

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

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Abstract: *The political, diplomatic, historical, sociological and legal aspects of the problem known as the “Armenian question” is being researched and analysed from different points of view. However, the psychological dimension which is the most important field in solving the problem is lacking. The paper deals with the past traumas and psychological situations of all the parties: Armenians of Armenia, Armenian diaspora, Turkish Armenians, Turkish people who defend the Turkish “official view”, Turks who apologise from the Armenians claiming that they feel guilty, and the Western world which puts pressure on Turkey. As it is defended that the basis of the problem lies in psychology, the solution is not focusing on the future, but on overcoming the past traumas.*

Keywords: *Mourning, social trauma, chosen trauma, time collapse, transferred memory*

In social disciplines such as political science, international relations and sociology, which deal with humans and human behaviors, the science of psychology is utilized frequently. As a result of using psychology in social sciences entailing “humans”, new sub-branches have emerged such as “social psychology” and “political psychology”. Social psychology is the scientific field that seeks to understand the nature and causes of individual behavior in social situations.¹ On the other hand, political psychology assesses the factors which form or affect social psychology and which entail macro issues such as group behavior, decision making and emotional status, along with micro issues such as racism, nationalism, genocide, radicalism and religious fundamentalism.

The common area of interest for both political scientists and psychoanalysts is to explain how humans behave in a group and understand how diplomacy will play a role in their arrangement. However, in reality, the human mind works primitively and the psychoanalyst is aware of this situation. On the other hand, political scientists believe that humans behave in a civilized manner.²

1 Robert A. Baron vd., *Exploring Social Psychology*, Third ed., Allyn and Bacon, Boston vd., 1989, p. 6.

2 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, Istanbul, 2007, pp. 262–263.

The issue known as the “Armenian question” puts forth that the Armenians have been subjected to genocide in 1915 by the Ottoman government and thus, wants the Republic of Turkey to accept these events as “genocide” and compensate for the losses. While the European/Western/Christian world supports the Armenians, they pressure the Turkish government to apologize for what they have done by making them confess that it is “genocide”. The formal view and majority opinion which could be entitled as “the Turkish side” has expressed that a tragedy does exist which could be explained by treason or situation of war, but this is not genocide and this could be proven by all kinds of documents and that even their archives are open to anyone who want to conduct research on this subject. Despite a majority opinion existing in Turkey, a group of liberal intellectuals defend that what was conducted against Armenians was genocide and apologize at least on their own behalf. The actors of this situation constituting the “Armenian question” which needs to be evaluated are the Armenian diaspora, Armenians of Armenia, Turkish Armenians, the Turkish community, the apologizing group in Turkey and the Westerners.

The Armenian question is in fact an issue which firstly concerns historians and jurists. However, due to the significance of its political dimension, political scientists and international relations specialists also examine this matter. The aspect of this subject which is the least researched, but is actually the most important is its psychological angle. In particular, social psychologists and experts of political psychology must address the Armenian question. Subjects such as the development of Turkey-Armenia relations, Armenians making peace with Turks and the view point of many European countries towards Turks and Turkey are directly related to the psychology of societies. The point which makes this branch the most important is the necessity to know the psychological state well for the resolution of problems within political, legal, social and all other areas, or at least to normalize the dialogues taking place. In other words, unless the psychological condition is repaired or a successful psychological preparation is done, no progress can be achieved in the Armenian question.

The Armenian Diaspora

Dealing with the Armenians as a whole will be an incorrect way to start for all kinds of evaluations. The reason why they have been separated into groups consisting of the Armenian diaspora, Armenians of Armenia and Turkish Armenians is, because all three groups have completely different life styles, interests and psychologies.

The group referred to as the “diaspora Armenians” represents Armenians living outside the territories of Armenia, Turkey and Iran. The group which fosters severe

hatred and hostility towards the Turks, which strongly defends the “genocide” thesis and which is worth being psychologically examined due to their non-ending enmity for 100 years is the diaspora Armenians.

The cause of the intensity of the Turkish hostility is related to the serious identity crisis the diaspora is in. although a majority live in more developed and rich countries than Armenia and Turkey and live under better social and economic conditions, they contain fewer rights than Armenians in Armenia and Turkey in developing themselves within cultural areas such as language, religion and education.³ Even though they could rescue their identity and culture by moving to Armenia, the economic conditions there are a serious obstacle for the diaspora to return to their motherlands. Since they suppose that if they adopt the identity of the country they live in and are a citizen of, they will altogether lose their Armenian feelings by becoming assimilated, they believe that their identities and cultural beings are under risk. The “glue” which will bind the Armenians together so that they will not be eliminated through assimilation, is the “genocide” experience and the intensive feelings related to this experience. Therefore, the only thing which in fact keeps the diaspora Armenians alive or maybe even forms and binds them together has emerged as psychology of victimhood and Turkish hostility.⁴ Essentially, it is even possible to put forth that what has made the Armenians Armenian is relocation, because the diaspora Armenians have been raised with the explanations of the 1915 events and have clung to each other through the tragedies endured by their ancestors.

Not leaving the sorrows suffered at the past and obsessively bringing them to the present is an unusual psychological problem. Mourning is an involuntary human reaction to changes that occur when the loss of possessions an individual feels positively or negatively connected to takes place. This reaction brings with it some gains. The mourner feels a new surge of energy that may be expressed towards new projects or new personal attachments. Although mourning marks a loss, it also brings a kind of new power. Without mourning, human beings cannot accept the change arising from losses taking place in the past. After mourning takes place following a great sorrow, the person returns to their everyday life as if the experience of loss has never taken place.⁵ Mourning is a much deeper psychological problem than feeling pain. The loss is accepted and after realizing

3 Erol Göka, “Ermeni Sorununun (Gözden Kaçan) Psikolojik Boyutu” (the Psychological Dimension of the Armenian Question), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 207.

4 Erol Göka, “Ermeni Sorununun (Gözden Kaçan) Psikolojik Boyutu” (the Psychological Dimension of the Armenian Question), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 206.

5 Vamik D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, pp. 155, 158.

this reality, one will continue their ordinary life. For instance, the “Megali Idea” of the Greeks is a kind of mourning, because the belief exists that the lost territories will be regained.⁶

Most of the time, problems will arise during the process of mourning. For instance, after sudden, unexpected or gruesome sorrows, the process of mourning will be skipped and there will be a return to the ordinary life. In this situation, the normal sadness and anger necessary for the grieving person to accept the sorrow will take place as if it never happened.⁷ “To be able to mourn is to be able to change. To be unable to mourn, to deny changes, carries great risks to the individual and to the organization”,⁸ Examining the mourning processes of groups is very important. This is because, if a group has not been able to mourn for a past loss, concepts of “apologizing” and “forgiving” will not be effective.

When societies cannot finish their mourning processes due to the losses being great, if the events experienced have not been able to be mourned or not been able to be connected to an outcome, the task of completing this psychology left half finished could either consciously or unconsciously, be passed on to the next generation: “I was not able to mourn, you continue”, “I was insulted, you save my honor”, “I was weak, you take my revenge” etc. which are explained by “passing on of traumas between generations”, creates shared tasks among the new generation in which no one knows how it has developed.⁹

At the basis of the necessity to have enemies and allies lies a great group interaction whose borders have been drawn by the emotions of love and anger.¹⁰ The task of passing on and sustaining traumas between generations could after some time, become the basis of nationalistic obsession on which identity could be based upon after assuming an ideological structure. Although the new generations have not experienced the 1915 events, they are able to accept the events which are located in their minds in the way their adults have told them as if they personally have experienced them and this way, are able to continue the passing on between generations.¹¹

6 Fatih Türkmenoğlu, An Interview with Vamik Volkan, *Milliyet Newspaper*, 23 September 2007.

7 Vamik D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, p. 160.

8 G.H.Pollock, “The Mourning Process and Creative Organizational Change”, *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, No. 25, 1977, p. 29 being cited by Vamik D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, p. 179.

9 Feride Cem, İş'te Portre: Vamik Volkan (There's the Portrait: Vamik Volkan), *Sabah İşte İnsan*, 28 December 2008.

10 Vamik D. Volkan, “Official and Unofficial Diplomacy: An Overview”, *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, Vamik D. Volkan, Joseph V. Montville, Demetrios A. Julius (der.), Lexington Books, Toronto, 1991, p. 8.

11 Vamik Volkan, “A Psychopolitical Approach for the Reduction of Ethnic or Other Large-Group Regression”, Center for Development Research (ZEF Bonn), Facing Conflicts, 14–16 December 2000 being cited by Haluk Özdemir, “Diaspora Ararat'ı Ararken: Ermeni Kimliği ve Soykırım İddiaları” (When the Diaspora is Searching for Ararat: Armenian Identity and Genocide Allegations), *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 14–15, Summer-Fall 2004.

Real memories of the traumas belong to the adults. Memories belonging to a person could not be passed on to someone else, but an adult could store images of traumas in a child's mind. Despite those children having no experience related to trauma, they have become a place of "storage". The purpose of the person storing these images is to eliminate the burden of his concerns by imposing the disturbing images upon others. This way, a psychological gene, affecting the feeling of identity, will also be provided to the child. It is highly difficult for these people to escape the situation they are in, because the person abandoning their task of being storage after becoming an adult will mean that their identity has changed. More importantly, it also means that the individual has broken the connection with whoever has made him storage or in other words, has killed that person psychologically. Therefore, the person will display great effort to recover.¹²

Apart from "mourning", there is a second concept which is necessary to address in order to understand group psychology. Vamık Volkan's concept of "chosen trauma" stands for the mental representative of the feeling of humiliation, pains, losses and despair experienced during the argument taking place in the past in the relations between two groups. As a determinant of identity, "chosen trauma" has great significance in the large group's life. The Czechs remembering the Battle of Bila Hora of 1621 each year is an example. Following this battle, the Czechs have been under the domination of the Hapsburg Empire for 300 years. The American Lakota Indians never forgetting the massacre of 1890 could also be an example of "chosen trauma".¹³

Another point which Vamık Volkan has drawn attention to is that whether "chosen trauma" has really been experienced or not is not very important for the so-called group. Rather than the reality of the trauma, its function is regarded as more important. "Chosen trauma" will be accepted in the process to keep the group identity alive and to develop an emotional tie between the group members and its accuracy will not be questioned.¹⁴ Perhaps it is for this reason that the initiatives in Turkey like creating a historical commission, opening the archives for examination, and denouncing of fake documents is somehow never valued. In relation to this, rather than what the experienced events are, how they are perceived and what kind of trauma it has created has become much more important than its dimension of truth. Observing the events in Turkey as a series of tragedies in which pains have been mutually suffered rather than genocide, or proving the atrocities committed by the Armenians upon Muslims, do not contain much significance for

12 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (gev.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, pp. 219–220.

13 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 211.

14 Vamık Volkan, *Politik Psikoloji (Political Psychology)*, Ankara Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Yayınları, Ankara, 1993, p. 70.

the Armenian diaspora. Even if it was not regarded as genocide, the Armenians would have thought that relocation alone was a tragic event.¹⁵

Another important concept is “time collapse”. It represents the shocking effect created when the trauma is suddenly triggered or willingly brought to the agenda, even if hundreds of years have passed, because it is as if the event has recently happened and has been experienced by that population.¹⁶ The awakened feelings when the “chosen traumas” are reactivated are alive as if the trauma has just taken place. The memories of the past, emotions felt at that moment and hopes for the future are intertwined through a “time collapse”.¹⁷

When a new danger is created by “others”, in order to reinforce the group identity of today’s generation and to confront the threat, groups having “chosen trauma” revives their “chosen trauma”. This rekindles the flames of the assignments which have to be fulfilled. Therefore, a resistance against settling group disputes through peaceful means takes place from time to time.¹⁸ The functions of the tasks set through “chosen trauma” could change over time. Although the assignment itself will not be eradicated, its goals could change. For instance, trauma could change into an exaggerated psychology of legitimacy. Exaggerated legitimacy puts forth that the group has the right to possess what they desire. For instance, irredentism is an ideology of political legitimacy.¹⁹

The reason for others to believe what the Armenians have made up could also be due to imposing exaggerated legitimacy. The allegations put forth by Armenians through documents, which most of them have been proven to be fake later on, are acknowledged by the Western world without questioning it, checking it or researching it. What is more interesting than the genocide allegations is that Armenian historians have declared themselves as the founders of the Urartu state and the world public opinion have instantly accepted the allegations without questioning them.²⁰ Despite the materials used in propagandas being fake most of

15 F. Sevinç Göral Alkan, “Psikoloji ve Psikanaliz Penceresinden Türk-Ermeni Meselesi: Mağduriyet Psikolojisi ve Büyük-Grup Kimliğinin Etkisi” (Turkish-Armenian Question within the Frame of Psychology and Psychoanalysis: Psychology of Victimhood and the Effect of Big Group), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 217.

16 F. Sevinç Göral Alkan, “Psikoloji ve Psikanaliz Penceresinden Türk-Ermeni Meselesi: Mağduriyet Psikolojisi ve Büyük-Grup Kimliğinin Etkisi” (Turkish-Armenian Question within the Frame of Psychology and Psychoanalysis: Psychology of Victimhood and the Effect of Big Group), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 218.

17 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 305.

18 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 239.

19 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 240.

20 Birsen Karaca, “Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmajı” (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments), *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165–166.

the time, due to some ignorance by the Westerners and identifying a scapegoat suiting their purpose, it has immediately been effective. The reasons for Europeans to immediately adopt the problems related to Turkey are explained under a separate title given below. However, there is also a social dimension to the issue. For instance, Habermas defends that a democratic discussion platform in modern societies are regressed through the development of the cultural industry and that it is shaped with manipulation, not with the rational exchange of views of the public. What Baudrillard tries to convey with “hyper reality” is that reality is actually just made up of images. In other words, we do not perceive reality, but perceive the images presented to us as reality. According to Baudrillard, a new reality composed of media images has emerged.

Some massive disasters could leave psychological effects. For instance, many individuals possess a condition known as “post-traumatic stress disorder”. This concept means that a person exposed to trauma remembers the past experience at unexpected times and re-lives that event. Among the problems resulting from massive traumas are also new social extreme occupations, change in the existing cultural traditions, establishment of monuments as objects of common links, and passing on of traumas from generation to generation.²¹

The impacts of traumas upon society could be very big. Following great traumas, new shared factors emerge. In other words, the most important component of identity which is shared and which ties the society together is the trauma experienced. This way, the existing cultural norms are also changing. The effects and results of this trauma are passed on from generation to generation through transfer, undergo change during these transfers, and sometimes subside or sometimes become stronger.²² While the emotional side of the events is forgotten or lose their effect when passed on from generation to generation, published books, pictures and documents are useful in preserving the memory. Although the number of narrators decreases, documents make it impossible to forget.²³

Archeologist Mehmet Özdoğan who has explained thinking of the past as a course of action unique to human beings, has separated this into two categories of “epical past” and “scaled concrete”. Epical past is a flat reality where reality and rumors have intermingled and lacks depth. Within this view point, it is not necessary to prove what has taken place in the past. What is important is to

21 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars), Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 137, 139.

22 Vamık Volkan, Vamık Volkan’s Political Psychology Seminars-2, Bahçeşehir University, 24-28 September 2007, <http://www.ekopolitik.org/public/printnews.aspx?id=1304>

23 Osman Sağırılı ve Cemil Yıldız, “Ermenilerin hayat Felsefesi Herkesle Kavga Etmek” (Armenians’ World View is to Fight with Everyone), “Küs Komşu Ermenistan” (The Offended Neighbor Armenia) article series, *Türkiye Newspaper*, 28 April 2010.

believe the rumors. However, thinking of the past is as important as being a part of the belief system.²⁴

The approach that even the most personal memories are formed only out of the communication and interaction of social groups²⁵ conveys that what we have to remember and forget is dictated by society. For the functioning of the mechanism which allows individuals and societies to forget and remember, social organizations like family and schools operate. The controlling instrument of this mechanism which is sometimes realized and sometimes is not recognized at all by individuals and societies, are things which acknowledge actions such as sins, shames, prohibitions, rewards, and ceremonies. History of humanity is filled with the successes and failures of the efforts to create a new social memory.²⁶

One of the most effective functions used to prevent human beings from forgetting is cinema, because cinema comes at the forefront of the most appropriate instruments to display the exaggerated and made up discourses. The 1919 movie shot with the support of Armenians in the U.S. entitled “Crucified Armenia and Auction of Souls” is accepted as the first of the examples which have addressed the Armenian allegations.²⁷ In all movies addressing the Armenian allegations, it is displayed that psychical violence has been inflicted upon Armenians during relocation. In order to strongly establish the motif of violence in the minds of the audience, it is crucial to repeat these types of scenes. Explaining violent actions by exaggerating them allow these types of scenes not to ever be forgotten by attaining a legendary attribute. It is possible to show the examples of incidents which are impossible to forget and which highly effects the audience, such as teenage girls stripped naked and forced to play, in the movies of “Skylark Farm” and “Ararat”

24 Mehmet Özdağan, “Tarih Öncesi Arkeolojisine Giriş” (Introduction to Archeology before History), *Atlas/Arkeo*, No. 1, 2002, p. 10 being cited by Birsan Karaca, “Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları” (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

25 Jan Assman, *Kültürel Bellek (Cultural Memory)*, Ayrıntı, İstanbul, 2000, p. 40 being cited by Birsan Karaca, “Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları” (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

26 Birsan Karaca, “Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları” (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

27 Ali Özuyar, Erciyes Üniversitesi-Neveşehir University-II International Social Research Symposium (EUSAS-II), “XIX.Yüzyılda Ermeni Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu ve Büyük Devletlerin Politikaları”, <http://www.soykirimgercegi.com/default2.asp> being cited by Birsan Karaca, “Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları” (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

by pouring gas over their friends and burning them, cutting off the heads of human beings in almost all these movies, and shoeing human beings in the movies “Mayris” (Mother) and “Ararat”.²⁸ Meanwhile, no one thinks about the fact that even the smallest horseshoe is too big for a human being’s foot.

Exaggerations and fictions about the “other” or the “stranger” entails the purpose of consolidating and keeping feelings alive by reinforcing that the stranger is the enemy so that it will never be forgotten. The definition of a stranger starts from birth. The actual identity of the stranger does not matter; what matters is “who the stranger is not”. The response to the stranger is a function of the process differentiating “mother” from “not mother” or the “good” mother from the “bad” one who cannot contain the child’s needs.²⁹ While differentiating between enemy and friend, the affect of the differentiation existing between “stranger” and “acquaintance” is significant. For instance, although the term “barbaric” actually means stranger or someone not belonging to us, it has started to be widely used as “enemy” and later on “cruel, butcher”.

The differentiation of enemy and friend lies at the basis of creating identity.³⁰ The only tie keeping the Armenian diaspora together is Turkish hostility and the revenge of “genocide”. However much this linking tie appeals to feelings and however much it is intense, it will be that much connective and the identity will be that much strong. Therefore, Turkish hostility, sorrowful stories, psychology of victimhood, the desire for revenge and the goal of the “genocide” being acknowledged are the elements keeping the diaspora together as an Armenian community.

While examining the subject of social traumas, generally, the method of psychoanalysis which aims to bring the forgotten past to the consciousness is used. The mind chooses the events and if not sorted out through psychoanalysis, will enter into a tendency of distortion. It is necessary for the mind to select someone guilty and to judge him. Today’s Armenian mind is based on transmitting the events over five generations. During transmission, some changes take place. Transmitted memory exaggerates what has happened to Armenians, while displaying the Turks as monstrous.³¹ While no sickly hostility, grudge or

28 Birsen Karaca, “Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları” (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

29 Vamık D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, p. 18

30 Vamık D. Volkan, “Official and Unofficial Diplomacy: An Overview”, *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, Vamık D. Volkan, Joseph V. Montville, Demetrios A. Julius (ed.), Lexington Books, Toronto, 1991, p. 7.

31 Gündüz Aktan, “Bellek ve Tarih” (Memory and History), 18 April 2006, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, pp. 184–185.

resentment existed in the explanations of the first generation Armenians who directly lived through the relocation, the dimension of the story has changed by including fictional events into the explanations of the following generations. Anger, disappointment, fury, pain and sadness exist among those subjected to relocation, but no fury exists towards Turkish hostility. Anger and fury, emerging as they have drifted apart from reality and real history, have started to take on a morbid form.

While some diaspora Armenians are born in Turkey, some have some kind of relation with Turkey and Turks, and some of their families have important ties with Turkey, some have no links with Turks at all. Those having the most hateful and radical thoughts are those having no ties with Turks who do not recognize the real Turks and only know them through the stories told. The explanations put forth in a meeting of French Representative of the Dashnaksutyun Party Armand Samelyan and a Turkish journalist openly displays the weight of psychological trauma. Samelyan, who has stated that he has not felt any pain and remained indifferent while watching on television the Turkish children being left under the wreckage and dying during the 1999 earthquake, has also expressed his awareness that this condition is not normal. However, Turks are the guilty ones again, because according to the representative of the Dashnaksutyun Party, Turks have destroyed his feelings of pity and has made him become inhuman. In his interview given to the journalist who was the second Turkish person he had spoken to all throughout his life, he has stated that internal settlement is still continuing, but that rather than being an inheritor of those responsible for “genocide”, it is better to be in the position of a victim, although with a distorted psychology.³²

The intense of anger and hatred could distance the individuals from thinking within the framework of mentality and from reality. Just as regarding all the Turks as a terrible monster, not accepting the clear truths is also a problematic situation. For instance, one of the issues Armenians struggle to accept is the deaths of Turks and Muslims in the same period which are much higher than Armenian deaths.³³ When the Turks mention the Armenians’ share in these deaths, these views are rejected by Armenians. Armenians, who put forth that these deaths have resulted from diseases, starvation and difficult nature conditions, do not accept that Armenian deaths could have also resulted from these reasons. This is because, in Armenians’ minds, only the Turks have killed the Armenians.

32 Cansu Çamlıbel, “Diasporanın Haletiruhiyesi” (the diaspora’s Psychological Situation), *Hürriyet*, 18 April 2010, p. 7.

33 Justin Mc Carthy, *Muslims and Minorities*, New York University Press, New York, 1983, pp. 133, 134. The author has shown that 2.462.250 people have died which constitutes 18% of the entire Muslim population in Anatolia between 1912-1922 based on statistics.

Another problem which could arise during the process of mourning is the obstinacy of mourning. In this situation, a passing on between generations takes place. A generation which has not been able to mourn, usually unconsciously passes on this unfinished business to its progeny. The real trauma passed on by the generation which has not been able to defend themselves against it and which have victimized it, has psychologized and mythologized it. Historical truth has been replaced by emotional narrative. This way, a group's view point becomes altogether one-sided.³⁴

For instance, the number of Armenian deaths has constantly increased over time, much more intense violent actions have been added to the tortures, massacres and rapes, good Turkish images conveyed seldom have entirely been eliminated and inclusions of concentration camps, gas chambers and execution by collectively shooting everyone has taken place. Into these inclusions, stories such as Ottoman authorities promising Kurds that if they kill Armenians, they will be given territory, and Turks using Armenian gravestones for toilets has been added.³⁵

In articles addressing the Armenian question with the purpose to have a psychological influence, Birsen Karaca has put forth that writers have made special efforts to depict everything belonging to Turks negatively and have even gone further and used the art of exaggeration. Moreover, they have put these forth within the framework of their own mental designs and not as a result of research and examination. This way, they have ensured that the target group has perceived fiction as reality. In these texts, the Turk is "absolutely bad" and the Armenian is the "absolute victim, slave, miserable". Karaca defends that the reason for attempting to display Armenians as miserable in such an exaggerated way is to weaken the just truths of the causes of the Armenian relocation. More openly, activities like cooperating with the enemy, massacres, terrorist actions, and gangs have tried to be reflected as forced actions resulting out of Armenians' "despair".³⁶

By observing the proposal of Armenians during the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) organized in the U.S., how pathologic the psychology of the diaspora is could be seen: "*We will construct a very big monument. We are collecting money for years for this monument. On this monument, how Turks are bad human beings will be written. If you apologize from us right here, the monument will still be constructed, but then Turks being less bad will be written.*"³⁷ In addition to the explanation of this grave situation provided

34 Vamık D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, p. 176.

35 Julia Pascal, "A People Killed Twice", *The Guardian*, 27 January 2001.

36 Birsen Karaca, "Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yarattılan Ermeni İmajı" (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments), *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165-166.

37 Feride Cem, İş'te Portre: Vamık Volkan (There's the Portrait: Vamık Volkan), *Sabah İşte İnsan*, 28 December 2008.

above, it is useful to remember Auden's thesis: "If we had not possessed hatred toward the "others" within the distinction between "us" and "others", then we would not have any love directed to ourselves."³⁸ This thesis not only explains the situation of the Armenian diaspora, but also in particular violent, racist and discriminatory approaches of those living within societies containing the crisis of identity and feelings of guilt such as the Western European nation.

Being aware of the situation they are in, Armenians have some helping suggestions to escape this situation. The group victimizing themselves will expect their losses to be recognized by others, in particular, by its opponents. It is significant for the enemy to recognize the group's mourning and suffering.³⁹ According to Armenians, since Turks do not accept the "genocide", Armenians cannot overcome the trauma and still live in the past. Since Turkey's denial does not free the Armenians from the past, it prevents them from focusing on the future. Therefore, in order to become normal again, the Armenian society is connected to its enemy. Being dependent on its enemy for normalization⁴⁰ could further increase the hatred of the Armenians.

Armenians' extensive group identity is closely linked to the Turks' extensive group identity and in fact, cannot exist independently from the Turks. Therefore, the two Armenian identities of "victim" and "victimized" must exist internally together.⁴¹ The Armenian diaspora identity being established upon Turkish hostility, but on the other hand, the necessity for Turks to recognize the "genocide" in order for Armenians to free themselves from the past traumas is a sensitive matter seen as a paradox. Is confessing "genocide", apologizing and fulfilling the compensation requests of Armenians by Turks a result that must be desired by Armenians? From now on, which issue and which purpose will act as glue which will keep the Armenian diaspora together? Will it be possible to find another factor as strong as Turkish hostility and the recognition of "genocide" for them to stay together or protect their identities? What is interesting is that perhaps Turkey's recognition of the "genocide" will eradicate the Armenian identity and allow diaspora Armenians to assimilate. Considering that the primary reason for Armenia to remain standing is the existence of the diaspora whose population is much higher than Armenians', the assimilation of diaspora Armenians might bring the end of the state.

38 W.H.Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror", J. Heath-Stubbs ve D. Wright (der.), *The Faber Book of Twentieth Century Verse*, Faber & Faber, Winchester, Mass, 1947, p. 36 being cited by Vamık D. Volkan, *Kanbağı. Etik Gururdan Etik Teröre (Bloodie, from Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terror)*, Bağlam, İstanbul, 1999, p. 37.

39 Vamık D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, pp. 172, 173.

40 Gündüz Aktan, "Ermeni Olaylarının Psikolojisi" (The Psychology of Armenian events), 2 February 2002, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa'da Irkçılık ve Türkiye'nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey's EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 52.

41 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek. Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, pp. 203-204.

Another interesting and paradoxical situation has emerged when the Turks have stated to the Armenians “we understand your pain”. Considering that half of the Turkish population is immigrants, it is possible to express that they can understand the Armenians regarding half lived lives. However, it could be seen that Armenians have rejected Turkish initiatives of empathy. In the meetings of Armenians and Turks taking place in the U.S., the truth that the Turks have come from families migrating to different areas in the Ottoman Empire has been stated. Armenians cannot even imagine that Turks suffered too.⁴² During his observations of the TARC meetings, Vamık Volkan has expressed that the Turks openly accept that Armenians have suffered a great tragedy in 1915, but whenever they show sympathy to Armenians’ pain, they are driven back. He has also stated that even when Armenians openly request from Turks to understand their sorrows, they do not accept their sympathy.⁴³ Putting forth that great concern develops among Armenians when Turks show empathy for the 1915 events, Volkan has explained the reason for this concern as Armenians not wanting to lose the title of “the world’s number one victim”, thus they regard Turks trying to understand them as people competing against them and damaging their social identities.⁴⁴ According to Volkan, the key will be to find an empathetic understanding that they all have suffered.⁴⁵

According to Vamık Volkan, the issue of the Armenian “genocide” has now become a “psychic reality”. In psychoanalysis, a concept explaining the development of an idea stands for a person’s perception of how an event starts and develops by using the desires, fears, and spiritual defenses within them. This way, proofs which could change this situation will not create any changes. Today, “genocide” has especially become a “psychic reality” for Armenians.⁴⁶

Armenians of Armenia

Armenia, with its troublesome geography, is a country having greater and stronger neighbors and suffering from security problems.⁴⁷ Being caught between regional

42 Douglas Frantz, “Unofficial Commission Acts to Ease Turkish-Armenian Enmity”, *The New York Times*, 9 July 2001.

43 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek. Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 205.

44 Feride Cem, İş’te Portre: Vamık Volkan (There’s the Portrait: Vamık Volkan , *Sabah İşte İnsan*, 28 December 2008.

45 Douglas Frantz, “Unofficial Commission Acts to Ease Turkish-Armenian Enmity”, *The New York Times*, 9 July 2001.

46 Feride Cem, İş’te Portre: Vamık Volkan (There’s the Portrait: Vamık Volkan , *Sabah İşte İnsan*, 28 December 2008.

47 F. Sevinç Görül Alkan, “Psikoloji ve Psikanaliz Penceresinden Türk-Ermeni Meselesi: Mağduriyet Psikolojisi ve Büyük-Grup Kimliğinin Etkisi” (Turkish-Armenian Question within the Frame of Psychology and Psychoanalysis: Psychology of Victimhood and the Effect of Big Group) , *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 216.

powers like Iran, Turkey and Russia, Armenia is a backward country suffering from poverty. Armenia has no neighbors in which they have friendly relations with. This country not only has corrupt relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan, but also has tensions with Iran and Georgia relating to minority problems. We must recall that Armenia's political independence is limited and is to a large extent, under the control of Russia. Within their asymmetrical relations with Russia which takes on a brotherly position, the problem of settling accounts of the past with Russians exists. When the facts that Armenia is among the countries where the most immigration has taken place and the diaspora is larger than the population of the whole country is included into the above mentioned negative conditions, it is possible to reiterate that Armenia has the necessary conditions for the Armenian population to assume a psychology of victimhood. The thing which keeps the troubled Armenians standing and maybe the only thing which prevents them from giving up is once again understood to be Turkish hostility.⁴⁸

At the basis of not providing any space for good memories of the Turks and transmitting only the bad memories most of the time by mounting them, is the fact that the Armenian identity has been abstracted from the Turkish identity. This condition could be explained as "separation of identity".⁴⁹ For instance, following the great earthquake of 1988 in Armenia, the hostile neighbor Azerbaijan's proposal to aid Armenians by donating blood has been rejected. The point which Armenians have opposed has been the mixing of bloods, since blood represents identities.⁵⁰

No matter how victimized Armenians display themselves, in many of their sources, articles exist which defend how combative, strong, durable and successful a nation Armenians are. Their strategic plans and the pride they take in the numbers of Turks they have killed in their conflicts with Turkey during the Ottoman period could be found in many documents. At the same time, a "rebellious community" image of the Armenians exist which is displayed with rebellion motifs.⁵¹ Karaca addresses the incompatible human image of the Armenian community found in Armenian literature and in particular, emphasizes the "crazy" image used by man of letters William Saroyan regarding Armenians. Compared with other

48 Osman Sağrılı ve Cemil Yıldız, "Ermenilerin hayat Felsefesi Herkesle Kavga Etmek" (Armenians' World View is to Fight with Everyone), "Küs Komşu Ermenistan" (The Offended Neighbor Armenia) başlıklı yazı dizisi, *Türkiye Gazetesi*, 28 April 2010.

49 Birsen Karaca, "Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları" (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

50 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 145.

51 Birsen Karaca, "Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmajı" (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments), *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165–166.

communities, Saroyan puts forth that Armenians are not as comfortable about who they are and what their purposes are and have been in competition right from the start. Stating that the Armenians are crazy, but know how to suppress their angers, Saroyan defends that properties the other nations have such as obedience, simplicity, seriousness, harmony, enthusiasm, respect, ability, courtesy, and not being demanding do not exist in Armenian society.⁵²

The area which the Armenians inhabit has been in turmoil throughout history and especially has been used as a battlefield by large states. Therefore, the Armenians' political lives have lacked stability. Most often, historians have shown this instable environment as the reason for Armenians to change direction through radical ideas. Among the Armenians' decisions of change, radical experiences have taken place, even extending to switching sides on battlefields. It has been put forth that even 364 years ago during the battle between Persians and Byzantines, Armenians have changed sides when they saw that Persians are much stronger.⁵³

In documents related to Armenians and written by them, it can be seen that properties such as victimhood which gives them power or prideful traits like being rebellious and competitive has not only been touched upon, but also their insulting attributes have also frequently been expressed. According to Karaca, Armenians remaining unresponsive to the unfavorable articles written about them constitute a separate topic of examination.⁵⁴

In sociology, the view that the period of being indifferent to the messages conveyed by mass communication tools or accepting what is presented without questioning is highly dominant. Directly accepting the messages in a passive way, without questioning or criticizing them at all is called the "hypodermic model". The Frankfurt School also calls this the "numbing model", because bombardment of information destroys and numbs the abilities to think about the goal freely and within an extensive framework, and to question and critically approach the matter. In the interpretative model which is the opposite of this, the target group is able to compare the information provided to them with those in other sources and show reactions.

52 W. Saroyan, *Paris-Fresno Güncesi 1967-68*, Aras, İstanbul, 2001, p. 57 being cited by Birsen Karaca, "Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmajı" (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments) , *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165-166.

53 G.H.Sarkisyan, *Ustanovlenie feodalnogo obşçestvennogo stroya i padenie drevnearmyanskogo gosudarstva*, bkz.M.G.Nersisyan, *İstoriya armyanskogo naroda*, Yerevan, 1980, p. 94 being cited by Birsen Karaca, "Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları" (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25-26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

54 Birsen Karaca, "Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmajı", (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments) , *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165-166.

On the other hand, Armenians are actually in a position of a “cheated community”. The Roman Empire has asked for the Armenians support against the Persians and despite obtaining their support, has not fulfilled their commitments to the Armenians. Similarly, the Westerners have also taken advantage of the Armenians while trying to destroy the Ottoman Empire, but then have abandoned them. Perhaps, the Russian have taken advantage of the Armenians the most for their own interests. The independence promised to the Armenians has been obtained only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and has not even been entirely achieved. Even today, Western countries, by using Armenians, try to block Turkey’s membership to the European Union and in fact, harm Armenia. Therefore, Armenians are in the position of “a nation being used by great powers for their own interests and then being abandoned without being significant enough for those powers to fulfill their commitments”. It is unclear how aware the Armenians are of this, but it cannot be possible for them to not feel the psychological discomforts of this situation. Looking from this angle, the Ottomans seem much more innocent when compared to Russia or the West.⁵⁵

The point in which Armenia is at an advantage over the diaspora is disinformation power being at the hands of the state. In the Armenian national archives, thousands of documents exist in which the names of those killed in hundreds of villages in Turkey are written one by one. When Turkish journalists visiting the archives have asked for the original copies from the authorities, they have been told that the documents are real. However, when said that pens have started to be used in 1943, whereas the documents are written in pen, it has been put forth that the authorities have changed the subject.⁵⁶

Karaca displays the information provided in the “Armenian History” book, organized for elementary seventh grade students in Armenia:

“Christians under Turkish domination in which the Armenians also exist, were accepted as the oppressed society - subjects having no rights. They were devoid of all types of fundamental rights and the security of their lives and assets. Under the anarchic conditions dominant in the country, the Armenian peasants could one day lose everything their earned by working under difficult conditions for many years.”⁵⁷

55 Birsan Karaca, “Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmaj”, (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments), *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165–166.

56 Osman Sağırlı ve Cemil Yıldız, “Ermeni Arşivlerine Girdik Orijinal Belge Yok” (We Entered Armenian Archives, no Original Documents Exist), “Küs Komşu Ermenistan” (The Offended Neighbor Armenia) article series, *Türkiye Newspaper*, 26 April 2010.

57 Hayots patmutyun, Hanrakrtakan dprotsi 7-rd dasarani dasagirk, Hmbagrutyan. Prof. V.Barhudaryani, ‘Luys’, (Yerevan, 1999), ec. 59 being cited by Birsan Karaca, “Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmaj” (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments) , *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165–166.

In this example of disinformation, the facts that the subjects have not only consisted of non-Muslims, that “*millet-i sadıka*” (loyal nation) has been used for Armenians and that an honorable status has been given to Armenian citizens have tried to be erased.⁵⁸

Although the psychological processes of groups are similar to those of individuals, they differ particularly in the cases of reaction to losses. Feelings of anger and pain shared by a group may reach an uncontrollable pitch.⁵⁹ Although this condition could be eligible for diaspora Armenians, it may also be possible for Armenians of Armenia.

Karaca reminds us of several headlines found in *Ortadoğu* newspaper on 5 September 2005: “Young Armenian couple in Lebanon applying to go to Turkey for their honeymoon were confronted with the danger of being banished by the church”, “Armenian Minister of Culture emphasizing that it is necessary to look towards the future all together, was identified by several individuals as a traitor to his country for his words entailing peaceful messages”, “Van Kirkorian of the TARC was threatened by radical Armenians and narrow minded extensions of the Dashnak administration for taking place within the Commission. Kirkorian, taking his children and wife along with him, was forced to move to another state in the U.S.”⁶⁰

Research has shown that having incorrect information regarding Turkey has increased as the level of education has risen. This proves the parallelism between the increase in being able to obtain informative sources and disinformation becoming open.⁶¹ Disinformation is information whose truth is not important, which is even incorrect most of the time and which is tried to deliberately be spread in order to serve for a particular purpose. The existence of a common external threat allows the society or community to cling to each other, while also keeping them alive by keeping the society awake. The Armenian administration attempts to keep the weakened state alive through the “Turkish threat”.

58 Birsen Karaca, “Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmaj” (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments), *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165–166.

59 Vamik D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, pp. 164–165.

60 Birsen Karaca, “Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları” (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

61 F. Sevinç Göral Alkan, “Psikoloji ve Psikanaliz Penceresinden Türk-Ermeni Meselesi: Mağduriyet Psikolojisi ve Büyük-Grup Kimliğinin Etkisi” (Turkish-Armenian Question within the Frame of Psychology and Psychoanalysis: Psychology of Victimhood and the Effect of Big Group), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 219.

Existing differences in lifestyles, psychological status and interests between Armenians in Armenia and diaspora Armenians has led to tensions between the two societies. For Armenians in Armenia, the urgent and primary subject is not “genocide”, but the normalization of relations. This way, the border will open and the country suffering from heavy poverty will achieve economic prosperity. Since the diaspora Armenians have a rather economically prosperous life, they are not able to entirely understand their cognates in Armenia. It is known that in order to protect their identities and presence, diaspora Armenians rely much more on the genocide allegations than those in Armenia. Therefore, for the diaspora, “genocide” is always the primary issue. When rapprochement or negotiations take place between Turkey and Armenia, diaspora Armenians apply pressure over Armenia not to make concessions for the “genocide” issue and not to take a step back. The Armenian diaspora’s “genocide” obsession actually has a negative impact on Armenia.

Theses stating the exact opposite of this also exists. For instance, in an interview conducted with students studying Turcology in Armenia, it has been revealed that the primary issue is not the opening of the border, but the recognition of the “genocide”. The students have indicated that the problem cannot be resolved by apologies, because it is a territorial issue. Moreover, according to those participating in the interview, Eastern Anatolia is Western Armenia.⁶²

On the one hand, diaspora Armenians create discomfort for not being able to realize the condition of those living in poverty in Armenia, while on the other they continue to keep their distance from this poverty. In other words, while wanting the Armenian community and state to “struggle”, they continue to lead a prosperous life style and remain distant from helping out. At this point, it is necessary to remind you that they are very different from the Jewish diaspora who personally participated in the struggle by going to Israel.⁶³ For the sake of their identity crisis, while strengthening their identities by utilizing the “genocide” issue without being disturbed, the Armenian diaspora harms Armenia. In other words, while Armenia has aimed at constructiveness in their relations with Turkey, diaspora’s approach has been more destructive in their relations with Turkey.

Armenians in Armenia exist who are aware of the harms brought to their country by the pressures of the diaspora and Western intervention. For instance, Director of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies Richard Giragosian has

62 Osman Sağırılı and Cemil Yıldız, “Sizinle Uğraşmak için Türkoloji Okuyoruz” (We are Studying Turcology to Struggle Against You), “Küs Komşu Ermenistan” (The Offended Neighbor Armenia) article series, *Türkiye Newspaper*, 27 April 2010.

63 Gündüz Aktan, “Bir İlk (1)”, 15 May 2002, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşina Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 67.

put forth that with the drafts adopted by parliaments of countries other than Turkey and Armenia, this problem cannot be resolved. According to Giragosian, these drafts are not the product of the Armenian government's work, but more of the Armenian diaspora and it is an action of European countries who want to punish Turkey by accusing them and driving them into a corner. Expressing that this brings with it more harm than benefit to both countries, Giragosian has stated that the place to resolve the "genocide" allegations is not the parliaments of third countries.⁶⁴

Apart from the differences between Armenians in Armenia and diaspora Armenians, clear differences even exist among the Armenians in Armenia in their approaches towards Turkey. Next to the more furious and strict political approaches of Yerevan Armenians, it could be seen that the approach in Gyumri has been more friendly, peaceful, and has primarily aimed at the opening of the border by getting rid of upsetting issues.⁶⁵

Turkish Armenians

As known, Turkish Armenians, together with Iranian Armenians, are not included in the diaspora group. Just like the diaspora, Iranian Armenians also having hostile attitudes and feelings towards the Turks, makes them no different than the diaspora within a psychological category. On the other hand, the Turkish Armenians must be evaluated as a third category since they are not a diaspora and are different than the diaspora and Armenians in Armenia.

Among a majority of Turkish Armenians, feelings of anger, resentment and revenge can be seen. For the Armenians, the subject of genocide is a newly raised issue which has not "yet" drawn many supporters. For the Turkish Armenians, as much as Armenianness, Turkishness is also an identity they take pride in. When the Turkish Armenians say "us", they include the whole of the Turkish society in that category. Turkish Armenians who participate in religious holidays as much as national holidays, also carry out celebrations in their schools. On significant days like the Republic Day, just as a majority of the other schools, they hang Turkish flags and commemorate Atatürk.⁶⁶

Either due to the society they live in or the pressures of diaspora Armenians, Turkish Armenians have several problems. During the period of ASALA terror, as

64 Osman Sağırlı and Cemil Yıldız, "Ermenilerin Toprak Talebi Yok" (Armenia has no Territorial Requests), "Küs Komşu Ermenistan" (The Offended Neighbor is Armenia) article series, *Türkiye Newspaper*, 23 April 2010.

65 Oya Eren, TRT1 News, *İzlenim News*, 2 March 2010.

66 *Tercüman Newspaper*, 29 October 2006.

a result of the negative approaches and pressures exhibited towards Armenians in Turkey, the community had retired into themselves, while some hid their identities by changing their names.

While the members of the terrorist organization or supporters are responsible, directing the offense and anger to the whole of the Armenian community is a problematic approach. Although limited, Turkey can come under the influence of foreign ideology and actions such as racism, discrimination and intolerance, which do not belong to these territories. It should be emphasized that those adopting these types of deviant views have come from extreme nationalists or fundamentalists.

It could be seen that Turkish Armenians are on the road of assimilation. Although negative conditions forcing them to assimilate, such as the ASALA terror, do not exist anymore, it is interesting to see that they willingly prefer to assimilate. The similarity of Armenian culture and life style to Turkish culture is a factor which makes their assimilation much easier. Yet, even just changing names means that they have been assimilated. On the other hand, the remaining factor of religion has remained to be an issue not being considered too much by Muslim Turks.

The greatest problem of Turkish Armenians is living as a closed society, although willingly, and assimilating. A second problem is, again willingly, existing within restricted areas for job opportunities. Based on all Turkish citizens being equal in front of law, although they do not have any legal restrictions, they do not prefer to work at governmental levels. It is known that invisible, implicit and indirect pressures, mocks, and belittling exist in society even if in small amounts. Armenians not feeling comfortable with their names, ethnic origin, language, religion, and culture, unexceptionally in all places and situations, is a great problem for them. If the equality in front of law of all citizens of the Republic of Turkey cannot be fulfilled due to this equality not entirely existing at a social level, then it is possible to refer to a great and significant problem. It must be reminded within the framework of social awareness that it is not the Armenians having Turkish citizenship which anger should be directed towards by the people of Turkey who are subjected to pressures from almost the whole world because of the Armenian question and who are constantly accused in the international sphere, despite thinking that they do not deserve this at all.

A much greater problem is the approach of diaspora Armenians and Armenians in Armenia, who inflict greater pressures than the Turks in Turkey, towards themselves. The diaspora, who do not regard the Turkish Armenians as real Armenians, believes that due to remaining silent towards being suppressed, being forced to assimilate and being insulted, they lead a dishonorable life. No interpretation of the “genocide” issue developing recently has emerged as another

reason for Turkish Armenians being accused of remaining indifferent. Here, the responsibility is in the hands of the Turkish state and Turkish nation who must take protective and defensive initiatives against insults and accusations directed towards their own citizens.

The Psychology of Turkish Armenians⁶⁷

Upon observing the group psychology of Turks, it could be seen that in general, attitudes towards a certain race or nation and in particular, feelings like resentment, anger, and hostility towards the Armenians do not exist. Most of the time, Turks have listened to stories of Armenian massacres, tortures and disloyalty with pain and sorrow. However, during transmitting what is described, passing on of hatred and racist feelings towards the Armenian nation has either consciously or unconsciously not taken place. On the contrary, shared moments with Armenians and neighborly relations filled with love have been described with great passion. While describing what happened, the Turkish side has not blamed Armenianness and the Armenians, but only those Armenians committing the massacres. Despite the disasters suffered throughout history, negative racism does not exist among Turks.⁶⁸ The reason for the existing differences between Armenians and Turks who have suffered great pains is that an identity crisis exists, despite it being true that Turks have been faced with problems concerning their identities from time to time.

In public opinion polls, much less hostility can be seen in Turks' stances towards the Armenians. It is not possible to talk about a concept called the "Turkish view", because the view point of the Turkish society is not homogenous. As much as those who resent Armenians, all kinds of individuals also exist among Turks who approach Armenians with sympathy and observe them without any discrimination.⁶⁹ Those regarding the Armenians as an enemy are not only a small minority, but also come from radical groups.

On the Armenian side, it could be seen that the approach towards Turkey is not homogenous. According to the whole of the Armenian diaspora and a majority of the Armenians in Armenia, almost all Turks are enemies. Moreover, it is out of the question for Turks who approach Armenians negatively to be radical about many other issues also. According to the moderates, their problem is not with the Turkish

67 "Türkiye Türkleri" (Turkish Turks) entails Turks living in Turkey. Since the Armenians living in Turkey and having Turkish citizenship are dealt with under another title, they are not included in this group.

68 Lale Şıvgın, An interview with Vamık Volkan, *Tercüman Newspaper*, 23 November 2007.

69 F. Sevinç Göral Alkan, "Psikoloji ve Psikanaliz Penceresinden Türk-Ermeni Meselesi: Mağduriyet Psikolojisi ve Büyük-Grup Kimliğinin Etkisi" (Turkish-Armenian Question within the Frame of Psychology and Psychoanalysis: Psychology of Victimhood and the Effect of Big Group), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 220.

community; their hatred is directed towards the Turkish state since it has both caused these massacres to take place and has denied them.

Another important point is the approach taken towards those having counterviews. In countries like France and the U.S. where the Armenian diaspora is the most powerful, the authors of books which defend that “genocide” has not taken place cannot find any publishing house to publish their books. Furthermore, these individuals who defend the counterviews are even sometimes threatened. The same goes for Armenia. Not a single book could be found in the county which reflects the Turkish side’s view and no articles have been written in this direction. Looking at Turkey, it is seen that books and articles defending the “genocide” are written freely and censorships and pressures on those defending counterviews do not exist.

It is known that Turks have been driven from the Balkans and the Caucasus to Anatolia, have been ripped away many times from the territories they live on, and have been subjected to various atrocities. One cannot say that the pains experienced by the Turks are any different from the Armenian relocation. However, a significant difference of the Turks is that despite everything they have suffered, they do not possess any general feelings of resentment towards the nation or race which have committed atrocities towards them. Looking at the genetic memory, it could be seen that Turks tend to forget the atrocities inflicted upon them and is a society which looks towards the future. While the Turks are raising children for the future without hatred and hostility, Armenians are raising the new generations towards the past based on “transferred memory”.⁷⁰ For instance, during the TARC meetings, Turkish participants have recalled that they are also the children of those driven from their homes by Christians. While the Turks have not mourned or complained about their exiled ancestors, the Armenian life is built on not forgetting.⁷¹

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, problems of identity have arisen in almost all over the world. When the equilibrium between the Communist world and the Western world has been abolished, a majority of the nations have started directing the question of “who are we” to their selves. Vamık Volkan puts forth that the question of “who are we” has emerged when empires have collapsed and colonies have been abolished, for instance, when the Ottoman Empire has collapsed and the period of colonization of India and Africa have come to an end. While searching for responses to the question of “who are we”, firstly ethnic, then religious identities have emerged.⁷²

70 Gündüz Aktan, “Ermeni Olaylarının Psikolojisi” (The Psychology of Armenian Events), 2 February 2002, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 52.

71 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 208.

72 Lale Şıvgın, An interview with Vamık Volkan, *Tercüman Newspaper*, 23 November 2007.

One of the problems of Turks is their silence related to what happened to those Armenians living on Ottoman territories when the Ottoman Empire started to collapse. However, Turks do not maintain their silence only on the Armenians, but also on what happened to their selves. Armenians link the reason of Turks remaining silent to Turkish feelings of guilt. However, according to Volkan, the actual reason is Turks not mourning over their losses emerging with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Turks whose territories have shrank, who have been driven away from their homes, and who have been murdered, have not been able to mourn over what they experienced. In Volkan's evaluations, the person who has prevented the Turks from mourning over the pain of losing their empire, reputation, power, homes, territories and loved ones has been Atatürk. By linking the reason of remaining silent over the pain and losses experienced to new Turkey and its creator being "almighty", Volkan has conveyed that there was not time to grieve over painful memories.⁷³

On the other hand, when new Turkey was being established, war was not waged only against foreigners, but also against Turks who were adherent of sultans. Therefore, the sultan and Ottoman images have been perceived negatively by Turkish citizens of new Turkey. In the first years of modern Turkey, when value was only bestowed upon some selected aspects of the Ottoman pasts, the others have been denied. Thus, it should be stated that the silence of Turks regarding the 1915 events is in essence a part of a general silence.⁷⁴

Turks not being able to mourn over the collapse of the Ottoman Empire is important for establishing the basis of today's psychology. Vamık Volkan has expressed that despite mourning not being able to take place, the Turkish nation has found its power to exist with the new Turkish identity and nationalist feeling created by Atatürk. Since it entails the principle of "peace with the world", the so-called feeling of nationalism is not negative like it is in the West.⁷⁵ Stating that the Turks have just started looking at what they lost, after a long time a new leader has not been able to replace the charismatic leader following his death, Volkan has assessed this as a natural process.⁷⁶

No matter how much memory the Turks have full of victories and heroism, they also always take on a defensive position. Since Turks regard themselves as targets for attacks in almost all areas within the international sphere, it could be observed

73 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, pp. 205, 207, 208.

74 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, pp. 205, 207, 208.

75 A. Tarık Çelenk, An interview with Vamık Volkan, *Ekopolitik*, 28 January 2009.

76 Fatih Türkmenoğlu, An interview with Vamık Volkan, *Milliyet Newspaper*, 23 September 2007.

that they are sensitive to issues on taking defense and remaining defensive. At the basis of this is the extent of unfair criticisms and prejudices towards the Turks and Turkey. Therefore, the defensive and doubtful approaches within the Turkish community are not that unfair.

Looking at why and how prejudices develops, it is put forth that various factors such as direct intergroup conflict, social categorization, early learning experiences and several aspects of social cognition have an impact.⁷⁷ Regarding Turkish prejudices, it is possible to provide an example with David Hotham's⁷⁸ words:

“... Everything the Turks did have immediately taken the form of savagery in the eyes of Europeans, although the same has also been done to others. Taking into consideration the commotion aroused by the Armenian massacre within the framework of numerous massacres initiated by other nations throughout history, and the prejudices emerging from Turkish hostility whose roots go back to the past would be honesty.”⁷⁹

The Psychologies of Armenian Apologizers in Turkey

The “official” view in Turkey acknowledges that the experienced events are a tragedy and expresses that they share the pain, but that “genocide” does not exist among the events. The Turkish “official view” also explains with officials on every level that these allegations are ready to be shared and proven with all types of documents. Those stating that the archives should be open to everyone, that historians from all over the world should examine the archival documents, and even that whether the events constitute genocide or not should be addressed by an international court to be established are Turkish authorities who defend the “official view”.

Different than regions in the U.S. and France where the Armenia diaspora is most influential and many European countries where strict censorships towards Armenia and the freedom of expression exist, not only could articles and books be published in Turkey which defends the opposite of the official view and puts forth that genocide has been inflicted upon the Armenians, but also views related to this subject could be mentioned in various television programs, newspapers and conferences. Just in the 1980's an undersecretary for foreign affairs had already

77 Robert A. Baron vd., *Exploring Social Psychology*, Third Ed., Allyn and Bacon, Boston vd., 1989, pp. 110 vd.

78 David Hotham has worked as a reporter of a foreign news agency for a long time in Turkey, later has worked towards a book entitled “The Turks”.

79 David Hotham, *Türkler*, Mehmet Ali Kayabal (trans.), Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul, 1973, p. 247 being cited by Gürbüz Evren, *Sömürgecilik Tarihi Işığında Ermeni Sorunundaki Çıkar Odakları (Benefit Rooms in the Armenian Question in Light of Colonial History)*, Ümit Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2002, p. 239.

stated that 300,000 Armenians could have died in 1915 and that this was a great tragedy.⁸⁰ Therefore, there is no taboo in Turkey on the discussion of the Armenian question; on the contrary, this taboo exists in Western countries.

The most difficult and bizarre group to psychologically understand among the actors of the Armenian question is the Turks who assert that the Armenian “genocide” has taken place and who have apologized from the Armenians by saying that the only offender is the Turks. When a century has passed over the 1915 events, holding the generations of today responsible is meaningless. Similarly, how convenient it is for the following nations to apologize for what took place in the past is also a matter of discussion. While those who have directly caused the sorrows have not apologized and when this is impossible to take place, the apology of the subsequent generations would not be appropriate. Firstly, no one can be held accountable for crimes committed by their ancestors. Secondly, the generations of today are not required to apologize and even if they do, it would not have any legal consequences.⁸¹

More importantly, it is a one sided and double sided matter of apology. Based on real examples from history, the Germans apologizing from the Jews unrequitedly seem meaningful. Since the Jews have not harmed the Germans and are even unable to defend themselves, they could be described as absolute innocent. Therefore, one sided apology is meaningful. In the Armenian question, although the pains are asymmetric, they are mutual.⁸² Armenians do not accept any responsibility and do not apologize. Even more, they oppose the word “tragedy” being used for the 1915 events, because according to them, this word conveys that both sides have suffered pains, but no one is responsible for it.⁸³

Within this context, Turks apologizing seems both meaningless and abnormal. Groups in Turkey finding themselves guilty or being compelled to display their selves as guilty have initiated a campaign of “we apologize” in 2009. Two days later, those being responsible for the 1915 events have launched an “I expect an apology” campaign with the excuse that Armenians exist among them also. In a short period of time, the figure for those who expect an apology has been more than four times that of those who have offered it.⁸⁴ In Istanbul’s Taksim Square on 24

80 Gündüz Aktan, “Vah Vah!”, 20 December 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 163.

81 Ömer Engin Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 18, 2008, p. 20.

82 Gündüz Aktan, “Tarihle Yüzleşmek (4)” (Facing History), 14 May 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 132.

83 Gündüz Aktan, “Tehcirin Başlangıcı” (Beginning of Relocation), 19 March 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 94.

84 Ömer Engin Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 18, 2008, p. 21.

April 2010, a commemorative meeting for the Armenians has been organized. Only a very small part of the participants of this meeting have consisted of Armenian or other minority groups, but the majority has consisted of Turks in Turkey. During the meeting, only the Armenians have been commemorated, but the Turkish nation who has suffered sorrows, whose state has been destroyed, who has lost territory, who has given many losses during the war and whose civilians have been massacred, has not been found “worthy” of suffering pain and being commemorated. The unusual point is that sorrow has not been felt for both sides, but only for the Armenians.

The process of mourning is especially important in politically induced situations. Mourning might not only take place for one’s own group. It is possible to grieve for the enemy and his losses also. However, due to existing tensions and hostilities between the groups, grieving cannot take place.⁸⁵ According to Levinas’s ethical understanding, it is only possible to feel empathy to our near surroundings and to those being a part of us. Based on this assertion, Gündüz Aktan has defended that the Turks accepting the “genocide” with their feelings of pity must be explained as fooling one’s self or hypocrisy. It has been put forth that in psychological approaches, there is no possibility of groups making empathy without mourning over their own tragedies. The reason for this has been explained as the blockade created by the undisclosed pains of individuals not giving the opportunity for others to feel their pains. What kind of an emotional state it is for a community to give priority to others without feeling their own pains⁸⁶ seems as a pathological case which must be examined.

Gündüz Aktan has explained the contradicting psychology of the old leftist/new liberal intellectuals in an interesting way. While this group has fought in their early life against the imperialist West and “servant” Turkey in order to rescue Turkey within the framework of a revolutionary leftist ideology, they have been subjected to the state’s atrocities on the one hand and have been abandoned by the non-supporting society on the other. Despite this leftist group’s opposition towards the West, the West has protected this group on behalf of human rights and freedoms during a period where the group has faced injustices. The West being on their side, while being viewed as an enemy and waging war against until recently, has created a contradiction. This group has believed that if Turkey does not completely become Western, then they will not be able to survive. Therefore, Western hostility has been abolished; on the contrary, Western followership has emerged. Within the

85 Vamık D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies & Allies*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1988, p. 164.

86 Gündüz Aktan, “Ahlak, Vicdan ve Soykırım” (Ethics, Conscience and Genocide), 12 April 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, pp. 107, 106.

efforts to change society of this group which has no longer been referred to as “leftist”, but “liberal”, a strange hostility towards the state and nation also exists due to the injustices and traumas experienced in their early life.⁸⁷ For old leftist / new liberal intellectuals, “from a Western viewpoint”, it is seen that the recognition of “genocide” is a principle of morality. In Aktan’s words, just as the Franz Fanon’s colonial intellectuals, Turks who defend “genocide” internalize the West’s racism and apply racism towards their own nation.⁸⁸ In other words, it is possible to say that the old leftists opposing the West are today using “kingship rather than acting as a king” with the title of liberal/democrat.

Orhan Pamuk’s words and the experiences following them also seem psychologically interesting. With the emergence of a “hero” like Orhan Pamuk, the “dark event” which the Turks “refrain from confronting” has lost its existence as a taboo and a stage where reality has been openly displayed towards the Turks has been perceived. Within this stage, the reactions of those getting angry at Orhan Pamuk also exist. The understanding of primitive nationalist and freedom of expression has not developed and the society being far from Western values have attacked this “hero”. The play has ended with the West protecting this “hero” from his own community and reproaching his backward society. While evaluating this incident, Gündüz Aktan has defended that the major problem is that “no icon exists in order to break up this iconoclast”.⁸⁹

The psychology of Turks apologizing in Turkey seems greater than the other sides of this problem, because this time, more than one problem exists. The injured and defensive identity in question is one which blames itself, sees itself as the only offender, sanctifies the West and even sees the solution of all problems as changing under the West’s instructions.

Another interesting point is how useful these apologies will be. Will Turkey pleading guilty and apologizing cause all promises to them to be fulfilled, such as opening the doors of membership to the European Union? With what kinds of thoughts do the apologizers take on such a great responsibility? What is more important than all these is the reactions of Armenians. Are they really ready to hear words of “I’m sorry, I’m guilty”? Actually, it will be very difficult for the Armenians to hear the apologies of “others’ and to forgive them, because it requires

87 Gündüz Aktan, “Henüz Amaçlarına Ulaşamadılar (2)” (They Have Not Yet Reached Their Aims), 31 May 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 139.

88 Gündüz Aktan, “Soykırım: Yeni Gelişmeler (2)” (Genocide: New Developments), 3 November 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 161.

89 Gündüz Aktan, “Vah Vah!”, 20 December 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 162.

change to take place within the existing large group identity. This will create a common concern.⁹⁰

The Psychology of the West

To assume that the Armenian question only exists between Turkey and Armenia is a great mistake. The impact and role of all countries referred to as the West or Europe on what has taken place and the events following it are significant. Europe has not just caused the First World War, which has led to the 1915 events and provoked the groups, but later on has also taken part in the events with its desire to identify the events as “genocide” and to punish the “offenders”.

The examination of Europeans’ psychology has not only been deemed necessary for being a part of the issue, but also for Europe being the continent where the most crimes against humanity have been committed. Genocide is a practice originating from Europe and is a part of Europe’s history and culture. Starting with the Middle Ages, numerous genocides such as anti-Semitism, inquisition, slavery, imperialism, witch hunting, the slaughter of lepers, scientific racism and similar examples have been seen. Furthermore, the views of great thinkers of the past such as Aristo, Kant and Hegel have provided a legitimate basis for racism.

European history is full of eradicating foreign elements or groups seen as marginal. Although it is possible to consider discriminatory actions towards differences or weaknesses in the European continent as part of the Greek era, it would be more correct to consider the beginning of cruelty and extermination in the 11th century. Firstly, Jews, homosexuals, lepers and prostitutes have been regarded as dangerous for society from time to time, have been accused for different reasons and have been subjected to cruelty. Regarding differences as “marginal”, thus “dangerous”, and eliminating them somehow have existed in European history for centuries.⁹¹

Based on European thought, harmony must be achieved within the society consisting of individuals; for this to take place, those being different must be cast out of the society.⁹² Europeans, who had believed that foreign and different groups clearly visible constitute threat, have conducted their process of elimination through methods of assimilation or extermination. For instance, they have exterminated the Jews, which the Europeans believed would never assimilate.

90 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, pp. 202-203.

91 For a scientific research on this subject see: Robert I. Moore, *La Persecution Sa Formation en Europe X.-XIII. Siècle*, Catherine Malamoud (trans.), Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1991.

92 Robert I. Moore, *La Persecution Sa Formation en Europe X.-XIII. Siècle*, Catherine Malamoud (trans.), Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1991, p. 135.

Genocide is the final point of racism. Within the ideology of racism, only othering is not present, the demonization of the other also exists. Just as genocide, the mother land of racism is also Europe. It could be seen that within the history of Muslims and Turks, a European type of racism entailing hostility has never existed.⁹³

The point which has made Europeans worthy enough to be examined psychologically is not European history being a history of racism, genocide and cruelty, but is the accusations directed towards other societies, despite having such a negative history. Europeans who have become the most ferocious defenders of human rights today, apply pressure over other societies which is most of the time highly exaggerated and have even gone out of line and defended the terrorists and murderers.

At the basis of political culture which has caused the Jewish genocide holocaust, lays anti-Semitism which has been present for at least 1000 years.⁹⁴ Regardless of whether being good or bad and no matter which culture or tradition they come from, Europeans have thought that the “Jews are Jews”.⁹⁵ The Crusades have also entailed the Jewish genocide.⁹⁶ Jews have been deported from England in 1291, France in 1394 and 100 years later from Spain.⁹⁷

The holocaust carries a particular significance among all other crimes committed against humanity in European history. The reason for accepting the massacres of Jews as a turning point is finding Europeans guilty for the first cruelty they have inflicted. In fact, not only Germany, but the whole of Europe which has not allowed the Jews to enter their country, have enslaved and tyrannized them, or have handed them over to Hitler’s Germany has been held responsible. Due to this guiltiness, following World War II, Europe has made great progress in human rights, minority rights, and rights of groups accepted as marginal like homosexuals. However, this progress has sometimes entailed exaggerated peculiarities. For instance, denying the Jewish genocide and even opening it to discussion on whether it really took place or not, or underestimating the experiences is a crime in Europe today. The reason for this is not to allow anti-Semitism in order to prevent a great disaster such as the holocaust from taking place again.⁹⁸

93 Gündüz Aktan, “Soykırımın Kurtulanlar (2)” (Survivors of Genocide), 1 December 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 160.

94 Gündüz Aktan, “Tarihle Yüzleşmek (4)” (Facing History), 14 May 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006*, p. 132.

95 Robert I. Moore, *La Persecution Sa Formation en Europe X.-XIII. Siècle*, Catherine Malamoud (trans.), Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1991, p. 108.

96 Yusuf Besalel, *Yahudi Tarihi (Jewish History)*, Üniversal Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2000, pp. 70, 71.

97 Robert I. Moore, *La Persecution Sa Formation en Europe X.-XIII. Siècle*, Catherine Malamoud (trans.), Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1991, pp. 53, 54.

98 Gündüz Aktan, “İnkarcı Kim?” (Who is the Denier?), 17 January 2006, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 176.

It is possible to explain the Armenians' accumulation of hatred and anger, which has gone as far as Armenians resorting to terror or distorting the truth with great lies. However, it seems more difficult to enlighten the reasons for Europe's insistence on the recognition of the Armenian "genocide" and the accumulation of negative feelings going as far as giving support to terror and punishing those who attempt to open the "genocide" to discussion. It is possible to say that the common aspects of both groups is the crisis of identity and their common interests is Turkish hostility, or in a more moderate language, Turkish opposition.

Although not as important as the holocaust, another factor which is effective in the protection of minority rights following World War II is psychology of victimhood. By means of Erol Göka's concept entitled "fake victimhood",⁹⁹ those being oppressed by the international community attracting attention and this attention yielding results has set some groups in motion. Oppressed groups or those feeling oppressed such as Romans, Kurds and Armenians have taken advantage of Europeans' favoring¹⁰⁰ the oppressed through their psychology of guilt. Based on psychological analyses, those benefiting from the advantage of the oppressed are in fact those being strong and responsible for the victimhood of others, because this idea puts forth that they try to purge their own crimes this way.¹⁰¹ A clear example is those causing World War I and being responsible for the experienced tragedies are today accusing Turkey of "genocide". Just as the Armenians and Turks have not caused this war, they have also been among the communities suffering the most sorrows.

The most interesting allegation put forth by Europeans and Armenians together is that Hitler has learned genocide from Turks. The allegation that the Turks have first committed "genocide" against Armenians and that Hitler has taken this as an example is to the benefit of Armenians and Germans. While the Armenians have strongly gone down in history as "the first nation to face genocide", Germans have reduced their burdens of responsibility and crime. This way, genocide has not longer been considered as a method belonging to Germans / Europeans. On the other hand, by simplifying "genocide" this way, the thought that "in history, genocide has been committed in all periods, in all places" has been adopted.¹⁰²

99 Erol Göka, "Ermeni Sorununun (Gözden Kaçan) Psikolojik Boyutu" (the Psychological Dimension of the Armenian Question), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 205.

100 F. Sevinç Görül Alkan, "Psikoloji ve Psikanaliz Penceresinden Türk-Ermeni Meselesi: Mağduriyet Psikolojisi ve Büyük-Grup Kimliğinin Etkisi" (Turkish-Armenian Question within the Frame of Psychology and Psychoanalysis: Psychology of Victimhood and the Effect of Big Group), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 213.

101 Erol Göka, "Ermeni Sorununun (Gözden Kaçan) Psikolojik Boyutu" (the Psychological Dimension of the Armenian Question), *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Ömer Engin Lütem (ed.), Extended 2nd edition, Terazi Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2009, p. 205-206.

102 Gündüz Aktan, "Artan Sorunlar" (Increasing Problems), 21 January 2006, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa'da Irkçılık ve Türkiye'nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey's EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 172.

Communities confessing, apologizing or being found guilty, have also started putting forth that the same crime has been committed by others. This psychology is similar to the effort of finding an accomplice, because many European countries being guilty of genocide have started pressuring Turkey by stating “you confess your crime just like we did”. Among the top of the most obvious examples of these types of countries is Switzerland. Shortly after being found guilty of crimes like turning down the Jewish refugees during World War II, ill treating them, and making them work as slaves, the Parliament of Switzerland has adopted the resolution foreseeing the recognition of the “genocide”. This action could be assessed as accusing Turkey, which they regard as the “other”, in order to evade their wounds or making Turkey the scapegoat with the purpose of defending themselves towards their own racist tradition.¹⁰³ It is also necessary to note that Switzerland is a state composed of three separate national minorities, fears fragmentation and due to this fear, prefers to remain outside the European Union and also finds the defense of rights of minorities all over the world very important for their own internal balance.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, in comparison to other Western countries, the Swedish Parliament which has committed a serious crime against humanity of sterilizing, according to law, ethnic groups who they find to be different or who they do not want to mix with, has accepted the Pontus Romans, Chaldeans and Syrians together with the Armenians as nations being subjected to genocide by the Ottomans.

It could be seen that in all Western countries which strongly accuse Turkey of the Armenian “genocide” and which recognize it, a history of crime against humanity which is tried to be covered up exists. Sterilizing initiatives of Belgium in the Congo, France in Rwanda and Algeria, the Greeks in Cyprus, Greece in Western Thrace, Holland in Srebrenica and Indonesia, and Sweden against the Sami and the “ordinary race” in their own country, along with the treatments of all imperial powers towards origins of Africa could be shown as examples of crimes against humanity such as genocide and massacres. Some of these countries still not confessing their crimes increases their feelings of guilt and makes them more aggressive in accusing other countries. Moreover, in order to conceal what has taken place, some countries like France see these periods as a necessary and positive part of their history.

Although Europe seems like a developed civilization which should be taken as an

103 Gündüz Aktan, “Asıl Sorun” (The Main Problem), 3 April 2002, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği* (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership), Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 61; “İsviçre ve Ermeni Meselesi”, 28 July 2005, pp. 144–146.

104 Gündüz Aktan, “Artan Sorunlar” (Increasing Problems), 21 January 2006, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği* (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership), Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 172.

example for their freedom of expression, putting aside the crimes it has committed in the past or the rejecting of these crimes, it silences those arguing that genocide has not taken place towards the Armenians and only allows those supporting the “genocide” to talk. In the meetings held in European countries, the opponents of “genocide” are not invited and even if they are, their rights to ask questions are restricted.¹⁰⁵ In meetings open to the press, restrictions have been brought on only the Turkish press. It is known that some academicians and politicians have been punished in European countries for denying the “genocide”. News has been published that in France, a 13 year old Turkish student has been suspended from school for rejecting the “genocide” and more interestingly, has been requested to prepare homework on the “genocide”.¹⁰⁶ The contradicting essential point is that Europeans who punish those opposing the “genocide” in their countries resents those criticizing the supporters of “genocide” in Turkey.

The connection between the Armenian question and Europe is not only limited to the psychology of victimhood or the search for a partner in crime. Although not clearly seen, the religion dimension of the issue is also important. Armenians mention at every opportunity that they are the first “state” to formally accept Christianity. By showing the common area they possess, Armenians try to seem sympathetic to the Christians who are powerful within the international system. In this context, they have frequently presented themselves to the public with the image in articles that they are “victims who have sacrificed themselves for the Christian world”. However, in different articles, it is seen that the Armenians have used Christianity as an instrument to become a state. Therefore, this contradicts the image of a nation choosing to be victims for the sake of Christianity.¹⁰⁷

The common ground of Christianity is not only beneficial to Armenians, but to the interests of the whole Christian community. This way, instead of the Armenians, the West could show the Christians as the victims of “genocide”. For the Westerners, it is very important that the Muslims have committed genocide against Christians, because genocide which has originated from the Western world and which is known to belong to this world has become a “general” phenomenon. Therefore, it has been revealed that genocides have not only been committed by

105 Gündüz Aktan, “Henüz Amaçlarına Ulaşamadılar (1)” (They Have Not Yet Reached Their Aims), 28 May 2005, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşina Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 135–137; “Bil Bilseler” (If Only They Knew), 27 September 2005, pp. 147–149.

106 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/12974305.asp?gid=229> being cited by Birsen Karaca, “Yeni Bir Toplumun Bellek Oluşturma Çabalarına Ermeni Senaristlerin Katkıları” (Contributions of Armenian scenarists to Form a New Social Memory), the invited spokesman to the education program entitled *Dünden Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşım* (Turkish-Armenian Relations: an Interdisciplinary Approach) dated 25–26 December 2009 and organized by the Political Psychology Institute.

107 Birsen Karaca, “Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarında Yaratılan Ermeni İmajı” (The Armenian Image Created in Armenian Mass Media Instruments), *Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal*, No. 14, 2004, pp. 165–166.

Europeans and the crime has once again been relieved by sharing the responsibility with others.

The only matter which is notable at this point is not the relieving of the crime. At the same time, directing this crime towards the Turks is as significant. Racist thoughts and feelings of hatred of the West are generally directed towards the Turks. However, when psychologically evaluating it, it is seen that the Europeans attempt to “deplacé” (change places) these thoughts; in other words, try to change their direction. By trying to impose their feelings on the Turks, they are able to think in a way such as “Turks are racist, they possess racist hatred towards the Kurds, after all they had done the same to Armenians”. With these theses, they are able to strengthen their thoughts.¹⁰⁸

It must be reminded that decisions of some Western countries which recognize the “genocide” or which considers the denial of “genocide” as a crime lacks a legal basis and therefore, is not very binding. At the basis of these decisions or legislative article types of points come domestic political games or psychological gains. Just as the Armenian diaspora being dependent on Turkish hostility in order to exist without assimilating, a psychological issue has developed where it seems that the West is dependent on Turkey in order to confess their sins.¹⁰⁹

Genocide, which is the final stage of racism, must be analyzed by Europeans at a psychological level. However, by sometimes emphasizing principles such as human rights or democracy for effect, Europe tries to conceal their genocide history, culture and psychology. The point reached today is no matter how developed the principles of human rights and democracy are in Europe compared to many other places in the world, it remains incapable of protecting all people. Racism, discrimination, cultural genocide, extreme rightist and neo-nazi political activities still strongly existing in Europe is a situation which must be taken notice of.

Conclusion

It seems that the solution of the problem known as the Armenian question exists in the facts based on historical documents or judicial interpretations. This idea which rationally seems correct has lost its validity in the real world. Other non-concrete factors such as domestic and foreign policies, economic relations, money, and

108 Gündüz Aktan, “Artan Sorunlar”, 21 January 2006, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 172.

109 Gündüz Aktan, “Fransa ve Soykırım” (France and Genocide), 13 June 1998, *Açık Kriptolar. Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları, Avrupa’da Irkçılık ve Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği (Open Cryptos. Armenian Genocide Allegations, Racism in Europe and Turkey’s EU Membership)*, Aşına Kitaplar, Ankara, 2006, p. 17.

interests also exist within this issue. However, the essential and primary concern in the lowermost layer of this problem is psychological. Without fulfilling the psychological settlement and treatment of all parties taking part in this issue, it seems difficult to reach a solution.

The sides not recognizing each other and therefore, not understanding each other's psychologies is an important problem. Turkish-Armenian dialogue remaining restricted and the two sides not closely knowing each other causes others to intervene and complicates the solution. By stating that "we have been dependent on Switzerland in order to hold each other's hands", Giragosian, Director of the Armenian Center for National and Strategic Studies, has drawn attention to the consequences of permitting other actors to intervene.¹¹⁰ Another example such as the sides coming together in Washington and not in one of the participating countries to the problem signifies the discontinuity of dialogue and insufficient relations and shows that the solution of the problem is more difficult than it seems.

Examining the Armenian question with a psychological approach, how inaccurate it is to propose leaving the past behind and focusing on the future emerges. The concept known as "time collapse" which has been thoroughly explained above has made the resolution of battles more complex, because in formal diplomacy, what is requested from the participants is to "not go the past, remain in the present". However, mentioning past traumas and allowing feelings to be brought to light is sometimes necessary.¹¹¹ Covering up feelings and issues related to the past, not mentioning them and putting them aside is not what is important. The correct behavior is to distinguish past experiences from the problems of today and be able to leave them where they belong in the past. Only this way will the present problems be able to be discussed in a more realistic way.¹¹²

Strict and hostile stances seen throughout the dialogues of groups suffering from long-term battles can be softened. Therefore, due to accusations and mutual arguments, the structure of the discourses could be changed to all sides explaining their stances. Then, real and successful negotiations could come about. What must be done is to create an "enlargement of time", bring the reflections under examination, identify hidden emotions and fantasies, change the idea of black-white and encourage them to start mourning.¹¹³

110 Osman Sağırlı ve Cemil Yıldız, "Ermenilerin Toprak Talebi Yok" (Armenians Have No Territorial Requests), "Küs Komşu Ermenistan" (The Offended Neighbor Armenia) article series, *Türkiye Newspaper*, 23 April 2010.

111 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 305.

112 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 306.

113 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme (Killing on Behalf of Identity a Research on Bloody Wars)*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 315.

Even if the past is discussed and revealed, feelings of hatred and anger are exposed, accusations are made and mourning takes place, an environment of healthy discussion and dialogue might still not develop. This is because, the reason of Armenians' existence is victimhood of "genocide" and other matters related to this. In order for Armenians to accept the empathy, apology and understanding of Turks, problems on the Armenian identity must also be abolished. The factor identifying who the Armenians are today as a group is the cruelty they have suffered to a great extent.¹¹⁴ Since the recognition of this cruelty by the group deemed guilty could mean that the Armenians will be eliminated, it is necessary for a process such as establishing the identity on different grounds, which even seems difficult in the medium term.

The idea of a group or its leader apologizing from another group could be difficult to achieve if the necessary foundation is actually prepared. To be forgiven will only be possible if the sorrowful group has mourned enough. The essential issue which should be focused on here is to not only participate in apologizing, but also to aid in the task of mourning. To settle big stubborn group battles without going into details and devoting a long time does not seem very sufficient.¹¹⁵

Related to the Armenian question, many groups with different psychologies such as accusations, announcements of offenders, punishments, apologies, waiting for an apology, turning down apologies, empathies, and individuals being concerned due to empathy exist. The anecdote in Osman Sağırlı and Cemil Yıldız's article series composed of their visit to Armenia and their interviews humorously summarizes the problem of "who will bring who to account from whom":¹¹⁶

"While passing in front of a restaurant, a man has noticed the sign on the window: 'You eat, your grandchild will pay!' He enters inside and eats his fill. Just when walking out the door, someone has said 'sir check'. 'Don't you see the sign?' the man has snapped back. 'The sign is correct sir we don't want the check of what you ate. We want that of your grandfather' they have said."

114 Vamık Volkan, *Kimlik Adına Öldürmek Kanlı Çatışmalar Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, Medine Banu Büyükkal (trans.), Everest, İstanbul, 2007, p. 202.

115 Vamık D. Volkan, *Kanbağı Etnik Gururdan Etnik Teröre*, Bağlam, İstanbul, 1999, p. 266.

116 Osman Sağırlı and Cemil Yıldız, "Ermenilerin hayat Felsefesi Herkesle Kavga Etmek", "Küs Komşu Ermenistan" article series, *Türkiye Newspaper*, 28 April 2010.

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