

REVIEW OF
ARMENIAN STUDIES

A Biannual Journal of History, Politics and International Relations

no:
30
2014

Facts and Comments

Ömer E. LÜTEM

Collective Memory and Narrative Toolkit in
Turkish-Armenian Mnemonic Standoff Over the Past

Rauf R. GARAGOZOV

Attila Orbók and Armenians

Yücel NAMAL

The Missed Occasion: Successes of the Hamidian Police
Against The Armenian Revolutionaries, 1905-1908

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Memory Laws & Freedom of Speech in Europe:
Analysis of *Perinçek v. Switzerland* Case

Çağatay YILDIRIM

BOOK REVIEWS



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Review of Armenian Studies is published biannually

Review of Armenian Studies is a refereed journal. Review of Armenian Studies is indexed in EBSCO and TUBITAK-ULAKBIM databases. Articles submitted for publication are subject to peer review. The editorial board takes into consideration whether the submitted article follows the rules of scientific writing. The articles are sent to two referees known for their academic reputation in their respective areas. Upon their decision, the article will be published in the journal, or rejected. The reports of the referees are kept confidential and stored in the Journal's archives for five years.

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Publication Office

Terazi Yayıncılık Bas. Dağ. Dan. Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.
Abidin Daver Sok. No. 12/B Daire 4 06550 Çankaya/ANKARA
Tel: 0 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Faks:** 0 (312) 438 50 26
www.avim.org.tr

ISSN: 1303-5304

Subscription Office

Hülya ÖNALP
Terazi Yayıncılık Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.
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Design

Ruhi ALAGÖZ

Printing

Özyurt Matbaacılık
Büyük San. 1. Cad. Süzğün Sok. No: 7 İskitler / ANKARA
Tel: +90 312 384 15 36 **Fax:** +90 312 384 15 37

Printing Date: 16 February 2015

Annual Subscription: 20 US \$
15 TL

Please send your payment to the following bank account:
For TL - Terazi Yayıncılık, Garanti Bankası-Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/6296007
Postal Check Account Ankara/Çankaya/Merkez 5859221

For US \$ - Garanti Bankası- Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/9086957
IBAN: TR60 0006 2000 1810 009 0869 57

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In this issue of our journal, we offer our readers five articles and three book reviews.

The first article, as it was for the last 13 years, is titled **Facts and Comments** and focuses on Turkey-Armenia relations in 2014, several activities of the Armenian Diaspora and stances of several countries regarding the Armenian issue. Thus, despite Turkey's continuous attempts for reconciliation, it is seen that Armenia's attitude rejecting any proposals and preparing to make several demands from Turkey, within the context of the centenary of the Armenian Relocation, is causing further deterioration in already tense bilateral relations.

Inspired by the articles of the then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and Gerard Libaridian, an American writer of Armenian descent, published in the *Turkish Policy Quarterly* journal, Rauf R. Garagozov analyzes the Turkish-Armenian mnemonic standoff with regard to the complex relationship between the collective memory and cultural trauma in his article **Collective Memory and Narrative Toolkit in Turkish-Armenian Mnemonic Standoff Over the Past**.

In his article titled **Atilla Orbok and Armenians**, Yücel Namal recounts Orbok's - a journalist and writer- struggle to oppose the Armenian propaganda in Hungary against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War and states that Orbok wrote the book "The Truth on the Armenian Riot Based on Original Official Information Obtained by the Ottoman Government Concerning the Riot of the Armenians against the State" for this purpose and thus, changed the views of the Hungarian people on the Armenian issue.

Maxime Gauin, in his article **The Missed Occasion: Successes of the Hamidian Police against the Armenian Revolutionaries, 1905-1908**, touches upon the Armenian terrorist actions during the mentioned three years, states that the perpetrators were getting caught by Ottoman security forces and organizations were falling apart but the 1908 revolution saved these organizations, especially the Dashnaks, from being destroyed.

Our journal took a close interest on the attempts to restrict Perinçek's freedom of expression in Switzerland and the lawsuit against him and even dedicated the previous issue to this subject. In this issue Çağatay Yıldırım's article **Memory Laws & Freedom of Speech in Europe: Analysis of Perinçek v. Switzerland Case** analyzes the subject in the form of a theoretical legal

research and examines the current situation of legislation in several countries, the joint fight against negationism, ECtHR's attitude towards the punishment of negationism and the protection of the freedom of expression and other relevant issues.

The coming centennial of the Armenian relocations caused an increase in publications on the Armenian issue. Three reviews of these publications could be found in this issue of our journal.

Thomas de Waal is a writer known for his publications on the Caucasus issue and Nagorno-Karabakh issue in particular. He last penned a book called **Great Catastrophe: Armenian and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide** which appeals to the public instead of academic circles. While recognizing the Armenian genocide claims, De Waal stands out for his efforts to strike a balance between the sides by trying to understand and reflect Turkey's attitude and opinions on this issue. This book's review is prepared by Turgut Kerem Tuncel.

Edward J. Erickson is a renowned American military writer. His books on the final period of the Ottoman Empire are translated into Turkish. The main theme of his book **Ottomans and Armenian: A Study in Counterinsurgency** is that it puts forth that the Armenian relocation by the Ottomans was a military necessity due to events like assistance to the Russian army and revolts. Another important point in Erickson's book is that it states that the number of Armenians exempt from the relocations was as high as 350 to 500 thousand. The review of this book which we hope will be translated into Turkish is prepared by Hande Apakan.

The book **Armenian History and the Question of Genocide** by Michael M. Gunter analyzes the stages of the Armenian controversy from the beginning up to now and presents several Armenian opinions on the subject and reveals the incongruity of the genocide claims. The book's review is prepared by Maxime Gauin. We believe that the translation of this book into Turkish would be beneficial.

Have a nice reading and best regards,

Editor

FACTS AND COMMENTS*

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

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Abstract: *This article discusses the main events in 2014 concerning Turkey's relations with Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora, especially the declarations by both countries with special emphasis on Prime Minister Erdoğan's message of condolences and also the commemoration events of 24 April in some countries, as well as Armenian demands from Turkey and some other developments during that year.*

Keywords: *Turkey, Armenia, Germany, Czech Republic, Egypt, Syria, Australia, Greece, Sweden, Bolivia, Armenian genocide allegations, Armenia and Diaspora Demands from Turkey, R.T. Erdoğan, A. Davutoğlu, S. Sarkisian, E. Nalbantian*

Öz: *Bu yazı 2014 yılı içinde Türkiye'nin Ermenistan ve Ermeni Diasporası ile ilişkilerini, iki ülke devlet adamlarının beyanlarını, Başkan Erdoğan'ın taziye mesajını, 24 Nisan'ın bazı ülkelerde anılmasını, Türkiye'den Ermeni taleplerini ve 2014 yılı içinde diğer bazı gelişmeleri ele almaktadır.*

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Türkiye, Ermenistan, Almanya, Çek Cumhuriyeti, Mısır, Suriye, Avustralya, Yunanistan, İsveç, Bolivya, Ermeni soykırım iddiaları, Ermenistan ve Ermeni Diasporasının Türkiye'den talepleri, R.T. Erdoğan, A. Davutoğlu, S. Sarkisyan, E. Nalbantyan*

* Since the previous issue of our journal (issue 29) was dedicated to the Special Issue on ECHR, *Perinçek v. Switzerland* Case, the article "Facts and Comments" where we analyze Turkey's relations with Armenia and the Diaspora was not included in that issue. For this reason, in this 30th issue we analyze the above-mentioned relations for 2014.

I- RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ARMENIA

1. The Impasse in Relations

The failure to put the protocols into effect, Armenia's refusal to withdraw from the Azerbaijani territories it occupies including Karabakh, its allegations of genocide against Turkey and also its many demands from Turkey on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the relocation led relations between Turkey and Armenia to an impasse.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu made several attempts to change this situation. In this context, he visited Yerevan on 12 December 2013¹ on the occasion of Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization but couldn't meet President Sarkisian, although he met with Foreign Minister Nalbantian, no result was achieved. On the other hand Nalbantian, trying to belittle this visit, stated that the normalization policy of bilateral relations didn't change, that Davutoğlu repeated the same points he said four years ago during his visit, and that he said to Davutoğlu "do you want us to lose another four years?"² Armenian Foreign Minister, with these words, revealed that they previously didn't accept to approach the Karabakh issue and normalization process of bilateral relations together and they do not intent to accept it now as well.

On the other hand, Davutoğlu reiterated Turkey's stance on Armenia in every opportunity. In the Trilateral Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia held in Ganja, he said "unless the occupied territories are freed and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is resolved in this context, a full normalization between Turkey and Armenia is not possible. The issue of opening borders is within this context". He also stated that in case the Karabakh conflict is resolved, not only the Turkish-Armenian border but also the Azerbaijan-Armenia border will open³.

We would like to briefly elaborate on the reasons of Armenia's insistence to disregard Turkey's opinions and suggestions.

1 *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 28.p.24,25

2 "La Politique turque vis-à-vis de l'Arménie Inchangé" (Turkey's Policy Towards Armenia Unchanged), *armenews*23, January 2014.

3 "Türkiye-Azerbaycan-Gürcistan Dışişleri Bakanları Üçlü Toplantısı" (Trilateral Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia), *haberler.com*, 19 February 2014.

First let's indicate that since the very beginning the Armenians don't want Turkey to be involved in the Karabakh negotiation process in any form. Even though Turkey's proposal to resolve its issues with Armenia together with Azerbaijan-Armenia issues is to the point and realistic, Armenia's refusal to accept this formula is because a final or partial solution in Karabakh requires Armenia to make concessions such as withdrawing from certain regions and this is not approved by internal policy considerations. On the other hand, since major countries co-chairing the Minsk Group don't put pressure on Armenia to make concessions, Armenia doesn't feel the need to make concessions. Furthermore, Armenia doesn't have any major military failures that require them to change their stance. In this case Armenia easily carries out its policy to maintain the status quo and to that end even endures closed borders with Turkey.

In this context, it is seen that the view that the closed border with Turkey is damaging the Armenian economy isn't so true. It should be kept in mind that under Kocharyan there was an increase in national income which occasionally reached double figures when the Turkish border was closed. Following Armenia's membership to the Customs Union, it is likely that its need for the Turkish border to open will decrease, at least in the earlier stages.

On the other hand, it is seen that major countries' desire for normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations without considering Azerbaijan's issues with Armenia will have negative results on Azerbaijan. In this case, Azerbaijan will have to strive against Armenia alone, its efforts will not succeed as major countries will directly or indirectly support Armenia and probably Azerbaijan's Karabakh policy might erode and maybe Azerbaijan, in return for several regions, might give up Karabakh. On the other hand, in order to prevent this, it is a possibility that Azerbaijan might resort to military resources to take back territories occupied by Armenia including Karabakh. Considering Azerbaijan's continuous armament, this shouldn't be underestimated.

Taking into account this possibility, stalling-delaying policies adopted by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs on Karabakh can be risky. It is possible that Turkey's

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policy to approach and find solutions to the issues between Turkey and Azerbaijan with Armenia as a whole will not have any results in the near future due to Armenia's objection and lack of open support by major powers.

2. Statements by Armenian Statesmen

It is seen that Armenian statesmen, especially Serzh Sarkisian, put special effort to criticize Turkey and Armenia at almost every opportunity. These criticism aims to influence the public opinion of Armenia and the Diaspora. Azerbaijani statesmen also do not hold back from their harsh criticisms against Armenia. However, Turkish statesmen seldom mention their problems with Armenia and the Diaspora. This is due to serious problems in Turkey's neighbors, especially in Syria, Iraq, Israel and Cyprus, and due to the fact that current problems with Armenia and the Diaspora are on the back burner.

President Serzh Sarkisian, in his speech at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe about issues concerning Armenia on 2 October 2013⁴, said: "Turkey, which contrary to all international rules and norms is keeping closed the shortest route connecting Armenia with the outer world for so many years have forced us to make extraordinary efforts to develop and build a modern state. Genocide is not only a heinous crime against humanity but also a striking manifestation of fascism and intolerance, as well as a grave encroachment upon the right to life..... The best way to prevent atrocious crimes against the mankind is to discuss those terrible pages of history and to assess the past in the light of universal values."

Sarkisian's answers to questions at the end of his speech⁵ led him to further touch upon relations with Turkey.

In response to Azerbaijani assembly member Seyidov's question: "You have territorial claims to Turkey, at the same time you have territorial claims to Georgia... Do you think that this kind of policy has future?" Sarkisian said: "We have never made any territorial claims to Turkey. If there is just one such claim, one such statement you can point out, I'll ask for your forgiveness."

4 "Statement Of Serzh Sarkisian The President Of The Republic Of Armenia In The Parliamentary Assembly Of The Council Of Europe" 02.10.2013, Access Date: 03.02.2015
<http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2013/10/02/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-participated-at-the-session-of-the-PACE-speech/>

5 "President Serzh Sarkisian At The Plenary Session Of The Pace Responded To The Questions Raised By The Members Of The Parliament", 02.10.2013, Access Date: 03.02.2015,
<http://www.president.am/en/interviews-and-press-conferences/item/2013/10/02/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-answered-the-questions-of-PACE-members/>

In response to another question about relations with Turkey, he said: “efforts we made pertinent to the start of relations with Turkey didn’t yield positive results because the Turks are not ready to start relations with Armenia. After lengthy negotiations we signed documents on the establishment of diplomatic relations, but the Turkish leadership refused to ratify the documents.” He also said: “We believe that each country should be very responsible about documents it signs. Unfortunately, in this case we don’t see any presence of such responsibility. The Turkish authorities are trying to make some proposals through different channels but I think these proposals are being made mostly to calm down the international community, if they really want to do something they can ratify these Protocols and we will be able to start relations and discuss any issue of interest.”

In response to a question about regional partnership, he said that they proposed Turkey to start up relations with the idea of cooperation, but it was hard to conceive any form of cooperation when the parties (he refers to Turkey and Azerbaijan) lack that wish and are boasting about to isolate their neighbor(Armenia).

Emphasis should be laid on these words by the Armenian President.

Serzh Sarkisian complains about the closed borders with Turkey. However he did not mention that Turkey closed its borders due to Armenian forces’ occupation of Azerbaijani territories and its continuing occupation also outside of Karabakh.

Sarkisian also complains that the Protocols were not approved by Turkey and doesn’t mention that Turkey delays the approval in order to find a solution for the Karabakh conflict. Another point that he didn’t mention is that Armenia also didn’t approve the Protocols and removed these documents from the agenda of the Armenian Parliament.

His words that Armenia never made territorial claims to Turkey and that there are no statements suggesting these claims reflects only half of the truth. It is true that Armenian officials, including presidents, didn’t make an official territorial claim. In fact, an official territorial claim to Turkey would be an act that will not be supported by any country. Turkey can also perceive this as an act of war. Therefore, an official territorial claim, considering the imbalance of power between the sides, is unrealistic and dangerous.

Despite Armenia not making any official demands, President Sarkisian personally made statements implying such demands. For instance, in a meeting

on 23 July 2011, in response to a student's question if Western Armenia, including Mount Ararat, will ever be united with Armenia, he said: "Everything depends on the young generations. Every generation has some goals to achieve." It is possible to infer from these remarks that it is currently not possible for Armenia to take Eastern Anatolia but this could be achieved if the young generations would take it as their goal. Turkish Foreign Ministry released a statement 3 days later strongly condemning Sarkisian's response. The statement said that these remarks were unfortunate and to give advice to the young people and future generations that could provoke hostilities and an ideology of hate between two nations was an irresponsible act⁶. Former President Robert Kocharyan also made similar statements before. In a speech he delivered in 2005, after stating the he didn't make any territorial claims to Turkey, he stated that the recognition of the genocide was among their policies, and future presidents and politicians will deal with the legal outcomes of the recognition of the genocide⁷. As is known, according to Armenians, the legal outcomes of the genocide claims are reparations, property return, and land.

Recently, in 5 July 2013, in his opening speech at the Pan-Armenian Forum of Lawyers, President Sarkisian said: "International recognition of the Armenian genocide, its condemnation and elimination of the consequences will always be an imperative", thus, made reference to reparations, property return, and land⁸.

Territorial claims were clearly included to the report on the 100th anniversary of the genocide presented by Prosecutor General of Armenia in the Forum. Stating that Armenia has territorial disputes with both Turkey and Azerbaijan, Prosecutor General said that , in order to solve these issues, it was necessary to prepare a comprehensive claims package with solid legal grounds and introduce it before relevant authorities to be submitted to the International Court of Justice⁹. The Forum decided to set up a special committee to collect legal documents on major issues regarding the Armenian genocide. The Turkish Foreign Ministry protested this development stating that the declaration made by the Prosecutor General is deplored by Turkey and contradicts the obligations Armenia has undertaken towards the international organizations of which it is a member, and added that "nobody can dare to demand territory from Turkey¹⁰."

6 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 39, p.14-15

7 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 16-17, p. 27

8 *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 28, p. 10

9 *ibid*, p.13. For the summary of this report, please see pages 10-16 of the same issue.

10 *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 28, p. 10

As it is seen, there are efforts to add artificial issues such as territorial claims to the loaded agenda of Turkey-Armenia relations. If these turn into official claims, there's no doubt that a major crisis will arise between the two countries. However, it is highly possible that these efforts are rather demagogic gestures for propaganda purposes for the year 2015 and to keep the public opinion busy. This will be better understood in the upcoming period.

A new addition to these semi-official Armenian territorial claims was made by Armenian Minister of Education and Science Armen Ashotyan. In 17 January 2014 he proposed to rename Armenia to "Eastern Republic of Armenia" and justified it by saying that present-day Armenia comprises only one-tenth of the nation's historic territory and therefore calling it Eastern Republic of Armenia would be more suitable¹¹.

While there was no reaction from other members of the government to this weird proposal, Giro Manoyan of the Dashnak Party said that this proposal was inopportune and asked the ruling Republican Party to cancel the 2009 Protocols and/or re-determine the border between the two countries in accordance with the border drawn by President Wilson for the Treaty of Sèvres¹².

The belief that an important part of Turkish territories in Eastern Anatolia belonged to Armenia is prevalent in Armenia and the Diaspora. When taking into consideration that the last Armenian state in the region was abolished nearly a thousand years ago in 1045 by the Byzantine Empire and that from that date onwards these territories were ruled first by the Seljuks and then the Ottomans, and the Armenians were a minority compared to other communities, it is seen that the assumption that Eastern Anatolia was Armenian territories is far from reality and is an approach that started to be grow stronger especially during Sarkisian's presidency.

President Sarkisian maintained his criticisms against Turkey in 2014 as well. In an interview he gave during his visit to Czechoslovakia¹³, repeating the Armenian views, Sarkisian said that they are ready to revive the process of normalizing relations if the Turkish side demonstrate the political will and end steps of the ineffective path of pre-conditions and added that Armenia's stance of normalizing relations without pre-conditions is supported by the US and other Western countries. In the same interview Sarkisian also criticized

11 *Nouvelles d'Arménie*, Issue 205, March 2014, p.8

12 "Manoyan, Ashotian's Proposal to Rename Armenia Inopportune" *Aysor.am*, 27 January 2014.

13 "Sarkissian Souhaite Que la Turquie Normalise Ses Relations Avec l'Arménie" (Sarkissian wishes for Turkey to normalize its relations with Armenia), *Armenews*, 5 February 2014.

NATO for not pressuring Turkey to end its blockade of Armenia imposed in 1993.

In his speech in the European People's Party in 6 March 2014, he mentioned the illegal blockade that Turkey imposed on Armenia and said that when humankind was getting ready to mark the World War I and the horror it unleashed, Turkey continued its policy of denial, attempted to bury the memory of more than one million victims of the Armenian Genocide disregarded demands of a nation that was deprived of its homeland, refused to repent for what had been done and thus pursued a xenophobic policy that at its roots is aimed at harming Armenia and Armenians¹⁴.

The capture of Kessab near the Turkish border by resistance forces in Syria became an excuse for Sarkisian to criticize Turkey. In a speech he made about the events in Kessab¹⁵, the Armenian President asserted that Kessab witnessed deportations in the last century, Turkish Armed Forces invaded Kessab in 1909 and set it on fire, and a French ship transported Kessab population to Latakia (Since both Kessab and Latakia was a part of the Ottoman Empire, his remarks is not understandable; moreover transportation of Armenians by a French ship occurred in 1995, in the events of Musa Dagh). Sarkisian also claimed that the Kessab population was exiled to Der Zor and to Jordan. He stated that the last event was the third deportation of the Kessab population and was against ethnic minority rights. As is known, before Syrian resistance forces entered the city, a large part of the Kessab population abandoned the city and went to Latakia, then came to Turkey. Therefore it is not possible to speak of a deportation in Kessab.

In both Armenian and Diaspora press, many articles claiming that Turkey ordered Syrian resistance forces to capture Kessab due to many Armenians living there, vilifying Turkey and featuring relocation and genocide claims were released. Such articles decreased after Turkey's acceptance of Armenian refugees from Kessab.

Although the Armenian press blamed Turkey for the destruction of Armenian churches in Deir ez-Zor in September, Armenian officials preferred to keep silent.

In his speech in the Armenian Ministry of Defense on 18 April 2014¹⁶,

14 "President Serzh Sarkisian Took Part In The Plenary Session Of The Epp In, Dublin", 06.03.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2014/03/06/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-speech-Dublin-EPP/>

15 "President Serzh Sarkisian Made A Press Statement Concerning The Events In Kesab", 24.03.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2014/03/24/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-statement-Kesab-Syria-in-Hague/>

President Sarkisian also touched upon relations with Turkey. Sarkisian said that the Turkish-Armenian (normalization) process ended in a stalemate and now was frozen, and the reason of the absence of relations between two countries was not Armenia. Stating that they were criticized on the ground that the protocols had at least two negative implications, Sarkisian said that the first criticism was that the recognition process of the genocide would be suspended in the long run and second one was that the protocols hindered the settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

Sarkisian asked, if the Protocols suspended the recognition process of the genocide, why the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, despite all efforts by Turkey, adopted the first resolution over last 24 years and why Turkey didn't ratify the Protocols if they were in favor of Turkey. Sarkisian asserted that if these documents had been in favor of Turkey, Turkey would have ratified these documents without taking into account neither Azerbaijan's position nor any other's interests. He also added that if the protocols had been in favor of Turkey, they would not have caused tensions in Turkey's internal political life.

In response to those claiming that the Protocols would hinder the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, he asked why harassing military acts of harassment increased if the opposite side (Azerbaijan) was in an advantageous position in the negotiations.

It seems that these statements were made by the Armenian President as a response to the criticisms against him in Armenia and the Diaspora.

In his speech in Armenia on the occasion of 24 April, Armenian President criticized Turkey, even harsher compared to the previous year. The summary of this speech and our opinions are in the "Activities Planned to Commemorate 24 April" section of this article.

On 24 April, Sarkisian joined the European Union high-level meeting held on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership and made a speech¹⁷. Although normally he was supposed to talk about Armenia's relations with the EU, while mentioning these relations, he devoted most his speech to Armenia's issues with Turkey.

16 "President Serzh Sarkisian Held Consultation With Leadership Of Ministry Of Defense", 18.04.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2014/04/18/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-meeting-in-the-Ministry-of-Defence/>

17 "Statement By President Serzh Sarkisian At High-Level Meeting Held On 5th Anniversary Of Eastern Partnership", 24.04.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2014/04/24/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-visit-Czech-Republic-April-24/>

He asserted that hundreds of Armenian intellectuals – writers, artists, doctors, public figures – were detained and slaughtered in accordance with a premeditated criminal plan and thus, the first genocide of the 20th century had been launched. Claiming that there was no statutory limitation for the crime of genocide, Sarkisian referred to the importance of the international community's recognition and condemnation of that unprecedented crime with the Armenian Genocide Centenary ahead and claimed that Turkey strived for an EU membership continued to avoid its own past, circumvented responsibility, had been falsifying history by pursuing policy of denial and moreover, spared no effort in order to force by all means upon other nations

It seems that these statements were made by the Armenian President as a response to the criticisms against him in Armenia and the Diaspora.

its denialism. Asserting that today, thousands of Turkish citizens, whose numbers grow from year to year in spite of persecution and prosecution, repudiated Turkey's policy of denial and stood by truth, Sarkisian said that collating with one's own history and understanding its consequences were important prerequisites for reconciliation, encouraging people to people contacts was another important prerequisite for reconciliation but was almost impossible since

there are artificial impediments, and the border was closed. Lastly, Sarkisian said that the lack of normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations and last closed border of Europe was a factor that weakened the Pan-European security, and it was paradoxical that the EU membership aspiring Turkey sealed off its border with a neighboring country considering the borders within European Union have long become history and free movement is a basic principle.

This speech of the Armenian President should be emphasized. First, Armenia, under pressure from Russia, agreed to join the Eurasian Customs Union and as a result didn't sign or more precisely, couldn't sign the Association Agreement with the EU. However, the EU attaches importance to maintain relations with Armenia, in order to prevent Armenia further getting closer to Russia. Armenia on the other hand, in order to prove that they are not trapped in Russia's orbit, is putting the effort to show that relations with the EU continue. In fact, this might be the reason for Sarkisian's attendance at the meeting, which rather had an importance in terms of the Protocols. However, using this opportunity, Sarkisian tried to harshly criticize, even smear Turkey. Nevertheless, none of the participants made statements supporting Armenia, on the contrary, President Ilham Aliyev, representing Azerbaijan, opposed Sarkisian's comments regarding Turkey.

According to the press¹⁸, the President made the following statements regarding this issue: “Today, unfortunately, the Armenian President has taken advantage of the opportunity to launch another attack on Turkey. It is easy to do so because there are no Turkish representatives in this meeting. But I am here and I can tell you why the Turkish-Armenian border remains closed”... “Erdogan suggested that the Armenian leadership open all the archives but was not properly received. Finally he extended his condolences to people of Armenian origin who lost their lives in the events, but unfortunately Armenia did not issue a relevant reaction to that either. Although the US and the EU have supported Erdoğan’s position, the Armenian government found the statement not sufficient. This clearly shows who it is that doesn’t want peace in the region. We want peace and our lands to be returned. Armenia must end its occupation. It is very easy to do that. It only requires political will from the Armenian government.”

Ilham Aliyev also emphasized the Karabakh issue. Stating that a double standard policy was pursued on this issue, he said: “The Azerbaijani people are asking one question: why is not there a sanction policy imposed on Armenia? Why isn’t Armenia deprived of the right to vote in the European Council? They are occupying the territory of another country. Four resolutions of the UN Security Council are not implemented and no punishment is imposed.”

We can draw these conclusions from the speech made by Sarkisian.

Although Armenian President’s effort, right or wrong, to protect his countries’ interests is normal, he should do this with proper wording and arguments. However, it is seen that Sarkisian rather uses the wording of Diaspora propagandists and does not hesitate to adopt an exaggerated Diaspora claim such as “On 24 April 1915, hundreds of Armenian intellectuals – writers, artists, doctors, public figures – were detained and slaughtered.” The number of Armenian intellectuals arrested in Istanbul on 24 April, 1915 was 235 and they were transferred to Ayaş and Çankırı unharmed¹⁹.

The claim that the Armenian relocation was the first genocide of the 20th century is another propaganda item. Taking into account that according to the 1948 Convention competent national courts or the International Criminal Court can determine if an event is genocide, to characterize events, in a period

18 “Türkiye’den Temsilci Yok Fakat Ben Buradayım” (There is no representative of Turkey, but I am here) and “Ermenistan Cumhurbaşkanı Türkiye’yi Eleştirince Aliev Sert Çıktı.” (Aliev reacted harshly when the Armenian President criticized Turkey), *AA*, 25 April 2014.

19 Yusuf Sarıncay, *24 Nisan 1915’te Ne Oldu?*, Istanbul 2012, p.196 (What happened in on 24 April 1915?)

of time when the term genocide was not found, as genocide is wrong. On the other hand, the first mass massacre of the 20th century occurred in Namibia between 1904 and 1907, which was a German colony at that time. Also Muslim civilians were occasionally suffered massacres during the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913.

On the other hand, it is seen that Sarkisian tries to get the border opened through pressures on Turkey by the EU. Although EU advocates the opening of the Turkey-Armenia border all along, it never made an attempt about this issue other than expressing its opinion. Even if it did, it is beyond any doubt that it would have a negative effect on its strained relations with Turkey.

The last point we would like to emphasize on this matter is on what Sarkisian expects from his policy of criticizing and even accusing Turkey on every occasion. It is unlikely that Turkey will make changes in its policies, for example open the border, due to Sarkisian's criticisms and accusations. It is conceivable that Sarkisian, taking into consideration the year 2015, acts in this manner because he doesn't expect a settlement or an agreement in the short run and even in the medium run, and will pursue this policy until the end of his term in office in 2018.

Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbantian also didn't hold back to criticize Turkey at every turn.

In his speech in the High-Level Panel held on 7 March 2014 on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide²⁰, he presented his country as the victim of the first genocide of the 20th century and also mentioned that the Allied Powers used the term crime against humanity for the atrocities committed against Armenians in a declaration on 24 May 1915.

Mehmet Ferden Çarıkçı, Permanent Representative of Turkey, in his response to Nalbantian²¹, stated that to create hostilities by labeling others using the 1915 events is to look at the past one-sidedly and accusatorily, genocide is a legal term and can't be based on opinions, and the events should be studied from historical and scientific aspects. He added that the improper use of this term will harm the prevention of future genocides.

In response to Çarıkçı, after making some statements meaning that Turkey

20 "Edward Nalbantian: Armenian People Feel Moral Responsibility..." *Armradio*, 8 March 2014.

21 "BM Temsilcisi Çarıkçı Ermeni İddialarına Yanıt Verdi" (UN representative Çarıkçı responded to the Armenian claims), *En son Haber*, 8 March 2014.

should apply to countries that made the 24 May 1915 declaration, Nalbantian pointed out the articles of the Convention regarding reparations for victims but what he meant was not understood as the 1948 Convention does mention reparations²².

The Azerbaijani representative, referring to the Khojaly Massacre, stated that Armenians aimed at partial or full extermination of the people, and asked this genocide to be recognized. This appeared in the conference report as Azerbaijan accused Armenia of committing genocide²³. Nalbantian said that this tragedy should not be used as a propaganda tool and to spread racist ideas.

Despite being in a difficult position in this meeting, Armenian Foreign Minister joined another similar meeting on 1 April 2014, a conference titled “The Responsibility to Defend” organized by the Belgian Foreign Minister on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and made a speech and talked about the Armenian genocide rather than the Rwandan genocide.

President Sarkisian, in his speech in Erivan on 27 May 2014 meeting of the State Commission established to coordinate commemoration events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the relocation and presided by him, said that Turkey has no alternative other than facing the history and recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide and not to become an accomplice of the Ottoman Empire. He also said that thousands of Turks demand from their own government justice and an end to their policy of denialism²⁴. He stated that Turkey proposed the establishment of a committee of historians and disclosing the archives but Armenian archives have always been open to the researchers. He said there is no need of archival research to face the truth of the “Armenian genocide” and every Armenian Family has information on this and it is enough to visit the Armenian Genocide memorial. He also invited the Turkish President to visit Erivan on 24 April 2015 to face vocal evidences of the history of the Armenian Genocide.

President Sarkisian sent a congratulatory message to Recep Tayyip Erdogan

22 “Human Rights Council Discusses the Prevention of Genocide” *The UN Office*, Geneva, 9 March 2014.

23 “Human Rights Council Discusses the Prevention of Genocide” *The UN Office*, Geneva, 9 March 2014.

24 “The State Commission On Coordination Of The Events Dedicated To The 100th Anniversary Of The Armenian Genocide Held Its Fourth Session” 27.05.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2014/05/27/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-Commission-on-coordination-of-activities-dedicated-to-100th-anniversary-of-Armenian-Genocide/>

on his election as president²⁵ and after wishing Erdoğan good health and prosperity and progress to the people of Turkey, he stated: “Assuming the office of President of the Republic of Turkey, you will indeed have the opportunity to make a personal effort to give effect to our bilateral agreements without preconditions.”

We would like to point out that when countries recognize each other, no matter how problematic bilateral relations are, it is a common practice to send such congratulatory messages and especially not to include opinions on existing issues other than congratulatory and greeting statements. However Sarkisian,

We would like to point out that when countries recognize each other, no matter how problematic bilateral relations are, it is a common practice to send such congratulatory messages and especially not to include opinions on existing issues other than congratulatory and greeting statements.

in this congratulatory message, reproachfully mentioned the implementation of the protocols without preconditions which is an important disagreement in bilateral relations. His aim in doing this is probably to form such an opinion that he pressured the Turkish President in the Armenian public opinion.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbantian, who joined the reception organized on 28 August 2014 on the occasion of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s inauguration, delivered Erdoğan an invitation letter from Serzh Sarkisian. This is also an improper action. Normally this invitation letter should have been delivered to

the Presidency through Diplomacy Protocol. For a minister to look for the President and to give him a letter by hand in a crowded reception is quite unseen. However it is understood that this move was to influence the public opinion and to show everyone that an invitation on the genocide was delivered to the Turkish President.

In this context, we would like to indicate that Armenians tend to mix up propaganda and politics and this often overcomplicates issues.

The purpose of inviting the President of Turkey - a country where a big majority of the population believes that the 1915 events does not constitute genocide and which perceives it as an insult besides rejecting it- to Erivan on 24 April and trying to make him pay homage in the Armenian Genocide Memorial is probably to humiliate him. This also means that Sarkisian does

25 “President Serzh Sarkisian Congratulates President Of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan” 13.08.2014. Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/congratulatory/item/2014/08/13/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-congratulation-to-the-President-of-Turkey/>

not find Prime Minister Erdoğan's political initiative by offering his condolences to the families of Armenians who died in World War I satisfactory.

The abovementioned purpose of the invitation could also be understood from the statement made by the Deputy Speaker of Armenian National Assembly and press secretary of the ruling Republican Party Edward Sharmazanov: "If Turkey's leaders come and visit the Memorial to Armenian Genocide victims, Tsitsernakaberd, it means they acknowledge the heinous crime of Genocide. That is, they do not consider the butchers and their victims equal. If they do not come, we re-state that Turkey is continuing its denial policy."

That said, it is understood that the fact that there is no statement from Turkey on whether the Turkish President will accept the invitation or not left question marks over minds in Armenia and Turkey. Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister of Turkey who is of Armenian descent, stated that the President's visit to Armenia on 24 April would be an important gesture. He added that that he deemed this unlikely and that there is no possibility of such a gesture from Turkey as long as the Armenian side continues to adopt its strict approach²⁶.

Prime Minister Erdoğan's message on 23 April 2014 that expressed condolences to Armenians aroused interest both in Armenia and Diaspora but have not received any positive response. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated in an article published in Turkish Policy Quarterly Journal that Erdoğan's message of condolence should not be seen as a conjunctural step. It should be seen as a prelude for transformation of minds and memories because this is not only an offer of condolence but also a sincere invitation to all parties to ensure a common future based on lasting peace. But the Armenian side did not receive the Prime Minister's message as such and did not give due importance to it. Following these developments, in a statement that he gave to a newspaper²⁷, Davutoğlu said that he believes Armenia and the Armenian diaspora will choose to take "bold steps" like the one Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took in April, adding that if this happens Turkish-Armenian relations will enter a "new era. Stating that Armenia is not acting behave enough, these words immediately received reactions. Sharmazanov, who had been mentioned above, indicated that Davutoğlu is mistaken as in 1915 there was not a relocation but a genocide, a systematic annihilation of as many as

26 "Maḥçupyan'dan Yeni Türkiye Perspektifi" (Maḥçupyan's new perspective towards Turkey), *CNN Türk*, 4 November 2014.

27 "Turkey Mulls "Bold Steps" of Armenia to Begin "New Era", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 25 June 2014.

1,500,000 Armenians living in their historical land. “So, I think for a ‘new era’ to start in Armenian-Turkish relations, Turkey must take steps to face its own history and to recognize the first genocide of the 20th century.”²⁸

In July, President Sarkisian visited Argentina, Uruguay and Chili, the countries that recognized Armenian genocide in Latin America.

The fact that in Argentina-the country that supports Armenian genocide claims the most-Sarkisian has not been accepted by President Mrs. Cristina Kirchner, because of her “illness” got attentions. Considering that Argentinian Parliament’s successive decisions on the genocide claims in the previous years put Argentina on the spot towards Turkey and that President Cristina Kirchner visited Turkey in 2011 to partially make up for it, Mrs. Kirchner’s “illness” might be a “diplomatic” one.

During his speech in Argentina, Sarkisian opposed Davutoğlu’s view of “just memory” stating that this view is actually an updated, developed and re-shaped version of denial of Armenian genocide claims. During the speech, he said that the genocide will not come to an end as long as Turkish officials deny that the genocide has been made, that Turkey is not far away from facing her history and thousands of Turkish people reject their own government’s policies and stand together with Armenian people in solidarity.²⁹

Sarkisian visited Uruguay as well, the first country that recognized genocide claims in the world in 1964-5, and he was welcomed very well. In the joint declaration³⁰ that was published following the meetings between Sarkisian and, the president of this country, Joe Mujica, it has been stated that Karabakh issue should be resolved exclusively through peaceful means and mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and there is a need for other countries and international organizations to take an impartial stance. It was further indicated that blockades, road restrictions and economic isolation is unacceptable and contradict the norms of international law. The parties called all countries of the world and international organizations to recognize and condemn the crime of 1915 committed against the Armenian people. The Armenian side mentioned with gratitude that Uruguay is the first country of

28 “Sharmazanov: It is Turkey That Must Take A “Bold Step” by Recognizing and Condemning the Armenian Genocide”, *Arminfo*, 27 June 2014.

29 “Sarkisian Rejects Davutoğlu’s ‘Just Memory’”, *Asbarez*, 8 July 2014.

30 “Joint Statement on Results Of Meeting Between President Serzh Sarkisian Of Republic Of Armenia And President Jose Mujica Of Oriental Republic Of Uruguay”, 9 July 2014. Access Date: 03.02.2015 <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2014/07/09/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-Joint-Statement-with-the-President-of-Uruguay>

the world to recognize the Armenian Genocide. In addition, it welcomed the decision of the Uruguayan authorities on founding an Armenian genocide museum in Montevideo. In the basis of Uruguay's extreme Armenian support, we see activities of small but active and rich Armenian community; on the other hand we don't see any existence of Turkey.

There are approximately 1.500 Armenians living in Chili; although this small community succeeded to issue a decision from the Chilean parliament in 2007. There is no news in the press regarding Sarkisian's expressions against Turkey during his visit to Chile or a monument to be built in 2015 reflecting the genocide allegations.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbantian, who accompanied Sarkisian during his Latin America visits, joined the discourse against Turkey. In an interview Edward Nalbantian gave to Buenos Aires Herald journal³¹, he blamed Turkey and stated that since Erdoğan set conditions impossible to fulfil, normalization between the two countries is not taking place. He claims that Turkey started to impose new conditions and it has less to do with the reparation that Turkish state would have to pay than the fact that it is difficult to look at your own people in the eye and say: 'we've been lying to you for 99 years'.

Nalbantian continued the campaign against Turkey that he was trying to maintain through newspapers. In an article sent to the French newspaper *Le Figaro*³², he criticized Prime Minister Erdoğan's message of condolences and Davutoğlu's reiteration of the proposal to establish a commission of historians, and defended clearing the way for the reconciliation process through concrete steps such as the ratification of the Zurich Protocols, the normalization of bilateral relations, opening of borders instead of dated tactics. He criticized Erdoğan's speech on 23 April 2014³³ in which he extended his condolences. Nalbantian, who stated that the international community expected of Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide and thousands of Turks have already recognized it, indicated that Turkey needed to make peace with its past in

31 "Edward Nalbantian: It şs Difficult for Turkey to look at its Own People in the Eye and Say: "We've Been Lying to You For 99 Years", *Arminfo*, 10 July 2014.

32 "Génocide des Arméniens: Erdoğan Doit Dire la Vérite" *Le Figaro*, 6 September 2014. "Armenian Genocide: Erdoğan has to tell the truth".) Armenian Foreign Ministry published this document in English under the title of "Turkey Should Reconcile With Its Own Past" on the same date. <http://www.tert.am/en/news/2014/09/06/Nalbantian-lefigaro/> This text is longer than the one published on Figaro. French historian Maxime Gauin replied Nalbantian's article with a long text he published on the bulleting of Center for Eurasian Studies. Turkish version is available on: <http://www.avim.org.tr/analiz/tr/1915-OLAYLARIYLA-ILGILI-OLARAK-EDWARD-NALBANDIAN%E2%80%99IN-YAZISI-VE-MAXIME-GAUIN%E2%80%99IN-CEVABI/3661>

33 *Ermeni Arařtirmaları* (Armenian Studies), Issue 47, p 27-43

order to build its future and he expected Erdoğan to accept Sarkisian's invitation to visit Erivan on 24 April 2014. The importance of Nalbantian's article is that it rejects the new reconciliation process proposed by Turkey through Erdoğan's condolence message. It is understood from Nalbantian's article that unless Turkey recognizes Armenian Genocide claims and opens the borders, positive relations with Armenia cannot be developed.

In response to a question asked during his visit to Baku after being elected as President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said "If the Azerbaijan-Armenia issue will be resolved then the Turkey-Armenia issue will be resolved but unless this will happen, the issue between Turkey and Armenia will continue as in the current state."³⁴ Erdoğan stressed that the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations depended on the resolution of the issues between Azerbaijan and Armenia. These remarks were welcomed in Azerbaijan and President Aliyev's statement of "Turkey and Azerbaijan will jointly counter the lie about the genocide of Armenians"³⁵ had a great impact in the Armenian press.

Turkey's new Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavuşoğlu's statement, which indicated that Turkey will struggle with sister Azerbaijan together against the so-called Armenian genocide, unite power and efforts with Azerbaijan in every area, took place in the Armenian press.³⁶ Later, even though it is a fact that should be or already has been known by everyone and has been said every time, Çavuşoğlu's remarks in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey indicated that it is not possible to recognize the Armenian genocide allegations which are attributed to past generations and the Turkish nation. This was a major headline in the Armenian press.³⁷ The reason of this attention is, most probably, the view which was adopted particularly by some part of the Diaspora that Çavuşoğlu's statement was going to recognize the genocide allegations or will be forced to recognize it. The program of the 62nd Government read by Prime Minister Davutoğlu on 1 September 2014 in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey included a section on the relations with Armenia under Caucasus section.³⁸ The section is as follows: "One of

34 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan Bakü'de" (President Erdoğan is in Baku), *Ülkehaber.com*, 3 September 2014.

35 "Aliiev vows Support for Armenian Genocide Denial", *RFE/RL*, 3 September 2014.

36 "Mevlut Cavuşoglu: "Nous Allons Lutter Ensemble Avec L'Azerbaïdjan Contre le soi-disant Génocide Arménien (Mevlut Cavuşoglu: "Together with Azerbaijan we will fight against the so-called Armenian Genocide"), *NAM*, 4 September 2014.

37 "La Turquie Ne Reconnaîtra Jamais le Génocide A Déclaré Le Ministre Turc des Affaires Etrangères" (Turkey Will Never Recognize Genocide, Says Turkish Foreign Minister) *NAM*, 7 November 2014; "Turkey Will Never Recognize Genocide, Says Turkish Foreign Minister", *Asbarez*, 6 November 2014.

38 62. Hükümet Programı, Access Date: 03.02.2015.
http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/Global/Government/pg_GovernmentProgram.aspx

the strategic priorities of our government is to establish peace and stability in the Caucasus and minimize the tension and the conflicts in the region. In this context, our country will continue her efforts to end the occupation of Azerbaijan territories and Upper Karabakh, and abolish the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in accordance with resolving the conflicts in the South Caucasus. In the upcoming term our steps towards normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia will continue. We are expecting from Armenia to tend towards a position to seek for “just memory”. We think that this is the only possible way to extend environment in peace, stability and welfare in the Caucasus.”

Prime Minister Davutoğlu’s statements during his first visit to Azerbaijan after he came into office, once more confirmed Turkey’s policy towards Armenia and Davutoğlu’s willingness to act in concert with Azerbaijan.³⁹ The Prime Minister said that as long as Armenia continues her uncompromising attitudes on the Karabakh issue, Armenia remains excluded from regional projects; though if Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity was respected, a peaceful environment could be built within this context. Armenia will benefit from this as other countries do and “as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey here in Baku, we, once again say this as the representative of the people of Turkey that Turkey will stand together with Azerbaijan in her fight until the day every inch of Azerbaijani territory is liberated. International law states this. Until the requirements of international law are fulfilled, Turkey will work shoulder to shoulder with Azerbaijan to make the region as a region of peace. Any negative attitude against Azerbaijan will be reacted the same way in Turkey as it is in Azerbaijan.

In a speech President Erdoğan made⁴⁰ when he was in France to discuss the situation in Syria with François Hollande, he stated that Turkey has been a victim of misinformation and defamation; that Armenia and the Diaspora have non-constructive ideological approaches on the 1915 events; that Turkey does not view this as a political matter; that Turkish archives are open and historians, legal experts, archaeologists should study on the events of 1915 for these events to be understood better.⁴¹

39 Davutoğlu’ndan Karabağ Mesajı: “Azerbaycan Kurtulana Kadar”, (“Karabakh Message from Davutoglu: Until Azerbaijan is liberated”), *AGOS*, 19 September 2014.

40 “Remarks By President Serzh Sarkisian At The 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference” 20.09.2014. Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2014/09/20/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-Armenia-Diaspora-conference/>

41 “Les Quatre vérités sur le terrorisme de Président Erdoğan” (“The four truths about the President Erdoğan’s terrorism”), *La Croix*, 1 November 2014.

One of the important events for Armenia is the gathering of approximately 700 delegates from approximately 60 countries in Yerevan for the 5th Armenia-Diaspora meeting between the dates 19-20 September, 2014. Prime Minister Sarkisian made a speech at this conference and he said that the 1915 would witness unique actions and events on the occasion of the meaning and dimensions of the 100th year anniversary; that, in this context there would be wide political actions and he expects some of the presidents of some of the countries will pay visits to Armenia. Moreover, he stated that 2015 would be the new target for the Armenian national awakening. He brought forward that Turkish society is questioning the false reflection of the history; thousands of Turkish people reject their country's policy of denial; and therefore the Turkish authorities' policy of denial has reached a deadlock. Sarkisian stated that they would continue to ask Turkey to stop her hopeless denialist policy; refresh her memory; review the dark pages of the past; face history; accept and condemn old crimes; and get rid of this chronic burden via cleaning its conscience.

What is interesting with regard to Sarkisian's words is that he mentions the events not as they are but as he wished them to be. If there is a group in Turkey that supports the Armenian view, they are not strong and ineffective in contrast to what Sarkisian said. The most striking proof of this is that the political parties which have more than %90 of the votes in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Justice and Development Party, Republican People's Party, Nationalist Movement Party) in total, adopt almost the same position towards the Armenian issue. Only the Peoples' Democratic Party supports the Armenian views, though in case the "reconciliation process" succeeds, it is possible that they will change their stance.

It has drawn attention that the aforementioned declaration⁴² which had been adopted during the 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference and which touches upon various issues, included Turkey's acceptance of its responsibility, recognition of the genocide, and abolishing of the consequences; and the ability of those Armenians who converted their religion to declare that they are in fact Armenians.

Sarkisian dedicated a major part of his speech in the United Nations General Assembly on 24 September, 2014⁴³ to his country's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. On the section about Turkey, the following issues draw particular

42 "Remarks By President Serzh Sarkisian At The 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference" 20.09.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.mindiaspora.am/en/News/3369>

43 "Sarkisian Says Yerevan Considering Recall of Turkey-Armenian Protocols", *Asbarez*, 24 September 2014.

attention. First of all, as it has become a tradition, it has been stated that Turkey should be brave and face her own history, recognize the Armenian genocide allegations and repeated that Turkey should save next generations from this heavy burden. Moreover, probably referring to then Prime Minister Erdoğan's condolences, he stated that Turkey is giving ambiguous messages. Sarkisian said that Armenia never makes a connection between normalization of Turkish–Armenian relations and recognition of genocide by Turkey. He further added that the normalization process, which resulted in the signing of Protocols, was actually initiated by Armenia; but Turkey linked ratification of the Protocols to the Karabakh issue; and from now on people in Armenia and Karabakh are saying “hell with the ratification” and hence, Armenia is considering recalling the Protocols from the parliament.

These tough statements in fact repeat the already-known views of the President of Armenia. While his statements about withdrawing the Protocols from the parliament seem new, these in fact did not give any signal of change. After all, Protocols are not on the agenda of the Armenian Parliament. Therefore, his remarks about withdrawing the Protocols do not have a meaning. By doing so, Sarkisian might be trying to build pressure on Turkey or aiming to lead the US and the EU countries to build pressure on Turkey by creating concerns in these countries which give unnecessary importance to the Protocols. It is also possible that he might have thought of gaining favor in his own public opinion by rejecting the Protocols if he fails to influence Turkey's policies with these pressures.

President Sarkisian's article published on the New York Times on 26 September 2014 was inspired by the elements of his speech at the General Assembly. It is seen that the real aim is to ask Turkey to recognize Armenian genocide, prevent a new reconciliation process that Erdoğan wanted to start by expressing condolences.

Insistent opinions of particularly Sarkisian, other Armenian Officials and Armenian authors in the Diaspora on recognition of genocide, abolishing the consequences of it and especially opening the Turkish-Armenian border have been met with lack of interest on the official level in Turkey.

A small minority in the public continues to support the Armenian views. It constitutes an example that a meeting was organized by Hrant Dink Foundation together with Ankara University Faculty of Political Science on the topic of “Sealed Gate: Prospects of the Turkey-Armenia Border”, and took place in the faculty building between the dates 22–23 November 2014. At this meeting which some Turks, whose ideas are already known, Armenians and

3rd parties participated in, the idea of how beneficial the opening of the border would be was discussed very intensively. There is no doubt in benefits of the opening of the borders for Armenia. In economic terms, the benefits would be very limited for Turkey. In terms of politics, opening the borders without receiving anything in return is unfavorable for Turkey as it is disadvantageous for Azerbaijan.

II- THE PRIME MINISTER’S MESSAGE ON THE EVENTS OF 1915

The office of the Prime Ministry released a statement titled “The Message of the Prime Minister of the Republic Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s on the Events of 1915” on 23 April 2014 in 9 different languages⁴⁴.

There is no doubt in benefits of the opening of the borders for Armenia. In economic terms, the benefits would be very limited for Turkey. In terms of politics, opening the borders without receiving anything in return is unfavorable for Turkey as it is disadvantageous for Azerbaijan.

The message has been a surprise in Turkey, in the world and especially among Armenian circles and aroused interests, received comments.

1. Content of the message

Original form of the message is available in the “Recent Documents” part of our Journal.

We can sum up the general ideas of the message as follows:

- Late period of Ottoman Empire is full of sufferings. There sufferings, including the suffering of Armenians, should be understood, commemorated and shared.
- The events of 1915 should not become a new area of antagonisms and political conflict.
- The Relocation is an inhumane action but this should not be an obstacle for Armenians and Turks to establish mutual humane attitudes and behaviors towards each other.
- Despite the disagreements, parties should communicate with each other.

44 Turkish, English, German, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian

In this context, Turkey's proposal to establish a joint history commission is still valid.

- Turkey wishes Armenians who lost their lives in the context of the early 20th century rest in peace, and conveys her condolences to their grandchildren. Turkey also pays tribute with compassion and respect, to all Ottoman citizens who lost their lives in the same period and under similar conditions.

The message was written with expressions of goodwill and with a moderate language seeking reconciliation. It is seen that the aim of the message is to appeal to the humanistic side of the Armenian issue. Indeed, this dimension of the issue is overbalancing for the great majority of Armenians. It is understood that statements in the message indicating that the relocation was an inhumane act and wishing condolences to the grandchildren of the Armenians who lost their lives in the relocation aim to address the feelings of Armenians and to reach rapprochement and reconciliation between parties more easily.

On the other hand, the message indirectly touches upon a fact which is an obstacle for reconciliation: Armenians' one sided point of view about the 1915 events and their history in general. Sincerely, Armenians take only their own sufferings into consideration and ignore or look down sufferings of other groups in the same period. This approach prevents the objective examination of historical events and particularly having outcomes that are acceptable for other parties. This results in having no process on a critical issue such as genocide allegations and moreover, in transformation of an event that took place 100 years ago into a dispute today.

It is not only the Armenians who suffered and experienced difficulties during the First World War. If we take the subject in terms of civil casualties, according to Prof. Justin McCarthy's calculations in this period (between the years 1912–1922) there were a decrease of 2.462.250⁴⁵ in the Muslim population and approximately a decrease of 600.000⁴⁶ in the Armenian population. Though Armenian authors, and accordingly the public opinion in Armenia and the Diaspora, increase this number up to the fantastic 1.5 million and pretend as if Muslims did not have any loss; even if they did, as if it is not directly the Armenians' concern. Considering that it was fully documented that 518,000 Muslims were killed in the massacre by the Armenian gangs in

45 Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities*, New York University Press, 1983, p.134

46 *ibid*

Easter Anatolia⁴⁷, this approach grows worse and prevents the parties from objectively examining their joint history.

The message emphasizes this attitude with some statements such as “understanding of all the sufferings in this period”, “establishing hierarchies of pain”, “comparing and contrasting sufferings”, “approaching different discourses with empathy and tolerance” and besides “events that took place are our all shared pain” and “we should evaluate the history through perspective of just memory”.

By including statements like “deriving enmity from history and creating new antagonisms” and “using the events of 1915 as an excuse for hostility against Turkey and turning this issue into matter of political conflict”, the message stresses another critical point. The last war against the Armenians was in 1920; the Armenians were defeated and the contemporary border between the two countries was established by the Moscow and Kars Treaties in 1921. Moreover, the Treaty of Lausanne determined the rights of Armenians in Turkey in addition to the other minorities, and laid out the principles regarding their properties. Hereby the Armenian problem was legally solved. However, the Armenian Diaspora since 1965 and the new Armenian State since 1991 have had the aim of reviving the Armenian problem and to reopen the closed cases. This prevented the establishment of peace and cooperation in the region, as well as between the two countries. Thus, there is an ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, while Turkey and Armenia do not have official relations and the border has remained closed for 21 years.

This situation has isolated Armenia in the region and has had huge negative effects on her economic development. To sum up, in order to fulfill her historical wishes, Armenia has become to contradict her own benefits. However, its faith in delusions is so strong that today’s realities are almost invisible. When we consider this situation which dominates Armenia and the Diaspora, it is necessary to have a logical as well as an emotional approach in the relationship with Armenians, which is what Erdoğan tried to do with his message.

The message did not mention a necessity for condolences to Turks (Muslims) from Armenians. However, since it was tried to balance the sufferings of both sides and “just memory” are emphasized the message, it would be normal for the necessity of expression of condolences by Armenians to be on the agenda in the future when the reconciliation process takes place.

47 Yusuf Sarıncay (ed), *Documents of massacres executed by Armenians*, General Directorate of State Archives, 2001.

Lastly, we would like to remark the difference between “condolence” and “apology”. Expressing condolences means “expressing sympathy on the death of a person’s relative”. To apologize means “to express regret for something that one has done wrong”. In other words, an apology requires responsibility. The Turkish Republic, which was established eight years after the events of 1915, is in no way responsible for these events, thus, it is not required to apologize.

After the release of the statement, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister made some complementary statements on it.

The statement, which for the most part was about the 1915 events, did not include the Karabakh issue. At the reception in the Turkish Parliament on 23 April, Erdoğan stressed that “Armenia-Turkey relations will not be normalized unless the Karabakh conflict is resolved”.⁴⁸ In a briefing about the message at his party’s group meeting, Erdoğan said: “I hope Armenia and the Armenian diaspora recognize our courageous step and reciprocate in the same courageous manner”.⁴⁹

On 28 April, the famous American TV reporter Charlie Rose conducted an interview with Erdoğan⁵⁰ after his message gained international attention. In the interview, Erdoğan was asked: “Armenians obviously like to use the word genocide. Is it impossible for the Prime Minister of Turkey to characterize it as genocide?” His response was: “This is not possible. If such a genocide occurred would there have been any Armenians living in this country?” Moreover, Rose asked whether recognizing the Armenians’ suffering would mean there is an apology. Erdoğan’s answer to this question was as follows: “This is not something that happened during the Republic of Turkey. This was during the Ottoman Empire. If the documents show that our ancestors made a mistake... then we would pay whatever the consequence of that is.”

Then Foreign Minister Davutoğlu referred to the possibility of having negative comments from Armenia on the message saying that: “We hope the hand we offered will be reciprocated.”⁵¹ He stated during a TV show he attended that the statement reached its goal and received positive comments. He added that even if Armenia does not react as expected, Turkey will not take the message of condolence back and it expects the same revolutionary step from Armenia.

48 “Normalization Condition with Armenia”, *imctv.com*, 26 April 2014.

49 “Prime Minister Erdoğan, We expect the same brave attitude from Armenia”, *iha.com.tr*, 29 April 2014.

50 “Erdogan Tells Charlie Rose There Was No Genocide”, *Asbarez.com*, 29 April 2014.

51 “Normalization Condition with Armenia”, *imctv.com*, 26 April 2014.

He also stressed that Turkey has the right to ask if Armenia will offer condolences for the Turkish diplomats who were assassinated by terrorist acts.⁵²

Then President Gül, who has a major impact on the reconciliation process with Armenia and on the signing of the Protocols, strongly supported the message of the Prime Minister.⁵³

It was emphasized in the press as well that some new measures are foreseen to be taken for Armenians. According to the press, one of the most important of these measures would be to offering Turkish citizenship to the grandchildren of the Armenians who left or had to leave the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁴ It is understood that this was welcomed by some Armenians. The officials of an institute called the West Armenians Congress expressed their positive view on this and stated that Ottoman land registration records should be opened for the Armenian who wish to have citizenship. The head of Armenian Heritage Party Raffi Hovannisian demanded the authorities give the right of return to the Armenians who were forced to leave Anatolia, and stated that this could be a pilot project to establish relations. He further stressed that if Turkey wants to take a determined step it has to recognize that a genocide occurred.⁵⁵ In an article published in the British newspaper the *Guardian*⁵⁶, then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stressed that then Prime Minister Erdoğan's message allowed to recapture the opportunity of a conciliation which was eluded in 2009 between Turks and Armenians. He explained that the Armenians were among the best integrated communities in the Ottoman Empire, that they contributed to Ottoman music and architecture and held important positions in the government. He stated that in the 19th century, when the Empire's strength declined continuously, five million Muslims were driven away from their homes due to ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and the Caucasus. He also emphasized that while much of western history told of the suffering of the dispossessed and dead Ottoman Christians, the colossal suffering of Ottoman Muslims remained largely unknown outside of Turkey. Davutoğlu stated that results of the Armenian relocation in that period were unacceptable and inhumane, and that this tragedy continued to distress the Turks and Armenians and continued to keep them apart. Along with the importance of national memories, he also mentioned the importance

52 "Davutoglu: We reached to the target", *Stargundem.com*, 25 April 2014

53 "President Gul Backs Erdogan's Armenia Condolences", *Cihan News Agency*, 28 April 2014.

54 "Step for Armenians is coming from Turkey", *Haberler.com*, 24 April 2014.

55 "Turkey Considers Citizenship for Heirs of Displaced Armenians", *Al Monitor*, 25 April 2014.

56 "Turks and Armenians – We must follow Erdogan's Lead and Bury our Common Pain", *The Guardian.com*, 2 May 2014.

of the Turkish and Armenian narratives coming closer and the emergence of a just memory, and stated that Turkey proposed to establish a joint historical commission for this purpose. Mentioning that the problem could not be resolved without listening and understanding each other, he stressed that all Diasporas with roots in Anatolia was the diaspora of Turkey too. He stated that he asked Turkish ambassadors to treat the Diasporas with open arms and they carried out his instructions despite losing many friends to the Armenian terrorism.

Davutoğlu, in his article, appealed to everyone to seize the moment and to reconstruct a better future for Turkish-Armenian relations and stated that Prime Minister Erdoğan's message was an unprecedented and courageous step taken in this direction.

Davutoğlu's article received negative reactions from both Armenia and the Diaspora.

Edward Sharmazanov, the Vice President of the National Assembly and spokesman of the ruling Republican Party stated that the pain of people must not be buried, but cured; that the Armenian genocide was not a common pain of Turks and Armenians; and that was a shame of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire. He indicated that it was necessary to eliminate the consequences in order to cure the pain and that Ankara should follow Germany and admit that genocide was perpetrated against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁷

Davutoğlu's article was also criticized in the Diaspora press.⁵⁸

2. Reactions to the statement

This section will explain the views on Erdoğan's statement from the Armenian authorities, the Armenian Diaspora organizations, the authorities of the other countries and some political parties in Turkey, as well as some media reactions from Turkey and other countries.

57 "Armenian Official: Genocide is Shame of Turkish Empire", *NEWS.am*, 5 May 2014.

58 Two examples; one of them is from the Diaspora in France, the other one is from the Diaspora in USA. Please see: *Collectif Van*, 7 May 2014 Davutoğlu: "Turcs et Arméniens, Nous Devons Enterrer Notre Douleur Commune", *Asbarez*, 7 May 2014. (Davutoğlu Says We Have to Bury Our Common Pain)

a. Official Declarations of Armenia

While President Sarkisian had the opportunity to respond to Erdoğan's statement, he avoided doing so. However, in his 24 April speech which mentioned above and in the European Union Eastern Partnership meeting on 24 April, he used harsh words against Turkey without referring to Erdoğan's statement directly.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbantian acted similarly. On the contrary, the Deputy Foreign Minister mentioned that Erdoğan's statement bears evidence that Turkey will recognize the Armenian genocide sooner or later.⁵⁹

Armenian Head of Staff of Presidency Vigen Sarkisian said that they tried to find if Erdoğan's message was an attempt to face history, but then they decided that the statement was a more advanced expression of denial and concealing of the crime of genocide.⁶⁰

Hayk Demoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum near Yerevan, who is also Secretary of the State Commission, that is presided by Serzh Sarkisian and was founded to organize 100th anniversary of the 1915 events, published a statement addressing Prime Minister Erdoğan⁶¹. It states that Erdoğan's message is an important step but not in the direction of revealing the truth, facing history and enabling reconciliation between the Armenian and Turkish people.⁶²

Just as Sarkisian, Armenian Catholicos Karekin II, who resides in the town of Etchmiadzin near Yerevan, did not react to Erdoğan's statement. On the contrary, the head of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, Aram I, who resides in Antelian, Lebanon, stressed that the distortion of the historical facts cannot deny the truth and what happened in 1915 was a genocide against the Armenians planned by Talat Pasha and Enver Pasha. Thus, the Armenian people do not expect just condolences and kind words from the Turkish State, but recognition and compensation of the Armenian genocide.⁶³

59 "Shavarsh Kocharian: Turkey Will Recognize Armenian Genocide Sooner or Later", *Panorama.am*, 24 April 2014.

60 "Erdoğan's Statement is Advanced Form of Armenian Genocide – Vigen Sarkisian", *Panorama.am*, 24 April 2014.

61 "Director of Armenian Genocide Museum Responds to Erdoğan's Statement", *Radio.am*, 24 April 2014.

62 "Director of Armenian Genocide Museum Responds to Erdoğan's Statement", *Radio.am*, 24 April 2014.

63 "Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I Responds to Turkish PM's Statement", *Nyut.am/archives*, 24 April 2014.

b. The Reaction of the Diaspora

Aram Hamparian, the executive director of the Dashnak foundation Armenian National Committee of America, said that the message of Prime Minister Erdoğan is a repackaged denial and it is an obstruction to justice.⁶⁴

The co-chair of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak Party) in Western Europe, Mourad Papazian, also shares the view that Erdoğan's message strengthens denialism in Turkey and that the aim of this expression of condolence is only to make a good impression on the public opinion.⁶⁵ His organization released a statement expressing the same opinions and demanding the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Turkish state as well as compensation for moral and financial damages, and for the loss of land.⁶⁶

The representative of the Armenian Assembly of America, an organization of wealthy Armenians in the United States, stated that the message of Erdoğan does not recognize the Armenian Genocide, and that the victims of the Armenian genocide cannot rest in peace as long as Turkey continues its campaign of denial. The Assembly remains encouraged by the trend that has begun to question the official Turkish thesis on the Armenian Genocide within the Turkish society. From Orhan Pamuk to Elif Shafak and Ragıp Zarakolu the number of those who courageously speak about the Armenian genocide continues to grow.⁶⁷

Having various Armenians gathered under the same roof, the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy released a statement⁶⁸ affirming that it is Turkey's renewed denial tactics under international pressure to accept its past and reconcile with it - especially with the centenary of the Armenian Genocide approaching. President of the Federation, Kaspar Karampetian, expressed his opinion saying that there can be reconciliation and peace between Turks and Armenians, but only when Turkey accepts her genocidal past, condemns it, and pays the necessary financial and territorial reparations.

64 "Repackaging Denial: Erdogan Issues Statement on events of 2015", *Asbarez*, 23 April 2014.

65 "Réactions Mitigées Après les Condolances d'Erdoğan aux Arméniens" (Mixed Reactions After Erdoğan's Message of Condolences to Armenians), *RFI*, 24 April 2014.

66 "Déclaration d'Erdoğan: La Poursuite de la Stratégie d'Ankara" (Erdoğan's statement: The pursuit of Ankara's strategy), *Armenews*, 24 April 2014.

67 "Armenian Assembly of America Response to Turkish PM Erdoğan's Statement on Armenian Genocide Anniversary", *Panorama.am*, 24 April 2014.

68 <http://www.eafjd.org>

After Turkey recognizes the genocide and apologizes, the file will not close, according to Tania Babanazarian from the ‘Armenian Case Organization’ in France, and there will be financial and territorial reparations.⁶⁹

Congrès National des Arméniens Occidentaux (National Congress of Western Armenians) in Paris made a statement⁷⁰ saying that Erdoğan’s message did not fulfill the expectations, but it is hoped that the Turkish authorities would join the constructive dialogue started by Turkish NGOs. The importance of taking concrete steps to the requests of the Congress was stressed and it was mentioned that the new requisition of the Congress will be published soon.

The Zoryan Institute, an Armenian Diaspora institution, focuses on the scientific research regarding the genocide claims especially in North America. On the 5 May, this organization published a response⁷¹ to Erdoğan’s message, defining it as an unprecedented step by the Turkish government. They used weak arguments to respond to the points in the message and indicated that it is desirable that the Turkish government recognizes the responsibility of the Ottoman Empire in this case. As a first step to build dialogue between the two nations, it is demanded that Turkey starts unconditional diplomatic relations and opens the common border.

Other statements by other diaspora organizations, although being different, are generally negative.

On the contrary, some well-known people in the Diaspora- even though they are only a few- reacted positively to Erdoğan’s message. Among them are Patrich Devedjian, former lawyer of ASALA who got involved in politics later on and rose to the Ministry level; Ara Toranian who used to be the spokesperson of ASALA and then hold high-level positions in Armenian organizations and currently manager of the monthly journal *Les Nouvelles d’Arménie*; Ara Sarafian who is the Director of Gomidas Institute in the UK; Richard Giragosian, Director of Regional Studies Center in Armenia, and Alexis Govciyan co-president of the Armenian Federation of France.

While these people took this message positively, it is observed that some had reservations. According to Govciyan, the message is an interesting one, yet

69 “Génocide Arménien: ‘On ne Veut Pas d’une Reconnaissance Au Rabais’ (We do not want a reduced recognition), *Nouvel Observateur*, 23 April 2014.

70 “Batu Ermenileri Ulusal Kongresi’nden ‘taziye mesajına’ cevap” (National Congress of Western Armenians responds to the ‘message of condolence’, *Agos*, 15 May 2014.

71 “Zoryan Institute Response to the Message of The Prime Minister of Turkey”, 05.05.2014, access date: 03.02.2015. <http://orer.eu/en/english-zoryan-institute-response-to-the-message-of-the-prime-minister-of-turkey/>

not enough and further steps should be taken.⁷² Devedjian stated that the message itself is not a big step but it is a progress and should be the first step towards recognition⁷³, whereas Toranian stressed that this message is the consequence of the pressures on Turkey⁷⁴. Sarafyan expressed that this message is important for the both people but since it does not recognize the genocide it is a different form of denial.⁷⁵ Giragosian stated that the Prime Minister's message is constructive and right but that Diaspora will not find it sufficient. He added that the era of "worst reactions" that might come from Diaspora is over.⁷⁶

c. Reactions of Some Countries and International Organizations

A few countries stated their positions towards Prime Minister Erdoğan's message.

President Obama did not touch upon Prime Minister Erdoğan's message at his message published on 24 April. Spokesperson of Foreign Ministry Jen Psaki stated that they welcomed this message.⁷⁷

During his visit to Turkey, President of Germany Joachim Gauck described Prime Minister's message as a "new page".⁷⁸

During his speech in the Armenian Genocide memorial, President of France did not refer to Prime Minister Erdoğan's message, he indicated that this message means progress but it is not enough⁷⁹ in the aftermath of the ceremony when journalists addressed questions regarding this issue. As far as we understand, Hollande was expecting at least an apology from Turkey on this issue and maybe recognizing the genocide claims. In fact, during his

72 "Fransız Siyasetçilerinde Başbakan Erdoğan'ın Mesajına Destek" (Anadolu Agency, "Support from French Politicians to Prime Minister Erdoğan's Message), *AA*, 25 April 2014.

73 "Taziye Mesajı Fransa'daki Ermenileri Umutlandırdı" (Condolences gave hopes to Armenians in France), *Zaman*, 25 April 2014.

74 ibid

75 "Ermeni Tarihçiden Başbakan Erdoğan'a Destek" (Support to Prime Minister from Armenian Historian), *ensonhaber.com*, 27 April 2014.

76 "Ermenistan İçin Başka Alternatif Yok" (There is no other alternative for Armenia), *sabah.com*, 27 April 2014.

77 "Ermeniler Memnun Değil" (Armenians are not satisfied), *NTV*, 23 April 2014.

78 "Germany Gauch: Turkey Condolences to Armenians A News Page", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 29 April 2014.

79 "L'Evolution de la Turquie Ne Suffit Pas" (Turkey's evolution is not enough), *20 Minutes*, 26 April 2014.

visit to Armenia on 12 May, Hollande said that the only solution is Turkey's recognition of Armenian genocide.⁸⁰

Stefan Füle, who is the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood, confined himself to indicating that they encourage the message and reconciliation is a key value to the EU.

d. Reactions in Turkey

i. Political Parties' Stance

Main opposition party CHP's stance regarding then Prime Minister Erdoğan's message on 23 April, has been laid out by a written statement made by Deputy Chairman Faruk Loğoğlu.⁸¹

CHP indicated in the statement that it commemorates those who lost their lives during the events of 1915 and shares the sorrow and pain of the descendants of them. Stating that Turks and Armenians lived brotherly in the past, the statement indicated that the two sides have different accounts of the past; that it is not possible to overcome these differences by making one superior to the other one; and this is why peoples of Turkey and Armenia could reach reconciliation through a constructive dialogue. The statement recalls that CHP proposed the establishment of a joint historical commission in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 2005 and that this was communicated to Armenia. The statement calls on the two countries to open dialogue based on documents. Moreover, CHP wishes in the statement for 2015 to be a year of reconciliation and peace between the peoples of Turkey and Armenia and between the two states, and not a year of divergence. Lastly, the statement proposes the establishment of a "dialogue group" within the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, where political parties are represented.

MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli said about the message that "there is nothing to evaluate about this, this nation has suffered enough"⁸². Moreover, in a written statement⁸³, Bahçeli stated that the message was received with

80 "Hollande Says the only solution is Turkey's acknowledgment of Armenian genocide", *News.am*, 13 May 2014.

81 "Loğoğlu'dan Türk-Ermeni Halklarının İlişkilerini Değerlendiren Yazılı Açıklama" (Loğoğlu's Statement regarding the relations between Turkish and Armenian peoples), *Yerelgündem.com*, 28 April 2014.

82 "Muhalefet Tepkili" (The Opposition reacts), *Yeni Şafak*, 24 April 2014.

83 "Bahçeli'den Başbakan'ın 1915 Açıklamalarına Tepki" (Bahçeli's reaction to the Prime Minister's Statements regarding 1915), *Heberler.com*, 25 April 2014.

astonishment and bitterness, that it seemed as if it was written in Yerevan, and that it was far from reflecting the realities of the Turkish history. Expressing that the decision of relocation was taken with the intention to block the intense and merciless attacks by the Armenian gangs, to block their sources, and to save the future of the country, Bahçeli stated that relocation was pretty consistent and even compulsory when the conditions of the period are considered. He further stated that there were some undesirable losses with different reasons and that “the Turkish nation does not have anything in the past that it would be ashamed of, and would ask for mercy.”

Bahçeli, who also spoke during the group meeting of the party, stated that it was neither humane nor Islamic for one to compete his pain with that of the other, and asked what would be done regarding the 518,105 Muslim Turks in Eastern Anatolia who were killed by the Armenian gangs, and whether these martyrs would be disregarded. He emphasized that the Turkish nation would not apologize for the events of 1915.⁸⁴ Later on, in a briefing made in the Youth Assembly on 3 May Nationalists Day, he said, “they express condolences and tacitly apologies to the Armenian Diaspora, the dishonorable who violently massacred hundreds of thousands of Muslim Turks.”⁸⁵

BDP, on the other hand, declared in a written statement that it considered then Prime Minister Erdoğan’s message insufficient and called for the Turkish state to express apologies to the Armenian nation. It further emphasized that it was inevitable to confront one another and that facing the history and paying the price before history would be an assurance that there won’t be pain again.”⁸⁶

Workers’ Party Chairman Doğu Perinçek stated regarding the message that such a statement could only be made by a spokesman of imperialism; that the then Prime Minister did not defend the country, its independence, and sovereignty; and that, he, just like the imperialists, convicted the relocation.⁸⁷

As one can see, MHP and the Workers’ Party, which are predominantly nationalist in nature, do not approve the then Prime Minister’s message. On the contrary, CHP and BDP, even though they have some reservations, do not oppose the message. When this situation is reflected on the Grand National

84 “Erdoğan Ermeni Açılımlında Kararlı” (Erdoğan is determined about the Armenian Opening), *Amerikaninsesi.com*, 1 May 2014.

85 www.cnnturk.com, 3 May 2014

86 “BDP’den Ermeni Çıkışı: Özür Dilensin” (BDP’s Reaction with regard to the Armenians: An apology must be issued), *Net Gazete*, 24 April 2014.

87 “Perinçek’ten Başbakanı 1915 Tepkisi” (Perinçek’s Reaction to the Prime Minister regarding 1915), *Haberler.com*, 25 April 2014.

Assembly of Turkey, it is possible to state that the message is supported by over %80.

Human Rights Association Istanbul office, which spearheaded the planning of activities to commemorate 24 April in Turkey, organized a press conference on 5 May and stated that there has been an improvement regarding the language used by the Turkish Republic up until then; thus, the state was obliged to switch from a denialist approach that is full of insult and lies to a denialist approach that is refined to some extent. The association also indicated that despite these developments, the message denied the genocide⁸⁸.

ii. Armenian Community's Stance

Shortly after the Prime Minister's message, the Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul issued a press release⁸⁹ and strongly supported the message.

The press release stated that the message laid the foundation of a bridge between peoples of Turkey and Armenia and turned over a new leaf in the Turkish-Armenian relations. Moreover, it is stated in the Patriarch's press release that the message respected the memories of the non-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman Empire, and that it emphasized that events like relocation, which brings inhumane consequences, should not prevent sympathy and mutual humane attitudes to be established between Turks and Armenians. The press release also stated that the message could overshadow resolutions adopted in foreign parliaments. It emphasized that discourse full of grudge and hatred that instigates hostility should be left aside for the Turkish and Armenian peoples to embrace each other. The Patriarch further stated that they said "Amen" to the Prime Minister's wish for resting in peace to the Armenians who lost their lives and that they accept the condolences with love.

Thereafter, Deputy Patriarch Ateshian met with the then Prime Minister at the office of the Prime Ministry. According to the press⁹⁰, the then Prime Minister, said to the Deputy Patriarch, "We took the initiative. Now we expect Armenia to take a step. The ball is in their court now. If they take the necessary step, we will take new steps. We open our archives. You have your own duties in

88 "İHD'den Başbakan'ın Taziyesi'ne Cevap", 05.05.2014, Accessed Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklar%C4%B1/155444-ihd-den-basbakan-in-taziyesi-ne-cevap>

89 "Türkiye Ermeni Patrikliği Basın Bildirisi" (Press Release by Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul), *Hürriyet*, 24 April 2014.

90 "Uzatılan Zeytin Dalı Kurumasın İstiyoruz" (We don't want the Olive Branch to Dry Out), *Milliyet*, 2 May 2014.

this matter as well. Hold official visits and convoke certain officials”. Ateshian said to the press following his visit that the Prime Minister’s message was first of its kind in the sense that for the first time a prime minister of the Republic of Turkey shared the pain of the Armenians, and, that this extended an olive branch to the Armenians. He called on both parties and said: “Come close to each other and lay the foundation of the bridge of friendship and peace.” He added, “I believe that this first step initiated by our honorable prime minister has been met with appreciation by the majority of our community. As the Patriarchate, we also regard it with appreciation.”

Indeed, it is observed that the majority of the Armenian community supported the Prime Minister’s message. President of the Foundation of the Armenian Hospital Bedros Şirinoğlu, who was in the delegation that visited the Prime Minister, said that the prime minister made all their wishes come true and he returned their properties in the past. He further expressed their wish for God to bless him; stated that they are grateful to him in all aspects, and stated that he could be a nominated as a Nobel Laureates.⁹¹ Other Armenians also supported this view.⁹²

Bedros Şirinoğlu, in fact, showed that he has a “just memory” by stating that “Armenians should offer condolences as well, as deaths occurred on both sides during the war.” He further stated, “Our Muslim brothers were also killed. This was a fight between two brothers, two friends. For me it would be more just if both sides apologized.”⁹³ However, by saying that “Our people won’t like what I am saying”, he also drew attention to the fact that the Armenian atrocity is ignored by the whole Armenian community.

It is seen that a minority within the network of Agos newspaper and the Hrant Dink Foundation evaluated the message as denialist, while accepting the fact that it is first of its kind. Thus, this minority supports the Diaspora’s view of the message. It is stated in an article published by Agos⁹⁴ that the message was “based on a foundation that denies the reality”, and that AKP government’s stance on the Armenian issue was based on calculations like “how can get the most of what by giving the least? How can we make it with the least harm?”

91 “Ermeni Cemaati: Başbakan, Nobel’e Aday Olursa Destekleriz”, 26.04.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-ermeni-cemaati-basbakan-nobel-e-aday-olabilir-5952475/>

92 For example the President of Armenian Association on Tolerance Jerry Hirimyan, Journalist Markar Eseyan, source: “Ermeni cemaatinden Başbakan mesajı: ‘Nobel adayı olabilir’”, *Türkiyegazetesi*, 26.04.2014. ‘<http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/151874.aspx>

93 Ibid.

94 “Taziye Mesajı: Yeni Ama Hâlâ İnkârcı” (Message of Condolence: New but Still Denialist), *Agos*, 12 May 2014. Rober Koptaş.

On the other hand, it is pointed out that “commemorating Armenians as the people killed in the conditions of the beginning of the 20th century, together with the other victims of the First World War, amount to normalize and simplify what is a crime against humanity.” Thus, it was intended to distinguish Armenians from the others who died in the First World War and to give them a special place. However, the Prime Minister’s message puts emphasis on “not to compare and contrast suffering” and in this regard “to evaluate history through a perspective of just memory”.

iii. Reactions by the Media

It is observed that the media in Turkey generally welcomed and supported then Prime Minister Erdoğan’s message. In a study we conducted based on 17 most popular newspapers,⁹⁵ it is determined that there were 110 commentaries in the aforementioned newspapers in the five days between 24-28 April 2014. It is observed that 89 of these supported the message, although to different extents. Opposing were 16 and these were mainly in two newspapers.⁹⁶ 5 commentaries, on the other hand, did not show a favorable or unfavorable tendency.⁹⁷ In this case, we reach the conclusion that Erdoğan’s message was supported by a high ratio of %81 by the media, even though they were all for different reasons. This ratio is the same with the ratio of those who supported the message in the Grand National Assembly.

In our view, this reflects the wish of the majority of the Turkish public opinion for the Armenian issue to be resolved as soon as possible. On the other hand, main reason behind the support to the message was that the message approached the Armenian issue from a humanistic perspective.

3. Possible Consequences of the Message

What is expected from the Prime Minister’s message would be to soften the anti-Turkey stance which became more apparent after the Protocols failed; thus, to ensure that the contacts between the two countries and two peoples

95 The aforementioned newspapers are alphabetically like the following: *Akşam, Aydınlık, Cumhuriyet, Haber Türk, Hürriyet, Milliyet, Posta, Radikal, Sabah, Sözcü, Star, Türkiye, Vatan, Yeni Asya, Yeni Şafak, Yurt ve Zaman*

96 *Aydınlık* and *Yeni Asya*.

97 Following the first five days after the message was released, we observed a few commentaries in some newspapers regarding the insufficiency of the message. One of them reflected the views of the Diaspora. Today’s “The External Dynamics of the MP’s statement on 1915, *Zaman*, 18 May 2014, Alin Ozinian.

in more favorable conditions; and in the future to promote to the conduct of anew negotiations between Turkey and Armenia in this benign environment.

Is it possible to achieve this goal? The answer to this can be found in the reactions shown to the Prime Minister's message.

Armenian Diaspora organizations- of which most are either Dashnak or Dashnak-oriented- reacted negatively to the message. Dashnaks are against reconciliation with Turkey unless "the consequences of the genocide are overcome", in other words unless the border with Turkey is opened, the properties are returned, compensation is paid, and even some land is given to Armenia.

Conversely, some influential people in the Diaspora were impressed by the Prime Minister's message. However, for most of them, this message is just a first step; this must be followed by other steps- compromises so as to say. In the meantime, it is natural that some civil society organizations, which are regularly in contact with each other, support the message, even though they do not speak out much.

As far as the Armenian media is considered, the Armenian public opinion did not show much interest in the Prime Minister's message. The same is true for the Russian Federation in which the highest number of Armenians lives after Armenia. It is understood that they would follow Armenian government's stance regarding the message.

Conversely, some influential people in the Diaspora were impressed by the Prime Minister's message. However, for most of them, this message is just a first step; this must be followed by other steps- compromises so as to say. In the meantime, it is natural that some civil society organizations, which are regularly in contact with each other, support the message, even though they do not speak out much.

As for the Armenian government, President Sarkisian and Foreign Minister Nalbantian preferred to keep silent with regard to the message for they intended to look not to care. By a lower level representation through the Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharyan the Armenian government put forth that they considered the message negatively. This stance probably stems from the view that Erdoğan's message was intended to decrease the influence of the activities planned for 2015. On the other hand, it is observed that Armenia's stance towards Turkey has been in parallel with Diaspora's stance since the failure of the Protocols, especially in the last three years. In other words, while Turkey previously was not openly demanded to recognize the

genocide allegations, to pay compensation and to return properties; when Armenia's current stance is considered, it is understood that the Armenian government did not want to take the message seriously as it conflicts with this policy.

When it is considered in a wider perspective, we see that the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation efforts is a process of which the first phase constitutes the efforts to establish normal relations between the two countries between 1991-1993; however, continuous occupation of Azerbaijani soil nullifies these efforts, and even led to closure of the border. Moreover, we see that Turkey took a second step about 12 years later when it proposed the establishment of a joint historical commission; however, these efforts did not succeed because of Armenia's disinterest. The third step, the signing of the Protocols, did not succeed either; this time it was the Karabakh issue which was as an obstacle to the ratification of the Protocols. As there are other countries in addition to the two countries, namely the US, Russia and the EU, that want the normalization of the relations between Turkey and Armenia, this process will continue; however, Armenian expectations for 2015 will postpone new initiatives to be made for some period but it is likely resume after a while.

Regardless of the fact that Armenia has toughened its stance under the influence of 2015, Turkey's expression of condolences has, in fact, put Armenia on the spot in the eyes of the other countries and the public opinion. Armenia still stands as the party that doesn't want reconciliation. As Armenia and the Diaspora need permanent support from others, Turkey's expression of condolences may cause a decrease in this support, although it may vary in terms of area of support and the country that is providing the support. This, in turn, will strengthen Turkey's hand when new initiatives are started to be taken.

III- ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO COMMEMORATE 24 APRIL

As in every year, 24 April was commemorated this year with ceremonies and/or religious rites in the countries where Armenian communities live. We observe a certain characteristic of these commemorations compared to the commemorations that took place in the past.

We will examine this issue in four sections. President Barack Obama's 24 April message, President François Hollande's speech at the genocide memorial in Paris, ceremonies in Armenia, President Sargsyan's speech and lastly, commemoration activities in Turkey for 24 April.

1. President Obama's Speech

When he was a presidential candidate, Barack Obama recognized the 1915 events as genocide upon Armenian militants' demand and he stated that he would pursue this stance in case he is elected. Nevertheless, after being elected, within the realities of his country's foreign policy, he could not keep this promise as he wanted to pursue good relations with Turkey. However, like his predecessors, he had to release a message on 24 April 2009 and he used the words "Medz Yeghern", the equivalent of genocide in Armenian, which means the great disaster. Thus, he partly satisfied the Armenians and partly the Turks as he did not directly use the word genocide. In the following years, Obama acted the same way.

This year's message by the American President⁹⁸ resembles the last year's message to a great extent. Some statements are repeated in this year's message. As in last year's message, it is stated that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or were marched to death. While there is no doubt that Armenians obliged to take a difficult journey, there is no evidence that they were sent to death. Even critical Armenian researchers in our day do not bring forward the argument that 1.5 million Armenians died in the events of 1915.⁹⁹

American President stated that a full, frank and just acknowledgment of the facts is in everyone's interest and that peoples and nations grow stronger by reckoning with painful elements of the past. With these expressions, he indirectly asked Turkey to recognize the genocide allegations. Moreover, he recognized and commended the growing number of Armenians and Turks who have taken this path. We understand that these are the Turks who recognize the allegations and make efforts so that the allegations are recognized.

This year's message state "the extraordinary courage and great resilience of the Armenian people in face of tremendous adversity and suffering" and it applauds the contributions that the Armenian-Americans have made to American society and culture.

Despite the compliments it made to the Armenians, President Obama's message did not satisfy the militant Armenians for their sole expectation from the President is the recognition of the genocide allegations.

98 "Obama, Again Fails to Recognize the Genocide", *Asharez*, 24.04.2014.

99 Please see the section titled "François Hollande's Speech" for why the number 1.5 million cannot be correct.

Turkish media, as well, has had interest in the message regarding this issue. The message's tone against Turkey and especially the indirect demand of the President from Turkey to recognize the genocide allegations were not highlighted in the media.

2. François Hollande's Speech

French President François Hollande, has long supported the Armenian views and made efforts for the recognition of the allegations. In this framework, he played a significant role in the adoption of the bill in 2001 that ensured the official recognition of the genocide allegations by France.

When he became a presidential candidate in 2012, imitating then President Sarkozy, he made a speech in the genocide memorial in Paris on 24 April, and said that in case he is elected, a new bill would be prepared to penalize those who deny the genocide allegations and that he would attend the 24 April commemoration ceremonies every year.¹⁰⁰ He was indeed elected president; however, he did not join the ceremonies in 2013 with the excuse of his visit to China.¹⁰¹

The reason behind this stance is the fact that the relations between France and Turkey were damaged because of the Armenian issue. The new French government tried to repair the relations through Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, and following Turkey's positive reaction, Hollande made an official visit to Turkey on 27-28 January 2014. This was the first time a French President visited Turkey in 22 years. France's signal that some Chapters in the EU negotiations could be opened, the lack of mention of the genocide allegation unless it is required, and the lack of it even if it seemed required were the signs that this visit was a successful one.

Having ensured significant progress in relations with Turkey, Hollande tried to establish better relations with the Armenian community in France as well, and, in this framework, organized some meetings with them. Following these developments, he delivered a long speech at the genocide memorial on 24 April.¹⁰² We will examine some sections of this speech below.

Hollande stated that what the Armenians had gone through in 1915 could only

100 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 41, p.51

101 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 44, p. 42

102 <http://www.elysee.fr/chronologie/#e6133,2014-04-24,ceremonie-de-commemoration-du-genocide-armenien>

be described by one word, genocide; and, that 1.5 million Armenians died and hundreds of thousands were deported. He further said that Komitas was arrested on 24 April in addition to the 650 Armenian intellectuals; and, that Komitas was influenced by this event for the rest of his life in Paris. Hollande added that France firmly strive for the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

By mentioning the issue of recognition of the Armenian genocide in the world, Hollande stated that this struggle would continue without any abandonment, hesitancy or appeasement. He said that he accepted to be the president of the international commission on examining the Armenian genocide in this framework; that he long supported the establishment of an Armenian center on memory and civilization by municipality of Paris, and the government will support this. He added that the government will also support the establishment of an awareness-raising and educational program across Europe.

Stating that the commemoration activities scheduled for the centennial of the Armenian genocide are planned in cooperation with Armenians, Hollande reported that he would be in Armenia in the next year on 24 April.

On denial of the Armenian genocide, the President said that the Constitutional Council of France had revoked the bill on denial; and that instructions were given in order for preparation of a new text that can't be revoked. On Perinçek-Switzerland case, he said that the European Court of Human Rights declared the Swiss Court's decision null and void; the Swiss government objected to this decision; and he instructed the government to ensure that France supports Switzerland on this matter.

Among other things, it is observed that there are some errors of fact in Hollande's speech. The number of Armenians arrested in Istanbul on 24 April 1915 and sent to exile (to Ayaş and Çankırı) is not 650, but 235.¹⁰³ As mentioned above with regard to Barack Obama's speech, the allegation that 1.5 million Armenians were killed in the events of 1915 were in no way proved; even critical Armenian scholars do not use this number. The reason why we emphasize this issue is the fact that Armenians always provide unrealistic numbers with the idea that the more it is exaggerated the more influential it will be. Moreover, leaders like Barack Obama and François Hollande are in the position of serving the Armenian propaganda by using these numbers without they are examined first.

103 Yusuf Sarıay, *24 Nisan 1915'te ne oldu?*, İstanbul, 2012 p. 196

3. Activities planned in Armenia and President Sarkisian's Speech

President Sarkisian, as all Armenian Presidents, releases a message addressing the nation on 24 April every year.

In the past, these messages did not mention Turkey, and, thus, Turkey was not directly accused of the events of 1915. Sarkisian followed this practice for a while however he targeted Turkey in his message on 24 April 2013 and kept his stance in his message in 2014 as well. Therefore, Sarkisian started implementing his policy of criticizing and even accusing Turkey in every occasion in his messages on 24 April as well.

In his message, Sarkisian stated that Turkey continues its policy of utter denial; that centennial of the Armenian genocide serves as an opportunity for Turkey to repent and set free the state's future from this heavy burden.

In his message in 2013, Sarkisian claimed that material assets accumulated through the millennia by the Armenian nation has been appropriated by the Turkish state and peoples (referring to Turks and Kurds). Further claiming that denial of the genocide constitutes direct continuation of that crime—a formula used by the Diaspora that does not have a legal meaning—, he claimed that very crime is being carried out in modern Turkey.¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, he put more emphasis to Turkey in this year's message¹⁰⁵. In his message, Sarkisian stated that Turkey continues its policy of utter denial; that centennial of the Armenian genocide serves as an opportunity for Turkey to repent and set free the state's future from this heavy burden. Expressing that 2015 should convey a strong message to Turkey, he said that the attitude towards Armenia can no longer be measured by words but by opening of borders and establishment of normal relations. He claimed that Armenia's position on protocols has not changed and added that they do not consider the Turkish society as their enemy. Furthermore, Sarkisian stated that they recall those Turks who lent a helping hand to their Armenian friends "being annihilated by the barbarians" during the relocation.

104 *Armenpress*, 24 April 2013

105 "Address By President Serzh Sarkisian On Remembrance Day Of Armenian Genocide Victims", 23.04.2014, Access Date: 03.02.2015.
<http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2014/04/23/Address-by-President-Serzh-Sarkisian-on-remembrance-day-of-Armenian-Genocide-victims/>

4. Activities Planned in Turkey

In recent years, some liberal-leaning intellectuals (who were actually left-leaning in the past), organized some commemoration activities on the occasion of 24 April together with some people with Kurdish origins and relatively a few Armenians. Although pretty modest at the beginning, these activities have developed in time. However, they could not reach a significant level and could not go beyond the reach of the groups mentioned above.

It was intended last year to bring an international character to these events by inviting some foreigners.¹⁰⁶ It is observed that efforts were made this year, as well, to ensure broader participation, especially by the foreigners. Human Rights Association and DurDe from Turkey, as well as Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM), released a declaration which includes the main Armenian allegations and invited people to commemorate 24 April in Istanbul.

This declaration is available on the web¹⁰⁷ in 17 languages. The readers were asked to sign this declaration, which is called a “petition”. It was opened for signature on 21 February 2014 for the first time. 3,090 people signed the declaration until 24 April. After this date it remained online, and as of the end of the year – on 30 December-, it was 3,493. For a declaration that is expected to reach a few billion people – since it is released in 17 languages- this is a small number.

As for the activities organized in Turkey on 24 April 2014, they were mainly in the same line with the activities planned last year. They were mainly in Istanbul and the media did not show much interest in them.

IV- DEMANDS FROM TURKEY IN THE CENTENARY OF THE RELOCATION

As of now, there is no official demand by the Armenian government from Turkey. However, there are some elements that are put into words by President Sarkisian in various speeches that have the potential to turn into official demands in the future. These are as follows:

106 For activities of 2013 please see *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 44, sp.45-53

107 www.remember24april1915.eu/petition

a. Demand that Turkey recognize the genocide allegations

Following the failure of the protocols, since circa 2010, Sarkisian has increasingly started stating in his declarations that Turkey should recognize the events of 1915 as genocide. The difference between Sarkisian and his predecessors is that Ter Petrosyan and Kocharyan did not directly mention Turkey in their demand from the “international society” to recognize the genocide allegation. Thus, by not mentioning it, they avoided a potential dispute with Turkey. It is seen that Sarkisian does not have such a concern.

b. Demand that Turkey abolish the consequences of the genocide

This expression refers to compensating grandchildren of those who were relocated, returning of properties and giving land of an undefined size to Armenia from the region of Eastern Anatolia of Turkey.

As a response to a question directed to Sarkisian following his speech in the European Council Parliamentary Assembly in 2013, he stated that Armenia never demanded land from Turkey.¹⁰⁸ It would be appropriate to rather consider this declaration as a retrospective fact and that it does not include the future. On the contrary, it is not considered that any country would support any demands of land from Turkey; this may exclude the South Cyprus regime and Syria which have hostile relations with Turkey. Besides, there would be those who think that it is normal for “small” Armenia to ask for land from “big” Turkey and even those who consider this as a matter of humor. Moreover, as will be mentioned below, it is seen that Diaspora is getting aware of the unrealistic side of demanding land and that it started looking for alternatives.

While there have not been any discussion in the third countries, it is considered that there are some who support Armenians with regard to compensating grandchildren of those Armenians who were subject to the relocation and returning of properties. It is also probable that a strong support would be provided by third countries regarding the returning of Armenian churches and other religious structures.

108 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 47, p. 17. We indicated in this issue that Sarkisian’s remarks reflect only one side of the truth, and that both Sarkisian and his predecessor Robert Kocaryan made remarks indicating that some territories must be demanded from Turkey in the future.

c. Demand that Turkey open its border with Armenia

These demands have been expressed for many years not only by Presidents of Armenia, but also by other officials on the grounds that closure of the border is illegal. Besides, while there is no time limit for the recognition of the so-called genocide or abolishing of the consequences of it, opening of the borders is considered as emergent. United States and the European Union support Armenia with regard to the opening of the borders without a precondition whereas Azerbaijan strictly objects to it.

d. The Legal Basis of these demands

The most important consideration regarding the official demands of Armenia is that these demands have no precise legal basis. There is no bilateral agreement between Turkey and Armenia except the Kars Agreement of 1921. The multilateral agreements, to which both sides are a party, are not directly relevant to the Armenian demands in principle. On the other hand, it is possible that these demands will be rejected on the grounds that they are related to the issues that are resolved in the past and some were related to Turkey's sovereignty rights.

Among other things, the fact that there is no substantial and precise legal basis that can serve as a foundation for the Armenian demands is considered by the Armenian government as well. As a matter of fact, Pan-Armenian Forum of Lawyers that was assembled in Yerevan on 5 July 2013 took the following decision to bring it forward against Turkey: to compile a list of complete and substantiated documents based on the views expressed during the Forum, the existing studies and documents as well as the norms and principles of International Law in order to eliminate the consequences of the Armenian genocide.

In addition, the Forum took the decision to establish a special committee that will make the package of legal documents on key issues related to the Armenian Genocide.¹⁰⁹

Thus, it may be expected that, after legal foundations are determined, these documents will be sent directly to Turkey or a competent international court such as International Court of Justice by the Armenian government.

109 *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 28, 2013 p. 13

2. Demands of the Armenian Churches

As is known, there are two main Armenian religious institutions; the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin (located in Etchmiadzin, which is near Yerevan, Armenia) and the Catholicosate of Cilicia (located in Antelias, Lebanon). These institutions too have made demands upon Turkey in recent times.

a. The Joint Demands of the Two Catholicos

The Catholicos Karekin II and Aram I published a joint statement on 24 April 2013 and put forth the following demands¹¹⁰: That Turkey should recognize the Armenian genocide; recompense all losses of Armenians in terms of human life and human rights; and give back Armenian churches, monasteries, church real estate, and cultural monuments to the “Armenian people”.

On 13 December 2011, the US House of Representatives adopted the resolution H.RES.306, which requested that Turkey “return to their rightful owners all Christian churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites, and other religious properties, including movable properties, such as artwork, manuscripts, vestments, vessels, and other artifacts”¹¹¹. Since the US House of Representatives has no authority on this issue, the resolution can be viewed as a statement of opinion. Despite the opening of Turkey’s Akdamar Church (Church of the Holy Cross) and other places of worship, and the returning of the properties of Armenian foundations, another resolution by the House of Representatives numbered H. RES.4347 was adopted on 28 March 2014,¹¹² but was not able to pass the voting stage.

In conclusion, the US at least pays attention to the returning of the Armenian churches and other religious properties. It can be expected that the European Parliament, completely comprised of the representative of Christian countries, might pay the same attention.

On the other hand, another important point on this issue is that, despite normally being in competition and sometimes experiencing friction, the two Armenian Catholicos easily come together when it comes to the genocide claims and making demands towards Turkey. The most recent development

110 For details about this, please see; *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 44, p. 22-23.

111 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 44, p. 39-41.

112 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 47, p. 58-59.

on this issue has been the gathering of the Synod of the Archbishops on 11-13 November 2014 that convened in Etchmiadzin, which is the largest body of the Armenian Apostolic Church and which comprises of bishops and archbishops of all countries including Turkey. The Synod agreed on a statement which called upon the international community to “condemn and recognize the first genocide of the 20th century that was carried out by Ottoman Turkey.” Also, the Synod called upon Turkey to “recognize the Armenian genocide and to return the rights of the Armenian people.”¹¹³

b. The Demand of the Catholicos of Cilicia

Catholicos of Cilicia delivered a speech on 19 September 2014 during the 5th Armenia-Diaspora Meeting held in Yerevan, during which he said that they would soon apply to the Turkish Constitutional Court for the returning of the historic centers (buildings) in Sis (Kozan county) to the their rightful owners the Armenian Church and the Armenian people, and that if the Court rejects their case, they will take the case to the European Court of Human Rights. Aram I indicated that such initiatives require important funds, but that they have confidence in the support of the Armenian people. Aram I expressed that even if they lose the case it will still be a victory, since the opening of the case will show the international community that Armenians are committed to demanding the rights of the Armenian nation no matter how many years may pass since the genocide.¹¹⁴ A well-known Armenian columnist¹¹⁵ objected to this by indicating that the Turkish government will abuse the issue in the event that the case is lost and that loss of this case will be shown as if the genocide claims are not being accepted. In another speech delivered on a different occasion, Aram I said that he was aware of the fact that law is not really on the side of the Armenians, but that it is necessary for efforts to converge on this area¹¹⁶.

3. The Demands of the Diaspora

In terms of making demands towards Turkey, the Armenian diaspora has always been more active and ahead of Armenia. There are, however, different

113 “Déclaration du Synode des évêques de la Sainte Eglise apostolique Arménienne” (Declaration of Armenian Saint Apostolic Church’s Synod of Bishops), *Armenews*, 15 November 2014

114 “Catholicosate of Cilicia to Sue Turkey Over Historic Headquarters in Sis”, *Armenian Weekly*, 19 September 2014.

115 “Lawsuits, Legislations, Lobbying: All Ahead of Genocide Centennial”, *California Courier Online*, 29 September 2015, Harut Sassounian.

116 “Catholicosate of Cilicia Consistent With Return of Catholicosate of Sis”, *Armenpress*, 19 November 2014.

opinions in the diaspora on this issue. While some make due with Turkey recognizing the genocide claims and apologizing for it, many also want Turkey to pay restitution, return properties and even cede territory to Armenia.

Certain organizations of the Diaspora have expressed their demands on this issue. Certain well-known individuals within the Diaspora have stated their opinions. Since we have limited space, we will not delve into every single one of them and will instead give weight to the Diaspora organizations by listing the summary of the demands below.

Here we have analyzed the demands of three important Diaspora organizations. The main one of these three is the Dashnak Party (Armenian Revolutionary Federation), which has influence on a large section of the Diaspora. This Federation adopted a statement concerning the demands to be made from Turkey¹¹⁷, and had a report prepared in order to support such demands. The report, titled “Resolution with Justice – Reparation for the Armenian Genocide”, attempts to find a legal basis for the demands¹¹⁸. Besides these, the Armenian Bar Association in the US has also prepared a list of demands¹¹⁹.

It is possible to aggregate the sometimes overlapping demands of these three documents under five headings. These are: genocide, returning of properties and the paying of restitutions, ceding of land to Armenia, relations with Armenia, and other demands. The specific demands that are being made under these main headings have been shown in the list below:

TOPIC BASED LISTING OF THE ARMENIAN DEMANDS TOWARDS TURKEY

GENOCIDE ISSUE

Turkey’s Recognition of the Genocide, Turkey’s Apology, Turkey Commemorating 24 April as the Armenian Genocide Day, Including the Genocide in the Education Curriculum, Establishing Genocide Museums in Turkey, Reusing Armenian-Origin Place Names in Turkey, Ending Denialism

117 “ARF’s Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide, *Asbarez*, 23 June 2014.

118 The Report of the Armenian Genocide Reparations Study Group, *Resolution with Justice*, Final Report September 2014.
http://www.armeniangenocidereparations.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/20140918-Armenian_Genocide_Reparations_Study-Into_and_ExecSum-EN-web.pdf

119 “Armenian Bar Association on Justice for the Armenian Genocide”, 10.06.2014. Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.horizonweekly.ca/news/details/40424>

in Turkey, Annulment of Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, and Armenians Who Had Become Muslims Being Able to Return to Their Real Identities

RETURNING OF PROPERTIES AND THE PAYING OF RESTITUTIONS

Returning the Real Estate Expropriated During Relocation, Restitution of Properties No Longer Present, Restitution Due to the Owners' Not Having Been Able to Use Their Property, Returning of All the Properties Of Armenian Churches, Being Able to Freely Access Legal Procedures in Respect to Properties, Restitution to be Paid to the Grandchildren and Their Organizations of Those Who Had Been Relocated, Restitution for the Deaths and Pain Suffered, Creation of a Schedule for the Returning of Properties and Payment of Restitutions, Considering Armenians As A Single Group for the Payment of Restitutions for Properties With No Documents and the Deaths and Pain Suffered, Turkey Giving Aid to Armenian Charity Institutions, Determining the Restitution to be Paid by Turkey

TERRITORY TO BE CEDED TO ARMENIA

Ceding the Territory of the Arbitration of President Wilson, Turning Territories of the Arbitration of President Wilson Into Demilitarized Zones that Permit the Economic Activities and Living of Armenians, Ceding of Historic Armenian Homeland – Including Mount Ararat and Ani – to Armenia, Allowing Armenia to Use The Natural Resources of Turkish Regions Close to the Border with Armenia, Providing Access to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea for Armenia, Recognition of the Independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, Returning of Nakhchivan to Armenia

RELATIONS WITH ARMENIA

Turkey Looking Out for and Protecting Armenia, Ending the Embargo Being Applied to Armenia, Opening of the Borders, Refraining from Carrying Out a Military Operation Against Armenia and Karabakh, Giving Economic Aid to Armenia, Signing of Security Pacts Between Armenia and Turkey and Its Other Neighbors

OTHER DEMANDS

Giving Status of Independence to the Istanbul Patriarchate and Other Armenia Religious Institutions, Making No Discrimination against Armenians

in Turkey, Protecting the Armenian Religious and Cultural Structures that are to Remain in Turkey, Inspection of this Protection by Armenia

As can be seen, the demands that the Armenian Diaspora has made is quite detailed, and it is evident that much time has been spent working on these demands. These demands have been determined with a maximalist mindset. Yet Armenia is not in a position to impose any demand on Turkey, so it is difficult to understand why such detailed studies are being done and published. On the other hand, Diaspora organizations too seem to have a no legal way through which to affect Turkey.

The most interesting demands among all of these are the ones about territories.

The Dashnak Party wants Turkey-Armenia border to be redrawn on the basis of the 22 November 1920 dated Arbitration of the US President. The Armenian Genocide Reparations Group - which has been indicated to be financed by the Dashnak Party – has stated the following, probably due to the realization that there is no possibility of Turkey ceding territory to Armenia: “While a complete political transfer of land (President Wilson Arbitral Award) to Armenia is optimal, the Group recognizes the alternative of demilitarization of Wilsonian Zone and allow free Armenian economic activity and residential status in it.” This alternative that does not prescribe Turkey ceding territory to Armenia is basically a “revolutionary” approach, since up until now demands for ceding of territory has been supported by all Armenians. Meanwhile, it must be mentioned that the Dashnak Party has remained silent on this alternative and that this can see as a form of unspoken agreement.

The Armenian Bar Association’s stance towards the demands of territory is different from the traditional Armenian demands as well. Although the Association has demanded the returning of the “historic homeland of Armenia”, it has not explained what is encompassed by this homeland. By stating: “Turkey must provide and guarantee to Armenia with fair use of the national resources of the area of Turkey leading to the border between the two states,” the Association has put forth a demand that does not prescribe for the ceding of this territory to Armenia. On the other hand, the Association’s naming of “the vicinity of Mount Ararat and the Armenian town of Ari and its vicinity” shows that its demands for territory are more symbolic in character.

In sum, it can be seen that Diaspora Armenians – while not expressing it explicitly – are beginning to distance themselves from the demands for territory, and in its place are giving priority to restitution and the returning of

properties and are working on preparing the legal basis for the demands that they will put forth. Lastly, the Armenian Genocide Reparations Group has indicated that, while not being exact and final, the reparations demanded of Turkey could be as high as 104 billion dollars. It would be correct to qualify such an enormous number as being in the realm of fantasies. In order give an idea of the enormity of this number: it can be calculated that this number corresponds to 1/8 of Turkey's annual national income, and if such a number is to be paid to Armenia, every Turk in a population of 75 million people would have to pay around 13,866 dollars or a family of four would have a debt of around 55,000 dollars.

V- OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

1. The Fourth Meeting of the State Commission on the Coordination of Events Dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the Relocation

In 2011, the State Commission on the Coordination of Events Dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was established and the presidency of it was assumed by Serzh Sarkisian personally. The members of this Commission include: Catholicos of Etchmiadzin Karekin II, Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I, Catholic Patriarch Nerses Petros XIX of the Armenian Catholic Church, President of the Armenian Evangelical World Council Hovel Mikaelian, President of Karabakh State (Region) Bako Sahakian, as well as the Prime Minister of Armenia, President of the Armenian National Assembly, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, representatives of the “traditional” Armenia parties including the Dashnaks, and representatives of some of the institutions of the Diaspora. The Secretary of the Commission is the Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Hayk Demoyan. Also, local committees have been set up in the countries where Armenians live to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the relocation.

In sum, it can be seen that Diaspora Armenians – while not expressing it explicitly – are beginning to distance themselves from the demands for territory, and in its place are giving priority to restitution and the returning of properties and are working on preparing the legal basis for the demands that they will put forth.

The State Commission has so far convened once per year and held its fourth meeting on 27 May 2014 in Yerevan. We have relayed the parts of speech delivered by President Sarkisian that pertain to Turkey in the “Turkey-Armenia Relations” section of this article. Besides this, Sarkisian said that

the Armenian genocide is the precursor of the other genocides of the 20th century, and claiming that there is no statutory limitation on crimes committed against humanity, he requested all states and the international community to recognize the Armenian genocide.

While no detailed information has been given about the kind of activities being planned for the 100th year, President Sarkisian has informed that certain heads of state will be invited to the ceremony on 24 April 2015. The only person to have accepted this invitation so far has been President Hollande. In this framework, we have seen above that President Erdoğan too has been invited.

In many countries, certain meetings handling the Armenian genocide claims and supporting the Armenian claims against Turkey have already started being organized. It is being understood that the largest of such meetings will be organized on 21 April 2015 in Yerevan with the title “Armenian Genocide and World War I”, and that a high number of academicians and journalists will be invited¹²⁰. Also, there are news about holding a large exhibition possibly in the Genocide Memorial for the same purpose¹²¹.

On the other hand, the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan is being renovated and expended, and the Museum will be opened in April or even earlier. Meanwhile, a museum about Musician-Priest Komitas will be opened again in Armenia. In the aforementioned State meeting, the “Do Not Forget Me” Flower (myositis) has been adopted as the logo and “I Remember and I Demand” has been adopted as the slogan of the 100th year.

Amongst the official activities that is most appropriate to be deliberated upon, is the one that is most important amongst the Church activities: the canonization of those that died during or after the Relocation as saints.¹²² The canonization of the allegedly 1.5 million people who died during the Relocation is something unheard in the history of Christianity. Lastly, in order to become a “saint”, one would have to have achieved great success in religious terms or must have been killed for religion (martyrdom), yet none of these conditions are valid for the Armenians who were Relocated.

120 “Une Exposition et une Conférence Internationale au Musée du génocide Liées au 100^{ème} Anniversaire du Génocide” (Exhibition and International Conference at the Museum of Genocide in connection with the 100th Anniversary of Genocide), *NAM*, 19 April 2014.

121 *Ibid.*

122 “Déclaration du Synode des évêques de la Sainte Eglise apostolique Arménienne” (Declaration of Armenian Saint Apostolic Church’s Synod of Bishops), *Armenews*, 15 November 2014.

Certain information has been shared in the media about the cost of the activities planned by the Armenian government. According to one news,¹²³ Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan has said that 6 billion Drams (around 13 million Dollars) will be spent for this purpose. Later on, Deputy Minister of Finance Pavel Safaryan has given this number as being 20 billion Drams (around 43 million Dollars).¹²⁴ This number encompasses only the activities to be carried out by Armenia, and is separate from the expenditures of the Diaspora.

Another point that must be delved upon is for how long these activities for the 100th anniversary of the Relocation will be carried out. For a long time, the Armenian public was made to believe that Turkey would recognize the genocide claims and pay restitution due to the pressures it will face for the 100th year of the Relocation. Due to the realization that the 100th year would have no noteworthy effect on Turkey's stance, President Sarkisian has indicated that 2015 is not the end but the beginning and as such has extended the duration of the activities to be carried out without pointing to their end date. Since World War I ended in 1918 and the Sarkisian's presidency ends in the centennial of it, it can be thought that the activities will be ended on that year. Basing his argument and the idea that the Armenian genocide took place between 1915 and 1923, one American columnist has put forth the idea that the centennial activities should be carried out between 2015 and 2023¹²⁵. Actually, the Relocation that the Armenians refer as the Armenian genocide ended in 1916. The reason why claims are made about the lasting of the relocation until 1923 based on insubstantial grounds is to attempt to be able to hold the Republic of Turkey responsible for this event. No one besides the Armenians and their partisans support this view. On the other hand, it is not realistic that the 100th year activities will last a decade.

2. The 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference

Despite having close relations with the Diaspora and especially greatly in need of the financial aid of it, Armenia did not have relations with the Diaspora in the institutional area for many years. This shortcoming was attempted to be allayed by the establishment of the Ministry of Diaspora in 2008 and the organization of Armenia-Diaspora Conferences once every year.

123 "Soykırım 100. Yılı Programları için Hükümete 6 Milyar Dram" (6 Billion Drams to the Government for the Activities on the 100th anniversary of the genocide), *News.am*, 21 August 2014.

124 "20 Billion Drams Intended For Armenian Genocide Centenary Events", *Armenpress*, 28 October 2014.

125 "Armenia Helps Coordinate Worldwide Genocide Centennial Activities", *Asbarez*, 03.06.2014. Harut Sassounian.

The fifth one organized this year on 19-20 September was the most spectacular one to date with the attendance of 700 people representing 150 Armenian institutions from 60 countries.

It is seen that mainly three events draw attention in this conference.

The first one, as was mentioned in the “Demands of the Armenian Church”, is Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I’s statement about applying to the Turkish Constitutional Court for the returning of buildings in Sis (Kozan County) that belong to the Armenian Patriarchate.

The second one is the speech delivered by President Sarkisian on the last day of the conference criticizing Turkey.¹²⁶ We have shared the part that pertains to Turkey in the “Turkey-Armenia Relations” section above.

The third one is that Sarkisian touched on the Karabakh issue and said that the war is not yet over and that it will end with a fire that will record Armenia’s victory.

Sarkisian stated that “each Armenian must have his house and home in his fatherland” and that “each Armenian must ask himself what he has done to make the motherland prosperous besides making other countries prosperous.” In this respect, Sarkisian had indicated that Armenia is ready to give opportunities for investment for the Diaspora Armenians.

Sarkisian furthermore mentioned Diaspora’s need to know the Armenian language and expressed that the main elements of preserving the Armenian identity is the Armenian language, the Armenian family and the recognition that the real motherland is Armenia. Such words - which carry the idea that the countries in which a majority of Diaspora Armenians have been born and raised in for four generations and in which they make a living is not the “real motherland” - is something that will not be easily acceptable by everyone. In another respect, if the motherland is accepted as being the place where people’s ancestors lived, then the motherland of the great majority of Diaspora Armenians is Anatolia.

Sarkisian; by stressing that there needs to be undertakings and achievements for the Armenia-Diaspora-Artsakh (Karabakh) triumvirate in 2015 and that

126 “President Participates In Closing Ceremony Of 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference”, 20.09.2014. Access Date: 03.02.2015. <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2014/09/20/President-Serzh-Sarkisian-Armenia-Diaspora-conference-speech/>

2015 will be an eventful year due to the scale and meaning of the events that will take place, has attempted to indicate the importance of the year 2015.

There are important parts in the section titled “Priorities of the Nation as the Ideological Basis for the Armenia-Diaspora Partnership” within the statement adopted at the end of the 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference. Within this section are the following headings:

- a. Building a Strong and Secure Armenia
- b. Independent and Secure Artsakh (Karabakh)
- c. Organized Diaspora
- d. Armenian Language as a Guarantee for Preservation of the Armenian Identity
- e. Centennial of the Armenian Genocide
- f. Consolidation Around the Armenian Church
- g. Security of Armenians in States of Emergency

As can be seen, what is most focused on is security, and this is seen as the security of Armenia, Karabakh and the Armenian communities around the world.

As can be seen, what is most focused on is security, and this is seen as the security of Armenia, Karabakh and the Armenian communities around the world. A matter that must be paid attention to here is that Armenia and Karabakh themselves have jeopardized their own safety by invading Azeri territories and causing more than 1 million Azeris to become refugees. Armenia will be able to ensure its security if it makes peace with Azerbaijan and Turkey. While showing the Armenian language as an assurance for the preservation of Armenian identity is in essence correct, it does not amount to much since the use of Armenian is close to disappearing in today’s Diaspora. It is not realistic to request that the members of the Diaspora dispersed in various countries all learn to speak Armenian or to attempt to provide the means for such an endeavor. In today’s Diaspora, Armenian identity is not attempted to be preserved through culture and tradition, but through genocide claims that breed feelings of grudge and hate. As such, this leads to problems that Armenians, both as individuals and as a society, are unable to cope with.

The heading that pertains to Turkey the most is the “Centennial of the Armenian Genocide”. The main points under this heading are: the creation of the State Commission in charge of coordinating events dedicated to the centennial of the Armenian Genocide and more than 50 regional committees which brought a new drive to the recognition and condemnation and elimination of the consequences of the Armenian Genocide planned and

perpetrated at the state level in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia (Eastern Anatolia); expression of gratitude to all the countries, who provided the Armenians with homes and ensured peaceful conditions for them; expression of gratitude especially to the countries and international organizations that have recognized and condemned the Armenian Genocide; acceptance of the norms of international law in relation to human rights and the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted in 1948 as the basis for the fight for the restoration of the individual rights of every Armenian, as well as the rights of the communities and the entire Armenian nation; the putting forth of the demand that Turkey lift that heavy burden, come to grips with its past and recognize the Armenian Genocide; proclamation that the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide and elimination of the consequences thereof will be on the agenda for Armenian's political struggle.

3. Developments on the Recognition of the Genocide Claims

It is being observed that both Armenia and the Diaspora are showing great effort to have the genocide claims recognized by certain country parliaments in 2015. Information about the main developments on this issue in 2014 has been given below.

It can be seen that through such recognitions, rather than expressing sorrow for the events of 1915, parliaments are using the genocide issue as a tool to show their reaction towards Turkey.

a. Egypt and Syria

Turkey is experiencing tense relations with these two countries for reasons that have nothing to do with the Armenian issue. Despite having no stance towards the Armenian genocide claims up until now, both countries have begun to show signs of change in their stance in recent times.

An article penned by an academician in Egypt¹²⁷ can be considered to be a precursor to this change.

In Syria, President Assad said the following: “The degree of savagery and inhumanity that the terrorists have reached reminds us of what happened in

127 “Between Recognition and Denial - the Genocide Question and Turkish-Armenian Relations”, *AMT*, 14 January 2014, Dr. Ahmed Magdy Al-Soukkary.

the Middle Ages in Europe over 500 years ago. In more recent modern times, it reminds us of the massacres perpetrated by the Ottomans against the Armenians when they killed a million and a half Armenians and half a million Orthodox Syriacs in Syria and in Turkish territory.”¹²⁸

b. Czech Republic

The Czech Republic Parliament, despite being subject to pressures from time to time, has not recognized the Armenian genocide claims. As such, Czech Republic’s President Milos Zeman’s statement “Next year Marks the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. In 1915 1.5 million Armenian were killed”, made during President Sarkisian’s visit in January 2014 has been baffling. The fact that no reaction has come from the parliament or the government makes one think that the Czech Parliament is laying the ground for the recognition of the genocide claims. Indeed, Czech Senator Jaromir Stetina – who has been known to be a partisan for Armenians and Armenia for a long time – has stated his gratitude for the President’s words, and then has said that he will bring this issue as a proposal to the Parliament in 2015 and that President Sarkisian’s planned visit to Prague would be of help in the acceptance of this proposal¹²⁹.

c. Germany

In 2005, the German Parliament adopted a resolution that viewed the events of 1915 as genocide without using the genocide word. Armenians were not very pleased with such a resolution and requested the adoption of a second resolution that openly characterized events as genocide, but they were unable to get a result from this. Unlike in other countries, the Armenian community of 20-30 thousand in Germany, almost all of which emigrated from Turkey, is not a very strong. In this respect, initiatives on behalf of the views of the Armenians are not done due to the pressure from this community, but from the Protestant circles in the country. By the way, it is worth mentioning that, despite having been clearly shown that he engaged in some fraudulence with regards to the books he wrote about Armenians, great interest is still being shown for the Protestant Priest Johannes Lepsius who worked in the Ottoman Empire before and during World War I, and his house has been turned into a museum despite certain objections. On the other hand, as we

128 “Syrian President Finally Recognizes the Armenian Genocide”, *Asbarez*, 28 January 2014, Harut Sassounian.

129 “Le Président De La République Tchèque Identifie Le Crime Ottoman Comme Un Génocide” (President of Czech Republic identifies Ottoman crimes as a genocide), *Armenews.com*, 1 February 2014.

shall explain below, the fact that German officials are beginning to support Armenian views more and more in recent times draws attention. When the reason behind Germans' new Armenian partisanship are investigated, it leads to the conclusion that the Germans do not wish to be criticized for the relocation during the centennial and wish to shift the entire responsibility to the Ottomans (Turks). Yet, there are Armenian historians who put forth that Germans recommended, or at the least supported the relocation¹³⁰.

Certain events in recent times have shown that disagreements have been experienced between Turkey and Germany due to the Armenian issue. It has been reported in the media that during Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Germany in February 2014, the Prime Minister said to Merkel: "funds in the budgets for the next year are being allocated for the 100th year of events of the 1915. Be more sensitive on this issue. You must warn your Group about such funds." Merkel did not reject that funds were being allocated, and replied: "Germany is democratic country, we cannot intervene. Turkey must face its own history... The Armenians in Armenia are in a very difficult situation. Turkey must open the border." In response, Erdoğan said: "Are you trying to force us to accept something that we did not do? We have opened all of our archives to historians. We have made calls to the whole world. We told them to come and analyze the archives, but no one came. Do not be unfair to Turkey."¹³¹

The second incident occurred on 3 July 2014, when the statement "deportation and mass murder became tools of war with the exile and destruction of the Armenians" was made during a meeting in the German Parliament titled "Centenary of the First World War" and which was attended by President Gauck, Prime Minister Merkel and other high state officials. These words, which give the impression that deportations and mass deaths began with World War I and that they were first applied to the Armenians, are far from reflecting the truth; such events have been seen throughout history and are continuing in today's times. On the other hand, the first mass killings of the 20th century were carried out by Germany itself in Africa. Between the years 1904 and 1907, 80% of the Herero people in the German colony of South-West Africa (today's Namibia) were killed by the forces under the command of the German General Lothar von Trotha.

In respect to the meeting held in the German Parliament, Speaker of the

130 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide, A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity*. 1996, Cambridge, Blue Crane Books.

131 "Merkel'den Erdoğan'a: Cumhurbaşkanı Adayı Olcak mısınız?" (From Merkel to Erdoğan: Will you run for Presidency?), *Hürriyet*, February 2014.

Turkish Grand National Assembly Cemil Çiçek sent a letter to the German Speaker of Parliament Lammer which expressed the conviction that: “Germany, with whom we had been brother-in-arms during World War I, knows perfectly well that the relocation was a matter of military necessity.”¹³²

Lastly, during his visit to Armenia, German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier has said that “Germany is ready to help Turkey learn lessons and accept its own past but it is Turkey that should demonstrate the will”¹³³. Emboldened by the words of the Minister, the German Ambassador to Yerevan Reiner Morell has said that they expect that “Turkey will apologize to Armenia in the coming couple of years.”¹³⁴

d. Greece

On 9 September 2014, on the anniversary of the liberation of Izmir from the Greek occupation, the Greek Parliament adopted a law that provisions to fine those who approve, trivialize or deny genocide, war and crimes against humanity up to 3 years in prison and up to 25.000 Euros. According to the law, for an event to be recognized as genocide, a judgment must be made by an international court or the Greek Parliament. According to Article 6 of the UN Convention on Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide dated 1948, the competent authority to rule that an event is genocide is either an international criminal court or a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed. In other words, parliaments are not competent to adopt decisions on genocide. The aforementioned law acted against the Convention dated 1948 as it has authorized the Greek Parliament to make a decision on genocide. The rationale behind denying authority to parliaments on genocide lies in the fact that criminalization of genocide is a legal concern, not a political one, thus it should be dealt by a national or an international court. Thus, the Greek Parliament ruled in 1995 that the events of 1915 were genocide and took similar decisions in 1994 and 1998 with regard to Pontus Greeks and other Greeks in Anatolia.

By adopting this law, Greece joined the defamation campaign against Turkey for the 1915 events planned for 2015. It is not understood what Greece gained by adding genocide allegations on top of the many issues it has with Turkey.

132 “Cemil Çiçek, Almanya Federal Meclisi Başkanı’na ‘Üzüntü’ Mektubu Gönderdi”, 11.08.2014. Access Date: 03.02.2014. <http://www.merhabahaber.com/cemil-cicek,-almanya-federal-meclisi-baskanina-uzuntu-mektubu-gonderdi-275638h.htm>

133 “Germany is ready to Help Turkey ‘Learn Lessons from Past’”, *Mediamax.am*, 23 October 2014.

134 “We Expect Turkey’s Apologies to Armenia, Says German Envoy”, *Armenian News – Tert.am*, 29 October 2014.

e. Australia

As is in many countries, in Australia as well, Armenians' ties with their national identity, like the Greeks and Assyrians, are preserved by remembering the painful experiences and having the desire for revenge, not by conserving their cultures and traditions. The result of this is the continuous vilification of Turks and Turkey and unrealistic demands such as reparations and territorial claims. In this context, Armenians for years tried to pass a law recognizing the genocide claims in the parliaments of this country. Despite their failure in the Federal Parliament, they were successful in several state parliaments. In 1 May 2013 the Parliament of New South Wales, the biggest state in the country, passed a motion titled "Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides". This motion, which is against the policies of the Australian Federal Parliament and passed despite warnings from Turkey, drew negative reaction from the Turkish Government and in a statement by the Foreign Ministry, this motion was strongly condemned and it was stated that those responsible for it would be deprived of Turkey's hospitality and friendship and not have their place in the ceremonies for the centenary of the Battle of Gallipoli¹³⁵. In the course of these discussions, the Australian Federal Government stated that this motion does not reflect its own policies.

The most recent development about this issue is the response by Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop to a letter by the Australian Turkish Advocacy Alliance President Ertunç Özen. In her response, Julie Bishop stated that it was unconstitutional for Australian territories to promulgate their own foreign policy and it was Australian foreign policy not to define the Armenian case as genocide.¹³⁶

f. Sweden

On 11 March 2010, the Swedish Parliament adopted a resolution by a majority of one vote putting forth that not only Armenians, but also Assyrians, Syrians, Chaldeans and Pontic Greeks have also been subjected to genocide and Prime Minister Erdogan cancelled his visit to Sweden in reaction to this. On the other hand, the Swedish Government opposed the resolution¹³⁷. The resolution requested from the Swedish Government to take initiatives in order to persuade Turkey in accepting the genocide conducted towards Armenians, Assyrians, Syrians, Chaldeans, and Pontic Greeks. The Swedish Government,

135 For more detailed information, see *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 45, p. 23-30

136 "Australian FM: Armenian Case Not Genocide", *ATAA*, 23 July 2014.

137 *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 35, p. 36,37

which attached importance to relations with Turkey, didn't make such an attempt. The government didn't change its stance despite demands from Armenian, Assyrian, Syriac, Chaldean and Pontic Greek people or politicians supporting them.

Lastly, on 24 October 2014, in response to a question on what the Swedish Government was going to do on the centenary of the Armenian Genocide in accordance with the resolution of the parliament four years ago, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström said that initiatives to persuade Turkey to recognize the genocide was not on their agenda¹³⁸ and there was no changes in their policies.

g. Bolivia

In Bolivia, on 24 October 2014, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies unanimously passed a resolution declaring condemnation “against all denialist policies regarding the genocide and crimes against humanity suffered by the Armenian nation” and solidarity with the Armenian people for the fight of their claims, the preservation of human rights and the establishment of truth and justice.

President of the Bolivian Senate Zonia Guardia Melgar stated that the unanimous passage of the resolution was fully approved by the Bolivian Foreign Ministry and said that they offered full support and solidarity to the Armenian and the Kurdish people¹³⁹.

There is no reason for such a support for the Armenian (and Kurdish) views by Bolivia. Maybe they acted under the influence of the Armenians in Argentina. However it is unreasonable for them to create a problem with Turkey, which has no issues with Bolivia, because of Armenians and Kurds.

While the Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbantian expressed their gratitude to the Bolivian Parliament and the government¹⁴⁰, the Armenian press didn't show much interest to this development. There was no reaction from Turkey either.

138 “İsveç Dışişleri Bakanı: Soykırım gündemimizde yok”, 24.10.2014. Access Date: 03.02.2014. <http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/dunya/isvec-disisleri-bakani-soykirim-gundemimizde-yok-h39635.html>

139 “Bolivya Legislature Unanimously Recognize Armenian Genocide”, *Asbarez*, 1 December 2014.

140 Ibid

THE MESSAGE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN, ON THE EVENTS OF 1915, 23 APRIL 2014

“The 24th of April carries a particular significance for our Armenian citizens and for all Armenians around the world, and provides a valuable opportunity to share opinions freely on a historical matter.

It is indisputable that the last years of the Ottoman Empire were a difficult period, full of suffering for Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, Armenian and millions of other Ottoman citizens, regardless of their religion or ethnic origin.

Any conscientious, fair and humanistic approach to these issues requires an understanding of all the sufferings endured in this period, without discriminating as to religion or ethnicity.

Certainly, neither constructing hierarchies of pain nor comparing and contrasting suffering carries any meaning for those who experienced this pain themselves.

As a Turkish proverb goes, “fire burns the place where it falls”.

It is a duty of humanity to acknowledge that Armenians remember the suffering experienced in that period, just like every other citizen of the Ottoman Empire.

In Turkey, expressing different opinions and thoughts freely on the events of 1915 is the requirement of a pluralistic perspective as well as of a culture of democracy and modernity.

Some may perceive this climate of freedom in Turkey as an opportunity to express accusatory, offensive and even provocative assertions and allegations.

Even so, if this will enable us to better understand historical issues with their legal aspects and to transform resentment to friendship again, it is natural to approach different discourses with empathy and tolerance and expect a similar attitude from all sides.

The Republic of Turkey will continue to approach every idea with dignity in line with the universal values of law.

Nevertheless, using the events of 1915 as an excuse for hostility against Turkey and turning this issue into a matter of political conflict is inadmissible.

The incidents of the First World War are our shared pain. To evaluate this

painful period of history through a perspective of just memory is a humane and scholarly responsibility.

Millions of people of all religions and ethnicities lost their lives in the First World War. Having experienced events which had inhumane consequences - such as relocation - during the First World War, should not prevent Turks and Armenians from establishing compassion and mutually humane attitudes among towards one another.

In today's world, deriving enmity from history and creating new antagonisms are neither acceptable nor useful for building a common future.

The spirit of the age necessitates dialogue despite differences, understanding by heeding others, evaluating means for compromise, denouncing hatred, and praising respect and tolerance.

With this understanding, we, as the Turkish Republic, have called for the establishment of a joint historical commission in order to study the events of a scholarly manner. This call remains valid. Scholarly research to be carried out by Turkish, Armenian and international historians would play a significant role in shedding light on the events of 1915 and an accurate understanding of history.

It is with this understanding that we have opened our archives to all researchers. Today, hundreds of thousands of documents in our archives are at the service of historians.

Looking to the future with confidence, Turkey has always supported scholarly and comprehensive studies for an accurate understanding of history. The people of Anatolia, who lived together for centuries regardless of their different ethnic and religious origins, have established common values in every field from art to diplomacy, from state administration to commerce. Today they continue to have the same ability to create a new future.

It is our hope and belief that the peoples of an ancient and unique geography, who share similar customs and manners will be able to talk to each other about the past with maturity and to remember together their losses in a decent manner. And it is with this hope and belief that we wish that the Armenians who lost their lives in the context of the early twentieth century rest in peace, and we convey our condolences to their grandchildren.

Regardless of their ethnic or religious origins, we pay tribute, with compassion and respect, to all Ottoman citizens who lost their lives in the same period and under similar conditions.”

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COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND NARRATIVE TOOLKIT IN TURKISH-ARMENIAN MNEMONIC STANDOFF OVER THE PAST

(GEÇMİŞTEN GÜNÜMÜZE TÜRK-ERMENİ BELLEK AÇMAZINDA
KOLLEKTİF HAFIZA VE ANLATI ARAÇSALLIĞI)

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Abstract: *Departing from two recent articles written by A. Davutoğlu and G. Libaridian this article examines the complex interrelationship between historical narratives, collective memory and cultural trauma in concern to Turkish-Armenian mnemonic standoff over the past. Proceeding from social cultural approach to collective memory as mediated by different types of narratives as cultural tools promoting remembering among groups it is argued that Turkish-Armenian standoff over the past to great extent is conditioned not only by history per se as by historical accounts available to members of these national groups. The author demonstrates psychological and political roots of the Armenian national narratives and memory and suggests new concepts and tools for tracing these national narratives and perspectives for attitude change.*

Key words: *Armenia, narrative, collective memory, Turkey, cultural trauma.*

Özet: *Ahmet Davutoğlu ve Gerard Libaridian tarafından yazılmış mevcut iki makaleden farklı olarak bu makale, son zamanlardaki Türk-Ermeni 'fikri' açmazını tarihi anlatılar, toplumsal hafıza ve kültürel travmanın birbirleri arasındaki karmaşık ilişkisi üzerinden incelemektedir. Her biri gruplar arasındaki hatırlamayı destekleyen kültürel araçlar olarak farklı türden tarihsel anlatılar ile oluşturulan bir kültürel hafıza, son yıllardaki Türk Ermeni açmazının hem tarihin kendisiyle hem bu ulusal gruplardan uygun üyelerinin tarihsel hesapları tarafından bu yönde bir şartlandırmayla oluşturulduğunun kanıtıdır. Yazar, bu yazısıyla, Ermeni ulusal anlatıların psikolojik ve politik köklerini göstermiş ve bu ulusal anlatıların izlenmesi ve bakış açılarındaki tutum değişikliğinin takip edilebilmesi için yeni kavramlar ve araçlar önermiştir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ermenistan, Anlatı, Kolektif Hafıza, Türkiye, Kültürel Travma.*

Two articles that recently appeared in *Turkish Policy Quarterly*—one written by then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu¹ and another by US-based Armenian historian, Gerard Libaridian as a commentary on Davutoğlu’s article²—are remarkable not only because they touch upon a highly sensitive issue of the historical past for both parties, but also because they concern some fundamental problems that exist in the relationship between history, memory, narrative and politics. In what follows, I analyse some of these problems, which are presented in their articles either in explicit or implicit form, with the hope of developing a discussion in a productive manner. Let me begin with Mr. Davutoğlu’s article.

Though Davutoğlu’s article examines the different aspects of the Turkish-Armenian relations, I will consider only those aspects of this article that are related to the issue of the relationship between history, narrative, memory, and attitudes. Taken from this perspective, the gist of Davutoğlu’s article can be summed up in the following theses:

- 1) Nationalisms, including Armenian, which arose in the 19th century (the “epoch of nationalism”) required new historical accounts that distorted history (the Ottoman era) for their own purposes (in particular, for creation of a new Armenian identity.)
- 2) In order to reconcile Armenians and Turks both parties should make certain changes in their memories and thus achieve a “just” memory. The grounds for such a memory change are the following: a) Armenians and Turks had a long history of good relationship and shared intertwined culture in the past, prior to the events in 1915 and therefore both parties should recollect these positive history instead of focusing exclusively on the Armenian hardships in 1915; b) Not only Armenians but also Turks experienced great sufferings and huge damage and lost in that historical period and therefore more balanced accounts are required;
- 3) In order to get a “just” memory a joint truth commission of historians from both parties should be established.

1 Davutoğlu, A. (2014) “Turkish-Armenian Relations in the Process of De-Ottomanization or “Dehistoricization”: Is a “Just” Memory possible”. *Turkish Policy Quarterly* Spring. (Available at: <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/article/972/turkisharmenian-relations-is-a-just-memory-possible-spring-2014/>).

2 Libaridian, G. (2014) “Commentary on FM Davutoğlu’s TPQ article on the Armenian Issue”. *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Spring (Available at <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/article/989/commentary-on-fm-davutoglus-tpq-article-on-the-armenian-issue/>).

Responding to this article, Libaridian has written a commentary that can be regarded as an Armenian side's response. In his commentary, he disagreed with almost all suggestions presented in Davutoğlu's article. In particular, Libaridian disagreed with the thesis of Armenian identity as constructed in the age of nationalism. In opposition to this constructivist concept of nation, he viewed Armenians in terms of "ancient nation". Then he believed that in Ottoman Empire Armenians were of "second class subjects at best, and victims of massacres at worst, even before 1915". And finally, Libaridian disagrees with the Turkish perception of events of 1915 which he regarded as an "Armenian genocide"³. It seems there is only one point for which both sides agree – the importance of developing a dialogue. But, it seems quite difficult if not impossible to develop a dialogue if one cannot make a sense of the above oppositions. Is there a way to rationalize these oppositions in order to find out the new possibilities for overcoming them in a productive manner for a dialogue on a new level? In what follows further I consider the arguments of both sides in the context of an academic framework. My tentative hope is that such an endeavour will help to advance the dialogue between parties in conflict, and all those who are interested in peace and a better understanding of the matter in question.

Interplay of memory, narrative and conflict

Both articles in an explicit or implicit way refer to such concepts as memory, narratives, trauma, and conflict, which are often a subject of intense debates among scholars. As these concepts are crucial for our further exploration let me consider them at some length.

These concepts are in complex interrelationship between each other. Thus, memory has a complex relationship with intergroup conflict and reconciliation. On the one hand, shared memories and representations about the group's past can play a crucial role in inciting ethnic or ethno-political conflicts⁴. Similarly, memories of the conflict can create a serious impediment for post-conflict reconciliation⁵. On the other hand, collective memories can serve as a useful tool for reconciliation as well.

3 Ibid, p.5.

4 Garagozov R., Kadyrova R. (2011). "Memory, emotions, and behavior of the masses in an ethno-political conflict: Nagorno-Karabakh". *The Caucasus & Globalization*, 5 (3-4), pp.77-88.

5 Bar-Tal, D. (2010). "Culture of conflict: Evolvement, institutionalization and consequences". In R.Schwarzer & P.A.Frensch (Eds.), *Personality, human development, and culture: International perspectives on psychological science* (pp.183-198). New York: Psychology Press.

Scholars have discussed two main strategies of dealing with troubled memories. One strategy calls for attempts to prevent forgetting⁶. For example, by addressing grievances and acknowledging past wrongdoings and injustice through various institutions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in post-*apartheid* South Africa, one opens up the possibility to explore and create new interpretations of the past, which eventually bring peace and reconciliation between former adversaries⁷. One of the important corollaries of the activities of the TRC is the creation of a framework for new historical narratives. In some circumstances, however, it might be more conducive for reconciliation to let the past be forgotten⁸.

Shared memories are based on a certain toolkit of historical narratives, but collective memories can preserve different, sometimes quite opposite versions of historical events than the one officially acknowledged and legitimized by history textbooks, thus, creating a tension between official and unofficial history⁹. Thus, collective memories that are preserved and passed through generation in the form of community stories provide a fertile ground for negative attitudes and acts of violence between groups¹⁰.

Recently scholars have turned to analyze the role of narratives for conflict resolution thus giving birth to narrative approach to inter-ethnic conflict¹¹. Within the “narrative” framework conflicts in some essential ways are considered as competing stories¹².

As evidenced by many cases parties at conflict strive for legitimizing their claims by creation and dissemination of their own version of “what happened in reality” while at the same time trying to delegitimize the narratives and claims of their opponents. In this connection supporters of narrative approach believe that, for effective conflict resolution, competing narratives should

6 Asmal, K., Asmal, L., Roberts, R.S. (1996). *Reconciliation through truth: A reckoning of Apartheid's criminal governance*. Cape Town: David Roberts Publishers.

7 Gibson, J. L. (2004). *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

8 Devine-Wright, P. (1999). *Tracing the hand of history: the role of social memories in the Northern Ireland conflict*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Surrey, Guildford.

9 Wertsch, J.V. (2002). *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

10 Barton, K.C., McCully, A. (2003). “History Teaching and the Perpetuation of Memories: The Northern Ireland Experience”. In E.Cairns & M.D. Roe (Eds.), *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict* (pp.107-124). New-York: Palgrave Macmillan.

11 Winslade, J. Monk, G. (2000). *Narrative Mediation. A new approach to conflict resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

12 Cobb, S. (2004). *Fostering coexistence in identity-based conflicts: Towards a narrative approach*. In: A.Chayes, M.Minow (Eds.). *Imagine Coexistence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp.294-310.

undergo certain transformations that could bring them towards convergence into a common narrative¹³. The underlying assumption is that a common narrative would help parties at conflict to create a shared, internally consistent vision of the past, present and future, which is considered as an important precondition for civil peace¹⁴. In this connection supporters of narrative approach believe that, for effective conflict resolution, competing narratives should undergo certain transformations that could bring them towards convergence into a common narrative¹⁵.

Put within this framework, Davutoğlu's propositions can be considered as a suggestion to alter the Armenian and Turkish memories of the troubling past via some kind of narrative transformations. In particular, the author suggests narrative transformations towards two types of narratives that can be conditionally identified as: "shared, intertwined cultures"¹⁶ and "common suffering"¹⁷. These narrative transformations he believes could shift memories toward "just memory" and bring reconciliation between the two nations.¹⁸

However, the possibility of narrative changes is not as simple as one might think. There are extremely powerful forces that can constrain essential narrative change. In what follows further I shall outline briefly a theoretical framework and present some experimental data on the narrative intervention into conflict that would provide us insights into some of such counterforces.

Narrative intervention in conflict resolution: empirical evidence

Based on mentioned above narrative framework I have suggested the model of narrative transformations which is aimed to contribute to change of memories, emotions and attitudes towards reconciliation. This framework has been applied to the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno Karabakh conflict¹⁹.

13 Cobb, S. (1993). "Empowerment and mediation: A narrative perspective". *Negotiation Journal*, vol. 9 (3), pp.245-259.

14 Steiner-Khamsi, G. (1994). *History, democratic values and tolerance in Europe: the experience of countries in democratic transition*. Council of Europe Symposium, Sofia.

15 Cobb, S. (1993). Empowerment and mediation: A narrative perspective. *Negotiation Journal*, vol. 9 (3), pp.245-259.

16 Davutoğlu, A. Op.cit., p.26.

17 Ibidem, p.28.

18 Ibidem., p.29.

19 Garagozov, R. (2012). "Do woes unite foes? Interplay of narratives, memory, emotions and attitudes in the Karabakh conflict". *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward Terrorism and Genocide*, 5(2), 116-135.

I have constructed four types of narrative (“Common suffering”, “Common cultural traits”, “Blame third party”, “Apology”) that might be conducive to reconciliation between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the Karabakh conflict. The basic question which guided my research was the following: What types of narratives are more conducive to attitude change towards reconciliation? Key to the study was comparison of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and non-IDP Azerbaijani respondents receiving the same narrative interventions²⁰. I expected that narrative reconstruction would be more difficult for Azerbaijanis who suffered more personally in the conflict.

The attitude effects of narrative intervention in the Karabakh conflict have been examined by direct and indirect measures.

Detailed description of the experiments and the analysis of the obtained data is given elsewhere²¹. I will be focused on two findings from this research which might be useful for further discussion.

First result of interest is dealt with the fact that from the four types of experimental narratives, the “common suffering” narrative was especially strongly rejected on the explicit level by the respondents²². At the same time, it was the only one narrative type that had even if on a small scale a positive impact on IDPs’ attitudes towards Armenians on the implicit level²³. This fact provides a fragile hope that under certain conditions “common suffering” narrative might be conducive to attitude change among former adversaries.

20 Currently, there are more than 600,000 Azerbaijani IDPs, that is, seven percent of the total population (one of the highest rates in the world). They were forcibly evicted from Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts of the Azerbaijan Republic by Armenian forces soon after the breakdown of the Soviet Union (CIA, World Factbook, 2012). The last and largest forced displacement occurred in 1993 and 1994, when over 500,000 Azerbaijanis living in adjacent districts around Nagorno-Karabakh were forced to flee in the wake of an Armenian military offensive (De Waal, T., Huseynov, T., Kharashvili, J. (2007). “The situation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia”. The European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs. 2012, February, 24). (Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegistreWeb/search/advanced.htm?relName=NUPE&reference=385.552&language=EN>).

21 Garagozov, R. (2012). “Do woes unite foes? Interplay of narratives, memory, emotions and attitudes in the Karabakh conflict”. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward Terrorism and Genocide*, 5(2), 116-135; Garagozov, R. (2013). “Implicit measures of attitude change via narrative intervention in the Karabakh conflict”. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward terrorism and genocide.* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2013.861919>; Garagozov, R. (2014). “Painful collective memory: measuring negative affect in the Karabakh conflict”. Manuscript submitted for publication.

22 Rejection was articulated almost with the same wording which can be summarized as following: “how one can compare our suffering with theirs, as we have lost much more. We have lost our lands, homes, and all our property which they [Armenians] seized”

23 Garagozov, R. (2014). Op.,cit.

Second finding was dealt with the fact that negative affect measured in our experiments was significantly higher among the IDP and non IDP participants of the focus group discussions than in respondents treated individually. In other words, the non-IDP participants of the focus groups who presumably would haven't particularly painful personal experiences and memories of the conflict, have expressed higher level of negative affect than IDPs - individuals, who experienced lost and sufferings on a larger scale but treated individually. The results suggest that particular kinds of collective memory²⁴ which are shaped by social context of the protracted ethno-national conflict can even exceed individual memory in yielding strong emotions among individuals even in those who do not have painful individual memories about the conflict.

While individual memory is more about personal experiences, which might not be necessarily painful with respect to the Karabakh conflict, collective memory serves as a reminder of social norms, perceptions, ideas, representations which are accepted in the given society with the respect to the matter at issue. In this regard, the Karabakh conflict is an issue of great concern in Azerbaijani society, touching upon with evokes strong emotions among all strata of population. This conflict or at least several episodes associated with it can be considered as *collective* or *cultural trauma*²⁵. I suggest to call this kind collective memory which is framed by social context peculiar for a society with the cultural trauma as *painful* collective memory .

So, we have arrived at two concepts, - collective memory and cultural trauma. Both concepts are crucial for our further consideration as they provide some clues for better understanding of the powerful forces that are underlying Turkish – Armenian mnemonic standoff over the past. Let me begin with the issue of collective memory.

So, we have arrived at two concepts, - collective memory and cultural trauma. Both concepts are crucial for our further consideration as they provide some clues for better understanding of the powerful forces that are underlying Turkish –Armenian mnemonic standoff over the past. Let me begin with the issue of collective memory.

24 In this research collective memories are defined as involving “the ongoing talking and thinking about the event by the affected members of society or culture” (Pennebaker, J.W. (1992). “On the Creation and Maintenance of Collective Memories”. Unpublished manuscript. The University of Texas. Austin, p.2.)

25 Garagozov, R. (2010). “The Khojaly Tragedy as a Collective Trauma and Factor of Collective Memory”. *Azerbaijan in the World*, vol. 2, no. 10, March 1. Baku: Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. (Available at: <http://www.azembassy.ca/ada/2010/Vol.%203,%20No.%205,%20March%201,%202010.pdf>).

Collective Memory as Mediated by Narrative Toolkit

In my considerations I follow the concept of collective memory which is developed within the framework of sociocultural theory²⁶ and especially Wertsch's approach to collective memory as mediated by specific kinds of cultural tools, in particular "textual resources" in the form of narratives. According to this approach historical narratives are considered to be cultural tools, promoting collective remembering²⁷. Certain properties of narratives affect the collective remembering process in a very specific way. In this connection James Wertsch proposed to make distinction between «specific narratives" and "schematic narrative templates" (SNT)²⁸.

According to the author, specific narratives are surface texts that include concrete information about the particular times, places and actors involved in events from the past. In contrast the SNT provide the recurrent constants of a narrative tradition. They do not include any concrete information, but are instead cookie cutter plots that can be used to generate multiple specific narratives. These templates differ from one cultural setting to another and require special analysis to reveal their role as a basic model for constructing plot lines for major historical events, including events that may not fit particularly well in this scheme. It is also argued that narrative template is used by a "mnemonic community" to interpret multiple specific events by interpreting them in accordance with a schematic plot line. In turn, as schematic narrative templates are deeply entrenched with patterns of collective memory and identity they may resist any significant narrative transformations.

Following this line of reasoning we can postulate that Turkish and Armenian thinking and perceptions of the past are to a great extent shaped by their national narratives. Indeed, Libaridian in his commentary on Davutoğlu's article makes several explicit or implicit references to the Turkish national narrative²⁹. In this connection it seems reasonable to look at the narrative toolkit of the Armenian mnemonic community that is underlying Libaridian's arguments.

26 Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Wertsch, J.V. 2002. *Voices of collective remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

27 Wertsch, J.V. (2002). Op., cit

28 Wertsch, J.V. (2002). Op., cit.

29 Thus, Libaridian writes: «it seems the Minister [Davutoğlu] has fallen prey to the propaganda spread by previous Turkish governments and their official court historians that the past of the Armenians can be sacrificed to the altar of Ottoman sanctity and, by extension, Turkish nationalism today" (p.4)

Narrative tools of the Armenian Mnemonic Community

One of the most important shared narratives that bind the Armenian mnemonic community together concerns repeated Armenians' "sufferings" at the hands of the "infidels," first the Persian fire-worshippers, then the Muslim Arabs, afterward, the Mongol "pagans," and later, the Turks. This national memory has encouraged Armenians to develop habits of emplotment, or narrative templates that lead them to interpret many events in a similar way – namely as suffering at the hands of external enemies³⁰. In this regard, the Armenian historical writing tradition has a well-developed and specific schematic narrative template. The Armenian Church which traditionally patronized medieval history-writing has played a particularly significant role in creation of this narrative template. Based on the narrative analysis of the main Armenian historiographic works, I have outlined the following formulae of this narrative template what I called the "a faithful people though surrounded and tormented by enemies"³¹:

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1. The starting situation (the "Golden Age"): the Armenian people are living in a glorious and valiant time, which is undermined by hostile intrigues, as a consequence of which:
2. The Armenians are fallen upon by hostile forces, as a result of which:

30 In this regard it is worth pointing out that, in actuality, relations between the Armenians and the Persian court and, later, with the Arab caliphs, unlike relations with Orthodox Byzantium, were quite friendly (Walker, C.J. (1990). *Armenia. The Survival of a Nation*. New York: Saint Martin's Press, pp. 28–29); Even in regard to the Turkic tribes that adopted Islam and formed a huge empire, with Armenians ending up under their rule, their relations were less tense than in regard to Byzantium. The Armenian Church having been forced to wage a struggle against the influence of both Byzantium and Catholic Rome, was less fearful of the Muslims, who, in contrast to Orthodox Byzantium, which exerted ideological oppression and pressure on the Armenian Church, did not interfere in the affairs of the Armenian Church, and they granted freedom of religion, while limiting themselves solely to the collection of taxes (See: Boase, T.S.R. (1978). "The History of the Kingdom." In *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, ed. T.S.R. Boase, pp. 1–33. New York: St. Martins Press; Darbinian-Melikian, M.O. (1986). "Foreword." In Iovannes Draskhanakertsi, *Istoriia Armenii*, trans. from Armenian, foreword, and commentary, Darbinian-Melikian, pp. 1–25. Erevan: AN Arm. SSR; Ghazarian, J.G. (2000). *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia During the Crusades*. Surrey: Curson Press). These, however, are different "histories," which could hardly be desired, inasmuch as they were not in accord with the ideological attitudes of Armenian Church historiography.

31 Garagozov, R. (2015). *Collective Memory: How Collective Representations about the Past are Created, Preserved and Reproduced*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

3. The Armenians experience enormous torments and sufferings.
4. If they remain steadfast in their faith, they overcome their enemies; if they depart from the faith, they suffer defeat.

To sum up, the Armenian cultural tradition has produced numerous “victim” narratives which are based on the mentioned above narrative template and which a left strong footprint on how Armenians perceive themselves and others. In this connection we can say that the Armenian narrative template mediates the effort after meaning in the Armenian “mnemonic community”. It is a cultural tool that is widely understood and employed by Armenians when making sense of events, both past and present, and as such it provides a plot line for narratives such that they take the shape of the same story told over and over with different characters. In this connection, taking into account the strong “anti-Turkish” mode of the major Armenian historical accounts and the Armenian schematic narrative template, it is easy to anticipate Libaridian’s disagreement with Davutoğlu’s thesis - about Armenians’ “good life” in the Ottoman Empire.

The same narrative toolkit is underlying Libaridian’s disagreement with the constructivist or instrumental approach to nations “imagined communities” proposed by Ahmet Davutoğlu as applied to Armenians. Libaridian considered Armenians in terms of an “ancient nation”. He takes this thesis for granted and does not provide any argument in support of it. For Libaridian, the thesis about “Armenians - ancient nation” is obvious and does not need any additional substantiation. But let us consider this issue more carefully.

Indeed, there are scholars who albeit cautiously support the thesis about Armenians as an “ancient nation”.³² If we look into their line of reasoning we can see that they arrive at this conclusion based on the analysis of the texts of Armenian historical narratives. The logic behind these judgments is as follows: the presence of ethnonyms, terms reflecting Armenian self-identification in the Old Armenian historical narratives³³. The problem with

32 See, for example: Grosby, S. (1996). “Borders, Territory and Nationality in the Ancient Near East and Armenia.” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 1–29; Smith, A.D. (2001). “Nations and History.” In M. Guibernau and J. Hutchinson, eds., *Understanding Nationalism*, pp. 9–31. Cambridge: Polity Press.

33 For example, Grosby writes: “Evidence of the existence of bounded Armenian territory and the nation of Armenia within it (Greater Armenia) in the fourth century CE is found in abundance in the following works: Favstos’s *Epic Histories*, . . . Agathangelos’s *History of the Armenians*, . . . Egishe’s *History of Yardan and the Armenian War*; . . . and Moisei Khorenatsi’s *History of the Armenians*” (1996, pp.17-18). In turn, A.D. Smith, referring to Grosby, concludes: “[I]n the case of Armenia in the fourth and fifth centuries, Grosby refers to documents that offer confirmation of nationality in two areas, namely, delimited territory and a common language, to which we might add a sense of common origin” (2001, p.18).

this argumentation is connected with several different points. I have discussed them in detail elsewhere³⁴. Here it seems enough to indicate that the overwhelming majority of the preserved Armenian manuscripts to which scholars refer as Old historical narratives, are dated to the seventeenth century and later. And more importantly, these narratives contain the narrativizing historical discourse (in terms of Hayden White)³⁵ that presents history as a coherent story with well-developed plot - beginning, middle and ending with a moralization. It should be noted that such kind of historical accounts appeared in the Christian historiography which had historical accounts in form of annals and chronicles (that is without plot and well developed ending) not earlier than the thirteenth century³⁶.

In the light of all these considerations, it appears that the Armenian historical works, which textually asserted a particular level of historical consciousness and development of ethno-religious identity—and this is an indisputable fact—could most likely have been the product of a later time, reflecting a historical consciousness and ideals that are inherent to subsequent periods of historical development. Taken from this perspective, it would seem more plausible that the ethnic Armenian identity formed in periods later than those suggested by supporters of “Armenians - ancient nation” thesis.

Here I am not going into the dispute with the proponents of the primordialist view on nations³⁷. My point is just to indicate the power of the narrative toolkit that mediates thinking and perceptions of the past of the member of a particular (in this case - Armenian) mnemonic community. This influence is also evident in concern to the most important and troubling issue which is at the core of the Armenian-Turkish dispute – the events of 1915 which Davutoğlu terms as “relocation of Armenians” accompanied by their huge losses and sufferings while Libaridian perceives it as the “Armenian genocide” committed by Turks.

Libaridian believes that “if to face the reality of what happened in 1915... there is no better word to characterize what happened than the word

34 See: Garagozov, R. (2015). Op.,cit.

35 White, H. (1987). *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse & Historical Representation*. London: The John Hopkins University Press.

36 Barnes, H.R. (1937). *A History of Historical Writing*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

37 By the way, even A.D. Smith, a prominent and staunch defender of the primordialist interpretation of “nation” as an “essential” formation whose roots trace back to the historical past, who criticizes the “instrumentalists” for their postulate concerning the “construal” of nation, has changed his position towards recognizing political, sociocultural, psychological, in one word- “subjective” factors in shaping nation, by proposing so called «ethnosymbolism».

genocide”³⁸. But the problem with this argument is that the perception of “the reality of what happened in 1915” is to great extent defined by the narrative toolkit peculiar for members of Turkish and Armenian mnemonic communities. One may argue that when it comes to 1915, not everything falls in the same category of memory; there are also archival documents, which, while they are frequently not very truthful either, do come up with different angles. The problem is that there is nothing special in these documents that might be diagnosed as a “genocide” in a way as it is done with medical symptoms. There is plenty of narrative evidence about Armenian suffering, losses and death; but how to term this narrative evidence is a matter of choice which is defined by political and legal decisions. In a sense, opening the archives does not essentially change the situation with the issue of “Armenian genocide”.

There is another problem with the term. Armenians well remember how they were killed and massacred but they have totally forgotten, denied and refused to accept that they also killed and massacred hundreds of civilians. For instance, one may refer to atrocities and massacres committed by Armenian military bands in Turkey in period previous to 1915³⁹ or later in Azerbaijan in 1918.⁴⁰ The last large scale massacre committed by Armenian militants happened in small town of Khojaly in Karabakh in 1992.

So, if we have to accept one (Armenian) part of story should not we also accept another part of the same story. And if we call the Armenian part of story a genocide then how should we regard the part of story about atrocities and massacres committed by Armenians? In this connection we can see that the framing of historical episodes — deciding what to select and what to omit — to a great extent defines the angle of historical perception and interpretation.

38 Libaridian, G. (2014). Op.cit.

39 Çiçek, K. “Türk Ermeni anlaşmazlığının siyasi kökenleri, tehcir ve dönüş üzerine yaklaşımlar”. (Available at: <http://www.ttk.gov.tr/templates/resimler/File/m1.pdf>).

40 It should be noted, in this regard, that the state of Armenia was established in May 1918 on the territory of the former Azerbaijani Irevan khanate (the South Caucasus) which was conquered by Russian Empire in 1828. (The Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan. Legislative Acts. Collection of Documents. Baku, 1998, p.14). The creation of the Armenian state was accompanied by ethnic clashes and cleansing conducted against local Azerbaijanis (Swietochowski, T. (1985). *Russian Azerbaijan 1905-1920. The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community*. Cambridge University Press). Just recently published archives (forbidden in the Soviet times) provide us with testimonies in abundant number about Armenian atrocities committed in different regions of Azerbaijan. («Baku. March 1918: Pogroms against Azerbaijanis in documents», collec. by S. Rustamova-Togidi. Baku, (2009); «Guba. April-May, 1918: Pogroms against Muslims», collec. by S. Rustamova-Togidi. Baku, (2010); «Shamakhi. March-July, 1918. Pogroms against Azerbaijanis in documents», collec. by S. Rustamova-Togidi. Baku, 2013.)

Indeed, there is no such a thing that might be regarded as an “objective” observer. According to Michail Bakhtin, the words we speak are always someone else’s.⁴¹ In this regard, as William Cronon notes: “The stories we tell about the past do not exist in a vacuum”⁴². He, for instance, demonstrates how the choice of a plot and its ending influences a description of the same event by two professional historians, resulting in two different stories⁴³. Again, my point here is not to debate the issue of 1915 as it is beyond the scope of this article. My point here is to establish the perspective within which we could better understand the Turkish-Armenian mnemonic standoff. The impact of the Turkish national narrative on the Turkish perception of the 1915 events, by the way, has been to certain extent analyzed by Libaridian in another article⁴⁴. From his analysis is evident that the problem of the Turkish stance on the issue of the “Armenian genocide” has not only narrative but also certain political dimensions. But the same is true regarding the Armenian hold on this issue. Armenian stance is also mediated not only by the Armenian narrative toolkit but by a certain political context. To be sure, the political processes involved in this issue are complex and in some aspects are unique. But certainly, these processes in some aspects are similar to what Peter Novick described for the political context that conditioned the Holocaust issue in the United States⁴⁵. According to Novick, the Holocaust became “virtually the only common denominator of American Jewish identity in the late 20th century” as assimilation and intermarriage led to a thinning sense of Jewish commitment among the young. At the same time, he suggests, the rise of identity politics and the “culture of victimization” made it acceptable, even fashionable, for American Jews “to embrace a victim identity based on the Holocaust.”⁴⁶ In the same vein, identity and memory politics are among the forces that define the Armenian’s agenda of the “Armenian genocide”. I am not going into the detailed consideration of its political dimensions as it is beyond the scope of this article. Instead, I will consider the concept of cultural trauma which is interconnected in some essential ways with collective memory and to certain extent is defined by political context as well.

41 Bakhtin, M.M.(1986). *Speech genres & other late essays*. Austin: University Texas Press.

42 Cronon, W. (1992). “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative.” *Journal of American History*, vol. 78, no. 4, p. 1372.

43 Cronon, (1992), *Op.cit.*, pp. 1347–76.

44 Libaridian, G. (2013). “Erdoğan and His Armenian problem”. *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Spring. (Available at: <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/article/889/erdogan-and-his-armenian-problem-spring-2013/>).

45 Novick, P. 1999. *The Holocaust in American life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

46 *Cit.*, from Kakutani, M. (1999). *Vexing New Book*. (Available at: <http://www.fpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/Novick/Michiko.html>).

Cultural Trauma

The notion of cultural trauma should be distinguished from psychological trauma in some essential ways. If psychological trauma refers to immediate experience by an individual of a distressing or life-threatening event⁴⁷, cultural trauma is experienced by a group, irrespective of being an immediate witness or victim of the act of violence⁴⁸. More precisely, psychological trauma is experienced if there is a direct threat to physical existence of the individual while cultural or collective trauma may occur if community members experience a threat to their collective identity⁴⁹.

Unlike psychological trauma, which is diagnosed by psychiatrists or psychologists, cultural trauma is often determined or established by cultural, religious, social or political figures⁵⁰. Cultural trauma also differs from psychological trauma in terms of its mechanisms and possible effects and outcomes⁵¹. Stated otherwise, if psychological trauma “operates” on an individual level and deals mostly with psychological processes “inside” the mental life of an individual, cultural trauma affects groups, their cultural memory, group identity and worldview or ideology. One possible way of dealing with cultural trauma could be identified as performing acts of collective remembering for rebuilding an appropriate identity⁵². Another option comes in the rediscovering or emergence of new ideology in a “traumatized” community⁵³.

In brief, cultural trauma that is perceived as a disastrous threat to collective identities can play a particular role in generating new ideologies, collective memory, and identity constructions. In this connection, cultural trauma often serves as the cornerstone for shaping painful collective memory which is able

47 Foa, E.B., Keane, T.M., Friedman, M.J., & Cohen, J.A. (2009). *Effective treatments for posttraumatic stress disorder: Practice guidelines from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies*. Second Edition. New York: Guilford Publications.

48 Alexander, J.C. (2004). “Toward a Theory of Cultural trauma”. In J.C.Alexander, R. Eyerman, B. Giesen, N. J. Smelser, and P. Sztompka. (Eds.), *Cultural trauma and Collective Identity*. A: University of California Press, pp.1-10.

49 Smelser, N.J. (2004). “Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma”. In J. C. Alexander, R. Eyerman, B. Giesen, N.J. Smelser, P. Sztompka (Eds.), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 31-59 at p.38.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid, pp.38-39

52 Aarelaid-Tart, A. (2009). “Cultural Trauma as the Mnemonic Device of Collective Memory”. In: E. Koresaar, E. Lauk & K. Kuutma (Eds.), *The Burden of Remembering*. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, pp.197-221.

53 Hechter, T. (2003). “Historical Traumas, Ideological Conflicts, and the Process of Mythologizing”. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Vol., 35, pp.439-60, at p.442

as we traced it in our experiments to exceed individual memory in yielding strong emotions among individuals even in those who do not have painful individual experience.

Taken from this perspective, the issue of the “Armenian genocide” can be considered as a deliberate construction that reframed the Armenian tragedy of 1915 in a certain narrative which is currently at the core of the Armenian memory politics. It is not to suggest that this tragedy is simply a fabrication or product of the imagination of the Armenian mnemonic community. Instead, it suggests that politics (including memory and identity politics) is playing a decisive role in reframing historical events in certain ways.

Concluding remarks

We can see how powerful forces are underlying the Turkish-Armenian mnemonic standoff over the past. To be sure, the list of such forces can be much longer. In this article I have been focused only on a few of them: narrative, collective memory and cultural trauma. These can be considered as major cultural predicaments in the Turkish-

Armenian mnemonic standoff. We can also see the social nature of these forces, their so called human “hand-made” nature. Unlike natural cataclysms such as tsunami or earthquakes, these socially constructed and socially sustained forces can be managed relatively easier. At least there is some hope that productive dialogue would provide us by means and vision for overcoming these significant cultural predicaments which are present not only in the Turkish-Armenian mnemonic standoff but can be also found in some other conflicts over the globe.

As Ahmet Davutoğlu put it in his article– “is “just memory” possible?” Responding to this question, Libaridian argues that there is no such a thing as “just memory” as these two words have different natures: one is a moral category while another refers to a fallible category of knowledge regarding the past⁵⁴. Philosophically speaking, the answer would not be so straightforward as it depends on what do we understand by “justice” and

Taken from this perspective, the issue of the “Armenian genocide” can be considered as a deliberate construction that reframed the Armenian tragedy of 1915 in a certain narrative which is currently at the core of the Armenian memory politics.

54 Libaridian, G. (2014). “Commentary on FM Davutoğlu’s TPQ article on the Armenian Issue”. *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Spring (Available at: <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/article/989/commentary-on-fm-davutoglus-tpq-article-on-the-armenian-issue/>).

“memory”. For instance if we acknowledge the socially construed, instrumental character of the kind of collective memory that is “invented” or created for purposes that include eliminating the old images of enmity that feed collective experience and understand justice as “cultivating virtue and common good”⁵⁵ then we can probably arrive to kind of memory that can be tentatively called a “just memory”.

Taking into account the complexity of the region where memories are so strongly entangled with politics, history and conflicts, including the long running Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno Karabakh struggle, it seems reasonable to develop a comprehensive and multileveled program that embraces the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno Karabakh conflict, opening of Turkish-Armenian borders, and a program of profound narrative intervention towards creating a shared and internally consistent vision of the past, present and future for the nations of the region.

In any case collective memory is viewed as susceptible to manipulations, distortions, and inventions. Some scholars even talk about the “syndrome of false collective memory”⁵⁶. Within this line of reasoning, the collective memories that are peculiar to Armenian and Turkish mnemonic communities can be characterized as *selective* and *painful*. But if parties stuck by such memories then it would be hard for them to come to terms with each other. In this connection, I would reformulate Davutoğlu’s question: “*Is a more shared collective memory possible?*” Obviously, this is harder to achieve. Taking into account the complexity of the region where memories are so strongly entangled with politics, history and conflicts, including the long running

Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno Karabakh struggle, it seems reasonable to develop a comprehensive and multileveled program that embraces the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno Karabakh conflict, opening of Turkish-Armenian borders, and a program of profound narrative intervention towards creating a shared and internally consistent vision of the past, present and future for the nations of the region. To be sure, each of these problems in itself is extremely complicated and hard to achieve but it would also seem that none of these problems can be resolved separately⁵⁷.

55 Sandel, M.J. (2009). *Justice. What’s the right thing to do?* New-York:Farrar,Straus and Giroux, p.260.

56 Lowenthal, D. (2001). “Preface.” In A. Forty and S. Küchler, eds., *The Art of Forgetting*, Berg: Oxford International, at p. xiii.

57 In this regard, recent statement of Turkish Trade Minister Kursad Tuzmenn is revealing:“The Turkish-Armenian border could be opened only after Armenia gives up distorting history and restores Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity”. Turkey not to open Armenia border until Azerbaijan’s integrity restored. *Hurriet Daily News*, December 20, 2014; (Available at: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/world/10506578.asp>).

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ATTILA ORBÓK AND ARMENIANS*

(ATTILA ÓRBOK VE ERMENİLER)

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Abstract: *Hungarian author and journalist, Dr. Attila Orbók, took an action against the activities of Armenians in Hungary against Turks. Orbók explained the behind scenes of Armenian problem, Armenian insurrection and the role of Great Powers in the Armenian insurrection to the Hungarian people and statesmen in his book that he wrote for this purpose in 1916. Thanks to this book which Orbók had printed in his expense in Budapest, 1916, the opinion of Hungarian people related to Armenian problem changed. For this reason, the Orbók's book is one of the important primary sources that are issued related to the Armenian problem which is looked at with the eye of an western author.*

Key Words: *Dr. Attila Von Orbók, Armenian Question, Turk, Hungarian, Budapest.*

Özet: *Macar gazeteci yazar Dr. Atilla Orbók, Macaristan'daki Türk karşıtı Ermeni aktivitelerine karşı harekete geçti. Orbók 1916'da Ermeni sorununun arka planını, Ermeni isyanını ve "Büyük Güçlerin" Ermeni isyanındaki rolünü Macarlara anlatmak için yazdığı kitabın da açıklamaktadır. Orbók'un kendi imkânlarıyla 1916'da Budapeşte'de bastırıldığı, bu kitap sayesinde Macar halkının Ermeni sorununa karşı bakış açısı değişmiştir. Bu sebeple, Orbók'un kitabı, Ermeni sorununa bir batılı yazarın bakış açısından, en önemli birincil kaynaklardan birisidir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Dr. Atilla Von Orbók, Ermeni Sorunu, Türk, Macar, Budapeşte.*

* This paper was presented as a report in the conference of "VI. Formation and Disintegration of the Multinational States in Central Europe" (VI. Töbnnemzetiségű államok keletkezése és felbomlása Közép-Európába) in Szeged, Hungary on 7 March 2014 by the Institute of Research of Central Europe (Szeged-VIKEK).

1. Introduction

In 1898, around thirty thousand Armenians existed in the Transylvania region of Hungary. However, all of these Armenians had become Hungarianized by losing their ethnic and religious identities¹. The Minister of Finance and Commerce serving within the Hungarian Government were of Armenian origin². In relation to the “*Armenian Question*”, the Armenians living in Hungary have carried out several unsuccessful attempts against the Turks³. But, these anti-Turkish activities of the Armenians have set Hungarian Turcophile comrades into motion.

2. Dr. Attila von Orbók

Hungarian journalist and author, Dr. Attila von Orbók⁴, was born in Pozsony on 17 September 1887 and died in Budapest on 5 September 1964. Orbók had PhD on Law in Kolozsvár University of Hungary, and lived in Munich, then in Paris and worked in Sorbon University. Orbók was the reporter of the daily newspaper, *Magyarország* published in Budapest from 1912 until the First World War in Paris. He became the press attaché of Hungarian Embassy in Bern from 1918, and was deputy between 1920 and 1922. He had worked in the jobs from 1927, except in daily newspaper and literature magazines. He became the director of foreign policy department in the daily news paper, *Függetlenség* (Independence) from 1933. He became the member of *Kisgazda* (Countryman having the Small Property) Political Party and worked in the press department after 1945. Then, he was charged in the redaction of *Regény Újság* (Novel Newspaper)⁵. The works of Orbók, who wrote many theatre plays, are as follows; *A tünemény*, 1922 (Phenomena), *Párizs élete*, 1927 (Paris

1 After Hungary gaining independence in 1867, Hungarian nationalism had increased in the country and the idea of making everything Hungarian had developed. In 1868, learning Hungarian in schools had become mandatory. Some communities of the nations living in Hungary which possesses a population of 17 million have become Hungarian to only be appealed. From 1881 until 1896, 14.090 individuals have obtained Hungarian names. (Prime Ministry of Ottoman Archives, HR. SYS (Foreign Minister's Political Division Record), File: 166, No. 2).

2 It is the translation of the official letter numbered 17, sent on 10 February 1898 by the Prime Ministry. (Prime Ministry of Ottoman Archives, HR. SYS, File 166, No. 2; István Lázár, *Transilvania A Short History*, Edited by: Andrew L. Simon, English translation by: Thomas J. De Kornfeld, Published in 1997 by Corvina Books Ltd. p.133)

3 For the activities of Armenians in Hungary against the Turks see: Yücel Namal, *Macaristan ve Ermeni Meselesi (1878-1920)*, Truva Yayınları, 1st edition, İstanbul 2010, p. 44-48)

4 For more information about Orbók's book, see: Yücel Namal, “*A Booklet Regarding the Armenian Question in Hungary*”, (Translated by Gizem Sökmensüer), *Review Of Armenian Studies*, No: 22, April 2011, Pp. 203-219.

5 *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon*, Második Kötet L-Z, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1969, s. 319-320.

life), Erdély mosolya, 1940 (Erdely's Smile), Hotel központi fűtés nélkül, 1940 (Hotel without Central Heating), Bársonyszék, 1943 (Ministry's Chair or Velvet Chair), Az Isten kertje, 1944 (God's Garden), Tom Sawyer megszökik, 1959 (Tom Sawyer Runaway).

3. The Book of Orbók related to Armenian Problem

One of the Hungarians taking action against anti-Turkish activities conducted in Hungary regarding the Armenian question has been Dr. Attila Von Orbók. In 1916 in the capital city of Hungary Budapest, Orbók has written the booklet entitled "The Truth on the Armenian Riot Based on Original Official Information Obtained by the Ottoman Government Concerning the Riot of the Armenians against the State" "(Az Igazság Az Örmények Forradalmi Mozgalmáról, A Császári Ottomán Kormányának Az Örmények Államellenes Mozgalmáról Beszerzett Eredeti Hivatalos Adatai Nyomán)"⁶.

Orbók has written this booklet in order to explain the truth regarding the Armenian question and the "seditions" of England and Russia to the Hungarian public who were unaware of the Armenian riots in Turkey. In 1916, Orbók has published this booklet with his own financial means and has distributed it to Hungarian statesmen, journalists and the public free of charge. The Ottoman Government has shown gratitude to Orbók for his booklet which he had written to enlighten neutral Catholic public opinion on the relations of the Ottoman Government and the Turkish people with Armenians and their behaviors towards them and also to serve Turkish-Hungarian friendship⁷.

Orbók has explained his purpose for writing this booklet as follows⁸:

"I, a sincere advocate of Turkish-Hungarian friendship, have regretfully witnessed that some oppositions in Austria-Hungary and Catholics in particular, without knowing the real truth of the situation, foster some unpleasant ideas regarding the behavior of the Turkish Government and Turkish nation towards Armenians. Even more, I have received the news that one of our political parties would give a motion of censure in the Assembly due to the Ottoman Government's supposedly unpleasant

6 Dr. Attila Orbók, *Az Igazság Az Örmények Forradalmi Mozgalmáról, A Császári Ottomán Kormányának Az Örmények Államellenes Mozgalmáról Beszerzett Eredeti Hivatalos Adatai Nyomán*, Budapest 1916, Renyi Karoly Kitapevi and Yayinevi, Budapest, IV, Vigado-Utca 1; Prime Ministry of Ottoman Archives, HR. SYS, File. 2883, no.21, lef. 7.

7 Prime Ministry of Ottoman Archives, *DH.EUM.2.ŞB(Dáhiliye Nezareti Emniyeti Umumiye 2nd Department)*, File. 26, No.13.

8 Prime Ministry of Ottoman Archives, *HR. SYS*, File 2883, No. 22, Attachment: 1.2.3.4.5.6.

policy towards the Armenians. I regard this situation with regret since it will not only impede Turkish-Hungarian friendship, but will also constitute a threat towards the bond of brotherhood existent between the two relative nations which I mostly attempted to display the truth about in my article I published in order to fully safeguard the interests of my nation since the Balkan war. Therefore, I find it an imperative mission to eliminate these unpleasant ideas which have arisen and explaining to Hungarian general opinion (public opinion) the approach adopted by the Turkish Government and Turkish nation towards the riots carried out by Armenians...”

In his booklet, Orbók has expressed that the Ottoman Government has displayed goodwill towards the Armenians and have provided them with privileges by trusting them. Moreover, he has added that the Armenians constitute the “elite” class of the Ottoman society and works in high-status positions in public services (Undersecretariat, Ministry) .

4. Armenians in Ottoman according to the Orbók’s Book

In his booklet, Orbók has expressed that the Ottoman Government has displayed goodwill towards the Armenians and have provided them with privileges by trusting them. Moreover, he has added that the Armenians constitute the “elite” class of the Ottoman society and works in high-status positions in public services (Undersecretariat, Ministry)⁹. Under these conditions, the Armenians have easily preserved their own churches, built their own schools, and maintained their own language and traditions under Ottoman

administration¹⁰. However, the Armenians have failed in appreciating these privileges and favors and on the opposite, have taken every opportunity to create disturbances within the state and to disrupt its peace with other states¹¹.

The Armenian committees, regarding the goodwill of the Ottoman Government towards the Armenian riots more as a weakness, have accelerated their activities. All efforts of Armenian committees were directed towards creating an independent Armenia with the support of the UK, France, and the Russian

9 As an example, Orbók has mentioned Armenian Gabriel Noradungyan, the Foreign Minister of the Ottoman State in 1914 and Oksan Efendi as the leader of postal services. Orbók, p. 12; For extensive information on the Armenians serving in the Ottoman Empire see: Nejat Göyünç, *Osmanlı İdaresinde Ermeniler*, Gültepe Yayınları, İstanbul 1983; Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians In The Service Of The Ottoman Empire 1860-1908*, Routledge&Kegan Paul, London 1977; Y. G. Çark(Rahip), *Türk Devleti Hizmetinde Ermeniler 1453-1953*, Yeni Matbaa, İstanbul 1953.

10 Orbók, *Ibid*, p. 12.

11 Orbók, *Ibid*, p.13.

Empire. In order to obtain this goal, they have not refrained from anything which would lead to the Ottoman Empire's decline and collapse. The Armenians, who have always gained the support of the Allied Powers, have strived towards assisting them with all their efforts and weapons, for the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and its allies¹². Before the Ottoman Government had decided on entering the First World War, the Armenian committees had already begun preparing and closely observing the tide of events. The activities carried out by Armenians during this period are the following¹³:

- Forming Armenian gangs
- Spreading the riots
- Setting traps on the path used by the Turkish Army during their retreat and committing massacres

In the report No. 63 report that was sent to the Russian Consul Charikov in Bitlis on 24 December 1912, the following significant information was present concerning the Armenian Committee and particularly the activities of the Dashnak organizations¹⁴: “The Dashnak Committee makes great effort and exerts their authority in order to gain Armenian public opinion for the benefit of Russia. The point in question is that the community acts with determination to provoke the conflict between Armenian and Muslim elements and therefore, to ensure Russia's intervention and the occupation of the country with the aid of the Russian forces. Dashnak members use different equipment for this purpose. This way, they strive towards creating disagreements between the Muslim population and Armenians and planting seeds of fear and disintegration within the country. The Armenians in the city and village together with their religious leaders display endless sympathy towards Russia. The stance of Dashnaks and their commitment to Russia is the result of the instructions of the central committee in Istanbul”.

Notwithstanding, the Ottoman Government had knowledge of this information and was already aware of this intrigue carried out behind their back. Yet, until mid-April 1331 in Hegira (1915) when a riot broke out in Van, they still refrained from taking measures against Armenians based on this justification and also from the legitimate use of the weapon of revenge. A couple of months before this crisis erupted, Enver Pasha had warned the Armenian patriarch that

12 Orbók, p. 18.

13 Orbók, p. 19.

14 Orbók, p.21-22.

if the Armenians carry out initiatives to provoke riots, since the country lacks sufficient gendarmerie and soldiers to ensure security, they will be forced, for the security and peace of the country, to eliminate all riots before they increase and will take all firm measures for this purpose¹⁵. Speaker of the Parliament has also warned Armenian deputies present in Armenian committees. Therefore, Armenian minorities have received the news from both churchmen and leading politicians that any kind of illegal action will create depressing consequences. However, despite all warnings, Armenians have not suspended their rebellious activities. A majority of Armenian youngsters being called upon under the Turkish flag to fulfill their military service have refrained from performing their duty and have joined the Russian Army. Therefore, they have stood by the enemy's side in order to fight against their own nation. These young Armenians were slaughtering Muslims living in the villages on the borderline. Under the influence of these events, Armenian minorities residing in different regions of the Empire have followed the chain of riots and have become courageous enough to provoke their cognates to rebel¹⁶.

In his booklet, Orbók has provided many examples of the riots caused by Armenians. Several of these are the following: At the end of 1914, Armenians have carried out an armed attack against the gendarmerie in Muş and Kızan and have cut off transportation and the telephone lines between Van and Bitlis. Armenian gangs comprised of army deserters and bandits have attacked the government office in Zeytun¹⁷ and sought to slaughter the Muslim population regardless of women or children. Ottoman offices during their investigations in Kayseri (Cesarea) in Armenian-owned lands have found bombs, ammunition, weapons, confidential documents, codes to read the letters, instructions for rebellious gangs and many more significant evidences in cemeteries, schools and churches. It has been proven that the priest has been the leader of this unlawful and anti-government movement and the culprits have admitted that the bombs and weapons found were for the independence

15 Orbók, p. 30.

16 Orbók, p. 31.

17 The Zeytun (Süleymanlı) events, with a declaration of mobilization on 3 August 1914, Armenians of Zeytun appeal to officials to establish an "*Armenian regiment*" and when their request is rejected, Armenians rebel and start slaughtering. First, they have robbed and murder on 30 August 1914, 100 unarmed Andirins who had disbanded and returned to their villages. Then, they have killed some individuals from the Besenli Village, but around 60 of the gangs have been captured with their weapons. Around 800 Armenian gangs taking action again in February, have cut off Maraş's telegraph lines and have attacked the military barracks and the government office. The gendarme commander and 25 gendarme soldiers have been martyred, while 34 of them have been injured. Moreover, many Muslims have been killed by Armenian gangs in various areas of Maraş. At the end of these events, 713 rifles, 12 shotguns, 12 mauser rifles, various bombs, 70 animals and 61 bandits including the Armenian priest and many documents belonging to the committee have been found. (Azmi Süslü, *Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Yayın No: 5, Ankara 1990, p. 71-72.)

of Armenia. On 11 March 1331 (1915) at the Armenian monastery in Teke located at the upper part of the city of Zeytun, an Armenian gang has laid an ambush for the gendarmerie. The rebels have slaughtered the commander and the escort gendarmerie¹⁸.

Armenians have continued their rebellious activities within the field of operation of the Ottoman army. Moreover, Armenian rebels have all of a sudden attacked the city of Karahisar-ı Şarki¹⁹ on June 1331 (1915) for no reason at all and have burnt one fourth of the Muslim population there. Eight hundred rebels have closed the city fortress and have not wanted to even hear the “paternal advice and kindly worded proposals” of Ottoman officials. Here, the Armenians have killed 150 people, including the gendarme commander. On the same date during the investigations of Ottoman officials, a large number of hidden bombs and weapons have been discovered in Izmit, Adapazarı and Bahçecik²⁰.

In his booklet, Orbók has evaluated the riots created by Armenians on Ottoman territories in which they lived together peacefully: “During the implementation of these measures, some have deplorably made many abuses against Armenians and victims based on brute force have taken place, but it was not possible to avoid these separate events no matter how depressing it was. A very deep and just anger had awakened among the Muslim population towards Armenians who were citizens of their own nation and who conducted riots and treasons, while they were to own a debt of gratitude to the country for being able to benefit from the blessing of legal equality”.

In his book, Orbók states that the Armenian riots, presented by Media of Allied and neutral powers as if a “religious” struggle is taking place on Ottoman territories, carries a “political” aspect; the Armenian minority, constituting 1.5 million of the Ottoman Empire which has a total population of thirty million, has cooperated with the enemy upon the provocation of Russia and the Allied Powers and has risen in rebellion against its fatherland of four hundred years.

5. Armenian Problem and Great Powers according to Orbók’s Book

In his book, Orbók states that the Armenian riots, presented by Media of Allied and neutral powers as if a “religious” struggle is taking place on Ottoman

18 Orbók, p. 32.

19 Şebinkarahisar which is a district of Giresun.

20 Orbók, p. 34.

territories, carries a “political” aspect; the Armenian minority, constituting 1.5 million of the Ottoman Empire which has a total population of thirty million, has cooperated with the enemy upon the provocation of Russia and the Allied Powers and has risen in rebellion against its fatherland of four hundred years. Therefore, the Armenians have aimed at creating an independent Armenia by regaining their independence with the support of external powers²¹. The truth is that the Allied Powers have encouraged the Armenians to revolt by appropriately putting the deceiving vision of an “independent Armenia” inside their heads, while the only purpose was for the civil rebellions to leave the Ottoman army in a difficult position. Orbók has also expressed in his book that the role of Russia, which he described as the “rolling ruble”, has been significant in these riots²². Moreover, Orbók has pointed out that the news and allegations of Western public opinion that Turkey is following a policy of annihilating the Armenian minority are lies entirely lacking any foundation²³.

The origin of the Armenian riots dates back to 1870 and the Armenian organizations of today have been established in those years through the financial and moral support of Russian foreign policy²⁴. In order to take advantage of the religious struggle, Russia has utilized Turkish hostility existing among the Armenians in Turkey as a political instrument for many years²⁵. The Armenians, who have been provoked by rebellious organizations in Russia, have created a bloody riot in 1892 in the region of Sason. Between 1893 and 1894, the riots have started again²⁶ and through priests possessing a Slav mentality, Armenians have appealed to Russia for external powers to intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottomans²⁷. Orbók says that the official declarations of western statesmen are quite persuasive about what kind of support the Allies provided to Armenians and how they encouraged Armenians²⁸. The statements and correspondences in this context are the indisputable evidences. One of those evidences is the call of insurrection of the Russian Czar to Armenians.

21 Reliable statistics do not exist on the number of Armenians in Turkey. According to the research of France, 1,150,000 Armenians live in the Turkish Empire. On the other hand, a Russian source states that this number is 2,5 million. German scholars nearly unanimously indicate that the number of Armenians has reached 1,5 million. One must calculate the most possible number lying between these two extreme amounts. (Orbók, p. 8.)

22 Orbók, p. 39.

23 Orbók, p. 39.

24 Orbók, p. 8.

25 Orbók, p. 8.

26 Orbók, p. 9.

27 Orbók, p. 16.

28 Orbók, s. 19.

During the World War I, the following idea has been dominant among Armenians: “All Armenians living dispersedly in the world must now put all their efforts in supporting the success of Allied Powers. The allies of Germany (Austro-Hungary, Ottoman Empire) are doomed to be destroyed; time has come to be born again. For this to be to our advantage, Armenians must strive”²⁹. The Allied Powers have taken advantage of every opportunity to convince the Armenians to rebel and therefore, to constrain the Turkish army within the country³⁰. In his book, Orbók has stated that especially when he has examined the Armenian riots, he has discovered that Russia and the UK have been the ones provoking the Armenian community in Turkey to rebel and have been the organizers of the Armenian riots.

6. Conclusion

The book, “Facts about Armenian Insurrection”, written by the Hungarian intellectual, Orbók, has a significant impact on changing the opinions against Turks related to the Armenian problem both in Hungarian and Western societies. After publishing this book, the Turkish-Hungarian friendship in Hungary became deeper. Orbók’s book is a confession by a Hungarian intellectual that Turks are blamed unjustly in the Armenian problem. Orbók manifests that the Armenian problem is not a religious problem, but emerges as a political issue in his book. In addition, he states that this political issue also emerges due to encouragement by United Kingdom and Russia the Armenians to insurrect. Orbók tells that the Armenians in Ottoman were the elites in the society and held the senior offices such as ministry in the state administration. However, despite of such tolerance and privileges, Armenians betrayed the Ottoman, revolted throughout Anatolia and killed their Turkish neighbors. Therefore, the book of Orbók that he wrote one year after the Armenian relocation, is very important.

Orbók manifests that the Armenian problem is not a religious problem, but emerges as a political issue in his book. In addition, he states that this political issue also emerges due to encouragement by United Kingdom and Russia the Armenians to insurrect.

29 Orbók, p. 26.

30 Orbók, p. 29.

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ATTACHMENTS

Tiszteletpéldány.

**AZ IGAZSÁG
AZ ÖRMÉNYEK
FORRADALMI
MOZGALMÁRÓL**

**A CSÁSZÁRI OTTOMÁN KORMÁNYNAK
AZ ÖRMÉNYEK ÁLLAMELLENES
MOZGALMÁRÓL BESZERZETT
EREDETI HIVATALOS
ADATAI NYOMÁN:
ORBÓK ATILA DR.**



BUDAPEST, 1916.
RÉNYI KÁROLY KÖNYVKERESKEDÉSE ÉS KIADÓVÁLLALATA
BUDAPEST, IV, VIGADÓ-UTCA 1.

Attachment 1: The cover of Orbók's booklet entitled "*The Truth on the Armenian Riot*". (Dr. Attila Von Orbók, *Az Igazság Az Örmények Forradalmi Mozgalmáról, A Császári Ottomán Kormányának Az Örmények Államellenes Mozgalmáról Beszerzett Eredeti Hivatalos Adatai Nyomán*, Budapeste 1916, Rényi Karoly Könyvkereskedése És Kiadóvalla, Budapest, IV, Vigado-Utca 1.)

THE MISSED OCCASION: SUCSESSES OF THE HAMIDIAN POLICE AGAINST THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARIES, 1905-1908

(KAÇIRILAN FIRSAT: HAMİDİYE POLİSİNİN ERMENİ
DEVİRİMCİLERİNE KARŞI BAŞARILARI, 1905-1908)

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Abstract: *During the last years of Abdülhamit's era, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation faced huge difficulties, both in the Ottoman Empire and Russia. After years of failed attempt to provoke a foreign intervention through terrorism and, above all, rebellions (1896-1904), the ARF tried to obtain similar results through terrorism alone, in İstanbul and İzmir. In 1905, the Dashnaks tried to kill the Sultan, but failed twice, and their main leader was even killed by his own bomb, during the preparation of the first attempt. Partially as a result of the second failure, the Ottoman police discovered a plot to devastate İzmir, as well as the İzmir-Aydın and İzmir-Uşak railways. Most of the plotters were arrested and sentenced. Last but not least, the betrayal of one prominent Dashnak and the denunciations by anonymous Armenians, permitted to the Ottoman security forces to dismember the Dashnak network in Van, the last province where the ARF maintained its capacity as a guerilla force. As a result, it appears that the Young Turk revolution, by naïveté, saved the Dashnaks precisely at the time when they were close to disappearing in the Ottoman Empire as a strong revolutionary party.*

Keywords: *Abdülhamit II, Armenian question, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Committee Union and Progress, İstanbul, İzmir, terrorism, Van, Young Turks.*

Öz: *Abdülhamit döneminin son yıllarında, Ermeni Devrimci Federasyonu hem Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda hem de Rusya'da büyük zorluklar yaşamaktaydı. Yıllar boyunca süren terörizm ve isyanlar (1896-1904) yoluyla yabancı devletlerin müdahalesini sağlama çabalarının başarısız olmasıyla, ARF İstanbul ve İzmir'de benzer sonuçları tek başına terörizmi*

deneyerek elde etti. 1905'te, Taşnaklar iki kere padişahı öldürmeyi deneyip başarısız oldular hatta kendi liderleri kendi bombasıyla, ilk girişim için hazırlık yaparken öldü. İkinci başarısızlıklarının kısmi sonucu olarak, Osmanlı polisleri İzmir'i özellikle de İzmir-Aydın ve İzmir-Uşak demiryolunu harabeye çevirecek bir komployu keşfettiler. Bütün komplocular yakalandı ve idam edildi. Son olarak da, önde gelen Taşnaklardan birinin ihaneti ve kimliği bilinmeyen Ermenilerin ihbar edilmesiyle, Osmanlı güvenlik güçlerine Taşnakların gerilla kuvveti sağladıkları son il olan Van'daki bağlantılarını yok etme izni vermiştir. Sonuç olarak, Jön Türkler devrimi öyle görünüyor ki, 'naiflikle' Taşnakları, güçlü bir devrimci parti olarak, tam olarak, Osmanlı Devleti içinde yok olmak üzereyken kurtarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 2. Abdülhamit, Ermeni Sorunu, Ermeni Devrimci Federasyonu, İstanbul, İzmir, Terörizm, Van, Jön Türkler

The last years of Abdülhamit II's personal reign are the most neglected by the researchers working on the Armenian issue, in spite of at least one spectacular event: the attempt, by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) to kill the sultan, in 1905. There is nothing about this bombing in Kâmuran Gürün's book or in the massive study on *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* by Salâhi R. Sonyel.¹ In his last book, Yücel Güçlü makes only a short allusion to the attempt to murder Abdülhamit, and does not study the 1905-1908 period.² Similarly, the classic study of Louise Nalbandian ends in 1896 and the more recent one, by Dikran Mersop Kaligian starts in 1908.³ One of the very few scholarly books paying attention to this time is the one of Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran and Ömer Turan, but it focuses on Van.⁴ Even more strikingly, the Dashnak plot in İzmir, in 1905, analyzed below, seems virtually unknown even among the specialists.

Regardless, the 1905-1908 period has a clear specificity. First of all, after the failure of the Dashnak insurrection at Sasun, in 1904, there was a decade without massive Armenian insurrection in the Ottoman Empire—if you consider the inter-communal clashes of 1909 in Adana as a sui generis, an aborted project of uprising which led to mutual violence and massacre.⁵ Between 1890 and 1922, the Armenian committees were constantly involved in important military or paramilitary activities, except between 1904/5 and 1914: There were rebellions against the Ottoman government (1890-1904; 1914-1916); volunteers units for the Russian (1914-1917), French (1916-1920) and Greek (1919-1922) armies; Armeno-Turkish wars (1917-1918; 1920); Armeno-Azeri conflict (1918-1920); and rebellion against the Soviets (1921). Second, from 1905 to 1908, unlike the 1908-1914 years, the Armenian revolutionary committees were not allowed to work in the Ottoman Empire openly. The weak and rather desperate situation of the Armenian committees, their failures, does not imply that their actions at that time were irrelevant, or that their situation of weakness is unimportant for the historian. We know, today, that the Armenian committees survived after 1908 and attained their

1 Kâmuran Gürün, *The Armenian File: the Myth of Innocence Exposed*, Nicosia-London: K. Rüstem & Brothers/Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985; Salâhi R. Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire*, Ankara: TTK, 1993.

2 Yücel Güçlü, *The Holocaust and the Armenian Case in Comparative Perspective*, Lanham-Boulder-Toronto-Plymouth: University Press of America, 2012.

3 Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1963; Dikran Mersop Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under the Ottoman Rule, 1908-1914*, New Brunswick (NJ): Transaction Publishers, 2009.

4 Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran and Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006.

5 On this affair: Kemal Çiçek, (ed.), *1909 Adana Olayları Makaleler/The Adana Incidents of 1909 Revisited*, Ankara: TTK, 2011; and Salâhi Sonyel, "The Turco-Armenian 'Adana Incidents' in the Light of Secret British Documents (July 1908-December 1909)," *Belleten*, LI/201, 1987, pp. 381-449, http://www.ttk.gov.tr/templates/resimler/File/fulltext/Belleten_Makale/bel201-1291_1338.pdf

climax of paramilitary activity in 1915.⁶ The Dashnak and Hunchak leaders or the chiefs of Abdülhamit's police could not know the future in 1906. A satisfactory knowledge of history needs a large study of the events, and if possible a study of the failed alternatives, as well as of the reasons why these alternatives failed.

This paper tries to present the first analysis and interpretation of the 1905-1908 period, from the perspective of the fight between the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian committees. This is also an invitation for further research, based on the archives of the Hamidian police and justice.

The Dashnaks had a more sophisticated organization, from Western Europe to the Caucasus but they failed, not less than the Hunchaks, to provoke a Russian and/or British military intervention.

I) A depressed, weakened, beheaded ARF tries in vain to assassinate Abdülhamit

A) Context: the accumulation of failures and the new strategy (1896-1908)

After isolated uprisings (Zeytun 1862 and 1878), the first wave (1890-1896) of important Armenian insurrections were organized by the Hunchak party—who advocated a mix of

Marxism and extreme nationalism—especially in Sasun (1894) and Zeytun (1895-1896), but the crisis and reprisals provoked by these insurrections eventually failed to provoke the so-desired intervention of the UK and/or Russia. There was even a split within the Hunchak party, a faction leaving the organization to create the Reformed Hunchak Party, without references to Socialism. As a result, the ARF, in spite of the failure of its first attempts (1891) took the place of the Hunchak party as the dominant nationalist-revolutionary organization among the Armenians.⁷

The Dashnaks had a more sophisticated organization, from Western Europe to the Caucasus⁸ but they failed, not less than the Hunchaks, to provoke a Russian and/or British military intervention. The attack on the Ottoman Bank killed innocent Turks and provoked the desired reprisals on both guilty and innocent Armenians. Regardless, the major powers did not go beyond some verbal

6 Among other references, see Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians. A Study in Counterinsurgency*, New York-London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013, pp. 143-212.

7 William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960, pp. 158-164 and 321; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005, pp. 11-29; Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary...*, pp. 104-131. Also see: François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II: le sultan calife (1876-1909)*, Paris: Fayard, 2003, p. 291-295.

8 Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians...*, pp. 15-26.

protestation, and they had some reasons to do so, since their representatives, especially the British ones, understood the foolish strategy of the ARF. The British ambassador found “admirable” the behavior of part of the Ottoman army during the attack.⁹ Even more disappointing, from the Dashnak perspective, a gang of the ARF attacked a Kurdish tribe close to Van in 1897, butchering women and children, mutilating their victims with the hope to provoke bloody reprisals. However, this time, the new governor of Van prevented any counter massacre by Kurds of Armenians.¹⁰ Similarly, Abdülhamit II appointed a new governor of Erzurum in 1895, Rauf (Réouf) Paşa. As early as 1896, Rauf had reorganized the gendarmerie and obtained successes against the Armenian revolutionaries without damages for the ordinary Armenians, obtaining the congratulations of the Russian consul himself.¹¹

Apparently unimpressed by these failures, the ARF launched guerilla warfare in eastern Anatolia in 1898. However, once again the Dashnaks did not obtain the expected result, and, as early as 1899, two of the most efficient leaders in eastern Anatolia, Aram Aramian and Serop Vartanian of the ARF, were killed by the Ottoman forces. Also in 1899, Mikayel Der Mardirosyan, who tried to create a Dashnak network in Cilicia, was arrested by the Ottoman police. After the failure of the Sasun insurrection, in 1904, the Dashnak leadership decided to stop such actions.¹² The failure of these revolts was expensive and, after 1900, the ARF increasingly used racketeering, death threats and, if needed, exemplary assassinations to raise money. By doing so, the Dashnaks obtained some successes,¹³ but the practice of murder was dangerous. For example, on October 17, 1902, the ARF assassinated Mateos Baliozian, a wealthy merchant of İzmir, because he systematically refused to give any money to the “Armenian cause.” His murderer, a Dashnak apparently arrived from Iran, was arrested the same day. On August 21, 1905, this Dashnak hangman was executed in front of a big crowd.¹⁴ Indeed, not all Armenians supported the ARF. Some of them hated this party:

9 Telegrams and reports of the British embassy at İstanbul, August 26, 27, 29 and 30, September 2 and 3, October 27, 1896, in Muammer Demirel (ed.), *British Documents on Armenians (1896-1918)*, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002, pp. 191-195, 197-208, 214-222 et 254 ; William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of...*, pp. 322-325.

10 Telegrams of Ambassador Curie, August 10 and 12, 1897, in Muammer Demirel (ed.), *British Documents on...*, pp. 327-328; William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of...*, pp. 349-350.

11 Sidney Whitman, *Turkish Memories*, New York-London, Charles Scribner's Sons/William Heinemann, 1914, pp. 95-97.

12 Hratch Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashaktsutiun, 1890/1924*, Milan, Oemme, 1989, pp. 51-52, 59 and 75-76.

13 Ibid., p. 63.

14 Lettres du consul de France à Smyrne à l'ambassadeur et au ministère des Affaires étrangères, 17 octobre 1902, 21 août 1905, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (AMAE), La Courneuve, microfilm P 16 737; Kapriel Serope Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted*, Boston: Baikar Press, 1934, pp. 16-17 and 68.

*“Father heaped again his scorn and sarcasm on the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. ‘It’s destroying our nation! It has ruined our schools, disunited our people. What do your leaders know about international politics? Wasn’t it all this revolutionary foolishness that caused the Massacre?’”*¹⁵

The situation in Russia was even more concerning for the ARF. Russian passivity in 1894-1896 was not welcomed, but the policy of Russification in the Caucasus was considered a *casus belli*. The policy of General Golitsyne, named commander-in-chief for the Caucasus in 1897, and Bobrikov, who became the civil governor one year later, was an aggressive assimilation of all non-Russians, including Armenians.¹⁶ The Dashnaks eventually decided to fight both Abdülhamit and the Tsar and officially adopted Socialism in 1907, turning to an alliance with the European Socialist parties as well as with the Young Turks. Not surprisingly, the tsarist police attacked the Dashnaks with its radical methods, without being annoyed by any intervention from any European consulate or embassy.¹⁷ It was not until 1912 that the ARF reconciled with the Tsarist regime.¹⁸ In addition, the adherence to Socialism provoked the departure and, in reprisal, the assassination by the ARF, of several Dashnak leaders, mostly Ottoman Armenians; Antranik was not killed because he was too popular, but bitterly left the ARF.¹⁹

The efforts of the Dashnaks in Russia “absorbed ARF resources” and “decreased Dashnak activity inside the Ottoman Empire which, in fact, dropped off in 1906 and 1907,” with only Van remaining an important center of activity.²⁰

B) The first plot to kill Abdülhamit

The interruption, for about ten years (1904/1905-1914) in big insurrections did not mean the renunciation of a radical fight against the Ottoman state. Unable, for some years, to attack the Ottoman army, the Dashnaks tried to kill the sultan

15 Leon Z. Surmelian, *I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1945, p. 63.

16 Antoine Constant, *L’Azerbaïdjan*, Paris : Karthala, 2002, p. 223-225.

17 E. Aknouni, *Political Persecution, Armenian prisoners of the Caucasus*, New York, 1911; İnayetullah Cemal Özkaya, *Le Peuple arménien et les tentatives de réduire le peuple turc en servitude*, İstanbul : Belgelerle Türk Tarih Dergisi, 1971, pp. 175-182.

18 Gaïdz Minassian, *Géopolitique de l’Arménie*, Paris : Ellipses, 2005, p. 15. Also see the dispatch of the British Consul in Erzurum, October 14, 1913, FO 195/2450 and the speech of Mr. Berezovsky-Olghinsky, special envoy of *Birjéviya Viedomosty*, April 7, 1913, AMAE, P 16 744.

19 Kapriel Serope Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted...*, pp. 26-31.

20 Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians...*, p. 27.

himself. This decision was taken in 1904, during the same congress that decided to prepare bombings in İzmir (on this affair, see the next part of this paper). For Christapor Mikaelian, by far the main personality who established the ARF in 1890, this project of assassination was an “*idée fixe*” and he played a determining role during the Athens meeting of 1904 in which it was decided to prioritize the attempt against Abdülhamit’s life.²¹

The first attempt was prepared from Bulgaria, where the Dashnak network experienced a dramatic development during the very first years of 20th Century;²² the ARF even maintained a military academy in this country. Regardless, on March 17, 1905, Christapor Mikaelian and his assistant, Vram Kendirian, were killed by their own bomb, on Vitosha Mountain, close to Sofia.²³ For the Dashnaks, Mikaelian’s death was a terrible loss. Their leader was both an ideologue and a manager. One century after his death, his picture was still in the homes of Dashnaks and one of the main specialists of the ARF still used the word “christaporism” for the ideological basis of the Dashnak party, a “revolutionary syncretism.”²⁴

Added to the failure of the second attempt to assassinate the sultan, this accidental death disorganized the ARF. Indeed, not only Mikaelian did disappear, but Safo, in charge of the second attempt of murder, was expelled in 1907—not merely because of his failure, but also, and above all, because he was, in the words of the half-official historian of the Dashnaks, “considered as the source of doubt and slander about the deaths of Kristapor and Vram.” Hrach Dasnabedian does not give any detail about the nature of these “doubts” and “slanders.”²⁵ Regardless, it is safe to assume that the rather humiliating circumstances of the death (the main leader of the ARF and his assistant were not even able to manipulate a bomb properly) had something to do with this internal trouble.

C) The attempt in İstanbul

The second squad preparing the murder of the sultan followed the basic idea defended by Mikaelian: to kill Abdülhamit, on Friday, after the weekly prayer, with a huge bomb placed in a carriage. Albeit sophisticated and based on a

21 Hrach Dasnabedian, *History of the....*, pp.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

23 Gaidz Minassian, *Guerre et terrorisme arméniens*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 2002, p. 2, n. 1.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

25 Hrach Dasnabedian, *History of the....*, p. 77, n. 40.

very precise knowledge of Abdülhamit II's habits, the plot had a fundamental flaw: Any change, even minor, in the timing of the sultan would lead the attack to a complete failure, and that is exactly what happened. On July 21st, the day of the attack, the sultan decided to chat with the Sheikh-ül-Islam for some minutes, and the carriage containing the infernal machine exploded in the middle of the crowd, too far from his target to even wound him. The bomb killed, according to the Dashnaks themselves, about forty people.²⁶ Remarkably, and unlike the Dashnak attack against the Ottoman Bank, nine years before, this bloody act of terrorism did not provoke riots against the

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Armenian population of İstanbul. As a result, the ARF failed to provoked any trouble that could eventually lead to an intervention of any great power. The ARF simply appeared to the West as a terrorist organization, similar to the anarchists who had killed French President Sadi Carnot (1894), Italian King Umberto I (1900), and U.S. President William McKinley (1901). "Neither of these costly operations had aroused sympathy in Europe and were judged to be counterproductive."²⁷

This "anarchist" image was reinforced by the arrest of a Belgian anarchist, Charles-Édouard Jorris, who was used as a hangman by the

ARF. Abdülhamit II pardoned Jorris, who became in exchange an informer of the sultan's police.²⁸

The Ramkavar leader Kapriel Serope Papazian, hardly an admirer of Abdülhamit, wrote: "this was another of the spectacular but futile acts of the Dashnagtzoutune. Its success would not have helped the Armenian cause; its failure probably saved our people from greater misfortunes."²⁹ Indeed, even in France, after the assassination of President Carnot in Lyon, by an Italian anarchist, all the Italian-owned shops of the city were sacked and, in many cases, burned.³⁰ The semi-official historian of the ARF, Hratch Dasnabedian, also observes:

26 Mikael Varandian, *Rapport présenté au congrès socialiste international de Copenhague par le parti arménien « Daschnaktzoutioun »*. *Turquie — Caucase — Perse*, Genève, 1910, pp. 16-17. This figure (40 persons killed) was also published by *The New York Times*, July 22, 1905. Other sources say 26 killed and 58 wounded: Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 32.

27 Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians...*, p. 27.

28 François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II...*

29 Kapriel Serope Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted...*, p. 24.

30 Pierre Milza, *Voyage en Ritalie*, Paris : Payot, 2004, p. 139.

“Ironically, the second large-scale demonstrative activity planned by the ARF in Constantinople shared the fate of the first. The leaders, the very souls of the operation, died in early stages, and the operations did not achieve the desired result.”³¹

II) The failure of the İzmir efforts and plot

A) The gradual discovery of the plot

According to the Dashnak themselves, the discovery of the İzmir plot was largely due to the failure of attempted murder against the sultan, and more precisely to the discovery of papers, first on Jorris, then in Dashnak caches.³² It is a fact that the Ottoman police received the order to be more active, as a result of the bombing. It is also a fact that the first arrests took place on August 8, in the context of the investigation on the attempted murder in İstanbul,³³ and about ten days after the arrest of Charles-Édouard Jorris. A scholarly study of the findings made in the Ottoman capital city, during the weeks following the bombing, has yet to be carried out.

That having been said, it is safe to argue that the conspirators committed serious errors. First of all, one of the main depositories of explosives was a fake “butcher shop,” settled in “a place where the rents are very expensive.” Worse for the camouflage, the “butcher” paid the rent thanks to checks coming from İstanbul each month, and the amount of the checks was “out of any proportion with the needs of this shop and the apparent expenses.” As a result, as soon as the police of İzmir received the order to reinforce the surveillance of the Armenians, this “butcher” was followed closely. The policemen were in a good position to intervene quickly when an accident revealed the true nature of the “butcher shop:” it contained 80 bombs, 35 grenades and important documents, including a booklet entitled “Armenian Catechism,” with a stamp reading “Armenian Revolutionary Committee — Smyrna Branch”. Similarly, the infernal machine deposited to blow up the Ottoman Bank was located in a fake tailor shop, close to the bank. The “tailor” had no customer and regardless paid an expensive rent for months. He was quickly arrested.³⁴

31 Hrach Dasnabedian, *History of the...*, p. 77.

32 Ibid. ; Mikael Varandian, *Rapport présenté au...*, p. 17.

33 “Lettre du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires étrangères”, 14 août 1905, *AMAE*, P 16 737.

34 “Lettre du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires étrangères”, 16 août 1905, *ibid.*

Further searches and seized documents proved that a committee of seven persons led the conspiracy; the other participants were divided into groups of five: each member of one group knew the *nom de guerre* of the four others, and ignored the work of the groups completely. The bombs arrived “partly from Marseille, partly from Odessa” and the dynamite was bought a Greek smuggler, “far from suspecting the purpose for which it was intended.” Seized documents also provided the list of the Armenian accomplices in various administrations and public places, all destined to be destroyed by explosives. Remarkably, the vali avoided any massive arrests, dismantling the network progressively, relying on the seized documents and the confessions obtained from the arrested terrorists.³⁵

This tactic was fully efficient. Politically, it was highly appreciated by the French Consul General in İzmir, who opposed any sending of a military ship in front of the city, and was successfully backed in this opposition by the Embassy.³⁶ In terms of police findings, the importance of seized documents is already clear; the confessions led the Ottoman authorities to the discovery of bombs at the bottom of two railroad bridges on the İzmir-Aydın line.³⁷ “Four petroleum tins, filled with dynamite of a total weight of 2 cwt [centum weights, namely a total of about 100 kg]” were found, “placed against piers of the respective bridges in such a way as to destroy the bridges its fuses were set upon.”³⁸

Another important discovery of explosives was also made thanks to testimonies of arrested Armenians—but this time, it is impossible to know their identity without the archives of the Ottoman police. At the end of August, in the Crédit Lyonnais (at that time, the biggest bank of the world), the safe rented by an Armenian who had given a false name was carefully opened by specialists. 62 kilograms of dynamite, divided into three packets, were extracted in the presence of the director of the branch as well as of the director of the police. Only after this discovery and a confrontation with one employee of the Crédit Lyonnais (in charge of the strong room), this Armenian, who was already arrested, confessed he had stored dynamite in this safe.³⁹ The Dashnaks duped

35 “Lettre du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires étrangères”, 16 août 1905, *ibid.*

36 “Lettre du chargé d’affaires au président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires étrangères”, 28 août 1905, *ibid.*

37 “Lettre du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires”, 24 août 1905, *ibid.*

38 “Dispatch of the British Consul General in Smyrna”, August 26, 1905, in Muammer Demirel (ed.), *British Documents on...*, p. 453.

39 “Télégramme du consul général de France à Smyrne”, 27 août 1905, *AMAE*, P 16 737 ; Dispatch of the British Consul General in Smyrna, September 4, 1905, Muammer Demirel (ed.), *British Documents on...*, p. 464.

the employees of the bank as follows: the one who rented the safe went to the bank four times per month with jewelry, explaining he needed to deposit that in the safe; his accomplice pretended to be his domestic servant also went, with a bag actually full of dynamite, and hid with his body what his boss was doing in the strong room.⁴⁰ Using information that was not identified by the French Consul, the authorities found 47 kilograms of dynamite in Manisa, and, some days later, seven other kilograms, this time thanks to “denunciations.”⁴¹

B) The precise goals of the conspirators

There is no doubt about the scope of the Dashnak plans in İzmir. The eighty “large” bombs that were found in one house “have not been seen by anyone outside the Turkish Government service.”⁴² The Dashnak who rented the safe in the Crédit Lyonnais eventually confessed this place was not merely for the storage of bombs: According to the plot, 3.5 kilograms should have been left, with appropriate clockwork, to cause the collapse of the bank itself.⁴³

More generally, the seized documents, the confessions and the discovery of caches for dynamite and other explosives, proved that the ARF wanted to destroy “at the same time” the Konak, the barrack, the main post office, the Ottoman Bank, the Public Debt Administration, the bank of Metelin, the Tobacco Régie, the Société des quais de Smyrne, the main cafés of the docks, the Sporting-Club and the railroad stations of Aydın and Kasaba, as well as all the important stations and bridges “until Ouchak [Uşak].” The grenades had to be used against the crowd; indeed, the Dashnaks decided to carry out their project on the anniversary day of Abdülhamit’s accession to the throne, and more specifically at 10:00 p.m. Indeed, at this day and time, İzmir was very crowded, maybe more than in any other moment; more exactly, the yards of the Konak and the barracks (in front of each other) were open to the crowd for this anniversary day. As a result, both the explosion of the building and the grenades would have butchered a significant number of bystanders. In the area formed by the Konak, the barrack and the docks only, about 30,000 inhabitants were concentrated during such an event. At 10:00, it was dark, and some of

40 “Lettre du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires”, 7 septembre 1905, *AMAE*, P 16 737.

41 “Lettres du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires étrangères”, 11 et 19 septembre 1905, *ibid.*

42 “Dispatch of the British Consul General in Smyrna”, August 26, 1905, in Muammer Demirel (ed.), *British Documents on...*, p. 454.

43 “Lettre du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires”, 19 septembre 1905, *AMAE*, P 16 737.

the bombs would have destroyed the gas lines, provoking virtually complete obscurity and exacerbating the panic. Last but not least, this panic would have certainly led to the fall of many people in the sea. The ARF wanted to kill—directly by bombs, indirectly by the panic—as many people as possible, both among the Turkish and Greek elements of the population, to provoke reprisals against the Armenian civilians, in İzmir itself and also in the countryside—even more easily since bombs would have exploded “until Uşak.”⁴⁴

The ARF wanted to kill—directly by bombs, indirectly by the panic—as many people as possible, both among the Turkish and Greek elements of the population, to provoke reprisals against the Armenian civilians, in İzmir itself and also in the countryside—even more easily since bombs would have exploded “until Uşak.”

The general destruction of the İzmir-Aydın and İzmir-Uşak railroads was prepared not only to provoke reprisals in the hinterland, but also to prevent the arrival of help in İzmir⁴⁵ and so to increase the number of casualties.

Hratch Dasnabedian is rather laconic on the plot, and, unlike for the İstanbul bombing, he does not refer to any published document from the Dashnak archives, but acknowledges some important facts:

“The Smyrna projects were to blow up banks and bridges, burn the custom house, occupy the consulate and so on; in other words, to attack European interests [my emphasis] so as to oblige the Powers to concentrate on the Armenian question.”⁴⁶

These words confirm the project to destroy the Crédit Lyonnais and more generally the radically anti-European dimension of the plot, the foolish dream to “force” the main powers of the time to do what the ARF expected them to do. Incidentally, it may be noticed that a staunch supporter of the “Armenian cause” wrote that the ARF and the ASALA committed “absurd crimes” with the hope to “blackmail” the major powers in the 1980s. It was born from an “illusion” and a “lack of maturity combined with political weakness.”⁴⁷ An Armenian political scientist, quoting these words with approbation, even uses the term “cretinism.”⁴⁸

44 “Lettre du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires”, 19 août 1905, *AMAE*, P 16 737.

45 “Lettres du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires étrangères”, 11 et 19 septembre 1905, *ibid.*

46 Hratch Dasnabedian, *History of the...*, p. 77, n. 39.

47 Jacques Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge: The Armenian Assassination of Turkish Leaders Responsible for the 1915 Massacres and Deportations*, Rutgers (NJ): Transaction Publishers, 1990, p. 201.

48 Gaidz Minassian, *Guerre et terrorisme...*, p. 129.

In July 1906, the trial of the conspirators took place. Three were sentenced to death in absentia, eighteen to hard labor for life, six to three years of hard labor, seven to one year in jail and twenty-three were acquitted by lack of evidence. Only two months after this trial, three Armenians were arrested, in possession of documents proving they were sent to establish a new revolutionary organization in İzmir.⁴⁹ An official report of the ARF says that the operations conducted by the Ottoman police in 1905, within İzmir vilayeti, caused “irreparable losses.” It was, explains the document, one of the two major blows for the Dashnaks, the other one being the discovery of the ARF’s stocks of explosives and weapons in Van in 1908.⁵⁰

III) The dismembering of the Dashnak network in Van

A) Davit the informer

Although there are many primary sources and several studies including developments⁵¹ on the Van affair in 1908, it remains little known, even among the specialists of Ottoman history.

For instance, Donald Quataert, in a development criticizing the “Armenian genocide” label speaks (very shortly) about the “massacres of Armenians” in Van, in 1908.⁵² In his very interesting book on *Ottomans and Armenians*, Edward J. Erickson does not devote a single line to this affair.

The beginning of this entire affair was the betrayal of Davit Dehertzi, one of the most promising members of the ARF in Van, at the beginning of 1908. Davit’s decision to go to the Ottoman side is explained in some sources by “a story worthy of romance novel” (Davit wanted to marry an Armenian girl but the leader of the ARF in Van, Aram Manoukian, had a similar design for the same person)⁵³ and in others by the rape of Davit’s fiancée by Manoukian, who took profit from Davit’s trip in Iran.⁵⁴ Considering the huge number of rapes

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49 Lettres du consul général de France à Smyrne à l’ambassadeur et au ministre des Affaires étrangères, 27 juillet et 15 septembre 1906, AMAE, P 16 737.

50 Mikael Varandian, *Rapport présenté au...*, pp. 16-17.

51 See Justin McCarthy and alii, *The Armenian Rebellion...*, pp. 126-127, n. 172 for a list of British and Ottoman primary sources, as well as bibliographical references.

52 Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, New York-Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 186.

53 Justin McCarthy and alii, *The Armenian Rebellion...*, p. 111.

54 Kapriel Serope Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted...*, p. 69.

committed by Armenian revolutionaries during the Van insurrection, and by Armenian volunteers in different places of eastern Anatolia, I am inclined to accept the second explanation. Anyway, the fact is that Davit Dehertzi went, at the beginning of 1908, to the office of the Ottoman governor of Van, Ali Rıza Paşa, seeking his revenge.

On February 4, 1908, Davit led the Ottoman soldiers to the monastery Sourp Krikor, ten kilometers from Van, where “283 boxes of cartridges” were found. On February 5 and 6, Davit’s information caused the discovery of “300 pieces of dynamite and several caches of weapons,” containing, according to the French Consul, “360 rifles and handguns, and 300,000 cartridges.” Also on February 5, Sebouk, one of the Dashnak leaders in Van, was found and killed during a clash with the Ottoman military. On February 6, a new, bigger clash erupted between a gang of sixty Dashnaks and the Ottoman forces; the next day, “the revolutionaries occupied a part of” Van. Six days later, “tranquility was restored in Van” and the clashes had “no consequences,” “thanks to the wisdom and moderation of authorities.” On March 23, the revolutionaries attacked once again, murdering Davit; about sixty Armenians were killed by the infuriated populace in reprisal, but the military governor “stopped the massacre almost at its beginning.”⁵⁵ Davit, who had converted to Islam, had left the house where he was hidden for the first time in almost two months; his Dashnak murderer, Dacat Terlimazian, killed eight Muslims to protect his attempt to flee—successfully.⁵⁶

“Three battalions of regular troops” were sent to restore the tranquility and the vali had “the best intentions.”⁵⁷ Considering the exasperation of the Muslim population and the popularity of Davit among both Turks and Kurds, it is remarkable that the Ottoman authorities were able to block the extent of reprisals against the Armenian civilians, unlike in the same vilayet in 1896 or in several other places of Anatolia in 1895.

B) The second wave of denunciations

The aftermath is even less known than the story of Davit itself. Indeed, “quietly (*dans le calme*),” without any resistance from the Dashnaks, and thanks to “numerous denunciations,” the Ottoman forces seized in May

55 “Lettre de l’ambassadeur de France au ministère des Affaires étrangères”, 2 avril 1908, *AMAE*, P 16742. Also see the report of the British Vice-Consul in Van, February 9, 1908, in Muammer Demirel (ed.), *British Documents on...*, pp. 477-483.

56 Justin McCarthy and alii, *The Armenian Rebellion...*, p. 112.

57 “Lettre de l’ambassadeur de France au ministère des Affaires étrangères”, 2 avril 1908, *AMAE*, P 16742.

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“100 war weapons, 100,000 cartridges, 300 kg of dynamite, a lot of powder, and the archives of the [Dashnak] revolutionary committee; in the villages, about 300 war weapons; few of them were freely given by their owners [hoping for the indulgence of the authorities]. One hundred persons have been arrested. [...] Since March 25, the peaceful inhabitants of the region are unmolested. The complaints received by Your Excellency from the Armenian Committee of Geneva are, for a great part, unjustified; they are based on false allegations and seem motivated by the bitterness of the revolutionaries to see an organization compromised by the searches currently carried out.”⁵⁸

This French document is very important, because it proves the existence of other informers, whose work was equally devastating. It also demonstrates the discouragement of the Dashnaks in Van in May 1908, since they did not oppose resistance this time, unlike in February and March. In the same letter, the chargé d'affaires wrote that if the Ottoman government activities should be “closely followed” by the Powers, it would be unadvised to hinder its actions against the ARF. On June 30, 1908, the same diplomat wrote another letter, praising the “very moderate repression,” that “targets only the revolutionaries” and, on July 19, he wished the Ottoman government “punished both Muslims and Christians,” advocating the destruction of the Dashnak organization and leniency for all the minor actors, whatever their religion or ethnicity. The chargé d'affaires also quoted the Vice-Consul in Van, P. Calvière: “95% of the Christian population was connected, willingly or by force, with the revolutionaries,” who “exerted a true tyranny,” but now, “it is finished” and the gendarmerie has only to look at the caches designated by Armenians themselves.⁵⁹

As a result, it is an error to affirm that “the French, Russian and British consuls in Van and their embassies in İstanbul demanded that a full amnesty be given to all Armenians who had been involved in the concealment of weapons or the murder of Davit and other Muslims. They also demanded that Muslims who killed or threatened Armenians, as well as officials accused of complicity, be tried and punished.”⁶⁰ At least for the French, that is inaccurate and unfair. Similarly, the scope of the discoveries, from February to July 1908, should not be underestimated. The Ottoman government estimated the number of seized bombs to be 5,000⁶¹ and the Dashnaks themselves called these operations a

58 “Lettre du chargé d'affaires au ministère des Affaires étrangères”, 10 juin 1908, *AMAE*, P 16742.

59 *AMAE*, P 16742.

60 Justin McCarthy and alii, *The Armenian Rebellion at...*, p. 114.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 112.

“disaster.”⁶² Had the news from the Young Turk revolution arrived in Van one hour later than they actually arrived, the “disaster” would have been even worse for the ARF. Indeed, Aram Manoukian was finally arrested, sentenced to death and went to the gallows. The news of the Revolution provoked a movement of the mob that saved the boss of the Dashnaks in Van.⁶³

Conclusion

After repeated failures (1896-1904) and as a result of its difficulties in Russia, after 1903, the ARF turned to a mostly terrorist strategy, targeting the sultan himself and the province of İzmir. The remaining guerilla forces and war weapons were mostly concentrated in Van vilayeti. These two goals totally failed, and obtained results absolutely opposed to the wishes of the Dashnaks, who lost several of their leaders, including the most important one, Mikaelian. In addition, the remaining network in Van was virtually destroyed in 1908, on the eve of the Young Turk revolution. The Hamidian police and military were incontrovertibly lucky in all three cases, but their effectiveness cannot be denied, and the most obvious evidence is the absence of reprisals in both in İstanbul and İzmir, and the quasi absence of massacre in Van. Further studies will necessarily refine the findings presented in this paper.

As a result, it is an error to affirm that “the French, Russian and British consuls in Van and their embassies in İstanbul demanded that a full amnesty be given to all Armenians who had been involved in the concealment of weapons or the murder of Davit and other Muslims. They also demanded that Muslims who killed or threatened Armenians, as well as officials accused of complicity, be tried and punished.”

As a result, it appears that the main shortcoming of the Young Turk top leadership was not an excess of violence in 1915, but an excess of self-confidence in 1908: The end of the Hamidian autocracy was supposed to magically make disappear the problems of the Empire. The too-often underestimated extent of the Dashnak despair and weakness in 1908 also incites the re-reading of the 1908-1914 as a period of an extremely intensive reconstruction of the ARF’s network. The ways and methods used during these years are not sufficiently studied.

62 Mikael Varandian, *Rapport présenté au...*, p. 17.

63 «Le nouveau gouverneur de Van», *Le Temps*, 13 août 1915, p. 3, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2422643/f2.zoom.langFR>

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MEMORY LAWS & FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN EUROPE: ANALYSIS OF *PERİNÇEK V. SWITZERLAND* CASE

(AVRUPA'DA HAFIZA YASALARI VE İFADE ÖZGÜRLÜĞÜ
PERİNÇEK-İSVİÇRE DAVASI ANALİZİ)

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Abstract: *This paper asks whether the current trend of the adoption of new memory laws in Europe is compatible with the existing international, regional and national human rights norms on the freedom of expression. The paper will also try to find answers for the following sub-questions: i) What is the current situation in terms of memory laws in the leading EU states, namely Germany, France and Spain? What are the striking points of the relevant decisions of the Constitutional Courts in these countries? ii) Should there be a joint combat against negationism in Europe? Is the Framework Decision successful, so far, to meet the expectations in this regard? iii) How do the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) approach to the balance the penalization of negationism and the protection of freedom of speech? Is there any evolution in their methods? iv) Context-based or content-based limitations, which one should be invoked on the issue of negationism? v) Did the Perinçek judgment bring any novelty for the ECtHR jurisprudence? This research presents a theoretical legal study aiming to analyze the current trend of the criminalization of the negationism in Europe in the light of the relevant international, regional and national provisions. Due to its limited scope, the research will only cover the anti-negationist laws in Europe. In this regard, among several international and regional bodies, the HRC and the ECtHR are at the hearth of the analysis since both of them have a binding power on all European countries with regard to the freedom of expression.*

Keywords: *European Court of Human Rights, Human Rights Committee, Perinçek case, Negationism, Freedom of Expression*

Öz: *Bu makale, Avrupa'daki mevcut güncel tartışmalar arasında yer alan ve son yıllarda sayıları giderek artmakta olan hafıza yasalarının, ifade*

özgürlüğü konusundaki mevcut uluslararası, bölgesel ve ulusal insan hakları standartlarına aykırılık teşkil edip etmediğini sorgulamaktadır. Ayrıca şu sorulara cevap aramaktadır: i) Almanya, Fransa ve İspanya'nın da aralarında yer aldığı başlıca AB ülkelerindeki hafıza yasalarına ilişkin güncel durum nedir? Bu ülkelerin anayasa mahkemelerinin konuyla ilgili olarak son dönemde aldıkları kararlarda dikkat çeken noktalar nelerdir? ii) Avrupa'da inkârcılığa karşı ortak bir mücadele benimsenmesi mümkün müdür? Geline aşamada AB Çerçeve Kararı'nın beklentileri karşılayabildiği söylenebilir mi? iii) İnsan Hakları Komitesi ve Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi (AİHM), inkârcılığın cezalandırılması ve ifade özgürlüğünün korunması arasındaki hassas dengeye ilişkin nasıl bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir? Geçen süre zarfında sözkonusu organların yaklaşımlarında herhangi bir değişim yaşanmış mıdır? iv) İnkârcılık konusunda bağlam-odaklı ve/veya içerik-odaklı kısıtlamalardan hangisine başvurulmalı? v) Perinçek kararı, AİHM içtihatlarına herhangi bir yenilik getirdi mi?

Teorik ve hukuki nitelikteki bu araştırma, Avrupa'daki inkârcılığın cezalandırılması yönündeki mevcut eğilimin, ilgili uluslararası, bölgesel ve ulusal hükümler ışığında analizini yapmaktadır. Araştırma, bölge olarak sadece Avrupa'daki inkârcılık-karşıtı yasalar ile sınırlandırılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, uluslararası ve bölgesel organlar arasından, ifade özgürlüğü bakımından bütün Avrupa ülkeleri için bağlayıcı etkiye sahip olan İnsan Hakları Komitesi ve AİHM bu analizin merkezinde yer almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi, İnsan Hakları Komitesi, Perinçek davası, İnkârcılık, İfade Özgürlüğü

I. INTRODUCTION

With the adoption of the EU *Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law* in 2008,¹ which aims, among other things, to harmonize the national criminal laws against the negationism of the historical facts including Holocaust, “memory laws” have become more widespread in Europe. The possible chilling effects of memory laws on freedom expression have constituted as a source of concern especially for historians.

Furthermore, in their recent speech-protective decisions, the Spanish and French Constitutional Courts found the laws, which made it a criminal offence to deny the existence of the genocides, unconstitutional on the grounds that these laws are incompatible with freedom of expression.² These judgments stoked the debate on the delicate balance between the penalization of negationism and the protection of freedom of expression, which was dating back to the Nazi atrocities during the World War II.

The paper asks whether the current trend of the adoption of new memory laws in Europe is compatible with the existing international, regional and national human rights norms on the freedom of expression.

With regard to penalization of negationism, two main relevant treaties, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)³ and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR),⁴ foresee some restrictions on the scope of the freedom of expression for certain situations. As the monitoring bodies of these two treaties, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) have an evolving approach for the restriction of hate speech.

In the recent case of *Perinçek v. Switzerland* concerning the criminal conviction of Mr. Perinçek, Chairman of the Turkish Workers’ Party, as a consequence of publicly denying the legal categorization of the alleged massacres and deportations had occurred in the territory of the former Ottoman Empire in 1915 as “genocide”; the Chamber of the ECtHR ruled that

1 Council of the European Union Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, 2008/913/JHA, 28 November 2008.

2 Spanish Constitutional Court’s Judgment, 7 November 2007, No. 235/2007; French Constitutional Council’s Judgment, 28 February 2012, No. 2012-647 DC.

3 International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, 6 I.L.M. 368.

4 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by Protocols Nos. 11 and 14, Nov. 4, 1950, Europ. T.S. No. 5; 213 U.N.T.S. 221.

the Swiss authorities had breached of Article 10 on freedom of expression of the ECHR.⁵ This judgment is not final since the case was referred to the Grand Chamber of the Court at the request of the Swiss authorities. On the other hand, as the first case on the denial of genocide other than Holocaust before the ECtHR, *Perinçek* judgment is important to understand the Court's evolving approach to extend the criminalization of negationism to the historical atrocities other than the Nazi crimes.

The paper asks whether the current trend of the adoption of new memory laws in Europe is compatible with the existing international, regional and national human rights norms on the freedom of expression. The paper will also try to find answers for the following sub-questions:

- i) What is the current situation in terms of memory laws in the leading EU states, namely Germany, France and Spain? What are the striking points of the relevant decisions of the Constitutional Courts in these countries?
- ii) Should there be a joint combat against negationism in Europe? Is the Framework Decision successful, so far, to meet the expectations in this regard?
- iii) How do the HRC and the ECtHR approach to the balance the penalization of negationism and the protection of freedom of speech? Is there any evolution in their methods?
- iv) Context-based or content-based limitations, which one should be invoked on the issue of negationism?
- v) Did the *Perinçek* judgment bring any novelty for the ECtHR jurisprudence?

This research presents a theoretical legal study aiming to analyze the current trend of the criminalization of the negationism in Europe in the light of the relevant international, regional and national provisions. The main research question is evaluative, whereas the sub-questions are descriptive, evaluative and normative in nature.

Relevant and reliable primary and secondary sources were consulted during the research process to find answers for the main research question and other sub-questions. In this regard, international, regional and national legal

5 ECtHR, *Perinçek v. Switzerland*, 17 December 2013, (Appl. no. 27510/08).

documents, first and foremost the rulings of ICCPR, the ECHR and the Framework Decision was used as primary sources. Additionally, the jurisprudences of the HRC and the ECtHR and the case-law of domestic judicial organs, in particular the German, French and Spanish Constitutional Courts' relevant judgments were also invoked as primary sources. These sources were selected on the basis of their relevancy and binding nature. The paper also refers to legal academic literature, such as books, journal articles, fact sheets, reports and background papers of expert seminars, as secondary sources. The secondary sources were also selected with regard to their relevance, trustworthiness, updated nature and availability. All consulted sources were cited in accordance with the determined citation method and were listed at the bibliography section.

Due to its limited scope, the research will only cover the anti-negationist laws in Europe. In this regard, among several international and regional bodies, the HRC and the ECtHR are at the hearth of the analysis since both of them have a binding power on all European countries with regard to the freedom of expression. As another limitation on the scope, only the German, French and Spanish laws will be elaborated in the national legislations and case-law section. These three countries have been chosen not randomly, but due to several underlying reasons. Firstly, all three of them are members of both the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU). Furthermore, their domestic legal authorities have ruled important decisions on memory laws, which constitute the key elements of the European jurisprudence on this issue. Moreover, their national provisions were used as base during the drafting procedure of the Framework Decision. Additionally, as the perpetrator of Holocaust, Germany is the pioneering state in the criminalization of genocide denial with its comprehensive legislation and jurisprudence. As for France and Spain, in the *Perinçek* judgment, the ECtHR made references to the recent striking decisions of their Constitutional Courts, which outlawed the criminalization of the negation.

Section II of this paper will examine the national anti-negationist legislations of Germany, France and Spain, respectively. This section will specifically elaborate the relevant rulings of the Constitutional Courts of these three countries. Section III will look at the initiatives to form a unified European approach against negationism under the Framework Decision. After that, the evolving approaches of the HRC and the ECtHR on the restriction of freedom of expression will be analyzed in Section IV. Then, Section V of the paper will focus on the recent *Perinçek* judgment of the ECtHR to determine whether it brought any novelty to the Court's approach. Lastly, Section VI concludes the paper by summarizing the findings of this research.

II. NATIONAL APPROACHES ON MEMORY LAWS

In this section, the German, French and Spanish national legislations and case-laws on the criminalization of the negationism will be elaborated. As already mentioned in Section I, these states have not been selected randomly. They have an important impact on the penalization trend in Europe.

A. Germany

As the “perpetrator-state” of Holocaust, Germany has one of the most comprehensive legislations against the negationism in Europe. These relevant German laws also constitute the basis of similar ones in the other European countries. Therefore, in order to understand the background of the anti-denialism in the region, the German system should be analyzed.

The approach of Germany on the issue of the penalization of the negationism was shaped by the effects of the dark history of the Third Reich and its constitutional conception of freedom expression which is based on the fundamental values such as human dignity and the constitutional interests namely honor and personality.⁶

There are several provisions dealing with the issue of the “Auschwitz lie” (*Auschwitzlüge*) under the German Penal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch*).⁷ In 1985, Section 130 of the Code was adopted to criminalize incitement to hatred against segments of the population and attack on the human dignity.⁸ The first regulation explicitly referring the criminalization of the Holocaust denial was inserted as Section 130(3) in 1994. This provision foresees the imprisonment for people who “publicly or in a meeting approves of, denies or renders harmless an act committed under the rule of National Socialism ... in a manner capable of disturbing the public peace”.⁹ Additionally, in 2005, Section 130(4) was introduced to make stronger the combat against Auschwitz

6 Rosenfeld, M., “Hate speech in constitutional jurisprudence: a comparative analysis.” *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol:24, 2002, pp. 1523-1567, at p. 1548.

7 The so-called concept of “Auschwitz lie” (*Auschwitzlüge*) refers to the negationism in Germany, which is based on the denial of the existence of gas chambers in Auschwitz camps.

8 Section 130 of the German Criminal Code states that: “Whoever, in a manner that is capable of disturbing the public peace: 1. incites hatred against segments of the population or calls for violent or arbitrary measures against them; or 2. assaults the human dignity of others by insulting, maliciously maligning, or defaming segments of the population, shall be punished with imprisonment from three months to five years.” (German Criminal Code in the version promulgated on 13 November 1998, Federal Law Gazette [Bundesgesetzblatt] I, p. 3322, last amended by Article 3 of the Law of 2 October 2009, Federal Law Gazette I, p. 3214).

9 *Ibidem*, Section 130(3).

lie: “Whoever, publicly or at a meeting, disturbs the public peace in a manner that violates the dignity of the victims by approving of, glorifying, or justifying National Socialist rule of arbitrary force shall be liable to imprisonment of not more than three years or a fine.”¹⁰

These provisions only cover the Nazi crimes and not mention the other genocides or grave crimes. Furthermore, in addition to the denial of crimes, these laws also prohibit their approval, glorification or justification. As seen from the above-mentioned legislations, the denial or trivialization of the Nazi crimes can only be punished under the condition that these conducts are carried out “in a manner capable of disturbing the public peace”.¹¹

On the other hand, Article 5 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) provides broadened protection for the freedom of expression, whereas it states that this right is not absolute.¹² In this regard, according to Article 5(2), the limitations on freedom of expression are set out “in the provisions of general statutes, in statutory provisions for the protection of the youth, and in the right to personal honour”.¹³

The delicate relation between the freedom of expression and the denial of Holocaust was elaborated by the German Constitutional Court in the *Auschwitz Lie* case in 1994.¹⁴ A far right political party had invited David Irving, a well-known revisionist British historian, to address that the persecution of Jews during the Third Reich is a big lie.¹⁵ The government had permitted the meeting on the condition that Irving would not give a denialist speech.¹⁶ Claiming the violation of freedom of speech, the far right party took judicial action against this governmental decision. After the rejection of this application by the trial court, the party submitted a complaint to the Constitutional Court.¹⁷

10 *Ibidem*, Section 130(4).

11 *Ibidem*, Section 130(3).

12 Article 5(1) of the Basic Law states that: “Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions in speech, writing, and pictures and to inform himself without hindrance from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by means of broadcasts and films shall be guaranteed. There shall be no censorship (German Basic Law, 23 May 1949, BGBl. I, Federal Law Gazette Part III, as amended through Dec. 20, 1993, classification number 100-1, as last amended by the Act of 21 July 2010 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 944)).

13 *Ibidem*, Article 5(2).

14 German Constitutional Court, *Auschwitzlüge (Holocaust Lie) Case*, 13 April 1994, No. BVerfGE 90, 241.

15 *Ibidem*, at para. A(I)(1).

16 *Ibidem*, at para. A(I)(2).

17 *Ibidem*, at paras. A(I)(4) and (II)(1).

The Constitutional Court shared the views of trial court.¹⁸ In the merits of the judgment, the Court made a distinction between statement of facts and opinion. Accordingly, opinions are marked by its subjective relationship to its content.¹⁹ They are personal assessments of a matter or value judgments, whereas factual assertions are characterized by an objective relationship between the utterance and reality.²⁰ Thus, the protective scope of Article 5 of the Basic Law covers freedom of opinions, but not factual statements that are indisputably untrue.²¹ The Court is of the opinion that Holocaust denial is assessed under the latter category, thus not protected by Article 5(1).²² According to Pech, the Court's interpretation is not completely persuasive, since the distinction between opinions and factual statements is of subjective nature.²³ He asserted that this distinction confronts a long-established understanding of the concept of opinion and the Court's recommendations for the ordinary courts to approach touchy expressions, as much as possible, in a non-punishable manner.²⁴

B. France

In 1990, the French Parliament adopted the so-called *loi Gayssot* (Gayssot Law), which was added as Article 24*bis* into the 1881 Freedom of the Press law.²⁵ This law makes it punishable to “contest” the existence of crimes against humanity as defined in the Statute of the Nuremberg Tribunal.²⁶ Article 24*bis* covers only the Nazi crimes with a *ratione temporis* between 1939 and 1945. The term “contester” (to contest), which was used instead of “nier” (to deny) in this Article, broadened the restriction on freedom of expression.²⁷ Thus, this wider language has paved the way for greater discretion of the legal authorities.

18 *Ibidem*, at para. B(II)(2).

19 *Ibidem*, at para. B(II)(1).

20 *Idem*.

21 *Idem*.

22 *Idem*.

23 Pech, L. “The law of Holocaust denial in Europe: towards a (qualified) EU-wide criminal prohibition.” *Jean Monnet Working Paper* Vol. 10/09, 2009, available at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1536078, at p. 13.

24 *Idem*.

25 Article 24*bis* of the French Freedom of the Press Law, 29 July 1881 as amended by Law No. 90-615, 13 July 1990.

26 *Idem*.

27 Pech, at p.16.

Furthermore, according to the Gayssot Law, the simple conduct of contestation of established facts can be prosecuted without any additional requirement, such as incitement to hatred or violence, or a manner set out under Article 1(2) of the Framework Decision: namely likely to disturb public order or which is threatening, abusive or insulting. Thus, the Gayssot Law provides a power for a pure “content-based” restriction on freedom of expression.²⁸ According to the French courts, there are several legal justifications behind this content-based restrictions: the deniers with an anti-Semitic intent may harm the reputation and honor of the Jews as well as pose a real and present danger to the French constitutional order.²⁹

In line with the decision of the major political parties in the Parliament, the Gayssot Law was not reviewed by the French Constitutional Council (*Conseil Constitutionnel*) before its ratification. Nevertheless, the national courts as well as the HRC and the ECtHR have examined the legality and compatibility of this Law with the ICCPR and the ECHR, respectively. Among these analyses, which will be elaborated *infra*, the decision of the HRC concerning the well-known Holocaust denier Faurisson is one of the most comprehensive and guiding ones.³⁰ In several separate opinions attached to this decision, the potential threats of the widest language of the Gayssot Law were elaborated.³¹

On the other hand, the criticisms concerning the limited scope of this Law, which only deals with the Nazi crimes, paved the way for the initiatives to extend it to other historical facts. In this regard, in 2001, France approved a law recognizing the “Armenian genocide” without any reference to the punishment for its denial.³² In the same year, another law (*loi Taubira*) was passed to acknowledge the slave trade as a crime against humanity.³³ The adoption of the controversial “*loi Mekachera*” in 2005, which required school courses to promote “the positive aspects of the French presence overseas especially in North Africa”,³⁴ sparked public reaction against the “*lois*

28 *Ibidem*, at p.17.

29 *Ibidem*, at pp.21-22.

30 HRC, *Faurisson v. France*, 16 December 1996, No. CCPR/C/58/D/ 550/1993.

31 *Ibidem*, Individual opinion by Nisuke Ando, para. 1; Individual opinion by Elizabeth Evatt and David Kretzmer, co-signed by Eckart Klein, at para. 9; Individual opinion by Rajsoomer Lallah, at paras. 6-7; Individual opinion by Cecilia Medina Quiroga, at para. 2.

32 French Law No. 2001-70 concerning the recognition of the Armenian genocide of 1915, 29 January 2001.

33 French Law No. 2001-434 concerning the recognition slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity, 21 May 2001.

34 Article 4 of the French Law No. 2005-158 of concerning the gratitude of the Nation and the national contribution for the benefit of repatriated French citizens, 23 February 2005.

35 French Law No. 2006-160, *Loi Mekachera*, 15 February 2006.

mémorielles” (memory laws) in France. Thus, in 2006, the Constitutional Council repealed this part of *loi Mekachera*.³⁵ Furthermore, in the same year the National Assembly adopted another bill which foresees the imprisonment for the denial of the Armenian genocide.³⁶ However, after a long waiting-period it was rejected by the French Senate on 4 May 2011.³⁷

Finally, within the framework of the attempts to extend the Gayssot Law to the Armenian genocide, the “Law to punish the denial of the existence of genocides recognized by the law” (*loi Boyer*) was approved by both Chambers of the Parliament in 2012.³⁸ By amending Article 24*bis*, this law aimed to penalize “the denial or grossly trivialization” of several genocides (including the Armenian genocide) acknowledged as such under French law.³⁹ However, on 28 February 2012 the Constitutional Council declared this law unconstitutional.⁴⁰ In its decision, even though the Council admitted that the Parliament is free to adopt necessary regulations on the freedom of expression, including criminalization option, it also reminded that the exercise of this freedom is a “precondition for democracy and one of the guarantees of respect for other rights and freedoms; that the restrictions imposed on the exercise of this freedom must be necessary, appropriate and proportional having regard to the objective pursued.”⁴¹

Furthermore, as one of the most striking and controversial parts of the decision, the Council ruled that a provision aiming to recognize a crime of genocide is not of “normative” nature.⁴² In other words, even though such provisions are formally adopted by the legislative organs, as carrying political values, they do not have normative character like laws. In this context, the Council decided that the penalization of the denial of the existence of crimes recognized by the legislative organs constitutes an unconstitutional restriction on the freedom of expression; thus, *loi Boyer* was found unconstitutional.⁴³ As one of the cornerstones for memory laws in France, the decision implicitly closed the doors for the adoption of new laws aiming to punish the negation of genocide, which is recognized by the Parliament.

36 French National Assembly, Bill No. 1021 adopted on 12 October 2006.

37 French Senate, Motion No. 1, presented by Jean-Jacques Hiest on behalf of the Committee on Laws, designed to oppose the motion to dismiss the bill punishing the denial of the Armenian Genocide, Vote No.200, 4 May 2011.

38 French Law on the punishment of denials of the existence of genocides recognised by law, 31 January 2012.

39 *Ibidem*, Article 1.

40 French Constitutional Council’s Judgment, 28 February 2012, No. 2012-647 DC

41 *Ibidem*, at para. 5.

42 *Ibidem*, at para. 6.

43 *Idem*.

C. Spain

With an amendment adopted in 1995, a provision on negationism was incorporated to the Spanish Penal Code.⁴⁴ According to Article 607(2) of the Code, the dissemination through any means of ideas or doctrines that “deny” or “justify” the genocide crimes or that aim to reinstate regimes or institutions that shelter practices contributive of those crimes is punished with a sentence of imprisonment from one to two years.⁴⁵

This provision was first applied in a case against Pedro Varela Geiss, a neo-Nazi activist and owner of a bookshop, which sold, among other things, Holocaust denial publications.⁴⁶ In 1998, Geis was convicted under Article 607(2) of the Penal Code for the denial and justification of genocide as well as under Article 510(1) for the incitement to racial hatred and received a prison sentence and a fine.⁴⁷ He appealed the ruling before the Barcelona Provincial Court of Appeal, which referred it to the Spanish Constitutional Court in 2000 to seek as to whether his sentence might run counter to one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, namely freedom of expression.⁴⁸ In an extensive and contested judgment dated 7 November 2007, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the genocide “denial” offence referred in Article 607(2) of the Code.⁴⁹

In the merits of the judgment, the Court clarified the Spanish constitutional system, which is based on the broadest assurance of the fundamental rights, and distinguished it from the militant democracies.⁵⁰ According to the Court, the value of pluralism and the necessity of the free exchange of ideas as the cornerstone of the representative democratic system prevent any activity of the public powers aiming to “control, select, or seriously determine the mere dissemination of ideas or doctrines”.⁵¹ Thus, the freedom of expression cannot be restricted on the grounds that it serves for the diffusion of ideas or opinions contrary to the Constitution unless these effectively harm the rights of constitutional relevance.⁵² In its judgment, the Court also referred the

44 Spanish Criminal Code, Organic Act 10/1995, 24 November 1995.

45 *Ibidem*, Article 607(2).

46 ECtHR, *Varela Geis v. Spain*, Press Release issued by the Registrar of the Court, ECHR 067 (2013), 05 March 2013, at p.1.

47 *Idem*.

48 *Idem*.

49 *Spanish Constitutional Court's Judgment, 7 November 2007, No. 235/2007*, at para. 9.

50 *Ibidem*, at para. 4.

51 *Idem*.

52 *Idem*.

jurisprudence of the ECtHR on the restriction of the freedom of expression and underlined that in the Spanish constitutional system there is no provision similar to Article 17 ECHR.⁵³

Furthermore, in the merits, the Constitutional Court made a clear distinction between the concepts of *denial* and *justification* of genocide. According to the Court, the *denial* is “the mere expression of a point of view on specific acts, sustaining that they either did not occur or were not perpetrated in a manner which could categorize them as genocide”; whereas the *justification* “does not imply total denial of the existence of the specific crime of genocide, but relativises it or denies its unlawfulness, based on certain identification with the authors”.⁵⁴

In conclusion, the Spanish Constitutional Court ruled that mere denial of genocide, including Holocaust, cannot be criminalized since the dissemination of ideas or opinions, even they are contrary to the essence of the Constitution, are protected by the freedom of expression provisions of the Constitution.

The Court also rejected the Public Prosecutor’s views that the denial of genocide objectively pursues the creation of a social climate of hostility against the genocide victims, in this case the Jewish community.⁵⁵ According to the judgment, the mere denial does not suppose direct incitement to violence and not constitute a potential danger for the legal rights protected by the regulation in question.⁵⁶ Furthermore, it clarified that simple spreading views regarding the (in)existence of specific facts, without any value judgment, falls within the scope of scientific freedom under Article 20(1)(b) of

the Constitution.⁵⁷ This freedom enjoyed greater protection in the Constitution than the freedom of expression and information.⁵⁸ Thus, the inclusion of the concept “denial of genocide” to the text assumes violation of the right to freedom of expression under Article 20(1) of the Constitution.⁵⁹

On the other hand, the Court asserted that the justification of genocide poses a special threat to the society.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the justification operates as an

53 *Ibidem*, at para. 5.

54 *Ibidem*, at para. 7.

55 *Ibidem*, at para. 8.

56 *Idem*.

57 *Idem*.

58 *Idem*.

59 *Idem*.

60 *Ibidem*, at para 9.

indirect incitement to the perpetration; thus, it can be criminalized.⁶¹ According to the dissenting judges, this judgment is in contradiction with the European initiatives, in particular the Framework Decision.⁶² These judges also criticized the Court's approach, which made a distinction between the denial and justification of genocide.

In conclusion, the Spanish Constitutional Court ruled that mere denial of genocide, including Holocaust, cannot be criminalized since the dissemination of ideas or opinions, even they are contrary to the essence of the Constitution, are protected by the freedom of expression provisions of the Constitution. Even though the judgment clarified the Court's previous opinions on the freedom of expression concerning the historical facts, it constitutes one of the surprising recent decisions on negationism in Europe with a striking timing. The Court decriminalized the denial of genocide in a period when the European countries were trying to approximate their criminal laws with regard to the penalization of these conducts. That is why some judges touched upon the inconsistency of this judgment with the EU Framework Decision in their dissenting opinions. The Court's reasons behind this judgment is also noteworthy, since it compared the Spanish legal system with the militant democracies and elaborated why the restrictions like under Article 17 ECHR cannot be applied in Spain. Last but not least, the fact that the ECtHR has already referred this judgment in its decisions on the negationism cases⁶³ also indicates how it is an important development for the freedom of expression.

III. ATTEMPTS FOR A UNIFIED COMBAT AGAINST NEGATIONISM

The European institutions, including the EU and the Council of Europe, have adopted several legislations to harmonize the national anti-negationism laws. This Section firstly will touch upon the previous attempts in Europe in this regard, namely the *EU Joint Action to Combat Racism and Xenophobia*,⁶⁴ and *Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, Concerning the Criminalisation of Acts of a Racist and Xenophobic Nature Committed through Computer Systems*.⁶⁵ After that, the EU Framework Decision will be at the hearth of the analysis on a unified approach against negationism within the EU.

61 *Idem*.

62 *Ibidem*, Dissenting vote lodged by Senior Judge Jorge Rodríguez-Zapata Pérez, at para. 2.

63 ECtHR, *Perinçek v. Switzerland*.

64 EU Council, Joint Action to combat racism and xenophobia, No. 96/443/JHA, 15 July 1996.

65 Council of Europe, Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, ETS No. 189, 28 January 2003.

A. Earlier Attempts for the Harmonization

a. *Joint Action to Combat Racism and Xenophobia*

Within the framework of the initiatives of the European institutions to establish an effective judicial cooperation between the EU Member States in order to combat racism and xenophobia, a *Joint Action* was adopted in 1996. This non-binding document contains the provisions of the criminalization of, among other conducts, the denialism.⁶⁶ In this context, the Joint Action constitutes the first step of the EU in the harmonization of the penalization of the negationism.

With regard to the historical facts, the document consists of two criminal acts, namely “condoning” and “denial”. The former is intended for all crimes against humanity and human rights violations; whereas the latter one is only for the crimes established in the Nuremberg Tribunal Charter.⁶⁷ In other words, the Joint Action distinguished the Nazi crimes with the other historical facts by penalizing the denialism only for Holocaust.

On the other hand, the text narrowed the scope of these offences with additional requirements. In this context, the Joint Action set forth the punishment for condoning of crimes against humanity and human rights violations only in case such act is committed “for a racist or xenophobic purpose”.⁶⁸ However, as regards to the denial of the Nazi crimes, the punishment can only be possible when this act “includes behaviour which is contemptuous of, or degrading to, a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, religion or national or ethnic origin”.⁶⁹ Thus, according to the

66 The relevant part of the Joint Action stipulates that

“TITLE I - A. *In the interest of combating racism and xenophobia, each Member State shall undertake, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Title II, to ensure effective judicial cooperation in respect of offences based on the following types of behaviour; and, if necessary for the purposes of that cooperation, either to take steps to see that such behaviour is punishable as a criminal offence or, failing that, and pending the adoption of any necessary provisions, to derogate from the principle of double criminality for such behaviour:*

...

(b) *public condoning, for a racist or xenophobic purpose, of crimes against humanity and human rights violations;*

(c) *public denial of the crimes defined in Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal appended to the London Agreement of 8 April 1945 insofar as it includes behaviour which is contemptuous of, or degrading to, a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, religion or national or ethnic origin;*”.

67 *Ibidem*, paras. Title I (A)(a) and (b).

68 *Ibidem*, para. Title I (A)(a).

69 *Ibidem*, para. Title I (A)(b).

text, mere condoning or denial does not constitute an offence. Even though the text seems to limit the borders of these offences, it provides discretionary power to Member States in deciding these additional requirements.

b. Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime

In addition to the EU attempts, the Council of Europe also started an initiative in combating against racism, xenophobia and denialism in 2008 by adopting the *Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, Concerning the Criminalisation of Acts of a Racist and Xenophobic Nature Committed through Computer Systems*. The Additional Protocol deals with, among other issues, the negationism in Article 6 which foresees the punishment of the distribution of material, through a computer system, consisting the denial, gross minimization, approval or justification of genocide or crimes against humanity as defined by international law and recognized by the Nuremberg Tribunal or of any other international court.⁷⁰ In this regard, it is a unique treaty which specifically requires the criminalization of the act of denying Holocaust or any other genocide or crimes against humanity.⁷¹ Furthermore, this Article brought a novelty to the international human rights treaty law by for the first time extending the scope of the offence to genocides other than Holocaust.⁷²

According to the Additional Protocol, the State Parties can enjoy an enlarged discretion to punish mere criminal conducts or limit the scope of the

70 Article 6 of the Additional Protocol states that:

“1. Each Party shall adopt such legislative measures as may be necessary to establish the following conduct as criminal offences under its domestic law, when committed intentionally and without right: distributing or otherwise making available, through a computer system to the public, material which denies, grossly minimises, approves or justifies acts constituting genocide or crimes against humanity, as defined by international law and recognised as such by final and binding decisions of the International Military Tribunal, established by the London Agreement of 8 August 1945, or of any other international court established by relevant international instruments and whose jurisdiction is recognised by that Party.

2. A Party may either

a. require that the denial or the gross minimisation referred to in paragraph 1 of this article is committed with the intent to incite hatred, discrimination or violence against any individual or group of individuals, based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, as well as religion if used as a pretext for any of these factors, or otherwise

b. reserve the right not to apply, in whole or in part, paragraph 1 of this article.”

71 Pech, L., at p.40.

72 McGonagle T., “International and European Legal Standards for Combating Racist Expression: Selected Current Conundrums,” in The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), *Expert Seminar: Combating Racism While Respecting Freedom of Expression*, Strasbourg, 16-17 November 2006, 2007, pp. 42-44, at p. 86.

criminalization of the conducts committed with the intent to incite hatred, discrimination or violence, or otherwise to reserve the right not to apply, in whole or in part, Article 6(1).⁷³ Thus, a State Party has an opportunity to totally ignore this Article. Despite these wide-range options with regard to the application of this provision, the ratification of the Additional Protocol is still at low-level.⁷⁴ This situation is a clear indication for the extent of the disagreement between countries and difficulty in the joint struggle against the negationism.

B. Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia

Within the context of the harmonization of the criminal law on Holocaust denial, in 2001 the European Commission proposed a draft for a *Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia*, with an objective to replace the Joint Action.⁷⁵ After a long negotiation process, the agreement between Member States could be realized in 2007 and the Framework Decision was adopted on 28 November 2008. This seven-year period indicated once again the extent of the controversy in the issue of denialism. The content of the Decision goes beyond of the scope of this paper, thus only its relevant parts concerning the negationism will be elaborated *infra*.

With the adoption of the Framework Decision, the list of offences referred in the Joint Action was expanded. According to Article 1(1) of the Decision, Member State shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the acts of publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivializing following intentional conducts are punishable: (i) genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined in the Statute of the International Criminal Court,⁷⁶ (ii) the crimes defined in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal.⁷⁷ In the first draft submitted by the Commission, the penalization of the denial or grossly trivialization only covered the Nazi crimes.⁷⁸ During the negotiation process, this situation

73 Article 6 (2) of the Additional Protocol.

74 As of 10 July 2014, only 20 members of the Council of Europe (total number 47) have ratified the Protocol including eight states put declarations or reservations on Article 6

(Source: Council of Europe Treaty Office, available at:

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=189&CM=8&DF=27/06/2014&CL=ENG>).

75 Commission Proposal for a Council Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, at 2, COM (2001) 664 final (Nov. 29, 2001) [hereinafter Commission Proposal], available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0664:FIN:EN:PDF>

76 Article 1(1)(c) of the Framework Decision.

77 *Ibidem*, Article 1(1)(d).

78 Article 4(1)(d) of the Commission Proposal.

was highly criticized by the Baltic States which propose to include publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivializing the crimes committed by Communist regime to the Framework Decision and to provide an equal treatment both for the Nazi and Communist crimes.⁷⁹ However, the Baltic States were not successful to put a direct reference of the Communist crimes to the final text, in which the scope of the crimes was broadened to all grave international crimes defined by the Rome Statute,⁸⁰ while a “special” provision was reserved for Holocaust.⁸¹ On the other hand, the attempts of the Baltic States could only bring about the statement of the EU Council regarding its regret on the crimes of all totalitarian regimes in the declaration attached to the Framework Decision.⁸²

On the other hand, the broadened scope of the crimes set out under Article 1(1)(c) and (d) was the other main reason for the years-long delay of the adoption of the Framework Decision. Some countries did not agree on the draft text due to their concerns regarding its impacts on the freedom of expression.⁸³ In order to resolve this impasse, several concessions on the punishment of negationism were accepted. In this context, Articles 1(1)(c) and (d) require some restrictions for the penalization of the public condoning, denial or trivialization of above-mentioned crimes. Accordingly, these conducts can only be criminalized when they are “directed against a group persons or a member of a such group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin” and “carried out in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred”.⁸⁴

In addition to this requirement, several optional limitations are presented under Article 1. In this regard, the Member States are free to rule out these options to their national legal systems. Accordingly, Article 1(2) makes possible to punish simple conduct, which (i) is carried out in a manner likely to disturb public order or (ii) is threatening, abusive or insulting.⁸⁵ The former

79 Council of the European Union, Brussels, 26 November 2008, 16351/1/08 REV 1 DROIPEN 94, Annex, Statements to be entered in the minutes of the Council at the time of adoption of the Framework Decision.

80 Article 1(1)(c) of the Framework Decision.

81 Pech, L. at p.46.

82 Annex, Statements to be entered in the minutes of the Council at the time of adoption of the Framework Decision.

83 Knechtle, J.C., “Holocaust denial and the concept of dignity in the European Union.” *Florida State University Law Review*, Vol. 36, 2008, at pp 52-56, at p.44

84 Articles 1(1)(c) and (d) of the Framework Decision.

85 *Ibidem*, Article 1(2).

condition was inspired by the German legal system,⁸⁶ whereas the latter one by the British system.⁸⁷ According to Pech, the first condition was not inserted into the text in favor of the Member States, which are unwilling to prosecute the denialism, on the contrary, it facilitated “militant democracies” to maintain the penalization of the negationism when harms collective interests instead of individual interests.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the terms “likely” and “public order” are not clearly defined in the text; thus, the Member States are permitted to decide when a negation becomes “likely to disturb public order”.⁸⁹

As regards to another optional restriction, Member States can make punishable the denial or grossly trivialization of the crimes referred in paragraph (1)(c) and (d) only if they have been established by a final decision of a national or/and an international court.⁹⁰ This optional restriction does not cover the act of condoning. This provision, drawn from the French system,⁹¹ was not found both in the first draft and in the Joint Action. Pech deemed this provision as a positive development, since it makes possible that the national or international courts, rather than the legislative bodies, can determine whether a conduct is legally described as genocide.⁹² On the other hand, this clause is also criticized on the grounds that it brings about unequal treatment towards different victim-groups.⁹³ For instance, even though the Nazi crimes, established by the Nuremberg Tribunal, were included in the scope of the clause, the negationism on the Armenian issue is excluded on the grounds that it has never been judged by a court.⁹⁴ Furthermore, by accepting the final decisions of the national courts, this provision also paved the way for distinctive categorizations of an event in different countries.

86 According to the statement by Germany in the minutes of Council: “Germany assumes in particular that, for the purposes of implementation, the term “öffentliche Friede” as used in the relevant corresponding provisions of German criminal law is covered by the term “public order” as employed in Article 1 paragraph 2 of the Framework Decision” (Council of the European Union, Interinstitutional File: 2001/0270 (CNS), 15699/1/08 REV 1 DROIPE 91, Brussels, 25 Nov 2008, 5). Explanatory Memorandum, p.8.

87 Article 18(1) of Public Order Act of 1986 stipulates that “a person who uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or displays any written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting, is guilty of an offence if (a) he intends thereby to stir up racial hatred, or (b) having regard to all the circumstances racial hatred is likely to be stirred up thereby.”

88 Pech, L. at p.47.

89 *Idem*.

90 Article 1(4) of the Framework Decision.

91 Article 9 of the Gayssot Law.

92 Pech, L., at p. 47.

93 Lobba, P., “Punishing Denialism Beyond Holocaust Denial: EU Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA and Other Expansive Trends”, *New Journal of European Criminal Law*, Vol:5.1, 2014, pp. 58-78, at p. 67.

94 *Idem*.

In addition to these restrictions and options, a specific provision on the constitutional rules and fundamental principles was inserted into the Framework Decision during the negotiation process in order to further secure the freedom of expression.⁹⁵ In this regard, Article 7 ensures that the Framework Decision respects the fundamental rights, as enshrined in the EU Treaty, which result from the constitutional traditions or rules of the Member States.⁹⁶ Some scholars found the first paragraph of this Article legally unnecessary on the grounds that as hierarchically subordinate, the framework decisions never prevail over the European constitutive treaties.⁹⁷

Commentary on the Framework Decision

Even though it has been six years after the adoption of the Framework Decision, the necessity of the harmonization of the criminal laws on negationism is still a matter of debate due to the several reasons. Firstly, the wider language of the text can cause arbitrary and chilling effects on freedom of expression. In this regard, the concepts of “condoning” and “grossly trivializing” have very ambiguous limits that make possible for States to adopt relevant criminal laws in line with their national priorities. The relevant EU institutions should clearly determine the scope of these terms with a speech-protective manner in order to prevent hazardous interpretations targeting free speech in different Member States.

Even though it has been six years after the adoption of the Framework Decision, the necessity of the harmonization of the criminal laws on negationism is still a matter of debate due to the several reasons.

Furthermore, this Decision encourages the States to extend the criminalization beyond the Holocaust denial to other grave crimes. The “slippery slope effect” of the Decision has paved the way for new memory laws concerning the still-debated historical atrocities, such as the Armenian massacre and the Ukrainian famine.⁹⁸ These memory laws impose additional restrictions on the freedom of expression of historians, thus negatively affect them to make academic researches on these contentious historical claims.

As another problem, some scholars criticize the prohibition of the Holocaust denial in different countries which Nazism does not have indigenous

95 Article 7 of the Framework Decision.

96 *Idem*.

97 Lobba, P., at p. 67; Pech, L., at p. 49.

98 Pech, L., at p. 50.

background.⁹⁹ According to these scholars, provisions similar to the Framework Decision are more effective and result-oriented when adopted on the national level rather than within the international or regional framework.¹⁰⁰ For instance, the anti-negationist punishments for Holocaust should be applied in countries, which are responsible for these sufferings, such as Germany.

In conclusion, the wider language and above-mentioned optional provisions of the Decision have resulted in diverse national implementations rather than a joint approach within the EU. These findings are also proven by the implementation report of the Framework Decision submitted by the European Commission.¹⁰¹ All in all, even though the original aim, namely the harmonization of criminal acts, has not been realized, the Framework decision has served for memory laws to become widespread in all EU Member States and increased the concerns for the future of the freedom of speech in the region.

IV. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL APPROACHES ON MEMORY LAWS

With regard to the European countries, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) are two main international organizations, monitoring the restrictions on the freedom of expression. Both organizations have important legislations and rulings concerning the issue of hate speech, in particular negationism, which provide an insight on the memory laws and their impacts on the free speech in Europe. In this framework, this chapter will elaborate the approaches of the HRC and the ECtHR, respectively, on the justifiability of the interferences of national authorities on freedom of expression especially in the denialism cases. In the ECtHR part, *Perinçek v. Switzerland* case will be analyzed in the light of the jurisprudence of the Court.

A. The Approach of the Human Rights Committee

Article 19(2) of the ICCPR guarantees each person's right to freedom of expression in its various types, by stating that: "[e]veryone shall have the right

99 Knechtle, J.C., at p.1.

100 *Idem*.

101 European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, 27 January, 2014 COM(2014) 27 final.

to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”¹⁰²

According to the Covenant, the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries along with it special duties and responsibilities; thus, this right is not absolute and can be restricted under Article 19(3). However, any restriction on the freedom of expression must meet three criteria: the restrictions “shall only be such as are (1) provided by law and are (2) necessary; (3) [and for one of the following purposes] (i) for respect of the rights or reputations of others; (ii) for the protection of national security or (iii) of public order (ordre public), or (iv) of public health or (v) morals.”¹⁰³

The Human Rights Committee further established that the restrictions “must conform to the strict tests of necessity and proportionality ... Restrictions must be applied only for those purposes for which they were prescribed and must be directly related to the specific need on which they are predicated”.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, limitations must be interpreted strictly in a way that would not endanger the essence of the right itself.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the relations between rights and restrictions and between norms and exceptions must not be reversed.¹⁰⁶

Article 19 should be read with Article 20 which is accepted by some scholars as practically the fourth paragraph to Article 19.¹⁰⁷ Article 20 does not provide a specific right but additional restrictions on other rights, in particular the right to freedom of expression, by stipulating that *i)* any propaganda for war and *ii)* any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence can be prohibited by law.¹⁰⁸

According to the *travaux préparatoires*, Article 20(2) was drafted as a

102 Article 19 (2) of the ICCPR.

103 *Ibidem*, Article 19 (3)

104 HRC, *General comment no. 34 on Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression*, 12 September 2011, No. CCPR/C/GC/34. at para 22.

105 Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogation of Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Annex, UN Doc E/CN.4/1985/4 (1985), Principle 3; Human Rights Committee, *General Comment No. 34*, note 4, para 21.

106 HRC, *General Comment No. 34*, at para 21.

107 Partsch, K.J., ‘Freedom of Conscience and Expression, and Political Freedoms’, in Henkin L. (eds.), *The International Bill of Rights: The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, New York, 1981. pp. 209-245, at p. 227.

108 Article 20(2) of the ICCPR.

response to the horror of the Nazi racial hatred campaigns.¹⁰⁹ During the drafting procedure, several issues were at the forefront and the chief among them was the wording of the terms “incitement”, “hostility” and “hatred as well as the potential governmental abuse of the restrictions on the freedom of expression.¹¹⁰ Accordingly, some delegations argued for the need for an additional article since the limitation clause in Article 19(3) was deemed insufficient for the prevention of incitement to racial hatred.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the issue of whether to condemn only incitement to violence or incitement to hatred as well was also extensively debated.¹¹² The proposal that the phrase “hatred or violence” be used instead of “hatred and violence” was yet another controversial agenda item of the drafting procedure.¹¹³

Even though the ambiguous character of Article 20(2) was criticized by the scholars,¹¹⁴ the Committee failed to clarify the phrase “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence” in its General Comment No.11 on Article 20.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, the HRC asserted in this General Comment that the prohibitions required under the Article “are fully compatible with the right to freedom of expression as contained in Article 19, the exercise of which carries with it special duties and responsibilities”.¹¹⁶

Moreover, the General Comment No.34 on Article 19 also elaborated the relationship between Article 19 and Article 20.¹¹⁷ According to the Comment, the acts covered by Article 20 are subject to restriction pursuant to Article 19(3); in other words, a limitation that is justified on the basis of Article 20 must also comply with Article 19(3).¹¹⁸ This rule was based on *Ross v. Canada* decision.¹¹⁹ Which is related to a former teacher, who was appointed to a non-

109 Nowak, M., *UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: CCPR Commentary*, 2nd revised edition, N.P. Engel Publisher, Kehl, 2005, at p. 475.

110 Fariior, S., “Molding The Matrix: The Historical and Theoretical Foundations of International Law Concerning Hate Speech”, *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, Vol:14, 1996, pp. 1-98, at. pp. 25-27.

111 *Ibidem*, at p. 470.

112 *Ibidem*, at p. 25.

113 *Ibidem*, at p. 26.

114 Nowak, at p. 475.

115 HRC, *General Comment no. 11 on Article 20, Prohibition of Propaganda for War and Inciting National, Racial or Religious Hatred*, 29 July 1983, No. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.9 (Vol. I).

116 *Idem*.

117 HRC, General Comment No. 34, at para. 50-52.

118 *Ibidem*, at para. 50.

119 *Ross v. Canada*, 18 October 2000, Communication No. 736/1997 (UN Human Rights Committee) para 10.6.

teaching position since in his spare time he published books and pamphlets, and made public statements with anti-Semitic views. In this case, the Committee adopted an integrated approach by invoking Article 20 as an additional argument in the interpretation of the limitation clause in Article 19(3).¹²⁰ Furthermore, the General Comment makes a distinction between the acts addressed in Article 20 and Article 19(3). In this regard, the acts addressed in the former indicate the specific response required from the state, namely the prohibition by law.¹²¹ Thus, only in this respect, Article 20 may be deemed as *lex specialis* with regard to Article 19.¹²²

With regard to Holocaust denial, the *Faurisson v. France* case constitutes the cornerstone case in the jurisprudence of the HRC.¹²³ In addition to the decision of the Committee, the individual concurring opinions attached to this decision are also significant in order to understand the approach of the Committee on the issue of the restriction on the freedom of expression. Robert Faurisson was a former professor of literature at the Sorbonne University.¹²⁴ In one of his interviews published in a French magazine, even though he did not contest the use of gas for purposes of disinfection, he doubted the existence of gas chambers for extermination purposes in Nazi concentration camps.¹²⁵ Faurisson also argued that the Gayssot Law promoted the Nuremberg trial and judgment to the status of dogma by imposing penalization.¹²⁶ After the publication of the interview, he was convicted of the crime of contestation of the existence of the crimes against humanity on the basis of the Gayssot Law.¹²⁷

In his petition submitted to HRC, Faurisson argued that the Gayssot Law infringed his right to freedom of expression and academic freedom in general, and constituted unacceptable censorship, obstructing and penalizing historical research.¹²⁸ As a response to this petition, the French government put forward that it merely fulfilled its international obligations by punishing the denial of crimes against humanity.¹²⁹ In the beginning of the examination of merits, the HRC strikingly conceded that the application of the Gayssot Law may lead

120 Nowak 478.

121 HRC, General Comment No. 34, at para. 51.

122 *Idem*.

123 HRC, *Faurisson v. France*, 16 December 1996, No. CCPR/C/58/D/ 550/1993.

124 *Ibidem*, at para. 2.1.

125 *Idem*.

126 *Ibidem*, at para. 2.2.

127 *Ibidem*, at para. 2.6.

128 *Ibidem*, at para. 3.1.

129 *Ibidem*, at para. 7.7.

to decisions or measures incompatible with the ICCPR.¹³⁰ However, contrary to the expectations, the Committee also noted that it cannot criticize the abstract laws enacted by States parties and its mere task is to establish whether the requirements for the restrictions imposed on the right to freedom of expression are met in the communications which are brought before it as such.¹³¹ On the other hand, during the examination of merits, the HRC took into account the public debates in France and other European countries concerning the anti-negationism legislations.¹³²

The Committee applied a three-part test for the analysis of the restrictions on his right to freedom of expression. As regards to the first criteria, the HRC found that the restriction had been indeed provided by law. The Committee also expressed its satisfaction that the Gayssot Law, which was applied to this case, was in compliance with the Covenant.¹³³ Secondly, with regard to the purpose condition, the Committee held that the restriction was permissible under Article 19(3)(a) on the grounds that the statements of Faurisson triggered the anti-semitic feelings.¹³⁴ Finally, in terms of the necessity of the interference, the HRC shared the views of the French authorities contending that the Gayssot Law serves for the combat against racism and anti-semitism since the denial of Holocaust is the principal vehicle for anti-Semitism.¹³⁵ Considering all these findings, the Committee concluded that the restriction was necessary; thus, it found no violation of his right freedom of expression.¹³⁶

On the other hand, this decision should be read with the individual concurring opinions to understand its background and the motivations of the Committee members in holding this decision. In these opinions issued by seven Committee members, the potential threats of the broad scope of the Gayssot Law were emphasized.¹³⁷ In one of the noteworthy opinions by Elizabeth Evatt and David Kretzmer which was co-signed by Eckart Klein, it was asserted that the Gayssot Law was “phrased in the widest language and would seem to prohibit publication of *bona fide* research” regarding the matters decided by the Nuremberg Tribunal.¹³⁸ According to them, the restrictions on the basis

130 *Ibidem*, at para. 9.3.

131 *Idem*.

132 *Ibidem*, at para. 9.2.

133 *Ibidem*, at para. 9.5.

134 *Ibidem*, at para. 9.6.

135 *Ibidem*, at para. 9.7.

136 *Ibidem*, at para. 10.

137 *Ibidem*, Individual opinion by Nisuke Ando, at para.1; Individual opinion by Elizabeth Evatt and David Kretzmer, co-signed by Eckart Klein, at para.9; Individual opinion by Rajsoomer Lallah, at paras. 6-7; Individual opinion by Cecilia Medina Quiroga, at para.2.

138 *Ibidem*, Individual opinion by Elizabeth Evatt and David Kretzmer, co-signed by Eckart Klein, at paras. 7-8.

of the Gayssot Law did not meet the proportionality test. Furthermore, the causality could not be proved between the liability and the intent of the author as well as the tendency of the publication to incite to anti-Semitism.¹³⁹ Lastly, the above-mentioned members also argued that a less drastic provision could realize the legitimate aim of this law without turning historical facts into a legislative dogma.¹⁴⁰

On the contrary to the concurring opinions, the Committee did not clearly criticize the implications the Gayssot Law on the freedom of expression in *Faurisson v. France* decision. Furthermore, according to some scholars, although this decision was clearly persuasive, it did not provide a clear doctrinal basis for the examination of the compliance of the Holocaust denial laws with freedom of expression guarantees.¹⁴¹ In response to these criticisms, the HRC elaborated its views concerning such laws in the General Comment No.34 by stating that: “[l]aws that penalize the expression of opinions about historical facts are incompatible with the obligations that the Covenant imposes on States parties in relation to the respect for freedom of opinion and expression. The Covenant does not permit general prohibition of expressions of an erroneous opinion or an incorrect interpretation of past events”.¹⁴² This decision was based on the concluding observations on Hungary, in which the Committee expressed its concerns that the evolution of the memory laws in this country would pave the way for the punishment of a wide range of views on the post-World War II history.¹⁴³ Thus, the Committee recommended Hungary to review its memory laws in compliance with Articles 19 and 20.¹⁴⁴

In conclusion, the Committee elaborated its views regarding the interference on freedom of speech in a unique complaint by Faurisson. Even though the HRC provided a clue on the incompatibility of the Gayssot Law, it missed an important chance to establish an international legal framework for the justifiability of memory laws. Such an obligatory framework given by one of the most comprehensive international bodies would have served to prevent the abusive and hazardous applications of memory laws criminalizing especially the historical and scientific statements. Nevertheless, the adoption of the General Comment No.34 can be considered as an important

139 *Ibidem*, at para. 9.

140 *Idem*.

141 Williams, A.M. & Cooper, J., “Hate speech, holocaust denial and international human rights law”, *European Human Rights Law Review*, Vol:6, 1999, pp. 593-613, at p.608.

142 HRC, General Comment No. 34, at para. 49.

143 HRC, Concluding observations on Hungary, 16 November 2010, No. CCPR/C/HUN/CO/5, at para. 19.

144 *Idem*.

development in this regard. With this comment, the Committee indicated its support for the case-by-case analysis of the statements instead of the general prohibition of them, in particular the denialist ones. As another note-worthy aspect of the approach of the HRC, unlike the abusive clause of the ECtHR, which will be shown *infra*, Article 20 does not provide content-based limitations, but foresees the examination of the necessity of interference by taking into account the contextual elements. Finally, it was also a positive

development that the Committee touched upon the Hungarian memory laws in its concluding observations. In this context, it is of crucial importance for the freedom of expression that this approach should be standardized and applied to all memory laws in different countries' concluding observations.

According to the Court, "[f]reedom of expression constitutes one of the basic conditions for the progress of democratic societies and for the development of each individual. It is applicable not only to 'information' or 'ideas' that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population. Such are the demands of that pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no "democratic society".

B. The Approach of the European Court of Human Rights

As a regional monitoring body, the European Court of Human Rights, with its comprehensive binding case-law, is an important key actor in Europe to balance the freedom of expression and hate speech. According to the Court, "[f]reedom of expression constitutes

one of the basic conditions for the progress of democratic societies and for the development of each individual. It is applicable not only to 'information' or 'ideas' that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population. Such are the demands of that pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no "democratic society".¹⁴⁵ These statements are of significance in terms of indicating how greatly the Court values the protection of the right to freedom of expression. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) reserves its Article 10 for the protection of freedom of expression.

On the other hand, the European Convention has not come up with a precise definition for the hate speech. However, the jurisprudence of the Court has established certain parameters making it possible to define characteristics of

145 ECtHR, *Handyside v. United Kingdom*, 7 December 1976, (Appl. no. 5493/72), at para. 49.

hate speech and to exclude it from the protection of the freedom of expression.¹⁴⁶ In this regard, the Court has only referred to “[a]ll forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance (including religious intolerance)”.¹⁴⁷ The Court deems the negationism, in particular Holocaust denial, as a specific form of hate speech, since it constitutes a denial of crimes against humanity, which is one of the most serious forms of racial defamation (of Jews), and of incitement to hatred.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, hate speech is an “autonomous” concept, which makes the ECtHR unbound by the national courts’ interpretations.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the ECtHR may rebut classifications adopted by domestic courts, or find certain statements as hate speech when national authorities ruled out this classification.¹⁵⁰

In analyzing the justifiability of such limitations on the freedom of expression, the ECtHR pursues two different approaches either by applying the restrictions set out in the second paragraph of Article 10 or by invoking Article 17 concerning the prohibition of the abuse of the Convention rights. The Court provides broader protection under Article 17 against expressions amounting to the denial of the Holocaust and other historical atrocities during World War II, whereas other types of hate speech are assessed under Article 10. In the following sections, the Court’s approaches to the restrictions under Articles 10 and 17 will be elaborated respectively.

a. Restrictions under Article 10 of the Convention

As stipulated in Article 10(2), right to freedom of expression is not absolute: “[t]he exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for

146 ECtHR, Fact Sheet on Hate Speech, July 2013, at p.1. Available at: http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Hate_speech_ENG.pdf

147 ECtHR, *Gunduz v. Turkey*, 4 December 2003, (Appl. no. 35071/97), at para. 40; ECtHR, *Erbakan v. Turkey*, 6 July 2006, (Appl. no. 59405/00), at para. 56.

148 ECtHR, *Garaudy v. France*, 24 June 2003, (Appl. no. 65831/01), at p. 22.

149 Weber, A., “The case law of the European Court of Human Rights on Article 10 ECHR relevant for combating racism and intolerance.” In The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), *Expert Seminar: Combating Racism While Respecting Freedom of Expression*, Strasbourg, 16–17 November 2006, 2007, at p. 11. Tulkens, at p. 98.

150 *Idem*. See also ECtHR, *Gunduz v. Turkey* at para. 43; ECtHR, *Sürek v. Turkey*, 8 July 1999, (Appl. no. 24122/94): partly dissenting opinion of Judge Palm.

the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary”.¹⁵¹ According to this provision, the domestic interference on an expression can be justified on the basis of three conditions; *i*) whether it is prescribed by law, *ii*) if it pursues a legitimate aim and *iii*) whether it is necessary in a democratic society.¹⁵²

As regards to the criteria of the “*prescribed by law*”, the law must be adequately accessible and formulated in a manner which is foreseeable, but not necessary to be absolutely precise.¹⁵³ In other words, this condition requires that “the scope of the discretion and the manner of its exercise are indicated with sufficient clarity to give adequate protection against arbitrariness.”¹⁵⁴ As the second condition, the interference must pursue at least one of nine “*legitimate aims*” listed under Article 10 (2): *i*) the protection of national security, *ii*) the protection of territorial integrity, *iii*) the protection of public safety, *iv*) the prevention of disorder or crime, *v*) the protection of health, *vi*) the protection of morals, *vii*) the protection of the reputation or rights of others, *viii*) the prevention the disclosure of information received in confidence, or *ix*) the maintenance of the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.¹⁵⁵ As for the issue of the negationism, the interests of national security or public safety, the prevention of disorder or crime and the protection of the reputations and rights of others are the most relevant legitimate aims.

Finally, according to the case-law, the “*necessary*” nature of the public interference in a democratic society is at the key criteria for the Court when assessing the compatibility with the ECHR. The jurisprudence indicates that the adjective “*necessary*” implies the existence of a “*pressing social need*”.¹⁵⁶ In the context of the guiding principles for the necessity test established by the ECtHR, the national authorities’ interference must be assessed as a whole, including the content of the remarks held against the applicants and the context in which they made them.¹⁵⁷ In particular, the Court must determine whether the interference was “*proportionate to the legitimate aims pursued*” and whether the reasons put forward by the national authorities for justification were “*relevant and sufficient*”.¹⁵⁸ In doing so, the Court has to

151 Article 10(2) of the ECHR.

152 *Idem*.

153 ECtHR, *The Sunday Times v. United Kingdom*, 26 April 1979, (Appl. no. 6538/74), at para. 49.

154 ECtHR, *Dzhavadov v. Russia*, 27 September 2007, (Appl. no. 30160/04), at para. 36.

155 Article 10(2) of the ECHR.

156 ECtHR, *Lehideux and Isorni vs France*, 23 September 1998, (Appl. no. 24662/94), at para. 51.

157 *Idem*.

158 *Idem*.

assure whether the national authorities applied standards in conformity with the principles set out under Article 10 as well as whether they based themselves on an acceptable assessment of the relevant facts.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, the Court also takes into account that the States enjoy a certain margin of appreciation as to the manner in which they would implement the ECHR.¹⁶⁰ However, the discretionary power of the States is not unlimited and subject to a European supervision.¹⁶¹

In the light of the case-law of the ECtHR, it can be inferred that there is no established element for the limits of the margin of appreciation.¹⁶² However, the intensity of the scrutiny of the Court is adjusted depending on the nature of the speech.¹⁶³ For instance, when a political speech is at stake or when the press is involved, the interference of the domestic authorities is strictly examined, which paves the way for the *de facto* removal of the margin of appreciation.¹⁶⁴ However, for more sensitive speeches, such as racist or blasphemous, the Court normally assumes that national authorities are in a better position to precisely determine the appropriate scope of the freedom of expression, since the limits may change from country to country as well as even within a single country.¹⁶⁵

b. Restrictions under Article 17 of the Convention

The Court can also apply Article 17 of the Convention (abuse clause) in its examination of the legitimacy of the interference on the freedom expression. Article 17 provides that: “[n]othing in this Convention may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the Convention.”¹⁶⁶

The *travaux préparatoires* of the ECHR indicates that Article 17 was

159 *Idem*.

160 *Idem*.

161 ECtHR, *Handyside v. United Kingdom*, at para. 49.

162 Weber, A., “The case law of the European Court of Human Rights on Article 10 ECHR relevant for combating racism and intolerance.” In The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), *Expert Seminar: Combating Racism While Respecting Freedom of Expression*, Strasbourg, 16–17 November 2006, 2007, at p.100.

163 Pech, L. at p. 28.

164 *Idem*.

165 *Idem*.

166 Article 17 of the ECHR.

incorporated to the Convention as a response to threats against democracy by the totalitarian regimes of Nazism, fascism and communism.¹⁶⁷ The jurisprudence of the Court and the underlying ideas of the Convention indicates that Article 17 was aimed to serve as a “render of last resort” in cases where the restriction clauses could no longer be applied or might be deemed insufficient.¹⁶⁸ Notwithstanding, the abuse clause cannot be invoked independently; hence, its application is always linked to another Conventional right which is considered to be abused.¹⁶⁹ In practice, the abuse clause has been mostly applied in cases dealing with the right to freedom of expression.¹⁷⁰

On the other hand, the ECtHR and formerly European Commission of Human Rights (hereafter “Commission”) have applied the abuse clause either directly or indirectly.¹⁷¹ In its direct application, certain expressions are removed from the protection of Article 10 with a *guillotine effect*; whereas in its indirect application, Article 17 provides as an interpretative aid when assessing the necessity of State interference under Article 10(2).¹⁷² In the cases of direct application of law, Article 17 eliminates the need for a “balancing process” under Article 10,¹⁷³ thus decisions are mostly taken *prima facie* and are content-based, without focusing on contextual factors.¹⁷⁴ In other words, by applying Article 17, the national authorities can justify the restriction based merely on the content of the speech. Furthermore, even though the burden of proof for any restriction under Article 10 is on the State, the content-based limitations with the invocation of the abuse clause can shift away this burden on to what it is intervening against.¹⁷⁵ This shift paves the way for a loss of proportionality; thus, the State does not require to prove a pressing social need.¹⁷⁶

As regards to the cases concerning the criminalization of the negationism, the

167 Cannie, H., and Voorhoof, D., “The Abuse Clause and Freedom of Expression in the European Human Rights Convention: An Added Value for Democracy and Human Rights Protection?”, *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, Vol. 29/1, 2011, at p.56; See also the *Travaux Préparatoires* (1949, 1st session, pp. 1235, 1237 and 1239):

168 Gliszczynska-Grabias, A., “Penalizing Holocaust Denial: A View from Europe”, *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, Vol.3, 2013, at p.59.

169 Cannie & Voorhoof, at p.58;

170 *Idem*.

171 *Ibidem*, at p.67.

172 *Idem*.

173 Keane, D., ‘Attacking Hate Speech under Article 17 of the European Convention on Human Rights’, *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2007, at p.643.

174 Cannie & Voorhoof, at p.67.

175 Keane, D., at p. 656.

176 *Idem*.

Court and the former Commission have examined the interference of national authorities on the right to freedom of expression with an evolving approach which is categorized with three main phases.¹⁷⁷ During the first stage of 1980s, in a limited number of cases brought before the Commission, it found the restrictions justifiable by only applying Article 10(2).¹⁷⁸ In these cases, the Commission did not invoke Article 17. In *X. v. Germany* case, which is one of the main cases in the first phase, the applicant had displayed pamphlets on a notice board located at his garden fence describing Holocaust as a “mere invention”, “unacceptable lie” and a “Zionist swindle”.¹⁷⁹ His neighbor of Jewish origin, whose grandfather had died in Auschwitz, filed a civil lawsuit against the applicant.¹⁸⁰ The German legal authorities had punished these acts of Mr. X.¹⁸¹ The Commission also upheld this conviction and found the application of Mr. X inadmissible on the grounds that the prohibition was necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the reputation of others within the meaning of Article 10(2).¹⁸²

With regard to the second stage, *Kühnen v. Federal Republic of Germany* constitutes one of the building blocks of the Strasbourg case-law on Holocaust denial.¹⁸³ Kühnen was a leader in an organization that attempted to reinstitute the prohibited Nazi Party in Germany.¹⁸⁴ He had advocated fight for an independent, socialist Greater Germany, therefore, prepared and disseminated various publications in this context.¹⁸⁵ After the criminal proceedings instituted against him, Kühnen was convicted of the dissemination of propaganda directed against basic order of democracy and freedom and the notion of the mutual understanding among peoples.¹⁸⁶ The Commission held that the application is manifestly ill-founded on the grounds that the interference was “necessary in a democratic society”.¹⁸⁷ With this judgment, the Commission entered a new stage and started to indirectly invoke Article 17 as an

177 See Cannie & Voorhoof, at p.60; Lobba, P., Holocaust Denial Before the European Court of Human Rights: Evolution of an Exceptional Regime, *European Journal of International Law*, Forthcoming, 2014, at p. 4. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2428650>.

178 ECommHR, *X. v. Federal Republic of Germany*, 16 July 1982, (Appl. no. 9235/81); ECommHR, *T. v. Belgium*, 14 July 1983, (Appl. no. 9777/82).

179 ECommHR, *X. v. Federal Republic of Germany*, at pp.194-195.

180 *Ibidem*, at p.195.

181 *Ibidem*, at p.196.

182 *Ibidem*, at p.198.

183 ECommHR, *Kuhnen v. Federal Republic of Germany*, 12 May 1988, (Appl. no. 12194/86).

184 *Ibidem*, at p.1.

185 *Idem*.

186 *Ibidem*, at p.2.

187 *Ibidem*, at p.6.

“interpretative aid” in the analysis of the necessity of State interference under Article 10(2).¹⁸⁸ As an additional breakthrough of this case, the Commission extended the scope of the abuse clause to every activity, which is “contrary to the text and spirit of the Convention”.¹⁸⁹

Finally, with the judgment in *Lehideux and Isorni v. France* case, the Strasbourg case-law has evolved into a new stage. In this judgment, the ECtHR established the conditions of the direct application of the abuse clause in the negationism cases.¹⁹⁰ The applicants gave a political advertisement in *Le Monde* calling the French people to rehabilitate the memory of the head of the pro-German Vichy Government, Philippe Pétain, and to have the judgment sentencing him to death and to forfeiture of his civic rights overturned.¹⁹¹ The two applicants were convicted of publicly defending war crimes and crimes of collaboration with the enemy.¹⁹² The ECtHR found that although the text could be regarded as polemical, the applicants had not attempted to deny or revise what they themselves had referred to in their publication as “Nazi atrocities and persecutions” or “German omnipotence and barbarism”.¹⁹³ As one of the most striking point of this judgment, the Court ruled that the negation or revision of “clearly established historical facts” including Holocaust is removed from the protection of Article 10 by Article 17.¹⁹⁴ As such, the case in hand did not belong this category of clearly established historical facts.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, the interference by public authorities could not be justified as necessary in a democratic society.¹⁹⁶ Thus, the ECtHR rejected the respondent State’s request for the application of Article 17 and held that there had been a violation of Article 10 ECHR.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, taking into consideration the forty-year period between the events in dispute and the publication, the Court also noted that “the lapse of time [made] it inappropriate to deal with such remarks, forty years on, with the same severity as ten or twenty years previously”.¹⁹⁸

As another point worth mentioning for this case is Judge Jambrek’s concurring

188 *Cannie & Voorhoof*, at p.60.

189 *ECommHR, Kuhnen v. Federal Republic of Germany*, at p. 5.

190 *ECtHR, Lehideux and Isorni vs France*, 23 September 1998, (Appl. no. 24662/94).

191 *Ibidem*, at paras.9-12.

192 *Ibidem*, at para.22.

193 *Ibidem*, at para.52.

194 *Ibidem*, at para. 47.

195 *Idem*.

196 *Ibidem*, at para.58.

197 *Idem*.

198 *Ibidem*, at para. 55.

opinion which clarified the application of Article 17 which requires that “[t]he aim of the offending actions must be to spread violence or hatred, to resort to illegal or undemocratic methods, to encourage the use of violence, to undermine the nation’s democratic and pluralist political system, or to pursue objectives that are racist or likely to destroy the rights and freedoms of others”.¹⁹⁹ The Judge also confirmed that “[t]he requirements of Article 17 are strictly scrutinized, and rightly so”.²⁰⁰

The principles on negationism established in *Lehideux and Isorni* were firstly applied in *Garaudy v. France* case, concerning a book entitled “The Founding Myths of Modern Israel” which resulted in the criminal conviction of former politician Garaudy for the offences of disputing the existence of crimes against humanity, defamation in public of a group of persons (the Jewish community) and incitement to racial hatred.²⁰¹ The ECtHR found the application incompatible *ratione materiae* with regard to Article 17 on the grounds that the content of his remarks had amounted to the Holocaust denial.²⁰² In the merits of the judgment, the Court pointed out that disputing the existence of clearly established historical events do not constitute a “historical research akin to a quest for the truth”; on the contrary, the real purpose was to rehabilitate the National Socialist regime and accuse the victims for the falsification of history.²⁰³ That is the reason why the Court referred the denial of the crimes against humanity as “one of the most serious forms of racial defamation of Jews and of incitement to hatred”.²⁰⁴ In this regard, the Court deemed the conducts at the issue manifestly incompatible with the fundamental values of the Convention; thus, directly applied Article 17 with a “guillotine effect” and held that the applicant was not entitled to rely on Article 10.²⁰⁵ On the other hand, according to Lobba, this judgment implicitly

The principles on negationism established in Lehideux and Isorni were firstly applied in Garaudy v. France case, concerning a book entitled “The Founding Myths of Modern Israel” which resulted in the criminal conviction of former politician Garaudy for the offences of disputing the existence of crimes against humanity, defamation in public of a group of persons (the Jewish community) and incitement to racial hatred.

199 *Ibidem*, Concurring opinion of Judge Jambrek, at para. 2.

200 *Idem*.

201 ECtHR, *Garaudy v. France*, 24 June 2003, (Appl. no. 65831/01).

202 *Ibidem*, at pp. 23-29.

203 *Ibidem*, at p. 22.

204 *Idem*.

205 *Idem*.

restricted the scope of Article 17 with a requirement of a racist or anti-Semitic intent, or an aim of reinstatement of the Nazi regime, in addition to the existence of the denial of established historical facts.²⁰⁶

c. Commentary of the ECtHR's approach

In its judgments, the Court has applied Article 10 or Article 17 (abuse clause) to analyze the legitimacy of the interferences on freedom of expression. Although it has been rarely invoked, the abuse clause is considered as a threat on freedom of expression with chilling effect, since it excludes the protection of Article 10. By applying a content-based approach on the basis of Article 17, the interventionist States do not need to justify the necessity and proportionality of the restriction. This results in the loss of the Court's control for the examination of the limitations.

On the other hand, according to the jurisprudence of the Court, the abuse clause has been applied to the convictions on the denial of "clearly established historical facts", amounting the incitement to hatred, such as denial of the existence of genocide, crime against humanity and other atrocities. Despite this framework drawn by the case-law, the ambiguity still exists for the scope of "clearly established facts". This paves the way for the questions which evidence is enough for the Court to decide when historical facts are clearly established and who decides for this categorization of the historical facts. Furthermore, in line with this categorization, the ECtHR makes a distinction between the Nazi crimes and other atrocities. This distinction also results in another problem, namely inequality between the victims of different historical atrocities.

In order to prevent the States from abusive applications of Article 17 and the unfairness between the sufferings of the victims, it is important for the Court to equally assess all cases under Article 10(2) rather than the two-tiered approach regardless of their categories. In this regard, the ECtHR should analyze all relevant factors regarding the speech in dispute and measures, such as content, intent, context, impact and the proportionality of the limitations. It may be preferable if the Court will adopt a method, similar to the European Commission's, namely the examination of all cases on the basis of Article 10 with an interpretive aid of Article 17.

206 Lobba, P., Holocaust Denial Before the European Court of Human Rights: Evolution of an Exceptional Regime, at p.8.

Additionally, the vagueness in the scope of margin of appreciation of the States may pave the way for the arbitrary applications. According to the case law, discretionary powers of States can change with regard to the content and sensitivity of speech, such as political, historical, legal, racial or blasphemous. Thus, the Court should establish the concrete standards for the categorization of speeches in terms of their content and sensitivity.

V. ANALYSIS ON JUDGMENT OF *PERİNÇEK V. SWITZERLAND*

In order to examine whether the Court has been consistent with its approach in its latest rulings regarding freedom of speech, this part will specifically center around the judgment delivered on 17 December 2013 in the case of *Perinçek v. Switzerland*.²⁰⁷ The case constitutes one of the key turning points of the anti-denialist case-law of the Court, since it is the first case concerning the negation of a historical claim other than Holocaust. In its judgment, the Chamber of the ECtHR held, by five votes to two, that Switzerland had violated the right to freedom of expression of Perinçek. The judgment of the Chamber is comprehensive with 80 pages, including 26 pages of separate opinions.²⁰⁸ It is worth mentioning that as per today, this judgment is not final, since the Swiss government referred the case to the Grand Chamber on 17 March 2014 under Article 43 of the Convention. Finally, the Grand Chamber panel of five judges accepted the referral on 2 June 2014.²⁰⁹

A. Principal facts

The applicant, Doğu Perinçek, is a Turkish national and the Chairman of the Turkish Workers' Party. In his speeches during various conferences in different cities of Switzerland in 2005, Perinçek publicly denied that the Ottoman Empire had perpetrated the crime of "genocide" against the Armenian people in 1915 and the following years.²¹⁰ Furthermore, he had described the idea of the Armenian genocide as an "international lie".²¹¹ On the basis of a criminal complaint against him filed by the "Switzerland-Armenia" association, the Lausanne Police Court found Perinçek guilty of genocide denial with a racist

207 ECtHR, *Perincek v. Switzerland*, Appl. no. 27510/08, 17 December 2013.

208 The judgment is only available in French, however unofficial English translation is available at: http://www.avim.org.tr/uploads/raporlar/Perin%C3%A7ekEng_1.pdf

209 ECtHR, Press Release issued by the Registrar of the Court, Grand Chamber Panel's decisions, ECHR 158 (2014), 03 June 2014.

210 ECtHR, *Perincek v. Switzerland*, at para. 7.

211 *Idem*.

and nationalistic motivation in 2005.²¹² The Vaud Cantonal Court and the Federal Tribunal respectively rejected Perinçek's appeal and confirmed the verdict of the court of the first instance in 2007.²¹³ In the Swiss courts' views, the Armenian genocide, similar to Holocaust, was a proven historical fact, set out under Article 261*bis* of the Swiss Criminal Code.²¹⁴ After exhausting domestic remedies, Perinçek brought the case before the ECtHR by alleging that the Swiss authorities had violated his right to freedom of speech. On the other hand, the Turkish Government also submitted written comments as a third-party intervener in the case.²¹⁵

B. Judgment

The Court firstly examined the admissibility of the application by assessing whether Perinçek's statements had abused the rights in the Convention and, therefore, could be excluded from the protection of freedom of expression on the basis of Article 17, even though the Swiss government did not have any request from the Court on this direction. In its submission, the Turkish government argued that the application could not be found inadmissible on the grounds of the abuse of rights.²¹⁶

In this part, the Court firstly reminded that the principle, which the acts of upsetting, shocking or disturbing ideas are also protected by Article 10, is applied in cases involving, as with the case under scrutiny, historical debate in a domain in which certainty is unlikely and the controversy still remains.²¹⁷ In this regard, although the ECtHR acknowledged that some of the statements of Perinçek were provocative, it noted that he had never discussed the existence of the massacres and deportations during the years in question but only denied the legal categorization of these events as "genocide".²¹⁸ Referring its case-law, the ECtHR reiterated that the boundaries for the invocation of the abuse clause are related to the issue whether the purpose of the statements amount to the incitement to hatred or violence.²¹⁹ The Court made clear that in the case in hand the dismissal of a legal categorization as "genocide" did

212 *Ibidem*, at para. 8.

213 *Ibidem*, at para. 11.

214 *Ibidem*, at para. 12.

215 *Ibidem*, at para. 5.

216 *Ibidem*, at para. 50.

217 *Ibidem*, at para. 51. See, ECtHR, *Lehideux and Isorni*, at para. 55.

218 *Idem*.

219 *Ibidem*, at para. 52.

not imply *per se* the incitement to hatred against the Armenian people.²²⁰ Considering that Perinçek did not abuse his right to openly discuss such sensitive issues and not use his right to freedom of expression for the purposes contrary to the text and spirit of the Convention, the ECtHR found the case admissible; thus, it did not need to apply Article 17 and decided to examine the case under Article 10.²²¹

In the merits section, the Court applied the three-step test to determine whether Perinçek's conviction, which was regarded as an interference on his freedom of expression, could be legally justifiable under Article 10(2). As regards whether the interference was "*prescribed by law*", the Court considered that the term "genocide", as used in the Swiss Criminal Code, might be incompatible with the precision requirement of Article 10(2).²²² However, taking into account his background, as a doctor of laws and a well-informed political figure, the ECtHR found that the penalization was foreseeable by Perinçek.²²³ Thus, the first condition was met.

With regard to the second criteria, the respondent State put forward the protection of order as well as the protection of the reputation and the rights of others as the "*legitimate aims*" for the conviction of Perinçek.²²⁴ According to the ECtHR, although the Swiss authorities could not sufficiently prove that Perinçek's statements threatened the public order, the impugned measure was seemed to aim at protecting the rights of others, namely the dignity of the families and friends of Armenian victims.²²⁵

As the last but not the least step, the Court examined whether the interference was "*necessary in a democratic society*", i.e. whether it was justified by a "*pressing social need*". Before analyzing this condition, the Court underlined that it is not incumbent to arbitrate contentious historical questions or decide on legal categorization of the massacres and deportations perpetrated against the Armenian people; however it can only examine whether the precautions were proportional to the pursued goals.²²⁶ For the case in hand, the ECtHR tried to balance between the protection of the honour of the relatives of the

220 *Idem*.

221 *Ibidem*, at para. 54-55.

222 *Ibidem*, at para. 71.

223 *Idem*.

224 *Ibidem*, at para. 74.

225 *Ibidem*, at para. 75.

226 *Ibidem*, at para. 111. See, ECtHR, *Chauvy and others v France*, 29 June 2004, (Appl. no. 64915/01) at para. 69, and ECtHR, *Lehideux and Isorni*, at para. 47; ECtHR, *Monnat v Switzerland*, 21 September 2006, (Appl. no. 73604/01), at para. 57.

Armenian victims and Perinçek's right to freedom of expression.²²⁷ In assessing the necessity of the interference, the Court first decided the state's margin of appreciation. In this regard, taking into account that the issue of the characterization of the events as "genocide" was a matter of the public interest and that Perinçek's statements was historical, legal and political in nature; the ECtHR noted that the Swiss authorities' margin of appreciation was limited.²²⁸

Under the necessity condition, the Court examined the "general consensus" method adopted by the Swiss authorities to justify the conviction of Perinçek. According to this method, there was a consensus among the public, in particular among the scientific community, on the categorization of the 1915 events as genocide.²²⁹ The Court noted that there are different views on this issue even among the Swiss organs themselves; and moreover, only about twenty nations (of more than 190 in the world) officially recognized the "Armenian genocide".²³⁰ Furthermore, referring the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR), the ECtHR underlined that the term of genocide is a very strict legal concept and requires a high threshold to prove particularly the special intent (*dolus specialis*).²³¹ Thus, the Court was not convinced that this general consensus method for his conviction could relate to such very specific points of law.²³²

Additionally, given that historical research is open to discussion and hardly results in objective and absolute truths, the Court found difficult to reach a "general consensus" on this issue.²³³ In order to strengthen this view, the ECtHR distinguished the case in hand from the cases concerning the denial of Holocaust.²³⁴ Accordingly, in the Holocaust cases: *i*) not the legal categorization of the crimes, but the very concrete historical facts had been rejected; *ii*) the applicants had denied the Nazi crimes which had been sentenced with a clear legal basis provided by the Statute of the Nuremberg Tribunal; and *iii*) the negated historical acts had been judged to be clearly established by an international court.²³⁵ In the light of these findings, the Court

227 *Idem*.

228 *Ibidem*, at para. 112-113.

229 *Ibidem*, at para. 114.

230 *Ibidem*, at para. 115.

231 *Ibidem*, at para. 116.

232 *Idem*.

233 *Ibidem*, at para. 115.

234 *Ibidem*, at para. 117.

235 *Idem*.

asserted that there is a clear distinction between this case and the Holocaust denial cases; thus, deemed the method of “general consensus” adopted by the Swiss authorities to justify the conviction of Perinçek as questionable.²³⁶

Within the context of the necessity condition, the Court also examined whether there was a pressing social need for the restriction. In this regard, the Court once again highlighted that Perinçek’s speeches did not incite hatred or violence.²³⁷ Furthermore, it upheld the Turkish Government’s arguments that Holocaust denial is the driving force of anti-Semitism (hatred of Jews) and the rejection of the description of the 1915 events as “genocide” does not have the same repercussions.²³⁸ On the other

hand, in its judgment the Court also made reference to the comparative study on the memorial laws in Europe prepared by the “Swiss Comparative Law Institute” in 2006. In this regard, the ECtHR noted that the genocide denial was criminalized, without limiting its scope to Holocaust, only in Luxemburg and Spain among the sixteen countries analyzed.²³⁹ Other than these two countries apparently there was not required a “pressing social need” for such a legislation.²⁴⁰ The Court considered that the Swiss government had failed to prove how there was a

stronger pressing social need than in other countries for the conviction of racial discrimination on the basis of speech denying the legal description of the 1915 events as “genocide”.²⁴¹ Two developments after this comparative study were also taken into consideration to support its judgment.²⁴² Firstly, in 2007, the Spanish Constitutional Court had found unconstitutional the national law provision criminalizing the denial of genocide.²⁴³ Secondly, in 2012, the French Constitutional Council had held that the law aiming to punish the contesting the existence of the genocides recognized by the law violates the

In the light of these findings and the case-law, the Court expressed its doubts that Perinçek’s conviction had been required by a “pressing social need”. Thus, it decided that the Swiss authorities had failed to meet the third condition which was the necessity in a democratic society to protect the honor of the descendants of the Armenian victims.

236 *Ibidem*, at para. 118.

237 *Ibidem*, at para. 119.

238 *Idem*.

239 *Ibidem*, at para. 120.

240 *Idem*.

241 *Idem*.

242 *Ibidem*, at para. 121.

243 *Idem*. See also: Spanish Constitutional Court’s Judgment, 7 November 2007, No. 235/2007.

Constitution.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Court also referred to the General Comment no. 34 of the HRC in its judgment to indicate that the criminalization of opinions about historical facts that do not incite to violence or racial hatred cannot be justified.²⁴⁵

In the light of these findings and the case-law, the Court expressed its doubts that Perinçek's conviction had been required by a "pressing social need". Thus, it decided that the Swiss authorities had failed to meet the third condition which was the necessity in a democratic society to protect the honor of the descendants of the Armenian victims.²⁴⁶ The ECtHR, therefore, considered that the national authorities had exceeded their narrow margin of appreciation in the current case.²⁴⁷ In conclusion, the Chamber of the Court held violation of freedom of expression within the meaning of Article 10.²⁴⁸

The judgment on such a controversial issue concerning the denial of the Armenian genocide could not be delivered with unanimity. It was annexed with 26 pages of separate opinions. In a joint concurring opinion, Judges Sajó (Hungary) and Raimondi (Italy) elaborated some of their legal arguments and considerations in this judgment.²⁴⁹ In this regard, they put forward that a narrow definition of genocide must be properly determined for the legal certainty in the context of freedom of expression.²⁵⁰ However, the Swiss authorities had not formed such a definition for the 1915 events.²⁵¹ Furthermore, according to these two judges, disrespectful and even outrageous remarks cannot be punishable unless they incite hatred and violence and they represent a real danger in light of the history and social conditions prevalent in a given society.²⁵² But none of these elements existed as far as the case in hand is concerned.²⁵³ Moreover, for this case the Swiss courts had pursued the legal approach that the negation of the legal characterization attributed to the destruction of a people was racist or racially discriminatory.²⁵⁴ Sajó and Raimondi argued that such an unconditional incrimination disabled to review the aspects of the speech that are protected by freedom of speech.²⁵⁵

244 *Idem*. See also: French Constitutional Council's Judgment, 28 February 2012, No. 2012-647 DC.

245 *Ibidem*, at para. 124; See also: HRC, General comment No. 34, at para. 49.

246 *Ibidem*, at para. 129.

247 *Idem*.

248 *Ibidem*, at para. 130.

249 *Ibidem*, Joint concurring opinion by Judges Sajó and Raimondi, at pp. 56-63.

250 *Ibidem*, at p. 57.

251 *Idem*.

252 *Ibidem*, at p. 59.

253 *Idem*.

254 *Ibidem*, at pp. 59-60.

255 *Idem*.

On the other hand, Judges Vučinić (Montenegro) and Pinto de Albuquerque (Portugal) expressed a joint partly dissenting opinion in which they rejected that the conviction of Perinçek was a violation of his freedom of expression.²⁵⁶ These judges asserted that the case in hand is too complicated to require a ruling to be issued by the Grand Chamber since the case raised two fundamental questions that the ECtHR had never addressed: *i)* the international recognition of the “Armenian genocide” and *ii)* the criminalization of the denial of this genocide.²⁵⁷ Claiming that the international community and even the Turkish state itself had previously recognized the “Armenian genocide”, the dissenting judges considered that the intervention by the Swiss authorities with regard to Perinçek’s freedom of expression was in accordance with the law, since the criminal nature of the act of denying the existence of the Armenian genocide had already been sufficiently established in the Swiss legal system, and the relevant legal provisions had been defined in a manner that was neither too broad nor too vague.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, they asserted that the tragic historical events constitute a relevant topic that can justify the restriction of the freedom of expression; thereby enlarge the State’s margin of appreciation.²⁵⁹

C. Commentary on the Judgment

The length of the judgment in *Perinçek v. Switzerland*, which is 80 pages including 26 pages of separate opinions, may indeed indicate how the case is comprehensive and controversial. Such cases concerning the denial or trivialization of historical facts are not frequently brought before the Court. Additionally, since most of the relevant judgments have merely been related to the criminalization of the denial of Holocaust and the case in hand constitutes the first one regarding the Armenian question, this judgment is of importance for the issue of the negation of the historical facts other than Nazi crimes.

In the admissibility part, the Court examined whether there was an incitement to hatred or violence in the applicant’s statements for the invocation of the abuse clause. In that part of the judgment, the Court made a clear distinction between the denial of a legal categorization as “genocide” and denial the facts of the historical acts, in this case the Armenian deportations and massacre.

256 *Ibidem*, Joint partly dissenting opinion by Judges Vucinić and Pinto de Albuquerque, at pp. 63-85.

257 *Ibidem*, at para. 1.

258 *Ibidem*, at paras. 3-11.

259 *Ibidem*, at para. 15.

According to the Court, the merely denying the legal categorization of the acts did not mean the incitement to hatred, thus required the contextual analysis on the basis of Article 10 rather than Article 17. The method of the Chamber of the Court, with holding the application admissible and carrying out a specific contextual analysis, rather than pursuing a *guillotine effect* approach of banning the speech, can be deemed as a positive development for the freedom of expression of the historians. With this judgment the application of the abuse clause kept its exceptional status. On the other hand, these results may also imply that the prospective cases brought before the Court regarding the denial of historical facts which amount the incitement to hatred or

violence, such as the denial of the existence of genocide, crime against humanity and other atrocities, would still remain to be exposed the sword of Damocles, namely Article 17. Thus, even this judgment seems to limit the application of the abuse clause by providing an additional condition, it failed to remove the doubts on the threats of broad application of the Article 17.

The emphasis of the Court on the principle that it is not the Court's role to arbitrate historical debates, indeed, is in accordance with its case-law and seems to be an encouraging result in particular for historians. Furthermore, the Court rightly recalled that the principle, in which the ideas are protected under Article 10, even they are upsetting, shocking or disturbing, is also applicable for the controversial historical debates.

On the other hand, the ECtHR pursued an appropriate approach by only dealing with the justification of the interference on Perinçek's freedom of speech, rather than deciding on legal categorization of the massacres and deportations perpetrated against the Armenian people

in Ottoman Empire. The emphasis of the Court on the principle that it is not the Court's role to arbitrate historical debates, indeed, is in accordance with its case-law and seems to be an encouraging result in particular for historians. Furthermore, the Court rightly recalled that the principle, in which the ideas are protected under Article 10, even they are upsetting, shocking or disturbing, is also applicable for the controversial historical debates.

Additionally, this judgment could not bring a solution for the problems of the margin of appreciation of States for the interference on freedom of expression. In the present case, the Chamber reduced the margin of appreciation of the Swiss authorities since Perinçek's statements were of legal, historical and political nature. The dissenting judges criticized this decision and, on the contrary, they argued that the margin of appreciation should be broadened in the tragic events. This judgment may pave the way for the views that the Court

should determine the precise borders for the margin of appreciation in the context on the interference on the freedom of expression in order to prevent the arbitrary applications.

As regard to the negationism cases, after this judgment the highly controversial and unanswered questions still exist, in particular which evidence is enough for the Court to decide when historical facts are clearly established and who decides for this categorization of the historical facts. The *Perinçek* judgment will probably deepen these discussions. The Court clearly distinguished the case in hand and the cases regarding Holocaust denial and decided that the denial of Holocaust is the main driving force of anti-Semitism, whereas the rejection of the legal status of the “Armenian genocide” might not have the same repercussions.²⁶⁰ The lack of general consensus on “Armenian genocide” was also effective for the Court to make this distinction with Holocaust. With this judgment, the ECtHR underlined the importance of “reducing genocide to law” by referring to the case-law of the international courts and the strict legal definition of genocide.²⁶¹ These findings have been criticized in several occasions, including the extensive joint partly dissenting opinion of Judges Vučinić and Pinto de Albuquerque who emphasized the inspirations of Raphael Lemkin from the Armenian tragedy in constructing the term of genocide.²⁶² Furthermore, according to several criticisms, the comparison with Holocaust resulted in the establishment of a hierarchy among the tragic events which meant an ignorance of the sufferings of different groups especially Armenians.²⁶³

Finally, in its judgment, the Court extensively referred to the comparative law including the case-law and legislations of the Human Rights Committee and the recent relevant decisions of the Spanish and French Constitutional Courts. Considering that these legislations and judgments had a strong stance against the criminalization of negationism, one may deduce from the *Perinçek* judgment that the Court affirmatively showed the value it attaches for the protection of freedom of expression against the abusive approaches of the memory laws.

Under these discussions, such complicated case was referred to the Grand Chamber in accordance with the pro-referral views. According to these views,

260 ECtHR, *Perinçek v. Switzerland*, at para. 119.

261 *Ibidem*, at para. 116.

262 *Ibidem*, Joint partly dissenting opinion of Judges Vučinić and Pinto de Albuquerque, at para. 29.

263 Belavusau, U., “Armenian Genocide v. Holocaust in Strasbourg: Trivialisation in Comparison”, *VerfBlog*, 13 February 2014, at p. 3, available at: <http://www.verfassungsblog.de/en/armenian-genocide-v-holocaust-in-strasbourg-trivialisation-in-comparison/>; Tanzarella P., “Negazionismo: aggiornamenti da Strasburgo”, *Consulta Online*, 2014, at p.4, available at: <http://docenti.unicam.it/tmp/3742.pdf>

the general practice pursued by the Panel of the Grand Chamber requires the case, which has already attracted exceptional media attention, to be deemed as a high profile at the center of a sensitive national and European debate with its historical aspect.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, the views underline that the present case covers a new issue, the first conviction of the negation of the historical facts other than Holocaust.

In contrast to the Framework Decision, memory laws have been criticized and deemed unconstitutional by the national judicial authorities in Europe. In this regard, the Spanish and French Constitutional Court have pursued a speech-protective approach in their examination of the anti-denialist laws. The relevant decisions of these Courts have constituted as a strong barrier against the slippery slope effect of the memory laws in Spain and France.

VII. CONCLUSION

The wider and ambiguous language of the EU Framework Decision has, once again, raised the concerns on the unjustifiable and arbitrary restrictions on freedom expression. The “slippery slope effect” of the Decision has paved the way for the adoption of new memory laws which aggravates the potential repercussions of such regulations on freedom of expression. All in all, given the existing diverse national implementations rather than a joint approach, it is safe to argue that the Decision failed to harmonize the criminal laws have within the EU. This

paper suggests that the most effective and result-oriented approaches to prevent hate speech for the protection of the rights of victims, public order and democracy can be realized with the national level initiatives rather than through the international or regional frameworks or regulations. It would be wise to suggest each country to adopt her own legislation in a way to minimize hate speech and incitement to hatred on the one hand and to allow open and free expression of ideas on the other.

In contrast to the Framework Decision, memory laws have been criticized and deemed unconstitutional by the national judicial authorities in Europe. In this regard, the Spanish and French Constitutional Court have pursued a speech-protective approach in their examination of the anti-denialist laws. The relevant decisions of these Courts have constituted as a strong barrier against the slippery slope effect of the memory laws in Spain and France.

264 ECtHR, The general practice followed by the Panel of the Grand Chamber when deciding on request for referral in accordance with Article 43 of the Convention, October 2011, available at: http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Note_GC_ENG.pdf

In addition to the national judgments, the criminalization of the negationism has been analyzed by the international and regional monitoring bodies. In this regard, the Human Rights Committee has an evolutionary approach on the interference on freedom of speech. In its recent statements, the Committee has expressed its concerns on memory laws and preferred a case-by-case analysis of speeches instead of a general prohibition. The HRC, rightly, opposes the content-based limitations, but supports the examination of the necessity of interference by taking into account the contextual elements.

As the binding regional monitoring body in Europe, the European Court of Human Rights has a two-tiered approach on the limitation of freedom of expression. In this regard, the Court invokes Article 10 or Article 17 ECHR (abuse clause) in its examinations. By applying a content-based restriction and removing the protection of Article 10, the abuse clause poses a threat on free speech. Furthermore, the condition of “clearly established historical facts” required on the basis of Article 17 creates vagueness which results in arbitrariness and chilling out effects. In the light of these findings, the paper suggests that all anti-negationism cases should be dealt with under Article 10(2) by taking into account of all relevant factors, including both content and context, with an interpretive aid of Article 17, rather than direct invocation of the abuse clause.

On the other hand, in its recent speech-protective judgment in *Perinçek v. Switzerland*, the Court applied the contextual analysis under Article 10 instead of the abusive clause. By distinguishing Holocaust from other atrocities and requiring additional conditions, this judgment implicitly indicated the ECtHR’s opposition to the underlying aim of memory laws, which is to extend the criminalization of negationism to the historical atrocities other than Holocaust.

All in all, the current national trends in Europe to adopt new memory laws and to harmonize criminal laws within the context of the EU go against the evolutionary rulings of the international, regional and national authorities, in which the necessity and proportionality are required for the restriction on freedom of expression.

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BOOK REVIEWS

(KİTAP TAHLİLLERİ)

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Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide

Ahuhur: Thomas de Waal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)
313 pages, ISBN: 9780199350698; Language: English; Amazon.com
price (hardcover) \$22.17 (01.02.2015).

Thomas de Waal is a senior associate in the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a highly esteemed global network of policy research centers in Russia, China, Europe, the Middle East and the United States, founded in 1910 in the United States. Prior to the Carnegie Endowment, in the years between 2002 and 2009 de Waal worked as an analyst and project manager on the conflicts in the South Caucasus at the London-based NGOs Conciliation Resources and the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. He has reported for the reputable media outlets such as the BBC World Service, The Moscow Times and The Times¹.

Thomas de Waal is a renowned specialist on the South Caucasus region and the wider Black Sea region. He co-authored the book *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York University Press. 1997) with Carlotta Gall. He is the author of the books *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War* (New York University Press. 2003) and *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press. 2010). *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War* is a widely-acknowledged study and one of the main reference books on the Karabakh conflict².

Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide

1 <http://carnegieendowment.org/experts/?fa=479>; <http://carnegieendowment.org/about/> (latest access 05.02.2015).

2 <http://carnegieendowment.org/experts/?fa=479> (latest access 05.02.2015).

(Oxford University Press, 2015) is Thomas de Waal's latest book. In this book, de Waal aims to provide a full account of the Armenian-Turkish relations in the last decade years. He narrates almost the full story of the Armenian-Turkish relations from 1890s via 1915 until today with a spirited style, reflects on the major turning points, displays some of the overlooked aspects of these relations and draws attention to complications in this relationship³. As such, de Waal spotlights some prospective research questions for the scholarly community. On the contrary to propagandist and recurring academic and popular studies that dominate the literature on the Armenian-Turkish relations, de Waal succeeds in keeping a correct distance from his subject matter and composes a rather balanced narrative and provides mostly impartial arguments. This helps him to decimate some of the 'myths' both in the academic and popular literature on the Armenian-Turkish relations. He provides valuable criticisms and corrections to some of the clichés in the literature.

Because the 1915 tragedy, which de Waal decides to call "genocide", has been the main parameter of the Armenian-Turkish relations, this tragedy and the "politics of genocide" occupy a central place in de Waal's book. As a central argument of the book, he draws attention to the unfruitful results of the "politicization of the genocide debate" for poisoning the Armenian-Turkish relations and obscuring a more comprehensive understanding of the history, which could be achieved through informed debate and dialogue between the two nations.

At the same time, inaccurate references, absence of references, historiographical/methodological faults, scant knowledge of the current socio-political developments in Turkey, unelaborated arguments and negligent utilization of the terms genocide, denial/denialist and deportation are the noticeable weaknesses of the book. These serious failures melt the validity of some arguments and lessen the value of the book which could have otherwise been a good introduction to the contemporary Armenian-Turkish relations for the general reader.

Some academic and most of the popular books on the 1915 tragedy contain exaggerated portrayals of the events that extinguish their reliability and validity. The conditions of the relocation of the Armenians following the *Sevk ve İskân Kanunu* (The Law of Relocation and Resettlement) issued on May 17th, 1915 and officially declared in the Ottoman state's official journal *Takvim-i Vekayi* on June 1st, 1915, are one of the frequently dramatized elements of the forced

3 On page 192, "Black City sea of Trabzon" is written instead of Black Sea city of Trabzon. This is an ignorable editorial mistake in the book.

relocation of the Armenians in 1915. Even in the Genocide Museum in Yerevan, besides the original photos, there are also dramatic illustrations of this period⁴. Although dramatized narratives and illustrations help to facilitate empathy with the people that had to pass through these difficult times, they obstruct the fuller understanding of the 1915 tragedy. On page 40 de Waal quotes a paragraph from the memoir of Hagop Arsenian, an Armenian who was subjected to relocation, in which he tells that a part of his transportation to Syria was by train and that he kept some of his money with him. This challenges the dominant narrative of ‘death marches to the desert on foot’. As such, it gives the researchers a hint for an important research topic: the conditions of transportation of the Armenians, different methods and, of course, the question ‘why’ and what this tells us about the 1915 tragedy. There are many more hints for the researcher like this one. For example, Chapter 3 nicely but very generally describes the entangled and multi-dimensional relations among Armenians, Russians, Ottomans, Great Powers and Azerbaijanis. This may give promising ideas for original research that would help to revise some elements of the dominant Armenian and Turkish historiographies. Other parts of the book, too, not poke in the eyes but hint at important research topics to the careful reader. This is the contribution of this popular book to the research community.

Throughout the book, de Waal clarifies his perspective on the unproductive results of the “politicization of the genocide debate”. According to de Waal, “politicization of the genocide debate” “has obscured the real history behind it, throwing up a barrier against those who otherwise would have been more ready to understand its flesh-and-blood realities”⁵. He also refers to the poisonous effects of the “politicization of the genocide debate” on the Armenian-Turkish relations.

This is certainly a correct observation, which is sometimes overlooked by the research community. However, it also carries a certain degree of naivety. Although a close observer of the Armenian-Turkish relations, de Waal fails to elucidate fully the political rationales of the Armenian and the Turkish sides in carrying out the “genocide debate”. De Waal, although not expressing it overtly, gives an impression that “politicization of the genocide debate” is a result of the irrational obstinacy of both sides. A more comprehensive explanation, however, should have addressed what the Armenian side was expecting to achieve following Turkey’s ‘recognition of genocide’. These are

4 The author of this essay visited the Genocide Museum in Yerevan latest in the summer of 2011.

5 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.3.

reparations and territorial rearrangements between Armenia and Turkey. Not only the representatives of the radical sections of the Armenian diaspora but also the high-ranking officials of the Armenian state covertly or explicitly, but consistently, disclose that Turkey's recognition of the 1915 events as genocide would follow by demands for reparations and territorial rearrangements. As de Waal mentions in the passing the "aversion [of Armenia] to a formal reference to the Treaty of Kars" in 1993 when Armenia and Turkey were "95 percent" in agreement on a text" to sign diplomatic protocols⁶ reveals that Turkey's suspicions are not ungrounded. At the same time, "genocide" is used by the Armenian state to achieve some other political goals vis-à-vis Turkey such as the reinstatement of the diplomatic relations and opening of the land-border between the two countries. In other words, behind the curtain of a rhetoric based on morality and justice, there is a clear political rationale of the insistence on the recognition of the 1915 events as genocide. In fact, de Waal's book has hints about that, such as the quotations from Gerard Libaridian on page 202⁷ or from Vartan Oskanian on page 208⁸.

The position of the Turkish side shall be explained with reference to the political instrumentalization of the "genocide" by the Armenian side. In fact, that is at least one of the reasons of de Waal's impression, which he expresses as "from our conversation I got the impression that almost any initiative with Armenians was now acceptable to the Turkish government, but they still resisted the "genocide" word with everything they could muster"⁹.

De Waal states that state-building, conflict with Azerbaijan over Karabakh and closed land-border with Turkey are the "more important national ideas" for the citizens of the Republic of Armenia. He states "the Genocide is not an

6 Ibid p.205.

7 De Waal cites Libaridian as follows:

Do we want Turkey to recognize the Genocide? Of course. But is that a pre-condition? Of course not. Why not? Because that doesn't resolve any particular issue that the country is facing, that our people are facing. We have no energy, we have no economy, we have a war with Azerbaijan and we are going to go to Turkey and say, "You guys are killers and you are killers if you don't recognize [the Genocide] and we want what from you? Territory." What kind of policy is that? That's not a policy, that's reflex.

8 De Waal cites Oskanian as follows:

Because nothing was happening in Armenian-Turkish ties, Kocharian was thinking that it was our moral obligation to talk more about this and to raise it in international organizations. He had seen that being reserved about it had not produced any positive results anyway—so by putting it on the foreign policy agenda, it was not deemed as something that will change the situation drastically. I think he was right. Raising that issue more openly, speaking about it at the UN, also helping our different communities in different countries to pursue recognition was not detrimental in any way to our obligations. On the contrary what transpired in my period and after, leading to the [2009] Protocols, was maybe the result of more openness about the genocide issue, this led to more debate within Turkey, as more countries recognized. And I think that helped the debate.

9 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, p. 9.

organizing principle of identity for citizens of the Republic of Armenia”¹⁰. This argument reflects the truth only partially. Even a quick overview of press, state discourse¹¹, mainstream academic studies, think tank reports, political party speeches and a few conversations with the people of different socio-economic classes in Armenia reveals that “the Genocide” is indeed an “organizing principle of identity” in Armenia. What de Waals fails to acknowledge is that the present-day Armenia is not the Armenia of the times of Levon Ter Petrosyan. At the same time, by quoting Bishop Khajag Barsamian de Waal rightly mentions that “Anatolia has a plural memory...Armenian memory is too singular. The fact that [what happened in 1915] wasn’t a genocide doesn’t minimize the suffering”¹².

De Waal states that he uses “the term ‘Armenian Genocide’ in the book, having, after much reading, respectfully agreed with the scholarly consensus that what happened to the Armenians in 1915–1916 did indeed fit the 1948 United Nations definition of genocide”. He adds, “at the same time, along with many others, I do so with mixed feelings, having also reached the conclusion that the ‘G-word’ has become both legalistic and over-emotional, and that it obstructs the understanding of the historical rights and wrongs of the issue as much as it illuminates them”¹³. De Waal argues that there are many high quality studies on the “genocide” and there is almost a consensus among the academic circles that the 1915 tragedy constitutes genocide and the current scholarly debate is on the “secondary issues”¹⁴.

It is true that most of the international scholarly community sustains that the 1915 tragedy constitutes genocide. Yet, it is highly debatable that this agreement is built on high quality academic studies. A review of the literature would show that there are indeed very few good studies on the 1915 tragedy. De Waal mentions Taner Akçam, Donald Bloxham, Fuat Dundar, Hilmer Kaiser, Hans-Lukas Lieser, Raymond Kevorkian, Ronald Suny, Eric Zürcher, Peter Holquist, Donald Quataert, Michel Reynolds as the prominent scholars in the field¹⁵. Many of these names are distinguished scholars. However, it is questionable if Taner Akçam, the protégé of the propagandist-as-historian Vahakn Dadrian¹⁶, a professor at the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian and

10 Ibid p.3.

11 For the Armenian state discourse, see Turgut Kerem Tuncel, *Armenian Diaspora: Diaspora, State and the Imagination of the Republic of Armenia*, Ankara, Terazi Publishing, 2014, pp.81-124.

12 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, p. 9.

13 Ibid p. ix.

14 Ibid p.20.

15 Ibid pp.48-49.

16 See, de Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, pp.47-48 for de Waal’s criticism of Dadrian.

Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University (MA, USA), contributor to the Armenian Weekly published by the ultra-nationalist Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutyun¹⁷, with organic ties with the radical sections of the Armenian diaspora can be named among those venerable scholars. Likewise, including Ronald Suny, a senior scholar of the Russian/Soviet history who gained his Ph.D. in 1968, in the list is a misfit, since Suny began to publish works on “genocide” only recently and his academic reputation is hardly because of his studies on “genocide”. On page 53, de Waal mentions the “Ten Commands” that “bought by British intelligence in 1919 from an Ottoman security official...[which] most scholars now believe that the document is a forgery”. He tells that Raymond Kévorkian, however, “speculates that it was an ‘authentic fake’ fabricated by someone who knew the thinking of the Unionist leadership and manufactured it in order to escape prosecution by the British”¹⁸. It is just fair to question the scholarly integrity of a historian that makes such a claim and, consequently, his name in the list of the prominent scholars of “genocide”. Only a few would claim writing a 1008 pages-long ‘complete history of the Armenian genocide’ makes one a good historian¹⁹.

Overall, a more precise definition of the current state of the art of research on the 1915 tragedy would have been ‘today, most of the international academic community accepts the 1915 tragedy was genocide. However, there are few good studies on the subject. For that reason more research has to be done by independent and detached scholars’. Unfortunately, today this is not an easily achievable enterprise both for the difficulty of getting out of the academic routine, luxury and security of conformity, and also the embeddedness of some of the academic circles. The fact that out of 20 issues composed of thousands of pages of the journal *Genocide Studies International*, published by the U.S. led International Association of Genocide Scholars, only nine pages of one article tackle with the Native Americans demonstrates the problem²⁰.

As it is said, “God is in the detail”; details are important. Therefore, studying the details of the 1915 tragedy, that what de Waal calls “secondary issues”, is an urgent task. Studying the “secondary issues” would terminate some of the

17 Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutyun is generally accepted as one of the orchestrators of the terrorist attacks on Turkish targets between 1975 and 1985. For the Armenian militant nationalist radicalism between 1975 and 1985 see, Tuncel, *Armenian Diaspora*, pp.287-286.

18 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, p.53.

19 Raymond Kévorkian in 2011 published 1008 pages-long book *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*.

20 See, Tal Buenos’ address at the luncheon hosted by NSW Parliamentary Friends of Turkey New South Wales Parliament on November,24 2014 at <http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/en/THE-ADDRESS-DELIVERED-BY-MR-TAL-BUENOS-AT-NSW-PARLIAMENT/3795>

‘myths’ in the academic and popular mainstream such as the “Holocaust model” that de Waal, too, labels as “flawed”²¹. Furthermore, studying the “secondary issues” would facilitate comprehension of the “cumulative radicalization”²² of the events that led to the 1915, which renders the “intentionality” thesis less relevant. For that, de Waal could refer to Edward J. Erickson’s *Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency* (2013) published by the prestigious publisher Palgrave to provide the reader with a fuller picture. Alas, he did not. This would also help de Waal to elaborate the relations he mentions in passing between Armenians and “‘Uncle Christian’(Russia)”²³, the “provocation thesis”²⁴ or the questions he mentions on pages 55-56 as regards to the importance that shall be given to the role of the Armenian revolutionaries.

De Waal states²⁵:

Engaging with history rather than with a virtual Armenian-Turkish courtroom, contemporary historians spend less time on the issue of intent—after all, even if there is no single archival document which dots the i’s and crosses the t’s, there was demonstrably both a murderous disposition in the actions of the Young Turk leaders in 1915 and a genocidal outcome for the Armenians. Most (but not all) historians who write about the Armenians and 1915 use the word “genocide,” while acknowledging that it is more a legal-political term than a historical one.

Arguably, this passage includes one of the most critical observations in the book. De Waal, implicitly recognizes that genocide is a legal term defined by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9th, 1948. Genocide is a legal characterization of an event. Certainly, historical research has to provide evidence to characterize an event as genocide. To do that, in order to fulfil the requirement set by the Article 2 of the Convention, the “intent to destroy” has to be proved beyond any question. This has to rely on the analysis of reliable and valid data. Therefore, propagandist historical books and memoirs cannot stand for evidence. Accounts of the eye-witnesses and war-time diplomatic notes can be used only very cautiously. “Murderous dispositions”²⁶ of the individuals or “genocidal outcomes”²⁷ cannot prove the

21 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, p.64.

22 Ibid pp.60-62.

23 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, p.30-31.

24 Ibid p.55.

25 Ibid p.53.

26 Ibid p.53.

27 Ibid p.53.

intent. Only true archival documents can constitute the data for this enterprise. Therefore, historians and distinguished researchers like de Waal himself have to be cautious of using a legal term randomly. Likewise, using the terms like “denial” and “denialist”, which are equally politicized terms with the term genocide, risks de Waal’s book to remind propagandist books. The negligence of de Waal with some problematic terms is also evident in his usage of the term deportation which means banishment to a foreign country to refer to the forced relocation of Armenians ordered by the Law of Relocation and Resettlement issued on May 17th, 1915. By this law Armenians in certain regions of the Ottoman Empire were not expelled to another country, but were relocated to the north of the present-day Syria, which was then within the borders of the Ottoman state. In fact, de Waal seems to be aware of the problems of using the terms genocide and denial/denialist and sometimes use them in quotation marks. However, like the great majority of the scholars, he does not seem to be cognizant of the difference between deportation and relocation.

In the introduction to the Chapter 12 of his book “Two Memorials in Istanbul”, de Waal reflects on two memorials in Şişli district in Istanbul not far from each other. De Waal writes²⁸:

These two memorial sites, within walking distance of one another, say something about the schizophrenia of modern Turkey regarding its past. On the one hand, an Armenian poet [Daniel Varoujan] killed in 1915 is memorialized, along with hundreds of his ethnic kin. On the other, the man [Talat Pasha] who ordered the poet’s arrest and murder—and directed one of the twentieth century’s worst atrocities—is also still afforded a memorial, albeit one kept in far worse condition.

Although de Waal draws attention to some of the idiosyncrasies in Turkey nicely, he fails to notice that the Armenian cemetery in Şişli is the private property of the Turkish-Armenian community and is maintained by this community, whereas Talat Pasha’s monument is in a park that belongs to a municipality. The different conditions of the two sites are particularly due to the inadequacy of the municipal services. The fact that de Waal is not aware of this actuality reveals his insufficient knowledge of the present-day Turkey. In effect, de Waal’s absence of sufficient knowledge of the contemporary Turkey reveals itself most apparently in Chapter 8 titled “A Turkish Thaw” in which de Waal addresses the recent popularization of the ‘Armenian issue’ in Turkey. In this chapter, de Waal repeats some of the ‘myths’ that the Turkish ‘liberal intelligentsia’ has created, including the one that Taner Akçam created about himself. Consequently, while overrating some of the developments in

28 Ibid p.249.

Turkey, de Waal remains oblivious to some of the deeper agendas and the use and abuse of the ‘Armenian question’ by certain political groups. In the introduction of the book, de Waal fails to elaborate the political rationale behind the Kurdish political movement’s recent discourse on the “genocide”, although he implies that, yet only in passing²⁹. At the same time, by mentioning the ‘Sabiha Gökçen case’³⁰, de Waal provides the reader with important insights about the ‘Armenian question’ in present-day Turkey.

As mentioned above, de Waal’s book underlines some of the overlooked aspects of the history of contemporary Armenian-Turkish relations. Nonetheless, de Waal keeps some important historical turning points in this history relatively unexplored³¹. There are also some historically incorrect arguments such as the one that claims whereas in Lebanon there was a significant support to ASALA and JCAG-ARA terrorism, most of the Armenians in the Western countries deplored terrorism. To argue that, de Waal refers to Anny Balakian’s *Armenian-Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian* (1993). Besides the methodological problems in Balakian’s research, the specific example that de Waal quotes from Balakian on page 157 is simply not valid for that argument. Besides, de Waal overlooks some of the documented facts that imply there was a significant support to terrorism among the Armenians in the Western countries³².

These might be considered as relatively minor mistakes. However, there are inexcusable historiographical faults in de Waal’s book. His unreliable sources are one of those faults. On page 62, when picturing Kemal, the “bloodthirsty” governor of Yozgat, de Waal refers to Peter Balakian’s *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Responses* (2003). However, no serious scholar considers Balakian’s book as a serious historical study. On page 92, de Waal names Aram Andonian among his sources with respect to the ‘Armenian deportations’. This is nothing but ridiculous; the fakery of Andonian’s *The Memoirs of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportation and the Massacres of Armenians* that has been used as an evidence of the “genocide” has already been a proven fact. De Waal’s random references are also evident in his reference to Rafael de Nogales, a Venezuelan soldier of fortune that served in the Ottoman army between 1915 and 1917. On pages 54-55, de Waal cites Nogales’ description of the governor of

29 Ibid p.11.

30 Ibid pp. 189-190& 285-286.

31 For example, Chapter 9 that narrates the birth of the Armenian Republic in 1991 could have detailed this process in reference to Armenian-Turkish relations. This would have shown the change of the Armenian policy with respect to Turkey by 1998 with the presidency of Robert Kocharyan.

32 See, Tuncel, *Armenian Diaspora*, pp.87-97 for a brief overview of the Armenian militant nationalist radicalism between 1975 and 1985.

Diyarbakir Mehmet Reshid as a man belonging “to a very aristocratic family of belonging Stambol”, although Mehmet Reshid was born to a Circassian family in the Caucasus and his family fled to Istanbul when he was 1 year-old. As such, it was impossible for him to belong to a “very aristocratic family”. De Waal quotes Nogales as follows: “Talaat had ordered the slaughter by a circular telegram, *if my memory is correct*, containing a scant three words: ‘Yak-Vur-Oldur,’ meaning ‘Burn, demolish, kill’” (emphasis added). Here, the delusiveness of the expression “Yak-Vur-Oldur” shall be apparent to anyone who knows Turkish. Secondly, Nogales writes “if my memory is correct” as an act of honesty. Alas, de Waal ignores what is apparent.

These invalid references are not due to lack of attention, they are the consequences of a faulted historiography; de Waal accredits memoirs, diplomatic reports, eye-witnesses of the protestant missionaries as valid sources. He does that rather in a self-contradictory way; while acknowledging the biases in the sources for being “subjective” and carrying “anti-Muslim” and “Turcophobic” prejudices, he still uses them because they “all share essential details, which confirm their basic authenticity”³³ although, in his own words “much of the literature of the time seeks a crude narrative of Christian martyrdom or the cheap thrill of barbaric atrocities”³⁴. As to Bryce and Toynbee’s *Blue Book*, de Waal refers to Toynbee himself to prove the reliability of this book. Besides, the clearly manipulative claim of Toynbee that the content of the book was okay, but the publisher, i.e., British government, was the problem³⁵, de Waal’s reliance on the author’s guarantee for the reliability of his own book is not only methodologically but also logically odd. Similar oddness is also apparent on pages 44-45, where de Waal implies the unreliability of Morgenthau’s memoirs yet, eventually uses them as a source. What is difficult to accept is mentioning Heath Lowry, who published a book criticizing Morgenthau’s memoirs without even giving the name of this book, not to say the full reference to it³⁶. On pages 56-57 de Waal refers to Gurgun Mahari’s “self-censored” *Burning Orchards* that was published in 1966 in Soviet Armenia in a way to underline the faults of the ARF-Dashnaksutyun. Doing that, as a renowned specialist of the Caucasus region, he incomprehensibly forgets to think whether it was possible in Soviet Armenia to refer to ARF-Dashnaksutyun in terms other than negative. De Waal’s reference to Harut Sassounian’s forthcoming book as to the Zurich Meeting in

33 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, p.33.

34 Ibid p.43.

35 Ibid pp.42-43.

36 Heath Lowry’s book that de Waal refers is *The Story behind Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, Istanbul, Isis Publications, 1990.

1977 is another clear evidence of de Waal randomness in choosing his references³⁷. With these methodological faults, de Waal's accusation of the "more extreme Turkish polemicist"³⁸ for engaging "in a game in which they cast doubt on every eyewitness report" lacks validity.

Overall, Thomas de Waal's *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide* is a comprehensive introduction to the contemporary Armenian-Turkish relations for the general reader. It is a comprehensive review of the general course and the major turning points of this complicated relationship between two nations. On the other hand, this book is impaired for repeating some recent 'myths' that the Turkish 'liberal intelligentsia' has created, which reveals de Waal's shortcomings to understand the deeper socio-political dynamics in Turkey. For the scholarly community, *Great Catastrophe* contains aggravating methodological errors, undependable references and invalid arguments as the causes of 'great frustration'.

37 Harut Sassounian is the publisher of the English-language Armenian weekly The California Courier since 1983. He is a known outspoken person, who contributes to major Armenian journals in the USA. Whereas, he writes articles about Armenian politics, the main body of his articles is composed of rigid criticisms of Turkey. Sassounian's articles are good examples to study the vague boundary between critique and hate speech.

38 De Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, p.53.

Armenian History and the Question of Genocide

Author: Michael M. Gunter (New York-London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011) XI + 195 pages.

Prof. Michael M. Gunter's book is the first one that is specifically devoted to criticize the "Armenian genocide" label, published by a mainstream, Western publishing house and written by a non-Turkish scholar. For example, *The Armenian File* was the work of Kâmuran Gürün, and Gunter Lewy's *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey* was published by the University of Utah Press—after the Oxford University Press capitulated in front of the pressure exerted by Peter Balakian. The late Stanford Jay Shaw was a victim of harassment and even of an attempt of assassination, as recalls Prof. Gunter (p. 54). As a result, the publication of such a book is a great victory of freedom of expression against intellectual terrorism.

This study is an honest synthesis of the historiography existing around 2010 and an analysis of the conflict since 1970s. It is divided in six chapters. The first one is an overview of the Armenian issue from 1878 to 1918, with a focus on classical Armenian and Turkish positions, finishing by an attempt of synthesis. The second one develops the reflection, deepening the issue of what is genocide (and what is not) and exposing some new developments of the historiography during the 2000s, particularly the book of Gunter Lewy. The third chapter analyses the aspect the most studied since 1980s by Prof. Gunter: Armenian terrorism in 20th century. The next one is, in a certain sense, the chronological continuation of the previous one, presenting the contemporary Armenian lobbying in the West. The fifth chapter answers the accusations of "Turkish counter-terror and harassment" and the sixth one, correspondingly, presents the attempts of rapprochement since mid-1980s. In spite of some evitable inaccuracies, this concise book is recommended.

Presenting the historical dimension of the conflict, Michael M. Gunter must be praised for several courageous demonstrations. In particular, he provides a concise rebuttal of the simplifications on the alleged "Ottoman night": In fact, the Ottoman Christians, particularly the Armenians, experienced an economic rise in 19th century, and possessed advantages that the Muslims never

possessed, such as Western diplomatic intervention). The author also mentions the terrorist activities of the Armenian nationalists during the late Ottoman period then the national security problem faced by the Ottoman Empire in 1915, as a result of the Armenian insurgencies (pp. 5-8, 37-46 and 61-62). Crucial as well is the reference to the works of Justin McCarthy, proving that the Armenians were in minority in all the provinces claimed at the beginning of 20th century (and until today) as “Western Armenia” (pp. 17 and 22).

One of the most courageous remarks is the one presenting the devastating analysis, by Erman Şahin, of books written by German sociologist Taner Akçam (p. 37). Quite interesting as well is his presentation of Guenter Lewy’s book (particularly when he cites the comments of Prof. Lewy on the manipulations of sources by Vahakn N. Dadrian) and his rebuttal of the critiques formulated by Joseph A. Kechichian and Keith David Watenpaugh against himself and Prof. Lewy (pp. 46-54). In short, explains Prof. Gunter, “the application of the term ‘genocide’ to these tragic events is inappropriate because the Turkish actions were neither unilateral nor premeditated” (p. 54) and also because “Armenian communities in such large western cities as Constantinople and Smyrna were spared of deportation probably because they were not in a position to aid the invading Russians” (p. 55). The existence of sufferings and important losses is not in itself a proof of genocide—if so, there would be a Turkish genocide as well, since at least 2.5 millions Anatolian Muslims died between 1914 and 1922. Some parts are more approximate, for example when he fails to mention in detail the powerful criticism of *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* by Sidney Bradshaw Fay and Heath Lowry.¹ Heath Lowry’s study is briefly mentioned (p. 142, n. 49) and the one of Fay is not cited at all. Correspondingly, the book should have been much more critical as far as Richard G. Hovannisian is concerned.²

On Armenian terrorism, one of the most interesting aspects of Michael M. Gunter’s contribution is the data on the warm support for terrorists from the main structures of the Armenian diaspora, particularly the Armenian

1 Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, New York-Toronto-London: Macmillan, 1928, volume II, pp. 167-182; Heath W. Lowry, *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1990. Also see Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005, pp. 140-142.

2 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 17-19, 52-53, 78-82 and passim; Heath W. Lowry, “Richard G. Hovannisian on Lieutenant Robert Steed Dunn — A Review Note,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, V, 1985, pp. 209-252, http://english.isam.org.tr/documents/_dosyalar/_pdfler/osmanli_arastirmalari_derGISI/osmanli%20C4%B1sy5/1986_5_LOWRYHW.pdf; Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, Cambridge (Massachusetts)-London: Harvard University Press, 2011, pp. 272-273, n. 3; Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians (1878-1896)*, London-Portland: Frank Cass, 1993, pp. 2-3.

Revolutionary Federation. Indeed, as explains Prof. Gunter, the ARF, which was established in 1890 and widely practiced terrorism during the Ottoman period, turned back to terrorism in the 1970s, creating a specific organization, the Justice Commandos for Armenian Genocide (JCAG, later called Armenian Revolutionary Army) and the legal branch of the party constantly explained how great was the assassination of Turks, only guilty by birth.

As this study recalls, the majority of the Turkish diplomats assassinated by Armenian terrorists were not victims of the Armenian Secret Army for Liberation of Armenia, but of the JCAG: Out of thirty, twenty were killed by Dashnak terrorists, eight by the ASALA and two by Gourgen Yanikian, the inspiration of the ASALA. The description of racket by the ASALA and of drug smuggling by both ASALA and JCAG members is also more than welcome. In the current context, the readers should correspondingly read and re-read the evidence exposed by Prof. Gunter about the cooperation between the ASALA and Palestinian terrorist groups. It would help to understand the contemporary anti-Turkish crusade of some warm supporters of Arab causes, such as Amal Alamuddin-Clooney, Robert Fisk and Geoffrey Robertson.

However, the analysis of Armenian terrorism by Prof. Gunter has two significant flaws. Firstly, he affirms (p. 57): “Also unique was how Armenian terrorism manifested two periods of activity separated by almost half a century,” the assassination of Turkish, Azeri former officials and Armenian “traitors” by the Dashnak network Nemesis and the attacks of 1970s and 1980s. In fact, the ARF continued terrorist activities during the interwar, not only by practicing terror against Ramkavar, Hunchak leaders and Dashnak dissidents (as explained in the book of Kapriel Seropé Papazian, rightfully quoted by Michael M. Gunter) but also by several attempts of assassination against Kemal Atatürk from 1924 to 1927.³ Inter-Armenian violence (Dashnaks vs. non-Dashnaks) also killed forty persons in Lebanon during the small civil war of 1958.⁴ Secondly, Michael M. Gunter repeats the classical analysis of the 1980s, affirming that the ASALA emerged in January 1975, and that the CJGA were created some months later by the ARF, because the young activists were attracted by the ASALA. This interpretation, already contradicted by the preeminence of the JCAG from 1975 to 1979, is refused since 2002, when a published version of Gaïdz Minassian’s doctoral dissertation was published. Having exceptionally worked in the ARF archives, Dr. Minassian concluded

3 Bilâl N. Şimşir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız (1973-1994)*, Ankara-İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2000, volume I, pp. 61-73.

4 Khachig Toloyan, “Terrorism in Modern Armenian Political Culture,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, IV-2, 1992, p. 19.

that the ASALA emerged in 1971 and that the ARF congress of Vienna (December 1972) decided to create the JCAG.⁵

The description of the contemporary developments, since the end of the USSR (conflict between Armenian and Azerbaijan, anti-Turkic Armenian lobbying in Western countries), contains several interesting remarks. The best one is probably about the occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh (an Azerbaijani province with a majority of ethnic Armenians since the massacres and expulsions that took place between 1905 and 1920) and seven predominantly Azeri districts by Armenian forces (p. 81): “These supporters [of the self-proclaimed Republic of Karabakh, or Artsakh] are seemingly oblivious to the hypocritical fact that seizing Turkic lands on the basis that they contained an Armenian majority was analogous to what Armenian Turkey has done to what Armenians claim are their historic land in eastern Turkey.” The distinction (pp. 90-94) between the Dashnak Armenian National Committee of American, the predominantly Ramkavar Armenian Assembly of America and the independent U.S.-Armenia Public Affairs Committee (arguable the less extremist of the three ones) are also useful.

The description of the Lewis affair in 1993-95 (pp. 77-79) is, however, more approximate. In addition the criminal case lost by the Dashnaks in 1994 and mentioned by Prof. Gunter, there was also at least one civil case lost by two other Armenian organizations against Bernard Lewis.⁶ More important, in 2005, the *Cour de cassation* ruled that the article 1382 of the civil code (saying that every damage must be repaired and used against Bernard Lewis in the only case he lost) cannot be used to limit the freedom of speech between individuals.⁷

The last chapter (“Rapprochement?” pp. 119-138) is the closest to us in 2015 but also the one deserving the most revisions. Most of the hopes mentioned in these pages were proved false. The Workshop for Armenian/Turkish Scholarship (WATS, evoked p. 127) turned to a new tool of Armenian propaganda.⁸ It was actually predictable since the Armenian side was represented, especially, by Gerard J. Libaridian, a former activist of the ARF who does not regret any of his past activities (including his testimony in Aix-

5 Gaidz Minassian, *Guerre et terrorisme arméniens*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 2002, pp. 22-23, 28 and 32-34.

6 Bernard Lewis, *Notes on a Century*, London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012, pp. 286-297.

7 Cour de cassation, chambre civile, 27 septembre 2005, n° 03-13622, <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichJuriJudi.do?idTexte=JURITEXT000007051612&dateTexte=>

8 See Jeremy Salt, “History as Theology,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 17 Issue 1/2, Fall 2011, p. 159 (critique of the result of the work of the WATS).

en-Provence for Max Hrair Kilndjian in 1982, to support terrorism) and does not want to enter any debate on the genocide label.⁹ The dominant view in the organizations of the Armenian diaspora is indeed summarized by Dashnak leader and prolific columnist Harut Sassounian: “I am not the one who needs fact-finding... I don’t need to find out what happened. I know what happened” (statement to *The Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 2008, cited p. 123). Even more importantly, the Protocols of Zurich failed, and Michael M. Gunter himself provides a beginning of explanation, mentioning the disappointing decision of the Constitutional Court of Armenian (pp. 132-137).

The author compares the situation to the settlement of the conflict between Egypt and Israel in 1979, adding that “only time will tell whether the present rapprochement will lead cordial peace” such as the Israeli-Egyptian one. In fact, the peace was signed in Camp David first of all because Sadat gave the priority to Egyptian national interests, against the dream of Nasser to build a pan-Arab state based on the annihilation of Israel. Such an intellectual revolution is merely unthinkable in Armenia for the moment. In this regard, the main weakness of the last chapter is its complete underestimation of the role played in the current blockade by the ideology of the Republican Party, in power in Armenia since 1998. What peace can be expected from a government claiming the ideological heritage of a Nazi war criminal (G. Nejdeh) and preferring irredentism to the welfare of his own population?

9 This reviewer public got last year first-hand evidence from Mr. Libaridian himself, having asked him a question on these points, having obtained a non-response and later having heard Mr. Libaridian’s answer (if I can say) to another person of the audience on 1915.

Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency

Author: Edward J. Erickson, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 299 pages.

About the Author

Edward J. Erickson is a Professor of Military History at the Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University in United States. He is also on the board of governors of the Institute of Turkish Studies at Georgetown University. Furthermore, he has experience in the region as a retired US army officer; he served in NATO assignments in Izmir as a foreign area officer specializing in Turkey and the Middle East. Erickson is a distinguished scholar on the Ottoman military history for the First World War period. His work includes *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (2000), *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* (2013) and *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* (2009), *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: A Comparative Study* (2014).

Book Review

The book titled “Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency” was published in November 2013 by Palgrave Macmillan. While emphasizing that the book is not intended to provide a social and political history of the grievances of oppressed peoples, Erickson provides the reader with an overview of the parallel cases of relocations in history, and Ottoman counterinsurgency practices between 1878 and 1915, particularly with regard to the activities of the Armenian revolutionary groups, and presents the rationale behind the Ottoman Empire’s counterinsurgency campaign.

Erickson’s main argument in his book is that relocation policies toward the Ottoman Armenians in the eastern provinces of the empire was merely a military necessity for the Ottomans; the sole motive behind the policy was the existential threat the armed hostile Armenian groups posed to the empire. Furthermore, by presenting numbers as to how many Ottoman Armenians died

during relocation, and how many of them actually stayed home and were not relocated, he contributes to the discussions on the Armenian claims of genocide. His research on the Ottoman state's selective policy of relocation addressing those Armenians in the warzones, the measures taken by the government to ensure that the relocation went smoothly, and the trials of those who were suspected of abuse are good evidence for arguing that the events of 1915 did not constitute genocide.

Erickson's book is noteworthy in the sense that it provides a critical historical analysis of events while providing the reader with a military-strategic viewpoint. The author's references to "insurgency", "counterinsurgency" and irregular warfare for the period under consideration are significant because these terms were not commonly used in early 20th century, as the author acknowledges it himself in the introduction of the book. Moreover, the lack of literature on how the Ottoman Empire reacted to insurgency in these years makes the book a valuable scholarly analysis on the events. As Jeremy Salt rightly puts it, "for the first time a scholar was turning his attention to these wars from the perspective of the Ottoman military command rather than the viewpoint of countries attacking the Ottoman Empire."¹ In doing so, Erickson delves into the Ottoman state archives and finds authentic documents, including messages between ministries and memoirs by important statesmen of the time.

Discussing the counterinsurgency policies of the western powers, namely the policies of Spain in Cuba, the US in the Philippines and Britain in South Africa, Erickson draws the conclusion that these significantly similar and highly effective practices which were based on the removal and relocation of civilian populations set a template for the future. Thus, he asks, why wouldn't it be understandable for the Ottoman government to execute this counterinsurgency policy towards the Armenian insurrection, which could be operationalized using minimal military resources?²

Erickson indicates that the power vacuum in eastern Anatolia during the war encouraged Armenians to raise rebellions in the region. Citing historical documents, Erickson emphasizes that Russians, as well as the French and the British, the wartime enemies of the Ottoman Empire, actively supported the Armenian insurrection. Moreover, the author stresses that Armenians who revolted in eastern Anatolia were in support of a Russian offensive, which is

1 Jeremy Salt, The Armenian 'Relocation': The Case for 'Military Necessity', *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 29, 8 May 2014, p. 66.

2 Erickson, p. 213.

not often mentioned in the literature. Making it worse, Erickson writes - based on Ottoman intelligence reports – that armed hostile Armenian committees executed terrorist attacks, bombings and assassination of civilians.

Acknowledging that all of these had to be seen as the Ottoman government had seen it, Erickson characterizes the “existential threat”³ the Armenian insurgents posed to the national security. This stemmed from the fact that the Armenian insurgents constantly attacked and cut the lines of communications which supported the Ottomans on the Caucasian, Mesopotamian and the Palestinian fronts against the allies. These lines of communications ran through areas in eastern Anatolia populated heavily by Armenians and the heavily armed Armenian revolutionary committees. Being weak in the Empire’s core areas as the army was mostly concentrated on the frontiers, the Ottoman government, Erickson writes, was in a “strategic dilemma”⁴, not expecting to combat an Armenian insurgency.

Erickson’s book is a valuable contribution to the literature in the sense that his research is based on authentic military documents in the Ottoman archives. For example, discussing whether a cohesive and coordinated Armenian master plan was executed for revolution, he notes that there is no scholarly work to prove the existence of such a plan. Thus, Erickson examines the message traffic between the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Interior and reaches the conclusion that that Ottomans believed that such a plan existed. Discussing the Ottoman Empire’s policy in reaction to this, the author states that the Empire, having no significant combat forces or a central strategic reserve, executed a “strategy of poverty”; employing relocation, a strategy “borne of weakness rather than of strength”⁵. Thus, the Ottoman government’s policy toward the Armenian insurgency moved from a localized response of relocation to a general counterinsurgency campaign based on relocation.

Delving into the conditions during the relocation, Erickson stresses in his book that the Armenians who were relocated faced malnutrition, inadequate medical care, and lack of shelter. Making it worse, it was reported that some faced atrocities and abuses. The author stresses that the Ottoman government took some measures on the ground to make sure the relocation went smoothly. The establishment of a commission that was tasked to investigate reports of atrocities and abuses against the Armenians constitutes an example of these measures. Citing internal messages of the government, Erickson also points

3 Erickson, p. 161.

4 Erickson, p. 183.

5 Erickson, p. 213.

out that Talat Pasha cautioned the governor of Ankara to ensure that the transfer of Armenians “be carried out in an orderly and practical manner, should henceforth never be left to individuals having fanatical feelings of enmity and that...Armenians will be definitely protected.”⁶ What is more, the author points out to the fact that the Ottoman state sent hundreds of individuals who were suspected of these crimes to trial. Thus, Erickson provides evidence that the Ottoman state in 1915 did not have the intent to destroy the Ottoman Armenians.

As for the number of Armenians who died during the relocation, while indicating that there is no agreement among scholars on this issue, Erickson states that “exact numbers simply do not exist”⁷ on this matter. He adds that advocates of the Armenian position, in fact, tend to report higher numbers. For example, stresses that the numbers reported by Raymond Kévorkian, who made the most comprehensive study on this issue, sometimes exceeds the known numbers of the local Armenian populations.

Most importantly, Erickson makes a great contribution to the literature delving into the issue of the number of Ottoman Armenians who were not relocated, which remains in dispute as well. Drawing on historical records, he argues that the relocation policy of the Ottoman Empire was a tailored policy toward specific eastern provinces directly threatening the national security. In fact, the majority of Armenian residents of the capital, and its surroundings were not relocated. Using Ottoman documents, the author notes that the estimates of the number of those Ottoman Armenians who were not relocated is between 350,000 and 500,000. Erickson rightfully asks, “If the goal was extermination, why weren’t the western Armenians relocated as well? Moreover, why were the relocations halted at all, especially after the spring of 1916, when, arguably the Ottomans were winning their war?”⁸ Besides, Erickson gives an answer to those who draw a parallel between the Holocaust and the events of 1915. Siding with the well-known scholar Guenter Lewy, he states that unlike what happened during the Holocaust, there is no evidence proving the actuality of an intentional extermination of the Armenians sponsored by the state.⁹ Lastly, the author states that the Ottoman government did not identify all Ottoman Armenians as “enemies within”, and that it rather referred to them as loyal citizens of the empire.¹⁰ By presenting these facts, the author makes a great

6 Erickson, p. 210.

7 Erickson, p. 214.

8 Erickson, p. 228

9 Erickson, p. 229.

10 Erickson, p. 219.

contribution to the literature. These facts, solely, can serve as direct challenges to the Armenian claims of genocide.

To conclude, Edward Erickson presents a powerful case for the argument that the policy of relocation by the Ottoman Empire was dictated solely by the military necessity; the sole motive behind that policy was the direct threat posed by Armenian insurgent groups to the war efforts of the empire. The lack of literature on how the Ottoman Empire reacted to insurgency in these years makes the book a valuable scholarly analysis on the events, and Erickson stands out as the first scholar who treated the Armenian issue from the perspective of the Ottoman military. Delving into Ottoman state archives and authentic documents, including messages between ministries and memoirs by critical statesmen of the time, Erickson makes a powerful case for presenting the Ottoman point of view of the events.

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