

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications, Department of History

History, Department of

2007

Venturing into the Minefield: Turkish Liberal Historiography and the Armenian Genocide

Bedross Der Matossian

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, bdermatossian2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historyfacpub>



Part of the [Asian History Commons](#), [European History Commons](#), and the [Islamic World and Near East History Commons](#)

Der Matossian, Bedross, "Venturing into the Minefield: Turkish Liberal Historiography and the Armenian Genocide" (2007). *Faculty Publications, Department of History*. 187.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historyfacpub/187>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications, Department of History by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

22

Venturing into the Minefield: Turkish Liberal Historiography and the Armenian Genocide

Bedross Der Matossian

Historiography normally refers to the act of writing history, the collective writings of history and the history of such activities over time.¹ This chapter addresses the collective writings of history by a group of scholars of “Turkish origin,” mainly deriving from a tradition of leftist sentiments. What is particular about this group of Turkish liberal historians is that they provide an alternative historical interpretation² of a specific historical event that is otherwise accepted by the official Turkish history (*resmi tarih*) as an historical travesty.³

Historical events, which are conventionally regarded as the “building bricks of history,” are composed into a certain form that acts as a vehicle for the creation and representation of historical knowledge and historical explanation.⁴ In other words, in the writing of history, events are placed into narrative form. Historians argue that narrative is important because it is through it that we understand the relationship between form and content, the word and the world.⁵ Furthermore, in this process of the creation and the representation of historical knowledge and historical explanation it is narrative that transcends the geographic, religious, national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries in conveying its messages. Hayden White argues on this point saying: “Far from being a problem, then, narrative might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate knowing into telling, the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assailable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culture-specific.... This suggests that far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which trans-cultural messages about the nature of a

shared reality can be transmitted.”⁶ The shared reality that is being transmitted in this case through the medium of narrative is the historical event of 1915: the Armenian Genocide. Though the historical event of 1915 is considered to be a “shared reality” for both the “perpetrator group”⁷ and the “victimized group,” it does not mean that both groups have a common consensus or single definition and interpretation of this shared reality. Whereas the “victimized group” for decades has been fighting for international recognition of the historical event itself through using the medium of narrative in its historical explanation, the “perpetrator group” has been trying for decades to hinder the reality of the historical event through creating a narrative of its own by using the methodology of negation, rationalization, relativization, and trivialization of the Armenian Genocide.⁸ Hence, the emergence of a new trend in Turkish historiography that provides an alternative interpretation of the historical event of 1915 ought to be considered as an important step toward a critical assessment of the state’s narrative on the historical event of 1915.

Though an alternative interpretation of the historical event of 1915 or a critical assessment of Turkish state narrative on the event is considered to be a sound approach, still one needs not forget that histories are always shaped by both the perception of the historian and the way the historian would like the events to be understood by others through the form of narrative. White argues on this point saying “history can never provide the story, rather it is a narrative designed by the historian as he/she organizes the contents in the form of a narrative of what he/she believes the past was about.”⁹ Furthermore, it is the conglomerations of narratives of the historians that constitute an essential component in the act of collective writing of history that eventually become historiography. Thus, without narrative there can be no reconstruction of the past and without historical imagination there can be no history and without collective writing of histories there can be no historiography. For White “it is the success of narrative in revealing the meaning, coherence, or significance of events that attests to the legitimacy of its practice in historiography. And it is the success of historiography in narrativizing sets of historical events that attests to the ‘realism’ of narrative itself.”¹⁰

This analysis assesses the contents of the narrative of Turkish liberal historiography on the event of 1915, otherwise known by Turkish liberal scholars as *soykırım*¹¹ (genocide), *kırım*¹² (massacre), *katliam*¹³ (massacre), *etnik temizlik*¹⁴ (ethnic cleansing) and the widely used term by Turkish liberal scholars, *kırım*¹⁵ (mass murder). One needs to take into consideration that each of these terminologies that define the historical event have different meanings ranging from the magnitude to the premeditated nature of the event. This suggests that the employment of different concepts by Turkish liberal historiography in defining the historical event of 1915 demonstrates the variety of their treatment of the historical event and thus shows their non-monolithic approach, contrary to what appears in Turkish official history.

However, in order for an account of past events to count as a proper history, it is not enough that it display all the features of narrativity. White argues that “in addition the account must manifest a proper concern for the judicious handling of evidence, and it must honor the chronological order of the original occurrence of the events of which it treats as a baseline not to be transgressed in the classification of any given event as either a cause or an effect. . . . The events must be not only registered within the chronological framework of their original occurrence but narrated as well, that is to say, revealed as possessing a structure, an order of meaning, that they do not possess as mere sequence.”¹⁶

Reform, economic advancement, revolt, immigration, nationalism, and oppression constitute an essential chronological elements in the narrative of Turkish liberal historiography on the event of 1915. Moreover, this series of interconnected events constitutes the historical background and the historical explanation in the interpretation of the Turkish liberal narrative of the deterioration of the Armeno-Turkish relationship and its culmination in the Armenian Genocide. Hence, after discussing these interconnected events in the narrative of Turkish liberal historiography on the deterioration of the Armeno-Turkish relationship, I will dwell on the concept of causation and contextualization in the historical explanation of the Armeno-Turkish relationship and then will move to discuss the narrative of the event itself through the medium of premeditation-implementation and aftermath.

Reform

In his recent book, Taner Akçam indicates that the real effects of important social events can be felt only one hundred years after their occurrence. Based on the theory of the German sociologist Norbert Elias,¹⁷ Akçam indicates that in order “to understand the Armenian Genocide it is essential to take perspective of at least a hundred years, back to the beginning of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.”¹⁸ The continuous European pressure on the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century played a decisive role in the internal administrative and legal reforms of the *Tanzimat* period. This was evident in particular with the position of the Christians and especially the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Though the primary goal of these reforms was purely political, that is, to satisfy the European powers, this does not mean that there was not an internal will to improve the administration and the status of the non-Muslim elements living in the Ottoman Empire. In addition, these reforms in particular in the provincial system aimed at strengthening the control of the center over the periphery and consequently a process of centralization began as an ultimate reaction to the “dissolution” of the Ottoman Empire. For example, in 1864, a complete overhaul of regulations on the organization of provincial government was initiated, a move that aimed at bringing the periphery closer to the grip of the center.

However, the nineteenth-century reforms in the Ottoman Empire did not have the same impact on the Muslims as they did on the non-Muslims. Fatma

Müge Göçek argues that the effects of the reforms on the Ottoman Muslims were largely negative. The Muslims interpreted the rights promised to the minorities as a loss of their privileged position in the empire.¹⁹ It is this feeling of the loss of a privileged position and the “elevation” of the status of the non-Muslims that led to the deterioration of interethnic relationships. Furthermore, these reforms also had an impact on changing the dynamics of power inside the Armenian *millet* in the Ottoman Empire and culminated in the creation of the Armenian National Constitution and the crystallization of the Armenian identity. However, for Turkish liberal historiography reform also meant international pressure as reform became a strong catalyst that “opened the way for the imperialist powers to interfere in the Ottoman Empire’s internal affairs, and almost every national or religious group would ultimately receive patronage and support from one of the Great Powers.”²⁰ Subsequently, after the Congress of Berlin in 1878 when the Armenian Question became internationalized, the issue of reform became a stronger catalyst for European pressure. However, the deplorable condition of the periphery led the Armenians constantly to demand reforms and appeal to the European powers for intervention. Thus, the issue of reform and international intervention were important factors that were to haunt the Armenian-Turkish relationship until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Economic Advancement and Nationalism

The Anglo-Ottoman Convention of 1838 and various trade agreements with European powers in the nineteenth century led to a dramatic increase of European trade in the Ottoman Empire. Foreign trade in the Ottoman provinces fell slowly under the monopoly of non-Muslim Ottoman merchants, chiefly of Greek and Armenian origin. For Turkish liberal historians economic advancement had direct connection with the emergence of nationalism. After demonstrating the economic advancement and integration of the Armenians in the Ottoman society, Fikret Adanır poses the question, “Why did the Armeno-Turkish relationship become catastrophic?”²¹ One decisive factor that he demonstrates is nationalism.²² For Halil Berktaş, Göçek, and Adanır commerce had a direct impact on the emergence of Armenian nationalism. Berktaş indicates that “trade, the money economy, and capitalism first developed among the non-Turkish and non-Muslim population groups of the empire. In this way these groups became more open to nationalist movements and engaged in struggles against the empire in order to establish their own nation states” [*ulus devletlerini kurmak için*].²³ However, Göçek indicates that “Turks and Muslim Arabs did not benefit from the changing patterns of commerce as much as the Greeks and Armenians; in the case of the Ottoman Turks, the commercial success of the Ottoman minorities generated enmity and fostered Turkish nationalism.”²⁴ Her observation is important because it indicates that the economic advancement of the Armenians

had a double impact. It not only fostered Armenian nationalism, but Turkish reactionary nationalism as well. The various boycotts against the Austrians, Greeks, and Armenians in the last decade of the Ottoman Empire enhanced the radicalization of the Turkish nationalism, and, as Göçek indicates, "these boycotts led the Unionists to conclude that only a national economy and a Turkish bourgeoisie could withstand foreign intervention and domination."²⁵ In addition, Göçek considers some other factors that played an important role as determinants of the structure of nationalisms that emerged in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire.²⁶ These include war and reform movements, the new visions of history that emerged in the intelligentsia of the ethnic groups living in the Ottoman Empire and, finally, their literature and education which gave meaning to them. She continues on this point arguing: "The combination of war, commerce, and reforms that transformed existing social relations thus interacted with new visions painted by history, literature, and education and, under the parameters set by the existing organizations of philanthropic and secret societies and political parties, determined the patterns the nationalisms within the Ottoman empire took."²⁷

Revolts and Immigration

Demographic changes in Anatolia as a result of immigration of Muslims from the Balkans and the Caucasus and events taking place in the Balkans had an important impact on the deterioration of the Armeno-Turkish relationship. It is impossible to examine the historical background of the Armeno-Turkish conflict without taking into consideration two important factors: revolts and immigration. It is worthy to mention that in a span of twenty years, from 1862 to 1882, the immigration of the Muslim population from the Balkans and Russia increased the Ottoman population by at least 40 percent.²⁸ A good number of these immigrants populated areas where Armenians were living thus creating population imbalance and consequentially creating friction among the local populations and the immigrants.²⁹ The special status that the Armenian merchants enjoyed under the protection of the European powers led these new immigrants, persecuted by the tsarist regime in Russia, to be more antagonistic toward the Armenians. It is worth mentioning that the situation in some parts of the Anatolian provinces was already deteriorating. Frequent attacks by the Kurdish tribes on the Armenians, heavy taxation, friction with the newly immigrated Muslims from the Caucasus and the Balkans, corruption in the administration, and failure of Armenian efforts to solve these problems in a diplomatic way led to the emergence of Armenian revolutionary groups. The Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878 was followed in July by the Treaty of Berlin, considered by the Armenians a disastrous diplomatic failure.

It seems that between 1878 and 1880 there was a major ideological shift within the Armenian communities of Anatolia. It is only after 1880 that the revolutionary movement emerged in the provinces. The Balkan insurrections

on the other hand had an impact on the emergence of the Armenian revolutionary groups.³⁰ The nationalist uprising of the Balkan groups, beginning with the Serbian revolt of 1804 and culminating belatedly in the Bulgarian revolt of 1875, had an impact on the Armenians living in Anatolia and shattered all kinds of possible unity under the banner of Ottomanism.³¹ Adanır indicates that the beginning of these revolutionary activities in the eastern provinces was aimed at resisting the encroachment of the Kurdish tribes. However, he indicates that with the arrival of the Hnchak and the Dashnaktsutun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) underground groups the policy changed.³² These organizations, he asserts, aimed for the independence of Armenia and acted to gain European involvement through the tactic of provocation-massacres-intervention.³³ Turkish liberal historiography downplays the approach of Armenian historiography to these revolutionary groups as pure self-defense units intended to protect the Armenian-inhabited areas from the Kurdish encroachments. For example, Selim Deringil argues on this issue, stating that the well-armed Armenian partisan groups that were active in Anatolia were more than “self-defense units.”³⁴ In order to understand better the nature of these groups and their relations with the Turkish and the Kurdish population, Deringil suggests concentrating more on the interethnic periphery relationships. “What were the relations between the sedentary Armenian population and the nomadic Kurds, say between 1880 and 1915?” asks Deringil. “How did the state policy articulate with local balances? What were the dimensions of collaboration with Russia?”³⁵ Deringil suggests that in order to understand better the breaking points between the Armenians and the Turks a considerable initial corpus of micro-level monographic studies needs to be conducted.³⁶ Deringil raises an important point here and that is the lack of micro-level monographic studies that deal with the Armeno-Turkish conflict in particular on the periphery level as most of the studies tend to deal more with the diplomatic and political history of the period.³⁷

As mentioned, the activities of the guerrillas in the Balkans and the events that accompanied the Ottoman defeat by Russia in 1877-78, were hard blows to the Ottomanist vision for a fraternal union of the people of the empire.³⁸ Consequently, this led to the immigration of hundreds of thousands of Muslims who were escaping the Russian army or expelled by the Christian state and looked for refuge in Asia Minor. Berktaş argues that in this period the Ottomans tried to repress nationalist uprisings in the Balkans and perpetrated massacres. Then Turkish Muslims in the region were massacred and they fled as a result to Istanbul and Anatolia.³⁹ Adanır and Berktaş highlight the issue of the immigration as an important factor in the deterioration of the Armeno-Turkish relationship. According to Berktaş, this is an important point because the bitterness of the uprisings in the Balkans caused great hatred (*büyük bir hınç biriktirdi*) and desire for revenge among Turkish Muslims. He continues: “The Armenian affair cannot be understood without paying attention to this hatred” [*Ermeni olayı bu hınç birikimi dikkate alınmadan anlaşılamaz*].⁴⁰

Oppression

According to Deringil a “legitimacy crisis” took place in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. This legitimacy crisis, which had internal and external dimensions, resulted from the challenges of the time. Deringil indicates that “by the reign of Abdulhamid, the desire of the state to administer and control with hitherto unprecedented intensity led to a situation where the role of the center had to be constantly re-defined.”⁴¹ One of the challenges of the time was the rising Armenian nationalism that was reflected in the Armenian revolutionary movements. Deringil indicates that as the tension between Muslims and Armenians mounted in the 1890s, the Ottoman center became more attentive to the smallest detail that could influence inter-community relations.⁴² Furthermore, the center began monitoring every single movement regardless if it was by a revolutionary group or a philanthropic one that could endanger its entity and hence by taking the necessary measures it tried to diminish that threat. For this, Deringil illustrates an interesting example of Ottoman counter-espionage against the Hnchak revolutionaries in 1894. The counter-espionage took place in the United States in order to monitor the activities of the Hnchak party in Boston. The Ottoman government through the Turkish consul in Boston tried to enlist an Armenian informant to gather information about the activities of the local party organization. In the end, the attempt failed as the Armenian informant began to demand higher compensation.⁴³ The case indicates that the Ottoman government was active internationally in monitoring the activities of the other branches of the revolutionary groups that were present in the Ottoman Empire.

Meanwhile, Islam was used by the state as a mobilizing force of solidarity and hence for demographic reasons the Muslim immigrants from the Balkans and the Caucasus were resettled in Asia Minor, particularly in Armenian-populated areas. The resettlement of refugees in these areas played an important role in the escalating Armeno-Turkish tensions. Furthermore, in order to combat the Russians, in 1891, Sultan Abdul Hamid II created the irregular *Hamidiye* regiments, primarily from among the Kurds, but as Adanır indicates, “in reality these were against the local population, and contributed in deteriorating the Armenian situation.”⁴⁴ Deringil, Berktaş, and Engin Akarlı argue the same. According to Deringil: “There was certainly a policy during the Hamidian era to use Kurdish tribes as Cossack-inspired irregulars [Hamidiye units] against the Armenians, as there was a search for a new base of solidarity on a recharged Islamic basis.”⁴⁵ Berktaş, on the other hand, highlights the issue of irregular troops in his comment on the massacres during the Hamidian period: “In any case, during the ‘century of dissolution [çözülüş yüzyılı]’ the Ottoman administration repeatedly chose to use not the standing army [*düzenli ordudan*], but irregulars and undisciplined [*düzensiz güçleri*] in these affairs, relying on their primitiveness and violence.”⁴⁶ This point of irregular troops

is an important one that Berktaý raises again when discussing the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

In addition, most of these scholars do not see a continuity between the Hamidian massacres and the Young Turks policies as it is attested in some trends of the Armenian historiography on the Armenian Genocide.⁴⁷ Deringil on this point indicates that the “Hamidian policies of ad hoc, semiofficial and official massacres were qualitatively different from the systematic persecution carried out in the Young Turk era.”⁴⁸ Similarly, Akarlı indicates the need to distinguish between Abdul Hamid’s relatively measured repression of the Armenians and the annihilative policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (Young Turks). He continues on this point saying: “For all his faults, Abdulhamid felt more bound by certain traditions of statecraft, which should help explain why the Ottoman state lasted so long on such wide-flung territories.”⁴⁹

Causation and Contextualization

In discussing premeditation, implementation, and aftermath in the narrative of Turkish liberal historiography, it is necessary to consider the issue of causation and contextualization in Armeno-Turkish relations. Generally speaking, causal relations exist between events, that is, if event A occurs, then event B follows, and “it can be reasonably demonstrated that event A explains the subsequent (temporal sequential) occurrence of event B.”⁵⁰ Some historians tend to place an emphasis on causation. Noted British historian E. H. Carr, for example, maintained that the study of history is the study of causes.⁵¹ Carr elaborates further on this point: “The relation of the historian to his causes has the same dual and reciprocal character as the relation of the historian to his facts. The causes determine his interpretation of the historical process, and his interpretation determines his selection and marshalling of the causes. The hierarchy of causes, the relative significance of one cause or set of causes or of another, is the essence of his interpretation.”⁵² Thus, the hierarchy of causes is the essence of interpretation.

Hayden White has a different perception. For him, focusing on the causes of an event “fails to recognize the variety of narratives that can be told and that themselves prefigure the type of causal connections to be made.”⁵³ Because, as Alan Munslow states, “White sees history as a literary artifact, he believes that historians make causal links as part of their overall constitution and prefiguration of the historical field through the exercise of their historical imagination and the employment of trope, emplotment, argument, ideological preference and philosophical orientation.”⁵⁴

As stated, Turkish liberal historiography tends to represent the historical background of the Armeno-Turkish conflict by using causal relations. Thus, for example, if there had been no Armenian economic advancement there would not have been the growth of nationalism, and if there had been no resettlement policy in the Armenian provinces there would not have been ethnic friction,

and if there had been no revolt there would not have been oppression, and so forth. The use of causal relations by Turkish liberal historiography in explaining the historical events of 1915 limits the variety of other narratives explaining those events.

The employment of causal relationships in Turkish liberal historiography raises the concept of contextualization. Although, in such horrendous events such as genocide, contextualization may help to explain the crime, it might also demonstrate its inevitability and minimize the level of the catastrophe. Thus, a scholar is faced with the dilemma of reconstructing the past through the integral use of causal relations and through contextualization and normalization of the event to give it proper historical meaning but without losing the ethical component. Göçek captures this dilemma with the following words:

If I contextualize the massacres of 1915 in my historiography, as I have, within a long Turkish nationalist period that ends up normalizing 1915 and thereby, by implication, mitigating and obliterating the trauma associated with 1915, then I need to critically discuss the location of 1915 in and itself to address this possibility. For I am doubly implicated, not only as a scholar but also as a Turk. It is therefore particularly imperative for me to acknowledge that I as a Turkish scholar convey the critical stand I take in relation to 1915 in the historical narrative I construct.

What Göçek argues is that it is not contextualization and the ensuing normalization of the event that is problematic rather its uncritical manner. She continues on this point: "What is at issue then is the ethics one employs in undertaking the contextualization."⁵⁵ So how should scholars approach a subject such as genocide? Based on Dominick LaCapra,⁵⁶ Göçek suggests that the scholar should engage in a strategic negotiation with the trauma and its historical actors: "The conventional distance scholars place between themselves and their texts is no longer there; the strategic negotiation enables the scholar to do a couple of things simultaneously: he captures the complexity of the trauma, contextualize it without normalizing it, and by reflecting on his own subject position during this process, is able to clarify his ethical stand in relation to the trauma."

Premeditation-Implementation-Aftermath

Turkish liberal historiography examines the concepts of premeditation, implementation, and aftermath through the lens of the second constitutional period (1908-18).⁵⁷ In other words, the second constitutional period becomes the ultimate tool for the contextualization of the historical event of 1915. Although the contribution of Turkish liberal historiography on the historical event of 1915 is still in its infancy,⁵⁸ the phase leading to the second constitutional period has been examined thoroughly by shedding new light in particular on the Armeno-Turkish relationship in the pre-revolution era and the level of their cooperation.

In a painstaking study, Sükrü Hanioglu has demonstrated the relationship of the Young Turks with the Armenians, in particular with the Armenian

Revolutionary Federation, which was more inclined to Prince Sabaheddin's decentralization ideology.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Hanioglu has demonstrated that the relationship between the Young Turks and the Dashnaktsutun was not great because they disagreed on a number of points, especially the issues of foreign intervention and decentralization.⁶⁰ Though in the first congress of the Ottoman oppositional groups in 1902 the relationship of the Armenians with the Young Turks was tense,⁶¹ between 1905 and 1907, the relationship between the Young Turks and the Dashnaktsutun improved, and as a result of Sabaheddin Bey's efforts, the two sides reached a serious agreement for the first time in the history of the Young Turk movement.⁶² Consequently, the Dashnaktsutun began to take part in the revolutionary propaganda that was not only confined to the Armenian circles; rather it appealed also to the Turkish circles inviting them to common action.⁶³ Furthermore, bogus organizations were formed in order to maximize the spectrum of the revolution. The most important of these bogus organizations established by the Dashnaktsutun was the so-called Turkish Allied Party. Hanioglu indicates that the real object of the Dashnaktsutun, a rapprochement between Turks and Armenians, became the most common theme in the Turkish Allied Party's propaganda.⁶⁴

Regardless of the level of cooperation, the selective Armeno-Turkish cooperation against the regime of Abdul Hamid II is an important point that contradicts the official Turkish history (*resmi tarih*), which contends that the Armenian revolutionary activities, in particular those of the Dashnaktsutun against Abdul Hamid, were rebellious acts aimed at the establishment of an independent Armenia and disregards Armenian cooperation with the Young Turks whose goals were the overthrow of the oppressive sultan's regime and reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution.⁶⁵ Despite this fact, two main issues remained as serious obstacles in the Armeno-Turkish relationships: decentralization and international intervention. It is no surprise that the Armenians like the Arabs and the Albanians were more inclined to Prince Sabaheddin because of his decentralized approach influenced by the theories of Demolins.⁶⁶ This is also evident in the Armenian press in the post-revolution period by the entrance of Sabaheddin to Istanbul. Hanioglu indicates that following his failure to interest the Armenian committees, some of which were bargaining with Sabaheddin at the same time, Behaeddin Shakir⁶⁷ decided to abandon his grandiose scheme of uniting all the Young Turks, Ahmed Jelaeddin Pasha, and the Armenian committees in an organization that would in reality be under his control.⁶⁸ The result was that the organization adopted the name the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress),⁶⁹ Behaeddin Shakir became responsible for the creation of four independent divisions of the central committee, a fact that according to Hanioglu helped Behaeddin Shakir to gain the upper hand in the organization and made him the hidden leader of the new organization.⁷⁰ What is the significance of Behaeddin Shakir in the central committee after the revolution? To what extent did Behaeddin Shakir manipulate this role in the liquidation process of the Armenians in 1915?

As mentioned, between 1905 and 1907, relations between the Young Turks and the Dashnaktsutun improved. This led the Armenian party to take a more active role in a second congress of Ottoman oppositional parties in 1907. The CUP, Prince Sabaheddin's League of Private Initiative and Decentralization, and the Dashnaktsutun, jointly organized that congress in which general agreement was reached among the three committees.⁷¹ According to Hanioglu, "the Year 1908 thus opened with a tactical alliance in place among three opposition committees. For those who had witnessed the endless debates between the leaders of the Dashnaktsutun and the CUP . . ., this seemed a considerable success."⁷²

To what extent was this cooperation between the Dashnaktsutun and the CUP productive or vital for the realization of the Young Turk revolution? To what extent was this cooperation sincere? To what extent did the Young Turks trust the Armenians? Hanioglu comments on this point, saying: "The CPU [CUP] papers and available Ottoman documents reveal that the joint CPU-Dashnaktsutun revolutionary activities were very insignificant and that the CPU never trusted the Dashnaktsutun. . . . The CPU alliance with the Dashnaktsutun played no role whatsoever in that revolution and was for practical purposes almost worthless."⁷³ This indicates the level of the distrust that existed between the Committee of Union and Progress and the Dashnaktsutun, the only Armenian party cooperating with the CUP. Why did the Young Turks not have sincere confidence in the non-Muslim elements, in particular the Armenians? According to Akcam, the Young Turks looked no more favorably on other non-Muslim elements living in the Ottoman Empire. In the Young Turks' view the non-Muslims represented a potential threat that would or could split the empire.⁷⁴

The Young Turk revolution of 1908 brought with it hopes of freedom and equality. It was with the reinstatement of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 that a new phase began in the Ottoman Empire and which ended in the collapse of the empire after World War I. This phase was characterized by overlapping "isms," identities, and loyalties, ranging from Ottomanism to Islamism, Turkism, and Arabism. This phase was also characterized by immense international pressure on the Ottoman Empire, loss of territories, and mounting politicization of the ethnic boundaries.

The hopes for the ideal Ottoman society based on equality and justice after the post-revolutionary period under the banner of Ottomanism began to fade as a result of political ruptures in this process. One of the most important ruptures was the counterrevolution of 1909, which was initiated by the reactionary forces in the Ottoman Empire. The counterrevolution, widely known as the *31 Mart olayları* (the March 31 incidents), and the accompanying massacres in Adana and throughout Cilicia had a tremendous impact on disrupting the equilibrium of this transitional period. Most Turkish liberal historians fail to address this important point.⁷⁵ Although the Cilician massacres were not the ultimate manifestation of the radicalization of Turkish nationalism,⁷⁶ they opened a serious gap between the Armenians and the Turks. For most of the Turkish liberal historians it was the

Balkan wars that led to the radicalization of Turkish nationalism and a drastic change in the government's policy toward the Christian elements living in the empire, in particular the Armenians. Adanır comments on this issue:

The Balkan wars (1912 and 1913) constituted a turning point in the evolution of the relationship between the Young Turks and the Armenians. Two changes of political direction seem to be significant in this regard: the first turning point is seen in the new conception of the CUP about the national question. Confronted with a new wave of Muslim refugees coming from the Balkan, the majority of the Young Turks abandoned their egalitarian Ottomanist attitude and began to utilize the demands of the Muslims in a campaign of defamation of the non-Muslim populations. . . .

The second turning point took place within the Armenian camp. After the disastrous Ottoman defeat in the Balkan wars and the fact that certain promises of the Young Turks—such as those concerning the issue of the Armenian territories—did not materialize, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation decided to place again the solution of the Armenian Question in the hands of the Great Powers.⁷⁷

According to Adanır, this consequentially led to a grave crisis in the Young Turk-Armenian relationship in 1913-14.⁷⁸

Rejecting the view that it was during the Balkan wars that Turkish nationalism began to be radicalized, Hanioglu, utilizing the private papers of several secretaries of the CUP's secret central committee, maintains that the CUP was a more intensely Turkish nationalist organization from an earlier date than many historians have thought.⁷⁹ Commenting on this point, he writes: "It is obvious that the Young Turks had strong nationalistic feelings even before the Young Turk revolution of 1908. Contrary to commonly held views, this policy did not begin after the Balkan wars of 1912-1913."⁸⁰ So, if Turkish nationalism was evident even before the 1908 revolution, does this mean that there was a long-term plan by Turkish nationalists to establish a Turanic empire in which the Armenians were considered to be a huge impediment for the realization of this ideology and does this mean that Pan-Turkism was the ultimate motive behind the Armenian Genocide? Most Turkish liberal historians refute Pan-Turkism as the ultimate ideology or the motive behind the annihilation of the Armenians.⁸¹ Akarlı comments on this point saying: "Since they are called 'Young Turks' by common convention, and because some of them sometimes sang songs of a mythical 'Turan' or Pan-Turkish state, we cannot jump at the conclusion that they thus wanted to get rid of all the Armenians once and for all to clear the way to the Turan. If the UPP [Union and Progress Party] leadership agreed on anything, it was the preservation of Ottoman state as a centralized structure, however much of it could be preserved, and at whatever cost."⁸²

The issue of Turkification or centralization still remains a lively debate among Turkish liberal scholars. So what was the motive behind the Armenian Genocide? Akçam argues that the feeling of vengeance, formed among Ottoman Turkish officials as a result of continual territorial losses, was largely directed at the non-Muslim minorities, "the 'servants of yesterday,' who lived on these

lands. And during World War I this revenge, which could not have been taken against the Bulgarians or the Greeks, was instead taken out against the “ungrateful” Armenians, who, by “collaborating with the imperialists, struck us from behind.”⁸³ Akçam continues on this issue stating: “In short, the ruling members of an Empire that was continually losing territories, that stood on the verge of collapse, perceived the national and democratic demands of their Christian subjects through the psychoses of isolation, fear and annihilation, and adopted an approach to them that was in line with these feelings.”⁸⁴

According to Berktaş and Akçam, it is this feeling of “total annihilation” that led the military dictatorship of the CUP to take such a drastic step especially after the Armenian demands for reform.⁸⁵ Akçam continues on this issue stating that the ruling members of the empire approached these national demands with the understanding that they would have to conduct a “war for survival.” And the only way to win this “war of survival” was through the homogenization of troubled, heterogeneous areas.⁸⁶ I think that the concept of “total annihilation” or “war for survival” should be understood more as wartime rhetoric manipulated by the CUP for the justification of the annihilation of the Armenians rather than reflecting the “true” feelings of the CUP leadership. Regarding the premeditation issue, Akçam demonstrates that the decision for the annihilation of the Armenians was taken in March 1915, when a clandestine decision was made against the Armenians and Behaeddin Shakir was tasked with its implementation.⁸⁷ Akçam, Berktaş, and Deringil believe that the decision for the annihilation of the Armenians was given orally to the regions.⁸⁸ Berktaş argues that in the orders for deportation there was no mention of massacre (*katham*) and mass murder (*kırım*). However, at the same time, separate unwritten special orders were given (*ayrı ve yazlı olmayan özel emirler verilmiştir*) to the most rapacious members of the Special Organization (*Teşkilat-i Mahsusa*) who “worshiped violence and were not bound to any moral codes” [*hiçbir toplumsal ahlak kaydıyla bağlı olmayan*].⁸⁹ In the arguments of Akçam, Berktaş, and Deringil, one notices a special emphasis on the Special Organization and the total exclusion of the Ottoman army from the responsibility of the Genocide. Isn’t the army at the end of the day the symbol of the state? Wasn’t this army the one who waged the War of Independence that led to the establishment of the Turkish republic? Akçam sees a strong relationship between the Armenian Genocide and the foundation of the Turkish republic: “I think the main reason the Turks avoid any discussion on history and make it a taboo lies in the reality of this connection between the Armenian Genocide and the foundation of the Turkish Republic.”⁹⁰

Ayhan Aktar has demonstrated that this taboo was discussed in the Ottoman Parliament long before the foundation of the Turkish republic.⁹¹ In dealing with the Ottoman parliamentary debates of 1918, Aktar emphasizes that no one from the Ottoman deputies at that time has shed any doubt about the actuality of the mass murder. By using the terminology *imha edilmek* (to be annihilated), *cinayeti azime* (macabre murder), *Ermeni kıtlığı* (Armenian massacre), and

Ermeni faciası (Armenian catastrophe), the Ottoman Parliament confirmed that “crimes against humanity” had been committed against the Armenians during the world war. Aktar draws the following conclusions:

1. The deputies in the Ottoman Parliament, Muslim and non-Muslim, did not enter a mode of saying: “this matter [massacres] did not take place and all the sayings are false” (*bu iş olmamıştır, söylenenlerin hepsi yalandır*). However, the proposals brought by Ottoman deputies of Armenian and Greek origins to punish those responsible met with obstacles, as the deputies of the Committee of Union and Progress were a majority in the Parliament.⁹²

2. The CUP deputies, on the one hand, were saying, that “Turks also died” and the minority deputies, on the other hand, were saying that the bandit organizations (*çete yönetimi*) were responsible for the massacre and asked for their punishment;

3. The current debates surrounding the Armenian deportation revolve around two poles: on the one hand, there are those who adhere to the premeditated character of an organized “genocide” and, on the other hand, there are those who justify expulsions of hundreds of thousands of people as a simple administrative measure necessitated by the wartime conditions (*şavaş şartlarının gereği olan basit bir idari tedbir*).

Aktar summarizes: “And within this polarized context of ‘blacks and whites,’ it becomes almost impossible to maintain an academic discussion. In this climate the voices of social scientists who are seeking truth in ‘gray zones’ [*gri alanlarda*] are intimidated into silence and are asked to be condemned by the law of ‘national treachery’ [*hiyaneti vataniye*].”⁹³

The most recent incident of this sort is that of the conference organized by Bosporus (Boğaziçi), Bilgi, and Sabancı universities and entitled “Ottoman Armenians during the Era of Imperial Decline: Academic Responsibility and Issues of Democracy” which had been scheduled to take place at Bosporus University during May 25-27, 2005. The conference was deferred because of the strong reactions of the government and both the ruling and the opposition parties. Following Minister of Justice Cemil Çiçek’s characterization of the conference “as a treason against Turkey” [*Türkiye’ye hiyanet olarak*], Bosporus University announced the postponement of the conference.⁹⁴ However, after weeks of deliberations and numerous attempts by the Turkish government to block the conference, it was held on September 24-25 at Bilgi University.⁹⁵ The conference is considered an important step for Turkish liberal historiography, because for the first time since the founding of the Turkish republic in 1923, a meeting within a Turkish university questioned the state narrative on one of the most sensitive issues—the Armenian Genocide, whether or not it was given that name.

Conclusion

In historical narrative it is “narrativity” that, as Paul Ricoeur puts it, “brings us back from within-time-ness to historicity, from ‘reckoning with’ time to ‘recollecting’ it.”⁹⁶ This chapter has attempted to assess the “recollecting” of Turkish liberal historiography of an important event in the history of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. In doing so, it has shown that the narrative of Turkish liberal historiography is not as monolithic as the narrative of the *resmi tarih* (official history). Despite having some commonalities with the Armenian historiography, Turkish liberal historiography still provides different perspectives to understanding the Armenian Genocide. Moreover, Turkish liberal historiography in its historical explanation of the event tends to deal more with causal relations by using contextualization as a tool. In studying horrendous events such as genocides, contextualization may yield a better understanding of the event, but it might also tend to demonstrate its inevitability and thereby minimize the level of the catastrophe. In addition, most Turkish liberal historians refrain from dealing directly with the mechanism of the event itself, as they tend to describe the macro-history of the event rather than dealing with it on the micro-level. Turkish liberal historiography on the Armenian Genocide is still in its infancy, because a Turkish critical approach to the history of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire in general is still on the threshold of achieving what Göçek calls “post-nationalist critical narrative.” One also need not forget that the task of Turkish liberal historians, in particular those who “venture into the minefield” or roam in the “gray zones,” is an intricate one. Through workshops, dialogues, and conferences Turkish liberal historiography can be fostered. Moreover, such events must focus first and foremost on Turkish society through publishing their proceedings in Turkish translation in order to promote the “narratives of society” that challenge the “state narrative.”⁹⁷

Turkey today is standing on the threshold of entering the European Union. Some will argue that this move will yield positive outcomes for Turkish liberal historiography. However, the ongoing massive campaign by the Turkish government, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AKP), and the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi or CHP), both against the Armenian “claims” and the Turkish “collaborators,” conveys another message.

Notes

1. The phrase “Venturing into the Minefield” was used by Selim Deringil in an article titled “The Study of the Armenian Crisis of the Late Ottoman Empire, or, Seizing the Document by the Throat,” in *New Perspectives on Turkey* 27 (Fall 2002): 35. On historiography, see Alan Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 133.
2. In the past two decades a new trend emerged in Turkey that began a critical assessment of Turkish history and historiography. It is important to mention the following

among many others: Nergis Canefe, "Turkish Nationalism and Ethno-Symbolic Analysis: The Rules of Exception," *Nations and Nationalism* 8, 2 (2002): 133-55; Ayla Göl, "Imagining the Turkish Nation through 'Othering' the Armenians," *Nations and Nationalism* 11, 1 (2005): 121-139; Ayşe Kadioğlu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and Construction of Official Identity," *Middle Eastern Studies* 32, 4 (1996): 177-193; Fatma Müge Göçek, "The Decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Emergence of Greek Armenian, Turkish, and Arab Nationalisms," in *Social Constructions of Nationalism: In the Middle East*, ed. Fatma Müge Göçek (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 15-83; idem, "Silences in the Turkish Republican Past: An Analysis of Contemporary Turkish-Armenian Literature," presented at a workshop at the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University, October 27, 2003; idem, "Reconstructing the Turkish Historiography on the Armenian Deaths and Massacres of 1915," in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), pp. 209-230; Taner Akçam, *İnsan hakları ve Ermeni sorunu* [Human Rights and the Armenian Question] (İstanbul: Image Press, 1999); idem, *Türk ulusal kimliği ve Ermeni Sorunu* [Turkish National Identity and the Armenian Question] (İstanbul: İletişim Publications, 1994); idem, *Ermeni tabusu aralanırken: Diyalogdan başka bir çözüm var mı?* [As the Armenian Taboo Is Being Unsilenced: Is There A Solution Other than a Dialogue?] (İstanbul: Su Publications, 2000); idem, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Zed Books, 2004); Taner Timur, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: 1915 ve sonrası* [Turks and Armenians: 1915 and Its Aftermath] (Ankara: Image Press, 2001); Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları iskan politikası (1913-1918)* [Union and Progress Party's Muslim Resettlement Policy (1913-1918)] (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2001); Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu, *İttihat-Terakki'nin sorgulanması ve yargılanması: meclis-i mebusan zabıtları* [The Interrogation and Trial of the Union and Progress: Proceedings of the Ottoman Assembly] (İstanbul: Temel Press, 1998); Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); idem, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Aykut Kansu, *1908 Devrimi: The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*, trans. Ayda Erbal (İstanbul: İletişim, 1995, 2006); idem, *Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1997); idem, *Politics in Post-Revolutionary Turkey, 1913-1918* (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2000).

3. The Turkish official history (*resmi tarih*) on the Armenian Question is embodied in the work of Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi* [Armenians in History and the Armenian Question] (Ankara: Yeni Press, 1950). The book was translated and appeared in English with a number of additions in 1988 (İstanbul: Documentary Publications). See also Y. G. Çark, *Türk devletinin hizmetinde Ermeniler (1453-1953)* [Armenians in the Service of the Turkish State] (İstanbul: Yeni Press, 1953). For a criticism of the Turkish official history, see Etienne Copeaux, *Espaces et temps de la nation turque: Analyse d'une historiographie nationaliste 1931-1993* (Paris: CNRS editions, 1997), esp. pp. 322-338. See also Göçek "Reconstructing the Turkish Historiography on the Armenian Deaths."
4. Munslow, *Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, p. 169.
5. Ibid., p. 170.
6. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 1.
7. In this sense, the concept perpetrator is used to represent the side that belongs to the perpetrator.

8. For more information on this issue of denial, see Richard G. Hovannisian, "Denial of the Armenian Genocide in Comparison with the Holocaust Denial," in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998). See by the same author, "The Armenian Genocide and Patterns of Denial," in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1986), pp. 111-133.
9. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 85.
10. White, *Content of the Form*, p. 55.
11. The concept *soykırım* has been used mainly by Taner Akçam. See his *Ermeni tabusu aralanırken*.
12. The concept used by Taner Akçam in the past decade. See his *İnsan hakları ve Ermeni sorunu*, and *Türk ulusal kimliği ve Ermeni Sorunu*.
13. The concept of *katliam* has been used even before the foundation of the Turkish republic in 1923, during the Ottoman parliamentary debates of 1918. See Ayhan Aktar, "Son Osmanlı Meclisi ve Ermeni Meselesi: Kasım-Aralık 1918" [The Last Ottoman Parliament and the Armenian Question: November-December 1918], *Toplum ve Bilim* [Society and Science] 91 (Fall 2002): 142-165.
14. This is the term used by Halil Berktaş in an interview with Derya Sazak: "Tehcir kanunu etnik temizlik" [The Deportation Law (is) Ethnic Cleansing] in the Istanbul newspaper *Milliyet*, March 7, 2005.
15. This is the term used by such leftist historians as Mete Tunçay. See, for example, in Ferhat Kentel, "Nefret" [Hatred], in *Gazetem*, February 10, 2005.
16. White, *Content of the Form*, p. 5.
17. Norbert Elias, *Was ist Soziologie* (Munich: Juventa Press, 1981).
18. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, p. 46.
19. Göçek, "Decline of the Ottoman Empire," p. 28.
20. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, p. 79.
21. Fikret Adanır, "Le génocide Arménien? Une Réévaluation," in *L'actualité du génocide des Arméniens: Actes du colloque, organisé par le Comité de Défense de la Cause Arménienne à Paris-Sorbonne, les 16, 17 et 18 avril 1998* (Paris: Edipol, 1999), p. 408.
22. Ibid., p. 407.
23. "Ermenileri özel örgüt öldürdü" [A Special Organization Killed the Armenians]: Interview with Halil Berktaş in the Istanbul newspaper *Radikal*, October 9, 2000.
24. Göçek, "Decline of the Ottoman Empire," p. 22.
25. Ibid., p. 28. For more information regarding these boycotts and in particular regarding the nationalization of economy, see Ayhan Aktar, "Economic Nationalism in Turkey: The Formative Years, 1912-1925," *Boğaziçi Journal, Review of Social and Administrative Studies* 10, 1-2 (1996): 263-290.
26. This is in the case of the Greek, Armenian, Turkish, and Arab nationalisms.
27. Ibid., p. 55.
28. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 97; Idem, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).
29. The final phase of the settlement policy of the immigrants in the Ottoman Empire was initiated during the second constitutional period by the Committee of Union and Progress. For more information on this issue, see Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları iskan politikası*.

30. On the social groups and nationalism in the Balkans, see Dimitrije Djordjevic, *Revolutions nationales de peuples balkaniques, 1804-1914* (Belgrade: Istorijski Institut, 1965).
31. On the emergence of the Armenian revolutionary groups, see Louis Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963); Anahide Ter Minassian, *Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1887-1912)*, trans. A. M. Berrett (Cambridge, MA: Zoryan Institute, 1984).
32. Adanır, "Le génocide Arménien?" pp. 408-409.
33. Ibid., p. 408. The Armenian revolutionary groups did not have a monolithic approach in their aims and demands. For example, while the Dashnaksutiun sought an autonomous status for the six Armenian provinces within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, the Hnchaks called for independence from the Ottoman Empire.
34. Selim Deringil, "In Search of a Way Forward: A Response to Ronald Grigor Suny," *Armenian Forum* 1, 2 (1998): 66.
35. Ibid., p. 71.
36. Ibid., p. 69.
37. See, for example, a recent M.A thesis that deals with the issue on the level of the periphery: Uğur Ü. Üngör, "A Reign of Terror: CUP Rule in Diyarbekir Province, 1913-1918," M.A Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2005.
38. Adanır, "Le génocide Arménien?" p. 408.
39. Berktaş, "Ermenileri özel örgüt öldürdü."
40. Ibid.
41. Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), p. 166.
42. Ibid., p. 14.
43. Deringil, "Study of the Armenian Crisis," pp. 46-47.
44. Adanır, "Le génocide Arménien?" p. 408.
45. Deringil, "In Search of a Way Forward," p. 67.
46. Berktaş, "Ermenileri özel örgüt öldürdü."
47. Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide. Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995); idem, *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999).
48. Deringil, "In Search of a Way Forward," p. 67.
49. Engin Akarlı, "Particularities of History: A Response to Ronald Grigor Suny," *Armenian Forum* 1, 2 (198): 59.
50. Munslow, *Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, p. 38.
51. E. H. Carr, *What is History? The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge January-March 1961* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 81-82.
52. Ibid., p. 97.
53. White, *Content of the Form*, p. 41.
54. Munslow, *Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, p. 41.
55. See Göçek's chapter, "Turkish Historiography and the Unbearable Weight of 1915," in this volume.
56. Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 41-42. In approaching events such as the Holocaust or what LaCapra calls other limit-events he argues the following: "The conventional

stance for the historian is often closest to that of the innocent bystander-onlooker. But this safe position is particularly in the case of the Holocaust and other extreme or limit-events. The most tempting position is probably that of the resister with marked sympathy for the victim and antipathy for the perpetrator or collaborator. . . . I think the historian should attempt to work out a complex position that does not simply identify with one or another participant-position. While acknowledging in particular the need to honor the resister and to listen attentively to and respect the position of the victim (or the multiple and variable positions of the victims), as well as to appreciate the complexities introduced by what Primo Levi called the gray zone of relations induced by the Nazi policy of trying to make accomplices of victims, the historian should attempt to prepare the way for overcoming the entire complex of relations defined by the grid: perpetrator-collaborator-victim-bystander-resister.

57. The brief first constitutional period refers to the short span from December 1876 to early 1878 when Sultan Abdul Hamid II allowed for constitutional rule and a parliamentary system. In February 1878, during the Russo-Turkish war, he prorogued the Parliament and suspended the constitution. Afterwards, an absolute monarchical rule was established for three decades. The Hamidian absolutist regime ended with the Young Turk revolution of 1908 and the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution of 1876. Thus, the second constitutional period lasted until 1918. During this period, the sultan had little authority and the Committee of Union and Progress ruled the empire.
58. The only complete studies remain those of Taner Akçam. See note 1 above.
59. Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, pp. 82-129.
60. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, pp. 194-195.
61. Ibid., pp. 173-199.
62. Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, p. 95.
63. Ibid., pp. 99-100.
64. Ibid., p. 101.
65. I use "selective Armeno-Turkish cooperation," since only one party (Dashnaktsutun) actively collaborated with the Young Turks.
66. Edmond Demolins (1852-1907) was the leading representative of the Le Play School and the editor of the journal *Science Sociale*. He frequently argued that decentralization was one of the primary reasons for what was perceived as Anglo-Saxon superiority. Sabaheddin believed that the Ottomans should follow the theories of Demolins in order to solve the problems of the empire. For more information on Demolins' theories, see Edmond Demolins, *A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1899).
67. Behaeddin Shakir, who played an important role in the liquidation process, led the special organization called *Teshkilat-i Mahsusa*. In 1920, he was tried in Constantinople in absentia and was sentenced to death.
68. Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, p. 136.
69. The organization was also known as the Committee of Progress and Union (CPU).
70. Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, p. 139.
71. Ibid., p. 191.
72. Ibid., p. 206.
73. Ibid., p. 207.
74. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, p. 84.
75. See Aykut Kansu, *Politics in Post-Revolutionary Turkey*, pp. 122-125.
76. According to the Armenian, Turkish, and Arabic newspapers of the time the Adana massacres were perpetrated by the reactionary forces in the Ottoman Empire. Later

- CUP organs blamed Abdul Hamid as the sole instigator of the counterrevolution, which resulted also in the massacres of Adana.
77. Adanır, "Le génocide Arménien?" pp. 410-411.
 78. Ibid., p. 411.
 79. Rashid Khalidi, ed., *Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p.x.
 80. Şükrü Hanioglu, "The Young Turks and the Arabs Before the Revolution in 1908," in Khalidi, *Origins of Arab Nationalism*, p. 43.
 81. See, for example, Adanır, "Le génocide Arménien?" p. 413.
 82. Akarlı, "Particularities of History," p. 60.
 83. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, p. 97.
 84. Ibid., p. 105.
 85. Ibid.
 86. Ibid., p. 150.
 87. Ibid., p. 166.
 88. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, p. 172. Berktaş, "Ermenileri özel örgüt öldürdü." Deringil, "The Study of the Armenian Crisis," p. 56, indicates that there were two levels of decision making: one, the official level, which issued orders not necessarily in bad faith; the other, a secret organization whose express purpose was to carry out forbidden activities.
 89. Berktaş, "Ermenileri özel örgüt öldürdü."
 90. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, p. 240.
 91. Aktar, "Son Osmanlı Meclisi ve Ermeni Meselesi," pp. 142-165.
 92. Ibid., p. 163.
 93. Ibid., p. 164.
 94. "Konferans Ertelendi" [The Conference Has Been Postponed], *Radikal*, May 25, 2005, p. 7.
 95. Some argue that because of pressure from the European Union, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan quietly encouraged the organizers of the conference to re-schedule the conference for September, days before the planned start of negotiations for Turkey entering the EU.
 96. Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," *Critical Inquiry* 7, 1 (1980): 178.
 97. Most of the scholarship written by Turkish liberal historians on the Armenian Genocide is in English.