of the history of state violence they had to endure since late 19th century, was that they were being transferred to the labor battalions in the deserted areas of the Empire and were being subjected to humiliating harassment accompanied by a spectrum of anti-Christian insults.⁴⁶³

Before the war begun, Directorate for General Security (EUM) had investigated whether there were preparations among the Armenians for a mass rebellion and EUM had concluded that no signs were observed and that the Armenians

⁴⁶² Keyder, *State and Class*, 67.

⁴⁶³ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 268.

“did not have the courage” (*buna cesaretlerinin olmadığı*).⁴⁶⁴ All correspondence of Enver, Talat, and Minister of Foreign Affairs up to war indicate and warn against not the existence of a mass rebellion, but “the possibility” that Armenians “may backstab”. The argument of mass rebellion –together with its main narratives and visuals- were manufactured within the war propaganda documents produced by the CUP from the summer of 1915 onwards.

By March 1915, military operations that began against “the Armenian deserters” transformed into a carnage with resistance of the Dordyol and Zeytun Armenians – whose legendary history of revolt against governmental repression had inspired Franz Werfel’s classic *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (see the Conclusion of this dissertation). For the Ottomans, what was transpiring was a “rebellion”, for the Armenians “the first step of CUP’s extermination policy.”⁴⁶⁵ When the deportations began from Zeytun and Dordyol, Armenian political parties in Istanbul informed their political offices abroad and approached various Entente parties with proposals to collaborate against the Ottomans. The Assembled Armenian Committees of Europe approached Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, in April 1915, urging Britain to rescue Armenians from the Turkish yoke. Following AACE, Armenians all around the world - in Canada, Egypt, US, and Norway - proposed to the Entente to enter the war on their side with their volunteer units. British War office rejected these

⁴⁶⁴Dündar , *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 340-343 [based on EUM 2.Sb.68.17, DH.SFR 52.96-97-98 (24 April 1915)].

⁴⁶⁵ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 269.

proposals since they thought it would compromise the safety of the Ottoman Armenians.⁴⁶⁶

Especially in April deportations from the Cilicia region accelerated and most of the area was evacuated. To solve the Zeytun problem, Cemal Pasha urged the settlement of Muslim immigrants waiting in Ayıntab (in Southeastern Anatolia). Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants' (*İskân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyeti*, henceforth İAMM) hesitated on the basis that Zeytun, located in an inaccessible mountain retreat, was not suitable for agriculture. The cipher telegram İAMM sent to Cemal Pasha as a response to his demand unveils one of the primary reasons behind the Armenian deportations in Cilicia. "...since Zeytun and its vicinity is considered to be rocky and unsuitable for agriculture, not only the settlement of the immigrants is considered possible there, but also even if they are settled for political reasons, it is anticipated that they would flee....", so informed İAMM Cemal Pasha.⁴⁶⁷ What the İAMM cipher telegram revealed in 1915 was in fact foreseen by Sir Edward Grey two years earlier. Immediately after the Balkan wars in 1913, he had anticipated that Muslim influx to Anatolia would lead the Turkish state to settle their immigrants in Armenian areas and deport Armenians to Mesopotamia when the moment arrived.⁴⁶⁸ The moment had arrived. On 9 May 1915, Zeytun's complete evacuation was ordered. And two days later on May 11, the construction of a mosque together with the settlement of the new Muslim immigrants were ordered. Zeytun's name was Turkified and changed to "Suleymanlı" in June 1915. Similar operations expanded to

⁴⁶⁶ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 270.

⁴⁶⁷ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 271 [based on DH.SFR 52.51 (20 April 1915)].

⁴⁶⁸ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 272 [based on FO 881/10292, conf.3633].

the entire Cilicia region while the Armenians were deported towards the south. A full-fledged operation ensued in order to decrease in the Armenian population in the Cilicia region.

The deportation of the Armenians out of the Anatolian peninsula can be organized around four main dates: 1) 24 April 1915 political arrests, 2) 9 May 1915 decision to partially evacuate Van, Bitlis and Erzurum, 3) 23 May 1915 decision to evacuate Anatolian shores, and finally, 4) 21 June 1915 decision deport all Armenians indiscriminately.

With the '24 April' arrests, the CUP targeted mainly the Hinchak and Dashnak party members; first 240 Armenian intellectuals were arrested, then the number of Armenians arrested reached 2,345 in literally two days. The arrests of the Armenian political, intellectual and civic leaders had already began on April 19 and in many cities, the arrests of Armenian intellectuals were systematically carried out between April 21 to May 19.⁴⁶⁹ While some died because of torture under arrest, many were executed in public places.⁴⁷⁰ The rest were deported to Anatolia, and very few survived. Talat Pasha's own memoirs illuminate why first this operation in Istanbul was needed: "When deportations began in various places in Anatolia, this led to a panic among the Armenians in Istanbul and especially among the committees. The management center of the Armenian committees, in other words, the brain of the organization abroad was located in Istanbul. This city at the same time was the center of all military operations." Talat knew that the deportations would provoke the

⁴⁶⁹ Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 40.

⁴⁷⁰ Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 40.

Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul, leading to instant publicity abroad.⁴⁷¹ For the Armenian deportations to be executed with no outside intervention and in full secrecy, first the heart of the Armenian intellectual and political life had to be destroyed. Balakian helps us grasp the scope and the full meaning of the first step of the Armenian destruction:

What happened to these deported Armenian cultural leaders happened to Armenian intellectuals all over Turkey. In this calculated way, the CUP destroyed a vital part of Armenia's cultural infrastructure, and succeeded in practically silencing a whole generation of Armenian writers. The death toll shows that at least 82 writers are known to have been murdered, in addition to thousands of teachers and cultural and religious leaders. It was an apocalypse for Armenian literature, which was in its own moment of a modernist flowering. Daniel Varoujan, Siamonto (Adam Yarjanian), Krikor Zohrab, Levon Shant, Gomidas (Soghomon Sghomonian), and many others had taken Armenian poetry, fiction, drama, and music into a new era...it may ...be that the Young Turk government's extermination of Armenian intellectuals in 1915 was the most extensive episode of its kind in the twentieth century. In many ways, it became a paradigm for the silencing of writers by totalitarian governments in the ensuing decades of the century. After April 24, it would be easier to carry out the genocide program, for many of the most gifted voices of resistance were gone.⁴⁷²

On 9 May Talat released the order to partially evacuate Van, Bitlis and Erzurum. Deportation destination was not specified; Talat Pasha's cipher only indicated the expression "towards the south".⁴⁷³ Deportations from Van, however, would not be very easy mainly because Van Armenians were already informed about what was going on in the Cilicia region and they had already initiated an armed resistance on 19 April 1915. Van governor Cevdet Bey – a relative of Enver Pasha – was at the same time in charge of the trans-border operations during the war⁴⁷⁴ and in

⁴⁷¹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 277.

⁴⁷² Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, 216.

⁴⁷³ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 282. On the basis of what we know about the existence of a double-track system in Talat's order as explained in the previous section, it is very plausible that more specific orders entailing the massacres also might have been delivered on foot by the 'responsible secretaries of CUP'.

⁴⁷⁴ As I have emphasized before one of the main functions of the Special Organization was to organize transborder operations –which had in fact been initiated before the onset of the war- and incite the

the aftermath of the CUP strategy to occupy Russian territories in Transcaucasia, which had collapsed with Sarikamis, he brutally targeted Van Armenians. He first demanded 3000 soldiers from them. Armenians rejected and offered to provide only 400. Four Dashnaks departed to negotiate with Cevdet but they never returned. Armenian resistance endured until the Russians entered Van with Armenian volunteers, confirming every Ottoman suspicion.⁴⁷⁵ Van was lost to the Russians on 19 May. Some argued this date (or roughly late May in the context of the Russian advance) also marks the onset of state-led massacres initiated by the notorious Cevdet Bey and his “butcher battalions” whose reverberations rapidly spread across the Eastern Anatolian plateau.⁴⁷⁶ Just at the same time the state was trying to keep Van under control, Directorate for General Security (EUM) was receiving intelligence about a possible Kurdish Rebellion within the same region. As Dündar documents, a possible Kurdish –Armenian alliance had always been a nightmare of CUP in the Eastern Anatolia and there were concrete signs on this. Especially around the time of the Van rebellion, EUM had intelligence on an upcoming “Kurdish Conference” in the region, which would be followed by a rebellion. In order to prevent this, EUM ordered that trustworthy Kurdish ashirets should be armed and put to service as auxiliary forces.⁴⁷⁷

Armenians had certainly looked to Russia for aid under the circumstances and had contacted both Choi and Caucasus to try to secure it, and Central Powers were

Muslims populations there to rebel against their Russian yoke. Tactics of both the Russians and Turks were no different from each other.

⁴⁷⁵ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 84.

⁴⁷⁶ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 85.

⁴⁷⁷ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 272-276.

informed about this. But as Bloxham emphasizes, “the Russian army did come, slowly, while thousands of Armenians were dying in Van, but as an ad hoc measure, not because of a preconceived plan.” Nevertheless the Van uprising was instrumental in the failure of the Persian part of Enver Pasha’s pan-Turanian campaign, “as were the Armenian volunteers fighting in Persia by their delaying actions at the end of April.”⁴⁷⁸ What added fuel to the ethnic carnage however was the fact that both before and after the Russian liberation of Van “an indeterminate number of Muslims were massacred” and the Russian advance resulted in the “massive plunder of the whole Ottoman population.” However the death toll was nowhere near the scale of 150,000 as claimed in the Turkish denialist theses⁴⁷⁹. An estimated 80,000 Muslim immigrants are known to have fled to Bitlis on the other side of Van Lake with the Russian advance.⁴⁸⁰ Some of these Muslims were settled in the housing evacuated by the deported Armenians in June 1915. This is the context for the notorious “Van Rebellion” that sits at the center of official Turkish theses for the retrospective justification of Armenian deportations as a military necessity.⁴⁸¹ None other than Ahmet Vefik Altınay, an early Republican historian and an officer in the Ottoman army, puts ‘Van Rebellion’ in a better perspective: “Eventually the Armenian massacres in Van and [Armenians] constituting a barrier to military operations gave rise to an important opportunity for the Ittihadists’ national ideals. What would a state

⁴⁷⁸ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 84.

⁴⁷⁹ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 84, 100.

⁴⁸⁰ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 84.

⁴⁸¹ For the most recent 2006 contribution to the massive denialist literature on the issue on the Turkish side, see Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran, Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006). Andrew Mango endorses the book at the back cover as “a substantial contribution to Turkish –Ottoman and Armenian studies.”

that is just and confident of its power in the face of this situation was supposed to do was to punish incitements to rebellion against the state; however Ittihadists ('Unionists') wanted to annihilate (*imha*) the Armenians and in this way remove the Armenian Reform (Vilayat-I Sitte) issue."⁴⁸²

Under the circumstances, another option for the CUP would be to expel the Armenians towards Russia, rather than to the deserts of Syria where natural attrition would take its deadly toll, but that would have a "boomerang effect" with the very same population coming back as a stronger military power and changing the ethnic composition of the area once again. If the Reform Edict (14 February 1914) had not been scrapped away by CUP with the onset of the war, one of its most urgent requirements was going to be the execution of a census monitored by great powers. Dündar , on the other hand, provides another rationale for the 'deserts route' of the deportations informed by the social engineering paradigm to ethnic violence: Population meant "wealth" for the CUP, as it did and does for every modern state. As long as it did not constitute a statistical threat and did not rebel against the state, after its treacherous elements were destroyed, remaining Armenians could even rehabilitate the deserts as a productive force. Whether there was a consensus on this within the CUP top-management should be debated and better researched; it should also be evaluated in the light of the Young Turk – Arab relations.⁴⁸³ In the final analysis, in the context of a very polarized climate where an entire population has been scape-goated, it is almost impossible to understand what the state must have intended. We don't have

⁴⁸² Ahmet Vefik Altınay quoted in Taner Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 199.

⁴⁸³ For CUP relations with Arabs, see Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: The Ottoman Empire 1908 – 1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

to either. Bloxham on the basis of the very nature of the deportations argues there is sufficient evidence of genocidal intent “if such needs to be sought”. While the orgies of mass murder, rape, mutilation, kidnap and theft descended on the deportees at strategic points as irregulars, soldiers, Kurdish and other Muslim tribesmen, the slaughter was always given euphemistic sanction by Talat’s authorization of the killing of resisters and escapees from the deportation columns.⁴⁸⁴ However, the death of every single Armenian was not crucial for the fulfillment of the aim of destroying the Armenian national presence in Anatolia. As Bloxham argues:

We should not imagine the deportation decision signified a decision for total murder...it is unlikely that the CUP leaders instantly developed a precise template of how their inherently murderous scheme would unfold across the empire. A discrete decision for total killing, as endlessly debated in the historiography of the Nazi ‘final solution’ is a product of the ex post facto ruminations of genocide scholars. Logistical decisions still remained to be made...concerning the pattern and schedule of deportations. Indeed, the provisional nature of the establishment of the desert concentration centers in the south for those Armenians who survived the deportations suggests the ongoing, improvised nature of the whole destruction process...⁴⁸⁵

Small pockets of Armenians, and some converted Armenians were allowed to stay (see below), and there was even space for tokenistic orders to protect some deportations en route, possibly in response to German and Austrian diplomatic interventions.

In the context of the ‘Van Rebellion’, as the Russians and some of the Armenian volunteers pushed on from Van towards Bitlis, on 23 May 1915, Ministry of Interior ordered deportations from 6 Armenian vilayets. Deportations would be

⁴⁸⁴ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 86.

⁴⁸⁵ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 88. Taner Akçam, whose scholarship developed in the footsteps of Dadrian still organizes his narratives around “the decision and its aftermath” (chapter 5 of *A Shameful Act*). In *A Shameful Act*, he argues “we have many indications that the decision for genocide was made by the CUP central committee deliberately and after long considerations.” See Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 153. In Armenian genocide scholarship, interpretations have always been artificially dichotomized into pre and post-decision periods. See Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 96.

executed in two main axes: East axis (Erzurum, Van Bitlis) and West axis (Adana, Antep ve Halep). Deported Armenians along the Eastern axis Der-Zor and Urfa and Mousul's southeastern region was spared as a settlement area. For the Western axis, Syria and Aleppo's southeastern regions were indicated. It was ordered that deported Armenians would be settled in available villages in a 'scattered fashion'.⁴⁸⁶ The number of evacuated villages and transfer destinations had to be reported to the Minister of Interior "on a daily basis."⁴⁸⁷ On 24 May 1915, the Entente, at Russian instigation as the Caucasus authorities sought to bolster the enthusiasm of the Armenians⁴⁸⁸, issued their historical "crimes against humanity" declaration condemning "the Turkish and Kurdish population, jointly with Ottoman officials and frequently with their support" for massacring the Armenians.⁴⁸⁹

The CUP leadership was quick to issue their own response in which it argued the Entente was provoking Armenians for a rebellion.⁴⁹⁰ However, it became clear for the CUP that what up until that point had been executed in secrecy through cipher telegrams and other clandestine arrangements had to be given a legal veneer. In a Memorandum dated 26 May 1915, the Interior Minister requested from the Grand Vizier the enactment through the Cabinet of a special law authorizing deportations. The Memorandum was endorsed by the Grand Vizier on May 29. The press had

⁴⁸⁶ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 284.

⁴⁸⁷ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 285.

⁴⁸⁸ This is an argument that I for the first time encountered in Bloxham's work (See *Great Game of Genocide*, 85) and it certainly complicates the 'moral foundations' of the birth of the principle of "Crimes against Humanity," which was also used as a legal yardstick in the prosecution of the Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. For the significance of the principle, see Vahakn Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 216-217.

⁴⁸⁹ For this full text of the Allies' declaration see Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*, 869. See also Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, 51.

⁴⁹⁰ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 285.

already announced the promulgation of the new emergency law, called the ‘Temporary Law of Deportation’ on May 27.⁴⁹¹ The law gave the “commanders of the armies, army corps, and divisions, or their replacements, as well the commanders of independent military posts” the authorization to, “if military needs demand, remove and settle in other localities, individually or together, the populations of cities and villages who are suspected of being guilty of treason or espionage.” The “suspicion” alone was sufficient reason to deport “the populations of cities.” Nowhere in the law were “Armenians” mentioned, nowhere in the law was it mentioned that this was a temporary measure and Armenians would be allowed to return after the war. In fact, on May 30, the Ottoman Council of Ministers confirmed the necessity of deportations but “gave the law a semblance of fair play” by approving a variety of provisions. These provisions legalized the confiscation of Armenian property and its allocation firstly among the Muslim immigrants. A state that was technically bankrupt since 1881 and whose Minister of Interior was claiming that 15,000 liras was needed to settle the Muslim immigrants in new housing claimed with these provisions that deported Armenians would be given “new property, land and goods necessary for a comfortable life [sic]” in the deserts of the Empire, in the most impoverished territories that the State had declared to be impossible to rehabilitable as of 1915.⁴⁹² As

⁴⁹¹ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 221. For the text of the law, see Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road to Independence*, 51. The Temporary Law of Deportation was eventually repealed ‘on the account of its unconstitutionality’ in a stormy 4 November 1918 session of the post-war parliament during which Armenian massacres, the scope of the victims, and the responsibility of the government were debated; the motion of the repeal for that law came from the Interior Minister, Fethi Okyar. See Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 222.

⁴⁹² For a bad translation of these provisions, see Gürün, *The Armenian File*, 209; for a good translation, see Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road to Independence*, 50-51. The text of the provisions read as: 1) to safeguard the person and possessions of the deportees until they had reached their destination and to forbid any form of persecution; 2) to compensate the deportees with new property, land, and goods

Hovannisian puts it, the law was a travesty in the view of what actually took place; the Armenians were never informed of its existence.⁴⁹³ The business of expropriation facilitated the further internal colonization of the Eastern Anatolia. While Muslim muhajirs (immigrants) benefited from this, in many places land simply passed to existing Muslim landowners “who had long seen themselves in competition with Christians.”⁴⁹⁴

On the same day that the Talat Pasha requested a law to authorize deportations, the Supreme Military Command issued the conditions of settlement for the deportations initiated on May 23 from six vilayets. According to these conditions, in their destinations, 1) the population of Armenian deportees could not exceed 10% of the tribal and Muslim population; 2) Armenian villages constructed could not comprise more than 50 houses; 3) the Armenian deportees could not change residence even for reasons of travel and support.⁴⁹⁵ The measure was designed to prevent any critical mass of Armenians and reflects CUP’s ongoing paranoia about the concentration of Armenians. The plight of the Armenians in these desert concentration centers organized around the 10% principle has recently been subject to a lively debate between scholars. Akçam has recently argued that the further rounds of massacres of deportees in these centers over the first half of 1916 was due to the Armenian numbers

necessary for a comfortable life, 3) to permit Moslem refugees to inhabit the abandoned [sic] villages only after having officially recorded the value of the homes and land and making clear that the property still belonged to the legal owners, 4) to sell or rent those fields, properties, and goods not settled by Moslem refugees and to keep in the treasury, in the owner’s name, an account of the derived income, after first deducing the administrative expenses, 5) to authorize the finance minister to create special committees to supervise these transactions and to publish circulars pertaining to the compensations for the properties and their protection, 6) to oblige all officials to comply with the law and report to the government during the course of fulfillment.

⁴⁹³ Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, 51.

⁴⁹⁴ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 89.

⁴⁹⁵ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 286; Gürün, *The Armenian File*, 207-208.

exceeding the 10 percent principle that was set for deportation destinations covering today's Syria (Aleppo and Der Zor) and Northern Iraq (Mousul).⁴⁹⁶ In fact, Akçam goes as far as to argue that even the 10 percent principle is enough to prove that the state's intention was to exterminate Armenians in whole. The paradigm that informs his arguments as of 2008, is still the 'Fuhrer order' syndrome that has dictated the intentionalist school of the Holocaust studies for the past 50 years. Dündar , on the other hand, argues the relationship between the 10 percent principle and the massacres in the Der-Zor and Mousul region is still in the dark since "neither the Turkish side" nor the "Armenian side" pays attention to those who survived. He claims that within the thousands of cipher telegrams he analyzed he has come across to a term called "Armenian zones" (*Ermeni mintikalari*, see below), which may suggest that the state had also designated some special Armenian settlement zones in addition to the operations that settled them among the Muslim tribes.⁴⁹⁷

Bloxham acknowledges that though more work needs to be done in this area, Akçam 's argument has some substantiation since the greatest massacres occurred in the camps of Der Zor.⁴⁹⁸ The phenomenon that informs the current puzzle and debates in the literature about the Der-Zor massacres is a thesis of Raymond Kevorkian: "the second phase of the genocide."⁴⁹⁹ Kevorkian argues 200,000 Armenians were

⁴⁹⁶ Akçam, *Ermeni Sorunu Hallolunmuştur* (İstanbul: İletişim , 2008), 62-67.

⁴⁹⁷ See Fuat Dündar 's review of Akçam's last book *Ermeni Sorunu Hallolunmuştur* (2008): Fuat Dündar , "“Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmus’ mudur? ” *Toplumsal Tarih* 714 Haziran 2008.

⁴⁹⁸ Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 88.

⁴⁹⁹ Raymond Kevorkian, *L'extermination des déportés arméniens ottomans dans les camps de cÖnce ntration de Syrie-Mésopotamie (1915-1916): la deuxième phase du génocide* (Paris:Bibliothèque Nubar de l'Ugab, 1998)

murdered in these camps by Circassians, Chechens, and Arabs.⁵⁰⁰ Bloxham reminds us that since the government was completely uninterested in the daily provision of people in these camps and since the epidemic diseases were widespread constituting a threat to the Ottoman army as well, massacre was a logical way of hurrying the inevitable process of death by attrition. The same factors provided both an excuse and an incentive to murder the Jews and Romanies during the Second World War as well.⁵⁰¹

The problem for the deportations of the Eastern Axis (Van, Bitlis, Erzurum) was the majority of the Armenians in these three provinces fled to Russia.⁵⁰² The state census records show that out of 305,000 Armenians in these three provinces, only 140,000 could be deported, and the rest - 165,000 people – were indicated as “perished” or “fled”. According to the numbers of Armenian Refugees Fund, the number of Armenians who took refuge in Russia as of October 1915 was 250,000.⁵⁰³ Many of these Armenians either joined the Russian Army or formed armed gangs and retaliated by massacring the Muslims across the Russian border.

On 21 June 1915 came Talat Pasha’s order to deport “all Armenians indiscriminately” including the regions Trabzon, Diyarbekir, Canik, Sivas and Mamuretulaziz, which had not been included in the deportation operations until this date. This region was lying precisely in between the eastern and western deportation zones previously designated. With this order, new settlement principles – that aimed to streamline some cultural assimilation policies beginning with the Turkish language -

⁵⁰⁰ Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 88.

⁵⁰¹ Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 88.

⁵⁰² Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 296.

⁵⁰³ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 347.

were designated. Armenians were banned from opening their own schools at the settlement zones and it was made mandatory for the Armenian children to attend the state schools. It was stipulated that Armenians would either be settled among the Muslims, or they would be settled at specific “zones” (mintika) where the number of houses was not to exceed 50 and these zones had to be 5 hours away from each other. In other words, the state was granting these Armenian deportees the right to establish their own villages under conditions that would keep their cultural identity in check. This was a more than a concentration camp; independent Armenian settlements seem to have been planned – at least on paper, and this keeps Dündar’s skepticism about Akçam’s arguments (“state intention to massacre according to the 10 percent principle”) valid. While through deportations, massacres and forced assimilation, Armenian existence in Anatolia was destroyed, Dündar stands strong behind his argument that CUP aimed to take the advantage of Armenian survivors for the deserts’ rehabilitation.⁵⁰⁴ According to Aram Andonian, Der-Zor’s *Mutasarrıf* Ali Suad Bey had once told the following to an Ottoman civil servant: “We don’t question why Armenians have been deported, this is none of our business... Thanks to the work of [Armenians] in these deserts after a while will rise fields with flowers and magnificent residences instead of these shanty cabins.”⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁴ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 442.

⁵⁰⁵ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 442. There is a considerable amount of controversy around the authenticity of Aram Andonian documents in the Armenian Genocide literature. Andonian was an Armenian journalist deported to Aleppo and his work written in 1920 titled “The Memoirs of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportation and the Massacres of Armenians” (also known as the “Talat Pasha telegrams”) has been at the centre of controversy since then. Vahakn Dadrian attributes great importance to these documents and puts them at the center of his work. Taner Akçam, on the other hand, argues he shall not enter into a debate over their authenticity, but nevertheless, he argues it is possible to prove that at last some of the published and unpublished documents in the possession of scholars share the same contents as documents published by Andonian. See footnote 4 in

Despite the “all Armenians indiscriminately” stipulation of the 21 June order certain small pockets of Armenians were not subjected to deportation; they were composed of three main groups: families of artisans, families of military officers, Catholic and Protestant families.⁵⁰⁶ Population was regarded as wealth by the CUP (perhaps as it is for every modern state) and its utility had to be optimized even under the most dire circumstances.⁵⁰⁷ However, certain limits were imposed on these selected pockets of Armenians as well. The definition of who constituted a “family member” rapidly evolved and, according to a circular, boys older than 15 and married women were included in the deportees. Not all families of artisans could stay; only those whose work was regarded as useful by the state were permitted to stay. These were artisans working on the railroads, workers, and some civil servants and they were transferred to other Anatolian provinces and settled among the Muslims. Families of military officers and artisans were allocated among the Muslim villages according to the 5 percent principle, that is, number of families permitted to stay could not exceed 5 percent of the total number of Muslim families in any given village; if there were 20 Muslim families in a single village, only one Armenian family could be settled in that village. In villages of 100 families, no more than 5 families could be settled.⁵⁰⁸ The last privileged group was the Protestants and Catholics and they were all exempted from deportation. However, local administrators were authorized to deport those Protestant and Catholics if they were observed to be engaging in ‘suspicious’

Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 378. Fuat Dündar too seems to be approach these documents with caution but he does not totally dismiss them. See Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 35.

⁵⁰⁶ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 298; Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 89.

⁵⁰⁷ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 296-97.

⁵⁰⁸ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 296-97.

activities. A cipher telegram dated 27 May 1916 reveals that CUP's decision not to deport the Catholic Armenians in fact had instrumental motivations. In this telegram, a Ministry of Interior officer tries to convince Ankara governor that the reason why the State did not touch the Catholics and Protestants was to appeal to the global public opinion that the State was not executing a policy of extermination of the Armenians.⁵⁰⁹ As much as the "discipline of 'Genocide Studies' has trouble explaining how genocides end,"⁵¹⁰ this cipher telegram's content should not be interpreted with cynicism; as this chapter attempted to convey, the state was indeed not trying to exterminate the Armenians in whole. They did not have to. Ittihadists were trying to "save the state," not a race.

With the official onset of the deportations, a problem that turned out to be even more challenging to CUP than the execution of deportations came out: the problem of how to find enough Muslim, and Turkish immigrants to settle in the areas evacuated by the Armenians. As the number of villages evacuated increased, the problem of finding "loyal elements" to settle became more grim.⁵¹¹ First, the Muslim immigrants who were too many for the Cilicia region and non-Arab Northern African Muslims were settled in the Armenian villages evacuated in Aleppo. Then, Turkish immigrants who were previously settled in the Syria region were transferred to the north, in areas closer to Anatolia. Bosnian and Albanian immigrants suspended in Konya (central Anatolia) were moved to Sivas and Diyarbakir, Turkish immigrants were transferred to Adana. But even with the most optimum use of Muslim and Turkish population, the

⁵⁰⁹ Dündar, Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 296-9, 298-300.

⁵¹⁰ Moses, "Why the Discipline of Genocide Studies has Trouble Explaining How Genocides End."

⁵¹¹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 289.

gap was difficult to close. For instance, when the Diyarbekir governor contacted the Ministry of Interior to demand 10,000 refugees to fill in the Armenian villages, the response was that they simply did not have enough ‘population’ and the only solution would be to transfer more Turkish and Muslim population from the Balkans as soon as possible.⁵¹² The Ministry of Interior stated that they were in need of Turkish population specifically and until that was found, “Muslim refugees” (*Şark mültecileri*) would need to be employed in the settlement. Ministry of Interior also advised that until new population was found, “information requested on the economy and the climate of the Armenian villages” should be transmitted to the center. On June 22, Ministry of Interior issues another order that stipulated that the Turkish refugees in Syria should be moved even further to the north and be settled in Armenian villages in Aleppo, Adana, and Urfa, that they would not need to construct new housing because of the Armenian “abandoned property” and that in the villages these Turkish refugees would vacate, nomadic ashirets had to be settled.⁵¹³ By mid-July, Sivas also demanded more population from IAMM’s statistical branch. The response they received was the same: That it was not possible and instead they had to manage the need by settling nomads in the vicinity.

On 20 July 1915, Talat Pasha demanded from all provinces census charts that would show “before” and “after” numbers on the basis of “nationality” pertaining to all administrative units down to “village” (koy). He also demanded “perfect maps” be prepared that would show the administrative organization (mulki teskilati gosteren

⁵¹² Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 290.

⁵¹³ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 290.

mukemmel haritalar”) of all units again down to villages. These census charts and maps, regardless of how primitive they were, have been the essential tools of the Turkification and Islamicization of the Anatolian peninsula.⁵¹⁴ All transfers were calculated and no population group was being removed and settled before precise numbers and statistics were exchanged with/between Talat and IAMM. Today many of these maps and charts, prepared between 25 July and 9 September 1915 on the nationality basis are missing and not available to researchers. What Dündar could locate over the years – as charts and maps- corresponds to data of only 5 vilayets and 8 sanjaks, that is % 18.5 of the Anatolian population. However, they are statistically numerous enough to give us an idea about how the entire operation was executed in Anatolia.⁵¹⁵

While many provinces were awaiting the transfer of “Turkish” population from the Balkans, Talat Pasha issued the last most important order through a cipher telegram sent to all provinces on the deportations on 21 August 1915. The date this cipher telegram was issued marks the onset of the “national resistance” and the Turkification operation in the Anatolian peninsula.⁵¹⁶ In this cipher telegram, Talat Pasha ordered the settlement of all nomadic and semi-nomadic “Turkish” ashirets in the villages evacuated by the Armenians. He emphasizes the time was very suitable for this and that these Turkish nomadic ashirets had to be settled as soon as possible before this opportune moment passed.⁵¹⁷ He requests the detailed reporting on the population figures of the transfers – and their exact ratios within the Muslim

⁵¹⁴ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 309.

⁵¹⁵ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 148

⁵¹⁶ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 147.

⁵¹⁷ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 310.

population - from every province. However, the climate and geographical landscape of the regions where the Armenian villages were located had become yet another challenge to the Turkish settlement project. Since many of these villages in the Eastern Anatolia were located in high-altitude areas with very rough and cold climactic conditions, it had become common to observe many immigrants deserting from their transfer convoys. Talat's 25 August cipher telegram conveys that he is informed about this with concern and he orders that these immigrants should be transferred under police surveillance "regardless of their consent" and after the settlement all necessary measures should be taken to prevent their escape.⁵¹⁸

In Fall 1915, it became clear to CUP that the refugee transfer from the Balkans would not be possible; so they turned to the Kurdish nomads. Only sunni Kurdish ashirets who were supportive of the war effort – that is, those ashirets who were taking part in the massacres and looting of Armenians along the deportation routes- were included in the settlement project. Another population source at this stage were prominent Arab families; towards the end of 1915, literally thousands of Arab families were transferred to western and central Anatolia and settled to the Armenian housing in Eskisehir, Konya, Hudavendigâr, Ankara, Sivas, and Kayseri.⁵¹⁹

While the CUP was trying to solve the population problem, beginning with spring of 1916 "hundreds of thousands of Muslims" began to flow in from the Russian side. According to Urmiye Council of Russians, Nikitin, this expulsion was provoked

⁵¹⁸ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 291. During the Berlin Conference, the Armenian committee had stated that the "the roughness of the climate has been the guard of its children" referring to the fact that Armenians have for a long time been guarded from Turkification and Islamicization thanks to the rugged nature and rough climate of the region. See Dündar, Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 291.

⁵¹⁹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 292.

by the CUP. Dündar presents this as an allegation, on the basis of the inevitable chronological proximity of the population issue to the new Muslim influx and on the basis of the fact that Russia was also searching for ways to get rid of its “unwanted” populations. It is also true that in many areas occupied by Russia in southern Caucasia, Armenians had been designated to administrative positions and the atrocities they were committing had also prepared the ground for yet another muslim influx. Regardless, this Muslim population influx was sorted based on ethnicity and their settlement zones were prepared accordingly. Kurds were transferred to western and central Anatolian regions and settled among the Turks for their assimilation.⁵²⁰

With the onset of the wide-scale massacres the problem of mass orphans, widows, and how to manage religious conversion emerged. While it was common knowledge that many children and women were unofficially taken by the Muslims (Turks, Kurds, etc.), IAMM issued an order to all provinces stipulating that it was “appropriate” that young girls and widows were wedded to Muslim men. IAMM order also specified that there shouldn’t be any Armenian males in the villages where these new marriages (*tezvic*) would occur. In another cipher telegram we observe that the word ‘appropriate’ was changed to ‘necessity’: “It was necessary for the young girls to be wedded to the Muslims.” In southern provinces where Armenians were deported, women were allocated mostly to Arab villages.⁵²¹

The problem of Armenian orphans, on the other hand, was submitted to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The policy as of 26 June 1915 was that

⁵²⁰Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 293

⁵²¹Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 304-305.

Armenian orphans younger than age 10 were to be taken care of in the state orphanages. In cases where the state orphanages could not accommodate the Armenian orphans, they had to be allocated to the Muslim villages. The Ministry demanded information from all provinces regarding how many orphans were present in their areas. On 19 April 1916, the policy regarding the Armenian orphans was revised. According to this new policy, orphans aged 12 or younger had to be sent to the orphanages in the rural areas. The remaining ones had to be allocated to the privileged families for their training and assimilation. Where these two options did not apply, the orphans had to be allocated to the poor Muslim families who would receive 30 kuruş per month from the state for their expenses. Orphans were strictly banned from Istanbul; central Anatolia was most appropriate for their fast assimilation. Throughout 1916, orphans were allocated to Muslim villages and new orphanages were built in the rural areas. In Talat's 'black notebook', 10,314 orphans were recorded. 6,858 were allocated to Muslim families, 3,456 were allocated to state orphanages.⁵²²

As early as 13 July 1915, Talat Pasha in a cipher telegram he sent to Aleppo and Maras 'Abandoned Property' Commission Head informed him that "the Armenian issue was resolved definitively (*Ermeni meselesinin suret-i katiyede haledildigini*) and that this was accomplished "by the transfer of Armenians" and "by settling immigrants and ashirets in their places [and] by increasing the Muslim population." 'Furthermore, he continued, this was accomplished "in the most sensitive and problematic times" of

⁵²²Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 306-307.

the state.⁵²³ What the available cipher telegrams of the Ministry of Interior on the deportation of the Armenians collectively convey is that despite the limits of the administrative apparatus, the government had the ability to move hundreds of thousands of people. Throughout the deportations, as the cipher telegrams show, Talat closely followed the movement of all transfer convoys of all ethnicities as closely as he monitored mortality.

The first date that the deportations came to an end was 29 August 1915; that was upon the protest of the United States. While Talat responded to the US stating that “there were no deportations organized by the central government”, the next day he sent a cipher telegram to all vilayets in which he explained that the objective of the deportations was not the “annihilation of the Armenians”, rather it was “to bring this element (*unsur*) to a stage where they were unable to engage in any activity against the state and to realize their national ideals that would encourage the emergence of an independent Armenian state.” Deportations resumed shortly after the US protest. Throughout 1916, the privileged families (military, artisans, Catholics, and Protestants) were periodically subjected to new security clearance and more surveillance by EUM and ‘suspicious’ ones were again transferred to Der-Zor. CUP was never comfortable with the converts either. More deportations were planned in early 1917 in Ankara and Edirne (cities far in the West) on the basis of a suspicion that Armenians converted to Islam were still observing Catholic mass, however, they were cancelled with the order of Talat Pasha. On 20 June 1917, the deportation operations of the Armenians ended. At least a third of the Ottoman Armenians perished in

⁵²³Dündar , *Modern Türkiye'nin şifresi*, 309.

1915.⁵²⁴ Today there are 65,000 Armenians living in modern Turkey among 71 million ‘Turks’.

4.3.4. The ‘Abandoned Property’ of Armenians:

In 1917, after half of the Anatolian Armenians perished, Yusuf Akçura, the first theoretician of Turkish nationalism, stated:

Just as the Jews and Germans constituted the bourgeoisie in Poland, in Turkey it was the native Jews, Greeks and Armenians who were the agents and middlemen of European capitalism... If the Turks fail[ed] to produce among themselves a bourgeoisie class... the chances of a survival of a Turkish society composed only of peasants and officials [would] be very slim.⁵²⁵

As discussed above, the Ottoman cabinet sanctioned Talat’s new deportation law, issuing extra provisions, on 30 May 1915. The cabinet also authorized the use of Armenian properties for the settlement of Muslim immigrants. By ordering the liquidation of the Armenian property, the state made it clear that the deportations were not a temporary measure.⁵²⁶

The deported Armenians were allowed to take all moveable properties and livestock with them. On 10 June 1915, Ottoman government circulated more regulations to provincial authorities on the formation of special commissions for the management of Armenian properties. In provinces where no commission could be established, the civil administration would enforce the regulations. Members of these

⁵²⁴ There is still quite a lot of controversy over the death toll as there is over the population figures. See Dündar, Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin şifresi*, 335-340; Murat Bardakçı, *Talat Paşa’nın Evrak-ı Metrukesi* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2008).

⁵²⁵ Akçura quoted in Adanır, “Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1915,” 77.

⁵²⁶ Hilmar Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies” in *The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2006), 55-56.

commissions received a salary from IAMM and they were personally responsible for the finances and properties under their care. The state insisted on a careful registration of all Armenian properties.⁵²⁷

Each commission had to appoint officials for sealing an Armenian building, including their contents. All moveable property was itemized, recorded, indicating type, amount and value. The registered goods were kept in central storage areas like houses, churches and schools. Perishable goods were to be auctioned off together with the crops on the fields.

Immoveable property like houses and fields were recorded by village and district, and the results had to be sent to administrative commissions. The government did not accept any power of attorney issued by the deportees after the deportations began; these properties were distributed to Muslim immigrants according to their needs and professional abilities. New owners had to pay for vineyards, orchards, olive groves and other real estate that produced cash crops. All properties acquired by the immigrants were also recorded in detail with various categories of information on the recipient. Immoveable property not used for the settlement of the immigrants could be publicly auctioned off.

While very meticulous guidelines were followed in the registration of moveable and immoveable property, the interests of the creditors were ignored. In the following months, numerous foreign companies discovered that their debtors had disappeared and their investments were lost. When the losses began to increase, German companies filed protests with the German Embassy in Istanbul. CUP's

⁵²⁷ Hilmar Kaiser, "Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies," 57.

explanations did not satisfy the German Embassy. On 13 September 1915, the Embassy sent an official memorandum to Porte. In this memorandum detailed information was provided on the liquidation process of the commissions in many provinces, which had liquidated Armenian property “for a fraction of its real value” and favored Muslim immigrants and certain local citizens.⁵²⁸ But the proceeds of the auctions and sales were inadequate to satisfy the claims of creditors, who had lost considerable sums, the report argued. German Embassy forcefully pushed for a government intervention to protect German commercial interests, reiterating that it would be considered responsible for the all German losses. Petitions of Deutsche Bank and Deutsche Orient Bank were enclosed. Embassy insisted that the liquidation commissions’ activities were illegal as no law existed that legitimated the forcible sale of Armenian property.

The notorious so-called “Abandoned Property” law emerged in response to these German pressures. On 26 September 1915, the government passed a provisional law, which was again enacted retroactively. The existence of liquidation commissions was now officially announced. The Ministries of Religious Foundations, Interior, Justice, and Finance were all entrusted with the law’s implementation. The law stipulated that the Finance Ministry would keep a record of all the properties with the exception of religious foundations. All proceeds from sales had to be transferred to the Finance Ministry, which would safeguard the funds in the name of the sold property’s original owner – owners could only claim their property after the end of the ‘present

⁵²⁸ Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies,” 59.

situation.⁵²⁹ In that case the payment was postponed indefinitely. In cases where property rights were contested, the owner had to leave the issue to state officials; s/he had no right to intervene. According to the Director of Deutsche Bank, Arthur von Gwinner, the new law could be summarized as, “1. All goods of the Armenians were confiscated, 2. The Government will cash in the credits of the deportees and will repay (or will not repay) their debts.”⁵³⁰ American Consul Jessie Jackson in his August 1915 report to US Ambassador Morgenthau called the government’s confiscation of the Armenian property “a gigantic plundering scheme.”⁵³¹ The new law did not make any major change in the activities of the liquidation commissions. New procedures were introduced for the creditors as well but they were of little practical importance, since commissions could reject any claim at their own discretion. Little mention was made of the provisions concerning the settlement of the Muslim immigrants. As the German Consulate-General’s analysis of the new law conveyed, since most Armenian real estate had been distributed to Muslim immigrants, the liquidations’ proceedings “would be ridiculously small and insufficient to cover the deportees’ liabilities.” These procedures were sheer formalities.⁵³²

Among the confiscation’s main goals was to accelerate the establishment of Muslim joint-stock companies (see Chapter 3). Acceptable buyers could hope for government assistance: Young Muslims were especially encouraged to take over Armenian properties and they could hope for favorable prices and conditions. Often, as Hilmar Kaiser puts it, the cheap and assisted transfer of Armenian mills and

⁵²⁹ Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies,” 60.

⁵³⁰ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 222.

⁵³¹ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 224.

⁵³² Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies,” 61.

warehouses to Muslim companies was regarded as the best way to continue production.⁵³³

On the other hand, there was a serious problem of profiteering damaging the state interests. On 11 August 1915, Talat addressed the issue of foreign companies and complained that the Armenian property “had been wasted.” Under no circumstances, were foreigners and unknown persons to be admitted to the deportation areas; Talat emphasized that foreigners must not profit from the liquidation of Armenian property. The purchase ban applied to non-Muslim Ottomans as well.⁵³⁴ On 6 January 1915, Talat again decreed that Armenian property must fall into Muslim hands and the Ottoman economy had to become a Muslim one. Formation of Muslim joint-stock companies were encouraged and Armenian property was cheaply transferred to the individual buyers and companies, who were asked to issue small shares in order to enable craftsmen and peasants to join as well. The names of the shareholders had to be registered in order to prevent their acquisition by foreigners.⁵³⁵ Like Armenian life, Armenian property was ‘abandoned’ and many local officials – army officers, provincial officers, the police were all taking part in the plunder. A high ranking Ottoman official told Austro-Hungarian Council Kwiatkowski that “well over half of Armenian jewelry and money had disappeared.”⁵³⁶

Foreign insurance policies posed a more complicated problem, since the payments on those policies had usually been transferred abroad. In order to get ahold of these assets, the Ottoman authorities demanded the assistance of the foreign firms.

⁵³³ Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies,” 63.

⁵³⁴ Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies,” 64.

⁵³⁵ Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies,” 67.

⁵³⁶ Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies,” 67.

On 11 January 1916, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce sent a memo to foreign insurance companies operating in the Empire and asked to furnish inventories of their assets and debts.⁵³⁷

Local competition for plunder and profiteering persisted as a serious problem. The discounted transfer of Armenian properties had created opportunities for local Muslims to profit from the situation. Some Muslims managed to get a hold of Armenian property cheaply by avoiding the public auction. Later, these properties were sold to third parties, gaining considerable amount of profits. For instance, at Caesarea a quickly formed Muslim company bought Armenian stores and goods wholesale for 200 Turkish pounds; the property then was sold for 10,000 pounds. A Bursa, a local CUP club and its members coerced some Armenian house- and land-owners to present themselves at the land registry, to declare that they were selling their property voluntarily and that the offered price was adequate. The Armenians would be handed a sack with money. They had to count the sum and declare the sum to be correct; on leaving the room they had to put the money back into the sack and return the money sack to the officials.⁵³⁸

Unlike the Temporary Law of Deportation, which had never been promulgated by the Parliament, the Ottoman Parliament publicly debated the Temporary Law of Abandoned Goods for about two months. The only opposition was the ardent nationalist Senator Ahmet Riza, who was one of the principal founders of the CUP. He had grown disillusioned by the modus operandi of the Unionist leadership who

⁵³⁷ Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Wayne State University Press, 2003).

⁵³⁸ Kaiser, "Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies," 67.

resembled that of the Abdulhamid II whom they had toppled in the name of liberty and justice. During the September 21, 1915 session of the Senate, Senator Riza pleaded with his government to allow the deportees, “hundreds of thousands of whom, women, children, and old people, are helplessly and miserably wandering around in the streets and mountains of Anatolia, to return to their original places of residence or settle wherever they wish before the onset of winter.”⁵³⁹ He insisted that the law was enacted two days before the opening of the Parliament, therefore it was against the law and justice, and he proposed that “it first be processed through the Parliament and its application be put off until after the war.”⁵⁴⁰ The ensuing debate showed that the Parliament knew nothing about the Temporary Law in question, so no proposal for change could be entertained. The Senate simply voted to transmit the Senator Riza’s bill for the amendment of the Temporary Law to the Legislative Acts Committee of the Senate. For two and a half months, Senator Riza could make no progress with the Legislative Branch. As Bayur observed, “Clearly the Parliament was intent on sanctioning the application of the Temporary Law while putting Riza’s bill to sleep.”⁵⁴¹ On November 30, 1915, Senator Riza one last time raised his voice in the Parliament, protesting:

It is not lawful to treat the possessions, to which the law has reference, as Abandoned Goods and Possessions (*emval-I metruke*). The Armenians, the owners of these goods and possessions, did not voluntarily abandon them; they were forced to abandon their domiciles and were coerced into deportation....It is not right that [this law be allowed] to come into force...Nobody can force me to sell my belongings when I am not willing to sell them...Grab my arm, eject me from my village, then sell my goods

⁵³⁹ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 222.

⁵⁴⁰ Dadrian, “Select Parliamentary and Judicial Documents: Document No.2 Parts I and II. The law on Expropriating the Goods and Possessions of Deported Armenians,” *Journal of Military and Political Sociology*, Volume 22. No.1, Summer 1994, 51.

⁵⁴¹ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 223.

and properties; such a thing can never be lawful. Neither the conscience of the Ottomans, nor the law can allow it.⁵⁴²

Ambassador Morgenthau in his November 4, 1915 communication to the State Department stated that it was Talat who exerted the greatest pressure on Ahmet Riza and his friends threatening to initiate more severe measures against the Armenians if they continued their agitation.⁵⁴³ Thus, the Temporary Law on Abandoned Goods was left intact until the end of the war.

After the Unionist leadership fled the country at the end of the Great War, on 18 October 1918 the new Grand Vizier Ahmet Izzet Pasha sent an order to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Deported Armenians could now return to their homes. Empty ‘abandoned properties’ could not be settled, and the properties previously allocated to the military and occupied by the people and officials had to be evacuated in order to accommodate the returnees. Thousands of Armenian deportees – those who survived the deportations and the war or who have been hiding- began to come back.⁵⁴⁴ According the Minister of Interior’s statement prepared in response to a query of the Allied Powers on the issue of how much funding was necessary for the returning survivors, the number released by the Ottoman authorities on 20 March 1919 for the returning Armenians was 101,747 (people).⁵⁴⁵

The return of the deportees was strictly controlled by the government. A ciphered telegram dated 28 October 1918 sent from the Ministry of Interior indicated

⁵⁴² Dadrian, “Select Parliamentary and Judicial Documents: Document No.2 Parts I and II. The law on Expropriating the Goods and Possessions of Deported Armenians,” 54.

⁵⁴³ Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 224.

⁵⁴⁵ Memleket Gazetesi dated 12 March 1919 is quoted in Taner Akçam, “Yalancının Mumunun Sönmesinde Yarar Var,” *Taraf*, 15 Haziran 2008. Just about the same number of Greeks also returned.

the transfer of Armenians from Mousul to the region of Bitlis, Diyarbekir and Mardin (Mardin is close to Antep). This telegram also warned that the empty houses regarded as ‘abandoned property’ can’t be demolished; telegram shows that properties left by the deported Armenians and Greeks were being demolished in some provinces since the reversed laws and new orders caused confusion among the residents of these properties.⁵⁴⁶ A response sent to the Minister of Interior stated that the new orders violated the Muslim immigrants; to solve the problem of insufficient housing, one of two families could be settled in a single house.⁵⁴⁷ On 4 November 1918, the new Istanbul Government abolished all laws on Deportation and Abandoned Property. On 9 November 1918, Ministry of Interior sent a telegram to many provinces and ordered the return of all sacred properties of Armenians and Greeks. Churches, schools, other properties and possessions of the religious institutions had to be evacuated and returned to their rightful owners. And finally on 8 January 1920 Istanbul government adopted a new law that mandated the return of the all properties to their real owners.

Armenian ‘abandoned property’ was also the subject of the international conferences of the time. In 1919, the Armenian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference presented a report about the damages of the Armenians in Turkey and in Caucasus. Most importantly, the Treaty of Sevres signed on 10 August 1920, regarded as the ‘order of execution for the Turks’⁵⁴⁸ and by the entire Turkish nationalist

⁵⁴⁶ Polatel, “Turkish State Formation and the Distribution of the Armenian Abandoned Properties from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey (1915-1930),” 140-141.

⁵⁴⁷ Polatel, “Turkish State Formation and the Distribution of the Armenian Abandoned Properties from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey (1915-1930),” 141.

⁵⁴⁸ *Tarih IV Türkiye Cumhuriyeti* (İstanbul : İstanbul Matbaası , 1931), 65.

historiography, included a specific article on the abandoned properties. The Article 144 stipulated that:

The Turkish Government recognizes the injustice of the law of 1915 relating to Abandoned Properties (*Emval-i-Metroukeh*), and of the supplementary provisions thereof, and declares them to be null and void, in the past as in the future.

The Turkish Government solemnly undertakes to facilitate to the greatest possible extent the return to their homes and re-establishment in their businesses of the Turkish subjects of non-Turkish race who have been forcibly driven from their homes by fear of massacre or any other form of pressure since January 1, 1914. It recognizes that any other immovable or moveable property of the said Turkish subjects or of the communities to which they belong, which can be recovered, must be restored to them as soon as possible, in whatever hands it may be found. Such property shall be restored free of all charges or servitudes with which it may have been burdened and without compensation of any kind to be present owners or occupiers, subject to any action which they may be able to bring against the persons from whom they derived their title.

The Turkish Government agrees that arbitral commissions shall be appointed by the Council of the League of Nations wherever found necessary. These commissions shall each be composed of one representative of the Turkish Government, one representative of the community which claims that it or one of its members has been injured, and a Chairman appointed by the Council of the League of Nations. These arbitral commissions shall hear all claims covered by this Article and decide them by summary procedure.

The arbitral commissions will have power to order:

- (1) The provision by the Turkish Government of labour for any work of reconstruction or restoration deemed necessary. This labour shall be recruited from the races inhabiting the territory where the arbitral commission considers the execution of the said works to be necessary
- (2) The removal of any person who, after enquiry, shall be recognised as having taken an active part in massacres or deportations or as having provoked them; the measures to be taken with regard to such person's possessions will be indicated by the commission;
- (3) The disposal of property belonging to members of a community who have died or disappeared since January 1, 1914, without leaving heirs; such property may be handed over to the community instead of to the State
- (4) The cancellation of all acts of sale or any acts creating rights over immovable property concluded after January 1, 1914. The indemnification of the holders will be a charge upon the Turkish Government, but must not serve as a pretext for delaying the restitution. The arbitral commission will, however have the power to impose equitable arrangements between the interested parties, if any sum has been paid by the present holder of such property.

The Turkish Government undertakes to facilitate in the fullest possible measure the work of the commissions and to ensure the execution of their decisions, which will be final. No decision of the Turkish judicial or administrative authorities shall prevail over such decisions.⁵⁴⁹

Mustafa Kemal's nationalist Ankara government, after the Greek Army was definitively defeated on 30 August 1922 and the Turkish cavalry entered Izmir (Smyrna) on September 9, reversed the Istanbul government's law that stipulated the return of the all abandoned property, and on 14 September 1922 replaced it with the Unionist's '27 September 1915' law.⁵⁵⁰ Although during the Lausanne Treaty they consented to an article of a protocol that stipulated that the Turkish Government would comply with the laws adopted between 20 October 1918 and 20 November 1922, the new Republican Government after the Lausanne did not allow the return of the Armenians to Turkey from the neighboring countries. As Polatel argues, only a brief review of the legislations and the decisions on the 'abandoned property' of the Armenians adopted by the Kemalists between 1922-1928 is enough to highlight the fact that they were no different than Unionists in their approach to the Armenian issue.⁵⁵¹

4.3.4. Conclusion

1915-1916 genocide was "one-sided destruction of a largely defenseless community by the agents of a sovereign state."⁵⁵² However, the situation that

⁵⁴⁹ For the full text of the Section I of the Sevr Treaty, see http://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Section_I_Articles_1_-_260

⁵⁵⁰ Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu*, 452.

⁵⁵¹ Polatel, "Turkish State Formation and the Distribution of the Armenian Abandoned Properties from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey (1915-1930)."

⁵⁵² Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 99.

transpired in Anatolia around 1917 onwards is appropriately described by Mark Levene as “post-genocidal”, where the state authority had collapsed on both sides leading all populations of the region to devastation. While Dadrian insists that what happened to the Armenians in the Caucasus in this period was a “miniature genocide” [sic], Akçam concedes that “the years between 1918 and 1922 were a period in which nationalist politics were decisive in determining the course of events, in which massacres and counter-massacres were frequent...until today what we might call the ethnic cleansing in the two regions was complete.”⁵⁵³ Regular and irregular forces of brutalized Armenian bands, Armenian volunteer forces, survivors of the earlier massacres, Kurds, Turks, Georgians, Azeris, as well as the British and the French engaged in many atrocities alongside most of the other ethnic groups; a real ethnic carnage was unleashed in the area with the collapse of the Caucasus front after the Bolshevik revolution.⁵⁵⁴ In fact, Bloxham, mentions that even at the beginning of 1916, as in during the Russian advance in April 1915, “vengeful Armenian forces and Cossacks murdered many Muslims, as testified to the British forces” but he argues none of these episodes is on par with the state-led murder.⁵⁵⁵

These episodes of massacres and counter-massacres that first transpired in the Eastern Anatolia during the Van Rebellion (April –May 1915), then at the beginning of 1916, and more intensely after the collapse of the Russian front following the Bolshevik Revolution and the foundation of the first Armenian Republic in 1918 continue to be main barriers in Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. They are at the

⁵⁵³ Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 330-331. 1918-1920 is the period that marks the short life of first independent Armenian Republic. See Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road to Independence*.

⁵⁵⁴ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 100.

⁵⁵⁵ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 100.

center of the Turkish denialist theses and they inform the myth of *mukatele* (mutual massacres): That 1915-16 was an episode of inter-communal conflict, “a desperate struggle... between two nations for the possession of a single homeland,” as Bernard Lewis once put it.⁵⁵⁶ At the end of this struggle, as the argument of *mukatele* goes, both sides slaughtered each other and suffered tremendously, wrote Mustafa Kemal in his messages to Bolsheviks.⁵⁵⁷

Regardless of how ambitious the Kemalist elites were about their political edifice, the new Turkey was built on the remnants of the Ottoman empire in Anatolia. That is, there is a large measure of institutional continuity between the late Empire and the early Republic. Although the Ottoman imperial legacy was shared by many states in the Southeastern Europe and the Middle East that were under Ottoman rule for up to five hundred years, Turkey was the main repository of the military and administrative traditions of the Empire. As Eric Zürcher puts it, ‘if other countries inherited other limbs, Turkey inherited the head and the heart,’ such as the capital Istanbul, central bureaucracy of the state including thousands of civil servants, and the army which had become a dominant force in politics during the final decade of the empire.⁵⁵⁸

Most of the merchants, bankers, and the industrialists of the empire were no longer there when the Republic came into being in 1923. Owing to the wartime destruction of a nascent bourgeoisie society in the Anatolian peninsula⁵⁵⁹ –with the expulsion of Greeks and the genocide of the Armenians, the state elites did not have to

⁵⁵⁶ Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 356.

⁵⁵⁷ See Chapter 5.

⁵⁵⁸ Erik Jan Zürcher, “How Europeans Adopted Anatolia and created Turkey,” *European Review* Vol.13, No.3, 379-394 (2005).

⁵⁵⁹ The entire Greek or Armenian population in Anatolia did not represent the bourgeois. 70% of the Armenians were peasants, for instance. But the Ottoman bourgeoisie was represented by Christians.

worry about the cooperation of a strong bourgeois class. Because of this the nationalist intelligentsia did not have to confront any serious opposition in their radical project of westernizing a people assimilated to the six-hundred year old traditions of an Islamic empire. The guardians of the *ancien regime* were simply non-reformist wing of the bureaucracy. With neither a contesting bourgeoisie – the principal factor defining Turkey’s ideological universe - nor a strong landlord class that might have demanded economic liberalism and civil and political rights for its constituency, there was no significant group in the society to challenge the absolutism of the state.⁵⁶⁰

Another factor that strengthened the status of the republican state was the material resources acquired during the elimination of non-Muslims – their property and positions they vacated. The expropriation of this property expedited the creation of a native bourgeoisie and made it beholden to the state. In other words, Ankara guided a national economic development without a corresponding bourgeois transformation. This development came under the full control of the state when the world economic conditions shifted in favor of antiliberalism and state-directed economy during the inter-war period. The trajectory from the last decade of the Empire to the early Republican period reveals not only the social origins of Turkish politics today, but also how the violent homogenization of the Anatolian peninsula between 1913-1918 accounts for it: If the Greek and Armenian bourgeoisie had been able to pursue their political aims within the Ottoman framework during the demise of the Empire, as Keyder argued, the Young Turk experiment of 1908-1918 might have

resulted in the constitution of a capitalist state under bourgeois domination rather than bureaucratic reformism.⁵⁶¹ The lack of the a contesting bourgeoisie and the masses who were ready to forget an inconvenient past in exchange for the economic rewards allowed the nationalist elites to construct a new history and new national identity in an entirely instrumental fashion. The new history of ‘modern Turkey’ would essentially be a mutual pact to forget “1915”. It is precisely this instrumentality of the history and identity project of the Kemalists that explains why the cost of ‘remembering’ is still so high in Turkey and why there is so much turbulence around “who we are.” It is again this instrumentality that explains why any deviation from the official history on the Armenian deportations can easily become a life and death struggle in Turkey.

⁵⁶¹ Keyder, *State and Class*, 2.

PART III: Charismatic Authority, Nationalist Inventions, And Institutions: Ottoman Armenians in the new Republican history

*To silence a guiltless nation that cries out against
so much injustice, oppression—even massacres—which it
has been called upon to endure is a kind of tyranny to
which it is impossible to submit.*
-Mustafa Kemal Atatürk , *Nutuk*

Chapter 5: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk , the Father of the Turks, on the Armenian Issue and 1915

5.1.Introduction

This dissertation explores the inextricable relationship between the Kemalist nation formation and the destruction of Ottoman Armenians. I argue that the debate about “1915” is rooted in the material circumstances that attended class formation in Turkey which created a distinct political culture with powerful reflexes against the Armenians and the Armenian issue. The massacres and the expropriation of the Armenian wealth nurtured a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie that gave its loyalty to Atatürk ’s nation-building project. The discursive foundations of the existential threat the Armenian constitutes for the Turk and the Turkish homeland are historically anchored in this relationship. After the radical erasures of the most painful memories of the Great War and after decades of silence coupled with nationalist indoctrination, however, this relationship could be identified neither in the social nor in the political

life of modern Turkey. Here lies the significance of Gökçen controversy for my work: It allowed me to observe and identify for almost three years the most salient visual and narrative tropes of this relationship and how it relates to the most sacred sensibilities of “Turkishness.”

Thus, in the context of the first two chapters, I defined the Gökçen controversy as the most traumatic encounter of modern Turkey with its Armenian past; ‘genocide allegations’ had never come so close to Atatürk – “father of the Turks” and the moral compass of the Turkish nation on whose image the legitimacy of the Republic rests. Never in the Republican history before Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s memory, on which the heroic and noble reincarnation of the new Turkish state rests, bled into the memory of the Armenian deportations in such vivid narrative alignments and textual encounters. The unity between Atatürk and the Republic is a fundamental premise of Turkish political life; indeed this is such an organic unity that Esat Bozkurt, one of the first lecturers of the Kemalist reforms, once wrote, “The last Turkish revolution is nothing but a photograph of Atatürk’s mind.”⁵⁶² Allegations about Gökçen’s Armenian roots shed bright lights not only on the narrative rupture between the Empire and the Republic invented by Atatürk. It also, inevitably, invoked inconvenient questions: Did Atatürk know....? How much did he know...? If he knew....?

Today although we know a lot about Atatürk’s military career and the history of his appointments, we do not know “what he knew” and “how much he knew” about

⁵⁶² Oktay Aslanapa, *İlk İnkılap Tarihi Ders Notları* (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1997), 49.

the Armenian deportations and massacres. As far as this dissertation is concerned, these questions do not matter. To the extent that the Republic was nothing but an image in his mind, as Bozkurt's statement indicates, what matters are the images his texts conjured on the Armenians and the Armenian issue; that is, what his "sacred" texts signify. This is what this central chapter is about.

Based on a textual analysis of his entire corpus⁵⁶³, including *Nutuk* (the Great Speech of 1927)—the master-narrative of modern Turkish history and national identity—I examine and document how his charismatic leadership helped to consolidate both the myth of 'murderous Armenians' and that of the Turks as an 'oppressed nation' (*mazlum millet*), monumentalizing both in official Turkish historiography. I argue that Atatürk's portrayal of Armenians and the Armenian Question has been generally consistent across the years and in various political documents. His view is consistent with contemporary Turkish denial as well. In the final analysis, I argue that what really tips the balance toward Turkish innocence in his representation of this conflict is not the framing of the issue per se but the stark

⁵⁶³ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk-Söylev*, Cilt 1–2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1981); Kâzım Öztürk, *Atatürk'ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I–II* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992); *Atatürk'ün Milli Dış Politikası (Milli Mücadele Dönemine Ait 100 Belge) 1919–1923*, Cilt 1–2 (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992); *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I: TBMM Meclisinde ve Kurultaylarında (1919–1938)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1961); *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II (1906–1938)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1959); *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri III (1918–1937)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1961); *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV (1917–1938)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1964); *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, Tamim ve Telgrafları V (1917–1938)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1972); Sadi Borak, ed., *Atatürk'ün Resmi Yayınlara Girmemiş Söylev Demeç Yazışma ve Söyleşileri* (İstanbul: Kırmızı-Beyaz, 2004), İsmet Görgülü, *Atatürk'ten Ermeni Sorunu* (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınları, 2002). For the English translation of *Nutuk*, I have referred to *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal 1927*, published by the Turkish Prime Ministry; for critical cÖnce pts and words I often checked another translation published by Koehler in Germany in 1929 as well. See *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal, 1927* (İstanbul: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1981); and *Mustafa Kemal, A Speech Delivered by Ghazi Mustafa Kemal, October 1927* (Leipzig: K. F. Koehler, 1929).

difference in the rhetoric Kemal deploys in depicting Armenian and Turkish atrocities, and hence the Armenians and the Turks. The undeniable authority of this discursive regime should be placed at the center of the resilience of Turkish denial today.

Let there be no mistake: Atatürk took no part in the genocide of 1915. As Perry Anderson put it, he was one of history's most striking examples of 'moral luck'. He was a Unionist, but by accident of military appointments, his hands were clean of the deportations and massacres of Armenians.⁵⁶⁴ Until the end of 1915, he was in Gallipoli. He never belonged to the central command of the CUP. In fact, despite the myth that attributes national resistance to Atatürk's own initiative, the groundwork for such a movement had already been laid down by the old leadership of CUP in Anatolia through Karakol, whose leaders had approached Atatürk, among others, for the leadership of the movement as early as December 1918. As Zürcher argues, Mustafa Kemal fitted the bill more so than others because he was 'trusted as a Unionist and a patriot but not too closely involved either with the ruling clique of Enver and Talat or the Armenian massacres'.⁵⁶⁵ However, from 1919 until his death in 1938—first with the War of Resistance he commanded, then with the modernist revolution he engineered—Kemal was the ideological mastermind of modern Turkey. He wrote the new history of the young Republic; he 'became a shorthand for Turkish national identity'.⁵⁶⁶ As Mahcupyan argues, this unification between Kemal and the nation has been so complete any criticism of him today that deviates from the official

⁵⁶⁴ For Kemal's military appointments, see Zürcher, *Unionist Factor*.

⁵⁶⁵ Erik Jan Zürcher, "Atatürk as a Young Turk," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No.41, Fall 2009, 225.

⁵⁶⁶ Leda Glyptis, "Living up to the father: The national identity prescriptions of remembering Atatürk ; His homes, his grave, his temple," *National Identities* 10, no.4 (2008), 353–72.

ideology can ‘easily drive one out of Turkishness’.⁵⁶⁷ As it will be clear in this chapter, the great “Turkish nation” was first and foremost an idea in Atatürk’s mind; so was Gökçen and everything she stood for.

5.2. Mustafa Kemal: As Charisma and As Institution

While some scholars argue that myth is altogether separate from historical fact and historiography, in the Turkish case Atatürk’s corpus makes claim to history and historiography: In fact, Atatürk himself argued that his aim in writing *Nutuk* was to facilitate the writing of modern Turkish history.⁵⁶⁸ From the preparatory *Nutuk* files in the Atatürk archives, we know that he intensively studied the history and the sociology of the ‘nation’, together with the ‘principle of nationality’ and ‘the nation in international law’.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, Atatürk —‘perhaps the world’s longest personality cult’ and still the ultimate taboo for the Turkish Republic⁵⁷⁰—and how he approached the Armenian issue until his death in 1938 should be at the center of understanding Turkish denial.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army in the Independence Struggle of Turkey (1919-1922) and the first President of the Turkish Republic until 1938 is regarded as the founder of modern Turkey. His last name Atatürk means “father of the Turks.” His regime was a one-

⁵⁶⁷ Etyen Mahçupyan, “*Mustafa’nın sorunu ne?*” *Taraf*, 25 November 2008.

⁵⁶⁸ Hülya Adak, “National Myths and Self-Narrations: Mustafa Kemal’s *Nutuk* and Halide Edib’s *Memoirs* and The Turkish Ordeal,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:2/3, Spring/Summer 2003, 513-514.

⁵⁶⁹ Sadi Borak, *Atatürk’ün Resmi Yayınlara Girmemiş Söylev, Demeç, Yazışma ve Söyleşileri*, 513–23.

⁵⁷⁰ Sabrina Tavernese, “Turkey’s hero, behind the bronze veneer,” *New York Times*, 13 November 2008; Robert Tait, “Turkish student faces jail over anti-Atatürk remarks,” *Guardian*, 16 June 2008.

party dictatorship centered on a personality cult of heroic proportions: “Equestrian statues of him were being erected in Turkey as early as 1926, long before monuments to Stalin could be put up in Russia.”⁵⁷¹ He was a political leader who spoke a lot and who knew very well the ideological and psychological power of political persuasion inherent in constant public speaking⁵⁷². Atatürk’s corpus of speeches and written works, in which he expressed his worldview on a wealth of topics from nationalism to secularism, from culture to democracy, from education to economy, remains as the official ideology of Turkey as “Atatürkism / Kemalism.”⁵⁷³ Some argue it is nearly self-evident to point out that Kemalism in contemporary Turkey is a public philosophy that embraces almost every topic and that serves as a fundamental legitimating norm and myth. Indeed, Kemalism is frequently utilized to evaluate a variety of ideas and actions that gain currency in Turkish public life.

Atatürkism in Turkey in this respect corresponds to a cult of personality well beyond the totality of symbolisms expressing respect and emotional loyalty to a national hero; it has become “a phenomenon of worshipping,” a “culture of deification,” and a way of thinking, a mentality entrapped and ruled by this sacredness. While charismatic leadership is a sociological phenomenon that responds to the social conditions and needs of particular society in particular point in history⁵⁷⁴, modern Turkey is still struggling with this cult with all its repeating cycles of anti-

⁵⁷¹ Perry Anderson, “Kemalism,” *London Review of Books*, Volume 30, Number 17, 11 September 2008, 20.

⁵⁷² Taha Parla, *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri: Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları* Cilt 2, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), 12.

⁵⁷³ For the ideological building blocks of Kemalism from nationalism to statism, Parla, *Atatürk’ün Söylev Ve Demeçleri: Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları*, 11-19.

⁵⁷⁴ Parla, *Atatürk’ün Söylev Ve Demeçleri: Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları*, 11-19.

democratic episodes like military coups, political party closures, and traumatic public debates of secularism almost seventy years later. This is regarded as the fundamental problem of the Republic still debating its place in between Europe and the Middle East. The trauma and the panic Sabiha Gökçen controversy caused in the Turkish public life together with the response of the Turkish Armed Forces to the allegations narrated in the previous section should be considered in the context of this emotional-psychological life-world of Atatürkism (“Atacılık” / “Atatürkçülük”) in Turkey.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will first analyze Mustafa Kemal’s approach to the Armenian question based on his texts between 1919 and 1938. These texts include speeches [during assembly proceedings and country tours], declarations, telegrams, correspondence and interviews. A careful inter-textual reading of these texts reveals that prominent ones among these documents, especially telegrams and correspondence, either informed *Nutuk*’s narrative or they actually took place in *Nutuk* in their original form. As I had mentioned above, Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk* presents a variety of historical documents and up until now his interpretation of those documents was taken by the official Turkey as synonymous with “historical fact”. I will in conclusion present the Armenian question and “1915” in the context of *Nutuk*.

5.3. Mustafa Kemal on the Armenian Issue (1919-1938)

Because the issues of the ‘Armenian invasion’ in the East and the returning Armenians in the aftermath of the Mudros Treaty loom so large in Kemal’s texts, a brief historical context for what actually transpired on the ground between 1918 and 1922 is necessary before his discourse is deconstructed. The 1915–1916 genocide of

the Armenians was ‘a one-sided destruction of a largely defenseless community by the agents of a sovereign state’.⁵⁷⁵ However, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman state authority and of the Russian Caucasus due to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and with the Armenian National Council proclaiming independence in June 1918 within the former Russian boundaries, the Ottoman-Russian border region ‘became at least as significant a military theatre as it had been in 1914–1915’, leading all populations of the region to devastation and ethnic carnage.⁵⁷⁶ The discussion at the Paris Peace Conference about ceding territory to Armenians in Eastern Anatolia, together with the emergence of an independent Armenian Republic next door, was the most important factor behind the mobilization of nationalist resistance movement in the eastern provinces; it is no coincidence that the first nationalist congress took place in Erzurum. In light of the Armenian efforts at the conference, the most important task of the nationalist Defense Committees was to prove ‘by scientific means’ that Muslims had always constituted the majority in the regions under risk. The fearful anticipation of new statistical wars—which had a long history especially in Eastern Anatolia, a site defined as ‘a modern zone of genocide’ by Mark Levene⁵⁷⁷—easily fuelled new carnage in the making and secured ‘majorities’ in the aftermath of the Great War.

After the withdrawal of Russian troops, the Ottoman Army launched a new Caucasus offensive at the beginning of 1918 and encountered fierce resistance, first from the Armenian irregulars, other members of the Russian volunteer battalions, and

⁵⁷⁵ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 99.

⁵⁷⁶ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 100–101.

⁵⁷⁷ Mark Levene, “Creating a modern ‘zone of genocide’: The impact of nation- and state-formation on Eastern Anatolia, 1878–1923,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Winter 1998, 393–433.

the vengeful survivors of the former massacres; then from the armies of the Armenian Republic. Particularly in this region, between 1918 and 1922 massacres and countermassacres were frequent, directed toward expanding national borders and achieving homogeneous populations.⁵⁷⁸ Armenian atrocities committed against the Muslims eventually provided Kemal's nationalist forces with the essential pretext for the invasion and obliteration of Armenia in 1920. These atrocities committed mostly after 1917 continue to be at the center of Turkish denialist theses, and they continue to be employed in the retrospective justification of the deportations and massacres of the Ottoman Armenians. It was a 'bloody conflict', as Kemal repeatedly put it; both sides slaughtered each other and suffered huge losses.

During the peace conference, Armenian nationalists negotiated for the Cilicia region (from Adana to Maras) in the south to become part of 'Greater Armenia'. The new Armenian Republic had declared its intention to 'unify and liberate the ancestral lands located in Transcaucasia and the Ottoman Empire' in May 1919.⁵⁷⁹ The Anatolian interior was never occupied by the Entente; however, after the Mudros Armistice of 1918, Cilicia was occupied by the British and the French and their auxiliaries. France's Legion d'Orient, formed in 1916 to control Northern Syria, was deployed in Alexandria by the end of 1918; the majority of the legion was composed of Armenians. From the beginning, Armenian irregulars exhibited considerable indiscipline under the influence of Armenian political organizations, and atrocities were committed, none of which was remarkable in the context of what happened in the

⁵⁷⁸ Akçam, *Shameful Act*, 330–31. The years 1918 to 1920 mark the short life of the first independent Armenian Republic. See Hovannisian, *Armenia On the Road to Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

⁵⁷⁹ Akçam, *Shameful Act*, 334.

region during the deportations of 1915.⁵⁸⁰ Ethnic tensions inevitably escalated in the area when the local Unionists spread the rumors that the Allied arrival was a prelude to a massacre of the Muslims. In autumn of 1919, the British relinquished control of Cilicia to the French. The transfer of control to the French was read as an indication by the nationalists that the occupation would be permanent, especially because it was accompanied by Armenians returning to Cilicia from various regions to reclaim their property.

The French military units, together with Armenian volunteers, assumed control of Maras, Antep, and Urfa by September 1919. According to the French sources, ‘some 12,000 Armenians had resettled in the southern provinces by the end of 1919’.⁵⁸¹ Under the specter of returning Armenians who began to seize their old property, the Muslim *nouveaux riches* threw their support behind Kemal’s nationalist forces that took control of the region in early 1920. Thousands of Christians were massacred in Maras, where the intercommunal rivalries were agitated by the French during the occupation of the city. The atrocities committed by the Armenians, however, were ‘dwarfed’⁵⁸² by the Maraş massacres by the nationalist forces; French agitation of the ethnic rivalries in the region in their own imperial interests was then exploited in the hands of Kemal’s nationalists.⁵⁸³ Armed conflicts between the French occupiers and the nationalists in Maras, Urfa, and Antep continued until the first French-Turkish armistice in May 1920.

⁵⁸⁰ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 152.

⁵⁸¹ Akçam, *Shameful Act*, 340.

⁵⁸² Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 152.

⁵⁸³ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 154.

According to Mustafa Kemal, the “Armenian Question” is an issue that the world capitalists have attempted to settle in line with their own economic interests (*menafii iktisadiye*) as opposed to the real interests (*menafii hakikiye*) of the Armenian nation.⁵⁸⁴ For him, the Armenians, just like the Rum (Anatolian Greeks), have been “the servants of the western imperialism.”⁵⁸⁵ Mustafa Kemal frequently asserts in his communication during the War of Independence that ‘the Armenian cause is considered to be strong by both the western nations and the Russian nation,’⁵⁸⁶ because Armenians have been promoted to the West and to the United States as “the oppressed.”⁵⁸⁷ In a manifesto addressed to the Islamic world in May 1920 to communicate the just cause of the Turkish war of resistance, Mustafa Kemal calls the

⁵⁸⁴ “Ermeni meselesi denilen ve Ermeni milletin menafii hakikiyesinden ziyade cihan kapitalistlerinin menafii iktisadiyesine göre halledilmek istenilen mesele, Kars muahedesiyle, en doğru sureti hallini buldu. Asırlardan beri dostane yasayan iki çalışan halkın revabiti hasenesi maalmemnuniye tekrar teessus etti.” See Öztürk, *Atatürk'ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları II*, 747. This is a statement made in an open proceeding in the Turkish national assembly in the aftermath of the defeat of Armenia in December 1920.

⁵⁸⁵ “Rum, Ermeni gibi garb emperyalizminin hizmetçisi olan milletlerle mesleklerinde sebat ettikleri müddetçe anlaşmamızın imkanı yoktur.” *Atatürk'ün Milli Dış Politikası (Milli Mücadele Dönemine Ait 100 Belge) 1919–1923*, Cilt 1, 204.

⁵⁸⁶ “Ermeni davası gerek Garb gerek Rus milletleri nezdinde kuvvetlidir. Hristiyanlık namına vukua gelecek tecavuzatın Garb ve Şark’tan hoşgörülemezceği muhakkaktır.” *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV (1917–1938)*, 351.

⁵⁸⁷ “Efendiler, Bolşevikler, siyasi hatta içtimai noktai nazardan – çünkü bilirsiniz ki Garp ve Amerika amelesi nezdinde Ermeniler mazlum tanıtılmışlardır–Ermenilere atfi ehemmiyet etmişlerdir. Himayekar bir siyaset takip eder görünmüşlerdir. Fakat bir gün bu Ermeniler onlara dahi nankörlük etmiştir. Onların kuvvetine dahi fiilen tecavüz etmiştir (*Kahrolsun sadaları*).” 14.8.1920 (acik celse). See Öztürk, *Atatürk'ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I*, 260. Also see, “Genel siyasi durum ve Bolşeviklerle ittifak için aradaki Ermenistan engelini kaldırılmasına dair vekiller heyeti müzakeresi” in *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV (1917–1938)*, 318: “Ermeni vukuati bütün alemleri iseviyeti aleyhimize sevk eden avamilerin en muhimelerinden olduğuna göre mevcudiyeti ilk evvel tarafımızdan tasdik olunan Ermeni hükümetini ordumuzun kuvvetiyle mahvetmek ve bittabi yeniden bir Ermeni kıtalı demek olan bu harekete bizim tarafımızdan sebebiyet verilme az, çok lehimize bir cereyan getiren tahriki de muvakkatan fesh ve bilhassa Amerika efkarı umumiyetini aleyhimize kıyam ve sevkettirir ve İngiltere’nin hakkımızda tatbikini istediği tarsi harekete cümlesinin muzahir olmasını temin gibi muzir ve muhlık bir netice tevhit eder. Esbabı maruzaya mebnî ordumuzun şimdilik Ermeni hükümetine karşı resmen ve alenen taarruz ve icrayı muhasemattan tevekki etmesini, mümkün olduğu kadar sureti hafiyede Elviyei Selasede teşekkül eden küçük hulûmetler milis kitaatı takviye olunarak bunlarla Gence’ye kadar ilerledikleri haber alınan İslam Bolşevikleri vasıtasıyla bu taarruzun icra edilmesi daha ziyade muvafiki maslahat görülmüştür.”

Armenians and the Greek Army the “old murderers” released on the Muslims in Anatolia by the imperialists in line with their colonial ambitions:

To accomplish this, they have released armies of invasion on Anatolia that has been the home of Islam (*me'vayt islam*) since the times of the Seljuk Turks for nine and a half, ten centuries....To accomplish this, the most ancient Islamic provinces (*en kadim islam memleketleri*) like Adana, Maras, Ayintab and Urfa, under the administration of French officers, were abandoned like a prey to the Armenian revenge and rage (*kin ve gayzına*), to the opportunistic barbarousness and the hostility of the Armenian spirit (*Ermeni ruhunun müfteris gilzat ve husumetine*). What was a nation whose government has been deprived of its arms and whose armies have been disbanded with a deplorable armistice supposed to do other than self-defense against these vagabond, ransacker, plunderer invaders who plagued their homeland? (*ana yurduna musallat olan başı boş bırakılmış ve yangıncı, yağmacı müstevlilere karşı*) ...The truth was that (*halbuki*) the invaded parts of Anatolia were those lands that were full of hundreds of thousands of refugees (*muhacir*) emigrating from our native lands (*memleketlerimizden*), with no dwelling, no bread, that were previously invaded. While these refugees flowing out of their lands in waves following a hellish (*kızıl*), terrifying flood (*salıp*) colored by the ominous blazes of the villages and towns burnt down during the Balkan wars and by the blood of an oppressed people were wandering in the Anatolian lands in misery marked by disease and hunger (*hastalıktan açlıktan perisan bir halde sürünüirken*), they [the imperialists] have unleashed the old murderers on them (*arkalarından eski katilleri yetiştirdiler*).⁵⁸⁸

In another protest sent to Chicherin, he calls the Armenian invasion the “Armenian colonization.”⁵⁸⁹ Mustafa Kemal particularly in his communication with the Bolsheviks and the Islamic world heavily deploys the rhetoric of imperialism on the Armenian issue. However, his domestic communication, especially on the eve of the Paris Conference, is laden with grave concerns about the emergence of an independent Armenia in the East and with the urgency to organize resistance against

⁵⁸⁸ My translation. “Büyük Millet Meclisinin Tüm İslam Alemine Beyannamesi, 9.V.1920” *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV (1917–1938)*, 324-325.

⁵⁸⁹ “....Türk ahalisine karşı yapılan Ermeni vahşetlerini durdurmak için o kadar zahmet çekmiş olan Türkiye'nin kendi arazisi üzerinde iskan edilmiş olan kendi vatandaşlarını istediklerini hilafına Ermenilere teslim edemeyeceği bedihidir, çünkü sizin talebinizin istihdaf ettiği bölgeler ahalisinin takınacağı tavır hakkında hiçbir şüpheye mahal yoktur. Sebepsiz olarak Ermenistan'a terk edilmiş olan Nahçıvan, Karabağ ve ilh... sekenesinin şiddetli protestoları bu hususta çok karakteristiktir. Bu bedbahtları başka yere nakletmeyi ve boş bir memleketi Ermeni kolonizasyonuna bırakmayı bizden istemeyi aklımızdan bile geçiremeyiz çünkü böyle bir şey Mezopotamya'da bulunan İngilizlerin büyük yararına memleketimizde dahili harb açmakla müsavidir.” See “Van ve Muş vilayetlerimizde zararına olarak Ermenistan'ın büyütülmesi yolunda vuku bulan Sovyet teşebbüsleri üzerine Sovyet hariciye komiseri Çiçerin'e gönderilen 27 Aralık 1920 nota sureti,” *Atatürk'ün Milli Dış Politikası (Milli Mücadele Dönemine Ait 100 Belge) (1919–1923) I*, 243-244.

the returning Armenians.⁵⁹⁰ His resignation letter from the Ottoman Army as an officer succinctly captures the historical mission of the War of Independence and the threats that inform the urgency to organize a national resistance: “In this national resistance that has been launched to save the sacred fatherland (*vatan*) and the nation (*millet*) from the threat of disintegration and not to fall victim to Greek and Armenian designs (*amal*), my official and military title had begun to prevent me from freely working with the nation...”⁵⁹¹ Also in his message to Ali Fuat Pasa, he states that “the real and the precise reasons for the national resistance were born of the threats of İzmir incident and of an Armenian invasion (*Ermeni istilası*), and the entire spirit and purpose of the Erzurum Congress lies above Ittihadism (*ittihatçılık*), Itilafism (*itilafçılık*), party politics and politics of all sorts (*particilikle her türlü siyasi cereyanların üzerindedir*).”⁵⁹²

Kemal’s communications throughout 1919 warn against the threat of returning Armenians “exterminating” the Muslim population and that this might change the region’s demographic structure particularly in the Eastern provinces and in the South.⁵⁹³ The problem, as defined by Mustafa Kemal, is both the “returning deportees,” and “those who are coming from other places,”⁵⁹⁴ coupled with their

⁵⁹⁰ Görgülü, *Atatürk’ten Ermeni Sorunu*, 54, 55, 56, 65, 72, 73.

⁵⁹¹ *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, 49. “Mübarek vatan ve milleti parçalanmak tehlikesinden kurtarmak ve Yunan ve Ermeni amaline kurban gitmemek için acılan mücadele-i uğrunda milletle beraber serbest surette çalışmağa sıfatı resmiye ve askeriyem artık mani olmaya başladı.”

⁵⁹² Görgülü, *Atatürk’ten Ermeni Sorunu*, 82.

⁵⁹³ Görgülü, *Atatürk’ten Ermeni Sorunu*, 62, 65-66, 67-68, 70, 87-88, 97-98.

⁵⁹⁴ For instance, in a 15 January 1920 correspondance, Mustafa Kemal informs the 15th Army that after the armistice, 250 thousand Armenians and Greeks came to İstanbul from United States and settled there. See “Armerikadan İstanbul’a gelen Rum ve Ermeniler’in ve Yunanlılar’ın faaliyetleri (15.K.Kumandanlığına verilen malumat), *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, 164: “İstanbul’da mütarekeden sonra 250bin Rum ve Ermeni Amerika’dan gelmiş ve yerleşmiştir.”

“policies of extermination” (*imha politikaları*) executed by armed gangs (*cethes*). In opening the Erzurum Congress in July 1919, he also mentions that “the Armenians, from Nahcivan to Oltu, are driving the Muslims (*ahali-I islamiye*) out and in some neighborhoods, they are massacring and looting them. By forcing the Muslims into destruction and into exile all the way to our borders, they [Armenians] slowly and surely want to reach their goals in Eastern provinces and at the same time they want to expel Ottoman Armenians, which they claim to be 400 thousand, to our country as a support.”⁵⁹⁵

To Mustafa Kemal, especially from early 1919 to late 1920, as he expresses in his telegrams, the political outlook looks very depressing and bleak; he thinks it is very plausible that the British, just like they’ve done in Izmir with Greeks and Anatolian Greeks (Rums), would also guard the Armenians in the East. In a telegram addressed to the 15th Army at the Eastern Front, Mustafa Kemal says it would be possible for them to uproot once again the locals and the refugees who had been settled there by force and this way create an example where the minorities would rule the majorities (*zorla yerlesmis olan ahalii mahalliye ile muhacirini bir kere daha yerlerinden oynatmak ve bu suretle ekalliyetin ekseriyete hakim naziresini tatbik etmek.*)⁵⁹⁶ Bergama, a town on the Aegean coast, is an example of this. On the eve of a fatal offensive on Armenia in 1920, in a communication Atatürk sent to the Soviet State Department, he depicts the mayhem and carnage in the Eastern provinces as the results of “[our] neighbours...in the making of artificial masses and majorities in

⁵⁹⁵ “Erzurum Kongresini Açarken, 23 Temmuz 1919,” *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I: TBMM Meclisinde ve Kurultaylarında (1919–1938)*, 6.

⁵⁹⁶ *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, 27-28.

methods unique to Western imperialists” through “destruction of Turkish territory” and the “massacre of the people” (*komşularımız ... Türk olan araziye tahrip ve ahaliyi katliam ettiklerinden ve Garp emperyalistlerine has olan usullerde sun’i kitleler ve ekseriyetler vucuda getirmekte olduklarından ...*)⁵⁹⁷ In a memorandum he submitted to General Harbord, he informs the General that “the fact” is that “Armenians in this new state⁵⁹⁸ are taking action to exterminate the muslim element (*müslüman unsuru imha etmek üzere faaliyette bulunuyorlar*).” Mustafa Kemal claims they have seen the copies of the orders “for their own eyes” and what provides evidence to this “wave of bloody carnage growing all the way to our borders” is frontier towns flooded by Muslims running for their lives.⁵⁹⁹

In numerous telegrams and communications he wrote especially between mid-1919 and late 1920 – until the defeat of Armenia, Kemal defines the atrocities Muslims suffered around and beyond the Eastern border using the words and expressions such as “savagery and murder” (*vahşet ve cinayet*), “destruction and extermination” (*tahrip ve imha*), “extermination one by one” (*birer birer imha [etmek]*), “massacre” (*katliam*) and/or “executing massacre” (*katliam icra eylemek*), “policy of Muslim massacre and extermination” (*islam katliamı ve imhası siyaseti*), “policy of massacre” (*katliam siyaseti*), “oppression and torture” (*zulüm ve işkence*), “oppression and massacre” (*zulüm ve kıtal*), and “oppression and atrocity/carnage” (*mezalim*). It should be emphasized that Mustafa Kemal uses the word “imha”

⁵⁹⁷ Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV, 338.

⁵⁹⁸ There was an independent state of Armenia the [first] Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, which was toppled by the Bolsheviks after they have been defeated by the Turks during the War of Independence.

⁵⁹⁹ “Kuva-i Milliye, 24.IX.1919” Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV, 81.

(extermination) or “imha siyaseti” (policy of extermination) very frequently especially in relation to the atrocities at the Eastern border during the emergence of the first Republic of Armenia (1918-1920). In a ciphered telegram included in Mustafa Kemal’s foreign policy documents, Kazim Karabekir Pasha of the Eastern theater of war reports in 1922 that “the Muslims have not even performed one thousandth of the savagery on the Armenians that Armenians deemed proper for the Muslims.”⁶⁰⁰

However, if half of Mustafa Kemal’s texts on the Armenian issue is dedicated to the carnage going on at the Eastern border during the War of Independence, the other half is dedicated to the one going on in the south under the French occupation.⁶⁰¹ Telegrams of emergency loom large among these texts. According to Mustafa Kemal, the massacres going on in the southern provinces, from Maras to Urfa, are of the nature that “would taint the pages of the history of humanity (*tarihi beşer sahifelerini lekedar edecek olan bu mezalime...*),”⁶⁰² “that would terrify the humanity (*..insanlığı tedhiş edecek surette..*)”⁶⁰³ and the perpetrators of this “savagery unprecedented in history” (*tarihte emsali nabesbuk olan bu vahşetin faili Ermeniler olup...*) are Armenians.⁶⁰⁴ Mustafa Kemal depicts the massacres in the South again in words like “policy of massacre and extermination” (*katl ve imha siyaseti*), “policy of destruction

⁶⁰⁰ Şark cephesi kumandanı Kazım Karabekir Paşa’nın Akbulak ve Besviran’da yapılan Ermeni mezalimi konusunda Hariciye vekaletine göndermiş olduğu sifre telgraf, 2 May 1922’, *Atatürk’ün Milli Dış Politikası I*, 428: “Akbulak ve Besviran’da Türk’e isnad edilen zulüm ve vahşet doğrudan doğruya Ermenilere aittir. Gerek ordumuz, gerek müslüman halkımız böyle bir zulüm ve vahşetten tamamen münezzehtir ...Ermenilerin İslamlara reva gordukleri vahşetin binde birini İslamlar Ermenilere yapmamışlardır.”

⁶⁰¹ *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, 76, 130-131, 137, 174, 177, 193, 197, 207-208, 233, 324; Öztürk, *Atatürk’ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I*, 89-91, 142-143.

⁶⁰² *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, 197.

⁶⁰³ *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, 174

⁶⁰⁴ *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, 208.

and extermination” (*kahr ve imha*) and “policy of oppression and extermination” (*zulm ve imha siyaseti*).

There are at least four different occasions in Atatürk’s published corpus where he explicitly talks about “1915” or makes an allusion to it. The first one is a speech he made in the parliament on 24 April 1920. The second is a foreign policy document: It is a letter of protest he sent to Chicherin in 1920. The third one concerns domestic politics; it is a public address made in Ankara, again in 1920. The fourth is an interview given to the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*: all the interviews of Kemal in the foreign press should be regarded as his international PR documents.

5.3.1. 24 April 1920 Speech in the Parliament

On 24 April 1920—about a month after the British occupation of Istanbul and the expulsion of leading Unionists implicated in the Armenian deportations to Malta—Kemal discussed in the parliament a British communication received on 19 February 1920. According to this communication, an English diplomatic representative from the Foreign Office gave information to the Sublime Porte that the capital of Istanbul would be relinquished to the Ottoman Empire on the condition that ‘the Armenian massacres (*Ermeni kıtalı*) shall cease forthwith and that [Nationalist] operations against the Allied troops—including those against Greece—shall also cease immediately’. Otherwise, it was added, the conditions of peace regarding the empire would be altered. What Mustafa Kemal said on 24 April 1920 was:

We all know our country. Where in our country massacres of Armenians had taken place? Or where are they taking place? I don’t wish to talk about the beginning stages of the World War and what the Allied powers are talking about is certainly not the

shameful act that belongs to the [distant] past By alleging that this kind of disaster is being executed in our country today, they were demanding that we stop doing it.

...All the American and European individuals and committees who have been travelling to ...various regions of Anatolia always returned to their countries with good impressions about us And hence, these elements whose political expediency lied in provoking the entire world against us through various pressures, in order to shatter this emerging positive public opinion about us and in order to prevent the entire world from changing their negative opinions of us, they have in the end staged and proclaimed this Armenian massacre forgery, which was consisted of nothing but lies....and so they poisoned the entire world against our devastated country and against our oppressed nation with this terrifying accusation.⁶⁰⁵

Mustafa Kemal talks about the occupation of Istanbul and of all the telegram houses by the Entente Powers. On occupation day (16 March 1920), the Entente circulated an official telegraph throughout the country claiming that the fugitive leaders of the CUP had formed a subversive organization called “National Organization.” In the Parliament, Mustafa Kemal rages against this development as well:

...This communiqué, as we saw it, by means of impeaching the supporters of national organization with ittihadism, aimed to create discord in Anatolia, to minimize the blow on the jurisdiction of the Sultanate and the Caliphate pretending that the occupation was temporary and hence, to present the entire assault as harmless.

...It has been a fundamental principle [of us] all along that the peaceful Armenians and Rums (Greeks) of Anatolia deserved a completely happy, and a prosperous life protected against all sorts of assaults as long as they did not come up with an opposition to the law of the Government and national acts. Even during the assaults and murders of our [co-religionist and co-racial] brethren (*dindaşlarımıza ve ırkdaşlarımıza karşı vukubulan tecavuzati cinayetkaraneleri*) by the official and unofficial Armenian forces in Cilicia and its vicinity, and outside our Eastern frontier, we treated the protection of peaceful Armenians living in our country from all intimidation as our very important civilizational duty and during these days the communication of Anatolia was cut-off from the outside world....we communicated the necessity of safeguarding the well-being of the Armenian population. Thus, during our days of sorrow from the time Istanbul was occupied until today, that not a single one of the Anatolian Armenians who did not enjoy protection from any foreign government suffered any assault whatsoever will embarrass an intriguer Europe who smears us with murder allegations (*her vesile ile isnadi cinayet eden*) at every opportunity...and this is a very important point that will prove the extent of exaltedness of the customs of humanity by which our nation is innately gifted

⁶⁰⁵ My translation. “Ankara mebusu Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın mütarekeden Meclisin açılmasına kadar geçen zaman zarfında cereyan eden siyasi ahval hakkındaki nutukları” in Öztürk, *Atatürk'ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I*, 59-61.

(*milletimizin fitratın mutemahalli olduğu seairi insaniyenin derecesi ulviyetini ispat edecek*).⁶⁰⁶

At the beginning of this parliamentary speech, before he mentioned the ‘beginning stages of the World War’ and ‘the shameful act that belongs to the distant past’, Kemal asserted that there had never been massacres of Armenians in the country, by stating ‘We all know our country. Where in our country had massacres of Armenians taken place? Or where are they taking place?’ Kemal here concedes that some ‘shameful act’, some ‘disaster’, or as he would later put it in 1927 in *Nutuk*, some ‘mistreatment’ and ‘cruelties and murders’ had indeed taken place. As the full context of this parliamentary proceeding reflects, this concession did not deter him from immediately emphasizing murders that Armenians had committed in southern Turkey (Cilicia) and on the Eastern Front. He concluded that the Turkish nation was gifted with a sense of humanity: even as Armenians were murdering ‘our brethren’ in the south and on the Eastern Front, Turks willingly protected the vulnerable community of Armenians in Anatolia. Seven years later, Kemal addressed the same British communication in his *Nutuk*; however, in the master-narrative of modern Turkish history, the reference to ‘the shameful act’ disappeared. Kemal argued that the Allied allegations regarding the ‘Armenian massacres’ was the pretext to occupy Istanbul:

Did [Allied Powers] . . . plan to occupy Istanbul on the pretext that the Government could neither prevent the attacks against the Allied Powers (including the Greeks) nor put an end to the Armenian massacres—which, by the way, did not exist (*haddi zatında mevcut olmayan Ermeni kıtline nihayet verilmemiş olduğu bahanesiyle İstanbul’u da mı işgal eylemek kastinde idiler*)? I believe that later events have shown that [this suggestion] was the nearest of all to the truth. . . The assertions regarding the Armenian massacres were undoubtedly not in accordance with the fact.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁶ My translation. Öztürk, *Atatürk’ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I*, 66-67.

⁶⁰⁷ *A Speech delivered*, 328-329; *Nutuk-Söylev*, 508.

Kemal revisited the Armenian issue on 24 April 1920 one more time; this time in a secret proceeding. In the context of the developments in the Caucasia, he repeated that ‘Armenians are busy exterminating the Muslim population’. He stated that nationalist forces did not rush to the help of the Muslim population at the border ‘in order not to provoke the British and the Americans against us and in order not to raise any suspicions whatsoever about the repetition and continuation of the incident that somehow had taken place during the Great War’ (*her nasılsa Harb-i Umumide yapılmış olan vak’anın tekerrür ve tevalisine dair hiç bir zan ve şüphe vermemek için*).⁶⁰⁸ To Kemal, what happened in 1915 was some incident that ‘somehow’ happened during the Great War, and the secrecy of the proceedings did not encourage him to be more open about the nature of this ‘incident’. Only one week later, on 1 May 1920, once again in a secret proceeding, in the context of his discussion on the French occupation in the south and the situation at the Cilicia Front, Kemal repeated that some ‘bloody incidents occurred in this country between Armenians and our nation’, provoked by imperialist policies, and that Armenian policy has been to exterminate Muslims ‘wherever they find them’.⁶⁰⁹

5.3.2. Mustafa Kemal’s Letter of Protest to Chicherin (27 December 1920)⁶¹⁰

Soviet support was absolutely vital for Mustafa Kemal’s nationalist movement. Negotiations with the Bolsheviks for military and financial aid to Turkey and for opening a direct route between the two countries had been going on since July 1920.

⁶⁰⁸ Öztürk, *Atatürk’ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I*, 84.

⁶⁰⁹ Öztürk, *Atatürk’ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I*, 142.

⁶¹⁰ *Atatürk’ün Milli Dış Politikası I*, 242-245.

While the Turks were pushing hard for a treaty, Bolsheviks – for whom the Armenian case was also strong- temporized and demanded the ceding of the areas of Van, Bitlis and Mus to the Republic of Armenia.

In the context of these developments, Mustafa Kemal sends a furious letter of protest to Chicherin, Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, and states that these plans for the expansion of Armenia clearly conflict with the “principles of communism” and they would put the Russian government in a bad situation in the eyes of the “Western proletariat”. Kemal reminds Chicherin that Turkey is an ally of Soviet Socialist Republics in the struggle against the “imperialist policies of the colonialists in the Orient” on the one hand, and against the “capitalist regime in the West” on the other. He stresses that Turkey is ready to disseminate these ideas in the East and provide the Bolsheviks with the support of the Islamic world. Mustafa Kemal states that they expect Russia to cooperate in the East likewise and to explain to the “European proletariat” that the only reason behind the grudge nursed against the Turks by the imperialists and “the calumnies repeated without limits” (*son haddine kadar tekrarlanan iftiraların*) is the fear they [the Nationalist Movement] evoked in the beneficiaries of the colonial undertakings. After he reminds Chicherin that the ceding of the three vilayets is also against the principles of national self-determination, he emphasizes that they also reject altogether (*peşin olarak*) the historical evidence that could be used against Turkey (*bize karşı dermeyeran edilebilecek tarihi delilleri*):

The issue is known by everyone, and both Russian and Western statistics provide evidence to it (*ihdicaca salıhtır*): For the past few centuries, nowhere in our Eastern vilayets has there ever been an Armenian majority. And the bloody conflicts (*kanlı mücadeleler*) of the Turkish and Armenian peoples provoked by either the Czarist regime or the Western imperialism have caused human losses for one side as much as it has for the other side (*bir tarafa olduğu kadar öteki tarafa da can kaybına*

malolmuştur). After the withdrawals of the Russians in 1917, what Armenians have done in our Eastern vilayets (*Şark vilayetlerimizi ne halde bıraktıkları*) is a sufficient evidence of this.

Thus, as he had done in the Parliament in April 1920, Kemal once again re-conceptualizes the deportations and massacres of Armenians during the Great War as “the bloody conflicts” which resulted in human losses for both sides.⁶¹¹

5.3.3.A talk with Ankara Notables at the School of Agriculture (28.12.1920)⁶¹²:

In this public address, Mustafa Kemal first talks about the Wilson principles, with an emphasis on the article 12 that concerned Turkey, and how the Entente violated those principles acknowledged at Versailles by occupying Anatolia and began to display a “mentality transformation” (*zihniyet tebeddülü*). According to Mustafa Kemal, the reasons behind this could be explained in two main “conceptions” (*mutalealar*) the foreigners (*ecnebiler*) “invented against us to satisfy their own economic and political interests.” The first of these conceptions is, “so goes their claim (*güyâ*),” says Mustafa Kemal, “our nation is incompetent (*gayrimuktedir*) of administering the Christian minorities in line with the principles of equality and justice.” The second is that “because our nation is generally lacking in competence (*heyeti umumiyesiyle kabiliyetten mahrum bulunduğundan*), it had invaded the cultivated lands and left them in ruins (*bahçe halinde bulunan yerlere girmiş ve oralarını harabezara çevirmiş*).” The first conception smears the nation with “cruelty” (*zalimlik*), and the second, with “incompetence” (*kabiliyetsizlik*). He first attacks the

⁶¹¹ Mustafa Kemal deploys this “bloody conflict” trope in May 1920 during the secret parliamentary proceeding...but I spare its discussion to a later section to prevent redundancies in the text.

⁶¹² My impression is –since there is no citation of a newspaper at the end- this was a speech Mustafa Kemal prepared for the visit paid to him by the notables of Ankara. At the end of the document, there is a citation that reads as “Nutuk: Muhteviyatına ait vesaik 1927, Vesika 220, s.220-228”. Mustafa Kemal used this text also in *Nutuk*.

“incompetence” conception in the context of the growth of the Ottoman empire (“*a phenomenon like this could not emerge with the power of the sword only*”) and then firmly dismisses the allegations of cruelty, observing that “... no nation has respected (*riayet etmek*) the faith and customs of foreign elements (*ecnebi unsurların*) better than our nation.”⁶¹³

Mustafa Kemal explains how Mehmet, The Conquerer after the conquest of Istanbul left all the religious institutions intact and the capitulations extended to Christian minorities since then, and he talks about the oppressive policies of “those who claim to be the greatest and the most civilized nation of the world” against the Muslims in their colonies. And he continues:

Whatever has ever happened to non-muslim minorities living in our country, it has been the result of their own policies of partition (*iftirak siyaseti*) they have followed in a savage way (*sureti vahşiyanele takip ettikleri*) having been carried away by the foreign intrigues and having exploited their capitulations. Surely (*herhalde*) , some unwelcome circumstances (*sayani arzu olmayan bazı ahval*) that occurred in Turkey rest on many reasons and justifications (*birçok esbap ve mazerete istinat etmektedir*). And I can decisively argue that these circumstances occupy a much lower rank than the cruelties executed with no justification in the European states. (*Avrupa devletlerinde mazeretsiz irtikap edilmiş bunca itisafattan pek dun bir mertebededir*). The bloody policy (*hunrizane siyaset*) that Russia pursued against Poland for one and a half century, the atrocities she committed against the circassians in Cauciasia and the atrocities called the pogrom committed against the Jews (*pogram namiyle Musevilere tatbik ettiği mezalim*) are among the examples.⁶¹⁴

Mustafa Kemal once again alludes to the incidents of 1915 and calls them “some unwelcome circumstances that occurred in Turkey.” He argues they rest on “many reasons and justifications.” The primary reason Kemal stresses, as the quotation conveys, is the provocation thesis / trope *par excellence* of Turkish denial: Having collaborated with the foreign intrigues and having followed policies of

⁶¹³ “Ankara ileri gelenleriyle bir konuşma, 28.12.1920,” *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II* (1906–1938), 4-15.

⁶¹⁴ *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II* (1906–1938), 4-15.

partition in a savage way, Armenians are responsible for bringing their fate unto themselves. After externalizing the responsibility of 1915 to foreign intrigues and Armenians' own policies, Kemal also relativizes the violence of 1915 in the context of the cases of cruelties he selects from the world history, targeting the European states and the Czarist Russia respectively.

5.3.4. Interview with the Public Ledger, Philadelphia (26.2.1921)

The Public Ledger correspondent Clarence K. Streit submitted nineteen questions to Kemal on 26 February 1921⁶¹⁵ and he requested that Mustafa Kemal submit the answers in French. The seventh question of Streit concerns “1915” explicitly: “What is the official view of your government (*hükümetinizin resmi nokta i nazari*) on the Armenian massacres and deportations (*takdil ve tehciri*) committed during the Great War, as the rumors have been circulating forever?” The eighth question follows: “What information can you provide on the massacre (*katliam*) that is claimed to have been committed against the Turks by the Armenians and Anatolian Greeks (Rum)?” Mustafa Kemal calls allegations about the Armenian massacres and deportations as “great exaggerations pursued by the hostile slanderers” (*düşmanca ithamda bulunanların surdurdukları büyük mubalaglar*) and affirms that the issue of Armenian deportations “actually boils down to the following (*aslında suna inhisar etmektedir*)”:

⁶¹⁵ There is a copy of the two pages Streit submitted to Kemal on Feb 26, 1921— he had submitted his questions on two sheets of paper carrying the Public Ledger letterhead and in Arabic script. The documents I am working with in this section are Ottoman translations of Streit's questions and Kemal's answers. Kemal's answers in French are also available. See Atatürk'un *Atatürk'ün Milli Dış Politikası I*, 257-276.

When the Russian army had launched its great offensive on us in 1915, the Dashnaksutyun Armenian Committee serving the Czarist regime then had provoked the Armenian people lying behind our military regiments for a rebellion. Since we were forced into a withdrawal on the face of the superiority of the enemy in human power and equipment, we were seeing ourselves always stuck in between two fires. Our convoys for supplies and casualties were being ruthlessly massacred (*acımasızca katlediliyordu*), roads and bridges were being destroyed, and terror were reigning in the Turkish villages....

...The world public opinion that was almost indifferent to the treatment England deemed proper for Ireland during peace time and away of any war zone can't justly impeach us for a decision we had been forced to take on the deportation of the Armenian people. As opposed to the slanders cast against us, the deportees are alive and most of them would have returned to their homes if the Entente had not forced us into another war.⁶¹⁶

In response to Streit's following question on the atrocities committed against the Turkish people by the Armenians and Anatolian Greeks, Mustafa Kemal states that "it would be a long story." The massacres and the destruction committed by the Armenian *cethes* (bandits) is sufficiently known by everyone, as Mustafa Kemal puts it, and the information on these could also be obtained from General Harbord, who had been in Anatolia. Kemal tells Streit that Dashnaks continued their murders (*cinayetlerine*) until the Alexandropol treaty.

5.4. The Armenian Issue and 1915 in *Nutuk*

5.4.1. Introduction to *Nutuk*:

Mustafa Kemal delivered *Nutuk*, which was epic in proportion and content as the most important public address of modern Turkey, in 1927 in Ankara to the Congress of the Cumhuriyet Halk Firkasi [Republican People's Party] over six days for a duration of thirty-six hours and thirty-one minutes (October 15-20). With its size, it is regarded as "a record in the annals of autocracy" which dwarfs any address by

⁶¹⁶ *Atatürk'ün Milli Dış Politikası I*, 272-273.

Khrushchev or Castro.⁶¹⁷ This historical juncture corresponds to a period when all the opposition to Atatürk had been eliminated in the parliament, the single-party management had been consolidated, and Turkish National Assembly had become the party group of Republican People's Party [CHP]. Numerous Ittihadists had been executed after the Izmir assassination attempt against Atatürk in 1926. In other words, only in 1927 were the conditions ripe for Mustafa Kemal to determine the contents of and write the official history of the modern Turkey.

Nutuk, which describes the heroic accounts of the War of Independence of Turkey against the Entente (1919-1922) and other important domestic political incidents and diplomatic and military affairs of the Republic until 1927, dramatically foregrounds the role of its narrator in Turkish history with "much hyperbole."⁶¹⁸ In *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal reconstructs Turkish history, reframes the transition period from empire to republic, reinterprets the Ottoman past, and eventually re-invents the Turkish national identity.⁶¹⁹ Immediately after the delivery of *Nutuk*, alternative autobiographies and letters of defense were written by Mustafa Kemal's opponents like Kazim Karabekir and Halide Edip Adıvar but after 1925, the entire opposition with its press was silenced and many of these autobiographies were banned until 1960s. Some were published only after the 90s. With all the opposition silenced,

⁶¹⁷ Anderson, "Kemalism," 20.

⁶¹⁸ Hülya Adak, "National Myths and Self-Narrations: Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* and Halide Edip's Memoirs and the Turkish Ordeal," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:2/3, Spring/Summer 2003; also see, Taha Parla, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri: Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları Cilt 2*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991).

⁶¹⁹ Aysel Morin, "Crafting a nation: The mythic construction of the new Turkish identity in Atatürk's 'Nutuk' (January 1, 2004). *ETD collection for University of Nebraska - Lincoln*. Paper AAI3126958. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dissertations/AAI3126958>

Nutuk monopolized the writing of history of the Independence Struggle in Turkey as well as the establishment of the Turkish Republic.⁶²⁰

In *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal presents a plethora of historical documents mainly pertinent to the military-diplomatic affairs of the War of Independence. For many decades his interpretation of these documents “was taken as synonymous with historical fact.” Since 1927, *Nutuk* has been the “sacred text” of the Turkish Republic, although it is being challenged by scholars today.⁶²¹ In the final analysis, what makes *Nutuk* a sacred text? What rhetorical movements authoritatively invest this text with its mythical qualities? I argue that one way to understand the sacredness of official Turkish historiography and its main narratives is to understand how Atatürk rhetorically unified those narratives of the nation with his “prophet-like self” in *Nutuk*.

Firstly, *Nutuk* is a linear, progressive account of historical events beginning in 1919 narrated by an unchanging self who had a prophet-like calling to rescue the nation. This self had *a priori* knowledge how history would unravel and how the nationalist resistance would end with victory, even before the historical events took place.⁶²² No other moment in *Nutuk* illuminates Mustafa Kemal’s role in Turkish history as a “secular prophet” better than the following lines:

As you see, in order to carry out our resolution, questions had to be dealt with about which the nation had hitherto known practically nothing. It was imperative that questions which were considered dangerous to discuss publicly be discussed openly. We were compelled to rebel against the Ottoman Government, against the Padişah, against Caliph of all the Mohammedans, and we had to bring the whole nation and the army into a state of rebellion. It was essential that the entire nation take up arms against whoever would venture to attack the fatherland of Turks and Turkish independence. It would undoubtedly have been of little advantage if we had made clear to the public at the very beginning all the implications of a resolution of such

⁶²⁰ Hülya Adak, “National Myths and Self-Na(rra)tions,” 510.

⁶²¹ Hülya Adak, “National Myths and Self-Na(rra)tions,” 512.

⁶²² Adak, “National Myths and Self-Na(rra)tions,” 515.

far-reaching importance. On the contrary it was necessary to proceed by stages, utilizing all opportunities to prepare the feeling and the spirit of the nation and to try to reach our aim by degrees. This is actually what happened. If our attitude and actions during nine years are examined in their logical sequence, however, it becomes evident that our general behavior has never deviated from the lines laid down in our original resolution, nor from the purpose we had set out to achieve. In order to dispel any doubts which might be entertained, one fact is urged upon us for mutual examination. As the national struggle, carried on for the sole purpose of delivering the country from foreign invasion, developed and was crowned with success, it was natural and inevitable that it would gradually, step by step to the present day, have established all the principles and forms essential in government founded in national sovereignty. The sovereign of the dynasty who, thanks to his traditional instincts, foresaw this fatal course of historical events, declared himself from the very beginning the most embittered enemy of that national struggle. I, also from the first anticipated this historical progress. But I did not disclose all of my views although I have maintained them all the time. If I had spoken too much about future prospects our realistic endeavors would have been looked upon as dreams; and consequently from the outset it would have caused the alienation of those who – discouraged by the closeness of dangers that threatened from without – were fearful of possible changes which would be contrary to their tradition, their way of thinking and their psychology. The only practical and safe road to success lay in dealing with each problem at the right time. This was the way to ensure the development and restoration of the nation. This was how I acted....*To summarize what I have been saying, I may add that it was incumbent upon me to develop our entire social organization, step by step, until it corresponded to the great capability of progress which I perceived in the soul and future of the nation and which I kept to myself in my own consciousness as a national secret (my italics).*⁶²³

Secondly, in *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal is conjoined with a unified depiction of the nation; the nation is denied an autonomous existence apart from the “I” of the narrative.⁶²⁴ As Adak mentions, this depiction is not only anachronistic but also paradoxical considering the text starts with a description of the lack of ideological and strategic consensus among the variety of organizations throughout Anatolia and Istanbul. Therefore, she terms Mustafa Kemal’s voice in *Nutuk* as “the I-nation” that exists prior to history. Kayalı too affirms same issue. He argues Kemal’s *Nutuk* represents a “tortuous and pragmatic” period as if it was a “seamless movement, united and inexorably driven by Turkish national spirit.” The assumption of the

⁶²³ *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk 1927* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1981), 10-11. This is a translation that has extensively utilized the version published by K.F. Koehler, Leipzig, Germany, in 1929, but I think it is a much improved version.

⁶²⁴ Adak, “National Myths and Self-Narrations,” 516.

mainstream historiography, Kayalı points out, is that the Turkish nation had come of age long time ago, but had been repressed by the imperial structures and culture and it was finally liberated by Mustafa Kemal, the heroic leader of the War of Independence. Turks' retrospective designation of the era as national liberation "affirms a teleology of national redemption with little regard to the constitutive role of unfolding political, social, military and international circumstances and contingencies."⁶²⁵ The primary textual origin of this "teleology of national redemption" in Turkish historiography is *Nutuk*.

Thirdly, a myth of rebirth is linked to the narrative of discontinuity. In *Nutuk*, the Sultanate and the Caliphate are presented as useless and backward institutions that can't be reconciled with modernization; in fact, all the Ottoman sultans are degraded as "a bunch of madmen" "moronic and ignorant" "animals."⁶²⁶

...To labour for the maintenance of the Ottoman dynasty and its sovereign would have been to inflict the greatest harm upon the Turkish nation; for, if its independence could have been secured at the price of every possible sacrifice, it could not have been regarded as secure so long as the Sultanate existed. How could it be deemed permissible that a crowd of madmen, united by neither a moral nor a spiritual bond to the country or the nation as a whole, could still be trusted to protect the independence and the dignity of the nation and the State? As for the Caliphate, it could only have been a laughing-stock in the eyes of the civilized world, enjoying the blessings of science.⁶²⁷

Another context where Mustafa Kemal starkly expresses this discontinuity between the Republic and the Empire is the section where he talks about the beginning days of the talks at Lausanne: "While we were not guilty of the neglect and the errors of the past and, in reality, it was not ourselves from whom they ought to have demanded the

⁶²⁵ Hasan Kayalı, "The Struggle for Independence," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 4: Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 114, 121.

⁶²⁶ Adak, "National Myths and Self-Narrations," 516.

⁶²⁷ *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal*, 10.

settlement of accounts that had accumulated during the past centuries, it was however our duty to bear the responsibility for them before the world.”⁶²⁸ As I have mentioned in the Introduction, one of the main concerns that frames all tropes of discontinuity in *Nutuk* in the making of the myth of rebirth is to deny the role Ittihadists played in the War of Independence and in the foundation of the new Turkish Republic. Atatürk prepared and delivered *Nutuk* one year after Ittihadists against his rule attempted to assassinate him in Izmir in 1926; many Ittihadists were tried and executed. The erasure of the legacy of the Ittihadists in the making of the new Republic also represses the collective guilt associated with the Armenian deportations and massacres in the national memory.

It should be noted here that the Alphabet Reform of 1928, which changed the Turkish script from Arabic to Latin letters with the stroke of a pen, dramatically compounded this problem of discontinuity between the Ottoman past and modern Turkey. Turkey all of a sudden became a society that could not read its own newspapers, letters, and diaries if they were written before 1928, a society that has become totally dependent on official history as the state defined it.⁶²⁹ This is one of the most important social factors that contributed to *Nutuk*'s endurance as an unchallenged myth for so many decades.

In *Nutuk*, there is not a profuse discussion of 1915 or of the plight of Armenians during the Great War. However, Kemal at the very beginning of this text – literally within the first few pages- talks about the Armenian deportations and calls the

⁶²⁸ *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal*, 586

⁶²⁹ Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 11.

violence as “some extortions and cruelties” and stresses that “the people” had never been involved in “the excesses” that occurred. That Kemal makes a case for the Armenian deportations at the very beginning of this most important text of the Turkish republic signals the foundational importance of the issue for the new state. As the analysis I present below illustrates, what Mustafa Kemal mainly foregrounds about the Armenians are the atrocities they commit in collaboration with the French occupying forces during the Turkish War of Independence or in Caucasia in the making of the new Armenian state. He frames the broader “Armenian Question” almost always with the problem of Christian minorities collaborating with the Western imperialists during the demise of the Empire. I argue these should be regarded as the foundational narratives that determined what should be remembered and forgotten about the Armenians in the new Turkish Republic and within its new Turkish historiography.

5.4.2. Ottoman Armenians in *Nutuk*

Nutuk and hence the new history of the Republic of Turkey begins the day Mustafa Kemal set foot in the Anatolian city of Samsun on the 19th May, 1919. He begins describing scenes of very severe conditions from a devastated Empire that signed an armistice in the aftermath of the Great War. The very first lines of *Nutuk* are spared for a commanding inventory of those Kemal holds responsible for the catastrophe before his eyes.

First in the list come the leaders of the Committee and Union and Progress. Kemal does not name them, they are identified as “those who had driven the people and the country into the general conflict,” and who “had fled and cared for nothing but their own safety.” Vahdettin, “the degenerate occupant of the throne and the

Caliphate” who “was seeking some despicable way to save his person and his throne, the only objects of his anxiety” comes next. The Cabinet that “was weak, and lacked dignity and courage” under the leadership of Damat Ferit Pasha follows. Then come the Entente Powers who occupied the country at every front with no respect to the terms of the armistice. In conclusion, Mustafa Kemal stresses the role “Christian elements” have been playing in this devastation: They were “at work all over the country, either openly or in secret, trying to realize their own particular ambitions and thereby hasten the breakdown of the state.”⁶³⁰ The Greek organization “Mavra Mira” established by the Patriarchate in Istanbul was forming bands, organizing meetings and making propaganda in the vilayets, supported by the Greek Red Cross and the official Emigrants Commission. The Armenian Patriarchate, Zaven Efendi, also worked in connection with the “Mavra Mira” and Mustafa Kemal points out that “the preparations made by the Armenians progressed side by side with those made by the Greeks.” Lastly, he mentions “a society called the ‘Pontus’ at Trabzon, Samsun and other places along the whole of the Black Sea Coast.” “This was the position at that time,” concludes Mustafa Kemal the very first page of *Nutuk*.

The second section, which is within the first ten pages of a document that is about six hundred pages (and took almost thirty-seven hours to recite), summarizes the objects and political aims of the organizations developing counter-measures. Here in the context of the objectives of the “Society for the Defense of the National Rights of the Eastern Provinces”⁶³¹ Kemal addresses –for the first and the last time in *Nutuk* -

⁶³⁰ *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal*, 1.

⁶³¹ The settlement of the Armenian Question was one of the issues at Paris Conference in 1919. The conference eventually decided to establish an independent Armenian state in eastern Anatolia, fulfilling

the issue of Armenian deportations. Among the objectives of this major defense organization of the Eastern provinces are to use of all lawful means to ensure the free exercise and development of the religious and political rights for all elements inhabiting these provinces, to defend the historical and national rights of the Mohamedan population of these provinces, and “to institute an impartial inquiry for the purpose of discovering the motives, the instigators and agitators implicated in the extortions and cruelties (*şark vilayetlerinde vaki olan mezalim ve cinayatin*)⁶³² committed in the Eastern provinces, so that the guilty ones might be punished without delay.”⁶³³ Mustafa Kemal points out that the Erzurum branch of this organization undertakes to defend the rights of the Turks in the Eastern Provinces and at the same time, it undertakes to “inform the civilized world by means of convincing documents that the people had never been involved in the excesses that occurred during the deportations⁶³⁴ (*tehcir esnasında yapılan suimamelatta milletin kat’iyyen methaldar bulunmadığını*) , that the property of Armenians had been protected up to the time when country was invaded by the Russians, on the other hand, that the Mohamedans had been compelled to suffer from the cruelest acts of violence and that some

the Armenian nationalists’ expansionist demands. The agreement from the beginning was a dead letter on the face of the Turkish opposition. The geographical location of the area meant that enforcing the decision in the face of Turkish armed opposition – especially in the East- would have necessitated a large-scale military invasion, and the Entente could not commit to that at the point. So Society for the Defense of the national Rights of Eastern Anatolia was founded on the basis of the fact the Armenian claims to the six eastern provinces had received a sympathetic reception at the Paris Conference and their major mission was to defend the territorial integrity of these six vilayets against the threat of an expanding Armenia. See Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 151-156.

⁶³² Mustafa Kemal here says “mezalim and cinayat” which I think must be translated as “cruelties and murders” but both the Koehler’s and the Prime Ministry’s texts translate this section as “extortions and cruelties.” See *Nutuk-Söylev*, 6; *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* , 3.

⁶³³ See *Nutuk-Söylev*, 6; *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* , 3

⁶³⁴ I translate this section on my own since I think neither Koehler nor the Prime Ministry’s version truthfully reflects what Atatürk says here in Ottoman.

Armenians who had been saved from deportation had, in disobedience of orders, attacked their own protectors.”⁶³⁵

Members of the Erzurum branch, Mustafa Kemal informs his audience, had also studied the propaganda circulated in these provinces as well as the Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian questions from a scientific and historical perspective. They resolved to concentrate their further efforts on the following points: “1. On no account to emigrate (*kat’iyyen muhaceret etmemek*) , 2. Forthwith to form scientific, economic, and religious organizations, 3.To unite in the defense of even the smallest part of the Eastern provinces that might be attacked.”⁶³⁶ He concludes his discussion with the following words:

From the foregoing statements, it appears to me to be clearly evident that the possible cession of the Eastern Provinces to Armenia was the most important reason for this society having been formed. They anticipated that this possibility might become a reality if those who tried to prove that the Armenians were in the majority in these provinces, claiming the oldest historical rights, were to succeed in misleading the public opinion of the world by alleged scientific and historic documents and *by perpetuating the calumny that the Mohamedan population was composed of savages whose chief occupation was to massacre Armenians.*⁶³⁷ Consequently, the Society aimed at the defense of the national and historic rights by corresponding methods and arguments.

Mustafa Kemal clarifies the Society’s concerns by sharing a telegram (3 June 1919) he had sent to Grand Vezir Ferit Pasha, who was invited to the Paris Peace Conference:

...From the accounts that have reached to us, His Highness...has affirmed that he has accepted the principle of Armenian autonomy...The population of the Eastern provinces, astounded at this, have felt themselves bound to demand an explanation...the national will and the conception of the government on the questions of a wide autonomy being granted to Armenia and the acceptance of a foreign protectorate are not in accord with one another. We can not help feeling seriously uneasy about these questions...In these circumstances, it is necessary that the delegates of the Unions for the Defense of the National Rights and the Anti-

⁶³⁵ *Nutuk-Söylev*, 6.

⁶³⁶ *Nutuk*, 6; *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 3-4.

⁶³⁷ My italics.

annexation Unions in the Vilayets, their branches and the representatives of those communities where the national organization has not yet been completed, appeal to the Grand Vezir, and directly to the Sultan himself, insisting upon the conditions that are vital to the nation...and demanding that the principles of defense on which the delegation now ready to start will lean for support be brought officially to the knowledge of the country.⁶³⁸

The second major moment in *Nutuk* on the Ottoman Armenians comes in the context of Mustafa Kemal's discussion of the issue of American mandate for Turkey.⁶³⁹ In this section, before he conveys his own opinion on the question of an American mandate, Kemal first presents a plethora of correspondence carried on at Erzurum.⁶⁴⁰ The very first telegram summarizes what Bekir Sami Bey, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, proposed the Nationalist Movement should lay before Wilson, the Senate and the American Congress.

Bekir Sami Bey was of the opinion that were the Ottoman empire to be divided into several zones only an American mandate would "guarantee the integrity of our country." This outcome would be "far better than independence that would be restricted to two or three provinces." The considerations to be laid before the American senate were "the establishment of a lawful government, the extension of public education, the guarantee of freedom of education and religion, the abolition of the Capitulation, and the acceptance of a general mandate over the whole of the

⁶³⁸ *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 21-22.

⁶³⁹ In the Paris Conference, in answer to the request that the United States establish a mandate in Armenia, the Harbord Commission, a fact-finding mission comparable to the King-Crane commission, toured Anatolia in September 1919. It recommended an American mandate in all Anatolia, with a large degree of autonomy for the Turks. The 12th of Wilson's 14 Points had assured the Turkish portions of the Empire a 'secure sovereignty' and the idea of American mandate had appealed to many Turks. Mustafa Kemal was against it and in *Nutuk* he calls those who were pro-American Mandate as "traitors."

⁶⁴⁰ Narrating the issue through the presentation of a series of correspondence – telegrams and letters exchanged- is one of the major rhetorical features of *Nutuk*. This also makes it a very challenging and tedious text to read.

empire by the government of the United States.”⁶⁴¹ Mustafa Kemal responded by asking what was to be understood by the development and extension of public education:

The first thing about it that strikes us that it means the establishment of American schools in every part of the country. At present we have about 25 educational establishments at Sivas , one of them alone being attended by about 1,500 Armenians. This being so, how can the extension of Ottoman and Islamic teaching be brought into agreement with this proposition? The paragraph relating to freedom in education and religion is, to a certain extent, important. But what particular signification can it have if the privileges of the Patriarchates still exist?⁶⁴²

After conveying the full text of Halide Edip’s⁶⁴³ letter addressed to him, Mustafa Kemal presents a telegram that lists the resolutions all political parties in Istanbul had unanimously decided to send to the American Embassy. The very first resolution (which would elicit a very harsh response from Mustafa Kemal) stated that the Committee was of the opinion that “Turks in the Eastern Provinces and prominent persons at the head of the Government would be willing to agree to the surrender of part of the territory in the east of Turkey to form, eventually an Armenian state, on the

⁶⁴¹ *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 71.

⁶⁴² *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 73.

⁶⁴³ Halide Edip , prolific woman writer and a political figure, had been very influential in the Turkish nationalism movement a decade before the Independence Struggle of Turkey. In 1910 she had embraced Turanism and had been called “The Mother of the Turk” among the pan-Turanistic organizations. At the end of the Great War, Edip vouched for the American Mandate for the Ottoman Empire. She believed this was the only solution if the territories held by the Empire were not to be compromised. An American Protectorate, Edip believed, would entail siding with a stronger power than Europe, which would protect Turkey from the threats of the Christian minorities empowered by the Allies. The Second volume of her autobiography *The Turkish Ordeal*, narrating Edip’s pivotal role in the Independence Struggle, was a text of self-defense written as a response to Nutuk, which dismissed Edip’s role entirely and characterized her as “mandaci-traitor” (mandaci refers to a person who advocates the mandate of a foreign power over national and political autonomy) of the National Struggle, based on a letter Edip sent to Mustafa Kemal (this is the letter Mustafa Kemal presents in Nutuk). As was the case with other political opponents of Mustafa Kemal, Edip’s defense did not enjoy much publicity in Turkey between 1927 and 1935, and only after 1962, *The Turkish Ordeal* was translated into Turkish as *Türkün Ateşle İmtihanı*. Adak mentions until recently in modern Turkey she paradoxically remained the writer of the most important works of the Turkish nationalist literature, *Ateşten Gömlek* and *Vurun Kahpeye*, but a “mandaci-traitor” of the Turkish nation nonetheless. See Hülya Adak, “National Myths and Self-Na(rra)tions: Mustafa Kemal’s *Nutuk* and Halide Edip’s *Memoirs and the Turkish Ordeal*,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:2/3, Spring/Summer 2003.

condition that their own welfare and future development would be duly taken into consideration.” Mustafa Kemal, the ardent nationalist, rejected the Committee’s proposal to create a “new Armenia” with “the deepest regrets and pity”:

In paragraph I the question of ceding a part of the territory of the Eastern Provinces to Armenia is mentioned. It is not only practically impossible today to cede even an inch of this territory to the Armenians, but it would be dangerous, considering that the overwhelming majority of the population consists of Turks and Kurds, to settle the Armenians there en masse, even if they cared to dwell there again in face of the violent irritation and thirst for revenge that prevail among these elements. The widest concessions that could be granted to the non-offending Ottoman Armenians would be, consequently, to permit their return to their countries on equitable and equal terms. To contend that a compact Armenian population is dwelling between Erzincan and Sivas, as laid down for in paragraph III, shows complete ignorance of the actual facts. Even before the war, the inhabitants of these districts consisted of a preponderating Turkish majority, an infinitesimal proportion of Kurds, who are known by the name of “Zaza” and an insignificant number of Armenians - today there are scarcely enough to be worth mentioning. These committees should therefore first of all recognize the limitations of their competence and if they really want to do something useful, take the trouble to study the statistics and graphic delineations drawn up for the Peace Negotiations by the Ministries of War and Foreign Affairs.

Mustafa Kemal talks about Armenians in *Nutuk* on two more occasions.⁶⁴⁴

Their remaining traces, I argue, constituted the most salient memory tropes for the Ottoman Armenians that endured within the official Turkish historiography: the atrocities that Armenians committed in southern Turkey under the protection of the French occupiers and those they committed in the East (within the territories of the new Armenian state founded in 1918), which would eventually trigger a full scale Turkish offensive on the Republic of Armenia in 1920. In *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal’s rhetoric regarding the atrocities Armenians suffered at the hands of the Turks and Kurds during the deportations of 1915 is limited to expressions such as “extortions and cruelties” and some “excesses.” In contrast, he does not hesitate to define the Armenian cruelties “as savagery unique in history” (...*tarihde emsali namesbuk olan*

⁶⁴⁴ “Armenians” and “Armenia” make other insignificant appearances throughout *Nutuk* that I did not include in my discussion here. See *Nutuk-Söylev*, 36, 346, 410-412, 784.

*bu vahşetin faili Ermenilerdi*⁶⁴⁵) or to elaborate their details in the most vivid language possible.

One of these occasions is the section where Mustafa Kemal talks about the Eastern military expedition on the Republic of Armenia. He explains the reasons behind this expedition in the following words:

..after the Armistice of Mudros the Armenians did not cease for a moment to massacre the Turks en masse in the interior of Armenia as well as in the border districts (*Ermeniler gerek Ermenistan dahilinde , gerek hududa mücavir mahallelerde , Türkleri kütle halinde katilden bir an fariğ olmuyorlardı*). In the autumn of the year 1920 the Armenian atrocities (*Ermeni mezalimi*) became intolerable. We decided to send an expedition to Armenia.⁶⁴⁶

The other occasion concerns the massacres in the South. Mustafa Kemal presents a communication received from Istanbul Government dated 19 February 1920. According to this communication, an English diplomatic representative from the Foreign Office had informed the Government that the capital (İstanbul) would be left to the Ottoman Empire if “Armenian massacres” (*Ermeni kıtalı*) ceased forthwith together with the Nationalist operations against the Allied troops including the Greeks. Otherwise, the peace conditions of the Empire would be altered. As I have mentioned above, the Allied propaganda machine was working to discredit Mustafa Kemal’s resistance movement by declaring they were Ittihadists and they were going to finish the Ittihadists’ job by massacring the remaining Anatolian Christians. “In order to understand how ill-advised this proposal was,” Mustafa Kemal responds, “we shall recall certain phases of the situation as they presented themselves at that time”:

The assertions regarding the Armenian massacres were undoubtedly not in accordance with the fact. For the Armenians in the South, armed by foreign troops and encouraged by the protection they enjoyed, molested (*tasallut etmekte idiler*) the

⁶⁴⁵ *Nutuk-Söylev*, 510.

⁶⁴⁶ *Nutuk-Söylev*, 652.

Mohamedans in their district. Animated with the spirit of revenge, they pursued a relentless policy of murder and annihilation (*katil ve imha siyasetine*) everywhere. This was responsible for the tragic incident at Maraş. Making common cause with the foreign troops, the Armenians had completely destroyed an old Mohamedan town like Maras (*Maras gibi kadim bir İslâm beldesini hak ile yeksan eylemişlerdi*) by their artillery and machine-gun fire. They killed⁶⁴⁷ thousands of innocent and defenceless women and children (*Binlerce aciz ve masum valide ve çocukları kahr u imha eylemişlerdi*). The Armenians were the instigators of these atrocities, which were unique in history (*tarihte emsali nabesbuk olan bu vahşetin faili Ermenilerdi*). The Mohamedans had merely offered resistance and had defended themselves with the object of saving their lives and their honor. The telegram which the Americans, who had remained in town with the Mohamedans during the five days that the massacres continued, had sent to their representative in Istanbul clearly indicates in an indisputable manner who were the originators of this tragedy. Threatened by the bayonets of the Armenians, who were armed to the teeth, the Mohamedans in the vilayet of Adana were at that time in danger of being annihilated (*her dakika katliama maruz bulunuyorlardı*). While this policy of oppression and annihilation (*bu zulum ve imha siyaseti*) carried on against the Mohamedans, who were only trying to defend their life and their independence, should have arrested the attention of the civilized world and excited their commiseration, how could the denials or the proposal made to us to abandon the attitude attributed to us be taken seriously?...The truth was that our nation had never taken up an aggressive attitude anywhere against any foreigner without good reason.⁶⁴⁸

This characterization of Maras massacre by Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk* captures almost all the resilient memory tropes that are still in currency in contemporary Turkey: “Armenians and the spirit of revenge”, “Armenians completely destroying old Mohamedan towns”, “Armenians murdering and annihilating thousands of innocent women and children”, “Armenians, the instigators of atrocities unique in history.” It would not be wrong to argue that the Armenian atrocities in Maras were mythologized by Kemal in *Nutuk*. One simple evidence for the enduring legacy of this myth in Turkey: One of the foremost nationalist campaigns launched against the 2008 Apology Campaign of the Turkish intellectuals quotes Kemal at the center of its Web page *ozurbekliyorum.com* (Iexpectanapology.com) with his words on the Maras massacres

⁶⁴⁷ Mustafa Kemal in the original Ottoman text of *Nutuk* uses a much stronger word than “killed” here; he says “kahr u imha” – in contemporary Turkish “ezip yoketmek”, and in English, which is lost in the translation of Koehler, that would be something like “to destroy / to crush and annihilate / exterminate”.

⁶⁴⁸ *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 329-330; *Nutuk-Söylev*, 508-510.

lifted from *Nutuk*: ‘They annihilated thousands of innocent and defenseless women and children. The Armenians were the instigators of this savagery unique in history’.⁶⁴⁹

5.5. Atatürk’s Position and the Contemporary Denial

Does Mustafa Kemal’s position and the rhetoric he deploys in expressing this position differ from other Turkish denialist accounts? I argue that Kemal’s version is not fundamentally different from the official Turkish thesis that does, after all, also acknowledge there “excesses” and “negligence” occurred during the deportations.

For instance, the diplomat Kamuran Gürün, one of the major proponents of the official thesis and the author of *The Armenian File*, one of the most authoritative books on the Armenian issue within Turkey, writes as follows:

Various deaths occurred for various reasons during the relocation. Some deaths were due to epidemics, some were due to climatic factors, some were due to the hardships suffered during the journey, *some were due to attacks, because official did not protect them or because officials engaged in illegal acts*⁶⁵⁰...many others died fighting against the Turks in the Russian army which they joined as volunteers.⁶⁵¹

One of the younger spokesmen of the official Turkish theses, Sedat Laçiner deploys more sophisticated and empathic rhetoric about “1915.” But not even this somewhat tormented account deviates from the official thesis that the violence amounted to no more than isolated incidents of “negligence.” In the context of a discussion where he talks about the rising nationalisms in the Empire and the

⁶⁴⁹ In December 2008, two hundred Turkish intellectuals launched an Internet signature campaign for an apology to Armenians for the 1915 deportations. See the campaign website at www.ozurdiliyoruz.com (viewed 15 January 2010). Also see www.ozurbekliyorum.com launched against the former by the ultra-nationalist groups; this site has an English version as well: <http://www.iexpectanapology.com> (viewed 15 January 2010).

⁶⁵⁰ My italics.

⁶⁵¹ Gürün, *The Armenian File*, 12.

predisposition of the Ittihadists for violent and military methods and their lack of affinity for democratic solutions, Laçiner writes that the administration responded to the Armenian rebellions “only with military means” completely ignoring the political and social dimensions of the issue and “1915” constitutes the final station of this “hall of mistakes” (*hatalar silsilesi*). The insufficiency of the state and the incompetency of the administrators signaled that a mass movement of this scale (*böylesine büyük bir kitlesel hareketin*) would rapidly turn into a disaster (*felaket*):

In the end, the decision was executed and the expected came true (*beklenen gerçekleşmiş*), many people, having fallen ill on the roads, lost their lives due to factors such as hunger, climactic conditions etc. Because of the enmity they nurtured towards the Armenians during the deportations, some administrators, local leaders and some individuals and groups among the people attacked the Armenians, hundreds of thousands of people were deprived of their home and homeland, families fell apart on the roads, people lost their most beloved. Emigration (*göç*) has increased the enmity between the Turks and Armenians, even those Armenians who had nothing to do with these kinds of political conflicts have felt obliged to take sides in the midst of this spiral of hatred. Up to this point, it is not possible not to acknowledge Armenians to be right....The State is obligated to protect her citizens. It can make decisions of necessity like the relocation. But the life, property and honor of the emigrating people (*göç eden kişilerin*) are under the protection of the state and state is the sole responsible party (*bunun sorumlusu da devletin kendisidir*). The Ottoman State failed the test in this. It should have been predicted in advance that thousands of Armenians would die during the emigration, that there would be attacks on the emigrants. In this respect, it is clear that The Committee of Union and Progress and The Ottoman Empire owe an apology to Armenians who were their citizens. But this apology can't be a “genocide apology”, it can't even be a “massacre apology”. In fact, this apology has partially taken place and many Ottoman administrators who had done wrongs during the deportation have been executed or punished in different ways. Furthermore, this punishment has gone such a long way that the execution decisions surpass even those of the Nuremberg Trials...If Ottoman administrators have made a mistake, this is not a mistake of “genocide” or “massacre”. It is at most a “negligence” and there is almost no state that has not made similar mistakes, that has not had similar negligence (*Olsa olsa ihmaldir ve benzeri hataları, yanlışları, ve ihmalleri yapmayan devlet yok gibidir*).⁶⁵²

Despite such reasonable “negligence,” Laçiner (in the 2005 edition of his text) goes so far as to argue that the Ottoman State and the Ittihadists should apologize for their “mistakes.” If Talat Pasha still lived, he would be 133, Enver would be 124! The fact is

⁶⁵² Sedat Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması* (Ankara: USAK Yayınları, 2005), 19-20.

that Turkish official thesis has always conceded that some degree of “cruelty and extortions” was inflicted on the Armenian community. This concession is always couched in the context of the official qualification –the deportations were necessitated by the logic of war and cannot therefore be portrayed as organized, pre-meditated, or “intentional” mass-murder. Laçiner acknowledges the need for an apology but stresses that this can’t even be a “massacre apology” and that “this is not a mistake of genocide or massacre”. Furthermore, Laçiner’s discussion of 1915 concedes that the Committee of Union and Progress was so disturbed by the “cruelties and extortions” that it took action to punish those it held responsible for the violence. In fact, the ex-President of the Turkish Historical Society, Yusuf Halaçoğlu is expected to soon release a book that examines how the CUP sought to punish those responsible.⁶⁵³

5.6.Conclusion

In addition to being a soldier, a diplomat, a politician, and a state-maker, Mustafa Kemal was also a pragmatist. He knew how to deploy rhetoric to suit the changing needs of his nation. This becomes very salient when one surveys the entire corpus of Mustafa Kemal across time and across a variety of topics. One example is his “anti-imperialist” talk. The high point of his anti-imperialist rhetoric corresponds to the period of early 1920 to early 1922. Most of this takes place either in the context of correspondence with Soviet Russia or in communication of his correspondence regarding the negotiations with the Bolsheviks on the Eastern Front, or in the National

⁶⁵³ See Khatchig Mouradian, “An Interview with Hilmar Kaiser,” *The Armenian Weekly*, 8 March, 2008.

Assembly.⁶⁵⁴ The Nationalists had been negotiating with the Bolsheviks for military and financial aid from July 1920 onwards, and even if the expected supplies began to flow after September 1921, “they played a crucial role in re-arming the nationalist forces.”⁶⁵⁵

Besides the negotiations with the Bolsheviks, Mustafa Kemal’s anti-imperialist rhetoric also manifests itself in the context of the communication prepared to seek the solidarity of the Islamic world and the Muslims under colonial oppression. This had always been a major source of anxiety especially for the British with huge Muslim populations in her colonies. This is not to deny that the partition plan of Anatolia in the aftermath of the Mudros Armistice, the occupation of Istanbul by the British and the Treaty of Sevres signed in August 1920 have all dramatically energized Kemal’s independence struggle as an anti-imperialist one.⁶⁵⁶ After the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, however, with the onset of a period of domestic Westernization and of new diplomatic and economic alliances with the West, this emphasis on anti-imperialism becomes almost impossible to observe in Atatürk’s discourse.

⁶⁵⁴ In chronological order: *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri III (1918–1937)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1961), 8; *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV (1917–1938)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1964), 304-305, 338-339, 342, 355, 367, 319-326; Öztürk, *Atatürk’ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları I*, 252-253; *Atatürk’ün Milli Dış Politikası I*, 188-189, 202-206; 523-528; *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, Tamim ve Telgrafları V*, 9; *Atatürk’ün Milli Dış Politikası I*, 327; Öztürk, *Atatürk’ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları, II*, 662; Sadi Borak, *Atatürk’ün Resmi Yayınlara Girmemiş Söylev, Demeç, Yazışma ve Söyleşileri*, 173-174; *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, 22-30; Öztürk, *Atatürk’ün T.B.M.M. Açık ve Gizli Oturumlarındaki Konuşmaları II*, 758; Borak, *Atatürk’ün Resmi Yayınlara Girmemiş Söylev Demeç Yazışma ve Söyleşileri*, 179-183.

⁶⁵⁵ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 158.

⁶⁵⁶ See Kayalı, “Struggle for Independence,” 131.

Some argue that Mustafa Kemal approached the Armenian issue from the perspective of the issue of minorities.⁶⁵⁷ This view not only diminishes the deep-seated Turkish fears about the Armenians, it naively overlooks the contemporary salience of “Sevres Syndrome.” As Kayalı points out, for an international agreement that was never implemented, Sevres – by formalizing the British occupation and stipulating an Armenian state – “has had a remarkable legacy in Turkey and retains a daunting place in the collective national memory as the paramount symbol of subjugation and capitulation.”⁶⁵⁸ It not only energized Mustafa Kemal’s War of Independence as an anti-imperialist movement, but also augmented the anti-Christian elan of the “Anatolian Movement.”⁶⁵⁹ What becomes salient in the analysis of the foundational master-narrative of the Turkish nation is that the problem of “1915” was not presented merely as a ‘minority issue’, it was framed as a issue that represented the fragility of the territorial integrity of Anatolia; in Atatürk’s words, “the possible cession of the Eastern Provinces to Armenia was the most important reason” that galvanized the independence struggle. That Ogun Samast, Dink’s murder suspect, posed Atatürk’s words that captured this very fragility: “The land of the nation is sacred; it can’t be left to its fate.”

Therefore, I argue, perhaps Turkish fears about the issue of territorial claims in understanding Turkish denial should not be set aside too quickly, even if they have no

⁶⁵⁷ Ahmet Faruk Kılıç, “Azınlıklar Problemi Bağlamında Atatürk ve Ermeni Sorunu,” *Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, Ermeni Araştırmaları Enstitüsü*, <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=YayınIcerik&IcerikNo=60>

⁶⁵⁸ Kayalı, “Struggle for Independence,” 131.

⁶⁵⁹ Kayalı, “Struggle for Independence,” 114, 121.

validity in international law⁶⁶⁰. As Amin Maalouf puts it in *On Identity*, “The emotions of fear or insecurity don’t always obey rational considerations. They may be

⁶⁶⁰ Today, before the “genocide allegations” and the problem of the closure of the Turkish-Armenian border since 1993, two main problems are regarded as the most important obstacles that prevent the normalization of the relations between Turkey and Armenia. One is the Karabag conflict. The other is the Armenia’s hesitation to recognize the territorial integrity of the Republic Turkey. The issue here is two-fold. Firstly, Despite Turkey’s demands, Armenia, after the Independence, has hesitated to reaffirm the Kars and Gumru Treaties of 1921 that defined the border between Turkey and Armenia. Moreover, the Armenian Parliament in 1991 declared that it did not recognize Kars and Gumru Treaties. A diplomatic reassurance since then has not been received from Armenia due to the influence of irredentist Armenian nationalists in domestic politics (both ex-president Kocharian and current president Sarkisyan are from Karabag). Secondly, according to the 11th article of the Declaration of Independence, “the Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia.” The Armenian Constitution stipulates in its very first line that “The Armenian People”, recognizes “as a basis the fundamental principles of Armenian statehood and the national aspirations engraved in the Declaration of Independence of Armenia.” Based on this, Turkey claims Armenia does not recognize her territorial integrity by constitutionally defining “Western Armenia,” which is “Eastern Anatolia” within the domain of the “fatherland.” See, Aybars Gorgulu, *Türkiye -Ermenistan İlişkileri: Bir Kısır Döngü*, Dis Politika Analiz Serisi-8, TESEV, Mayıs 2008, Gareth Winrow, *Turkey and the Caucasus: Domestic Interests and Security CÖnce rms*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000, p.12. In the context of these standing legal issues, Armenian activism around the issue of “land reparations” continue to agitate and galvanize Turkish anxieties around Eastern Anatolia. A recent website established by the American-Armenian activist David Davidian introduces the issue of “land reparations” in its opening page as follows: “Today’s Armenia is not the culmination of natural cultural process, but rather a geopolitical repository for the survivors of that genocide. This ex-Soviet Republic is a state subject to Great Power political manipulation and survives at the vagaries of its neighbours. It is a landlocked state, not self-sustaining, lacks sovereign access to Black Sea ports, and currently over 75% of whose borders are under blockade. Reparations from the Turkish state to the Armenian people for the crime of genocide must include a land transfer for Armenia to exist as a self-sustaining state. Sovereign access to the Black sea is the requisite access to its survival. The accompanying regional map delineates the extent of this compensatory land transfer.” The map Davidian promotes in his website points to an Armenia much smaller than what was claimed by ASALA from the late 70s to mid 80s in line with an “Israel model” in Eastern Anatolia. See regionalkinetics.com. CIA’s current factbook on Armenia has very recently removed a previous passage that used to say, “traditional demands regarding former Armenian lands in Turkey have subsided.” [Go to the library and find out which year is the break year]. In the final analysis, as everybody does in their own fields, I chat about this issue with my colleagues all the time. Certainly nobody has data to back their claims, but there seems to be a consensus in these daily conversations that the real reason for the ongoing Armenian enmity is not about human loss, it is not about “genocide” per se, but it is about “the territory” – that Armenians, after Kars and Gumru treaties that came after the Turkish offensives in 1920, have really been cornered into a very landlocked, barren, infertile territory devoid any natural resources. It is noteworthy that as soon as the Republic of Armenia gained independence in 1991, they occupied Karabag, leaving more than a million Azerbaijani refugees in misery. 20% of Azerbaijan remains to be occupied by Armenia as we speak today, which is called “the mountainous Karabag issue” in international relations now. Turkey closed its Armenian border in 1993 in protest of Armenia’s invasion of Azerbaijan, which continues to have fatal consequences for Armenia: 55% of the population lives under poverty line, and monthly average income per capita is 80 dollars in the country. World Bank’s 2001 report estimates that as soon as Armenia’s borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan reopen her exports will increase by 100%, her GNP would increase by 30%. See Gorgulu, *Türkiye -Ermenistan İlişkileri*, p.18

exaggerated or even paranoid; but once a whole population is afraid, we are dealing with the reality of fear rather than reality of threat.”⁶⁶¹

In the winter of 2007, I visited the new War of Independence Museum added to Mustafa Kemal’s Mausoleum (Ankara) in August 2002.⁶⁶² One of the first things I came across was a giant map of Turkey showing the partition plan according to Sevres Treaty located right across the animated war panoramas. While a full-fledged trench warfare going on behind me, I curiously began to examine the Sevres map. Never in my life had I seen a Sevres map of that size. Shortly, one of the body-guards of the Museum in black -attire⁶⁶³ approached me and made a couple of advances to start a conversation. Probably because I was so absorbed in my thoughts in front of the huge partition map, my response to every one of these advances has been a nodding head and a kind smile. At the end of these multiple failed attempts, he all of a sudden became very nervous by my muteness, which I presume must have been way too suspicious to him, he almost exploded: “Are you a foreigner?” “No,” I said, revealing my voice in Turkish for the first time, “I am a Turk.” “Do you live here?” he insisted. “No, I live in United States. In California,” I replied, and instantly felt the cold breeze

⁶⁶¹ Amin Maalouf quoted in Ayhan Aktar, “Debating the Armenian Massacres in the Last Ottoman Parliament, November – December 1918”, *History Workshop Journal* 64, p. 242-270.

⁶⁶² Turgut Özakman, the author of Turkish bestsellers of the 21st century, *Those Crazy Turks* (Şu Çılgın Türkler) and *Awakening* (Diriliş) together with the documentaries *Independence* (Kurtulus) and *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) was also the author of 40m long panoramas depicting the War of Independence in this Museum. For a journalistic analysis of this mind-blowing public relations war (whose darker and para-legal networks are also in the process of being exposed in Turkey in the context of ongoing and already highly used and abused “Ergenekon” operation) waged with an explosion of books, films, documentaries, and a 3000 sq. meter museum (inside Mustafa Kemal’s Mausoleum), all organized to fight the “so-called Armenian genocide allegations” in Turkey, see Rober Koptas, “Hesap Basitti” [It was a Simple Plan], *Agos*, 11 Temmuz 2008.

⁶⁶³ War of Independence Museum, for reasons that are unknown to me, employs dozens of these body guards – very young, handsome, clean-cut Turkish men dressed in black suits with ear pieces on. In fact they resemble intelligence officers courting American presidents while they travel.

that came down from the snowy peaks of his restless mind. “Oh. I heard there are a lot of Armenians there.” The initial friendly pitch in his voice was taken over by a profound disappointment and uneasy doubts. “I guess so...,” I murmured. Behind us in the panoramic trenches were the Turkish soldiers chanting, “*Allah!!...Allah!!...Allah!!!*” He turned to the map, all of sudden...and said, as faithfully as a War of Independence Veteran (*Istiklal Savasi Gazisi*), “May God never show us those days again.” I looked at his bright face, at his luminous forehead. I realized he was much younger than I was. I genuinely wanted to say something to him; I knew all the poems, all the songs, all the school books, by heart. But I couldn’t. I couldn’t smile either. He kindly walked away, but kept me under an unthreatening surveillance until I exited the museum.

Based on the textual analysis of Mustafa Kemal’s entire corpus with an emphasis on his discourse on “1915,” this chapter argued that Mustafa Kemal’s standpoint on 1915 has been generally consistent across years and across texts of different political function: foreign policy (i.e. correspondence with the Bolsheviks and Americans, manifestos issued to the Islamic world...), foreign press (interviews), domestic politics (telegrams, manifestos, parliamentary speeches). In the majority of these texts, the violence of “1915” is presented as a tragic function of a conflict fuelled and provoked in line with the political and economic interests of the Western imperialists at the end of which human losses of both the Turks and Armenians have been tremendous.

However, I argue that what really tips the balance towards the Turkish innocence in the perception of this conflict is not the framing of the issue per se, but

the stark difference in the rhetoric Mustafa Kemal deploys in the depiction of the Armenian and Turkish atrocities. While “1915” is frequently restricted to “some unwelcome circumstances” , “incidents,” or “some extortions and cruelties,” the violence Turks have suffered in the hands of the Armenians is reified as “imha” (extermination / annihilation), “kital” (mass murder), “tarihte emsali nabesbuk vahset” (unprecedented savagery in history) in the context of an on-going ‘oppressed nation’ (“mazlum millet”) narrative in the background: *The truth was that our nation - innately gifted by the exaltedness of the customs of humanity- had never taken up an aggressive attitude anywhere against any foreigner without good reason.*⁶⁶⁴ So is the enduring legacy of the father of the Turks, so is the “Truth. During his 1923 address of the Adana traders, Mustafa Kemal radically erases the Armenians from the history of Anatolia altogether:

...Our friends told us ...Armenians have invaded our hearths of arts and have taken a position as if they were the owners of this country. With no doubt, there couldn't be more injustice and audacity than this (sic). Armenians have no rights in this prosperous country. The country is yours, it belongs to the Turks. This country belonged to the Turks in history, then it is the land of the Turks and it will belong to the Turks forever.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶⁴ My italics.

⁶⁶⁵ “Adana Esnaflariyla Konusma (Turk Ocaginda Esnaf cemiyetinin cayinda Heyeti idare reisi Ahmet Remzi Yuregir'in soylevi uzerine), *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, 126.

“For a society that does not question anything, that does not discuss and weigh the possibilities, and for the individuals educated in line with the national education ideology and the socialization process [of this society] as such, there can be no such a thing as enlightenment; there can only be renewal of faith (iman tazeleme)” -Taha Parla⁶⁶⁶

Chapter 6: Ottoman Armenians in the first History School Textbooks written by Mustafa Kemal and his Missionary-Historians: *History I-II-III-IV*

6.1.Introduction

“Before you study history, study the historian...Before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment,” Carr writes in *What is History?*⁶⁶⁷ It would not be wrong to say that this dissertation followed Carr’s advice, keeping the greatest historian of the Turkish nation, Atatürk , at its center: I first examined the historical and social environment of the Armenian deportations through the foundation of the new Republic, and then I examined Atatürk and his discourse on the Ottoman Armenians. In this chapter I will be examining the narratives and the representations of the Ottoman Armenians and the Armenian issue in Turkish history textbooks from the construction of the Turkish History Thesis in 1930 to 1950s when the single-party period came to an end. As far as the temporal spectrum of this analysis is concerned, however, it has been impossible to cut the discussion precisely as of December 1950. For almost every issue I identified within these national narrations, in order to highlight their significance for the Republic, I felt obliged to comment on the ideological legacies until the 1980s (and in some occasions, until today). The period after the 1980s is understood as a time of momentuous change for

⁶⁶⁶My translation. Taha Parla, ‘Kemalizm, Türk Aydınlanması mı?’ in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm*, ed. Ahmet İnsel (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 314-315.

⁶⁶⁷Edward H. Carr, *What is History* (New York: Vintage, 1961), 54.

the Turkish society when all the institutions and ideals of modernity came under siege.⁶⁶⁸ In this dissertation, since I have been trying to understand the role of the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians in the Kemalist nation formation, I chose to limit my analysis in this chapter with this formative period.

6.2.Theory

Why national education and history textbooks, one might ask in the first place? Gellner argues that the central education is of the very first importance for the political sociology of the modern world. In the modern social order, it is the professor not the executioner who holds power. The monopoly of state education, he asserts, is now “more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence” for the modern state.⁶⁶⁹ As Bourdieu also points out, the imposition of the categories of thought that we spontaneously apply to all things of the social world including the state especially through the schooling system is one of the main powers of the state.⁶⁷⁰ In the modern state, the task of producing citizens is pursued by universal education, which is a central feature modern state state formation.⁶⁷¹

Althusser argues that among all the “Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs)”, the ISA that has become the dominant one in capitalism as a result of the violent political and ideological class struggle against the Church has been the “educational ideological apparatus.” School-Family couple, he argues, has replaced the the Church-Family couplet. While the School has the dominant role, however, “hardly anyone

⁶⁶⁸ Reşat Kasaba, “Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, 15-36.

⁶⁶⁹ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* , 33.

⁶⁷⁰ Sam Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State: Education and the Politics of National Culture in the Post-1980 Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 9.

⁶⁷¹ Kaplan, 9.

lends an ear to its music,” Althusser claims, because “it is so Silent!” The School’s ideology is “universally reigning” because it is one of the essential forms of the ruling bourgeois ideology.” The school is represented as a neutral environment purged of ideology, where:

teachers respectful of the ‘conscience’ and ‘freedom’ of the children who are entrusted to them (in complete confidence) by their ‘parents’ (who are free, too, i.e. the owners of their children) open up for them the path to the freedom, morality and responsibility of adults by their own example, by knowledge, literature and their ‘liberating’ virtues.⁶⁷²

Althusser asserts that no class can hold State power over a long period of time without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses. And the example he gives once again underlines the vitality of the educational apparatus: “Lenin’s anguished concern to revolutionize the educational Ideological State Apparatus (among others), simply to make it possible for the Soviet proletariat, who had seized State power, to secure the future of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the transition to socialism.”⁶⁷³

In his analysis of the “major innovations” involved in the invention of tradition in the French Third Republic, Hobsbawm too attributes first degree importance to “primary education”, which he conceptualizes as the secular equivalent of the church. Primary education was imbued with revolutionary and republican principles and content. Hobsbawm asserts that “there is no doubt this was a deliberate construction

⁶⁷² Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York: Monthly Review Press 1971), <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm> Althusser’s other Ideological State Apparatuses are the religious ISA (the system of the different churches), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different parties), the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.), and the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports, etc.).

⁶⁷³ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York: Monthly Review Press 1971), <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>

of the early Third Republic.” Given the centralization of the French government, the content of the educational manuals “which were to turn not only peasants into Frenchmen but all Frenchmen into good Republicans, was not left to chance.”⁶⁷⁴ The revolutionary elan of the 1960s and 1970s in France had fomented a movement to criticize the contents of the school textbooks but as Copeaux argues the weakness of the influence of the movement indicates how difficult it is to interrogate the grand myths lying at the foundation of a nation’s consciousness and memory.⁶⁷⁵

In Germany today, on the other hand, the pedagogic analysis of the school books is at an advanced stage and is a specialized field in and of itself: *Schulbuchforschung*. What motivated the growth of this advanced engagement with the schoolbooks was a pursuit to understand the role national education played in the rise of the Nazism during the interwar years. According to Georg Eckert, who initiated the analysis of the German school books, schoolbooks used during the formative stages of human development leave a lasting imprint on the historical consciousness and value universe of the youth and they can continue to shape them throughout their lives. There is nothing surprising about the use of schoolbooks for nationalist propaganda.⁶⁷⁶ Central education in every regime – from liberal to communist- was always invested with ideological agenda and the schoolbooks have

⁶⁷⁴ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, 271.

⁶⁷⁵ Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), 14. Copeaux states that in France it took a 20 year long university-level research to dust off the national historical discourse inherited from the 19th century and to relaunch the initiative to reconsider the ideological contents of the books.

⁶⁷⁶ Copeaux, 14-15.

always been prime ideological instruments.⁶⁷⁷ While the schooling's main function was the creation of a communist morality for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union vision, it was the creation of a nationalist morality for the Kemalists.

The factors that are influential in the development of children are certainly not confined to school books: extra-curricular activities (art, sports, etc.), peer pressure, influence of the family, religious authorities, and mass media (television, and especially today, internet) all play a role in the formation of subjectivities. But as Althusser argues, no other Ideological State Apparatus has the obligatory and not least, free audience of the totality of the children eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven.⁶⁷⁸ The contents of the schoolbooks also have a lot in common with those of other ideological apparatuses. "Especially if one is interested in the analysis of symbols," Coupeaux affirms, school textbooks are first class resources, because they are among the most read books and they reflect not only the ideas of their authors, but also the official and semi-official worldviews or at least those over which there is consensus."⁶⁷⁹ The analysis of their narratives unveils the ideological boundaries that separates the national identity from its "others." In other words, the way "the others" are presented in the schoolbooks is at the same time a presentation of self-understanding in the past, in the present and in the future.

⁶⁷⁷ Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004); Christopher Barnard, *Language, Ideology, and Japanese History Textbooks* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Frances Fitzgerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the 20th century* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979); Jean Anyon, "Ideology and United States History Textbooks," *Harvard Educational Review*, v.49, n.3 (1979), 361-86; Michael Apple and Lois Weis, *Ideology and Schooling* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983).

⁶⁷⁸ Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy*, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>

⁶⁷⁹ Coupeaux, 15.

6.3. Institutional Background: The Turkish case

In Turkey, a strong state tradition persists in the national education system. Despite the growth of the communication technologies and the increasing infusion of popular culture in every day lives of the citizens, the state is still the most important actor in the reproduction of the nation.⁶⁸⁰ The educational system is understood as a key institutional site where political unity and morality are established; children are expected to assimilate national principles during their mandatory schooling. As late as 1989, the outgoing minister of Education, Hasan Celal Güzel, affirmed the “pedagogical mission of the state” in the following simple terms: “national education is a state affair.”⁶⁸¹ Turkey’s latest constitution, promulgated three years after the 1980 military coup, affirms the central role of the state in educating the country’s youth in Article 58:

The State shall take measures to ensure the training and development of youth into whose keeping our State, independence, and our Republic are entrusted, in the light of contemporary science, in line with the principles and reforms of [the first president of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal] Atatürk, and in opposition to those ideas which aim at destroying the indivisible integrity of the state.⁶⁸²

Thus, raising the new generation of children in Turkey is regarded as *raison d’État*; children are seen as the object of the historical destiny of the nation and as the subject of the political vitality of the state.⁶⁸³ The declaration of the conference organizers of the tenth National Education Conference in 1981 affirmed this by stating that the Turkish society’s survival hinges on “passing “on the national culture

⁶⁸⁰ Umut Özkırımlı, “Türkiye’de Gayriresmî ve Popüler Milliyetçilik” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce Cilt 4: Milliyetçilik*, 715.

⁶⁸¹ Kaplan, 9.

⁶⁸² Kaplan, 9.

⁶⁸³ Kaplan, 9.

to the new generations in order to attain continuity and stability in social life.”⁶⁸⁴ This totalitarian approach to national education translates into tautological statements found in the Curricula Board Journals disguised as expert knowledge: “Among the many reasons that explain why we can not understand the others before we understand ourselves as a nation, the most important one is perhaps the understanding as seen in psychological studies that individuals become more prone to accept the others once they accept themselves.”⁶⁸⁵

In Turkey, since 1924 all school textbooks have to be authorized by the Curriculum Board (*Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi*) attached to the Ministry of Education. Copeaux argues that the production process of the narratives for the history textbooks constitutes a “perfect example” of the relationship between the will of the state and the translation of this will into national education. The foundation of the Curriculum Board lies at the center of this relationship.

To reform the national education system of the new Republic, many foreign experts were invited to Turkey. John Dewey who came in 1924 was one of the first and his recommendations made a strong impact on the system. Others like Kuhne (1925) and a group led by E.W. Kamerrer (1933) followed him. It was, however, Dewey who emphasized the importance of establishing peripheral institutions that would form the foundations of a general and permanent educational policy, and that would assure their continuity. These institutions would function under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. This is how the Curriculum Board was founded in Turkey.

⁶⁸⁴ Kaplan, 10.

⁶⁸⁵ Ali Naili Erdem, “Valiliklere” in *T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Tebliğler Dergisi*, Cilt:39, Sayı:1900, 27 Eylül 1976.

Its founding goal was the inspection of national education. Yet, as Copeaux writes, in a short period of time, with its bureaucratic structure, it became a ministry within a ministry and it lost its moral and intellectual function. It turned into a bureaucratic inspection apparatus exclusively geared towards the organization of the curricula, lesson plans and pedagogic problem solving within the national education. Key decisions about whether particular books are suitable to the state ideology are taken by the Curriculum Board and since 1924 it has been one of the most important institutions to assure continuity within the national education. Today the approval / disapproval of the Curriculum Board carries important commercial implications in the context of an expanding book market for millions of students. In recent years the pressures have increased so much that almost in all the textbooks even the titles and subtitles are kept uniform and this uniformity applies to the main texts and narratives of important sections in the books as well.⁶⁸⁶

The content analysis that follows in this chapter will begin with the first lycee history textbooks of the new Republic: *History I*, *History II*, *History III*, and *History IV*. I argue that especially *History IV*, which remained in circulation through the early 1940s should be regarded as one of the most fundamental texts that determined the revolutionary ideology of the Kemalist generation.⁶⁸⁷ The generation of the Turkish intellectuals of the 1960s to the 1980s was constituted by those 15-20-year-old students whose national indoctrination these four volumes contributed between 1930s and 1940s. Copeaux asserts that, if the pedagogic importance of middle school and

⁶⁸⁶ Copeaux, 111-115.

⁶⁸⁷ Doğu Perinçek, "Sunuş," *Tarih IV Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri (1931-1941)*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2004), iv.

high-school education is acknowledged, certainly in conjunction with other factors, in the formation of identity and personality, the ideological work accomplished by these four volumes offers one of the keys to the contemporary Turkey's dominant political culture.⁶⁸⁸

Before I delve into the *History* series, however, I will talk about the very first attempt of the historians designated by Atatürk to write a new Turkish civilization history inspired by H.G. Wells' *The Outline of History* (1919): *Outlines of Turkish History* ('Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları'). Although *Outlines of Turkish History* (herein, *Outlines*) could never elicit Atatürk's approval and it never became a schoolbook, an abridged version of it did as a pamphlet and was distributed to the high schools as a support book. I regard *Outlines* and its abridged version as important points of departure in my own analysis since they are prime ideological and psycho-historical instruments /documents that reflect the emotional universe of the Atatürk and his "missionary-historians" who would then produce the *History* series. I also argue that they are both valuable documents that reflect the predisposition of the nationalist Republican elites toward the Armenians.

6.4. *Outlines of Turkish History* (1930)

Kemalist elites' active collaboration to write a new nationalist history for the Turks formally began in 1930. Orthodox historiography loves to indulge in an anecdote that anchors the origin of this project in a conversation between Mustafa

⁶⁸⁸ Copeaux, 67.

Kemal and his adopted daughter, Afet.⁶⁸⁹ As Afet also talks about this in her numerous memoirs and collective works⁶⁹⁰, while she was a student at Notre Dame De Sion Boarding School for Girls, she had some schoolbooks ‘in which there were statements that humiliated her national sentiments and she did not want to learn them.’ One book wrote that Turks were of the secondary races and they were a barbaric race (*kavim*). ‘At the same time, there were pictures in the book’, Prof.Afetinan continues, ‘and Turks were introduced as a people that had nothing to do whatsoever with our type (*bizim tipimiz*)’. She complains that in another book races were represented in three groups. In the short list of races she outlined, Turks are in the ‘Yellow or Mongolian Races’ whereas Armenians are listed among the ‘White Races’ along with Caucasians and Araps; ‘Black race’ is listed in the third group. Frustrated and offended by these representations, she takes all these books to Mustafa Kemal one day in 1928. Kemal looks at them and says, ‘No, this can’t be true. We should work on this. You shall work on this. (*Hayır böyle olamaz. Bunların üzerinde meşgul olalım. Sen çalış*).’⁶⁹¹

However, Mustafa Kemal, as a nationalist state-maker with as much vision as to invite John Dewey to Turkey in 1924, had been thinking about the necessity of a

689 Ayşe Afet İnan (1908-1985) was a Turkish historian and sociologist. She was one of the adopted daughters of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. She met Atatürk in October 1925 during his visit to İzmir. She was a primary school teacher at that time. Atatürk sent Afet in 1925 to Lausanne, Switzerland, so that she learns French. After returning to Turkey in 1927, she attended the French "Notre Dame de Sion High School for Girls" in İstanbul. Finishing the school, she was appointed as a secondary school teacher for history. In 1935, Afet İnan went to Switzerland again to study history at the University of Geneva. She obtained her Ph.D. degree in sociology in 1939 with her dissertation, *Recherches Sur les Caractères Anthropologiques des Population de la Turquie*. Her dissertation adviser was Eugene Pittard. In 1950, she became a professor at the University of Ankara. She was the co-founder and a leading member of the Turkish Historical Society.

⁶⁹⁰ Prof.Afetinan has almost twenty memoirs and collected works whose titles always read as ‘Atatürk and ...’ and often recycle each other’s contents on Mustafa Kemal, Turkish history, Turkish Historical Society etc.

⁶⁹¹ Prof.A. Afetinan, *Atatürk’ten Mektuplar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1981), 9-10; Afet İnan, “Atatürk ve Tarih Tezi,” *Belleten*, 1939, 3(10), 244.

new history for Turkey written from a nationalist perspective. In 1923, he sent a letter to the Academic Senate of the Arts and Letters division of the Istanbul University where the best historians of the era were in residence and assigned them the mission of ‘finalizing our Independence War in the domain of science.’⁶⁹²

Mustafa Kemal delivered his *Nutuk* in 1927. As I have indicated in Chapter 5, his aim in writing the Great Speech was to facilitate the writing of a modern Turkish history. He had been talking about a new Turkish history in his country tours as well, and finally he had H.G.Wells’ *The Outline of History* (1919) translated into Turkish between 1927 and 1928.⁶⁹³ Nonetheless, the actual undertaking of writing a new nationalist history for the Republic had to wait until the Alphabet Revolution of 1928. Ottoman Turkish was written with a version of the Arabic / Persian alphabet and from 1923 onwards there had been discussions on a reformed version of the script; there was much opposition in the conservative and religious circles. On November 1 a law was passed which made the use of Latin alphabet in public communications compulsory from 1 January 1929. Zürcher asserts that the motivation for the change was ideological: “it was yet another way to cut off Turkish society from its Ottoman and Middle Eastern Islamic traditions and to reorient it towards the west.”⁶⁹⁴

Mustafa Kemal had indeed been preoccupied with the construction of a new Turkish history that would stress the contributions of the Turks to world civilizations and that would deemphasize the history of the Ottoman Empire. In the Christian

⁶⁹² Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Türklerin Tarihi, I.Cilt* (İstanbul : Tekin Yayın evi, 1981), 18.

⁶⁹³ Again, according to Afet İnan, Atatürk had the first two volumes translated in 1927 (must be true because indeed he does refer to Wells in his 1927 Great Speech) and the third, fourth and fifth volumes in 1928. See A. Afetinan, *Gazi M. Kemal Atatürk ve Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1953), 2.

⁶⁹⁴ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 197.

Europe's imaginary, the image of the 'barbar Turks' devoid of any civilizational competence and intelligence especially in relation to the administration of the Christian minorities had been radicalized and reified in the aftermath of the massacres of the Armenians. It is no coincidence that Kemal too addresses this civilizational "incompetence" issue as a part of the claims invented by the foreigners against the Turks in the same context where he addresses the allegations about the Armenian massacres during his public address in the School of Agriculture in Ankara in 1920 (see Chapter 5).

On the other hand, after the violent expulsions of the Armenians and the Greeks from Asia Minor, it was vital to hedge against the future territorial claims by showing that Anatolia was 'Turkish' long before the Armenians and the Greeks were there.⁶⁹⁵ Karal, in an article titled as 'Atatürk's Turkish History Thesis', writes,

With our War of Independence, we cleaned up our territories from foreign armies and declared our independence to the world in Lausanne. Yet, we could at any time find the international community who has for centuries been cultivated by a faulty history regarding the Turkish lands standing before us as enemies. Indeed, even after Lausanne, it was understood, based on what they said and what they did, that some imperialist states were preparing to execute a plan of invasion claiming historical rights over the Turkish territories. And this shows that it was necessary to reinforce the material results accomplished by our War of Independence with endeavors in the moral domain (*Bu da gösteriyor ki Kurtuluş Savaşımızda elde edilmiş olan neticeleri, manevi alanda yapılacak çalışmalarla tamamlamak lazımdı*). Therefore, there was no solution other than defending ourselves with a weapon that was the same as the one used against us. The weapon used against us was falsified history (*tahrif edilmiş tarihdi*). Our duty, then, was to outline our history in its true form [sic] and to enlighten the misinformed public opinion about the Turkish nation and the Turkish territories. The brief explanation provided until here shows the importance attributed to the Turkish History Thesis by Atatürk.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁵ Copeaux, 50.

⁶⁹⁶ My translation. Enver Ziya Karal, "Atatürk'ün Türk Tarih Tezi" in *Atatürk Hakkında Konferanslar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1946), 58. Karal wrote this in 1945 or 1946. I believe Karal's reference to "imperialist states" is to Stalin's invasive plans after the WW2. Turkey's relations with the Soviet Union had dramatically soured during the WW2 because of Turkey's neutrality on the one hand, and its good relations with Germany on the other hand (which Deringil calls "active neutrality"). The increasing Soviet influence in the Balkans (particularly, in Bulgaria) also increased Turkey's concerns. See Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi 2 (1938-1945)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), 269-

Ottoman historiography until then stated that Turks had gradually conquered Anatolia after the defeat of Byzantine army in 1071; however after centuries of religious conversion and inter-marriage Christians still constituted the one-fifth of the population in Anatolia. A thesis that would argue that the ancient civilizations of Anatolia were in fact ‘proto-Turks’ was necessary. This way, it would also be unnecessary to address the ‘potentially embarrassing questions, such as the size of the Turkish population that settled Anatolia (as compared to the already existing population under the Byzantine Empire) or the process of conversion to Islam during the intervening centuries.’⁶⁹⁷ As Karal asserted in 1946, ‘Atatürk ’s studies on the Turkish history (Atatürk ’un tarih uzerine calismalari) are the continuance of our War of Independence in the domain of culture.’⁶⁹⁸

Turkish Society for Historical Research (‘Türk Tarih Tetkik Cemiyeti’) was founded in 1930.⁶⁹⁹ Their first work was the 606-page *Outlines of Turkish History*

271; also see Selim Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War: An ‘Active’ Neutrality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). First came the Rippentrop –Molotov pact, then came the Soviet announcement that it would not renew its Friendship treaty with Turkey after it relapsed in 1945. Soviets demanded that for the Friendship Treaty to be signed the border between the two countries had to be corrected: The areas in the North-eastern Anatolia that had been lost to Russia between 1878 and 1918 and taken back by the Turks at the end of the Armenian Expedition in 1920 had now be given back to Soviet Union again. Moreover, Soviets wanted the establishment of a joint Russian-Turkish defense force in Bosphorous and Dardanelles to guard the Black Sea. Soviets tabled their demands at the Potsdam Conference in 1946 and they were not immediately rejected by the British or the Americans either. With the rise of the Truman Doctrine and the Cold War, Washington re-evaluated the strategic importance of Turkey and USA gradually became more supportive of Turkey. With US’s backing, Turkey, already outraged by the Soviet demands, took a firm line and the issue was controlled with minimum tension.

⁶⁹⁷ Keyder, “A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism,” 7.

⁶⁹⁸ Karal, “Atatürk’ün Türk Tarih Tezi,” 55, 57. Karal, as one of the deans of orthodox Kemalist historiography argues that there were three “special” reasons which obligated Atatürk to adopt a nationalist history: global public opinion informed by European intellectuals and philosophers that Turks were a yellow race, global public opinion that Turks were incapable of civilizational competence and intelligence (*medeni kabiliyet ve istidat*), historical claims over Turkish territories.”

⁶⁹⁹ In 1935, it became Turkish Historical Society (‘Türk Tarih Kurumu’) in 1935. Uluğ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyet’in 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1973), 4-5.

(‘Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları’), which informed and inspired the first history textbooks of the Republic. It was an ambitious project undertaken by Afet (Inan), Mehmet Tevfik (Bıyıkoglu), Yusuf (Akçura), Samih (Rifat), Dr. Resit (Galip), Hasan Cemil (Cambel), Sadri Maksudi (Arsal), Semsettin (Gunaltay), Yusuf Ziya (Ozer).⁷⁰⁰ Except for Afet Inan, and Tevfik Biyiklioglu, these were all deputies in the Parliament; Afet, on the other hand, was Atatürk’s adopted daughter, while Biyiklioglu, a military officer who had fought at the Western front of the War of Independence and attended the Lausanne Conference as a military consultant, was Mustafa Kemal’s Presidential Secretary.⁷⁰¹

Organized by Atatürk to write a new Turkish history in a very short period of time, these ‘politician-historians’⁷⁰² produced *Outlines* in literally less than a year in 1930 and their rushed outcome could neither receive the approval of Atatürk nor the one hundred historians it was distributed to for feedback. The volume, the first attempt to popularize the new Turkish history thesis, was full of mistakes. Only the last page was spared for the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, and the Ottoman Empire was squeezed into 50 pages. The rest of the book was organized around the world civilizations and their ‘Turkish’ roots including those in Anatolia. In a nutshell,

According to İğdemir, the Society was then comprised of 16 members who had their first meeting on 4 June 1930: Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, Mehmet Tevfik Bıyıkoglu (General Secretary of the President of Turkey), Yusuf Akçura (İstanbul Deputy, Professor of History), Samih Rifat (Çanakkale Deputy), Dr. Reşit Galip (General Secretary), Prof. Dr. Afetinan, Vasıf Çınar (Ministry of Education, then Council General for Moscow), Halil Ethem Eldem, Yusuf Ziya Özer, Sadri Maksudi Arsal, Reşit Safvet Atabini (Kocaeli Deputy), İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı (Balıkesir Deputy), Ragıp Hulusi Özden, Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, Zakir Kadiri Ugan, Hamit Zübeyr Koşay.

⁷⁰⁰ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1930). See the title page of this book where the full list of the authors take place. Last names in parentheses are my addition; Law of Surnames was adopted in 1934. *Outline’s* title page did not have the last names as of 1930.

⁷⁰² Ersanlı, 108.

Outlines argues that Turks, with their state-making traditions, were at the foundation of all world civilizations such as the Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, Iranian and European. The ancestors of the Greek civilization in Anatolia were also the Sumerian and Hittite proto-Turks. This is the heart of what we today know as “Turkish History Thesis.” The fact that the final state of the Turks founded in 1923 was handled in a single page, after the Ottomans were skipped in 50 pages, shows how intense and powerful the Kemalists’ desires to anchor national and ethnic roots in ancient history were.⁷⁰³

Even though *Outlines* failed to elicit the approval of MK due to its sloppiness and grave mistakes, I argue its significance for the modern Turkish history lies in its *Preface* titled as ‘Why was this book written?’ and the definition of ‘history’ presented in the book. Both are unique psycho-sociological exposés on the most profound yearnings of the Kemalist elites seeking a new identity and the quintessential instrumentality of ‘history’ in modern Turkey. So ‘why was this book written?’:

This book was written with a specific goal in mind. In the majority of history books published in our country and in the French history books that inform them, the role of Turks in the world history has been intentionally or unintentionally diminished. That Turks had been informed about their ancestors in this way has been harmful in the development of their consciousness (*benliğini inkişaf ettirmesinde*). Our main goal in this book is to correct these mistakes for our nationality that is today recovering its real status in the world... With this, we wish to open the way into the depths of the creative potential of our nation, to unveil the mystery of the Turkish genius and character, to show him/her the specialness and the strength of the Turk, and to show that his national development was anchored in ancient (*derin*) racial roots. With this experience, we do not claim that we have written that national history that we are so in need of; we are only showing a destination and goal to those who wish to work on this subject....⁷⁰⁴

The definition of ‘history’ on page 20 sheds a brighter light on the yearnings expressed in the Preface. As we understand the past, *Outlines* asserts, ‘we will distance ourselves from (*hazer edeceğiz*) being recorded by history as a person, as a

⁷⁰³ Ersanlı, 124.

⁷⁰⁴ My translation. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 1-3.

nation that the future generations will remember with hate (*nefretle yadedeceği*).⁷⁰⁵

These agonized yearnings coalesce with the most illuminating outburst of the book at the very end of a narrative that discusses the highness of the Turkish civilization in Central Asia going back to 9000 years before the BC:

The spiteful claims and the calumnies that argue that Turks' only goal and endeavor in life is to invade other people's countries through war-making and that they have no contributions to the civilization have by now been out of fashion. In line with these ancient understandings born out of century-old fights of Christianity....shouldn't those who have persistently set themselves the task of presenting Turks on the basis of some violent actions that are only of the kind that have been observed in every nation's history, in order to understand how unjust and ruthless they are..., set the entire past aside and only recall the last world war and the types of combats (*çarşışma şekilleri*) of the German and French nations in the various theaters of this war?...⁷⁰⁶

In my reading, even though the allusion to the Armenian deportations and massacres is not that strong above, the statement of defense resting on the reference to the French and German combat types particularly during the Great War makes it very likely that the address of 'some violent actions' extends all the way to '1915'.

Outlines has never become a schoolbook. But an 87-page abridged version of it was produced as a long article and 30,000 copies were distributed to the schools as a support book. It was entitled, '*The Outlines of Turkish History – Introduction*'.⁷⁰⁷ In this abridged version, the introduction of the *Outlines* entitled 'Why was this book written' and the definition of 'history' were removed. However, the narrative on the Great War discussed above was included with a new sub-title: 'Wrong and Spiteful Brainwashing about the Turks'.⁷⁰⁸ The core message of 'Why was this book written?'

⁷⁰⁵ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 21.

⁷⁰⁶ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 64.

⁷⁰⁷ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları – Methal Kısım* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

⁷⁰⁸ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları – Methal Kısım*, 69-70.

were reorganized in the final two pages of the *Introduction* that reads more like an 87-page wartime propaganda pamphlet:

The purpose of this work is to remind the Great Turkish Nation, which has been subjected to very unjust calumnies for centuries and whose service and labor in the foundation of great civilizations have been denied, of its honorable past resting on historical truths. We must add the following: While an eleven thousand year old past that swells us with so much pride and honor does not fill the Turkish nation with a superficial and empty pride, having deviated from the front lines for a few centuries due to conditions that can be and will be observed in every nation's history does not discourage us either (*futur vermez*).⁷⁰⁹

It is noteworthy that the 9000-year old Turkish past claimed in the *Outlines* rose to 11,000 years in the *Introduction* distributed to the schools.

As mentioned above, I regard the *Outlines* as an important point of departure in my own analysis because it reflects, although in a very subtle way, the predisposition of the nationalist Republican elites toward the Armenians.

In this 606-page work the 'The King of Armenia' for the first time appears on page 395 in the context of a battle between the Parthians in Iran (established as proto-Turks in the *Outlines*) and the Roman army led by 'Kirasus [sic]'⁷¹⁰ depicted as a general who had 'a savage ambition for senseless blood-shed'. 'King of Armenia', in a passing, is immediately identified as the 'ally' of this 'savage.'⁷¹¹ In the absence of any other information, only a specialist in antiquity can make sense of this discursive encounter in the *Outlines* between Crassus, Parthians and the 'King of Armenia'. The enigmatic reference is to the battle of Carrhae which took place in the Plain of Carrhae (modern Harran in Turkey) between the Parthians and Romans near the contemporary

⁷⁰⁹ My translation. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları – Methal Kısmı*, 73.

⁷¹⁰ Must be the Roman General Marcus Liçin us Crassus (115BC-53BC) who defeated Spartacus but died in the battle of Carrhae (modern Harran in Turkey).

⁷¹¹ "Roma patrisyenlerinden Krassus...Partlara karşı açacağı bir muharebe ile diğer patrisyenlerin yaptıkları seferleri, kazandıkları fütuhatı gölgede bırakmak istedi. Ne asker toplamının küçlüğü [sic], ne de kabilelerin beddua ve lanetleri kendisini bu sebepsiz kan dökmek vahşetinden vazgeçirmedi. Ermenistan krali müttefiki idi." See *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 395.

Syrian border. The ‘King of Armenia’ was Artavasdes II, the son of Tigranes the Great, of the Greater Armenia (which existed between 190BC-390AC), which used to encompass the entire Eastern Anatolian plateau. It was a client state of the Roman and Persian empires, frequently providing them with troops during their invasions.

Neither Armenia nor the Armenians are mentioned in the context of Alp Aslan’s (‘Hero-Lion’, the second Sultan of the Seljuk Dynasty) conquest of Anatolia in 1071 in the *Outlines*. Following the Battle of Manzikert (‘Malazgirt’ in Turkish) with the Byzantians from which he emerges as a hero for the Turkish history, *Outlines* indicates that ‘many Turkish tribes settled in Malatya, Erzurum, Sivas, Kayseri, Kemah and Erzincan’ – all stretching along the Eastern Anatolian plateau.⁷¹² The omission of a historical fact whose referent event was between 1045 and 1071 is in fact a great source of ‘relief’ for the modern Turkish historiography⁷¹³: The Bagratuni Kingdom of Armenia had been conquered by the Byzantium Empire in 1045 and by then Armenians in the Eastern Anatolia had begun to flee to the Cilicia region, which today encompasses the northeastern section of the Mediterranean Sea in Asia Minor. The convenience of this historical fact for the Turkish nationalist historiography is indeed indisputable: Without having to circle around any blunt lies, myths or evasions, Armenian civilization in the Eastern Anatolia can be regarded as ‘non-existent’ by the time Turks entered Anatolia. What nationalism erases in a single brush, however, continues to bleed quietly from a well-protected domain; that is, ‘etymology’: Very few Turks know that ‘Malazgirt’/ ‘Manzikert’ derived from the Armenian

⁷¹² *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 502-503.

⁷¹³ Copeaux, 389.

‘Manavazkert’, meaning ‘built by Manaz.’ The city of Manaz, to the north of Lake Van, was built by Manaz, the son of Hayk who was the legendary patriarch of the Armenians. Over time, it was shortened to ‘Manzikiert’.⁷¹⁴

Thanks to this fortunate historical fact, battles around the ancient Armenian city Ani between the Turks and the Byzantines can also be discussed in the Turkish schoolbooks without having to mention anything about the Armenians. Indeed, in *Outlines*, after the Mongolian invasions of Anatolia in the 13th century, ‘Armenia’ once again shows up as a territory conquered ‘with no war’ (*muharebesiz*) by the Mongols.’ *Outlines* mentions that ‘Georgia (Tiflis, Kars, Ani)’, however, were conquered with violent battles.⁷¹⁵ The ancient Armenian city of Ani, known as the ‘city of 1001 churches’, whose ruins can still be observed in Turkey in the city of Van, this time shows up in ‘Georgia’ without a trace of its Armenian past. With the rise of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, narratives on Alp Aslan in the Turkish history textbooks mentioned what a ‘great rejoicing’ his conquest of Ani was to the ‘Islamic world’ (*islam camiasinda buyuk sevinc yaratti*).⁷¹⁶ Alpaslan had converted the Cathedral of Ani into a mosque in 1064.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁴ Mehmet Ümit Necef, “Dyojen’in Ordusunda ‘Türk’ler’ ne arıyordu?”, *Taraf*, 9 Eylül 2009, <http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber/40469.htm>

⁷¹⁵ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 523.

⁷¹⁶ See İbrahim Kafesoğlu and Altan Deliorman, *Tarih Lise 2* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1977), 60; Erdoğan Merçil and Büte Merçil, *Tarih II* (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 1990), 94; Mehmet Maden, Mustafa Kablan, Akin Sever, *Lise Tarih I* (Ankara: Devlet Kitapları, 2005), 163.

⁷¹⁷ Turkey decided to restore dignity of Ani in 2005. As a gesture to Turkish-Armenian reconciliation, Akhtamar Church (Cathedral of Ani) was renovated between the years 2005-2007. During the opening ceremony that inaugurated the Church as a ‘monument-museum’ (*anıt-müze*), Akhtamar’s entrance was decorated with big Atatürk posters, Turkish flags, and hundreds of red balloons. The restoration was finalized with yet another absurd compromise: The state has refused to restore the cross and the bell of the ‘Armenian Church of Holy Cross on Akhtamar.’ ‘There is no need for a cross in a museum,’ said the Minister of Culture, Atilla Koc. A ‘museum’ was indeed the right modern transformation for Akhtamar, where ‘memories’ could be guarded, contained, and exposed to the public only during the

Only ten pages later in the *Outlines*, in the context of a discussion of the relations of Timur's Dynasty with the 'Christian Dynasties of the Orient', the 'Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia' is depicted as in a state of demise. 'In 1375, in the name of Armenia, only the Sis (Kozan) Castle was left. After its loss, the Armenian King died in Paris.'⁷¹⁸ *Outlines* severs and mystifies the essential link between the Bagratuni Kingdom in the Eastern Anatolia and the Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia (1078-1345). After the Seljuk invasions, the latter was founded on the Gulf of Alexandretta over the Mediterranean Sea by the Rubenian Dynasty, an offshoot of the Bagratid family on the East. The population of this new Kingdom was constituted by the Armenian colonies that fled the Byzantines after their conquest.

What immediately follows Timur's Dynasty in the *Outlines* is the 'Ottoman Empire,' confined to the final fifty pages. Armenians who had previously appeared around the savage General Crassus and who were then invaded by the Mongols appear in the *Outlines* one last time in the 'Social Organization' of the Empire. The book

museum hours. While some commented that the opening ceremony was "yet another symbol of 'conquest'" others wrote that the entire ceremony resembled just another episode of 'cultural genocide.' As of today, the sign at the entrance of this historic town that was Önce Orthodox Christian reads as 'Anı,' which means 'memoir' in Turkish. While the intention is merely to keep 'the territory' and its signs Turkish (despite the fact that Turkish books write 'Anı'), the connotations of 'Anı,' indeed with great irony, unveils the tension between the Christian Ani and the Muslim Turks. Despite the expensive international PR gigs and the ceremonial pomp staged on the Akhtamar island decorated with red balloons, Ani remains an *anı* - a 'memoir'- for the Turks that they actually wish to 'forget.' This is true not only for Ani but also for Armenia. As Esat Uras put it in the Preface of his 1950 book that informed the entire knowledge production in Turkey on the Armenian issue for almost half a century, Armenia 'can't be anything other than.... a simple memoir inherited from the geography' (*coğrafya'dan intikal eden basit bir hatiradan baska birsey olamayacagini...*). Meanwhile, in İstanbul, Agia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom built by Justinus, enjoys the Muslim skies with its four minarets and golden crescent of Islam over its dome. See "Akdamar'ın açılışı haçsız ve çansız yapılacak," *Radikal*, 29 Mart 2007, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=216927>; Cengiz Çandar, "Ahtamar Kilisesi ya da sözde Akdamar Müzesi," *Hürriyet*, 29 Mart 2007, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/6225448.asp?yazarid=215&gid=61>; Also, there exists in the internet a very good website on the city of Ani: <http://www.virtualani.org/cathedral/index.htm>

⁷¹⁸ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 533.

mentions that besides the ruling Ottoman elites and their descendants, there existed in the Empire other peoples identified by their 'ethnic names' such as 'Turks, Arabs, Greeks (Rum), Armenians, Serbians....etc.' The authors also mention that besides the Greek Orthodox Church, there also existed 'numerous churches such as the Armenian, Keldanian Syriac, Melki, Kipti etc.' The *Outlines*' narratives on the social history of the Empire come to a conclusion with arguments on the economic relations among the non-Muslim subject peoples. 'While the Muslims had a prominent share in the commerce and industry', those who resided in the cities of the coastal regions were occupying prominent positions in maritime commerce with the western ports.

'Besides,' the *Outlines* continues:

The number of Greeks, Armenians were not few among the trading manufacturers (*sanayii esnafı*) of big cities in Istanbul, Izmir, Kayseri, Erzurum. In certain trades, especially in medicine, prophecy (*kehanet*), money lending (*sarraflık*), swindling (*madrabazlık*), illusionism (*hokkabazlık*), the position of the Jews were prominent. In this way, this division of labor and financial exchange between them had made these men of various religion and ethnicity economically dependent on each other. Furthermore, during the most powerful and glorious days of the Ottoman navy...general commerce and maritime commerce would sure bring important profits. Being a merchant of a country whose power and reputation received such reverence and respect everywhere would provide every kind of convenience in travel and transaction. Even those subject peoples who were not connected with the Ottoman dynasty would want to be citizens of the sultanate in line with their interests. Armenians who were holding a prominent position in jewelry manufacturing were the steady suppliers for the places of the sultan and the mansions of pashas. The wealth and the comfort of the ruling elites were resulting in good earnings also for these traders and artisans.⁷¹⁹

So what kind of a discursive existence do the Ottoman Armenians have in the *Outlines*, the very first history project of the Kemalist elites? What do we eventually learn from these narratives regarding one of our oldest neighbors in Anatolia?

Armenia has an elusive existence; one can barely guess that it stretched somewhere in between Iran and Anatolia. One 'Armenian King' shows up as the ally of a Roman

⁷¹⁹ Ibid, 601.

savage; another dies in Paris after the loss of the Sis Castle in Cilicia. Having been denied a cohesive narrative as a people and as a civilization with an ancient history and culture in Anatolia, they appear once again in the context of the Ottoman Empire. Having wrapped them in not-so-subtle rhetoric of economic resentment, *Outlines*, in its final pages, defines the Ottoman Armenians -who existed in a vacuum with no history and no identity throughout 606 pages- as one of the subject peoples of the Empire who were in relations of dependency with the ‘money-lender’, ‘illusionist’ (*hokkabaz*) and ‘swindler’ (*madrabaz*) Jews. All of them were making good profits thanks to the reputation and the glory of the Empire and the wealth of the ruling elites.

What we observe in *Outlines*, in this respect, is not the total erasure of the Armenian memory from the new Republic’s first history text; I argue it is rather a radical dehistoricization and trivialization; narrative superfluity – which would become systematic with the production of History volumes (see below).

I develop the concept “narrative superfluity” in this section in conversation with Arendt’s concept of “superfluous populations.” Arendt, in *Origins of Totalitarianism*, develops the concept “superfluity” and “superfluous populations” to indicate the phenomenology of modern state power. She argues that the radical evil inherent in all totalitarian regimes is that they render their people superfluous. Superfluity’s most extreme version, according to Arendt, emerged in the Nazi concentration camps. “Here, murder is as impersonal as the squashing of a gnat. Someone may die as the result of systematic torture or starvation, or because the camp

is overcrowded and superfluous human material must be liquidated.”⁷²⁰ Camp is where the rightless becomes not merely a means to an end, but a superfluous subsection of humanity.⁷²¹

Although she originally applies to the term to totalitarianism, Arendt also contends that the production of superfluous people is a feature of all modern states and it would remain an underlying feature of all modern politics of coercion. The French revolution, for instance, she contends, created masses of superfluous people in the 20th century by tying the rights of man to the sovereignty of the state. Those who were not conceived as the part of a nation-state were rendered superfluous; they had no juridical status. They had no right to act, no right to act in concert with others, they, simply, had no juridical status. “The Rights of Man,” Arendt wrote, “had been defined as ‘inalienable’ because they were supposed to be independent of all governments.” However, it became gradually self-evident that the people, not the individual, was the image of “Man.” The moment human beings lacked their own government and no institution was left to protect them, it was revealed that “the abstract nakedness of being nothing but human was their greatest danger.”⁷²²

As much as she believed that the “horrible originality” of the totalitarian movements was unprecedented, she surmised that the worst was not behind us. Totalitarian solutions would survive “in the form of strong temptations which will come up whenever it seems impossible to alleviate political, social, or economic

⁷²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 571.

⁷²¹ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 586.

⁷²² Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 380.

misery in a manner worthy of man.”⁷²³ Totalitarian solutions would survive whenever utility (i.e. immigration policy) was defined and legitimized as necessity by the modern state. And hence, on the face of the increasing socio-economic pressures, the modern states would always define certain groups of people as “superfluous.” They would always define certain groups to be in the way. “Uprootedness”, she argues, which has always been the curse of modern masses, can be a preliminary condition for superfluity. “To be uprooted means to have no place in the world, recognized and guaranteed by others; to be superfluous means not to belong to the world at all.”⁷²⁴

The “narrative superfluity” of the Ottoman Armenians in Turkish national narrations carry the connotations of “worldlessness” informed by Arendt’s notion of superfluity. It is however also informed by the Armenians’ material conditions and the recurring massacres they suffered from in the Empire since the late 19th century, as explained in the previous chapters. The final solution of 1915, I argue, needed to be pursued by “narrative superfluity” in national narrations. It is this “narrative superfluity” that actually wipes out all traces of identity and memory. In Turkish national narrations, it precedes the radical erasure of the Ottoman Armenians from the history textbooks and the History series, which I will discuss next, constitute its main context

⁷²³ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 592.

⁷²⁴ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 612.

6.5. History I-II-III-IV (1931-1941): The Production of Armenians as a superfluous people in Turkish national narrations

6.5.1. History II & Legacies: The Armenians and Anatolia

This trivialization and dehistoricization takes place in a much expanded way in the four volume History textbooks of the Kemalist revolution used between 1931 and early 40s.⁷²⁵ References to the Armenians increase in these volumes. In *History II*, the narratives on the first Turkish exploration of and the invasions to Anatolia in the 11th century take place under the title ‘ANATOLIAN TURKISH STATES IN THE MIDDLE AGES’. By the 11th century Byzantine Empire was stretching from the Eastern Anatolia to Southern Italy. Anatolia proper, as it was suggested above, was the territory of the Byzantines (Eastern Roman Empire). *History II*’s chapter on the Turkish explorations of Anatolia during the early 11th century opens with ‘Turks in Anatolia during the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258AD).’ Abbasids had extended all the way from the Central Asia to Eastern Anatolia and they constituted a powerful frontier between the Islamic dynasties and the Byzantine Empire.

History II in this brief introduction argues that there would always be volunteer forces that would come from the Islamic countries to fight with the Byzantines. It is

⁷²⁵ History I, II, III, IV were prepared by the very same team that prepared the *Outlines* and the textbooks were open to discussion in the First History Congress of 1932. In 1933, the four volume high school History was simplified for the middle schools in three volumes. See *Ortaokul için Tarih I* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1934); *Ortaokul için Tarih III* (Ankara: Maarif Matbaası, 1941). The number of students enrolled in the high schools during the 1931-32 academic year were 4,152, in middle schools the number was 25,635. So, there were roughly about 30,000 students in middle and high school education as of 1931. See *Tarih 4* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2004), 250-252.. There were about 5,000 students also in Teacher’s colleges (Öğretmen Mektepleri) in 1931, but I do not know if they studied the same history textbooks. Later in my research I observed that Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay in the 50s produced history texts also for these Teacher’s colleges and their main text was not different from that of the highschool history textbooks they wrote. In 1950, there were 21,000 students in highschools, and 65,000 in middle schools. In 1980, the former rose to 500,000 the latter to 1 million. See footnote 89 in Copeaux, 62. In 1990, the number of highschool students were 750,000, and the middle school students were 2.2 million. See footnote 10 in Copeaux, 113.

underlined that Turks were an important force among them and there were also Turks who settled in the Cilicia region. 'Even after the Byzantium armies had exterminated the Islamic population (961-965), Turkish masses could still be found on the rugged and mountainous regions of Cilicia,' writes *History II*. In fact, even after Seljugs invaded these regions, *History II* asserts, in addition to the Muslim Turks here, there were also 'non-Muslim Turks' settled by the Byzantines who transferred them from the Rumelia to Anatolia.

History II's narrative anxiety is clear: While the 'Armenian Question' in the East was resolved thanks to the Byzantine conquest of Bagratuni Kingdom in 1045 (so there were no Armenians in the East anyways when the Seljuk Turks entered Anatolia), what could be done for the South? Turks then had to be transplanted in the narrative history of Cilicia before the Eastern Armenian colonies made it there. These colonies had indeed settled in Cilicia before the Seljuk Turks arrived. Thus, before the 'Cilician Armenians' show up in the following section, *History II* makes a quick discursive move and asserts that there were 'Turkish masses' on the highlands of Cilicia even in the 10th century.

With a very important narrative safety net established, *History II* continues: Before the Seljuk state is established in 1040, Oguz ashirets 'moving towards the east' (1029) encounter and battle with some 'Armenians,' 'Georgians,' and 'Byzantines.' Between 1041 and 1042, they launch successful offensives on the 'Armenians'. Between 1047-1049, 'Armenia is trampled by the Turks', but by 1052 Armenians and

Georgians come back to the Van region, only to be invaded again by 1056-1057: ‘It was impossible to stop the Turkish invasions.’⁷²⁶

After Alp Aslan’s ascent to the throne, Turkish forces ‘destroy’ the city of Ani (once again, Ani shows up with no identity), and they also begin attacking the regions extending from Urfa to Antioch (Antakya). Then *History II* summarizes the Battle of Manzikert in quite modest rhetoric in half a page, without attaching much importance to it in the history of Turkish settlement in Anatolia. It is noted that this battle was the beginning of the demise of the Byzantium Empire, and Anatolia, from that point onwards, became vulnerable to the Turkish invasions. After the Battle, Alpaslan allocates the territories until Kizilirmak (a river passing through central Anatolia) between the Turkmen ashirets who have established new feudal dynasties (beylik) in Anatolia. This is how the Battle of Manzikert – a key battle which inaugurated the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia in the 11th century -- signified for the Turkish national identity until the early 1940s. There is nothing surprising about this: In the context of the ‘Turkish History Thesis,’ which asserted in the most extravagant way that there had been a Turkish presence in Asia Minor for millennia (because the Sumerians and the Hittites were ‘proto-Turks’ and they were the ones who informed all the other Anatolian civilizations), it could be paradoxical to blow up the importance of this battle for the Turkish national identity. This was destined to change after MK died.

As we will observe in the next section, after the ideological excesses of the Turkish history thesis were challenged by the ‘Humanist’ movement in the national education, the Battle of Manzikert began to assume its key symbolic role as a seminal

⁷²⁶ *Tarih II, Orta Zamanlar* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 226-227.

event that initiated the process of Turkification in Anatolia.⁷²⁷ However, if this Seljug victory on the Anatolian soil would eventually be recognized as ‘a perfect symbol for the birth of the modern Turkish nation on Turkish soil’ and Anatolia would become the hinge of the Turkish national identity, it was my thesis that this would have a direct impact on the representations of the Armenian presence in Anatolia in the Turkish history textbooks. My content analysis indeed substantiated my thesis: Within the continuous narrative on the first Oghuz/ Seljug presence in Anatolia (1029 to late 14th century) in *History II*, there are 16 references to ‘Armenians’, 3 references to ‘Armenia’ and 1 reference to ‘Ani’ (20 references in total). In the new books written after the Kemalists’ *History* volumes, more nationally ambitious narratives were attached to the Battle, but in return, references to Armenians dramatically decreased: There were only 7 references in Mansel’s books, as I will discuss below.

In *History II*, Cilician Armenians show up for the first time within the narratives on the Seljuk feudal dynasties. It is mentioned that these dynasties had a lot of battles with Byzantines as well, and they have taken over a lot of territories from ‘the Armenians [Byzantines] settled in Cilicia.’ As I have indicated before, the issue of who was there before was already resolved with the transplantation of the ‘Turkish masses on the rugged mountains of Cilicia’ who were in reality the mercenary forces for the Abbasids in the 10th century. In the Progressive era of the Anatolian Seljuks, first Giyaseddin Keyhusrev I attacks Cilicia Armenians and takes over the Pertus Castle (1208). His brother Izzeddin Keykavus attacks the Byzantines, and

⁷²⁷ Carole Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 202.

‘Armenians’ who wanted to take ‘the advantage of’ Izzeddin’s battles with the Byzantines. Izzeddin attacks Cilicia once again and forces Armenians “to a magnificent defeat.”⁷²⁸ During the Mongolian invasion of Anatolia (1241), Armenians “betray” the Seljuk Turks once again, so Giyaseddin Keyhusrev II sends an army and “tramples” Cilicia (*bir ordu göndererek Kilikya’yı çiğnedi*).⁷²⁹

So the Armenians keep betraying the Turks during their battles with the Byzantines and the Turks, in return, ‘trample’ the Armenian territory. This remains the central trope of *History II* as the complexity of the Byzantine battlefield was banished from the new nationalist narrations. Children of the new Republic, socialized to internalize the sacredness and the indivisibility of the fatherland, were not allowed to know that the Byzantine army frequently deployed foreign mercenary troops and in fact even during the Battle of Manzikert on 26 August 1071 it was packed by the Turkish mercenaries (‘Oghuz’ Turks and “Pechenegs”) who ‘betrayed’ the Byzantines in the later stages of the battle and joined the Seljuks.⁷³⁰

When we reach the 15th century in *History II*, Timur’s armies catch 4000 Armenian horsemen in 1400 and bury them in the ditches around Sivas regarded as ‘the key of Anatolia.’⁷³¹ Then, the Mamluk Dynasty attacks and annihilates the ‘Little Armenian Kingdom’ by the end of the 14th century and finishes the Armenian political existence in Anatolia.⁷³² In the section where the religious policy of the Great Seljuk monarchs is discussed, *History II* argues that they, in line with the old Turkish

⁷²⁸ *Tarih II, Orta Zamanlar*, 232.

⁷²⁹ *Tarih II, Orta Zamanlar*, 235.

⁷³⁰ John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium. V2: The Apogee* (London: Penguin 1991), 349.

⁷³¹ *Tarih II, Orta Zamanlar*, 235.

⁷³² *Tarih II, Orta Zamanlar*, 268.

customs, have treated the Christians under their rule with great justice and they have given them all the liberties to conduct their own religious rituals. This is supported with the argument that ‘Armenian, Syrian Orthodox, Georgian authors’ speak very highly of the Seljuk Sultans who ‘rescued them from the conservative, ruthless, arrogant Byzantians.’⁷³³ Indeed, for this timeless psycho-historical ‘betrayal’ story to hold water, a crucial detail on the Turkish benevolence always needs to be planted in the narrative. The ‘ungrateful’ Armenians joined forces with the enemies of the Turks despite the fact that Seljuk sultans were so just and so good to them.

6.5.2. History III & Legacies: Demise of the Empire and the Armenians

After the Armenian political existence in Anatolia ends by the end of the 14th century in *History II*, Armenians re-appear in the new textbooks about 500 years later at the very end of *History III* (Ottoman Empire) within a narrative titled as ‘Berlin Treaty: Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.’ Their location in the textbook and the subtitle are enough to signify that tense discursive encounters lay ahead. *History III* informs that with the Berlin treaty of 1878 the Ottoman territories were being definitively split between the great powers. Articles were present in the treaty regarding the protection of the Christians and reforms were demanded for the Eastern vilayets that had “some Christian population” (*bir miktar Hristiyan halkı bulunan Doğu vilayetlerinde*), writes *History III*.⁷³⁴ The Treaty’s demands led to continuous revolts and attacks of those who wanted to take the advantage of them such as the

⁷³³ *Tarih II, Orta Zamanlar*, 221-22.

⁷³⁴ *Tarih III* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2005), 260.

“Macedonian Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians.”⁷³⁵ When we get to the ‘Abdulhamid Era’ section in the textbook, arguments on the Christians, with strong allusions to Armenians, crystallize further: Their political aspirations had advanced by then, *History III* asserts with a tonality couched in suspicious foresight. Rather than a general reform in the Empire, “Christians” (read: “Ottoman Armenians”) were now trying to leave the Empire by advocating special reforms only for the regions their own tribes lived. European states were helping them.

The section titled ‘Armenian, Cretean, and Macedonian Issues’ follows the ‘Abdulhamid Era’. Here, the Armenian who has never related to the Turk in any social, cultural, or political way for three volumes of ‘history’ officially and suddenly becomes an ‘issue.’ According to *History III*, the Ottoman Empire took the responsibility of making reforms in the vilayets where the Armenians lived but some Armenians did not think the reforms made [in these vilayets] were enough (*oralarda yapılan reformlari yeterli gormediler*). Beginning with 1888, these Armenians established revolutionary committees and revolted in Moush region (1895). Furthermore, even in Istanbul they attacked some government offices with bombs. Abdulhamid’s government severely put down these revolts and this way he was able to eliminate the interventions of the European states with no damage (*zararsizca bertaraf edebildi*). Armenian nationalist revolts were against the interests of Russia as well, *History III* quickly asserts, and in dealing with them Russia had offered political help to the Sublime Porte.

⁷³⁵ *Tarih III* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2005), 260.

Were there Armenians in Russia as well? Were they like those living in our ‘vilayets’? *History III* feels obligated to establish that these Armenians were the same everywhere; this is done not in the main narrative, but with a footnote. So argues the footnote: There were quite a few Armenians under Russian administration and some of them were also getting involved with the Russian revolutionary committees and working against the interests of the Czarist regime and some were also engaged in establishing an autonomous or independent Armenian state within Russia. Some of the Armenians organizing revolts in the Ottoman Empire had come from Russia.⁷³⁶

Finally, in this single page on the ‘Armenian issue’, four words were italicized in the text for the new Republic’s high school children, majority of whom were not likely to see any Armenian neighbors around, any Armenian friends to play with: *reform* (always a pretext for betrayal), *revolutionary committees* (ihtilalci komiteler), *bombs* (bombalar), and *Russia*. These were the central memory tropes new Republic’s children were disciplined to associate ‘the Armenian’ with: *An Armenian is a komitadji with bombs. Armenians say they want reforms; for that they were ready to blow up the entire Anatolian peninsula and declare their independence.*

Neither *History III*, nor any one of the history textbooks of the past 80 years ever mention anything about the thousands of Armenians massacred by Abdulhamid’s Hamidiyeh forces between 1894-96 or other thousands perished during the Adana massacres of 1909. Since 1981 almost every Reform History (*inkilap tarihi*) textbook and since late 80s many lycee history textbooks mention that Armenians attempted to assassinate Abdulhamid [suikast (*cana kıyma düzenlemişler*)] in 1905 (or “attacked

⁷³⁶ *Tarih III*, 294.

Abdulhamid *with bombs*”)⁷³⁷ and they also organized revolts and attacks *with bombs* in Istanbul and elsewhere in the Empire. In fact, it is maintained that they had even converted their churches into *bomb depots*.⁷³⁸ Turkish history textbooks for decades have been as quiet about the Adana massacres in 1909 as they have been about the Abdulhamid Era massacres. What is more serious is that from the late 80s onwards, many books began to argue that the Adana massacres were those massacres during which Armenians ruthlessly murdered tens and thousands of Turkish women, men and children “with savagery devoid of humanity”:

After the Second Constitutional Revolution, Armenians organized a big revolt in Adana. The revolt shortly spread around the entire region. Armenians murdered tens and thousands of Turks indiscriminately – women, men, children, and the elderly- with no mercy, ruthlessly with a savagery devoid of humanity. They initiated the Adana massacre.’ [‘Turks’ and ‘Adana massacre’ is originally bold in the book]⁷³⁹

⁷³⁷ Mükerrerrem Kamil Su and Ahmet Mumcu, *Orta öğretim Kurumları Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi* (İstanbul : Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1981), 117; Mükerrerrem Kamil Su and Ahmet Mumcu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük* (İstanbul : Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1986), 117; *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük* (İstanbul : Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 2003), 125; Ahmet Bekir Palazoğlu and Osman Bircan, *Ders Geçme ve Kredi Sistemine Göre Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük 1* (Ankara: Koza Eğitim, 1993), 145; Kemal Kara, *İlköğretim okulları için İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük 8* (İstanbul : Serhat Yayınları, 1994), 86; Kemal Kara, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük* (İstanbul : Önde Yayın cılık , 2006), 130; Nurer Uğurlu and Esergül Balcı, *Tarih Lise 3* (İstanbul : Serhat / Orgun, 1989), 228; Altan Köymen, Baykal Özel, and İbrahim Atnur, *Tarih Lise III* (İstanbul : Ülke, 1990), 150; Hakkı Dursun Yıldız, Coşkun Alptekin, İlhan Şahin, İdris Bostan, *Tarih Lise 3* (İstanbul : Servet Yayın, 1990), 181 (“*II. Abdulhamit’e Yıl dız Camii’nden çıkışı sırasında yapılan bombalı saldırı*”); Altan Deliorman, *Tarih Lise III* (İstanbul : Bayrak, 1991), 214, 230 (“*Kendisine karşı hazırlanan bombalı suikastten sans eseri kurtuldu*”); Kazım Yaşar Koprıman et al., *Tarih 2* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1993), 60; Altan Deliorman, *Tarih II* (İstanbul : Bayrak, 1995), 95 (“*Kendisine karşı Ermeniler tarafından hazırlanan bombalı suikastten şans eseri kurtuldu*”); Nevin Ergezer, *Lise için Tarih 2* (Ankara: Ocak Yayınları, 1995), 77; Şenol Kalaycı, *Lise Tarih 2* (İstanbul : Meram Yayıncılık , 1995), 86; Mehmet Altan Köymen et al., *Ders Geçme ve Kredi Sistemine Göre Tarih II* (İstanbul : Ülke, 1996), 93; Veli Şirin, *Ders Geçme Kredi Sistemine Göre Liseler için Tarih II* (İstanbul : Gendaş, 1994), 106; Kemal Kara, *Osmanlı Tarihi 1* (İstanbul : Önde Yayın cılık , 1995), 190; Kazım Yaşar Koprıman et al., *Tarih Lise 2* (İstanbul : Devlet Kitapları, 2003), 73; Vicdan Cazgır, Servet Yavuz, Niyazi Ceyhun, *Lise Tarih 2* (Ankara: Devlet Kitapları, 2005), 67.

⁷³⁸ Altan Deliorman, *Tarih II* (İstanbul : Bayrak, 1995), 95-96.

⁷³⁹ My translation. Nurer Uğurlu and Esergül Balcı, *Tarih Lise 3* (İstanbul : Serhat / Örgün, 1989), 228-229. Similar rhetoric on Adana massacre can be found in Altan Köymen, Baykal Özel, and İbrahim Atnur, *Tarih Lise III* (İstanbul : Ülke, 1990), 150-151; Kemal Kara, *Osmanlı Tarihi 1* (İstanbul : Önde Yayın cılık , 1995), 189-190.

In Adana massacres, thousands of Armenians were massacred by the reactionary forces against the constitutional revolution that once again had attempted to affirm the equality of all the peoples of the empire regardless of creed and nationality. I will discuss the political economic factors that moved the relations between the Muslims and non-Muslims particularly in the Adana region to such to such a violent point months after the revolution later in this chapter.

6.5.3. History IV and its Legacies

6.5.3.1. Significance as a Textbook

History IV is inter-textual with Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* in terms of the organization of its subject-matter (and all the reform history textbooks of the Republic generally followed *History IV*'s main structure).⁷⁴⁰ The main text frequently presents generous excerpts either from the *Nutuk* or from the speeches Mustafa Kemal has given during his country tours; all of them are presented in bold font. *History IV* remained in circulation through the early 1940s. I argue that it should be regarded as the national monument of the textbooks in modern Turkey.

⁷⁴⁰ Beginning with *History IV*, in every reform history textbook, Mustafa Kemal's biography has been inserted between the section pertaining to the end of the World War 1 and the beginning of the National Resistance: Considering the situation of the Empire by the end of the Great War, what was needed was a miracle, and Mustafa Kemal, who knew what was to unfold in the destiny of his nation, fulfilled that miracle. Without Kemal, the phoenix would not be able to rise from her ashes and establish a new state. Kemal's biography becomes the discursive 'leap of faith' between the narrative catastrophe of the Great War and the miracles of the War of Independence; without knowing his life story and personal strengths, we can't make sense of the transition from the Great war to the foundation of the new Republic. Then come the sections on War of Independence, Lausanne Treaty, The Promulgation of the Republic, Abolition of the Caliphate, Political Parties in the Republican Era, and Reforms (The order never changes: Secularism and Legal Reforms, Reforms in Education, Reforms in Economy, Reforms in Health and Public Administration, Turkish Military and National Defense). Every reform history textbook of the Turkish Republic has preserved this structure up until today. With Ziya Enver Karal's books came a section on Turkey's foreign policy after the Reforms. After the 1980 military coup, a new section on 'Atatürkist system of Thought' and Atatürk's principles were added to follow the Foreign Policy sections of these books.

History IV begins with a chapter titled as ‘Turkish Nation’s Founding of Another New State’ (‘Turk Milletinin Yeni Bir Devlet Daha Kurmasi’) in large capital letters. ‘In the history of humanity there has never been any other race who has established as many and as great states as the Turks,’⁷⁴¹ so reads the very first sentence of the chapter. Then follow brief, half page narratives on the status of the European states by the end of the Great War, Wilson Principles, Paris Peace Conference, League of Nations, Sevr, Bolshevik Revolution, the rise of fascism in Italy, and the great depression. The devastation of post-war Europe under communism and fascism stressed at the very beginning of *History IV* frames the re-birth myth of the new Republican Turkish state, which in the context of this devastation shines. Narratives on the prophetic vision of Mustafa Kemal, on the virtues of the Republic and the Kemalist reforms unfold in pages to come.

What follows this introduction is ‘The Status of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the Great War’, nested in a long excerpt lifted from the first few pages of *Nutuk*. As I have discussed in Chapter 5, at the beginning of his 1927 speech, MK depicts the post-Mudros catastrophe and the political landscape among the ruins. Within this narrative, he also talks about the Armenian deportations. No narrative is more central to the Republican Turkey than *Nutuk*, and its centrality to the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide has to this date been overlooked.⁷⁴² I also regard it to be very revealing that Atatürk’s account and justification for the Armenian deportations were placed at the very beginning of *History IV* in the context of the founding moment of the

⁷⁴¹ *History IV* (İstanbul : Devlet Matbaası, 1931), 2.

⁷⁴² See Chapter 3 in this dissertation.

Republic in last volume dedicated to the new state of the Turkish nation; it could have been placed in the ‘Great War’ section at the end of History III, but it wasn’t.

Structural location of the textbook for this particular presentation, I argue, also signifies the importance of the deportations for the new State. So let’s for the last time remember Mustafa Kemal’s summary since it remained in *History IV* until the early 1940s and was removed from the Turkish schoolbooks thereafter.

What rhetorically empowers this summary is a commanding inventory of those Mustafa Kemal wrathfully holds responsible for the catastrophe before his eyes. The very first in the list come the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress. Kemal does not name them, but identifies them as ‘those who had driven the populace and the country into the general conflict’ and who ‘had fled and cared for nothing but their own safety’. Then come Vahdettin, ‘the degenerate occupant of the throne and the Caliphate’, the Cabinet, which ‘was weak, and lacked dignity and courage’ under the leadership of Damat Ferit Pasha, and the Entente, who occupied the country at every front with no respect for the terms of the armistice. In conclusion, Mustafa Kemal stresses the role of ‘Christian elements’ in this devastation: They were ‘at work all over the country, either openly or in secret, trying to realize their own particular ambitions and thereby hasten the breakdown of the state’.⁷⁴³ He points out that the Armenian Patriarchate Zaven Effendi too worked with the Greek Mavri Mira in full collaboration and ‘the preparations made by the Armenians progressed side by side with those of the Greeks’.

⁷⁴⁸ A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk , 1

The next section summarizes the objectives and political aims of the national defense organizations that developed countermeasures. In the context of the objectives of the ‘Society for the Defense of the National Rights of the Eastern Provinces’⁷⁴⁴ Mustafa Kemal addresses -for the first and the last time for the ‘Turkish nation’ - the issue of Armenian deportations. Among the objectives of this major defense organization of the Eastern provinces were ‘to institute an impartial inquiry for the purpose of discovering the motives, the instigators, and the agitators implicated in the ‘cruelties and murders’ committed in the Eastern provinces so that the guilty ones might be punished without delay⁷⁴⁵; to do their utmost to remove misunderstandings that existed between the different elements in the country and to restore the good relations that had formerly existed between them....’⁷⁴⁶ Mustafa Kemal points out that the Erzurum branch of this organization decided in defense of Turkish rights, ‘to inform the civilized world by means of convincing documents that ‘the people had never been involved in the mistreatment that occurred during the deportations’, ‘that the property of Armenians had been protected up to the time when the country was invaded by the Russian’, that ‘in fact the Muslims had been compelled to suffer from the cruelest acts of violence’ and ‘that some Armenians who had been saved from deportation had, in disobedience of orders, attacked their own protectors.’

Members of the Erzurum branch, Mustafa Kemal informs his audience, had also studied both the propaganda circulated in the Eastern provinces and the Turkish,

⁷⁴⁹ The settlement of the Armenian Question was one of the issues at the Paris Conference in 1919 and the word had gone out.... See Eric Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1998), pp.151-6.

⁷⁵⁰ *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 3-4.

⁷⁵¹ *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 3-4.

Kurdish, and Armenian questions from a scientific and historical perspective. They resolved to concentrate further efforts on the following points: ‘1. On no account to emigrate’ (*kat’iyyen muhaceret etmemek*); ‘2. Forthwith to form scientific, economic, and religious organizations’; and ‘3. To unite in the defense of even the smallest part of the Eastern provinces that might be attacked.’ He concludes his discussion of the founding principles of the Society for the Defense of the National Rights of the Eastern Provinces by stressing the fact that it ‘was clearly evident that the possible ceding of the Eastern Provinces was the most important reason for forming this society’. He states that the report of Armenian massacres was a ‘calumny’ perpetuated by those who wanted to prove that the Armenians were in the majority in the Eastern provinces and who were trying to mislead the public into believing that the Muslim population ‘was composed of savages whose chief occupation was to massacre Armenians.’⁷⁴⁷ The excerpt from the *Nutuk* goes on to include those societies who conspired against unity and comes to an end after MK also talks about those ‘prominent personalities’ who endorsed the American protectorate.

Between the early 40s and the early 80s, reference to ‘Armenian deportations’ that had entered the textbooks with a long excerpt from *Nutuk* disappeared from the national education. While the *Nutuk* excerpt never came back, in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, the dosage of ‘Atatürkism’ in the textbooks was increased⁷⁴⁸ and new

⁷⁵² A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk , 3-4.

⁷⁴⁸ While the source of the violent social unrest that paved the way for the 1980 coup was class conflict, according to the military junta, what was at the foundation of the violent chaos the country went through especially between 1978-1980 was the lack of a ‘real’ understanding of Atatürk’s principles. Indeed, military was right. Kemalists had aspired for a classless society. Traditionally, nationalism is regarded as the dominant ideology of Kemalism. Taha Parla argues that the overarching ideology of the Kemalists, under the influence of Ziya Gökalp, has been corporatism. Corporatism once gives the

narratives on the ‘Armenian issue’ including the official state theses for 1915 were assigned a permanent space in the history textbooks.⁷⁴⁹ Certainly the former and the latter measure are not anchored in the same issues (domestic anarchy as a result of class conflict and ASALA terrorism, respectively) but their discursive encounter was

society as an organism; it denies ‘individualism’, class conflict and cosmopolitanism. As Asim Karaomerlioglu puts it, especially within the historiography of the 30s, the narratives of statist industrialization have been highly exaggerated; in reality Kemalist elites have always been fearful of capitalist development and its subsequent transformations. For instance, economic transformation in the villages has always been kept in check; Kemalists were fearful of social mobility and urbanization rising from the villages. For instance, Kemalists’ emphasis on the Village Institutes (*Köy Enstitüleri*) – peasants had to be kept in their places and had to be educated within the villages, and the romantic discourses (those in Turkish Literature as well) that proliferated on the education and the dignity of the peasants have developed as an offshot of the economic policies that were on guard against urbanization and capitalist transformation in the villages in an overwhelmingly peasant society. For the corporatism of Kemalists, see Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1993), and for a critique of Kemalists’ approach to the peasantry, see Asim Karaomerlioglu, ‘Türkiye’de Köycülük’ in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce: Kemalizm* (İstanbul: İletişim 2001), 284-297. In the final analysis, school books certainly never get into these details; in the official historiography and hence in the textbooks the explanation of every success and victory is anchored in MK’s personality and psychology.

⁷⁴⁹ Post-80s changes in the textbooks took place in two ways: First, in the reform history textbooks, ‘War with Armenia’ sections were expanded as ‘The Armenian Issue and War with Armenians.’ They comprise three main sections; the Armenian issue until the Great War; The Armenian issue during the Great War and the Armenian Issue in the War of Independence. This happened in 1981. See Mukerrem Kamil Su and Prof.Dr.Ahmet Mumcu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1986), 117-124; Prof.Dr.Ahmet Mumcu and Mukerrem Kamil Su, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 2003). Then, in 1989, in (Lycee) history II or History IIIs one long narrative on the Armenian issue addressing the events up until the end of the war of independence was installed immediately following the section on the Berlin Treaty. This section’s title has also remained uniform since then: “Dağılma Hareketleri Sırasında çıkan Ermeni Sorunu” (The Armenian Issue that emerged during the Events of the Collapse [of the Empire]). Up until 2005, as far as I observed in the textbooks I have, “Armenian issue” sections continued to follow the section on the Berlin Treaty and its Ramifications. See Prof.Dr.İsmet Miroğlu and Prof.Dr.Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Tarih III* (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 1990); Prof.Dr.Kazım Yaşar Koprman et al., *Tarih II* (İstanbul: Devlet Kitapları, 1993), 60; Prof.Dr.Kazım Yaşar Koprman et al., *Tarih II* (İstanbul: Devlet Kitapları, 1993), 66-67. Beginning with 2003, in addition to these narratives following the Berlin Treaty section, a narrative on the deportations of the Armenians during the Great War was added to the sections on the Great War under the title “The Attitudes of the Armenians during the Great War and its Consequences”. See Komisyon, *Tarih II* (İstanbul Devlet Kitapları, 2003), 72-73, 82-83; Vicdan Cazgır, Servet Yavuz, Niyazi Ceyhun, *Tarih II* (Ankara: Devlet Kitapları, 2005), 66-68, 75-83. Post 2003 changes in the lesson plans on the Armenian issue can also be traced from the 2002 circular of the Curriculum Board; see “Ermeni, Yunan-Pontus ve Süryaniler” ile ilgili konuların Orta Öğretim Tarih 1, Tarih 2, ve T.C. İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük Ders Öğretim Programlarında Yer Alması”, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Tebliğler Dergisi, Temmuz 2002-2538, 531-555. The circular is a 23-page table that details the changes that should apply to the Armenia issue narratives beginning with the textbooks of 2003-2004 Academic Year.

significant and they did make meanings for each other within the limited domain of the history textbooks.

6.5.3.2. Armenians and The Southern Front

After Mustafa Kemal's assessment of the post-war situation of the Empire, 'Armenians' resurface in *History IV* within the narrative of the formation of the nationalist resistance in the South.⁷⁵⁰ In the aftermath of the Mudros treaty, first the British occupied Urfa, Ayıntab, Maras, Adana (capital of Cilicia region), and its vicinity in January 1919 on the basis of the 7th article of the Mudros.⁷⁵¹ Seven months later they transferred these regions and Syria to the French. The people who were outraged by these occupations (*bu işgallerden coşan halk*) and especially by the atrocities and murders committed by the Armenian Legion assembled and supported by the French (*bilhassa Fransızların teşkil edip ileri sürdükleri ermeni milli alayıyla birlikte yaptıkları zulüm ve katillerden coşan halk*) began to organize national resistance groups against the French,' writes *History IV*.⁷⁵² So Mustafa Kemal sends some important officers to Adana (Cilicia), Kozan, Elbistan, Maras, Ayıntab and Urfa sites for the 'national fever to be transformed into organized action.' Then the details of the individual fronts set up, their leaders and the outcomes of the local battles with

⁷⁵⁰ After Mustafa Kemal's assessment of the situation of the Empire at the end of the Great War presented in the context of a long excerpt lifted from the Great Speech, 'The Sultan and his Government's Assessment of the situation', 'Turkish Nation's Assessment of the Situation' and 'Mustafa Kemal's Assessment of the Situation' follow. Then begins Mustafa Kemal's biography. What follows Mustafa Kemal's biography is a long section titled as 'National Resistance'. The narrative begins with the occupation of Izmir by the Greeks. Then the Western front is set up. Section on the Southern front follows...See *History IV*, 1931, 32-33.

⁷⁵¹ According to Mudros, Allies won the right to seize any 'strategic points' in case of a threat to Allied security.

⁷⁵² *Tarih IV* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), 32. For the formation of Armenian Legion, see Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 139-142, 151-154.

the French are relayed. Adana (Cilicia) front had been assembled with '3300 people.'⁷⁵³ The resistance forces assembled by *Tufan* (Yüzbaşı Osman Nuri), *Dogan* (Topcu Binbaşı Kemal), and *Yürük Selim* (Yüzbaşı Salim)⁷⁵⁴ fought with the Armenian forces who were 'three times as many' and cleaned this region of the Armenian attacks. *Kılıç Ali* (the most important *aide de camp* of Mustafa Kemal until he died), according to *History IV*, had been in charge of setting up the Maras front.⁷⁵⁵ After the people in Maras revolted against the French, as the story goes, the French in February 1920 withdrew to the Ayıntab front (further to the south). Then the national forces comprised of '2500 people' led by Kılıç Ali and Şehit Şahin pursued the resistance in Ayıntab until February 1921. Ayıntab that did not give up on the resistance for ten months finally prevailed when the French gave up because of 'starvation and lack of ammunition.' National forces led by Ali Saip and Nuri Beys⁷⁵⁶,

⁷⁵³ And how many Armenian volunteers were there in the Armenian Legion? We know the Legion at its height during the Great War consisted of more than 4000 men serving under French officers...but it was called Legion d'Orient then, founded in November 1916. It was composed of Arabs, Syrian, Maronite and Armenian recruits, and Armenian recruits were over-represented because of the deportations and massacres ongoing. Numbers across sources are pretty inconsistent. Some of them were assembled of the Musa Dagh survivors shipped by the French to Port Said. Bloxham mentions that 500 men among them put themselves at the disposal of the Entente powers, but also Armenians from USA joined. The Legion was subdivided at the beginning of 1919 into a Legion Armenienne and a Legion Syrienne as a result of the pressures from the Armenians. For the battles in Maraş, Bloxham mentions '400 Armenian volunteers' Maraş is the site of a battle which comes after the confrontations in Adana. Kamuran Gürün, in his book defending the Turkish theses, mentions '400 volunteers' for Dörtol, for a French landing in Mersin in December 1918, mentions 'a 1500 men unit [in which] there were only 150 French soldiers'. If we assume that Gürün's numbers must be the most exaggerated ones since he is defending the official theses, then we can conclude that the Armenian Legion comprised of at most 1750 Armenians. See Kamuran Gürün, *Armenian File*, p.273. Of course there are also thousands of returning Armenians after the Armistice. But how many took up arms, that we do not know.

⁷⁵⁵ Kılıç Ali was also one of the Antep deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (beginning with the first one) and he was also serving in the Independence Courts during the War of Independence.

History IV concludes, took Urfa back by February 1920. This is the main narrative for the southern front in *History IV*.

First, what is striking is that, compared to Mustafa Kemal's narrative in *Nutuk* especially on Maras and the Armenians, *History IV* reads surprisingly brief and dry. As we have seen in Chapter 5, in *Nutuk* the massacres perpetrated by the Armenians in the southern provinces from Maras to Urfa during the War of Independence are described as a 'policy of massacre and extermination.' According to MK, those were the massacres that 'would taint the pages of the history of humanity', that would 'terrify humanity' and that the perpetrators of this 'savagery unique in history [were] Armenians'. Compared to the rhetoric of *Nutuk* on the Armenians in Maras and the atrocities they committed, *History IV*'s narrative comes across as incredibly arid and sterile.⁷⁵⁷ However, if one pays attention to the number of people / locals / bands of irregulars who joined the national resistance (*Kuvai-Milliye*) at the western and southern fronts, a significant contrast emerges on the basis of the numbers that *History IV* presents with pride: The front set up against the Greek invasion in the West has a total of 1,600 people involved, the southern front, almost 6,000.⁷⁵⁸ More than half was

⁷⁵⁷ *Tarih IV Kemalist Eğitim in Tarih Dersleri (1931-1941)* (İstanbul : Kaynak Yayınları, 2004), 32.

⁷⁵⁸ Let me emphasize that these numbers are for the irregulars that comprised local volunteers. Zürcher notes that although the Ottoman Army had been depleted by defeats, epidemics and desertion, it still functioned as one entity and its command structure was still intact. Its leading officers – 'the Young Turk officers who had made their careers in the past ten years' - supported the national resistance almost uniformly. Mudros treaty of 1918 had mandated the disarming and the demobilization of the Ottoman troops. These officers sabotaged this, and they secretly supplied the regional resistance organizations with arms and ammunition. However, army's strength in most of Anatolia was not impressive. Thrace, the straits area and all of western Anatolia had about 35,000 troops. The Western front under the Greek Occupation (Greeks had occupied Izmir and its environs in May 1919) had to rely on bands of Turkish and Circassian irregulars for resistance until 1921. Zürcher mentions these irregulars did harass the Greek army, but they could not alone be the deciding factor. In the South the military situation was 'a little better, with about 18,000 troops (the remnants of the Ottoman Syrian armies) in Cilicia and the north of the Syrian desert and 8000 further east. In conclusion, the only place where sizeable Ottoman forces were concentrated was in the east

stationed in Adana. What was at stake in Adana and in the entire Cilician plateau?

How do we explain the ‘national fever’ *History IV* mentions there?

In the previous chapters, I already discussed the post-1919 condition in Anatolia, especially around the Southern fronts. Between November 1918 and June 1919 the CUP branches in the provincial capitals had already organized themselves into societies for the ‘defense of the national rights’ all around Anatolia. These societies were generally supported by the Muslim (Turkish and Kurdish) landowners and traders. Many of them had become wealthy during the Great War through government contracts and by taking over the land, property and the businesses of the Armenians and the Greeks ‘for next to nothing.’⁷⁵⁹ After the Law of Deportation was cancelled (by the anti-Unionist Istanbul Government of the Sultan now in collaboration with the Allies), and the Mudros Treaty was signed, thousands of Armenian deportees – those who survived the deportations and the war or who have been hiding- began to come back. We do not know how many of these Armenians returned directly to the Southern regions; according to Bosghos Nubar Pasha, the number returning deportees only to Cilicia was 130,000⁷⁶⁰; Ottoman government’s figure released in March 1919 was 101,747 for the entire country. We also know that ‘most Armenians from the province of Adana’ were not killed during the deportations although ‘this very basic fact is elided in the works of many prominent Armenian historians.’⁷⁶¹ The situation in Cilicia (capital, Adana), Urfa, Antep and Maras was tense from the beginning; there were strong suspicions that Armenian claims on the

⁷⁵⁹ Eric Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.154

⁷⁶⁰ Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 338.

⁷⁶¹ Ara Sarafian, ‘Note to the Editor from Ara Sarafian’, *Armenian Weekly*, 10 January 2009, <http://www.armenianweekly.com/2009/01/10/note-to-the-editor-from-ara-sarafian/>

area would be honored when French recruited and armed local Armenians.⁷⁶² Even before the formation of nationalist resistance by the end of 1918, some argues a nucleus of CUP resistance played on the Muslim sentiment and spread the rumor that the Allied would disarm the Muslims as a prelude to a massacre.⁷⁶³ The reluctance of the old and also the new Muslim occupants and owners⁷⁶⁴ -- some of whom themselves had of course been previously dispossessed by war and deportation (from the Balkans or Caucasia) -- of the Armenian properties across the wealthy Cilician plain certainly must have fuelled this propaganda. *History IV* writes that Adana front was set up with 3,300 people around Mersin, Tarsus, Osmaniye on 21 January 1919 and this region was cleaned off of the ‘Armenian incursions’ (*Ermeni tecavüzlerinden*) with a final offense on 14 November 1920. Zürcher mentions that fighting in the south began in January 1920.⁷⁶⁵ Without an understanding of the economic history of the Cilicia Plateau, however, we still can’t fully understand what was at stake at the southern fronts. What follows is a brief discussion of this.

6.5.3.3.Cilicia (Çukurova): The Delta of Cotton Dreams -1

Çukurova (‘hollow plain’) is the name of the delta, also known as Cilicia, situated around the city of Adana in southern Turkey. As Turkish children, teenagers, young and old women and men (and most probably as urban Republican elites), we learned to treasure the dreamy cotton fields of Çukurova within the lyrical narratives

⁷⁶² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.155

⁷⁶³ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 152.

⁷⁶⁴ For refugees who were resettled in the Cilicia region during the Great War, see Chapter 2 in this dissertation and Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 282-335.

⁷⁶⁵ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 155.

of Yasar Kemal's *Memed, My Hawk* (1955), which depicts a conflict between the poor tenant farmers and the wealthy rural landowners, the 'Aghas' (Agalar) of the legendary Cukurova. For us it was a simple, lyrical tale of a rebellious boy born in the Taurus Mountains. So would begin the life of Slim Memed inside *Memed, My Hawk*:

The slopes of the Taurus Mountains rise from the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean, on the southern coast of Turkey, in a steady ascent from the white, foam-fringed rocks to the peaks. They then spread inland, at a tangent to the curve of the coast. Clouds in white masses always float over the sea. The coastal plains between the mountains and the shore are of clay, quite smooth, as if polished. Here the soil is rich. For miles inland the plain holds the tang of the sea, its air still salt and sharp. Beyond this smooth plowed land the scrub of the Chukurova begins. Thickly covered with a tangle of brushwood, reeds, blackberry brambles, wild vines and rushes, its deep green expanse seems boundless, wilder and darker than a forest.

A little farther inland, beyond Anavarza on one side and Osmaniye on the other, on the way toward Islahiye, begin the broad marshes. In the summer months they bubble with heat...Beyond the marshes, there are more plowed fields. The earth is oily, shining, warm, and soft, ready to repay fortyfold, fiftyfold, the seed that it receives.⁷⁶⁶

The vilayet of Adana (it was one of the six 'Armenian' vilayets) included the sanjaks of Adana, Mersin, Icili (Silifke), Kozan (Sis) and Cebel-i Bereket. As of 1914, according to the Ottoman census, about 60,000 Armenians lived in this vilayet; Cilicia Patriarch's census cites about 84,000 Armenians. The Gregorian Armenians had two churches in Adana and four schools with about 1500 students. The Catholic and Protestant Armenians had their own schools and churches.⁷⁶⁷

The fertile plain of Cilicia had developed from the 1830 onwards. It had experienced a cotton boom during the US Civil War, and had become once again important around the turn of the century with wealthy Armenians purchasing land for purposes of commercial agriculture.⁷⁶⁸ Indeed, Armenian landowners at this stage were already in possession of the richest areas of the Cilician plain and they were

⁷⁶⁶ Yashar Kemal, *Memed, My Hawk* (New York: NYRB Classics, 2005), 3.

⁷⁶⁷ Osman Köker, 100 Yıl Önce *Türkiye de Ermeniler*, 242.

⁷⁶⁸ Çağlar Keyder, *State and the Class*, p.138

rapidly increasing their holdings. The Armenian population had prospered and multiplied while the Muslim population had declined. As W.J.Childs put in his 1922 entry to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘The Muslims of Cilicia, indeed, were gloomily brooding over Armenian affronts to their patriotism, and economic Armenian encroachments on their position as the dominant class and ruling race. These matters combined formed a mass of highly inflammable material.’⁷⁶⁹

Cotton production in Cilicia was modernized by the second half of the 19th century. When the cotton prices increased because of the American Civil War, Britain established the first cotton gin factory in Adana. Coupled with the privileges extended to foreign commercial enterprises by the Empire, mechanization of agriculture accelerated. Especially the presence of Britain and France in the cotton production of Adana provided more opportunities for the commercial advance of the Christian landowners and merchants.⁷⁷⁰ So Armenians of the region had also prospered through the cultivation of grains, fruits and cattle breeding. Others had advanced in the manufacturing of textiles, carpets and silverware. However, Cilicia would become the heaven of Muslim landowners during the 1950s when ‘fortunes would be made after a single harvest.’⁷⁷¹ In the post-Holocaust era and when the single-party regime of the Republican People’s Party comes to an end, Cilicia’s prosperity would trigger yet another change in the reform history textbooks, which I will discuss later.

⁷⁶⁹ See footnote 27 in Keyder, *State and Class*, 236.

⁷⁷⁰ Yurt Ansiklopedisi: Türkiye, Volume 1 (İstanbul: Anadolu Yayın cılık , 1981), p.31-32

⁷⁷¹ Keyder, *State and Class*, 138.

6.5.3.4. The Armenians and the War of Independence

‘One should not regard the War of Independence merely as a military and political struggle: The Turkish nation that has seen the collapse of the Ottoman Empire struggled to establish a sovereign state and society in every way,’ writes *History IV* and launches the narrative for the War of Independence (*Istiklal Harbi*). The War of Independence has both military and diplomatic fronts, according to *History IV*. While the military frontiers were established against the Greeks in the west, the French in the south, the Armenians in the East, the success of all these military fronts was also dependent on the success of the Kemalist government’s diplomatic relations with the French, the Russians and the Americans: ‘Mustafa Kemal has given much importance to the political, in other words, to the diplomatic fronts of the War of Independence.’⁷⁷²

In this discussion, the Armenian issue comes up first in the context of the diplomatic relations with ‘The United States of America’: Wilson wished to constitute an Armenian State in the eastern Anatolia. After an American commission that was sent to the East indicated that it was impossible to realize this ideal and after the States withdrew from all European affairs and once again took refuge in the Monroe Doctrine, “the consideration of the Armenians also left the pragmatic arena (*amelî saha*).” This way, *History IV* writes, “since the ideals of United States in the Near East were limited by the *commercial and cultural* domains, United States preferred the policy of good relations with the Turks.”⁷⁷³

⁷⁷² *History IV* (1931), 58.

⁷⁷³ *History IV* (1931), 59-60. *History IV*’s italics.

In the section where the relations with the ‘French Republic’ are discussed, *History IV* concludes that an armistice with the French, who had occupied the southern provinces, “could be signed only when the Turkish army put the Armenians in their place (*Ermenilerin haddini bildirdikten sonra*), defeated the Greek army with two Inonu and Sakarya victories, and thoroughly showed its power and importance.”⁷⁷⁴ In *History IV* Turks either ‘trample’ Armenia as we have seen in the context of Alp Aslan’s crusades, or they ‘put the Armenians in their place.’ Indeed, only one page after the Sevr, a new section is launched in *History IV* with the following title: THE FIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW TURKISH STATE: THE ARMENIANS TRAMPLED (*ERMENILERIN EZILMESİ*) AND THE GREEKS DEFEATED.⁷⁷⁵ While in the *History* volumes the rhetoric on the Greeks communicates much anger, the rhetoric on the Armenians often emanates a desire to humiliate as well – a quiet ironic and profound engagement, indeed, with a people whose discursive presence is so superfluous.

THE FIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW TURKISH STATE: THE ARMENIANS TRAMPLED AND THE GREEKS DEFEATED - the section where the military campaign of the regular armies finally constituted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1920 are covered – are preceded by a four-page Sevr narrative where it is relayed that in some parts of the Eastern vilayets a sovereign and an independent Armenian State (*Ermenistan Devleti*) was going to be established’ (Article 5). *History IV*’s Sevr narrative in this period mostly dwells on the struggles between the Istanbul government and MK’s nationalist Ankara government and presents a discursive depository where the slavishness of the Sultan and his cronies to the Allies are

⁷⁷⁴ *History IV* (1931), 61.

⁷⁷⁵ *History IV* (1931), 66.

emphasized. After this introductory narrative, ten selected articles of Sevr are presented in a summary fashion; half of them concern the territorial split of the Empire between the Allies, the rest concern the minority rights, disarming of the Ottoman State, commercial capitulations, the foundation of an “independent Armenian State” and a “Kurdistan mandate”. *History IV* indicates that the treaty meant “the execution order for the Turks.” As I discussed in Chapter 3, the Sevr Treaty was comprised of 260 articles and one article, Article 144, concerned the “Abandoned Property.” Neither the Turkish history textbooks of the past 95 years nor the Turkish nationalist historiography ever mention anything about the Article 144 in Sevres. Turkish history textbooks always present the treaty in rhetorical clichés such as the “death order”, and summarize only 4 or 5 articles which only concern territorial allocation.

‘The Victory over the Armenians at the Northeastern Front and the Consequences’ situated under the main title THE FIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW TURKISH STATE: THE ARMENIANS TRAMPLED AND THE GREEKS DEFEATED is the last section where Armenians or Armenia are covered in *History IV*. In its opening paragraph, *History IV* writes,

At the front set up at the Anatolia’s northeast, the New Turkish State (Yeni Turk Devleti) launched a successful campaign against the *Armenians* and signed its first international *treaty*. Armenians, after the Armistice of Mudros did not cease for a moment to massacre the Turks en masse in the interior of Armenia [1] as well as in the border districts. In the spring of the year 1920 Armenian atrocities (*Ermeni mezalimi*) became intolerable.⁷⁷⁶

One would hardly believe that in these two sentences were buried some of the most profound anxieties of the ‘New Turkish State’ regarding the Armenians. The ‘New Turkish State’ wages a campaign against the ‘*Armenians*’, writes History IV, and

⁷⁷⁶ *History IV* (1931), 72. ‘Armenia’ and ‘treaty’ italicized in the book.

successfully signs its first international treaty with them. The international legitimacy of the ‘New Turkish State’ is first and foremost established and guaranteed with an ‘international treaty’ signed with the Armenians. After the Armenians are ‘put in their place’ in this opening sentence, the reason for this campaign is explained by the subsequent two sentences lifted directly from MK’s *Nutuk*: “Armenians, after the Armistice of Mudros did not cease for a moment to massacre the Turks en masse in the interior of Armenia as well as in the border districts. In the spring of the year 1920 Armenian atrocities (*Ermeni mezalimi*) became intolerable.”

One can’t miss the footnote attached to “the interior of Armenia”. So reads the footnote [1]:

During the collapse of Russia, an Armenia was formed including the cities of Yerevan, Alexandropol (Gumru), Kars and the regions with significant Armenian population in that vicinity. This formation called as the ‘*Armenian State*’ was headed by the anti-Turk and ultra-nationalist Tashnak Party. The Tashnak government protected by the Allied powers was trying as hard as it could to harm the Turks.⁷⁷⁷

The first footnote of *History IV*, which briefly explains the foundation of the state of Armenia with explicit resentment, is the manifestation of a narrative discomfort with the sudden emergence of an “Armenian state” within a four-volume narrative in which Armenians were always confined to a superfluous existence and Armenia was ‘trampled’ every time it surfaced. Indeed, while the Kemalist nationalists established their ‘new Turkish State’ in 1920, so had the Armenian nationalists established theirs, in 1918 – exactly two years before the Turks. Otherwise an international treaty could not have been signed: There *was* an Armenian state and this needed an explanation.

⁷⁷⁷ *History IV* (1931), 72.

In the context of this narrative discomfort, both the footnote as a technology for narrative resolution and the contents of it signify resentment. While the number of Turkish states mentioned in the *Outlines of Turkish History* (1930) was 12; this figure rises to 20 in *History IV*. This means only in a few months 8 more Turkish states had been added to the narrative of the new Turkish history in *History I, II, III, and IV* (1931). History I emphasizes that what constitutes the core of the Turkish ‘civilization’ is the endurance and the continuity of the Turkish state-making tradition defined by the ability to establish societies resting on robust principles of public law (see *History I*, p.46-53). State-making tradition was positioned to be the heart of the Turkish civilization. In this context, the footnote, into which the new Armenian state was relegated, becomes an instrument of power that reifies the inferiority of the Armenian state.

The footnote’s content also conveys uneasiness with the ‘state’ status of Armenia. First a ‘formation’ is indicated and then it is explained that the ‘Armenian state’ is a name given to that formation. *The very first page of History IV* (formally, p.1 of the book) indicates that the new Turkish state was established as the new state of the Turkish nation whose state traditions, according to the new history thesis, were rooted in the ‘Sumerian state, B.C. 40000’ – ‘the first civilized state in history.’⁷⁷⁸ ‘Armenian state’, in *the very first footnote of History IV*, on the other hand, is a name given to a formation that bundles together some cities and some Armenian groups. A certain sense of haphazardness of this formation is expressed not only in relation to the randomness of Armenia’s geography and people but also in relation to the collapse of

⁷⁷⁸ *History IV* (1931), 1.

Russia. While the anti-Armenianness and the ultra-nationalism of the Kemalist movement is never emphasized, anti-Turk and ultra-nationalist qualities of the Tashnak party are also indicated to consolidate the implied malignancy and superfluosness of this ‘formation’ confined to an existence in quotation marks in a footnote, just a like tumor ready to be excised through surgical procedure.

This is not argument in defense of the innocence of the Tashnaks; they were indeed as ultra-nationalist as the Kemalists. Especially after 1912 (after the Balkan wars), and in the context of the inter-communal carnage that exploded at the Eastern border after the Bolshevik revolution (1917), they were no less ruthless than their Turkish counter-parts while every inch of the border every day has been drawn in human flesh and blood. This is, rather, yet another commentary on the ‘new nations that had the bad luck to be born in the age of propaganda.’⁷⁷⁹ Would the Republic’s children know that the Unionists and the Tashnaks worked hand in hand for liberty and equality in the Empire before the 1908 Constitutional Revolution against the Abdulhamid’s regime? Would they ever know that four out of eleven Armenian deputies who were elected for the Ottoman Parliament after 1908 were prominent Tashnaksutyun leaders? Would the Republic’s children know how warmly Ahmet Riza once welcomed a prominent Tashnaksutyun leader to the Parliament after the Revolution: “How nice! Our trustworthy friends are descending from the mountains in order to defend constitutional institutions.”⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁹ Arendt, see chapter 1.

⁷⁸⁰ Murat Koptaş, *Armenian Political Thinking In the Second Constitutional Period: The Case of Krikor Zohrab*, Master’s Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005 Unpublished Manuscript.

The rest of the story in *History IV* is the familiar one from *Nutuk*. When the Armenian atrocities became intolerable, as the story goes, the government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (Kemalists' new government in Ankara established in 1920, which at the time was still struggling for legitimacy and sovereignty in both the international arena and against the Sultan's Istanbul government) decided on an Armenian expedition. Mustafa Kemal assigned Kazim Karabekir Pasha as the Commander of the Eastern Front. In June, Armenians invaded Oltu; an ultimatum was dispatched to the Tasnaksutyun government to stop the invasions in July. However, the Armenians continued their invasions and attacks. Moreover, on 24 September, they attacked 'our forces at the border region and dared to engage in war (*harbe girismek curetini gosterdiler*).'⁷⁸¹ After the Armenian invasions were eradicated, the Turkish army made its offensive in the morning of 28 September. On 3 December 1920 Gumru Treaty was signed. *History IV* repeats that Gumru treaty is the first treaty the new Turkish state signed. It is the 'fruit of the success of the new Turkish army.'

History IV concludes by explaining the significance of this victory:

The Allied, who had triumphed over the Ottoman Empire, had promised the Armenians Trabzon, Erzurum, Gumushane, Erzincan, Bitlis, Van vilayets, in short, very vast Turkish territories all the way to Harsit valley on paper; and the Armenians were dreaming about invading these promised lands. After they have been trampled by and fled the Turkish army (*Türk ordusu onunde inhizam ve firarla*), they woke up from their dreams and saw the reality and they had to abandon Kars and its vicinity, which the Ottoman Empire had lost in 1878, to the Turks with the Gumru Treaty. With this treaty, the Armenian State was brought to a state where it could no longer harm the Turkish state. Subsequently, when the Armenian state became a part of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, as we will see below, the Gumru treaty was replaced by the Moscow (16 March 1921) and Kars (13 October 1921) treaties signed in between Soviet Republic and Turkey....The government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly could now turn its attention to their fronts.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁸¹ *History IV* (1931), 72-73. *History IV* addresses the treaties with the Soviets one more time in the aftermath of the Sakarya Battle, but that narrative relays information on the treaties signed with Moscow. See p.101-104.

In all the Republic's history textbooks published until today, the narrative on the war with Armenians on the East concludes by emphasizing that only after the victory on the Eastern front, Turkish nationalist forces could mobilize all the resources to the western front. I argue that this alone once again conveys that for the Turks, the Greek and the Armenian enemies were not equal despite the nationalist pomp attached to the Greek occupation later in the official discourses.

6.6. Conclusion

When *History I, II, III* and *IV* -Kemalist state's first history textbooks – are considered altogether, here is the learning for the Turkish children between 1930s and 1940s: There were some Armenian Kings and some 'Armenia' somewhere around Iran, Azerbaijan, Anatolia and the Mediterranean, they were 'trampled' by the Turks, and their political existence was finally eradicated by the end of the 14th century (*History II*). In *History III Armenian revolutionary committees with bombs* revolting everywhere in the Empire came into the picture. There were some Armenians living in some vilayets of the Empire but which vilayets were they? Could Moush be one of them? These Armenians always wanted reforms and they were never happy so they would always take up arms and revolt. There was a big revolt for instance in Moush in 1895 (so this may be one of the vilayets where the Armenians lived?). The section on the Berlin Treaty indicated that the 'Christians' in the Eastern vilayets wanted reforms...so perhaps very careful students could connect 'Eastern vilayets' and 'Moush' and gauge that those Christians living in the Eastern vilayets were Armenians.

Even if the students completely missed this connection, Mustafa Kemal in *History IV*, in the context of generous excerpts from *Nutuk*, explains that there were some Armenian deportations during the Great War, some ‘cruelties and murders’ were committed in the Eastern provinces, their property was protected up until Russians came (and Russians should be responsible for whatever happened to them...) but it was really the Muslims who suffered from the cruelest acts of violence, that those ungrateful Armenians who were saved from the deportations attacked even their own protectors. It was the mission of the Erzurum branch of the Society for the Defense of the Eastern Provinces to inform the civilized world of these and that ‘the people’ were never involved in the ‘mistreatment’ that occurred during the deportations by means of convincing documents.

After this explanation, one, as a student, would technically think that the Armenians were gone forever with these deportations. However, in *History IV*, they come back with the French and it is stated that the atrocities they committed outraged the people of Cilicia and fomented a ‘national fever.’ What explains the nationalist outrage in Cilicia? *History IV* remains silent. Thousands of Muslims and Turks banded together in Adana, Maras, Urfa, Ayintab. Then some ‘Armenian State’ emerged in the East during the War of Independence, whose founding story was exiled to a footnote. This Armenian state too was trampled when the Armenians dared to wage war against the Turks. Turks put Armenians in their place, and Armenians fled the Turkish armies.

One would perhaps expect that the Armenians and the Armenian issue would be completely erased from these first textbooks of the Republic; afterall the Lausanne Treaty made no mention of the Armenians. As I have indicated in Chapter 1, after the

victory of the Kemalists in the Turkish War of Independence, Lausanne (1923) made no provision for the rehabilitation, restitution or compensation of the Armenian survivors. In fact the revised peace treaty made no mention of the ‘Armenians.’ As Hovannisian puts it, ‘it was as if the Armenians had never existed in the Ottoman Empire.’⁷⁸² My analysis of the first textbooks, which I tried understand with a concept I coined as “narrative superfluity”, proved otherwise.

First of all, Atatürk ’s arguments on the deportations and the abandoned property of the Armenians, which are in line with the arguments of the contemporary Turkish denial, crown the very beginning of *History IV*. On the other hand, what preceded the period of erasure (which I will analyze in the next chapter) in these books was the abundance of narratives that confine Armenians to a meaningless, incoherent, rootless – superfluous- existence with no human face within the Turkish national narrations. In the discourses of the post-80s, this superfluosness constructed as the ontological other of the ‘Turk’ could easily lend itself to narratives on metaphysical evil represented in the image of the Armenian terrorist organizations (‘ermenî tedhis örgütleri’) and the computer-generated images of ASALA militants; the bombs were finally given many faces, all computer-generated and released by Interpol: But were they ‘Ottoman Armenians’? Where were the Ottoman Armenians?

6.7. Who wrote the narratives on Armenians in the History volumes?

The four volume *History* series was prepared based on the thematic outline of the *Outlines*. From Uluğ İğdemir’s memoirs, we are able to trace certain sections of

⁷⁸² Richard Hovannisian, ‘Etiology and Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide’ in *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimension*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

History I-II-III-IV to their actual authors. İğdemir, for instance, mentions that a significant portion of ‘Islamic History’ was written by Mustafa Kemal. He had first assigned Zakir Kadiri Ugan, but then he was very dissatisfied with his work, and he had reassigned the section to Semsettin Gunaltay.⁷⁸³ In his 23 August 1931 letter to Tevfik Biyiklioglu, Mustafa Kemal wrote that ‘I found the draft section Semsettin Bey prepared incredibly interesting and precious. I have made some additions to the notes that I had submitted to you before...’⁷⁸⁴ The sections on the ‘Turkish States’ except for the Ottoman Empire were written by Fuat Koprulu, *History IV* was co-authored by Tevfik Biyiklioglu and Dr. Resit Galip.

Atatürk, after reviewing the drafts of *History IV*, had also written to Biyiklioglu and wanted the ‘southern fronts’ section to be written drawing on the accounts of Kılıç Ali, Tufan Bey, Ali Saip, all *Kuvai-Milliye* (national resistance) leaders at the time. The history of the Ottoman Empire in *History III* was written by Yusuf Akçura; according to İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Atatürk had identified serious mistakes on the drafts of the history of the Ottoman Empire and he had called Yusuf Akçura to Dolmabahçe Palace to show him the mistakes.⁷⁸⁵ This is basically all we can trace on the individual authorship of the volumes based on accounts those who witnessed the process at that time.

Meanwhile, Turkish Historical Research Society, based on Mustafa Kemal’s order, reorganized the research on the *Outlines of Turkish History*. For every subsection, experts were identified and they were asked to produce drafts on their

⁷⁸³ Uluğ İğdemir, Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu, p.8

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid, p.9 (My Translation)

⁷⁸⁵ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Türk Tarihi Yazılırken Atatürk’ün alaka ve görüşlerine dair Hatıralar,” *Bellekten* 3 (10), 1939, 351-52.

assigned topics. The first series that comprised 66 brochures were printed in 1932, the second series comprised 47 brochures in 1934 and the third series comprised 15 brochures in 1936. In these lists holding a total of 128 draft brochures two works particularly deserve attention in the context of this chapter and dissertation⁷⁸⁶: One is ‘No#6 Esat, Ermeniler (*Armenians*)’ in the first series, another is ‘Esat, Berlin Kongresine Kadar Ermenilerin vaziyeti (*The condition of Armenians until the Berlin Congress*)’ in the second series.⁷⁸⁷ No#6, a copy of which I could locate at the National Library in Ankara very coincidentally, identifies ‘Esat’ as ‘Amasya Deputy’,⁷⁸⁸ it is evident that these drafts were written by Esat Uras. Uras is best known in Turkey with his 1950 book *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Sorunu* (*Armenians in History and the Armenian Issue*). While 1950 book remains as the most authoritative work on the Armenian Issue for the official Turkey and it continues to inform the knowledge production that promotes the official theses on 1915, ordinary Turks don’t know much about who exactly he was. And those who know who he was –like Justin McCarthy or Andrew Mango in the United States - continues to regard his book as an impartial and academic study of the Armenian issue.⁷⁸⁹ So who was Esat Uras and can we know if he ever contributed to the narratives on the Armenians in the *History* volumes?

⁷⁸⁶ The full list can be seen in Semavi Eyice, “Atatürk’ün büyük bir tarih yazdırma teşebbüsü,” *Belleten* 32:128, 1968, 522-526.

⁷⁸⁷ The former is 18 pages, the latter is 24 pages.

⁷⁸⁸ Surname Law in Turkey was adopted on 21 June 1934. So both series to which ‘Esat’ submitted his works in 1932 and 1934 must be before the adoption of this law.

⁷⁸⁹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 334.

6.7.1. Esat Uras (Amasya 1882 -Ankara 1957)

Uras, the Director of the Armenian Desk at the General Security Directorate of the Ministry of Interior (EUM, 2nd Bureau), was ‘intimately involved with the machinery of destruction in 1915.’⁷⁹⁰ In 1920, he was the Kemalist movement’s Director of Security (*Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü*). In 1921 he attended the Kars Conference (for Kars Treaty) and in 1923 the Lausanne Conference as the Senior Consultant of the Armenian issue. He was one of the very few bureaucrats fluent in Armenian at that time.

Before the Great War, he was in charge of researching Armenians and he prepared a report while Ziya Gökalp was the head of ethnographic research on the minorities, ashirets and sects in Anatolia. According to Enver Behnan Sapolyo, Armenian deportations began after the ethnographic research organized by Ziya Gökalp.⁷⁹¹ During the war, as the Director of the Armenian Desk at EUM (2nd Bureau), he was in the team administering the Armenian prosecutions. He had been present in the interrogations of the Armenian komitadjis including those in Aleppo.⁷⁹² His police tasks also included the collection and preparation of a variety of propaganda materials, which in the future would be used by none other than himself in crafting claims and arguments for modern Turkey’s most authoritative work on the Armenian issue.⁷⁹³ Certainly the most interesting piece of information on Esat Uras

⁷⁹⁰ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 213; Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 334.

⁷⁹¹ Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 127. Dündar indicates that Uras had conducted ethnographic research also on the gypsies, Yezidis, Alewites and Bektashis. See *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 335.

⁷⁹² *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 334.

⁷⁹³ Shortly after the news of the deportations and massacres of the Armenians reached Western world, the Allied powers issued a joint statement whose legacy endures. They announced that “in the view of these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization...they will hold personally responsible

[for] these crimes all members of the Ottoman Government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres.” Germany was alarmed by this situation and warned the Unionists to be careful about ‘foreign propaganda’. They advised that the issue would be a big trouble for the Ottomans both during the war and after the war. Upon this warning, Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a warning to the Ministry of Interior, urged them to take the necessary measures and emphasized the importance of preparing a serious dossier to be published and distributed abroad. The target audience would be ‘the civilized world’ and to influence the public opinion, it had to be emphasized that the government was very sensitive about ensuring the life and property security of the Armenians, that the negligent officers were punished, that the operation was ‘legitimate’ and ‘moderate.’ These claims would constitute the main arguments of the official discourse in years to follow. On the very same day Germany’s manifesto was received, Cemal Pasha had warned Enver Pasha that the massacres were being internationalized. In a ‘confidential and urgent’ cipher telegram, he indicated to Enver that even the impartial state and media institutions were now interested in the Armenian issue because of the attacks on Armenians during the deportations. He too emphasized that counter-propaganda work had to be prioritized and the ‘foreign and Christian’ public opinion had to be enlightened with the publications comprising original documents. It was at this stage Uras’s EUM came into the picture. EUM asked the vilayets and sanjaks to collect documents and materials that would constitute ‘evidence’ that the Armenians revolted. In the cipher telegrams, the importance of the collection of ‘visual materials’ and ‘statistical data’ was emphasized. However, when the photographs received from the rural areas only showed arms and ammunition, EUM indicated that these were not like the ‘real documents’, so new photo shoots were ordered. The new photos displayed the arms with their Armenian owners. All these materials were used by the staff of the *Police Journal* (*polis mecmuası*) to prepare the propaganda brochures and booklets. The first booklet was published in 1916: *Ermeni komitelerinin âmâl ve harekât-ı ihtilâliyesi (ilân-i meşrutiyyeten evvel ve sonra)*. In 1917, its French version was published: *Aspirations et agissements révolutionnaires des comités arméniens avant et après la proclamation de la constitution ottoman*. 1700 out 4000 copies of the French version were distributed to the foreign consulates and representatives in the foreign countries. Publication location information was not indicated in these brochures to hedge against the suspicions that they might have been published by the Unionists. Meanwhile, the Unionist government also engaged in documenting the atrocities Armenians committed against the Muslims in the regions under Russian occupation. This was planned to be the Ottomans’ counter-argument for the Western public opinion saturated with news on the Armenian massacres couched as a ‘pan-Christian’ issue; Christian sensibilities had to be touched to mobilize fundraising for the ‘Starving Armenians.’ Western diplomatic telegrams, whose contents were being leaked to the press almost around the clock in both the United States and the Britain, were thick with references to ‘Muslim barbarism’ and the Armenians were frequently referred to as ‘native Christians’. According to an official at the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the news prepared for the world public opinion to be ‘attractive’ they had to comprise ‘original vehicles’ (*vasita-i asliyye*) like ‘photos and pictures’. It was because of these vehicles, this official indicated, ‘various enemies for more than half a century’ has influenced the European public opinion. Therefore beginning with 1917, the attempts to document the atrocities of the Armenians against the Muslims in the regions from where Russians were withdrawing were prioritized. For instance, a special tour for the journalists were organized; Enver Pasha had emphasized that the ‘reports had to be more vivid.’ Regardless of how hard the Unionists tried, the Ottoman propaganda materials did not have much influence on the Western public opinion, which at the time already was over-saturated by the Armenian plight. With no intention to succumb to relativism, let’s take the opportunity here to emphasize that the carnage that the thousands of Muslim civilians suffered in the hands of the Armenian bands (*cethes*) and the Russians unfortunately remained buried under the dust of history. Besides the publication of the propaganda works, the Unionists had also planned to establish a museum in the building of Ottoman EUM dedicated to the exhibition of arms and ammunition confiscated from the Armenians. In this museum, all kinds of bombs, and gadgets used in their production together with the names, identity cards and photographs of the agents and other objects “worthy of exhibiting” would be on display. In all this propaganda production one person was key; that person was Esat Uras. See Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 330-335.

comes from the British Foreign Office. According to a report dated 4 February 1919 in British Foreign Office, Uras had claimed that there had been a meeting on the extermination of Armenians and he had had a hand-written summary of this meeting. When he attempted to sell this alleged meeting summary to the Foreign Office, he got arrested. In his testimony, he was recorded to have said that ‘a little before the armistice, the officials went to the archives unit at night and cleaned up the majority of the documents.’⁷⁹⁴

6.7.2.The Origins of Armenians as a Superfluous People in Turkish National Narrations:

Uras’s 18-page draft explores the origins of the Armenians and outlines their ‘political’ and ‘cultural’ history until the Berlin Treaty. From the first page to the last, Uras remains devoted, however, to conveying that the accounts on the origins of the Armenians are highly controversial and ambiguous and there is no way Armenians can be regarded as a specific ‘ethnicity’, ‘nation’ or as a people. According to Uras, ‘Armenian’ and ‘Armenia’ are names designated to the Armenians by other nations.

Uras asserts that the surveys conducted on the origins of the Armenians have been so complicated that there is no way of reaching any conclusions based on these results. He talks about some mythological accounts based on the Holy Scriptures but discredits those immediately based on the argument that hearsay in the aftermath of

⁷⁹⁴ Heathcote Smith’s 4 February 1919 report (FO 371.4172, conf. 31307) in Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, 334. It is well-known that shortly before the Unionist leadership fled the country there has been a major clean-up of documents ; especially the archive of the Committee of Union and Progress was destroyed. See Taner Akçam, “Arsivlerin Temizlenmesi,” *Radikal*, 26 December 2004, http://www.radikal.com.tr/ek_haber.php?ek=r2&haberno=4208 (last accessed on 3 November 2009).

Christianity has no scientific value. In the end he quotes Basmacıyan who wrote that ‘the origins and the history of the Armenian and Armenia are very much in the dark.’⁷⁹⁵

After establishing that nobody can know who Armenians are, Uras begins to explore the origins of ‘Armenia’. Essentially, he concludes, ‘Armenia’ is a geographical name and it has nothing to do with a ‘nationality’ or ‘Armenianness’. Assyrians, Babylonians, Akkadians were in the region before and they had named the region as ‘Nairi’ and ‘Ourartou’. Uras offers an etymological deconstruction of ‘urartu’: ‘aur’ is mountain, he explains, and ‘artau’ means ‘country.’ Nairi, on the other hand, meant ‘country of rivers’ – there were many rivers in the region. So ‘Armenia’ either meant country of mountains or country of rivers. ‘Ararat’ is nothing but a distorted version of ‘Urartu’. According to a certain ‘Kiepert’, on whom Uras does not provide citations, it is the name of a region, it is not the name of the mountain.⁷⁹⁶ After he explores a variety of other possibilities based on other accounts whose bibliography are nowhere to be found, he effectively uproots the Armenians from their historical origins and establishes them as a people of no particular history or identity.

Uras makes his most radical move in line with the new Turkish History Thesis. He summarizes five possibilities for the origins of Armenians: Armenians can be 1. the ancient people of the Urartu-nairi region, 2. the migrants who came to Anatolia after the drought in Central Asia, 3. Hittites, 4. Phrygians from Thessaly or Balkans, 5.

⁷⁹⁵ Esat Uras, *Ermeniler*, 3.

⁷⁹⁶ Uras, *Ermeniler*, 4-5.

Cimmerians [sic]. While Uras provides some accounts that justify, albeit in a very arbitrary way, how he ended up with the first four possibilities, there is not a trace in his text regarding how he got to the ‘Cimmerians’. The language of the real local people of Urartu was Ural-Altaic, they can be no other than Turks who have been there long time ago. ‘During the time of the migrations those who came from the Central Asia were of course Turks again. Hittites are originally Turks [sic]. Phrygians...too are those Turks who came to Anatolia having followed the Northern Blacksea road.’⁷⁹⁷ Uras’s freefall argumentation ends there.

What about Cimmerians, then? Uras remains silent on how he relates ‘Cimmerians’ to ‘Armenians’; he does not even provide an arbitrary link. In the context of his silence, one can’t help but associate the metaphorical connotations of ‘Cimmerians’ based on Robert Howard’s *The Hyborian Age* to Uras’s discursive silence: the barbarians who lived in the antediluvian earth – the homeland of *Conan the Barbarian*, the most famous character of Howard. Could a more fantastic, more ahistorical, more delusional site ever be found to bury the Armenian past from a Turkish nationalist perspective? In *The Hyborian Age*, Cimmerians shows up as ‘ferocious savages, untamed by the invaders.’ Their wars are less invasions than ‘mere plundering forays.’ They loot cities, devastate countries; retire to the hills with their plunder. They butcher their captives who are not fit to make the long marches....⁷⁹⁸ Armenians, ‘the vagabond, ransacking, plundering invaders who plagued their homeland’, as Atatürk had once put it....

⁷⁹⁷ Uras, *Ermeniler*, 8.

⁷⁹⁸ Robert Howard, *The Hyborian Age*,
http://s3.amazonaws.com/manybooks_pdf/howardrother07hyborian_age?AWSAccessKeyId=17359FS6G622SA3TH7R2&Expires=1257180487&Signature=IH%2BSJfgGW0gezAjt48yZNHMoDpw%3D

After he buries the Armenian history into complete darkness, Uras moves onto exploring the social, cultural and political life of the Armenians – what can one expect? In comparison to the Oriental letters, theirs, he says, is inferior, mostly informed by the Church literature. The first nation to adopt Christianity? Uras refutes that as well. He claims that it is extremely noteworthy that – in fact twice in his draft- Kirkor Losavdovic who brought Christianity to Armenia was from the Pahlav family, in other words he was a Parthian.⁷⁹⁹ Uras concludes in a circular fashion: Armenians trace their history all the way to the Hayikyan family in 2200B.C. and to Vahe was held hostage by the Great Alexander in 328BC. This is too a ‘completely imaginary history that corresponds to no national genealogy whatsoever.’ Uras insists that the only era that is regarded as the ‘Armenian era’ of Armenia has nothing to do with any national Armenian family; that Arshakuni Dynasty was of Turkish descent as well.⁸⁰⁰

After Uras gives a brief account on how Armenians came into contact with the Turks for the first time in the Anatolian peninsula during the Seljugs, he talks about Cilicia. Those Armenians who fled the Seljug invasions had taken refuge in the mountains of Cilicia. ‘Among them were somebody called Ropen [sic] – nobody knew who he was, where he came from- also came to settle in the Taurus mountains, ’ writes Uras with deep contempt. The Byzantines protected these Armenians because they functioned as good border guardians, but compared to the power of the Muslims who gained the control of the Mediterranean in the 16th century, they remained ‘as the

⁷⁹⁹ Uras, *Ermeniler*, 12.

⁸⁰⁰ Uras, *Ermeniler*, 10-11.

mountain princes' (*dağlı prensler*).⁸⁰¹ So ends the contemptuous narrative of Uras on the Cilician Kingdom and its first Prince, Roupen I, known as the 'Lord of the Mountains.'

After Uras discredits all the accounts on the origins of the Armenians, he begins to talk about their 'political history' in the Ottoman Empire. From Mehmed the Conqueror to Sultan Mahmoud, Armenians were completely free to conduct their own social and religious affairs, writes Uras. They were engaged in commerce and industry, were employed in state positions, and were 'completely happy.' As of the 19th century, they were unknown to Europe as a nation; Europe knew those Armenians in Istanbul only. They were known as 'as merchants scattered around the world, as people who did not care about anything but their own self-interests, as those miserable vagabonds without a homeland, without a nationality like the Jews.'⁸⁰² Uras concedes that they were very powerful and much more free in 'their cultural, historical, literary, social conditions' compared to those of the Russian Armenians. It is ironic that in a narrative that completely rids Armenians of their historical and cultural heritage, Uras is able to claim that they were better off than the Russian Armenians in terms of 'historical' and 'cultural' affairs. One wonders what Uras really understands from 'history' and 'culture' as someone whose professional credentials as a 'historian' were honed in police interrogations and in the production of war propaganda materials produced for the national security during the Great War.

⁸⁰² Uras, *Ermeniler*, 16.

Uras's 18-page narrative lands on the most familiar ground when he talks about the young Armenians who were going to school in Paris and who were exposed to the French revolution: 'They provoked the Armenians for revolution, which they regarded as a more certain and radical path.'⁸⁰³ In 1839, the Tanzimat Edict removed the inequalities between the Muslims and the Christians and after this the class struggles between the Armenian elites (amira class) and merchants began, Uras writes. His contemptuous voice resurfaces when he mentions 'national ideals' in the context of the Armenians: the Amira were regarded as the reactionaries, 'those chasing the national ideals were regarded as the intellectuals (*münevver*).' In 1863, their constitution was approved by the state: Although the Turkish name for this constitution was 'the Constitution of Turkey's Armenians', in Armenian it was called the 'Constitution of the Armenian millet', Uras emphasizes. In Uras's highly simplified 'political history' where politics of all the Ottoman Armenians as one monolithic mass were reduced to 'national ideals,' and 'revolution', the Armenian constitution –which organized their social affairs that lay outside the jurisdiction of the Islamic Law- becomes a simple 'step for the autonomy.'⁸⁰⁴ So in his narrative, Ottoman Armenians –who were traditionally regarded as the loyal millet of the Empire until the Berlin Treaty in 1878 - lose their status of 'loyal millet' and emerge as revolutionaries much earlier. Eventually, after many struggles, these so-called intellectuals chasing national ideals, so were they profiled by Uras, brought the 'famous Hrimyan who played such an important role during the Berlin Conference' to

⁸⁰³ Uras, *Ermeniler*, 17.

⁸⁰⁴ Uras, *Ermeniler*, 17.

the patriarchate in 1869.⁸⁰⁵ So is the political, cultural and social history of Armenians until about the Berlin Treaty, according to Esat Uras.

Based on this narrative could we tell whether Esat Uras was consulted for the narratives on the Armenians in the *History* volumes? Since I currently have no account of a correspondence that would prove this, like the one between Atatürk and Tevfik Biyiklioglu on who should be consulted for the narrative on the ‘southern fronts’, I can only make some speculations based on the rhetorical and discursive qualities of Uras’s 18-page draft. To begin with, no section of the ‘Armenians’ has been replicated in the *History* volumes. However, the narrative of the section titled as ‘The first contact and Relations with the Turks’ bears some structural similarities to the narrative in *History II* where Armenians and Armenia show up in the context of the Seljug invasions. Tugrul, Alpaslan, Meliksah, Suleyman Keykavus keep invading, conquering, restraining Armenia and the Armenians. During the reign of Cenghiz Khan, Uras mentions that the Daghestani and Ararat regions of Armenia ‘have been trampled’. It is also interesting that while Uras talks about the Armenians fleeing to the mountains of Cilicia before the Seljug invasions in the 11th century, *History II*’s narrative on ‘Turks in Anatolia’ also begins by mentioning that there were Turks already living in the mountains of Cilicia during the 10th century guarding the Islamic frontiers of the Abbasid Dynasty. The contemptuous tone of voice on the Armenians and their superfluous representation marked by deep historical ruptures (ie. After the Seljug invasions, how did they survive in the Ottoman Empire, where exactly were they, who were their neighbors, how were their relations with them...?) in both the *Draft* and the

⁸⁰⁵ Uras, *Ermeniler*, 18.

History volumes come across as pretty related. In conclusion, considering that Uras was such a rare specialist on the Armenian issue, I believe it would be very unlikely that he was not consulted during the production of *History I-II-III-IV* (after all Kılıç Ali, Tufan Bey, Ali Saip were consulted on the southern front narrative that was one page in total).

Chapter 7: More Erasures, Further Ideological Repositioning, and Forgetting: Ottoman Armenians in the History Textbooks written between 1942-1980s

7.1.1942-1950: History I-II-III Revisited by Mansel-Karal-Baysun and the centralization of the myth of the Manzikert:

7.1.1. Historical Context

After the passing of Mustafa Kemal, the criticism around the four-volume *History* series increased.⁸⁰⁶ The reports of 1943, 1946, and 1949 National Education Summits indicate that there was serious tension between those who were defending the Turkish history thesis and those who were defending a ‘humanist wave’ in Turkish historiography. The revolutionary zeal that ‘fired’ the ethnic-Turkicist theses was waning and a group of intellectuals began to advocate a return to the West. As opposed to the Turkish history thesis, which had turned to Central Asia as the land of origin for the Turks and argued that all the civilizations in Anatolia were the descendants of these Central Asian Turks who had to leave when their land underwent major ecological transformations, humanists saw the real roots of the Anatolian culture in the Greco-Latin civilization. They advocated an approach that emphasized not the Turks’ ethnic past exclusively -divided in between Central Asia and Anatolia, but Anatolia’s civilizational past. These intellectuals pioneered an influential movement that promoted the translations of the key Greek, Latin and other Western classics (known as the ‘Classics Movement’). The debate of the humanists was consequential for modern Turkey whose effects endure until today. It gave rise to a reactionary movement that paved the way for a movement called “Turkish-Islamic

⁸⁰⁶ See Copeaux, 79-110.

Synthesis” (*Türk-İslam Sentezi*), which would become institutionalized in the 70s. The ideologues of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis advocated a national identity that emphasized a fusion of the Asian and Islamic roots of the Turks but that still remained anchored in Kemalism. Arabs made no contributions to the Islamic civilization; it was the Turks who transformed Islam into a civilization. This was the gist of their argument. The history textbooks of the humanist wave remained in circulation until the mid-80s; then the textbooks prepared in line with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis entered circulation. The institutionalization of the Turkish Islamic synthesis in schooling, Üstel observes, should be regarded as a return to “cultural citizenship reinforced by Islam.”⁸⁰⁷

7.1.2. Centralization of the Myth of the Manzihiert and Armenians

Arif Müfid Mansel, a classical Greek specialist, together with Enver Ziya Karal and Cavid Baysun, rewrote *History I-II-III* with a more balanced and informative approach. The books became considerably shorter. It is immediately visible that the most extravagant myth of the founding fathers -that the Turks who migrated from the Central Asia were at the foundation of all the world civilizations- were highly moderated by these authors. The antique civilizations of Anatolia were no longer presented as proto-Turks.

However, it is my observation that for the first time with Mansel’s books the narratives on the first Turkish invasions of Anatolia by the Seljugs came to be viewed

⁸⁰⁷ Füsün Üstel, ‘Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Resmi Yurttaş Profilinein Evrimi’ in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 282.

as the hinge of Turkish history and presented under the title “the History of Turkey.” Seljuks were presented as those who first defined the boundaries of the Turkish fatherland indicated as “Turkey” (*Türkiye*). That is to say, in *History II*, the chapter titles and subtitles that cover Oghuz Turks’ first invasions to Anatolia does not indicate that Anatolia is “Turkey”; they read as ‘ANATOLIAN TURKISH STATES IN THE MIDDLE AGES’ (*Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk Devletleri*) and ‘Selçukluların Anadolu’yu istilası’ (*The Invasions of Anatolia by the Seljuks*). The same chapter and subject matter in Mansel’s Volume 2 is titled as ‘TURKEY – FROM THE CONQUEST OF ANATOLIA BY THE OGHUZ TO THE OTTOMANS’ (*Türkiye – Oğuzların Anadolu’yu Fethinden Osmanlılara Kadar*⁸⁰⁸).

While *History II* was more engaged with the ‘Turkishness’ of the civilizational history of Anatolia from time immemorial, in Mansel’s volume rhetoric of patriotism attached to Anatolia *as Turkey* visibly increase. So begins ‘The History of Turkey’ with the first Oghuz / Seljuk explorations of Anatolia:

History of Turkey begins with the arrival of the Oghuz Turks to Anatolia during the time of the Great Seljuks. 1071 Battle Manzikert opened the doors of Anatolia to the Turks, the fatherland (*memleket*) was conquered by the Turkish commanders in a very short period of time.⁸⁰⁹

First, the section on the explorations of the Turkish mercenaries during the Abbasids follows *History II*. Mansel too argues that many Turks had already been settled in Anatolia by the Abbasids in cities like ‘Tarsus, Misis, Adana, Maras [four main cities of Cilicia]⁸¹⁰, Malatya, Diyarbakir, Malazgrit and Ahlat [Eastern Anatolia]’ to support the Anatolian crusades of the Abbasids. These are all provinces populated by the

⁸⁰⁸ Mansel et al., *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, 90.

⁸⁰⁹ Mansel et al., *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, 90.

⁸¹⁰ My brackets.

Armenians. Then, Mansel launches this chapter and frames its importance with a new section titled as ‘The Epochs of Turkish History’, which are itemized from one to five as the conquest of Anatolia, Anatolian Seljug Dynasty, Anatolian (Seljug) Feudalities, Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. This list is also graphically illustrated in boxes descending from the Great Seljug Empire to the Republic of Turkey at the center of the opposite page. The importance attached to the Battle of Manzikert and the rhetorics of identification and patriotism that express this importance dramatically stands out compared to the absolute dullness in which the battle was addressed in *History II*. Mansel begins the narration of the day of the battle -26 August 1071- with the following statement: ‘Finally began the battle between *our army* (my italics) and the Byzantian army near Manzikert around noontime on Friday, 26 August 1071.’⁸¹¹ After fierce battles, Romanos’s armies are defeated, the Emperor is taken prisoner by Alp Aslan. ‘The Great Turkish King’, having mollified the defeated King (*yenilmiş hükümdarın gönlünü alarak*), keeps him as a guest. And then:

A peace agreement was made between them on the condition that the Eastern Anatolia was given to the Turks and the Byzantians would pay taxes every year and the Emperor was set free. That the Battle of Manzikert that ended with the Turkish success has given birth to consequences of utmost importance. After this, the force that would resist the Turkish progress in Anatolia was broken, the road to Turkish sovereignty of Anatolia was paved. This battle changed the stream of not only the Turkish history, but also of the entire world history and it has been a watershed event. The foundation of the Great State of Turkey (*Buyuk Turkiye Devleti*) began in the year of 1071. After this Turks not only conquered Anatolia, but they mixed with the Turks who had come to Anatolia before them. This way the dynasties that pursued their rule in Anatolia rested on Turkishness, not on foreign nations.⁸¹²

The mythification of the Battle of Manzikert as the key symbol in the formation of the Turkish Republic is usually regarded as a development of the 1960s and it is

⁸¹¹ Mansel et al., *Ortaçağ*, 93.

⁸¹² Mansel et al., *Ortaçağ*, 93.

associated with Kafesoglu, one of the deans of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis.⁸¹³ My analysis shows that the first template had already emerged in Mansel's books written under the influence of the 'humanist' challenge to Turkish History Thesis. In the history textbooks written after Mansel, I observed that this template –captured by the quote above – remain essentially the same until today; it was merely amended and expanded with even more ambitious patriotic rhetoric.

And what are the consequences of this development for the representations of the Armenians in Turkish history textbooks? I observed that centralization of the myth of Manzikert for the formation of the Turkish Republic and for the Turkification of Anatolia immediately took its toll on the 'Armenian apparitions' in Mansel's books. At the time that the Sumers and Hittites were the proto-Turks, the founding fathers who wrote the very first textbooks did not mind spreading 'Armenians' around the narratives, albeit in a vacuum with no history and identity. As I have mentioned above, the total number of reference to Armenians within this specific narrative on the first Turkish invasions of Anatolia was 20 in *History II*. That there existed an 'Armenia' in the East could safely be acknowledged although it was 'trampled' and 'destroyed' by the Turks (Oghuz / Seljugs) later.

After the centralization of the myth of Manzikert in Mansel's books, the references to Armenians were reduced from 20 in *History II* to 7 in Mansel's volume 2; 6 of these references are to Cilicia Armenians, 1 is generally to 'Armenian kings'. As Mansel mentions in his summary of the consequences of the battle, 'Eastern Anatolia was given to the Turks.' And after this, Turks 'mixed with the Turks who had

⁸¹³Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol*, 200-204.

come to Anatolia before them. This way the dynasties that pursued their rule in Anatolia rested on Turkishness, not on foreign nations.’ *This way*, since Mansel erases the Armenian Bagratuni presence in the East (885-1040) taken over by the Byzantines, he does not have to mention that the Byzantians had re-settled some of these Armenians in the Cilicia region, who then had established the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1080-1375). Thanks to the erasure of these two Armenian Kingdoms from the 11th century history of Anatolia in Mansel’s narrative, Turks who took over Eastern Anatolia from the Byzantians after Manzikert easily mix with their brethren ‘who had come before them.’ These are the Turks, as we learn the very beginning of this chapter, who had been settled by the Abbasids in both Cilicia and in the Eastern Anatolia as volunteer forces. With the necessary omissions and erasures, a potentially inconvenient question such as ‘who was in Anatolia first – Turks or Armenians?’ was definitively removed from the horizon of national education.

Mansel’s volume 3 – History of Recent Epochs (*Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar Tarihi*) – begins with the foundation of the Ottoman Empire in the 14th century comes all the way to the history of World War II as of 1942. Watershed events of the European history are also covered in between the chapters on the Ottoman Empire. The first chapter of the book, ‘Ottoman Empire in the 14th century,’ gives a snapshot of the ‘political panorama’ in Anatolia as of the mid-13th century. There were 4 states in Anatolia then, Mansel et al. writes: Byzantium (ended in 1453), the Seljugs, Empire of Trebizond (1204-1461) and the Ilkhanate (1256-1335). Mongolian invasions ended up being very beneficial to the ‘racial unity’ of Asia Minor since many Turkish tribes

fleeing from these invasions settled in Anatolia. Volume 3, then, summarizes the ‘racial status’ and ‘social status’ of Anatolia:

Turkish arrival and settlement in Anatolia in various ways had began in the very old epochs of history. But a mass Turkish settlement begins with the victory of Manzikert in 1071, it continues in the 11th century in a systematic way. By the end of this century, if we set aside the northwestern and western littoral sections, Anatolia was completely Turkified....[Turks who came to and settled in Anatolia]...gave Turkish names to the mountains, cities, provinces and villages; they Turkified not only the Iranian, Mongol, and Arab Muslims in a short period of time, they taught Turkish also to Greeks (Rum) and the Armenians. Thus, Anatolia began to be Turkish with its rocks, soil, water and people. Turks continued to live in Anatolia as they used to.⁸¹⁴

That there were ‘Christians’ in the Ottoman Empire frequently comes up in Mansel’s Volume 3 in the context of the social and political life of the Empire.⁸¹⁵ In some of these discussions, Greeks and Christians in the Balkans are specifically discussed but Armenians are never mentioned. After a few references to ‘Cilician Armenians’ in Volume 2 in the context of the ongoing battles of Seljugs and Byzantians in the 11th and 12th century, and after a quick statement at the beginning of Volume 3 that Turks taught Turkish to Armenians and Anatolia became Turkish with its land, air and water, the first ‘Armenian’ apparition can be spotted in Mansel’s books for the first time in the 19th century, in the context of Ayastefanos Treaty signed after the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-78. After the other articles of the treaty are summarized come a few words on Armenians: ‘Rights were going to be granted to Armenians.’⁸¹⁶ Which Armenians, where were they? Were there Armenians in the Ottoman Empire? Hadn’t they become Turkish? What ‘rights’ were they asking for? In the context of Mansel et al.’s textbooks, no student could solve the mystery and answer these questions.

⁸¹⁴ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 3.

⁸¹⁵ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 4, 11, 28-29, 57. For the section “Osmanlı İmparatorlugunda Rumların Durumu,” see page 145.

⁸¹⁶ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 156

In the context of the discussion of the events that formented the Ottoman state's disintegration, however, the 'Armenian' apparitions become more frequent. Only a page later, they appear and ask for 'reforms for where they resided.'⁸¹⁷ But where did they reside? And finally the third apparition is observed within the narrative on the articles of the Sevr Treaty of 1920: 'In the Eastern vilayets a Kurdistan and an Armenia were being established.'⁸¹⁸ Izmir and Eastern Thrace was given to the Greeks. The Straits were subjected to the administration of an international commission. 'All that was left behind was a Turkey (*Türkiye*) with no independence (*istiklal*) sequezeed in a few vilayets of central Anatolia.' National resistance that began in Anatolia under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal resulted in the establishment of a new Turkish State (*yeni bir Türk Devleti*).⁸¹⁹

Throughout Mansel et al.'s three volumes, 'Armenia' was mentioned exactly three times, exactly once in every volume. In volume 1, Hadrianus, the Emperor of the Roman Empire (AD76-138), who would travel a lot, as the authors mention, "passed from Armenia and Mesopotamia."⁸²⁰ In volume 2, Alp Aslan, the great Seljug Sultan, conquered 'Armenia that was subjected to the Byzantine Empire.'⁸²¹ And in volume 3, in the context of Sevr emerges an independent Kurdistan and an Armenia 'in our Eastern vilayets' (*Doğu vilayetlerimizde*). If a genius Lycee student of history in the Turkish Republic put these volumes side by side and thought really hard, I guess he

⁸¹⁷ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 158

⁸¹⁸ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 164

⁸¹⁹ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 164

⁸²⁰ Mansel et al., *İlk Çağ Tarihi*, 201.

⁸²¹ Mansel et al., *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, 64.

would at most think Hadrianus, one of the greatest Roman Emperors, was once in *our* country. But then, again, where were the ‘Armenians’?

7.2.History of the Turkish Republic (1944) : *History IV* Revised by Enver Ziya Karal

7.2.1.Enver Ziya Karal and the *Armenian Question* (1878-1923)

A new book to replace Mustafa Kemal’s *History IV* was written in 1944 by Enver Ziya Karal – one of the co-authors of Mansel’s new textbooks that I have discussed above.⁸²² Karal (1906-1982) was a prolific historian who had published works on Mustafa Kemal, reform history of the Republic, and the Ottoman History. It should be noted that a short manuscript written by him, *La Question Arménienne, 1878-1923*, was also translated into Turkish and English in 1975⁸²³. The very first sentence of this manuscript defines the Armenian question as ‘one of an armed uprising of the Armenians against the Ottoman State.’

Before I discuss the *History IV* Karal revised and produced, I’d like to talk about Karal’s 1975 work on the Armenian issue in order to clarify not only his ideological loyalties but also to shed light on the quality of his scholarship. This section, because Karal’s book presents quite a few images as the ‘documentary evidence’ of the atrocities of the Armenians, also gives me the opportunity to talk about the “myth of photographic truth” that increasingly mediates knowledge-

⁸²² Enver Ziya Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1944)*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1944).

⁸²³ So far I couldn’t find out how early he had written that pamphlet, but one citation in his bibliography belongs to a 1969 work, which makes me think the manuscript must have been written / revised by 1969. See Enver Ziya Karal, *Armenian Question (1878-1923)* (Ankara: Imprimerie Gunduz, 1975).

production in the Turkish-Armenian conflict and the historical memory of the violent events of 1915.

In this short manuscript that surfaced in 1975, Karal argues that Armenian question ‘at first sight’ may seem ‘to have stemmed from Turco-Armenian relations; but this is not so.’ It was a complex international problem in which the Great Powers wanted to bring a solution in line with their own interests, the question retained an ‘artificial character both in its birth and its development and caused great suffering to both the Armenians and the Turks.’⁸²⁴ Armenians cooperated with the Allied Powers, Karal asserts, and “they opened a civil war front against the Turks. So far as the Allied Powers were concerned, the Armenian question was a pretext to arm the Armenians, in order to strike at the Turks from behind.” Turks’ aim was to protect “the existence of the State.” Armenians could be prevented from cooperating with Allies only “evacuating them from the war zones.” So continues Karal:

It is certainly true that much blood was shed on both sides on account of armed resistance on the part of the Armenians; and a good many Armenians lost their lives on account of sickness, cold, and even revenge actions that could not be endorsed by the Turkish people. But the following events help to prove why these unfortunate incidents could not be interpreted as massacre of the Armenian nation.⁸²⁵

Karal goes on to discuss how the Armenian revolutionary committees publicly announced “their intention to fight against the Turks.” By the time the Ottoman state joined the war, “the Armenian Committees had already completed their plans to take their place in the ranks of the Russian army.”⁸²⁶ Nowhere in the text the word ‘genocide’ is used; Karal refers to allegations as ‘so called Armenian massacre.’⁸²⁷ He

⁸²⁴ Karal, *Question Armenian*, 5.

⁸²⁵ Karal, *Question Armenian*, 15.

⁸²⁶ Karal, *Question Armenian*, 15-16.

⁸²⁷ Karal, *Question Armenian*, 15-16, 17, 21.

asserts that the “main source” that support the Armenian claims is the *Blue Book*.⁸²⁸ I will argue below that his knowledge of this document indeed must have informed his text for the new *History IV* he wrote after Mustafa Kemal died.

Also included in his 20- page manuscript framed by the provocation thesis, in which he frequently asserts that both Armenians and Turks suffered tremendously, are 8 black and white photographs. Despite his frequent emphasis on the tragic aspects of mutual suffering of these peoples ‘who had lived amicably side by side for centuries’, not even a single photograph is spared for the Armenian suffering. All the captions of these blurry and grainy photographs full of corpses indicate with authority *what the photos show, what we must be seeing and what we must be believing*. They self-consciously, and with profound anxiety, articulate the fact that the meaning of the images are never fixed and self-evident, therefore the precarious ‘Truth’ they are supposed to ‘document’ needs to be guarded like the fatherland itself:

The body of Mustafa, the gendarme, ‘atrocously [sic] assassinated at Sivas by Armenian bands...

Photo taken on the spot, of some Mohammedan victims assassinated with hatchets by Armenians in the village of Koollar...

Gun powder kept in tins and found hidden in the rocks near an Armenian Monastery at Hatchina...

An on the spot Photograph taken near by the city of Urfa , in Siverek district, Muslims murdered with hatchets by Armenians in the village of Karadag...

A photograph of sick Turkish soldiers, who were murdered by the Armenians, in the Diyarbakir region...

⁸²⁸ Karal, *Question Armenian*, 15-16, 17.

The young girls of the village of Zazavanik in Erzurum, who have been the victims of atrocity and assault by the Armenian bandits...

While their husbands were serving in the Imperial Army, the women and children of the village of Hidirilyas, were brutally killed by Armenian Hono's bandit group using shotguns and scimitars...

*A photograph of a group of Turkish soldiers left behind because of sickness, were murdered by the Armenians in the district of Diyarbakir...*⁸²⁹

From the 19th century onwards, under influence of the ideology of positivism, which regarded the machines to be more reliable than the humans, the photographic camera was taken to be a scientific tool for registering reality. Its technical and mimetic qualities established it as a successful tool for gathering empirical evidence.⁸³⁰ Photography came to establish itself as a vessel of accuracy, 'authenticity' and 'truth.' It came to be seen as realistic and objective – a neutral eye. The photographer was idealized as someone who stands outside the event.

Today we still regard photography as an unmediated copy of the real world. We think what we see is the "event" itself. Photographs are used in the courtrooms as documentary evidence and they are presented as if they are incontrovertible proof that an event took place in that particular way. Even in the digital era, although we know that images can be easily manipulated, much of the power of photography still lies in the shared belief that photos are "objective" and "truthful" recordings of events.

The photographs, however, do not innocently capture the 'reality' thereby affording us access to the knowledge of what happened. Rather, they reduce reality to

⁸²⁹ Karal, *Question Armenian*, 15-16, 11, 19, 23, 27.

⁸³⁰ Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to forget: Holocaust memory through the camera's eye* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1998), 9.

an image or surface captured at the blink of an eye. We don't see what remains outside the frame. Photography, according to Susan Sontag:

implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it. But this is the opposite of understanding, an approach which starts from not accepting the world as it looks... Strictly speaking, it is doubtful that a photograph can help us to understand anything. The simple fact of "rendering" a reality doesn't tell us much about that reality...only that which narrates can make us understand.⁸³¹

In other words, no particular meaning resides in the images. They do not make sense of "what happened." Therefore, they neither prove nor disprove a particular position. The image, rather, is a social text; its meaning is socially constructed. The meanings of the images are constructed as they circulate within particular discourses. The particular narratives like the captions surrounding them, or a book they are embedded, lend particular kinds of meanings to what they show. And the spectator as the subject of particular identity and worldview is always an active participant in this construction.

Images certainly constitute an "evidence" of something" but they do not tell "of what". They are indeed vulnerable to the same obscurities of other forms of evidence.⁸³² William Saroyan once commented that one picture is worth a thousand words. But that may become possible only if one looks at the picture and say or think the thousand words. As Zelizer cautions us, while looking at photographs, we must not ask "what do these photos authenticate?". We must rather ask: "How do they articulate an argument? Whose argument is this? How was it validated? Who spoke it? To whom? Under what conditions? To what ends? With what effects?"⁸³³ When it comes

⁸³¹ Susan Sontag, "Photography," *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 20, 1973, 63.

⁸³² Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs," *Representations*, No. 9 (Winter, 1985), 1-32.

⁸³³ Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, 10.

to photographs, these questions pertaining to “much more consequential matters of meaning and interpretation, of narrative and ideological tropes, of invisible presences and visible absences” are rarely asked, Trachtenberg affirms.⁸³⁴

All photographic images, as social and historical constructs, require and entail acts of translation necessary to mobilize compassion, witnessing, and critical engagement. The questions Zelizer asserts become all the more pertinent regarding the atrocity images since they easily become lasting iconic representations of war atrocity and human evil. As they become the primary inventory for collective memory in all conflicts, they also become primary sources where identity and hatred are reproduced time and time again. While, for instance, Turks circulate myriad images that show bands of men decorated with arms as evidence of an “Armenian rebellion” (See Figure 14, 15), or mass graves that show bones as the evidence of atrocities committed by the Armenians in their texts of knowledge-production and of popular media, Armenians circulate images of skulls, mass graves, beheaded Armenians, and decimated women and children as the evidence of “the Armenian Genocide” (see Figure 16, 17, 18).

This is not to say that there were no Armenian rebels or Armenian rebellion, or there were no massacred Armenians or Turks. It is to say, all images circulated by the Turks and the Armenians one hundred years after the “event” are just simple

⁸³⁴ Trachtenberg, *Albums of War*, 2-3.



Osmanlı Dönemi, Ermeni Silahlı Militanlar: Silahlı Kalkışmanın Buna Benzer Yüzlerce Belgesi Ermeni Kitaplarında Bulunabilir

Figure 7.1: The original caption of this photo located in Sedat Laçiner 's book *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması* (2005) reads as "Ottoman Period, Armenian Armed Militants. Hundreds of Similar Documents of Armed Rebellion Can Be Found In the Armenian Books" (p.412)



Figure 7.2: The screengrab of the news story in the liberal daily Radikal on the Apology Campaign on 1 February 2009. The title reads, “Do two apologies give birth to a robust brotherhood” and the caption of the photo reads, “According to the allegations, in Anatolia at the beginning of 1900s, Armenians who were deported and massacred, established cethes, invaded villages and killed great number of innocent people.” It was remarkable to me that Radikal chose this picture for this article. Both the title, photo choice, the rhetoric of the caption (i.e. Armenians killed “innocent people”) speaks to Radikal’s ambivalence about peace in an article that poses as the advocate of it.. In conclusion, let me just mention that, the banner advertising of Toshiba that says, “The Truth is no longer unrivalled” constitutes an interesting discursive encounter on the same page attesting to the precariousness of the contexts in which images circulate in popular culture.
(<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=919479&Date=01.02.2009&CategoryID=97>)

“peepholes” into the past: They are, as products of a mechanical instrument that blinks in less than a second, unable to translate highly complex collection of violent events that lasted for years, engaged complex of groups of social actors, and destroyed

two thousand year old Armenian presence in Anatolia. They are simple abstractions of disconnected moments of an event in which “the normal gap between sense experience and mental comprehension is stretched to an extreme.”⁸³⁵ They do not help us understand. They do not let us ask any questions; they overwhelm.



Figure 7.3: “Beheaded Armenians”. Original caption of the photograph in the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute Collection Online (http://www.genocidemuseum.am/eng/photos_of_armenian_genocide.php)

⁸³⁵Trachtenberg, “Albums of War,” *Reading American Photographs*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (Hill and Wang, 1989), 74.



Figure 7.4: “Armenians burnt alive in Sheykhalan by Turkish soldiers, 1915” Original caption of the photograph in the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute Collection Online (http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/photos_of_armenian_genocide.php)



Figure 7.5: “Armenian child starved to death, 1916” Original caption of the photograph in the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute Collection Online (http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/photos_of_armenian_genocide.php)

They do not historicize. Especially in the context of the rising stakes in the high-profile politics of “genocide recognition” every year, their meaning gets all the more

precarious; they exist within a complex of mediations that are historical, social, and ideological in nature. So are the images in Karal's book (see Figure 19, 20, 21). Their meanings are determined not only by his nationalist narrative but also by the contrived and anxious rhetoric of the captions.

Karal, for one of the images, for example, asserts that it is a "Photo taken on the spot" (see Figure 19). We see corpses lined up on the ground, some covered with white cloth...but it is Karal who tells us that they are "some Mohammedan victims assassinated with hatchets by Armenians in the village of Koollar." There is no way we can know who the corpses are in the grainy image. There is no way we can know if they are Christians or Mohammedans, Turks or Armenians. There is no way we can know, by looking at the image, that they were murdered by hatchets...we don't see any "hatchets" in the image...even if we saw some, still we would not know. There is no way we can know they were murdered by the Armenians in the village of Koollar. Two men *resembling* Ottoman gendarmes with their outfit are standing by them, but there is no way the image helps us establish the link between these Ottoman gendarmes and the corpses. And finally, there is no way we can know if the village of Koollar is nearby or the image is indeed produced in Koollar.

Likewise, the captions of Figure 20 and Figure 21 convey the same issues. In the grainy, blurry, time-stained visual universe of Figure 20, all we can see is a clutter of bodies, and another five-six people looking at them from a distance. Based on what the visual shows, we can't know if the bodies are dead, we can't know their gender, nationality, or religious affiliation. We can't know the location based on the barren territory we observe; it might be somewhere in Northern Africa, it might be



Photo taken on the Spot, of some Mohammedan victims assassinated with hatchets by Armenians in the vilage of Koollar.

Figure 7.6: An image from Karal's *Armenian Question (1878-1923)* on page 11.



While their husbands were serving in the Imperial Army, the women and children of the vilage of Hidirilyas, were brutally killed by Armenian Hono's bandit group using shotguns and scimitars, on 10/23 rd August 1915.

Figure 7.7: An image from Karal's *Armenian Question (1878-1923)* on page 27.

somewhere in Syria, or central Anatolia. And yet, it is Karal's authoritative caption that dictates to us what we should "see" within that picture. It is Karal who tells us that the bodies we see are those of the children and the women of the village of Hidirlyas. It is Karal who tells us that "their husbands were serving in the Imperial Army" and they were murdered *while* their husbands were away, investing the symbolic order of the visual with gendered codes of honor. And it is again Karal who tells us within the caption that these people were "brutally killed by Armenian Hono's bandit group using shutguns and scimitars." We do not see any Armenian bandit groups in the photograph, and we don't see any shotguns and scimitars lying around either; again, if they were visible within the picture, the visual itself would not establish any forensic links between the wounds of the dead and the instruments of killing. In conclusion, in Figure 21, all we see is two men pointing to some unidentifiable objects buried in some rock formations. It is Karal's caption that tells us what must be seeing is "gun powder kept in tins" near an Armenian Monastery at Hatchina. We don't see the Monastery around, and there is no way we can identify the function of the tins...in fact, what Karal calls as a gunpowder tin is not even visible in the photograph. The caption however is ideologically intertextual with the central memory trope of the Armenian that surfaces in the contexts of the *History* series, the first history textbooks of the Republic, which I analyzed in the previous chapter: *An Armenian is a komitadji with bombs. Armenians say they want reforms; for that they were ready to blow up the entire Anatolian peninsula and declare their independence.* Karal too, as we will see below, will suggest in the first edition of the new *History IV* he wrote, *History of the Turkish Republic (1918-1944)*, that the Armenian schools and churches all around

Anatolia were building up arms under the direction of Zaven Efendi in Istanbul.

“Gunpowder tin” is an essential trope that reifies the “Armenian bandit” image.

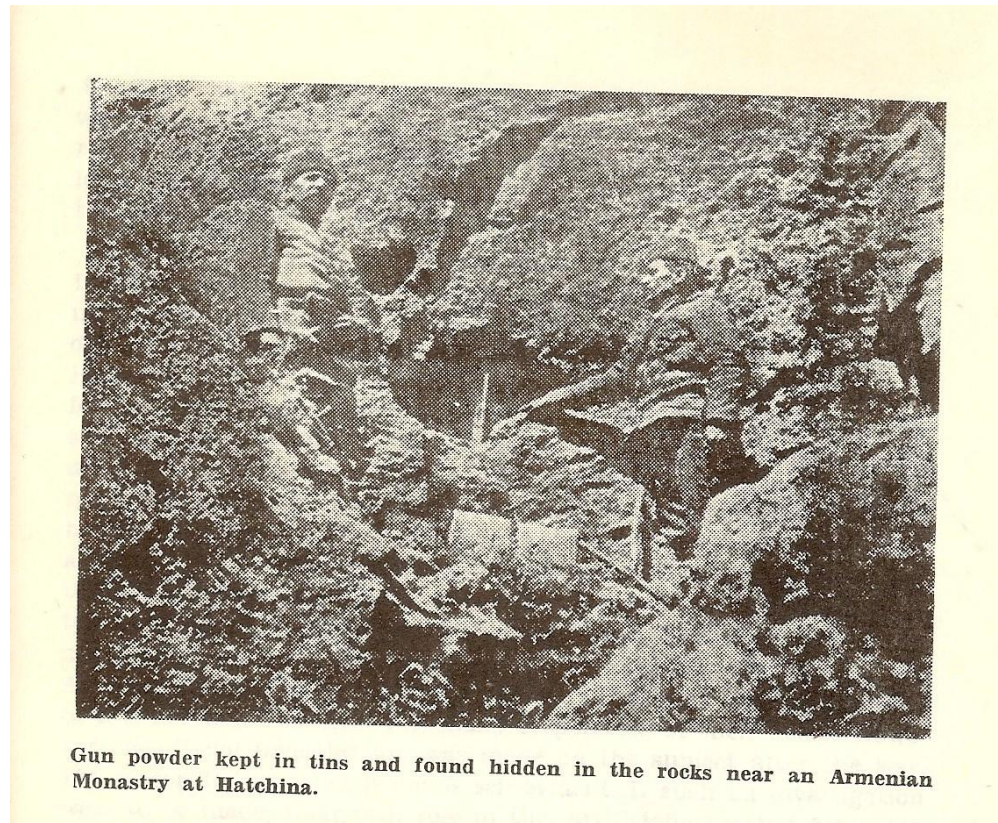


Figure 7.8: An image from Karal's *Armenian Question (1878-1923)* on page 19.

On top of all these ambiguities, for none of the pictures archival information or reference is provided. Karal's bibliography comprised of 34 items at the back looks sloppy. Citations merely read as 'Dag Deviren Collection (back side) (p.229)', or 'Periodical of Turkish History (36-37)', or 'Chicago Union Tribune (from the author's collection)'. There is no way a researcher, looking at his citations, can identify and locate the document he has cited in the large 'Register of the Hidayet Dagdeviren

Collection 1831-1951' comprised of 28 ms. boxes and 22 binders located at the Hoover Institution in the United States, just to give one example.⁸³⁶

In this respect, Karal's *Armenian Question* contains nothing more than one-sided Turkish propaganda; it is as much a propaganda document as the *Blue Book* through which Turks and Armenians only learn to hate each other. "The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience," writes Lippmann, "is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event."⁸³⁷ Lippmann thought these "mental images" were the very substance of "public opinion" in democratic societies. The grainy images filled with bones labeled as the "Armenian Genocide" like those of Karal labeled as "the Turkish soldiers murdered by the Armenians" constitute the public opinion of both sides about each other and what both sides understand from "history."

Karal was sent to Lyon University in France in October 1928 by a state scholarship (devlet bursu) most probably approved by Mustafa Kemal while he was the President of Turkey then. Between 1957 and 1970, Karal served as a Visiting Scholar at some of the most prime higher education institutions in the United States such as Stanford University and Columbia University to lecture on the Reform history of the Turkish Republic. His biography prepared by the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu) online mentions that he was a visiting scholar at Stanford

⁸³⁶ Register of the Hidayet Dağdeviren Collection 1831-1951, Letters, memoranda, reports, proclamations, speeches, clippings, newspaper issues, and photographs, relating to political and social conditions in Turkey during the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Turkish Republic, Turkish military activities during World War I, Turkish foreign relations, and ethnic minorities in Turkey. See http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf8p3006dn;developer=local;query=;style=oac4;doc.view=entire_text

⁸³⁷ Walter Lippman, "Chapter I. The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads" in *Public Opinion*, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Lippman/ch01.html>

University in 1955-1957. During his stay he worked in the Hoover Institute Archives to conduct 'scientific examinations' on the Paris Peace Conference.⁸³⁸

Between 1944 through 1980, Turkish Republic's young minds were entrusted to the Reform History textbooks (which replaced *History IV*) written by Karal, in whose textbooks there was never a bibliography, and who did not bother with citations and bibliographies despite his numerous visiting positions at the Ivy League institutions of the United States of America.

7.2.2. Karal's History IV (1944): *Nutuk*'s account of the Armenian Deportations Removed

While *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1944)* ('The History of the Republic of Turkey') was informed by *Nutuk* structurally, it is much shorter than *History IV*, its narrative structure is tighter, and lengthy excerpts from *Nutuk* are not used. Just like *Nutuk*, it opens with the evaluation of the situation of the Ottoman State by the end of the First World War, summarizes the grave terms of the Mudros treaty and the enslavement awaiting Turkey.

Then comes the rhetorical crescendo of Karal's textbook. While *Nutuk* presents the Christian elements at work all over the country 'trying to realize their own particular ambitions and thereby hasten the breakdown of the State' as just another crisis to deal with, Karal, after giving a brief picture of the Allied occupation, writes, 'But the catastrophe that had begun for our fatherland did not end with these developments. Minorities who have enjoyed an easy and a comfortable life under the

⁸³⁸ Karal has a detailed biography online at the Turkish Historical Foundation's website: <http://www.ttk.org.tr/index.php?Page=Sayfa&No=161>

Turk's tolerant administration for centuries wanted to take the advantage of the situation and began to work on their wicked ambitions (*kotu emeller*) geared towards Turkish territories.'⁸³⁹ A main headline that reads as 'ACTIVITIES OF THE MINORITIES' immediately follows and launches the main story of the formation of a national resistance. Thus, Karal's rhetorical movement transfers the entire burden of the post-Great War catastrophe to the 'wicked ambitions' of the minorities. This template remains in Karal's books until 1960.

First comes the information on the Greek ('Rum') activities: 'Mawrimira', a calendestine Greek organization in the Empire, was collaborating with the Greek government and receiving financial support from them. Its task was to form bands and to make propaganda in the vilayets on behalf of the Greek government. The Greek Red Cross, the official Emigrants Commission, the Boy Scouts in the Greek schools were administered by Mawrimira. This much is said in the *Nutuk* as well. Karal adds new dimensions to what exists in *Nutuk*. He talks about the Anatolian cities where Mawrimira had influence and concludes that 'all the schools and the churches in these places had become an association (*kulüp*) and a weapon depot (*silah deposu*).'⁸⁴⁰ The Armenian Patriarchate Zaven Efendi, who was in touch with the Greek 'Mawrimira', had established an organization just like that of the Greeks, and Armenian activities were running parallel to those of the Greek, writes Karal, replicating *Nutuk* almost word by word. Karal does not embellish further what Mustafa Kemal says in *Nutuk* as he does in the Greek case. However, if the Armenian activities were indeed just like

⁸³⁹ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi* (1918-1944), 1.

⁸⁴⁰ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi* (1918-1944), 2.

those of the Greek, by virtue of the narrative structure the students are directed into a conclusion that all the Armenian schools and churches all around Anatolia were building up arms under the direction of Zaven Efendi in Istanbul.

This interpretation became all the more plausible for the students of the *History of the Turkish Republic (1918-1944)*, which stayed in circulation until 1980.⁸⁴¹ Karal, beginning with the first edition (1944), erased the reference to the Armenian deportations Mustafa Kemal addressed as an issue in the context of the founding principles of the Eastern Provinces Union. Thus, between 1944 and 1980, the deportations of the ‘Ottoman Armenians’ disappeared from all the volumes of high school history texts in the Republic of Turkey. In the absence of any ‘human’ representations of Armenians within the narratives of the social, cultural and political life of the Empire, the spectre of an independent Armenia in Eastern Anatolia carved out by the Great Powers and the ‘War with Armenia’ remained the only ‘historical’ threads to relate to all things ‘Armenian.’ In the young minds of the Republic, beginning with Karal’s new *History IV*, Armenians along with Greeks were only our enemies during the War of Independence.

7.2.3. Karal’s History IV (1944): Narrative on the War against the Armenians in the East and the rhetoric of “systematic killing”

Compared to the *History IV*, which had launched the narrative on the military fronts of the War of Independence with the title ‘THE FIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW TURKISH STATE: THE ARMENIANS TRAMPLED AND THE GREEKS DEFEATED’,

⁸⁴¹ New editions were titled as *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1953)*, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1960)*, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1965)*. This last one, the copy I located in Turkey was published in 1976 by Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayın evi in Ankara.

Karal's 1944 textbook comes across as no less nationalistic: 'TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS FIGHTING FOR THE FATHERLAND (VATAN)'. So reads Karal's chapter title, and he immediately launches the narrative on the 'War with Armenia'.⁸⁴² He does not hesitate to begin with the foundation of the Armenian State in the East after the Boshevik revolution, however he follows *History IV* in attacking the Tashnak government of this state for engaging in hostilities against the Turks 'taking the advantage of the crisis Turkey was going through.' The reason behind the Armenian expedition, in line with *Nutuk's* and *History IV's* narrative, is presented as 'the onset of the killing of the Turks in a systematic way in Armenia or nearby regions especially in the aftermath of the Mudros treaty (*Türklerin öldürülmesine sistemli bir şekilde girisilmisti*).' Mustafa Kemal's 1927 rhetoric 'killing en masse' (*kutle halinde öldürmek*) in *Nutuk*, which was precisely recycled in *History IV*, becomes 'killing in a systematic way' in Karal's 1944 textbook. How do we explain this rhetorical change in rhetoric in Karal's textbook in 1944?

I argue that Karal, who has been in France for his history PhD between 1928-1933, must have been familiar with the rhetoric of the Western propaganda apparatus during the Great War from the Morgenthau's memoirs and the New York Times accounts to the British *Blue Book* - which as of 2009 remains at the center of Turkish-Armenian conflict. Beginning with 1915, Armenian massacres had been presented in these accounts almost universally as 'a system of deportation, dispersion and extermination,' as 'the premeditated policy of extermination deliberately pursued by

⁸⁴² Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1944)*, 62. Section titles in the (1918-1953) and (1918-1965) books read as much less nationalistic: Turkish Grand National Assembly's military and diplomatic achievements (1920-1923) and Turkish Grand National Assembly's achievements.

the Ottoman government'. Rhetoric like 'race murder', 'murder of a nation', 'a campaign of race extermination in progress', 'the general plan to dispose of the Armenian race', 'an effort to exterminate a whole nation, without distinction of age and sex' were recycled between Morgenthau (who originally coined many of these expressions in the memos he sent to the U.S. State Department), Viscount Bryce, Toynbee and the international press lead by the New York Times.⁸⁴³

In the British *Blue Book*, which was prepared by the British War Office to pull the United States into the war as an ally and to facilitate the post-war indictment of the Ottoman Government as soon as the war ended, the responsibility of the Central Government at Constantinople in the massacres was emphasized for numerous times.⁸⁴⁴ During the war, the Entente powers had already concluded a number of secret agreements concerning the division of the Empire and the division of the spoils.⁸⁴⁵

⁸⁴³ Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Wayne State University Press, 2003); Ara Sarafian, ed., *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917* (Princeton, NJ and London, England: Gomidas Institute, 2004); Ara Sarafian, ed., *The treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916 : documents presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce* (Princeton, N.J. : Gomidas Institute, 2000); Richard Diran Kloian, ed., *The Armenian genocide : news accounts from the American press, 1915-1922* (Berkeley, CA : Distributed by Anto Printing, 1988).

⁸⁴⁴ *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916). I have been working with the PDF copy of the original document located in the Indiana University Library digitized by Google Books: http://www.google.com/books?id=7qafAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=&f=false (last accessed on 11/03/2009). For very salient examples, see xxi; xxiii; 333; 334; 337; 362; 362; 375; 382; 402; 469; 504; 637.

⁸⁴⁵ The first treaty was the Constantinople agreement of March 1915 in which France and Britain recognized a number of Russian demands: After the war, Russia would be allowed to occupy parts of Eastern Anatolia, İstanbul, and the Straits. The second treaty was the Treaty of London of April 1915 in which the Entente promised south-western Asia Minor to Italy. The Third was Sykes-Picot of May 1916 between France and Britain in which the annexation of Southern Mesopotamia by Britain and of the Syrian coast by France. The fourth was St Jean de Maurienne of August 1917 in which Italy redefined its claims on southern Asia Minor, including Izmir (Smyrna) and its hinterland in the Italian zone – Russian revolution prevented the ratification of this secret agreement. However, these were more formal secret agreements between the Entente. The British had made other promises some of which continues to bleed in the Middle East: In November 1917, the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, 'in an effort to gain the support of influential Jewish circles at home and –especially- in Germany and Austria, promised the leader of the Zionist movement in Britain, Lord Rothschild, that

Viscount Bryce, upfront in the “Preface” of the *Blue Book* claims that the accounts that found their way out of Asiatic Turkey in the summer of 1915 ‘described what seemed to be an effort to exterminate a whole nation, without distinction of age or sex, whose misfortune it was to be the subjects of a Government devoid of scruples and of pity, and the policy they disclosed was one without precedent even in the blood-stained annals of the East.’⁸⁴⁶ In anticipation of potential future challenges to *Blue Book’s* central argument on the basis of its methodology – ‘eye-witness testimony’, Bryce asserts that

as there is every reason to believe – and indeed it is hardly denied – that the massacres and deportations were carried out under general orders proceeding from Constantinople, the fact that persons who knew only what was happening in one locality record circumstances there broadly resembling those which occurred in another locality goes to show the general correctness of both sets of accounts.⁸⁴⁷

Toynbee, who had edited and assembled the documents in the *Blue Book* as a young historian at the service of British war office then, too argues in the ‘Historical Section’ at the end:

Britain would support the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. The second British promise, which contradicted the former, and which would explode as a scandal when the Bolshevik government made all these treaties and promises public: the British High Commissioner in Egypt had promised the Sharif of Mecca that in exchange for an Arab Revolt, the British would support the establishment of an Arab Kingdom stretching to the 37th parallel in the north, with the exception of the Syrian coast and the Holy places in Palestine. After the Bolsheviks made the treaties public in denunciation of all imperialist designs, the British clarified its position on the matter in June 1918: They made a distinction between two groups of territories. Areas which had been independently Arab before the war and those liberated by the Arabs would belong to the Arabs. Areas liberated by the Entente or still in Turkish possession would remain under the administration of Entente Powers. See Eric Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History*, p.149-150

⁸⁴⁶ “Preface by Viscount Bryce” in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), http://www.google.com/books?id=7qafAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=&f=false (last accessed on 11/03/2009), xxi.

⁸⁴⁷ “Preface by Viscount Bryce” in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), http://www.google.com/books?id=7qafAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=&f=false (last accessed on 11/03/2009), xxiii.

this fundamental uniformity of procedure is more sinister than the incidental aggravations of the crime by the Kurds, peasants, gendarmes or local authorities. It is damning evidence that the procedure itself, which set in motion all the other forces of evil, was conceived and organized by the Central Government at Constantinople.⁸⁴⁸

‘Premeditation’, ‘policy’, ‘general plan’, ‘the essential uniformity of design’, ‘the fundamental uniformity of procedure’ as expressions used to frame and emphasize the state responsibility existed in abundance in the western accounts of the Armenian massacres beginning with 1915. Although the contemporary debates around the problem of ‘intent’ and ‘premeditation’ embedded in the rhetoric of ‘evil’ and ‘barbarism’ are immediately associated with the U.N. Genocide Convention and the post-Holocaust discourses respectively, for the Turks –who have historically conceived the ‘state’ and their state-making traditions as literally ‘holy’- the problem has a much longer history anchored in the western discourses on the Armenian massacres.⁸⁴⁹ Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt notes that even as late as 1942

⁸⁴⁸ “Historical Section,” in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), http://www.google.com/books?id=7qafAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=&f=false (last accessed on 11/03/2009), 637

⁸⁴⁹ Metin Heper argues that the state in Turkey has been stronger than the state in Germany. The Ottoman –Turkish polity has produced a state tradition largely absent in the old / new Third world countries and that polity came to have significant resemblance to the polities in certain continental European countries such as France and Germany. However, Heper argues, the state in the Ottoman – Turkish polity was isolated from and autonomous vis-à-vis civil society to a degree greater than has been the case in continental Europe. Therefore, he argues that Ottoman-Turkish state constitutes a polar case among the polities with a strong state. He emphasizes that compared to Germany, in Turkey the state ‘has been far more strong, and consequently, the consolidation of democracy has been much more difficult. See Metin Heper, *The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy: Turkey and Germany Compared*, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.25, No.2, July 1992. In chapter 2, I had also mentioned that there is consensus in the literature on the Unionists / Young Turks that they had only one cÖnce rn in the faithful days up to the Great War and the ethnic cleansing during the War, and that was ‘saving the state.’ Heper too mentions, drawing on Niyazi Berkes, the primary cÖnce rn of the bureaucratic elites had always been that of ‘saving the State’. See Heper, “The Strong State,” 172. As I have indicated before, even the ideals of ‘constitutionalism’ and ‘parliamentarism’ advocated by the Young Turks before the 1908 Revolution were appreciated not for their democratic potential, but they were seen as a means to strengthen and save the Ottoman state. See Zurcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 22. Also see Chapter 2 in this dissertation. In Turkish the ‘survival / continuity/ perpetuity’ of the state is called ‘devletin bekasi’ (devlet: state, beka: perpetuity / continuity). “Devletin bekasi” as an expression

‘there was still no mention of a systematic extermination program’ against the Jews in the American press.⁸⁵⁰ From the very beginning Armenian massacres were described as ‘race extermination’ in countless articles and news reports in the West. I consider these factors to be in conversation with the rhetoric change to ‘systematic killing of the Turks’ by the Tashnak government in Karal’s 1944 text.

Karal’s conceptualization of the Tashnak attacks on the ‘Turks’ within or near the Armenian borders remains as ‘killing in a systematic way’ until 1980. None of the contemporaries of Karal uses the expression ‘killing in a systematic way’, however. Su’s 1955 textbook mentions that Armenians were ‘killing the Turks with torture’. Sapolyo’s 1963 and 1973 textbooks just mention ‘assaults and incursions’. Serdarlar’s 1979 narrative goes back to *History IV* and *Nutuk* and deploys the expression ‘killing en masse’. All the accounts, however, regardless of the variance in their rhetoric on the mass killings across the border argue that what triggered the Armenian expedition was the assaults of the Armenians on Turks.

There is also the consensus across these reform history textbooks on the importance of War in the Eastern Front: With the Armenian expedition, the possibility of an independent Armenian state in Eastern Anatolia was permanently eradicated. What is more significant is that the textbooks openly acknowledge that only after this victory over the Armenians in East, all the resources and forces could

still has very strong resonance among the Turkish populace. What is today called the ‘sevr paranoia’ as a psycho-social phenomenon in Turkey should fundamentally be anchored in and associated with the ‘strong state’ traditions of Turkey. See the report of a current ethnography by TESEV on the contemporary resonance of ‘devletin bekasi’ among the Turkish citizens, “Amacimiz devletin bekasi: Demokratiklesme Surecinde Devlet ve Yurttaslar,” *TESEV*, 20.

⁸⁵⁰ Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, 282.

be channeled to the Western front.⁸⁵¹ This captures the importance of the ‘Armenian issue’ for the new Turkish state. It is memorialized as the first victory of the Turkish War of Independence (*İstiklal Savaşı*).

7.3.History IV Revised (1953 Edition): Post-WW2 Era and Changes

As I have argued in the previous chapter, national education is one most important ideological state apparatuses in Turkey and therefore schoolbooks, prepared under the close supervision of the state, are instruments in the textual universe of which the ideological shifts and repositioning affected by various kinds of political struggles can be traced. In this respect, the 1953 edition of Karal’s *History of the Turkish Republic* reflects the state’s response to a number of converging political developments within and outside of Turkey. It is particularly an interesting textbook through which one can catch a glimpse of the state’s response to the post-Holocaust world order. Before I elaborate on the ideological shifts within the textbook, let me briefly summarize the major political and economic developments that constituted the general climate of these shifts.

7.3.1.Conjunctural Developments and Domestic Politics in the post-WW2 era

7.3.1.1. International Political Developments

Turkey survived the war in silence and in neutrality. Massive ethnic cleansing and the territorial victories legitimized and legalized by the the Lausanne Treaty

⁸⁵¹ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1944)*, 63; Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1953)*, 98; Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1965)*, 93; Mükerrerrem Kamil Su, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, 68-70; Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi* (İstanbul : Rafet Zaimler Kitap Yayın evi, 1963), 59.

(1923) were consolidated and fortified by the claims of the Turkish History Thesis. However, important conjectural developments were taking place outside the walls of Turkey in the aftermath of the WW2, and the Kemalist elites themselves did not pretend to disguise the pivotal instrumentality of the fictions of the History Thesis that rendered Anatolia as the Turkish homeland “from time immemorial.” As I have also discussed in the previous chapter, in an important article published in 1946, in the aftermath of the Postdam Conference, so acknowledged Karal the precariousness and vulnerability of the new Republican history:

With our War of Independence, we cleaned up our territories from foreign armies and declared our independence to the world in Lausanne. Yet, we could at any time find the international community who has for centuries been cultivated by a faulty history regarding the Turkish lands standing before us as enemies. Indeed, even after Lausanne, it was understood, based on what they said and what they did, that some imperialist states were getting ready to execute a plan of invasion claiming historical rights over the Turkish territories. And this shows that it was necessary to reinforce the material results accomplished by our War of Independence with endeavors pursued in the moral domain (*Bu da gosteriyor ki Kurtulus savasimizda elde edilmis olan neticeleri, manevi alanda yapilacak calismalarla tamamlamak lazimdi*). Therefore, there was no solution other than defending ourselves with a weapon that was the same as the one used against us. The weapon used against us was falsified history (*tahrif edilmis tarihdi*). Our duty, then, was to outline our history in its true form and to enlighten the misinformed public opinion about the Turkish nation and the Turkish territories. The brief explanation provided until here shows the importance attributed to the Turkish History Thesis by Atatürk.⁸⁵²

The referent of the some imperialist states that “were getting ready to execute a plan of invasion claiming historical rights over the Turkish territories” in Karal’s discourse is Stalin’s Soviet Union. Turkey’s relations with the Soviet Union had dramatically soured during the WW2 because of Turkey’s neutrality. First came the Rippentrop – Molotov pact, then came the Soviet announcement that it would not renew its Friendship treaty with Turkey after it relapsed in 1945. Soviets demanded that for the

⁸⁵² Karal, “Atatürk ’un Türk Tarih Tezi” in *Atatürk Hakkında Konferanslar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1946), 58.

Friendship Treaty to be renewed, the border between the two countries had to be corrected: The areas in the North-eastern Anatolia that had been lost to Russia between 1878 and 1918 and that had been taken back by the Turks at the end of the Armenian Expedition in 1920 now had to be returned to the Soviet Union. Moreover, Soviets wanted the establishment of a joint Russian-Turkish defense force in Bosphorous and Dardanelles to guard the Black Sea.

The Soviet Union tabled its demands at the Potsdam Conference in 1946 and they were actually not immediately rejected by the British or the Americans either, justifying the fears of the Republican Turkey. With the rise of the Truman Doctrine and the Cold War, however, Washington re-evaluated the strategic importance of Turkey and USA gradually became more supportive of Turkey. With US's backing, Turkey, already outraged by the Soviet demands, took a firm line and the issue was controlled with minimum tension. Nonetheless, as I will argue below, the 1953 edition of the reform history textbook of Karal, particularly the section on the Erzurum Congress coupled with the post-Holocaust developments in the global order, reflects these fears and how they were managed within the national educational apparatus.

The consequences of the World War II were more far-reaching than the territorial dispute and diplomatic crisis experienced with the Soviet Union. Regardless of how thick the walls of Turkey were, the extermination of the European Jewry had provoked powerful normative changes in the ideological order of the international states system. The case of the Nazi Germany had illustrated the catastrophic end where the notion of national rights could reach. Although the ideology of state sovereignty remained intact, in the post-war world order overwhelmed by the shame

of the ashes of the millions of European Jews, UN Charter for ‘Human Rights’ and the Genocide Convention were perhaps the *only* legitimate monuments to remind humanity of its precarious compassion and respect for ‘life’.

Developments were a wake-up call both to the Armenians, and to the Republican elites. The epithet of genocide was seized immediately by the Diaspora.⁸⁵³ As early as 1947, Armenian National Committee of America sent a memorandum to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers and argued that ‘the monstrous plan of genocide, that is, the plan to exterminate an entire nation, was...first conceived and executed by the Turks, with the connivance of Germans.’⁸⁵⁴ Bloxham notes that implicit in UN’s framing of genocide in international law was a particular determination to punish the crime; it was, first and foremost, a powerful rhetorical tool for the Armenians with which they could now press their own territorial claims and claims for reparations. I argue that the foundation of the state of Israel almost next door in the aftermath of the Holocaust must have also alarmed the Turkish state. After all, nothing was impossible after Stalin re-claimed half of Eastern Anatolia at the Postdam Conference. At first, it was rejected neither by the British nor by the Americans. If there was any country Cold War brought good luck, it was modern Turkey; with American backing, Soviet demands were neutralized; Marshall Plan began to flow. However, once again, the 1953 edition of Karal’s reform history textbook will reveal to us that the developments of the post-WW2 global order were perceived to be a threat to be managed within the educational apparatus as well.

⁸⁵³ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 216. Bloxham is careful to note that the systematic use of the concept for 1915 should be situated in the post-65 era. He notes that until 1965, the usage of “genocide” in the Armenian diaspora was frequent enough but not systematic or dogmatic.

⁸⁵⁴ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 216-217.

Karal's defensive emphasis on the 'real owners' of the southern properties within the section on the "Southern Fronts" of the War of Independence reveals the anxieties of the *nueveu riches* of the South that reached even the fabric of the Turkish schoolbooks.

In making sense of the urgency that necessitated the new arguments that appeared in Karal's 1953 edition with regard to the Southern front narratives, we should also take into consideration two more social forces within Turkey in the post-war era: One is the economic development of Cilicia in the 40s and the 50s, which I will discuss as a sequel to *Cilicia (Çukurova): The Delta of Cotton Dreams* of Chapter 6. The other is the domestic political developments that marked Turkey's transition to multi-party politics between 1945 and 1950. In the emergence of the new political alliances that marginalized the Republican People's Party in the first democratic elections of modern Turkey, these two social forces can't be separated.

7.3.1.2. Cilicia (Çukurova): The Delta of Cotton Dreams – 2

After the Armenian properties came into the hands of the Muslim landowners conclusively after the Turkish War of Independence, these landowners established large estates... *where Memed's slavery by the local landlord begins (Memed, My Hawk)*. By the time tractors arrived Turkey (beginning with 1950, with the Marshall Plan), sharecropping tenancy was prevalent on cotton-growing. Mechanization provided 'unprecedented opportunities' to large landlords who had formalized their ownership titles when cadastral registration became more efficient in the 40s.⁸⁵⁵ Others could also unilaterally enclose their holding by driving-off sharecroppers.

⁸⁵⁵ Keyder, *State and Class*, 138.

While in Turkey as a whole this was not a widely observed occurrence, Keyder underlines that the case of Cukurova is unique. Compared to the rest of the Turkey where on the average 4% of the village populations were driven off, in the region including Cukurova 12% of the population was driven off: 'Enclosures were immediately remunerative in the case of cotton, where only seasonal wage labor was needed, and during the 50s fortunes were made after a single harvest.' The population of Adana doubled during the 50s and it resembled a typical boom-town where 'the number of Cadillacs per capita was higher than in most American cities.'⁸⁵⁶ The Korean War has also been the wheel of fortune for the large cotton farmers of Cilicia.⁸⁵⁷ Most importantly, as Keyder poignantly articulates, Cukurova had a lasting legacy on the modern Turkish economy:

During the 70s, the heyday of Turkish industry, at least two of the main entrepreneurs vying for supremacy (out of the five or six concentrations of 'holding companies', i.e. finance capital) had started this way. The case of Cukurova is unique. In no other region was agricultural surplus so great and so concentrated as to provide such dimensions of primitive accumulation and to open such opportunities for commercial activity. Other large companies and financial concerns were founded by urban capital, in large part accumulated through trade during the etatist period. ... While Istanbul's share in industrial investment was disproportionate, cities of earlier accumulation (such as Izmir) and of new-found wealth (Adana) also started emerging as poles of growth.⁸⁵⁸

7.3.1.3. Transition to Democracy and the rise of the Democratic Party

1945-1950 is regarded as the period that marks Turkey's transition to democracy. Domestic political developments had some of their roots in the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and some in the economic policies of Republican

⁸⁵⁶ Keyder, *State and Class*, 138.

⁸⁵⁷ Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 238-239.

⁸⁵⁸ Keyder, *State and Class*, 138-139. Zurcher argues "several of the 30 or so large family-owned holding companies which dominate Turkish industry today started out in this way," 239.

People's Party, which became largely unpopular with all segments of the population. In order to make sense of the cataclysmic developments of this transition period the distinction between the mass of the population in Turkey (the peasants, and the industrial workers –some 330,000 in a population of around 20 million) and segments of coalition on which the Kemalist regime had been built (the officers, the bureaucrats, the muslim traders in towns and landowners in the countryside) should be highlighted. Kemalist regime had never been popular with the masses; small farmers by 50s still made up 80% of the population and within the past 25 years of the regime they had not seen much improvement in their standard of living (by 1953, the total number of villages linked up with the electric grid was 10 in modern Turkey). As the state became more visible with its secularist policies, resentment against the state became only more acute.

Yet, there were other important domestic developments in this period. Wealth Tax of 1942 – although its main victims were non-muslims- had caused an unrest among the Turkish bourgeoisie as well. The entire episode showed that the bourgeoisie was also vulnerable to the Kemalist regime's bureaucrats and the military. By 1950s, this indigenous bourgeoisie, whose growth was the priority of the Unionists and Kemalists alike, had become powerful and they became powerful enough not to settle for dependency. Especially the large landowners, who had been an essential element in the Young Turk coalition, had been alienated by the government's policy of artificially low pricing of agricultural produce to combat inflation during the WW2. Furthermore, RPP had introduced a new 'Tax on Agricultural Produce' and a new land

distribution bill –Land Distribution Law- in January 1945. Especially this last bill played a crucial role in the emergence of political opposition in post-war Turkey.

Discussions of the bill in the parliament in May 1945 were the first occasion when the government was vehemently criticized. The main opposition, with no surprise, came from the members with landowning connections and their spokesman was Aydin Menderes from Aydin, who officially registered his Democratic Party in 1946 and became the new PM of Turkey in 1950. May 1950 marked a watershed development in modern Turkish political history: Democratic Party recorded a landslide victory in elections winning an overwhelming majority of the seats in the Parliament (408 vs. Republican People's Party's 69). The social characteristics of the DP representatives were dramatically different from those of the Kemalists. They were on average younger, had local roots in their constituencies, were less likely to have had a university education, and far more likely to have a background in commerce or in law. There were almost no representatives with a bureaucratic and/or military background. On 27 May 1960 the Turkish military took over with a coup and on 16 September 1961 Adnan Menderes was executed.⁸⁵⁹

7.3.2.The Narrative on Erzurum Congress and Territorial arguments

Karal's 1944 narrative on the Erzurum Congress – one of the most important initial steps that was to shape the War of Independence, does not deviate from *Nutuk*. It reaffirms that this was the 'first important congress of our Reform', summarizes the

⁸⁵⁹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 231-252.

decisions taken on the territorial integrity but doesn't relay any information on the relationship between the Armenian issue and the defense of the Eastern vilayets.

Karal, however, significantly revises his narrative on the Erzurum Congress in the 1953 edition of his textbook. So writes Karal under the subtitle 'Why did the Congress meet?':

In the 24th article of the Mudros treaty, it was said that 'if turmoil arises in the Six Vilayets (*Vilâyat-ı Sitte*)⁸⁶⁰, the Entente powers preserve the right to invade any part of these vilayets.' What was called Vilayat- Sitte was Eastern Anatolia's Erzurum, Van , Bitlis, Harput, Diyarbakir, Sivas vilayets. In the Treaty document's English text the six vilayets were called 'the six Armenian vilayets' [in English in Karal's text], in other words 'the six Armenian vilayets.' And this was sufficiently explaining that the Entente was dreaming about establishing one great Armenia in the Eastern Anatolia. Despite the fact that Eastern Anatolia was Turkish down to its rocks, soil, history, people and culture, and against the spirit of the Wilson principles, that it was offered as a free gift to the Armenians had led to the foundation of the Defense of the National Rights of the Eastern Provinces Union in the days following the armistice.⁸⁶¹

As I have argued above, the dramatic emphasis on the "Turkishness" of the Eastern Anatolia articulated specifically in relation to the historical Armenian demands in this section should be considered in the context of the converging dynamics of the post-war conjectural developments: Stalin's demands over Eastern Anatolia at the Postdam Conference and the emergence of a Genocide Convention that was immediately seized by the Armenians to press their own territorial claims.

7.3.3.The Narrative on the Southern Front and the allusions of to 'Abandoned Property

1944 (first) edition of Karal's reform history textbook, which replaced *History IV*, presents even a more sterile, much shorter and much more arid account of the Southern Front than *History IV* that I have analyzed in the previous section. The

⁸⁶⁰ Determined in the Berlin Congress as Vilâyat-ı Sitte (the Six Vilayets) given to Erzurum, Van, Harput, Diyarbakir, Sivas, Bitlis. In the Mudros Treaty, these cities were altogether called 'The Armenian Six Vilayets' [Ermeni Vilâyat-ı Sittesi]. Armenians call this region as "the Western Armenia."

⁸⁶¹ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1953)*, 39.

French in collaboration with the Armenians attempted to oppress the populace provoking a nationalist outrage. Esteemed officers took the advantage of this outrage in organizing resistance. Our powerful bands (*chethes*) began to attack the French and the Armenians everywhere.⁸⁶² This is the gist of the narrative offered in Karal's 1944 text covered in half a page.

One, however, encounters a surprisingly expanded 'Southern Front' section in Karal's 1953 revised edition, whose narrative remained untouched until after 1977.⁸⁶³ This narrative relayed across six and a half pages – a record-breaking length for any section on the Southern Front in the history of national education – deploys arguments specifically on the property and the real estate of the Turkish notables in the Turkish south couched in overly inflated rhetoric of heroism emphasizing 'dignity', 'honor', 'and 'righteousness'; Karal argues that the battles in Antep would even leave Verdun behind.

During my research, I originally surveyed 95 secondary and high school level history textbooks used between 1930 and 2006; even if half of those books now lie beyond the scope of this dissertation, the entire analysis allows me to make the following claim with confidence: In no other textbook written after Karal's, arguments on or allusions to the wartime abandoned property of the Armenians take place. In what follows are brief snapshots from Karal's souther front narrative that first showed up in 1953:

⁸⁶² Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1944)*, 22.

⁸⁶³ I observed the same narrative in Karal's *History of the Turkish Republic (1918-1965)* published in 1977.

The French in the places they occupied collaborated with the Armenians...They formed support brigands of the Armenians, they attempted to integrate them into the administration of the country....These incidents led to the formation of national fronts against the French in southern Anatolia.

Meanwhile, Adana and its region were being called as 'Cilicia' especially by the foreigners. The real intention of the French was to colonialize this prosperous region 90% of which were Turks. Since they knew Turks would not obey to them, they thought it was necessary and beneficial to engage in acts that would destroy the Turkish population (*türk nüfuzunu kiracak hareketler...*) using the Armenian minorities. They allowed Armenians to set up a revenge brigade and they ignored the atrocities and attacks Armenians committed on the Turks....***In addition, they took the property of many Turkish notables saying they belonged to the Armenians. Turkish people were determined to defend the Turkishness of Cilicia....***

Antep front:

....Antep's ...war-making, energy and what they have accomplished were unique. Without having received any substantive support from regular armies, the people had organized the resistance by themselves and they had become an army by putting their entire existence out there. ***Every one had put their life, property, knowledge and intelligence in the service of defending the Turk's rights.*** ...This spectacular scene was investing the battles for justice at every corner of the Turkish homeland...with a moral power. Even the victors of the World War One saw in Antep War the reincarnation of the Verdun defense of the French against the Germans. But Antep would leave even Verdun behind. Because Verdun had behind her a France that was not oppressed, that was in a situation to rescue her, and Frances's allies. Antep, however, was all alone. Mustafa Kemal's faith in the Turkish righteousness and his hopeful manifestos for freedom were Antep's only moral power.

Urfa Defense:

...The French as they have done everywhere else engaged in acts humiliating for the Turks in collaboration with the Armenians. They began to claim historical rights to the city because they have stayed here for a while eight hundred years ago during the Crusades. They took the government buildings under their control....***They accepted with no investigation the allegations of the Armenians regarding the real estate of the some of the Turkish notables.*** All these acts caused storms of rebellion in the conscience of the people of Urfa who look calm on the surface.....

Maras Defense:

....The French in collaboration with the Armenians humiliated the Turks in various ways. They made fun of the outfits of the Turkish women; they pulled the Turkish flag off the castle. Based on the slanders of the some Armenians, they imprisoned some Turks. These acts mobilized Turkish lions from Maras who look calm on the surface. The people –including the children, men, women, the young and the elderly- rebelled for the homeland, dignity and honor.....⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶⁴ Bolds and italics are mine. Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1953)* (İstanbul: Maarif Basımevi, 1958), 71-77.

These narrative ammendments show how responsive the history textbooks were to the conjectural developments outside Turkey. The Postdam experience coupled with the normative changes in the international states system after the WW2 must have shown to the ruling elites – for the first time a bourgeoisie alliance in the Democratic Party largely supported by big landowners- that the world was no longer a safe place for the Turkish ‘history’. The simplicity and the superficiality of these narrative fortifications shed a much brighter light on the instrumentality of history in modern Turkey. As Montaigne put it, ‘the reverse of truth has a thousand shapes and a boundless field.’⁸⁶⁵ Or, they constitute yet another example for the ‘constant shifting and shuffling in utter sterility’ which is the characteristic of modern nations that had the bad luck to be born in the age of propaganda, as Arendt wrote.⁸⁶⁶

My final observation with Turkish history textbooks until 2006 is the total absence of the Holocaust from the narratives on the Second World War. While the reform history textbooks that remained in circulation until 1980 briefly summarizes the diplomatic relations of Turkey during the war, and some mention only in a passing and in extremely ‘passive’ rhetoric such as ‘Jews had begun to be killed in Germany,’⁸⁶⁷ nothing about WW2 and its colossal violence takes place in the books written after 1980. This is a highly disturbing evidence that unveils that the fact that the official Turkey has no intellectual history that worked through and came to terms with the world-historical violence of the World War II and its consequences for the

⁸⁶⁵ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 253.

⁸⁶⁶ Arendt, *Between past and Future*, 254.

⁸⁶⁷ Reform history textbooks in Turkey generally in the context of Turkey’s relations during the WW2, briefly talk about the war, Hitler and Nazi Germany. These narratives deploy overly diplomatic rhetoric and they only relay information about international relations, with no discussion of the world-historical violence of the WW2.

international states system. I can't speculate if the total erasure of WW II especially in the aftermath of 1980 is a function of Turkey's genocide denial or Turkey's anxieties regarding the ongoing genocide debate currently played out on the stages of international parliaments. But I can argue that schoolbooks' utter silence on the WW II should be regarded as one of the factors that explains Turkey's slow and painful integration to the global human rights culture.

7.4. History I-II-III by Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay (1950-1980s⁸⁶⁸): Consolidation of the narrative Turkification of Anatolia

The textbooks written by Akşit and Oktay stayed in circulation with minimal revisions for almost 35 years from the 1950s through the 1980s. They are, in other words, the most enduring textbooks of modern Turkey that survived three military coups. In terms of the organization of the topics and lessons, they structurally follow Mansel's books. However, compared to Akşit and Oktay (hereafter, *Akşit/Oktay*) in nationalist rhetoric, Mansel's books might even be regarded as cosmopolitan, at least some of their sections.

Akşit/Oktay's *History I* encompasses the civilizations of antiquity and it does not even provide us with any traces, as Mansel does, on the Armenians within the

⁸⁶⁸ Some editions of these books show Akşit and Oktay as co-authors, some editions just show Emin Oktay as the author, and some editions show Niyazi Akşit as the author. The basic narratives except for some subtitles and titles so not change significantly. For instance, the narrative on the importance of the battle of Manzikert in the 1953 edition of Emin Oktay matches the narrative in 1987 edition almost word by word. The specific editions I use in my analysis are as follows: Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay, *Tarih Lise I. Sınıf* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1967); Emin Oktay, *Tarih Lise II* (İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1987); Emin Oktay, *Tarih II Ortaçağ* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1952); Niyazi Akşit-Emin Oktay, *Tarih II* (Öğretmen Okulları Kitapları) (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1953); Emin Oktay, *Tarih Lise III* (İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1985); Niyazi Akşit, *Tarih III Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1967).

textual vicinity of either Crassus or Hadrianus (who had at least passed by ‘Armenia’ in Mansel). In the context of the new history lessons by Akşit/Okay, Armenians for the first time ‘appear’ at the end of the discussion on the Byzantine Empire in Volume II. The narrative on the Byzantine fine arts argues that the “Russians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Armenians” have been under the influence of Byzantine art.⁸⁶⁹ Considering that the section regards the Byzantine works of art as ‘beautiful’ and celebrates their legacy in Istanbul, this first introduction to the Armenians can be appreciated.

The narrative trend observed in Mansel’s books towards rendering Anatolia as the hinge of ‘Turkishness’ is consolidated within Akşit/Okay’s *History II*. For the first time in this volume, a formal definition of what constitutes ‘History of Turkey’ (*Türkiye Tarihi*) is provided in the context of the narrative that explains the significance of the Battle of Manzikert: ‘The new Turkish history that begins with the conquest of Anatolia and that continues until today is called, due to the name of Anatolia that is our homeland, History of Turkey.’⁸⁷⁰ From 1950s through the 80s, ‘Turkey’s History’ within the narrative is written in bold letters. In all Lycee textbooks, in the contents section, the narrative that begins with the first Seljuk incursions until the end of Anatolian Seljuk Civilization is indicated as ‘the History of Turkey’. In this context, Akşit / Okay’s *History II* underlines that Alp Arslan entered Anatolia ‘having conquered Armenia that was subjected to the Byzantine Empire’ (*Bizans İmparatorluğuna bağlı olan Ermenistan’ı fethederek Anadolu’ya girdi*). At the end of the Battle of Manzikert Turks “definitively take over Anatolia,” adopt it as

⁸⁷⁰ See Emin Okay, *Tarih II Ortaçağ* (İstanbul Remzi Kitabevi, 1952), 91; Emin Okay, *Tarih Lise II* (İstanbul:Atlas Kitabevi, 1987), 137.

a “second homeland for themselves” and this way they bring the Medieval Age to an end by driving the Byzantines out of Anatolia. ‘Anatolia as a second homeland’ in this framework affirms the primacy of Central Asia as *the* homeland of the Turks and as the spatial referent of the nation.

The section in Akşit / Oktay’s *History II* that most clearly indicates a nationalist turn to ‘Anatolia’ is the chapter on the ‘Anatolian Civilization during the Seljuks’. In the 1953 edition of Akşit/Oktay, ‘Turkification of Anatolia’ is listed literally as one of the social institutions following ‘state administration’ and ‘army and navy.’⁸⁷¹ ‘Before the Battle of Manzikert, Anatolia was the land of the Byzantium (Rum)...but after the Battle of Manzikert, many Turkmen ashirets (Oghuz Turks) came to Anatolia...’ so begins *History II*. In this half a page narrative, the main argument is that Anatolia tremendously thrived after the Turks arrived. Many new villages, schools, mosques, libraries, hospitals were built: ‘The face of Anatolia changed.’ Mansel’s rhetoric is recycled by Akşit/Oktay: ‘To the mountains, plains, and rivers were given all Turkish names. This way Anatolia became the second homeland of the Turks and an important Turk-Islam land.’ Another paragraph continues to talk about the Turkish invasions that continued after the Battle of Manzikert and argues that they came to an end after the 15th century. So ends Akşit / Oktay’s 1952 narrative on the Turkification of Anatolia: ‘In the coastlines were Anatolia there were the Greeks (Rum), and in the East there were the Armenians.’ While Mansel talked about the revival of the economic and social life in Anatolia with

⁸⁷¹ After the ‘Turkification of Anatolia’ come the sections ‘Society and Daily Life’, ‘Language and Literature’, ‘Intellectual Life and Science’, ‘Fine Arts and Architecture’, and ‘Economic Life.’ See Oktay, *Tarih Lise II* (1952), 112-121.

the arrival of the Turks with much nationalist splendor, his text had neither framed the narrative with a title such as ‘Turkification of Anatolia’ nor given information on the presence of Armenians and Rums.

In the 80s (when ‘Armenian Issue’ sections became a permanent topic in the reform history books), *History II*’s ‘Turkification of Anatolia’ section becomes far more ambitious. It is now presented under the ‘Social Life of the Anatolian Turks’, but the narrative’s nationalist expansion is immediately visible. Furthermore, how it initially unfolds is also highly suggestive of the anxieties that informed this expansion: ‘During the Muslim invasions, the south-eastern region of Anatolia (Diyarbakir, Mardin, Malatya, Urfa, Antep) and the southern skirts of the Taurus mountains (Maras, Antakya, Misis, Anavarza, Adana, Tarsus, and Silifke) were invaded by the Muslims and to these regions first Arabs, and then beginning with the second-half of the 8th century many Turks had come and settled. But Anatolia’s definitive Turkification began with the Seljug invasions.’⁸⁷² The translation is clear: Even before the Turks entered Anatolia, there was no such a thing as Armenia; that geography was already settled by the Muslims. While in the 1952 textbook, the Turkified landscape included only the mountains, plains and rivers, in the 1987 edition, the Turkified landscape seems to have expanded: Plateaus and lakes joined the list. *History II* discusses how the Turkification of Anatolia continued until the Ottoman Empire. Just like the one 1952 edition, 1987 edition too ends with information on the Armenians and Rums: ‘Having said this, in Anatolia...there remained a number of (*bir miktar*) Armenian and Rum peoples who were of the old peoples of these lands. These, by

⁸⁷² Emin Oktay, *Tarih Lise II* (1987), 195.

paying taxes to the Turks, continued to maintain their existence (*varliklarini korumakta devam ettiler*)' [sic].⁸⁷³ The rhetorical expression of this existence, however, is so precarious – there were a number of Armenians and they *continued to exist* because they were paying taxes- that even within the textual landscape of the book one almost fears when they will go missing again. Only about twenty pages later indeed, in the introduction of the Chapter for the 'Foundation of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1451)', they disappear from the summary of the racial make-up of Anatolia: "In this century, in Anatolia, Turks were a majority. Nations like the Greeks (Rum) and Mongols were also among the residents of Anatolia. Of these, Greeks were populated mostly in Marmara, Aegean and the Eastern Black Sea littoral. Mongols, meanwhile, had come to Anatolia after 1243 and had settled mostly in the military regions." One, under the circumstances, may assume that there were only a number of Armenians and they must have been all devoured by the Mongols.

And yet, Armenians show up again in *History III*, this time in the 16th century in the context of the Ottoman Empire's 'Economy' during its golden age: 'Since Ottoman Turks were in the military, farming, and arts, they would not consider the commercial business as that important (*pek onem vermezlerdi*). Mostly the Jews, the Greeks and the Armenians would do these jobs.' Then *History II* explains the privileges the French and the other Christian merchants enjoyed during the 16th century. In fact, in a long paragraph, this Lycee level history textbook goes into the minute details of the commercial privileges of a certain Jewish 'Yasef Nazi from Portugal' and talks about minutia from his ships loaded with wine to the credit

⁸⁷³ Emin Oktay, *Tarih II* (1987), 196.

institutions he established with his mother-in-law 'Donna Grasia Mendes'. The entire narrative comes across as an absolutely 'passive-aggressive' one underlined by resentment. In the absence of any cohesive information on these peoples, one doubts if the purpose of this section is 'historical information.' For one thing, Armenians, who had been dropped from the ethno-racial make-up of Anatolia in the previous volume, showed up in this volume for the first time as one of the non-Muslim peoples engaged in commerce. Their historical representative is once again 'the Jew' and once again they become teaching material only when it needs to be underlined that the Jews, the Armenians and the Greeks were 'economically dependent on each other.' Even after 57 years, as the History III of Akşit / Oktay shows, the mentality presented in the *Outlines of Turkish History* (1930) did not change (see above) in 'modern' Turkey.

The Armenians who were thriving in commercial life of the Empire disappear for another 300 years in *History III* only to crown the narrative of the Berlin Treaty, whose text neighbors the section on 'the Collapse of the Ottoman Empire' in the opposite page. The problem is a familiar one by now: They demanded reforms 'where they lived' in Rumelia and in Anatolia. Armenians finally exit *History III* attached to yet another event condemned in the history of the 'Turkish nation': The Mudros Treaty. 'The Allied...could occupy the places Armenians lived in the East.'⁸⁷⁴ At the end of a 800-page long history education spread over three volumes, an average high school student by the end of the 80s would only know that Armenians engaged in commerce; they wanted reforms; they lived in the Eastern Anatolia; they were also in alliance with the enemies of the Turks.

⁸⁷⁴ Emin Oktay, *Tarih Lise III* (1985), 265.

7.5. Conclusion

In this section, I looked at the history textbooks written after Atatürk died and that stayed in circulation until the early 1980s. I tried to understand the relationship between the narrative tropes on the Turkification of Anatolia and the narratives on the Armenians. I observed that for the first time with *Mansel et al.*'s books the narratives on the first Turkish invasions of Anatolia by the Seljugs came to be viewed as the hinge of Turkish history and presented under the title "the History of Turkey." Seljugs were presented as those who first defined the boundaries of the Turkish fatherland indicated as "Turkey" (*Turkiye*). I also observed that the rhetoric of patriotism attached to Anatolia as *Turkey* visibly increased. The mythification of the Battle of Manzikert as the key symbol in the formation of the Turkish Republic is usually regarded as a development of the 1960s and it is associated with Kafesoglu, one of the deans of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis. My analysis showed that the first template had already emerged in Mansel et al.'s books written under the influence of the 'humanist' challenge to Turkish History Thesis.

The narrative trend observed in Mansel et al.'s books towards rendering Anatolia as the hinge of 'Turkishness', I observed, was consolidated within Akşit/Oktay's *History II*. For the first time in this volume, a formal definition of what constitutes 'History of Turkey' (*Turkiye Tarihi*) was provided in the context of the narrative that explains the significance of the Battle of Manzikert: 'The new Turkish history that begins with the conquest of Anatolia and that continues until today is

called, due to the name of Anatolia that is our homeland, History of Turkey.’⁸⁷⁵ With the necessary omissions and erasures, a potentially inconvenient question such as ‘who was in Anatolia first – Turks or Armenians?’ was definitively removed from the horizon of national education. As far as the 19th century history of the Empire and the Armenians were concerned, I observed that with Akşit/Oktaç’s textbooks, modern Turkey entered a period of silence.

The most remarkable development of the period (1940s) belongs Karal’s reform history textbook 1944. In this textbook, Nutuk’s account of the Armenian deportations, which was present in *History IV* supervised by Mustafa Kemal, was removed and never again took place in any history textbook of the Republic. I tried to show how the 1953 edition of Karal’s *History of the Turkish Republic* reflects the state’s response to a number of converging political developments within and outside of Turkey in the aftermath of the WW II. I argued that it is a particularly significant textbook through which one can catch a glimpse of the state’s response to the post-Holocaust world order in reference to the abandoned property of the Armenians.

In conclusion, I tried to highlight the significance and the ramifications of the silence of the national education in Turkey about the history of the WW II, whose mention was completely removed from the books after the 80s. Before the 80s, there existed a narrative limited to a few details of diplomatic affairs of the period; this narrative too was silent of the genocides of the WW2. I tried to underline the fact that the total absence of reckoning with the world-historical violence of the war – the

⁸⁷⁵ See Emin Oktay, *Tarih II Ortaçağ* (İstanbul Remzi Kitabevi, 1952), 91; Emin Oktay, *Tarih Lise II* (İstanbul:Atlas Kitabevi, 1987), 137.

genocide of the European Jews and Gypsies- and with the normative changes that were born out of the catastrophe of this war should be regarded as an iceberg into which Turkey keeps crashing with its dismal human rights record.

Chapter 8: Atatürk, the Committee of Union and Progress, and the Memory of 1915

8.1.Introduction

On 4 March 2009, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House of Representatives has approved a resolution stating that Armenians were the victims of genocide in 1915. On March 5, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu held a live news conference for 30 minutes in Ankara, aired by the Turkish TV channels. The first 13 minutes of the press conference was speech, the rest was spared for the Q&A session. “A judgement was made about a nation,” so began Davutoğlu. He was firm and defiant. And in the first three minutes of his speech he underlined what the memory of “1915” meant for modern Turkey. Davutoğlu for the past few years has been emphasizing the importance of a “just memory” in the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. In this speech too he first indicated the gravity of the population flows from the Balkans and from Caucasia. As for 1915, “its significance may be in the deportation for the Armenians,” Davutoğlu said, and continued,

for us, 1915 is at the same time Canakkale (*Dardanelles*). It is year a nation has been in a great struggle to defend its continuity (*bir milletin bekasiyla ilgili buyuk bir savunma cabasi için de oldugu bir yildir*). There have been events of great sorrow in Anatolia...but only in Anatolia?...After all the sorrows, the message Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who was a Commander in that war, has sent to the mothers of the Anzac is the message of the Turkish nation: ‘Rest assured, we treasure your sons (*evlatlariniz bizim bagrimizdadir*). Having lost their lives in these lands they now have become our sons.’ This is how we look at history.⁸⁷⁶

As Davutoğlu spoke, NTV posted his words, “for us, 1915 is at the same time Canakkale,” as supers on the screen (see Figure 28). They remained posted for about

⁸⁷⁶ My translation. See the video of the press conference of the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on *NTVMSNBC*, 5 March 2010, <http://video.ntvmsnbc.com/#v247035003204191033192192125128210000250112127251>



Figure 1: 5 March 2010, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's Live Press Conference in Ankara. Screenshot from the video of the event from NTVMSNBC's site. The supers on the screen to the right of Davutoğlu writes, "For the Armenians 1915 may be the deportation, for us it is Canakkale."

2 minutes. This was the first 3 minutes of his speech, in the rest of which he elaborated on the Turkish –American and Turkey-Armenia relations. In response to a question during the Q&A session, he said "this, first of all, for us, is an issue of national honor."

There were two remarkable movements within the first 3 minutes of Davutoğlu's speech and I argue the particular location of their articulation within the sequence of the press conference fortifies their significance. First, Davutoğlu anchored the meaning of "1915 for the Turkish nation in the legendary Dardanelles

(Gallipoli) defense during the Great War. As one of the most prominent leaders and policy strategists of an Islamic government that has been openly against Atatürk's legacy of secularism in Turkey, he instantly associated Dardanelles victory, and hence the memory of "1915" for the "Turkish nation," with "Ghazi" Mustafa Kemal. He then expressed Turkish nation's moral approach to history and historical issues once again anchoring them in the compassion for a common humanity articulated by none other than Mustafa Kemal when he had addressed the mothers of the Anzac.

Davutoğlu did not say "Mustafa Kemal" during his speech; he said "Ghazi Mustafa Kemal." Ghazi means Muslim warrior fighting for Islam. Mustafa Kemal had cooperated with various religious leaders during the war against Greece and he accepted the title "Ghazi" that was given to him by the National Assembly in 1921 (during the War of Independence). He did not hesitate to use this title until the end of his life despite the uncompromising secularist elan of his regime and legacy. What we observe in Davutoğlu's speech is an ideologically repositioned "Mustafa Kemal"-given AKP's approach to Atatürk and the Atatürk cult in the Turkish political culture— epitomizing the memory of "1915" for the Turkish nation. Davutoğlu not only defined "1915" with "Ghazi Mustafa Kemal", he also anchored the morality of Turkish nation's historical consciousness in the dignity of Mustafa Kemal, in the compassion for humanity articulated and embodied by Mustafa Kemal. The speech signals that in the new era of Turkish-Armenian relations managed by AKP, Mustafa Kemal – albeit, an ideologically repositioned one whose Muslim identity will be foregrounded with his "Ghazi" title, with his memory encompassing the best glories of

an “oppressed people” from Gallipoli to War of Independence - would continue to be the embodiment of “national honor.”

What I will argue in this section is that the entanglement of 1915 with Atatürk’s memory resting on the “Gallipoli” trope as articulated by Davutoğlu is the visible tip of an iceberg that has been floating in the cold waters of the unofficial memories. As I have emphasized in Chapter 5 where I deconstructed Atatürk’s discourse on the Armenians and the Armenian issue, Kemal took no part in the genocide of 1915. As Perry Anderson put it, he was one of history’s most striking examples of ‘moral luck’. He was a member of the CUP, but by accident of military appointments, his hands were clean of the deportations and massacres of Armenians.

Until the end of 1915, he was in Gallipoli. He never belonged to the central command of the CUP. In fact, this is precisely why he was approached by the Unionists for the leadership of the national resistance movement as early as December 1918. He fitted the bill more so than others because he was trusted as a Unionist but not too closely involved either with the ruling clique of Enver and Talat or the Armenian massacres. And it is true that *Nutuk*, written in 1927, constitutes a reckoning with the legacy of the Unionists and their policies during the Great War. Mustafa Kemal denounces the leaders of the Committee and Union and Progress on its very first page. He does not name them, but he identifies them as “those who had driven the people and the country into the general conflict,” and who “had fled and cared for nothing but their own safety.” Clearly Mustafa Kemal draws a line between the ruling clique of the Committee of Union and Progress and the rest of the Committee of Union and Progress.

On the other hand, the biographies of the orthodox Kemalist tradition all present Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the real founder of the Committee of Union and Progress and the spiritual founder of the revolution of 1908. Nowhere does this conviction come alive more powerfully than a memoir dictated to Afet İnan by Atatürk : ‘The essence of the universal and the historical, the 1908 Revolution, should be searched in Doctor Mustafa’s home in Damascus.’⁸⁷⁷ The anecdote implies that Atatürk was the founder of the first revolutionary society that organized the 1908 revolution, which would then become the CUP.⁸⁷⁸ Turkish schoolbooks too, as we will see in this chapter, suggested that Atatürk was the real founder of the CUP (at least until 1980) and sustained a bridge between Atatürk and the Young Turk Revolution, albeit in some narrative complexity that will be deconstructed.

What concerns this Epilogue is not whether Atatürk was real the founder of CUP or not. Whether he really played a significant role in the emergence of this organization and the 1908 revolution does not concern it either. What rather concerns this Epilogue is the nature of the relationship between the CUP and Atatürk from a politics of memory perspective. Can modern Turkey come to terms with the crimes orchestrated by the CUP while Atatürk’s memory remains so entangled with it? In this section, I will try to work through this entanglement, once again, turning to the history textbooks of the new Republic.

⁸⁷⁷ Dr. Mustafa Canbolat’s home in Damascus where Mustafa Kemal founded *Vatan ve Hürriyet* .

⁸⁷⁸ Afet İnan, *Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1959), 49. Please note that this was published in 1937 before Atatürk died in the TTK’s journal *Belleten*. The citation under the anecdote reads as ‘Belleten: 1937, Cilt I, Sayı 2 S290-309.’

8.2. *History III & IV (1931)*

In the post-Great Speech (1927) climate clarified of the last remnants of Ittihadist opposition, the narratives on the founding history of the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress written under the supervision of Mustafa Kemal entangle the memory of the liberal Young Turks with that of the ‘revolutionary Armenian committees’. According to *History III*, some Young Turks who were in Paris allied with the Armenian revolutionary committees and went as far as to demand Western intervention, while others had rejected any alliance with the Armenians and western intervention. Because of this, *History III* argues, the Young Turks in Europe had split in ‘1900’. It is interesting that Yusuf Akçura, the author of *History III*, gets the date wrong with no reference to The First Congress of Ottoman Liberals in 1902.

The Young Turk movement by 1902 was fractured along radically different ideological lines and leadership struggles became evident at the first Congress of Ottoman Liberals. Hanioglu defines this as ‘one of the momentous events in the life of the Young Turk movement’ and as a ‘pivotal meeting in the history of the CUP’⁸⁷⁹. The main rift was between Ahmet Riza and Prince Sabahattin, one of the sons of Damat Mahmut Celalettin Pasha. Ahmet Riza had been tending towards an ‘Ottoman-Muslim nationalism’ and centralism and he was vehemently opposed to foreign interference in the affairs of the Empire; he was also against the use of violence and force in reinstating the constitution. Prince Sabahattin, on the other hand, favored a minimal, decentralized government in support of free enterprise and private initiative

⁸⁷⁹ Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 173. For the analysis of the Congress, see Chapter 8 in the same book, pp.173-199.

and he was not adverse to foreign commercial and political influence in the Empire if it would promote development. He was not adverse to use of force to topple Abdulhamid and throughout his political career he maintained his alliances with the Armenians knowing how important their backing was for his leadership to attract Europe's attention. In the congress where the Empire's Jews were represented by one delegate, and where 'Greek' delegates had very little to do with the Ottoman Turkey or Ottoman Greeks, Armenians with the participation of the two most prominent Armenian political committees –Dashnaktsutiun and Verakazmial (Reformed) Hnchakian- had the most powerful representation followed by the Albanians. In fact, the Armenian issue received a prominent representation in the congress allied with Prince Sabahaddin's liberals. Immediately after the congress, the European press was applauding Sabahaddin's Faction as the 'individuals of the day'.⁸⁸⁰

The congress (and even its sequel in 1907, the Second Congress of Ottoman Liberals) and its vibrant politics on the ground sheds a bright light on the Turkish nationalist historiography that indiscriminately reified Armenians as 'terrorists', 'revolutionaries', 'murderers', 'fifth columns.' The 1902 congress shows that there existed in the Empire some Young Turks who supported Armenian causes and others who negotiated with them despite their nationalist impulses. The Congress, in short, reminds us of one golden era of *politics* between the Ottoman Turks and the Ottoman Armenians only six years after more than a hundred thousand Armenians were slaughtered by the Abdulhamid II's Hamidiyeh regiments and only a decade before the Armenian population was driven into the deserts of death.

⁸⁸⁰ Hanioglu, *Young Turks in Opposition*, 199.

The absence of any reference to this historic conference in *History III* once again drives the Armenians and Armenian political committees out of the history and the politics of the Empire. Any alliance with the Armenians and with the Armenian committees is presented as a seditious act wrapped in rhetoric of disdain. Armenians and their political parties travel through these narratives as enemies seeking opportunities to backstab the Turkish nation from time immemorial.

The Young Turks who were in Europe were only busy with propaganda, *History III* continues. Their program could be summarized with the reincarnation of the *Mithat Pasha Constitution*⁸⁸¹:

Those Young Turks who didn't carefully examine the recent European history and follow the developments there were explaining the shortcomings of its execution in Sultan's ideals to revive despotism and were still dreaming that the different Ottoman subject peoples could mix and make a nation even at the beginning of the 20th century.⁸⁸²

History III, through its criticism of those dreamy Young Turks who wished to revive the Mithat Pasha Constitution, asserts that there was no way to live together with the Armenians. Others who didn't get involved with the Armenians and who opposed western intervention, on the other hand, was called *Terakki ve Ittihat Cemiyeti* (Progress and Union Committee, CPU); these had no serious influence within the Empire. Here, *History III* contempt is directed towards the faction of Prince Sabahaddin's liberals.

Meanwhile, as *History III* narrates, Mustafa Kemal had founded a 'secret committee to change the regime' in Damascus and it was named as '*Vatan ve Hürriyet*

⁸⁸² *Tarih III Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri (1931-1941)* (İstanbul : Kaynak Yayınları, 2005), 297.

Cemiyeti'. 'In order to disseminate the activities of the Committee in Rumelia' he opened a branch of this organization in Salonika. Then, 'upon the advice of someone who came from Paris, the name of this organization was changed to 'Terakki ve Ittihat'(Progress and Union). But after this Committee was institutionalized among the military personnel particularly in Syria, Beyrut, Haifa and Jerusalem, Mustafa Kemal came back to Macedonia and found the opportunity to get involved with committee's operations. *History III* emphasizes in italicized letters that 'this operation continued until the Constitutional Revolution and after the Revolution for a while as well. During the Revolution, the words were shuffled and *Ittihat ve Terakki* (Union and Progress) became common.⁸⁸³ Thus, *History III* confidently establishes for the children of the Kemalist Republic that the 'Union and Progress', which was so influential in the making of 1908 Revolution, originated from the Vatan ve Hürriyet (Fatherland and Liberty) founded by Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa Kemal's biography in *History IV* repeats these arguments with some minor narrative changes.⁸⁸⁴

However, '*Mustafa Kemal Bey believed in the necessity of great and radical change in the country. He had determined his destination by then,*' writes *History III*. In order to reconcile the fact that Mustafa Kemal did not play a prominent role in the politics of the era after 1908, a new narrative is presented: He advocated that the military that brought about the Constitutional revolution had to go back to its original position and shouldn't have been involved with anything else other than the defense of the fatherland – particularly not with politics. *History III* writes that his opinions

⁸⁸³ *Tarih III Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri*, 298.

⁸⁸⁴ *Tarih IV Kemalist Eğitim in Tarih Dersleri*, 18.

differed from those of the CUP leaders. After various struggles, as the argument goes, Mustafa Kemal withdrew from the endless daily political rows and preferred to remain as an officer ‘within the Turkish army.’

History III continues to assert Mustafa Kemal’s farsightedness in the domestic politics of the post-revolution era. During this period, CUP, which fundamentally comprised Turks, went on conflicting with the national parties of the Greeks, Armenians, Arabs, Albanians, often letting the army interfere as well. “Thus a very dangerous era opened in which the army was meddling with the political affairs.” The fights which broke in the parliament between the nationalities overwhelmed the boundaries of parliamentary politics and thus in the Empire “Albanian, Armenian, Arab and even Kurdish issues” emerged. The CUP, *History III* reveals, mobilized military troops against the Albanians and the Armenians; it repressed the Armenian revolts with much violence (*Ermeni ayaklanmalarini cok siddetle bastirdi*). ‘As we see,’ *History III* asserts, emphasizing the teleological farsightedness of the Mustafa Kemal, the ideals of Ottomanism only served to foment more hatred among the different nationalities and by 1912 Muslims who were not Turks had also launched their national independence struggles. *History III*’s point is that CUP failed to see something Mustafa Kemal had seen long time ago and chased an impossible dream; they were too late in taking Turkish nationalist politics seriously and they could finally see this after the Balkan wars. They began to take some interest in Turkish nationalism but they hesitated to adopt it seriously: They tested Islamism with Albanians and couldn’t abandon Ottomanism altogether since the Central Committee of the party was accepting Armenian, Greek, Arab and Wallachian members until the collapse of the

Empire: ‘In short, Union and Progress was carried away by banal opportunism (*idareimaslahat*) and could not determine its direction definitively.’⁸⁸⁵ That Union and Progress was not decisive in its secularism....that they were inexperienced, ignorant of the world developments, they ruined the economy even more than Abdulhamid with their ‘exclusively empirical’ and practical approach to economics, they were so wrong in rushing the Empire into the war....*History III* goes on and on.

This criticism –its scope and the details it engages with- launched against the CUP in *History III* was discontinued in the subsequent history textbooks of the Republic written after the passing of Mustafa Kemal.⁸⁸⁶ As Karal removed the Nutuk’s explanations on the Armenian deportations in his 1944 version of *History IV – History of the Turkish Republic (1918-1944)*, Mansel et al.’s *History I,II, III* written in the early 40s also made peace with Turkey’s Unionist past (see below). In no other textbook of the Republic after *History III* the Unionists were criticized with so much elaboration as conveyed in *History III*. Karal was one of the co-authors of the new *History I, II, III* of which Mansel was the lead author, as we have seen above.

As the following analysis will convey, the history textbooks, mostly reform history textbooks that were written after Mustafa Kemal’s death mention that Mustafa Kemal disagreed with some members of the Union and Progress on the issue of military’s meddling with politics (within the sections on Mustafa Kemal’s biography), but they never engage in the criticism of the Union and Progress beyond that. Even Enver Pasha’s Sarikamis defeat is usually explained away with the harshness of winter

⁸⁸⁵ *Tarih III Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri*, 304.

⁸⁸⁶ The change in rhetorics was immediately visible in the new textbooks Ali Müfid Mansel wrote in 1942. See Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 173-174.

conditions and epidemics⁸⁸⁷, and beginning with the books written by the mid-1990s, Enver pasha's commitment to 'Turanism' is explained in a very 'objective' way and in the end, it is mentioned that he was 'martyred' in Turkistan in 1922.⁸⁸⁸ A picture of him always ornaments these sections, signaling a revival of Enver Pasha adoration in Turkish schoolbooks in the post-1990s.

History III had severely criticizes both Enver pasha's Sarikamis expedition and Cemal Pasha's Suez expedition during the War, attributing both to their recklessness and incompetency: 'The catastrophes these two generals caused could not be compensated until the end.'⁸⁸⁹ While the book emphasizes that the timing for the Empire's entry to the Great War was inappropriate and it is highly critical of the German role in this, the heroism of the Ottoman armies in Dardanelles and in all the other theaters of war is celebrated with vivid examples. The catastrophe that befell Armenians is never mentioned in these final pages of *History III* – an issue to be carefully and strategically contained in *History IV*. The volume is also in total silence on Talat Pasha, whose name is never mentioned in relation to any events narrated in the book. The unique resilience of the 'Turkish nation' in the Great War, however, is fervently celebrated before the articles of the Sevr Treaty are summarized:

In the Great War, the Ottoman Empire mobilized *nearly 4 million* soldiers and almost a million and a half of this could be employed at the fronts. *In other words, the greatest regular army of Turkish history had been deployed.* During the war, the Ottoman loss was *near one and a half million*. If all the events of the Ottoman history narrated so far are considered, the extraordinariness of this success is understood and what a fascinating power of life Turkish nation has is appreciated with great pride.

⁸⁸⁷ For instance see Emin Oktay, *Tarih III* (1985), 263; Mükerrrem Kamil Su and Ahmet Mumcu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi*, 13; Nevin Ergezer, *Lise için Tarih II*, 85. ; Yıldız-Alptekin- Şahin-Bostan, *Tarih Lise 3*(1990), 193.

⁸⁸⁸ See for instance Kopraman et al., *Tarih II* (1995), 71; Kopraman et al., *Tarih 2* (2003), 78.

⁸⁸⁹ *Tarih III Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri*, 308.

The source for this power of life is the historical existence of the Turkish nation for 120 centuries.[History III's italics]⁸⁹⁰

8.3.Mansel et al. - *History III* (1942- late 40s)

As Mansel's volumes clearly illustrate, after Mustafa Kemal died, the criticism of the Ittihadist cadres (especially Enver Pasha) and of the Empire's entry to the First World War disappeared from the history textbooks. That a German-Turkish alliance pact was signed with the eager endorsement of Enver and Talat Pashas is relayed but it is not put in a negative light with arguments on German opportunism as it was done in *History III* of the Kemalist cadres. However, the enthusiastic narratives on the heroic Turkish performance during the Great War ensues in *Mansel et al.* as well; like *History III*, Mansel's Volume 3 (*Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar Tarihi*) too acknowledges with great pride that after Turks entered the war, they have drawn the forces of the Entente to Dardanelles, Caucasia and Egypt, and this way they exhausted Russia and caused the Russian revolution. The textbook also mentions that, thanks to the Turks, Germans have been very successful in the Western frontier. Both the French and the British were defeated by Mustafa Kemal's powerful defense in Dardanelles. While Turks were launching these great defenses with great success, many other nations and the United States joined the Entente and they ended up losing the war when Germans could not endure the new Entente armies. Mansel et al. , as opposed to *History III*, discusses neither Enver Pasha's catastrophic Caucasian offensive nor Cemal's Egypt expedition, which was also a failure.⁸⁹¹

⁸⁹⁰ *Tarih III Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri*, 308-309.

⁸⁹¹ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar Tarihi*, 164.

Compared to that of *History IV*, Mansel's narrative on the relationship between Mustafa Kemal and the Committee of Union and Progress can be considered slightly more ambiguous, but in the final analysis, his narrative too implies that Mustafa Kemal is the founder of the 'Union and Progress' that actualized the Constitutional Revolution of 1908: He first founded *Vatan ve Hürriyet* (Fatherland and Freedom Society), then opened a branch in Salonika. At the time that he was not in Salonika, his society began to operate under the name 'Union and Progress' and it was this society that forced Abdulhamid to restore the Constitution.⁸⁹²

In conclusion, Mansel's textbooks dramatically break contact with *History IV* with regards to the critical narratives on the Union and Progress. While *History IV* interprets the shifting politics of the party between Turkism, Ottomanism, and Islamism as 'banal opportunism', Mansel deploys a more defensive rhetoric: Although Ittihadists took Turkism very seriously, it is argued, they could not completely abandon Ottomanism and Islamism in order to save the state from collapse; they could not find the time to execute their party program, they had to deal with domestic unrest and wars in great scale.⁸⁹³ Mansel openly defends the Ittihadist leadership. With these textbooks, modern Turkey makes peace with its Unionist past in the context of national education.

8.4. Karal's *History of the Turkish Republic* (1944-1980)

In the new 'History IV' written by Karal in 1944, Mustafa Kemal's relations with the Committee of Union and Progress is presented in a much more simplified

⁸⁹² Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 173-174.

⁸⁹³ Mansel et al., *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar*, 173-174.

way. That he first founded *Vatan ve Hürriyet Cemiyeti* (Fatherland and Freedom Society) in 1906, and then for the branch he opened in Salonika ‘someone from Paris’ recommended that it should be named ‘Progress and Union’ and then during the 1908 revolution it came to be known as the ‘Union and Progress Committee’ etc...- the main plot in *History III* (which is a little compressed in History IV)- are never mentioned. Karal simply mentions that Mustafa Kemal was transferred to a military mission in Salonika in 1907 and there he has ‘done great services in the Committee of Union and Progress.’⁸⁹⁴ Karal, in other words, neither implies nor asserts that Kemal was *the founder* of the Committee of Union and Progress; but does not burn the bridge either. He does mention that Mustafa Kemal’s opinions significantly differed from those of ‘his friends’; Mustafa Kemal thought more foundational reforms were needed and the military had to stay out of politics. Therefore, he left politics and dedicated himself to military affairs only, Karal concludes.

When the Great War broke out, Kemal informed the ‘concerned parties’ (read: Enver Pasha and top leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress) that ‘our entry to the war was rushed’ and that the result would be costly for the Entente. In all of his missions except for Dardanelles, that are Hicaz, Caucasian front and Bagdat, he identified military-strategic problems; he informed the ‘concerned authorities’ (once again, read: Enver Pasha) and / or German generals but his recommendations were disregarded and many of these missions resulted in various calamities, writes Karal. In this narrative, Mustafa Kemal’s tensions with Enver Pasha in the army or other Unionist leaders are covered up by Karal with expressions like ‘concerned parties’ or

⁸⁹⁴ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1944)*, 10.

‘concerned authorities’. His criticisms on the military affairs of the Empire during the Great War are contained and framed by his criticism of the Germans. This way, Mustafa Kemal moves into the ‘War of Independence’ narrative as a Unionist / CUP member, notwithstanding some disagreements between him and ‘his friends.’ Karal’s 1944 textbook too affirms that after Mustafa Kemal died in 1938, modern Turkey made peace with the Unionists; in years and decades to come the relations re-organized in the textual universe of the history textbooks would only get better.

In the 1953 edition of Karal’s book⁸⁹⁵, the narrative on the Committee of Union and Progress within Mustafa Kemal’s biography gets a slight revision. Karal in this edition inserts a statement that Mustafa Kemal founded *Vatan ve Hürriyet*, then opened a branch of *Vatan* in Salonika and then during the declaration of the Constitutional revolution, *Vatan* took the name ‘*İttihat ve Terakki*’⁸⁹⁶. In other words, the revised 1953 edition clearly projects Mustafa Kemal as the founder of *İttihat ve Terakki* in line with *History III* and *History IV* written under the supervision of Mustafa Kemal in 1931. Thus, in Karal’s reform history books, in the absence of any criticism of the CUP leadership as conveyed in *History III*, ‘the Committee of Union and Progress’ - the party whose top leadership was responsible for the Armenian massacres and deportations - quietly slides into the narrative of the War of Independence and the Republican era in the shadow of Mustafa Kemal. No information is provided on the confiscation of the party or top leadership’s persecution

⁸⁹⁵ What I call as the ‘1953 edition’ is *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1953)*. The first edition was *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1944)*. Karal also had a third edition which remained in circulation until 1980: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1965)*.

⁸⁹⁶ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1918-1965)*, 15.

by the Allied courts or their escape from the country and their assassinations. Until 1980, this trend continues.

What is interesting is that during the years 1953 edition of Karal's 'History IV' was in circulation, Akşit/Oktaç's *History III* was telling yet another version of the 'origin' story for the CUP: MK founded 'Vatan ve Hürriyet' in Damascus, he opened other branches in Haifa and Salonika. While he was doing his own political work, 'Progress and Union' was shaken (we are not told what exactly 'Progress and Union' was and why it was shaken) and one day, while he wasn't in Selanika, 'two societies merged' and changed their name to 'Union and Progress.' On the one hand this version suggests that there was a separate society called 'Union and Progress', on the other hand it is presented in such an ambiguous fashion that Mustafa Kemal's 'Vatan ve Hürriyet' dominates the narrative; his founding role is implied although not stressed with clarity.

Between 1950 and 1980, there were three other authors whose reform history textbook *History of the Turkish Republic* have been in circulation on and off for the high school students. Mukerrem Kamil Su (whose textbook would become the main Reform History textbook of the 80s through 21st century) in the 50s, Enver Behnan Sapolyo in the 60s and 70s and Neriman Serdarlar in the late 70s all produced *History of Turkish Republic* textbooks in Turkey. None of these textbooks suggest that Mustafa Kemal was the founder of the Union and Progress. Mukerrem Kamil Su and Neriman Serdarlar assert that Kemal broke contact with the *Union and Progress* after the 1908 revolution because of the disagreements with the top leadership on the military's involvement in politics. Sapolyo, would technically be included in the

orthodox Kemalist tradition, does not assert any conclusions of this sort; he was in the War of Independence and he had heard autobiographical accounts from MK.⁸⁹⁷ In the final analysis, however, considering the endurance and the authority of Karal's and Akşit/Oktay's books in Turkey between the 50s and 80s, Mustafa Kemal remains the founder of the Committee of Union and Progress.

8.5. Conclusion

Talat Pasha, who was the Minister of Interior during the Great War and was one of the chief architects of the destruction of Ottoman Armenians, was assassinated in Berlin in 1921 by Soghomon Teghlian, an Armenian Revolutionary Federation member from Erzurum. His remains were transferred to Turkey in 1943 with a military ceremony and were buried to Abide-i Hürriyet Monument, which is a war cemetery (*şehitlik*) located in a central Istanbul town, Sisli (Figure 29, 32, 33). In the official webpage of Sisli Municipality which has Mustafa Kemal's small photo on the top right handside of the page, the Monument-Cemetery is spared its own webpage; photos and brief biographies of various CUP members buried there are also provided.

⁸⁹⁷ See Zurcher, *Unionist Factor*, 27. Zurcher, includes Sapolyo in his list for those who reproduced the traditional biography on Mustafa Kemal. I have not checked his book titled 'Atatürk' but in the *History of the Turkish Republic* textbooks he wrote he does not claim that Mustafa Kemal founded the CUP. He does not imply any links either. According to Sapolyo, on the other hand, Kemal founds *Vatan ve Hürriyet* in Syria, opens its branches in Haifa and Salonika, when he comes to Salonika, he joins Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti (Ottoman Freedom Society), which then takes name, *İttihat ve Terakki*. Kemal, then begins to criticize the Ittihadist leaders on the military and politics issue. Sapolyo does not assert any conclusions on whether Kemal left the Committee or not. His narrative cÖnce ntrates on his military achievements. In Su's account, Mustafa Kemal founds *Vatan ve Hürriyet* with four other close friends in Syria, then opens a branch in Salonika, and later Vatan joins the *İttihat ve Terakki* that has been clandestinely operating in Salonika. Kemal, however, disagrees with the leadership of *İttihat ve Terakki* especially on the issue of military's involvement in politics, therefore he leaves the Committee. Finally, a transitional reform history textbook written by Neriman Serdarlar and Fahriye Cetinkanat before the 1980 military coup, Kemal founds the *Vatan ve Hürriyet*, opens a branch in Salonika but by the time he came to Salonika, all his friends had already joined the *Union and Progress*, so he did. However, since he thought it was dangerous for the military to get involved in politics, he broke contact with the society and dedicated himself to military affairs.

The biography of Talat Pasha writes that “Adolf Hitler, in order to strengthen the Turkish-German relationship, made a special gesture and sent Talat Pasha’s coffin on 25 February 1943 to Turkey. Talat Pasha’s funeral was held with a military ceremony and he was buried 50 meters to the right of Abide-i Hürriyet Monument.” (See Figure 30). The bloody shirt he was wearing when he was assassinated is currently on display in Istanbul Military Museum. The photo of it is also presented in the internet page of Turkish Armed Forces General Staff (See Figure 34, 35). Enver Pasha is also buried at the same site located at center of Istanbul (Figure 32).

As I tried to highlight in this *Epilogue*, after Mustafa Kemal died, the new history textbooks written in 1942 removed all the critical references to the Unionist leadership from their texts planted by Mustafa Kemal in the post-*Nutuk* climate. This, I argue, yields implications for Turkey’s memory politics: Because of the significance of the 1908 Revolution for the Young Turks, Mustafa Kemal in the orthodox historiography was always presented as the spiritual founder of the Committee of Union and Progress. In the majority of the textbooks analyzed in this *Epilogue* through 1980s, Mustafa Kemal remains the founder or the spiritual father of the Committee of Union and Progress even if he played no role during or after the Revolution. The disagreements he had with the Unionist leadership are always mentioned in the textbooks, but nonetheless his charismatic and authoritative memory remains profoundly entangled with that of the CUP even though he had nothing to do with the Armenian deportations. This ‘memory’ was passionately engineered by himself during his lifetime, and perhaps this will account for its endurance in decades to come.

Meanwhile, the murderous leadership of the CUP continues to be revered in modern Turkey despite the fact that every time genocide allegations are raised, one of the golden arguments of official Turkey is that the Republic is a new state, it has nothing to do with the Empire. What cultural work are the museums of the leaders of the CUP doing in the middle of Istanbul? In fact, even Adolf Hitler is memorialized with gratitude for “making a special gesture” and sending their remains to Turkey....

“Thank you, Hitler.”

Figure 8.2: Screenshot from <http://www.sisli.gov.tr/yedeksite/abide.html>

***Harbiye Nazırı Enver Paşa**

Tarih, 4 Ağustos 1922. Yer, Belçivan. Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası yurtdışına çıkan İttihatçılardan biri de Enver Paşa'ydı. Avrupa'da birkaç ülkede kaldıktan sonra son durağı Rusya oldu. Bolşeviklerle anlaşamadı. 4 Ağustos 1922'de Belçivan yakınlarında Kızılordu'yla çarpışırken, mitralyözlerin üzerine elinde kılıç atıyla yürüdü. Aslında yaptığının intihar olduğunu o da biliyordu. Yıllar sonra ölüm yıldönümünde 4 Ağustos 1996 tarihinde naaşı Tacikistan/Çeğen Köyü'ndeki mezarından alınıp İstanbul'a getirildi. Devlet töreniyle Talat Paşa'nın mezarının yanına defnedildi.

***Sadrazam Talat Paşa**

Tarih, 15 Mart 1921. Yer, Berlin. Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında Almanya'ya gitmek zorunda kalan İttihatçı lider Talat Paşa, tütün almak için sabah saatlerinde evinden çıktı. Hardenberg Caddesi'nde 100 metre yürümüşü ki, İran'dan gelen 24 yaşındaki Ermeni terörist Sogomon Tayleryan tarafından vurularak öldürüldü. Üzerinden "Mehmed Sai" adına düzenlenmiş sahte kimlik çıktı. Talat Paşa'nın cenazesi uzun yıllar Türkiye'ye getirilemedi. Yıllarca bir kilise mezarlığında sahipsiz kaldı. Adolf Hitler, Türk-Alman ilişkilerini kuvvetlendirmek için özel bir jest yapıp Talat Paşa'nın naaşını 25 Şubat 1943 tarihinde Türkiye'ye gönderdi. Talat Paşa'nın cenazesi askeri törenle, Abide-i Hürriyet Anıtı'nın sağ yanındaki 50 metre uzaklığa defnedildi.

Figure 8.3: Screengrab from <http://www.sisli.gov.tr/yedeksite/abide.html>



Figure 2: Enver Pasha's Mausoleum in Istanbul. Screengrab from <http://www.sisli.gov.tr/yedeksite/abide.html>



Figure 8.5: Talat Pasha's mausoleum in Istanbul. Screenshot from <http://www.sisli.gov.tr/yedeksite/abide.html>



Figure 8.6: Abide-i Hürriyet Monument in Sisli, Istanbul where Talat and Enver Pashas mausoleums are located.

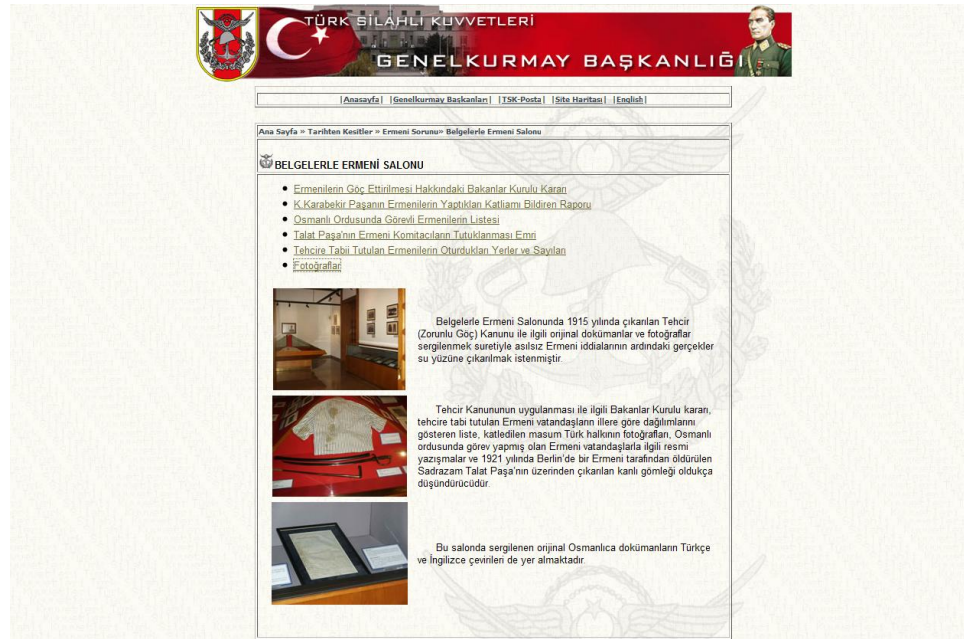


Figure 8.7: Screenshot of the webpage “Armenian Saloon with Documents” in website of Turkish Armed Forces Turkish General Staff at http://www.tsk.tr/8_TARIHTEN_KESITLER/8_1_Ermeni_Sorunu/konular/belgerle_ermen_i_salonu.htm



Figure 8.8: The photograph of Talat Pasha’s bloody shirt displayed on the webpage of Turkish Staff General at http://www.tsk.tr/8_TARIHTEN_KESITLER/8_1_Ermeni_Sorunu/konular/belgerle_ermen_i_salonu.htm

CONCLUSION

Modern Turkey's entry to the inter-war period coincided with an emergent "Republican visual culture": Paintings depicting scenes of Kemalist cultural revolution, posters of national industry, and the photographs of *La Turquie Kemaliste*, as Bozdoğan argues, have been instrumental in establishing modernism as an aesthetic discourse:

Unveiled women working next to clean-shaven men in educational and professional settings, healthy children and young people in school uniforms, the modern architecture of public buildings in republican Ankara and other major cities, the spectacular performances of the national theater, symphony orchestra, opera, and ballet, and proud scenes of agriculture, railroads, factories, and dams are among the most familiar images. Not only have these been charged with a civilizing agency for the greater part of Turkey's republican history, but they have also come to set the official standards of exterior form and behavior against which people, ideas, events have been measured and judged.⁸⁹⁸

During this period, under Atatürk's leadership Turkey had underwent countless Western reforms. By 1924, the education was completely secularized; all the religious colleges were abolished. Religion was taken under state control; in 1928, the clause which made Islam the state religion of Turkey was removed from the constitution. Religious symbols were removed from the public life; in 1925, fez was replaced by the hat, religious attire was restricted to prayer services in the mosques. In 1926, the Swiss civil code and the Italian penal code were adopted. In 1928, the Latin alphabet was adopted. By 1932, a new history had been written and debated in a national conference and it had become the mainstay of history-teaching. Equal rights were granted to women.

⁸⁹⁸ Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, ed., *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, 5; 139.

From the government to press, the schools to the army, all the ideological institutions of the state had been mobilized against battling with centuries of European scorn with triumphant narratives of Turkish civilization and history. Kemalists took propaganda seriously. Vedat Nedim Tor, Turkey's Director General of the Press, studied propaganda under Josef Goebbels who was Nazi Germany's Minister of Propaganda between 1933 and 1945. Tor, until the early 40s, has been the Editor of *La Turquie Kemaliste*, the official national publication that was in charge of disseminating the new image of Kemalist Turkey abroad in three languages. Between 1935 and 1940, Austrian photographer Othmar Pferschy travelled around the country and took pictures of modern Turkey for *La Turquie Kemaliste*.⁸⁹⁹ The enduring image of Kemalist Turkey was born during the totalitarian climate of the interwar period. The "sick man of Europe" was gone; it was now a new Turkey reengineered and embodied in the image of a European, heroic, charismatic, civilized, truly beautiful Mustafa Kemal, representing the possibilities of the future for Turkey. It was now *Kemal's Turkey*.

A cartoon published in 1908 titled "Turkey for the future" depicted a woman aviator dressed in a traditional *carsaf* (black veil), flying over a hectic urban street. Arat indicates that this 1908 vision was actualized both literally and figuratively in the early Republican period. The change, however, was much greater than could have been envisioned in the 1900s. Atatürk's adopted daughter Gökçen became the first military aviator of Turkey. "If the project of modernity aimed for a Westernizing

⁸⁹⁹ All 49 issues of *La Turquie Kemaliste* published between 1933 and 1945 are currently online: <http://www.boyut.com.tr/kemalizm/> The magazine was published in every three months in three languages: English, French, and German. The issues online are the French ones.

polity that was liberal, democratic and secular,” wrote Arat, then a “female aviator could herald all.”⁹⁰⁰ Gökçen , a project of Atatürk , epitomized the most utopian possibilities for Turkey. It was with her Turkey would take wings to the future.⁹⁰¹ Her very femininity in her military uniform was a powerful marker of Turkey’s civilizational shift on guard. Gökçen as an image, I argue, can easily be singled out as one of the most powerful visual tropes of the ethos of making a modern nation out of the ruins of an old empire. “Musa Dagh” controversy broke while these visual tropes of modernity and civilization were in the making in modern Turkey. And it became an “intense, passionate, and dangerous” controversy in the 1930s.⁹⁰²

Musa Dagh and MGM

Franz Werfel, born in 1890 in Prague, then within the realm of the Austria Hungarian empire, was the only son of a wealthy Jewish glove manufacturing family. By his 20s, he was already a celebrated poet. His 1924 drama of the Mexican Revolution, *Juarez and Maximillian*, established him as a formidable playwright. By the early 1920s, he was hailed as one of the most brilliant emerging young German language writers. The inspiration for his best known work – *Die Vierzig Tage Des Musa Dagh* (The Forty Days of Musa Dagh) published in 1933 in Germany and Austria – came during a 1929 pilgrimage to the Middle East. During a visit to a carpet-weaving plant in Damascus, for the first time he came across emaciated Armenian

⁹⁰⁰ Yeşim Arat, “The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey,” in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, eds., *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), 99.

⁹⁰¹ Arat, “The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey,” 99.

⁹⁰² David Welky, “Global Hollywood versus National Pride: The Battle to Film The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” *Film Quarterly* 59:3, 36.

children who were unable to operate the looms: “The miserable sight of some maimed and famished-looking refugee children, working in a carpet factory, gave me the final impulse to snatch from the Hades of all that was, this incomprehensible destiny of the Armenian nation,” he wrote. Damascus experience reinvigorated Werfel, according to Minasian. Within a day, he began to gather notes on the Armenian massacres; he was consumed by his encounter.⁹⁰³ During his research of British, French, German and Austrian documents about the Armenian massacres, Werfel came across an incident that described Musa Dagh (Mountain of Moses) siege, where some 5,000 Armenians held off Ottoman forces for 53 days before being rescued by French and British ships.

Werfel wrote the novel in a year, and in November 1933 it appeared in Vienna, Zurich, Leipzig, and Berlin bookstores. It was immediately hailed as Werfel’s masterpiece.⁹⁰⁴ With the rise of the Nazis, however, the same year his novel was published he was expelled from the Prussian Academy of Art. In 1934 while the Third Reich banned *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and began to burn his books, *Forty Days* made it in US bookstores. The book immediately became a best seller of 1934. On 2 December 1934, the *New York Times Book Review* gave a front-page treatment to *Musa Dagh*. So wrote Louis Kronenberg, the editor of the *Review*:

A dramatic narrative that has stirring emotional forces...a story of men accepting the fate of heroes and the task of supermen...If Hollywood does not mar and mishandle it, it should make a magnificent movie....It is concerned with a moment in history still so close to us and with two races whose enmity has become such a byword – the subtler hate on the Turks’ part for a race of superior culture....⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰³ Edward Minasian, *Musa Dagh* (Cold River Studio, 2007).

⁹⁰⁴ Minasian, *Musa Dagh*, 62.

⁹⁰⁵ Minasian, *Musa Dagh*, 68.

An American film about the Turks slaughtering what was perceived to be “a race of a superior culture” comprised of “heroes” and “supermen”: Kronenberg’s praise was perhaps the harbinger of why *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* would disturb the ruling Kemalists so much. It would be a bombshell on the visual ethos of *La Turquie Kemaliste* that was carefully being choreographed for both domestic and international audiences with its unveiled women, clean-shaven men in educational and professional settings, modern Ankara, modern architecture, national theater, symphony, opera, ballet, proud scenes of agriculture, railroads, factories, dams and Gökçen, all in the earnest pursuit of the West, all in the image of Mustafa Kemal.

In December 1933, twelve months before Werfel’s novel was published in the US, MGM was alerted to the novel’s sweeping success in the European bookstores. The Culver City studio was already sent a synopsis of the book that emphasized the Musa Dagh resistance against an Ottoman government determined to cleanse itself of its Armenian subjects. In May 1934, MGM bought the motion picture rights of *Musa Dagh* for five years. J.Robert Rubin, MGM’s legal counsel was not easy about the project, and he advised that the filming of *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* be approached with caution, “it is quite possible that Turks will have the picture withdrawn in every territory...unless your diplomatic and consular services in conjunction with the state department use a vigorous attitude...I think you must be told of how dangerous this question of nationalism has become,” he warned.

In the meantime, a few days before the novel was released in the US, an erroneous news item stating that Paramount Pictures was to make a movie of *The Forty Days* had alarmed the Turkish Embassy in Washington. This provoked the

Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Munir Ertegun Bey to meet with Wallace Murray, chief of Near Eastern affairs for the secretary of state, to express his concerns about the proposed movie. The ambassador “earnestly hoped that Paramount would desist from presenting any such picture, which could only give a distorted version of the alleged massacres”⁹⁰⁶ and that would stir up anti-Turkish feelings in the United States.

Mehmet Munir Bey had been in the Turkish War of Independence, he had attended the Lausanne deliberations as a legal counsel and in 1920 he had prepared a report on the Armenian activities and the state rationale for the deportations. According to the report he had penned, Armenians had turned the country “into a bomb arsenal,” they had collaborated with the enemy and engaged in massacres and atrocities and therefore made the enemies of the local population, and for this reason “it was decided that the Armenians of certain regions be relocated to other areas, that the majority of the Armenians were relocated, that in some areas the deportation decision could not be implemented well,” those who did not follow the orders were tried and punished in the Court Martial, “Armenians taking advantage of this opportunity” tried to cover up their own murders and to portray themselves as innocent, and they have been successful in their propaganda effort.” Mehmet Munir Bey, in conclusion, wrote that Armenians were “no revolutionary socialists, but in fact they follow an imperialistic policy.”⁹⁰⁷

Despite the fact that the studio assured the Turkish ambassador that there would be nothing in the movie that would offend the Turks – the entire movie was

⁹⁰⁶ Minasian, *Musa Dagh*, 97.

⁹⁰⁷ The report of Mehmet Munir Bey, Translation of “1920 BOA. HR. HU, Kr. 173/5” in *Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915-1920)* (Ankara: Turkish Prime Ministry General Directory, 1995).

going to be built up around the private life of the leader of the Armenians, the issue continued to intensify. In December 1934, Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rustu Aras intervened urging the authorities in Washington to prevent the production of the film in the US. On the basis of a newspaper article that appeared in the *Washington Herald*, Ambassador Ertegun once again contacted the Chief of Near Eastern Affairs for the Secretary of the State:

I refer to your letter of November 26th, 1934, in which you informed me that, if a film would be produced from Werfel's book, "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh," there would be nothing in which could give offense to Turkey. I see now in a Washington paper that the production of the film is underway. You will see from the enclosed clipping that the story is referred to as a matter of religious conflict between Christians and Mohammedans, and mention is made of "Turkish massacres in Armenia." Before the film is released, I think that it would be advisable to draw attention...to the interpretation given to the story by the press and to the fact that the production under such circumstances would be inopportune. I am sure that you will appreciate how much importance I place on preventing the misleading of public opinion in America through erroneous features concerning the history of my country.⁹⁰⁸

In 1935, communications between Ankara, the Turkish Embassy in Washington, the United States Department of State, the American Embassy in Turkey, the Hays Office in Hollywood and New York, MGM in Culver City and Loew's in New York increased. Turkish government had already relayed the message to MGM that if the production was not cancelled, all MGM films would be banned in Europe, and that Turkish authorities were prepared to expend every effort all over the world to prohibit the picture from being screened. MGM's market share was small in Turkey, but they did fear Turkey would convince France for a boycott as well. Werfel's book was banned in Turkey and the Turkish press had already taken up the issue and interpreted it as Armenians in America indulging in hostile Turkish propaganda.

⁹⁰⁸ Minasian, *Musa Dagh*, 100.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Ertegun was keeping the pressure on MGM's legal counsel that it was unfair to treat a question of this kind involving "Turkish honor" when only one side of the story was being told; the "fiction of Franz Werfel, presumably influenced by Armenian circles, is full of arbitrary calumnies and contempt against the Turkish people."⁹⁰⁹ Some Armenians living in Istanbul soon joined the protest and communicated their concerns to MGM and to the Armenian press in the US. So had reported Turkish daily *Cumhuriyet* (with a circulation of some 9,000 at that time) on the Istanbul Armenians' protest: "Turkish Armenian intellectuals met in their churchyard at Pangalti and placed a photo of Werfel and his book on a pile of wood shavings before a large crowd of Armenians. Ashot Kecyan, the literary contributor to the newspapers Aztar and Norlur, lighted a fire with a match...the choir of the Pangalti church and students gathered there sang the Turkish national anthem."⁹¹⁰

The convergence of the coordinated pressures of the Turkish government, attacks from the Turkish press, the need to stay in good terms with the state department and the fear of losing the French market finally crushed MGM's resistance in 1935. Even if it was just sheer market logic in the context of the market conditions after the Great Depression and the anxieties about the prospects of a new world war, the controversy conveys that the issue was "assuming very large proportions in the minds of the officials in Ankara," as the Chief of Near Eastern Affairs for the Secretary of the State put it. Turkish denial at that time was anchored in the "alleged

⁹⁰⁹ Minasian, *Musa Dagh*, 136.

⁹¹⁰ Minassian, *Musa Dagh*, 114.

Armenian massacres.” It was the denial of one-sided mass killings of Ottoman Armenians during the Great War.

Despite the controversy, however, MGM refused to give up its rights to Werfel’s novel. Furthermore it assured Turkey that the movie would never be made as long as MGM owned the rights. In 1939, the studio renewed its rights. In 1970, John Kurkjian’s High Investments, Inc. bought MGM’s rights to *Musa Dagh*. Kurkjian believed he could turn *Musa Dagh* into a profitable film that would make him a hero in the Armenian community, he expected studios to knock on his door with lucrative production deals, they never did.⁹¹¹ Finally, in 1982 Kurkjian decided to make the movie himself by hiring screenwriter. *Musa Dagh* was shot in the foothills of Malibu for about \$1 million. The result was a “slapped-together farce that lacked cohesiveness.”⁹¹² *Variety* called it “a dreary little film that does no justice to its weighty subject.”⁹¹³ The possibility of *Musa Dagh* filmed and delivered to international audiences by MGM was the last major crisis on the “alleged Armenian massacres” the Kemalist regime had to manage with competence before the World War II. With the onset of the Cold War, Turkey guaranteed an unconditional American support on its denial.

⁹¹¹ Welky, “Global Hollywood versus National Pride: The Battle to Film The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” 41.

⁹¹² Welky, “Global Hollywood versus National Pride: The Battle to Film The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” 41.

⁹¹³ Welky, “Global Hollywood versus National Pride: The Battle to Film The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” 41.

In this Dissertation:

This dissertation was an attempt to understand the resilience of the Turkish denial of the Armenian Holocaust ninety five-years after the event. By the end of the Turkish offensive on Armenia in 1920, the Armenian civilization in Anatolia was eradicated through population transfer, massacre, transfer of women and children to Muslim families and assimilation, and the confiscation and expropriation of the Armenian property. In doing this, I wished to isolate myself from the discourses of post-WW2 era and did not strictly take off from the question of “genocide denial,” which historically became significant only after the war and the emergence of the UN Convention. I rather began with the question of the denial of the massacres and tried to understand the ways in which this denial during the early Republican era contributed to the making of Turkish national identity. I wanted to understand how this denial contributed to the production of a new history and founding myths in imagining a “Turkish nation” and in the invention of “Anatolia” as the “Turkish homeland from time immemorial.”

Post-war knowledge-production and popular culture on the genocide of European Jews and the stigma that avalanched with the “g-word” might have contributed to the radicalization of Turkish “genocide” denial. More importantly, at a time that the genocide of the Jews, “The Holocaust,” was becoming the moral touchstone of the global human rights regime, the real trauma for modern Turkey and what really necessitated the organization and coordination of the international public opinion about the official Turkish theses on 1915 were the assassinations of Turkish

diplomats by the Armenian militants between 1973 and 1984. Until 1979 Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia targeted only Turkish diplomats and embassies, after 1979 they turned to international targets such as the bombing of the Turkish Airlines at Paris Orly Airport. During the heyday of ASALA's militancy, dozens of Turkish diplomats together with many innocent civilians who had nothing whatsoever to do with this conflict lost their lives.

No one can claim that the suffering of these people and their loved ones was any lesser than the Armenians persecuted in 1915. I have never been torn about how to make a human judgement about ASALA's actions like Rafael Lemkin was about Tehlirian's assassination of Talat pasha in 1921. I was born into the heyday of this violence, I grew up with "DOGS DID IT AGAIN" headlines every day. These were indeed the very first, some of the very first and the most significant national texts my generation encountered when we had just began to read and write, and I have never been morally ambiguous about these murders. And yet, this dissertation does not concern the comparative moral significance of these acts – Tehlirian's, ASALA's and Ottoman State's- of all which were specific and different episodes of social violence: human beings were murdered in all episodes and from this perspective I condemn them all.

This study concerns the Turkish denial of the Armenian massacres in 1915 and how this denial relates to the founding narratives of Turkey. In this respect, it is true that ASALA's actions "led to the construction of a fanatical anti-Armenianism" especially under the influence of 1980 military junta and subsequently the word "Armenian" became the ultimate epithet of insult in modern Turkey. But neither

ASALA's actions nor this subsequent process through which the "Armenian" became the absolute evil in Turkish political culture explains the resilience of the Turkish denial. With no question, ASALA's actions helped reify the image of the Armenians as "terrorists" who were trying to convert the entire Anatolia into a "bomb arsenal." ASALA helped fortify and reify the narratives of Turkish nationalist self-righteousness and victimhood monumentalized during the Republican era. The "Armenian evil" – the terrorists, the bombers with no human face- was already imagined and articulated in the Turkish national narrations, as I tried to historicize in this study. ASALA finally made Turkey's dreams come true by materializing what Turkey needed at the most crucial turning-point in Turkish history. It was an "epic encounter."⁹¹⁴ Discourses on the assassinations of the Turkish diplomats and on the diplomacy of denial made meanings for each other just when they needed each other. Therefore in this study I tried to understand the cultural material that was already ready when ASALA's militancy rose and I tried to understand the nature of this cultural work that was accomplished by the Kemalists during the Republican era.

I worked through this cultural work along the axis of three institutions: national economy, charismatic leader and his discourses (Atatürk) and national education. First by intuition, then informed by the findings of my textual archeology in Turkish national narrations from discourse on Gökçen controversy to the Turkish schoolbooks, Atatürk endured in my archeology – as a state-maker and as a Historian, even though he played no role in the deportations and the massacres of 1915. I found

⁹¹⁴ Melanie MacAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and US Interests in the Middle East (1945-2000)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

his memory entangled in highly complex ways with the legacy of the Armenian genocide and the Unionists who orchestrated it. To the extent that last Turkish revolution, the Republic was nothing but a “photograph in Atatürk’s mind,” as Mahmut Esat Bozkurt once put it, I wanted to understand the symbolic universe of the photographs Atatürk took or commissioned and how they were framed in relation to the Ottoman Armenians mostly during his lifetime. I wanted to understand how the pictures of Armenians gradually decreased and finally disappeared in the album of “La Turquie Kemaliste.” What kinds of pictures of the Ottoman Armenians were included, what captions were written for them, how they were organized in the album...were all among my questions in understanding denial. To the extent that Gökçen was one of the most precious images in Atatürk’s mind, the excess I observed in the Turkish public discourse when there was an attempt to revise the meaning of this image with allegations about her Armenian roots has been a guiding light as I navigated through the national discourses I examined.

I do not claim that this study covers and exhausts all lenses and explanatory frameworks through which Turkish denial can be understood. I present the argument that the nationalist self-righteousness, narratives of victimhood, of heroism, and of national pride epitomized by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s charisma and moral authority remains ideologically, institutionally, and temporally (vis a vis the proximity of the Turkish national resistance and the Armenian persecution) entangled with the memory of the destruction of Ottoman Armenians. He was and is still the moral compass of the nation, and this authority is still the master-narrative of the Turkish nationalist self-righteousness. What the “Founding Father” thought and wrote about

the Armenians and the deportations of 1915, the material conditions that informed his ideological justifications, the ways in which these justifications have been institutionalized in national narrations, new representations and narratives this institutionalization process yielded (national education and history textbooks) under his leadership still critically matter. As Atatürk and his legacy constitute the narrative from Empire to Republic, his image and his legacy is also what authoritatively occupy the abyss between Armenian evil and Turkish innocence and self-righteousness.

One would expect that a more conservative Turkey (i.e. under AKP's governance) repositioning itself against Atatürk's uncompromising secularist legacy would slowly open new avenues for a political culture that would be more conducive to Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. Would, however, Ahmet Davutoğlu's -AKP's best political strategist- public address following the US House Resolution signal a new period during which Atatürk will be repositioned as the "Ghazi" of 1915 under the long shadows of the imperial fantasies for new conquests carried in the name of Islam?⁹¹⁵ Perhaps it is too early to make a judgment on this. "Atatürk," however, is one very long, uniquely charismatic narrative of honor, self-righteousness, and dignity. For the West, he marks Turkey's civilizational shift, for the East, he marks the self-righteousness of the oppressed nations. For the time being, the legitimacy of both the state and national identity remains identified with Atatürk and his moral authority. Hrant Dink, days before he was assassinated, wrote that he knew "the forces behind him were not confined to" a few ultra-nationalists and he "knew so well that they were

⁹¹⁵ "Ghazi" is etymologically related to "gaza" (loosely, "holy war") that means the sacred war waged in the name of Islam against the "unbelievers." "Ghazi" is a title given to those who participated and/or got wounded during these wars. Whether the "gaza ethos" explains the Ottoman Empire's expansion is a debate within the Ottoman Studies.

not that ordinary and visible.”⁹¹⁶ In this dissertation, I tried to understand these quite extra-ordinary and seemingly invisible forces. Dink was right.

⁹¹⁶ Hrant Dink, “Neden Hedef Secildim,” *Agos*, 12 January 2007.

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