The Armenian Genocide

Cultural and Ethical Legacies

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Dedicated to the Great Faith and Commitment

of

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Scholar—Servant—Steward

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Turkish Historiography and the Unbearable Weight of 1915

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Even though ninety years have passed since the traumatic events of 1915, there are still questions that haunt Turkish society; specifically, how does one narrate what happened to the Anatolian Armenians? How can one talk about 1915? How and why did 1915 happen? What can one term 1915 and who can write about it?

For instance, the traumatic events of 1915 have been referred to by various terms in Turkish society throughout the ninety years' of its history. The initial Ottoman legal term employed to refer to the action taken against the Armenians in 1915 was *tehcir* (*tehjir*), loosely translated as "forced migration," which etymologically derives from the Arabic root *h-j-r*, meaning to migrate from one place to another. This was distinct from the Ottoman term *sürgün*, translated as "the transfer of populations"—the latter was an ancient practice ordered by the Ottoman state more to repopulate regions of the empire in an attempt to increase its revenue base. Applied mostly to Muslims, it was often accompanied by tax breaks and land allocations in the settled regions. Tehcir did not contain any of the advantages of sürgün and was much more punitive in nature. The term Ottomans employed after World War I to refer to the atrocities committed against the Armenians during the forced deportations was *kıtal*, translated as "massacre," or "mass killing." It is this term that I employ in relation to 1915.

I am aware, however, that the common practice among Armenians and most English-language speaking scholars is to refer to 1915 as "genocide." I do agree that if one were to define genocide "as sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to destroy physically a collectivity directly or indirectly through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim,"[1] what happened

in 1915 was genocide. I prefer to employ the term massacres because my aim is to develop a historical sociological analysis from the standpoint of Ottoman history as it is negotiated in Turkish society today. Ottomans themselves did not have access to the term genocide because it was not yet formulated—the term was first coined by Raphael Lemkin in his 1944 book entitled *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*; the Turkish state in turn has politicized the term to such a degree that its employment automatically shuts off any possible venues of communication with Turkish society at large.

Since my aim is to communicate my ideas to Turkish society and hopefully start a dialogue, I choose to employ the traditional Ottoman term. Also, the term genocide contains a very strong moral responsibility—it would not be fair to expect Turkish society that is barely aware of what happened in 1915 to be ready to assume this responsibility. After all, ignorance is "one condition that is generally recognized as a morally valid excuse" provided, of course, that this does not translate into "self-deception and culpable ignorance."[2] The term "massacre" also captures, and hopefully problematizes the current contention in Turkish society against the term genocide. Turkish society first has to be communicated the historical events that transpired in 1915. I am sure that once it has processed and interpreted this knowledge it will correctly decide what to call the events.

The Turkish translation of the term genocide is *soykırımı*, which could be translated back into English as the "slaughter, carnage of a race." Turkish scholars who are attempting to start a dialogue in Turkish society often prefer instead to employ the Turkish term *kırım*, thus removing the racial component, to thereby refer to 1915 as "slaughter, carnage," or *katliam*, roughly equivalent in meaning to massacres.

In this discussion, I address the first two of my earlier questions, namely the narration of what happened to Anatolian Armenians and how one can talk about 1915 within this narration. I must note at this juncture that I employ the term "Anatolian Armenians" to refer to those affected and destroyed by the traumatic events of 1915 as this term captures not only their place of origin, their centuries-old homeland, but also refers to how they socially and culturally identified themselves as a community. I have to emphasize, however, that the term as such does not capture the horrid deaths of hundreds of Armenian intellectuals arrested on April 24, 1915 and deported from Istanbul/Constantinople by train to be massacred and the tens of thousands likewise deported from Adrianople, Rodosto, and other Ottoman territories in Europe (Rumelia) only to perish en route. Most of the other Armenians in Istanbul escaped the same tragic fate as did those of Izmir/Smyrna, at least until 1922.

Part I commences with the acknowledgement that the current narrative structure available in Turkish to communicate the massacres of 1915 contains a very strong naturalized nationalist subtext that subtly marginalizes, normalizes, and legitimates this tragedy. I, therefore, propose a new framework for

Turkish historiography that gives agency to the experience of minority groups and suggest that the current hegemonic nationalist historiography be replaced by it. In Part II, I move to the next question of how to locate 1915 within this new post-nationalist historiography. Though 1915 is powerful when unmediated, unframed, and unassimilated, once it is located within historiography, its trauma becomes normalized. This has also been evinced in the only other context like 1915, both in terms of the scope of the tragedy as well as its disastrous aftermath, namely the Holocaust.[3] Hence, I analyze the problem of the contextualization of 1915 in relation to the Holocaust.

Part I: A New Post-Nationalist Turkish Historiography

Even though the work of historiography is centrally bound to concerns in the nature of knowledge production, it is also always engaged as an ethical exercise in a promise of justice to the other, to the excluded.[4] This is especially the case in my attempt to reconstruct a post-nationalist historiography, because the current one, I contend, excludes the experience of the minorities. I should note, at this juncture, that neither is Turkey alone in constructing such a nationalist narrative nor I in challenging it. Nationalist historiographies are recently being challenged in other parts of the world as well. Two cases in point are the current debates in Israel[5] and Indonesia.[6]

When the current Turkish historiography pertaining to the Anatolian Armenians is analyzed in detail, the elements of Turkish nationalism and the violence of the events of 1915 emerge as the two elements that need to be examined critically and deconstructed. The domination of the ideology (read Turkish nationalism) and the historical event (read 1915) that have diffused into much of the existing scholarship on Turkey remain unexamined as scholars approach historical sources uncritically and often accept the textual rhetoric as historical reality. Yet such histories epistemologically manipulate the role and significance of certain social groups (read Sunni Turks) at the expense of all others through their selective employment and deployment of history. In so doing, they eliminate outright certain possible choices and trajectories (read non-nationalist solutions) not only from history but, by implication, from scholars' analyses as well. They thus introduce a certain historical determinacy whereby the nationally triumphant groups (read the now secularized Turkish elites) always persevere by soaring to historical success against all odds, and the vanquished (read the rest of Turkish society, including all minorities) seem destined to failure. A case illustrating this depiction is the construction of the point of origin of the official historiography of the Turkish republic.

I conjecture that it was the famous *Speech* (*Nutuk*) that Mustafa Kemal delivered in 1927 at the Second Congress of the Republican People's Party—which he had founded and now led—that laid the foundation stone for the official historiography of the Turkish republic. In that speech, Mustafa Kemal narrated his own historiography of the War of Independence and that particular histori-

ography eventually became that of the Turkish nation. I should note, however, that Mustafa Kemal was not alone in his attempt to create a nationalist history for the new Turkish republic. Public narratives were often employed to create nationalist narratives for history that often made a nation; a case in point is the creation of the story of American nation-building.[7]

The first sentence of Mustafa Kemal's speech actually declared the point of origin of his own historiography—and therefore, by implication, of all the official Turkish historiographies thereafter—as follows: "I alighted in Samsun on the 19th day of May of 1919." The ensuing text not only covered the events from the year 1919 onward, but did so from the vantage point of 1927, namely four years after the establishment of the Turkish republic and the suppression of various revolts throughout Anatolia. It is noteworthy that at the particular historical juncture when Mustafa Kemal took to narrating his version of this new nation's past, all the minority groups in Turkey, including the Armenians, had already been very effectively marginalized. Given these epistemological parameters, it was virtually impossible within the confines of Turkish nationalist historiography predicated on such a historical framework to ever recover and fully recognize the agency of such ethnic and religious groups in Turkey.

And the ensuing Turkish nationalist discourse neatly categorized these ethnic and religious groups along strictly maintained boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. It defined the included Turkish secular elites as historically triumphant and then proceeded to naturalize their norms and values into society as "historical reality." The nationalist ideology also idealized the emerging Turkish secular elites as it simultaneously allocated them exclusive determining power over the course of Turkish history and also purified them of all the vice they had once engaged in by censoring history; it thus presented the Turkish elites morally and metaphorically as "white." By the same token, Turkish nationalist ideology articulated and narrated the excluded minorities as the vanquished and then proceeded to attribute to them the exact opposite characteristics: the excluded were stripped of most of their agency, and the very little they were permitted to exercise was of course depicted within parameters defined by the triumphant group, thereby appearing totally subversive and immoral. Turkish nationalist ideology thus embellished history by selectively employing only those historical events that portrayed the excluded minorities in a negative light, thereby saturating them with vice. It therefore ended up conveying Turkish minorities morally and metaphorically as "black." And when scholars, they themselves socialized within the Turkish nation-state where such an ideology was predominant, approached this highly selective representation of Turkish history within this framework, they, too, directly or indirectly reproduced historical actors as either black or white, with no consideration at all of either the possible shades in-between or other colors.

The official Turkish nationalist historiography also selectively retold the historical events before 1915 in a way that both legitimated what happened to

the Anatolian Armenians and took pains to demonstrate that the same, if not more, happened to the Turks as well. This epistemological restructuring of the past, undertaken to emphasize the unavoidability of 1915, enabled Turkish nationalist historiography to deny both its extent and intentionality. Hence, 1915 was employed to structure all existing Turkish historical accounts onto itself with insurmountable force and, in so doing, obliterated all critical historical analysis and eliminated all events, institutions, social groups that might not have foreshadowed this ultimate outcome in the following manner: Anatolian Armenians were portrayed in history initially as a wealthy and content "loyal" social group who turned ungrateful and treacherous mostly at the instigation of the Great Powers; the same powers were also narrated, in the same stroke of the pen, as aggressing upon the Turks in their attempt to wrest the empire away from the "rightful owners." As a consequence, both the Turks and the Armenians were depicted as suffering "equally" during World War I, which was brought upon them by the Great Powers.

In official Turkish historiography, both the hegemony of Turkish nationalism and the hegemony of 1915 ended up dramatically limiting the historical repertoire of the scholars engaged in the research of Turkey's past. The official employment of history thus portrayed very selectively the social conditions of the Ottoman Empire, the agency of various social groups within, the repertoire of choices these groups had, and the range of historical events they encountered. Given this state of affairs, I argue here that it would not be possible for official Turkish historiography to make any significant empirical and methodological advances without reconstructing its framework through engaging in critical analysis. I propose to reconstruct such a historiography by reconsidering in particular its periodization so that it is not solely based on the naturalized nationalist history of the Turks that eventually emerges hegemonic, but rather on the intersections of the experiences of *both* the Turks and the minority groups, in this case the Anatolian Armenians, of the empire.

Alternate Periodization of a Post-Nationalist Turkish Historiography

The alternate periodization of such a post-nationalist Turkish historiography needs to comprise, in relation to the Ottoman *millet* and imperial structures, five stages: (1) Formative Period, 1453-1639; (2) Institutionalization Period, 1639-1839; (3) Reform Period, 1839-1902; (4) Nationalist Period, 1902-1982; and (5) Toward a Post-Nationalist Period, 1982-2004.

In determining the temporal boundaries of the *Formative Period of 1453-1639*, even though the origins of what became the Ottoman Empire could be traced to the establishment of the Ottoman principality in the Iznik (Nicea) region around 1299 and the interaction of the semi-nomadic Ottoman Turks with the non-Muslims residing in Anatolia even a century earlier, I conjecture that it was probably with the conquest of Constantinople from the Byzantine Empire in

1453 that the Ottoman Turks started to develop not only the ideal but also the realization of an imperial structure populated by social groups from multiple ethnicities and religions. It is then that the first outline of a policy regarding the conditions under which non-Muslims was to exist within the confines of Ottoman lands starts to form.[8]

According to this policy, the non-Muslim minorities were organized into religious communities termed millets, where the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities comprised the main categories. Each millet community was organized around its religious institution and headed by its particular elected religious leader who oversaw the internal administration of the community and was legally responsible for it, especially in terms of the payment of communal taxes to the Ottoman sultan. Under this arrangement, even though the non-Muslim minorities possessed economic rights, they lacked significant social and political rights in that they could not bear arms, travel on horseback within cities, or hold administrative office except when appointed by the sultan. Since their civic rights were based on their religion, they also could not marry Muslims without religious conversion and, if they chose to do so, lost their legal rights within their own communities. As a consequence, during this formative period, given the conditions under which they functioned, the Ottoman minorities ended up becoming active and prominent in one sphere—the economic one—where they faced the minimum restrictions. They thus specialized in particular professions and utilized their multilingual skills especially in inter-imperial trade.

The fact that the position of the Ottoman minorities was restricted in relation to their social interaction with the rest of the population, however, produced significant repercussions throughout society. The Ottoman social system, established as such, ended up naturalizing the superiority of the Muslims in that there were no such political, social, and economic restrictions placed upon them; they could bear arms, hold office, and also live in a society that operated within the Islamic legal framework. In short, one could claim that during the formative period, the social system allowed the Ottoman minorities to coexist peacefully with their non co-religionists—a state of affairs quite advanced given the persecutions of religious minorities throughout Europe but favored, in the last instance, the Muslims. I set 1639 as the endpoint of this formative period because of a change that then occurred in the particular position of the Armenians within the empire: it was with the treaty of 1639 between the Ottoman and Safavid empires that the social location of the Armenians in the Ottoman social system became finalized.[9]

The periodization I propose differs from that currently provided by the Turkish nationalist historiography in the following dimensions: The latter's portrayal of this period is one of continuous peace where "Turkish magnanimity and Muslim benevolence" grants rights to the religious minorities living in their midst; the narrative then *imputes* how religious minorities received this noble act (without historically researching to find out what they actually thought in

relation to their existence in the Ottoman Empire) by stating that they in turn became and remained peaceful "out of gratitude." Hence, the moral tone of benevolence on the side of the Turks and gratitude on the receiving side of the minorities is already established by the Turks for the minorities, without the latter's participation in the process. The Turkish nationalist historiography then proceeds to select carefully and mention frequently other contemporaneous historical events with the intent to demonstrate the superiority of the Ottoman treatment of minorities over others; one such frequently mentioned historical event involves the violence inflicted by the Spanish Inquisition upon religious minorities resulting in their death and deportation. That the Ottoman sultan welcomed such minorities into his empire further strengthens the nationalist narrative. Hence the initial positive moral tone set by the domestic treatment of the religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire is extended here to establish moral superiority over contemporaneous European empires.

In developing the above-mentioned narrative, Turkish nationalist historiography thus selectively highlights the favorable dimensions of the minority existence in the empire. Yet, in so doing, it also, again selectively, fails to mention other aspects of Ottoman minority existence. Specifically, Turkish nationalist historiography underplays or silences the obligations the Ottoman minorities had to fulfill in return for what they received, namely the additional taxes they were obligated to pay, and also the legal, social, political, and administrative restrictions they faced within Ottoman society because of their religion. In addition, Turkish nationalist historiography assumes the naturalized dominance of the Ottoman administrative perspective as it treats the Ottoman minorities as one undifferentiated, rather stereotyped, social group; it thus fails to take into account, for instance, the internal dynamics and divisions of the religious minorities such as the ones that existed between those residing in the capital as opposed to those living in the provinces, or the inter-communal strife among them that was also present from the onset. Also overlooked in this particular historical juncture is the tension that existed between the Ottoman Muslims and minorities as their interests often came into conflict. The absence of these factors in the Turkish nationalist historiography idealizes and thereby dehistoricizes the relationship between the Muslim and minority communities; in so doing, it indirectly sets the stage for the later mythification of Muslim and minority relations. It is therefore no accident that with the advent of domestic strife in nineteenth-century Ottoman society, this selective representation "naturally" leads to the placement of the blame for the social strife unto the treachery of the ungrateful Ottoman minorities.

I chose 1639 as the starting point of the *Institutionalization Period of 1639-1839* for it is during the period of Sultan Suleiman II that the Ottoman social structure takes shape as the now established relations between the Muslims and minorities start to reproduce themselves.[10] During the ensuing two hundred years, even though the Ottoman Muslim and minority communities do indeed

coexist relatively peacefully, they continue their transformation not as one social unit, but as two separate communities, one Muslim and the other non-Muslim, that evolve internally within themselves and in quite limited interaction with one another. Hence the initial legal separation based on religion becomes institutionalized into the Ottoman social structure creating a very strong defined and maintained bifurcation. As the Ottoman subjects practice their religions within their own communal spaces, their social and communication networks develop most strongly within themselves rather than across the divide; as the same subjects cannot marry or inherit across the religious divide, their transfer of knowledge, wealth, and resources also occurs within their own communities separately from one another. In particular, the restriction placed upon minorities of not being allowed to bear arms as non-Muslims excludes them from the Ottoman military profession, which becomes the exclusive domain of the Muslims. Even though this restriction proves to be quite advantageous to the Ottoman Muslims during the expansion of the empire in that it brings them not only material wealth but higher social standing, it nevertheless starts to work to their disadvantage in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the Ottoman Empire stops expanding. Thus, the Ottoman army starts to face increasing defeats, and the Ottoman Muslims manning the military not only fail to acquire wealth and status through warfare but begin to lose their lives at alarmingly high rates.

What limits Ottoman imperial expansion during the same historical period is the rising West. It is the emergence of European powers now equipped not only with the products of the Industrial Revolution but with new military warfare techniques that establishes a strong stand at the borders of the Ottoman Empire. This Western transformation, which places the Ottoman Muslim subjects at a disadvantage, provides new opportunities for the Ottoman non-Muslims. Because of the European economic expansion that ensues as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, European trade with the Ottoman Empire escalates and the Ottoman minorities who have for ages been domestically directed to specializing in trade and the economy acquire, unlike their Muslim counterparts, increased advantages because of their linguistic, cultural, and religious affinity with Europe. The Ottoman sultans make use of the skills of some Ottoman minorities by appointing them to significant administrative posts, often relying on either their domestically developed economic skills or their linguistic skills; hence, many end up heading Ottoman economic institutions or engaging in diplomacy with European powers on behalf of the Ottoman sultan. Yet, the minorities manning these high-level administrative posts differ from their Muslim counterparts in one significant dimension: the Ottoman sultan often establishes control over the Muslim post-holders by marrying them to women from his own household to guarantee their loyalty, or the Muslim post-holders are able to resist the sultan's control by networking with their powerful relatives or by passing their advantages on to their children. Since the Ottoman minority

post-holders are socially located outside of such family and marriage networks, their hold on the power they acquire places them in a much more precarious position and often does not extend beyond their own lifetime.

The political developments in Europe in the form of the Enlightenment and the ensuing French Revolution also impact the Ottoman social structure and with it the Ottoman Muslims and minorities in quite different ways. The most significant outcome of this Western political development is undoubtedly a discussion of rights of individuals as citizens rather than as imperial subjects. A preordained world is gradually replaced by one where individuals operate in a society within which they acquire contractual rights and responsibilities to become citizens of equal standing. As such, these citizens want to make the societies they live in their own and, when prevented from doing so, undertake revolutions to actualize their visions, visions that are often termed "visions of modernity."

It is no accident that the penetration of these European visions into the Ottoman Empire occurs indirectly through education and directly through the Ottoman minorities who have both the closest economic contact with Europe through trade and also often send their sons to Europe for education to sustain the economic advantage they have been able to build in the empire. It is also not surprising that it is the Ottoman minorities who become conscious and increasingly dissatisfied with their position within the Ottoman social system. After all, the Ottoman minorities and Muslims do coexist within an overarching imperial culture and their language, music, architecture, and arts have been affected by one another through the centuries. For instance, Armenian architects build mosques, Greek musicians compose musical pieces, and Jewish artisans create clothing. Yet when all the material culture by Muslims and minorities creates the Ottoman public space, the cultural ownership often ends up getting attributed to the socially, politically and legally dominant Muslim community. What the Ottoman minorities produce is only theirs privately; they do not have, because of the societal restrictions placed upon them, as much claim on public ownership, no particular space of their own within the Ottoman public sphere other than their carefully bounded communal space. Even though the Ottoman minorities increasingly participate in the creation of the Ottoman public space, they are not publicly recognized as a part of it; they are instead obligated to retire to the privacy of their own communal space.

As a consequence of these political and economic developments in Europe and the concurrent Ottoman internal transformation, the positions of Ottoman Muslims and minorities become affected in disparate ways, however. The interaction between the external and internal dynamics impacts the Ottoman minorities more favorably than the Muslims. While the Ottoman minorities are advantaged by the economic developments, the new political ideas increasingly highlight their disadvantaged location within Ottoman society. The Muslims increasingly lose the advantages of their normalized dominance in society as the

Ottoman imperial expansion tapers off and they, too, become dissatisfied with their location within society. It is in the next historical period that both social groups, especially the younger cohorts educated in Western-style institutions, turn to reforms in an attempt to redefine their locations; both groups note that the problems are embedded in the existing Ottoman social system, both identify the preordained nature of Ottoman imperial rule as the possible origin of such problems, and both start work for the introduction of an Ottoman constitutional government that would, in theory, ensure them larger public space for increased political participation. I chose 1839 as the end point of this period because it is then that both groups start to work toward reforming the empire.

Once again, the periodization I propose diverges from the narrative provided by Turkish nationalist historiography in the following ways: in the nationalist narrative, there is no differentiation of the formative and institutionalization periods of Ottoman social structure in relation to the lives of its Muslims and minorities. Ottoman history is instead bifurcated into the "classical period" that covers all the centuries preceding the nineteenth-century European impact, that is, roughly five hundred years (1299-1839, and then the ensuing "reform period" that articulates the Ottoman transformation occurring as a consequence of the impact of about eighty years (1840-1922) until the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. The lack of differentiation of the Ottoman classical period produces two consequences: it further dehistoricizes the societal locations of the Muslims and minorities by overlooking the transformations they underwent through the four centuries. Particularly, how the disparate locations of the Muslims and minorities gradually become embedded in the Ottoman social structure and how a deep structural divide was established between them are overlooked. The nationalist historiography also mythifies both the characteristics of Ottoman minorities and the Muslim benevolence toward them as unchanging over the course of the centuries.

The only source of change the nationalist historiography then ends up highlighting is not internally generated, but externally enforced by the expanding West. The increasing involvement of European powers in the Ottoman Empire therefore becomes interpreted negatively as the intervention of these powers in Ottoman internal affairs in general and their pressuring for reforms for the Ottoman minorities in particular. The interaction also assumes a moral character as it is clearly defined, in line with nationalist rhetoric that categorizes all actions as either "good" or "bad" for the nation and all actors as "black" or "white," that the latent intention of Western powers is, from the start, to weaken and destroy the Ottoman Empire. The economic and political impact of Europe is also selectively highlighted in relation to the unrest it produces among the Ottoman minorities alone; the negative impact of the European transformation on the location of the Ottoman Muslims in relation to the minorities is overlooked. The Muslims enter the nationalist rhetoric only in terms of the increasing tension between the Ottoman sultan who holds on to his power and the newly emerging Western-style educated Muslims who want to share that power.

It is within this epistemological context that the historical analysis of the reform period, the period of visible Western European impact on the Ottoman social structure, commences. From the start, however, the Turkish nationalist historiography treats the Western impact on Ottoman Muslims and minorities as two independent—rather than *interdependent*—phenomena, thereby ideologically reading into the text their subsequent failure to transform peacefully along the same lines.

I start the *Reform Period of 1839-1902* with the year 1839 because it is then that both the Ottoman minorities and the Western-style educated Muslims start to process and interpret the political, social, and legal ideas generated in Europe within the dynamics of Ottoman society. Especially the younger generations of both the Ottoman minorities and the Muslims observe the West, increasingly receive their education there and, most importantly, in order to reproduce the military and economic success of the West, start establishing educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire along similar lines. In the educational and social reforms they undertake, the Ottoman minorities are primarily supported by the emerging class of merchants and tradesmen who benefit from the increasing economic and trade relations with Europe, while the Ottoman Muslims must rely on the Ottoman state.

The disparate nature of this support impacts the Ottoman social structure differently: the reforms pertaining to the Ottoman minorities are successful mostly when undertaken by minorities themselves and, as such, remain constricted to the minority communities. The reforms by the Ottoman state targeting in theory both the minorities and the Muslims are mostly triumphant in the case of the Muslims and fail to overcome in praxis the institutionalized structural divide in society between the Muslims and the minorities. Still, the reform period is marked by intense efforts on all sides, namely the Ottoman state administration and the existing Muslim elites, the minorities and their local governance structures, and the Western-style educated Muslims with their new political visions to reform the empire into a form that would fit all their needs.

The Ottoman imperial administration spearheaded the reform efforts by undertaking three administrative legal reforms approximately every two decades (1839, 1856, and 1876) to ascertain equal rights to the Ottoman Muslims and minorities.[11] The persistence of these three efforts reveals, I think, how deeply ingrained the Muslim-minority inequality was in the Ottoman social system that it took three unsuccessful tries to overcome. Muslim dominance was so deeply naturalized in the system that efforts had to be introduced each time as alleviating problems with the social locations of *both* the Muslims and the minorities, whereas they in essence attempted to bring the status of the minorities up to the level of the Muslims.

The first proclamation in the *Tanzimat* reform period was promulgated on November 3, 1839, whereby the individual rights of both the Muslims and minorities of the empire were recognized together equally for the first time. What

is noteworthy here is the novel legal treatment of both social groups under a single decree, which was bound to highlight the legal inequalities that existed between the Ottoman Muslims and minorities especially when they were placed side by side rather than treated as two entirely structurally separate categories. The following proclamation called the *Islahat*, promulgated on February 28, 1856, further attempted to negotiate and bring about equality between the Muslims and minorities of the empire. As noted above, the necessity to proclaim a second reform approximately two decades after the first suggests the depth of the necessary structural adjustment to the Ottoman social system to alleviate the sources of inequality: these extended from equal opportunity in recruitment into educational and administrative institutions to equal representation in courts to equal opportunity for membership in provincial assemblies.

These reform proclamations had to be followed by a third almost two decades later when, on December 23, 1876, a more drastic legal reform termed the *Meşrutiyet* was undertaken with the declaration of the Ottoman constitutional system and the formation of an Ottoman national assembly. Even though European powers interpreted this Ottoman move as a pre-emptive move to relieve the European pressure placed upon the empire for reforms, it nevertheless did enable all subjects some degree of representation in an assembly and led to the first elections of the empire. I think that the Ottoman state did indeed try to reform the empire along Western lines in an attempt to capture European patterns of imperial success, but failed when it was unable to overcome the deep structural divide that had developed in Ottoman society between the Muslims and the minorities.

The difference in societal reactions to these state-initiated reforms is noteworthy in that there were strong generational differences in reception both among the Ottoman minorities as well as Muslims. Most of the younger generations of Ottoman minorities favorably received the potential improvement to their legal status and their closer integration into the larger Ottoman society that these reforms, but they were frustrated with the slow pace with which the reforms were executed and the resistance they faced both within their own communities and also from Ottoman Muslims. Older generations of Ottoman minorities predicted that these legal reforms would increase the sense of loss of communal identity as their communities became more and more integrated into Ottoman society at large; they therefore wanted to retain their special language, legal system, local practices, and special privileges even when these sometimes brought with them exclusionary practices from the larger society.

The reactions of the Muslims were also complex; those younger generations of Ottoman Muslims educated in Western-style institutions embraced, in theory and in principle, the Western European ideology of the brotherhood of all men under equal rights and therefore realized and supported these reforms as a necessary component of modernity. As they had naturalized their dominance in the existing system, they were not yet aware how this equality would directly

affect their lives in practice. The older generations of Ottoman Muslims protested vociferously, stating that they did not want to destroy a system that had worked so well for so many years, and some even voiced the opinion that they did not want the Ottoman minorities who had been beneath them for so many centuries to be elevated to the same legal status as them.

The Ottoman minorities participated in the Ottoman state-initiated reforms as individuals and in the reforms of their own local administrations as groups.[12] Probably the state-initiated reform that had the most influence on Ottoman minorities was the first 1839 Ottoman reform proclamation in that it enabled the establishment in millets of mixed tribunals. Previously, the local administrative bodies of the Ottoman minorities were dominated by the power of religious leaders, yet this reform created space for lay members in these tribunals who in turn introduced new ideas and reforms into their particular millets. The participation of laity in religious affairs brought dynamism to all three minority communities of the empire, namely the Jews, Greeks, and Armenians. The concurrent changes in the Ottoman taxation system also contained in the reform edict enabled Ottoman minority merchants and artisans to participate more fully in the local millet administration thereby providing increasing support to the reformist elements and their new ideas. It was also during this period that the first stirrings of nationalism set in as Greece was established as an independent state in 1830, and all communities struggled with the issue of defining their identities within an imperial framework in a world still structurally dominated by empires. The ensuing rebellions in Wallachia, Moldavia, Montenegro, and Serbia in the 1850's, and the increasing influence of the Russian Empire in the Balkans and the north and the northeast in the 1890's brought the Ottoman Empire more and more under pressure for reforms to improve the rights of its Christian subjects.

The interpretation by Turkish nationalist historiography of this period of Ottoman reform is marked by a deep ambivalence in that, while it has to recognize and legitimate the Western ideas and institutions of reform that later provide the founding stones of the Turkish republic, it also has to criticize the Western powers instigating those ideas and institutions. The nationalist historiography therefore treats the recipient Ottoman societal elements selectively: it does not recognize the differentiation within the Ottoman minorities because it treats them as one stereotyped unit that has no agency of its own so the minority reaction to the reforms is interpreted solely in terms of how they fall under the influence of Western powers to "turn against" the Ottoman Empire. The contributions of those minorities in Westernizing Ottoman society are therefore overlooked.

In relation to the Ottoman Muslims, those older generations that react adversely to the reforms are likewise dismissed as "the traditional religious" elements that do not have the interests of the empire at hand. In so doing, the nationalist historiography obfuscates and dismisses the most significant criticisms of the reforms undertaken by this group, that these reforms eliminated

the natural dominance of Muslims in Ottoman society. The only Ottoman group that emerges triumphant with its agency unscathed is the young Ottoman Muslim reformists as these were the intellectual forefathers of Turkish nationalists. In this case, too, however, the nationalist historiography treats historical facts selectively by employing the most significant methodological fallacy of nationalism: the rhetoric of the reformists is treated as historical reality. Even though the Ottoman reformists do pay a lot of lip service to legal equality in theory, their record becomes much more checkered when one analyzes the degree to which such reforms were actualized in Ottoman society. As noted previously, there was significant structural resistance to the application of the reforms, which often goes unmentioned.

By overlooking the discrepancy between the rhetoric and reality of the reforms and by treating the rhetoric as reality, Turkish nationalist historiography manages to portray the impact and reception of reforms much more favorably than they actually were. In the narrative of nationalist historiography, if problems with reforms do exist, the culprits are either the Western powers who pressure too hard or the Ottoman minorities who want too much too soon; the reactions of the Ottoman Muslims are overlooked. Hence, it is only the agency of reform-minded Ottoman Muslims that is recognized within Ottoman society.

I think a new era commences in Ottoman history with the introduction of the idea of nationalism into the empire. Hence, I start the *Nationalist Period of 1902-1982* with the historical event of the 1902 Congress of Ottoman Opposition Parties in Paris, even though the seeds of nationalism were sown earlier throughout the empire at disparate locations during the latter half of the nineteenth century, as indicated by the many rebellions from the Balkans to Syria, Lebanon to Jeddah. I argue that it is at this 1902 congress that political parties belonging to the Muslims and minorities of the Ottoman Empire met in Paris to discuss their common future, if there was to be one. As such, they all had a fair chance as participants in the congress to become significant players in determining the future of the empire, and history had not yet eliminated some at the expense of others.

If my starting point of the 1902 congress is compared with that of nationalist historiography, which commences with the Turkish War of Independence in 1919, it becomes evident that two social factors eventually become silent in the nationalist historiography. The first factor to disappear is the ideology of nationalism that had started to take shape among some of the Young Turks—it seems as if it has disappeared in the ensuing Turkish historical narrative because it becomes such a natural part of it that one can no longer recognize it as a distinct factor. The second factor that is literally lost is the multicultural, multiethnic structure of the Ottoman Empire initially reflected in the various groups of Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians participating in the congress—this multiethnic, multicultural factor is gradually marginalized in Turkish historical narrative as these groups lose their agency to survive only as the "other."

I should note here that these two factors are intimately connected to each other as well: the gradual marginalization of the ethnic and cultural groups is justified and legitimated by the escalating nationalist rhetoric embedded in the same narrative. The physical removal of these groups, often by force and violence, accompanies this symbolic disappearance. When one then approaches the events of 1919 from such a standpoint, it becomes evident that at that particular time period those who had committed to fight a War of Independence, including Mustafa Kemal, were already ambivalent about where ethnic and religious minorities of the empire fit in the ensuing state they aimed to establish on *their* homeland. In addition, two such minorities, namely the Anatolian Armenians and the Greeks, had already been uprooted once from their ancestral lands for the good of the "homeland" upon the orders of the Committee of Union and Progress.

The events of 1902 that I propose to focus on present a different framework, however, one where nationalism and its destructive treatment of minorities have not yet left their marks on the historical narrative. In 1902, the historical repertoire at the congress still included all the ethnic and religious groups of the Ottoman Empire, and the ideology of nationalism was one among the many that were feverishly discussed. Such a point of origin thus enables me to map out the many paths of social transformation possible for the Ottoman Empire that Turkish nationalism then eradicated by either suppressing, deporting or eliminating the various ethnic and cultural groups; I am also able to capture in its own terms the agency of such victimized groups as they attempted to resist this escalating nationalism. In 1902, the Ottoman social groups still came to the Paris congress as groups of an empire, but it soon became clear both there and soon thereafter that a peaceful coexistence was to prove impossible because the Muslim-Turkish element was not willing to forego its naturalized dominance in the Ottoman social structure, and the millet system had generated a Muslim-Christian divide that was beyond repair. The environment was thus too polarized for the various social groups to come together to act in unison for they had led separate communal lives for such long centuries. I should note that I would argue it was at this congress that the Young Turk movement started its transformation from an intellectual endeavor into a political entity, a process that eventually produced the 1908 revolution when the Committee of Union and Progress formed by a segment of the Young Turks seized power from the Ottoman sultan.

The period as a whole was thus marked by the nationalisms not only of the Ottoman minorities themselves, but also by the nationalism of the dominant Muslim group against them, which was to eventually wreak havoc on them through forced deportation in the case of the Armenians, forced population exchange in the case of the Greeks, and gradual attrition in the case of the Jews. I think that from the viewpoint of the history of Muslims and minorities, the founding of the Turkish republic in 1923 was not a very significant turning

point in that the minorities retained their rights by the Lausanne treaty and their acquisition of the rights and responsibilities of Turkish citizenship remained mostly limited to responsibilities rather than rights. Even though they did *rhetorically* acquire full rights, they did not do so *in practice* as demonstrated by the following incidents all instigated by the Turkish state almost once every decade: before and during World War II: the Turkish Jews were forcibly deported from Thrace to prevent possible collaboration with the enemy; all three minorities—Greeks, Armenians, Jews—were forcibly conscripted into the military to work as laborers; all three were targeted to pay a "Wealth Tax" (*Varlık Vergisi*) that literally wiped out their resources; a decade later, on September 6-7, 1955, the state set street mobs upon the minorities in Istanbul to destroy their shops, houses, and places of worship; and still another decade later during the Cyprus events of 1963-64 many Greeks were compelled to emigrate with savings not to exceed the equivalent of $100. It is at the termination of this nationalist period that the minorities are virtually destroyed and the path of elimination followed by Turkish nationalism is almost complete.

I think that mapping out the nationalist movement from its Ottoman inception to its Republican phase not only brings narrative coherence to the historical events that transpire, but also connects the trauma of 1915 with its nationalist aftershocks into the 1960s. My periodization of course differs dramatically from the nationalist historiography which refuses to recognize the significant historical continuities between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish republic. But I would contend that that very refusal fragments the narrative history of state-sponsored prejudice and violence against the minorities and thereby enables the Turkish state to disclaim any historical continuity in its attitude toward the minorities. Specifically, the exclusion of the period from 1902 to 1922 from nationalist historiography obfuscates the most virulent formative stages of Turkish nationalism that flourished under the Young Turks.

With the foundation of the Turkish republic in 1923 and the ensuing radical Westernization, Turkish nationalism became neatly folded—and hidden—in the Western "civilizational" project. Turkish nationalists gained much more international recognition and respect as ardent Westernizers and pursued their national projects under this guise; their sustained prejudice and violence against the religious minorities in Turkey were also justified in the name of this civilizational project: all social groups who criticized state projects were immediately accused of obstructing Turkey's path through Western civilization toward progress.

I mark the advent of a new era hopefully termed the *post-nationalist period from 1982 to the present* with the year 1982, for it is then that the neo-liberalization of the Turkish economy, media, and communications occurred under the Turkish president Turgut Özal. This liberalization process created pockets of public space not controlled by the Turkish state and it was within those spaces that social groups finally started to discuss what their own society meant in their

own terms. The political oppression wrought upon society by the military at exactly the same time might even have helped along this societal implosion by getting people focused on "non-political" topics such as identity formation. It was also during this period that a substantial amount of Armenian/Greek/Jewish minority literature was translated into Turkish and the memoirs of minorities appeared for the first time. Even though the Turkish state was literally forced into this neo-liberalization due to its changing location in the world conjuncture at the end of the Cold War, it nevertheless did end up creating new pockets of public space in Turkey that still are not directly controlled by the state. Whether these pockets have the potential to transform into political space capable of empowering minorities in Turkey remains to be seen.

The official Turkish minorities of Jews, Greeks, and Armenians are currently so decimated in number that they no longer possess their former social, political, and economic significance. The Turkish state recognition of and apology for its policies of prejudice and violence against these communities would therefore have symbolic significance at best. The other most significant unofficial minority, the Kurds, is still not fully recognized by the Turkish state in terms of their rights. Yet the rights of all social groups in Turkey vis-à-vis the state—as opposed to their responsibilities which they have always been forced to fulfill—have recently become significant on the national agenda in relation to Turkey's impending European Union membership. The recent public discussions around these and other social issues and the often violent reactions of nationalist elements, however, have demonstrated how deeply ingrained and naturalized nationalism still is in contemporary Turkish society. The next decade in Turkey shall witness the challenge of the liberal elements in Turkish society against the nationalist hegemony to bring in what I, hopefully, intend to term the "post-nationalist European Union period."

One problem that I still have not resolved with this new historiography is the location of 1915 as this is a highly traumatic event that ultimately resulted in the terminal removal of Anatolian Armenians from their ancestral homeland. Even though I have criticized the employment of 1915 by Turkish nationalist historiography and attempted to correct the historical subversions implicit in its narrative through my proposed historiography, locating 1915 within the Nationalist Period of 1902 to 1982 contextualizes and thereby implicitly normalizes the trauma and tragedy of 1915. And it is to this problematic issue that I next turn.

Part II: The Location of 1915 within the Post-Nationalist Turkish Historiography

In studying traumatic events that are almost beyond human comprehension, scholars find guidance in the literature on the Holocaust, for the Holocaust, like 1915, is not a historical event but rather "signals human motives and actions that put human nature at risk and subject civilization to judgment," leaving "an

indelible mark on our consciousness about the nature of evil, of extreme victimization, of the limits of suffering and despair."[13] There have been a number of scholars who have compared 1915 with the Holocaust, starting with Vahakn Dadrian who drew upon social-psychology for formulating hypotheses about the profiles of the perpetrators and the victims.[14] Richard Rubenstein was the first Holocaust scholar who first acknowledged that the Armenian massacres constituted the first full-fledged attempt by a modern state to practice disciplined organized genocide, and that therefore the Holocaust had to be placed within the context of mass death in relation to it.[15] Irving Louis Horowitz made a similar argument.[16]

Helen Fein elaborated upon the comparison by stating that in both cases the political formula legitimating the raison d'étre of the state as a vehicle of destiny for the dominant group was adapted by a new elite in a state in decline to exclude the victims.[17] The next scholar to undertake an extensive comparison was Robert Melson who argued that it was the relative success of both victim groups in modernization that set the preconditions for their persecution.[18] Benjamin Valentino follows Fein's conceptualization as he groups Turkish Armenia, Nazi Germany, and Rwanda under "ethnic mass killings" to argue then that all three resulted from the efforts of the political leaders to transform radically the ethnic, religious, or national composition of society at the expense of certain groups.[19] Patricia Marchak employs the same argument as she finds in both cases, among many others, the commonality of terror sponsored by the states committing human rights crimes against their citizens.[20]

Yehuda Bauer compares the two events in relation to their characteristics and, while agreeing that the Armenian Genocide is arguably the closest parallel to the Holocaust, contends that the motivation of the former was political, chauvinistic, pragmatic, and ethnic while the latter was ideological, universal, total, and racial.[21] Martin Shaw proposes an intrinsic connection between war and genocide in that genocide is a particular form of modern warfare, which the Armenian Genocide was the first of the modern ideologically motivated genocides, and, as such, set the precedent for the Holocaust.[22] Ward Churchill makes a similar claim; he argues that 1915 served as an example to the Holocaust.[23] Maud Mandel undertakes an interesting comparative study of what she identifies as "the victims of the two twentieth century genocides" as she analyzes their reestablishment patterns in France.[24]

Still, these comparisons only provide guidance to the essential problem that exists in both cases, which is the problem of how to approach the study of such human tragedy, by itself or in relation to other events and, if the latter, how. Saul Friedlander addresses this problem in philosophical terms as a decision a scholar has to make either by studying the event in and of itself to the exclusion of everything else, or contextualizing it within everything else.[25] The exclusive focus on the event alone highlights it, but ends up removing the event from the people; its contextualization instead within the rest of history normalizes the

event, but in so doing makes the event more accessible to people. The issue and the implied decision was widely discussed in the course of 1986 to become referred to as the "Historians' Debate."[26]

The parameters of this decision are particularly significant in my case because I am also ethnically a Turk, therefore by implication a member of the social group that perpetrated the unspeakable crimes of 1915. If I contextualize the massacres of 1915 in my historiography as I have within a long Turkish nationalist period that ends up normalizing 1915 and thereby, by implication, mitigating and obliterating the trauma associated with 1915, then I need to discuss critically the location of 1915 in and of itself to address this possibility. It is therefore particularly imperative for me to acknowledge that I as a Turkish scholar convey the critical stand I take in relation to 1915 in the historical narrative I construct.

In referring to this debate, scholars tend to argue that it is not the contextualization—and the ensuing normalization—that is problematic, but rather its uncritical, non-self-reflexive manner. What is at issue then is the ethics one employs in undertaking the contextualization. In attempting to find a constructive solution to this problem, Saul Friedlander argues that what is missing is "a narrative that includes both the voice of the scholar as well as the memory of the survivors, commentary and overt interpretation of events that deepen the historical record and resist hasty ideological closure."[27] The scholar thus has to work out a subject position and come to terms with his implication in the grid of tragic participant positions—it can be argued that in relation to the trauma, this stance locates the scholars closest to that of an innocent bystander. This also is the position Michael Mann seems to assume in his extremely significant work.[28]

Yet, the position of the scholar has to be a more complex one, Dominick LaCapra argues; it has to acknowledge the resister, listen attentively and respect the position of the victim, and also appreciate the complexities introduced by the oppressors to make accomplices out of victims.[29] In other words, the "network of interrelated subject positions" has to be "investigated empirically, analyzed carefully and critically, and attempted not to be replicated in one's voice." What is significant here is the strategic negotiation LaCapra asks the scholar to engage in with the trauma and its historical actors. The conventional distance that scholars place between themselves and their texts is no longer there; the strategic negotiation enables scholars to do a couple of things simultaneously: they capture the complexity of the trauma, contextualize it without normalizing it, and, by reflecting on their own subject position during this process, are able to clarify their ethical stand in relation to the trauma.

Yet I think this strategic intervention needs to be taken a step further in the direction suggested by feminist theory, which calls for the presence of the first-person narrative of the scholar within the text.[30] Feminist theory contends that the existing power relations in society that naturalize the dominance of males

also affect the creation of knowledge about society at large to imbue them with the interest of the males at the expense of females. The social science texts written by male scholars therefore often end up hiding their power and authority through particular strategies such the use of the pronoun "we" or the passive sentence structure; these strategies not only obfuscate the agency of the male scholars but also indirectly end up legitimating their authority. Hence, as Michel Foucault comments in relation to scientific disciplines, the males exercise power "by tying themselves to scientific or moral definitions of who they are."[31] Just as the hidden intentions of scholars contextualizing trauma can end up normalizing it, so do the intention of male social scientists contextualizing women's experiences end up marginalizing them in society. Feminist scholars have argued that these "power relations" implicit in texts can be made transparent by introducing the standpoint of women to the texts. One strategy employed by feminist scholars like Dorothy Smith is, in opposition to what is practiced by their male counterparts, the interjection of their own voices into the texts to make their particular vantage points, their relation to the text, transparent.

It is for these reasons that I, in a strategic move, have employed and continue to employ the first person narrative in this text. One should, however, note the one major criticism that could be made against such a move, that it may distort existing power relations in society at large by privileging the voice of the scholar. Such relativism also "lacks a commitment to truth and morality."[32] Both of these criticisms center on the issue of the ethical accountability and moral responsibility of the scholar. Both as a scholar and as someone who also happens to be a Turk, that is, a member of the social group that perpetrated the massacres, what is my moral responsibility in studying 1915?

Good moral character comprises, according to David Jones, "having certain traits, or moral virtues, among which are benevolence, conscientiousness, courage, autonomy and self-control, self-knowledge, self-respect and practical wisdom."[33] The most significant manner in which societies have held individuals accountable for their actions is through the imposition of legal punishment. Holding scholars accountable for their writings and interpretations is what the academic community endeavors to do, yet if one takes a step back and focuses on the act of knowledge production itself, what are the guidelines a scholar has to follow to ensure that she is morally responsible toward her subject matter while producing the text?

The Frankfurt School and critical theory have revealed that there are human interests hidden behind knowledge that is purportedly scientific and therefore objective, and they have proposed "aggressive critique" as a way to uncover the ideologies hidden in the text. Yet if the scholar does not reveal her vantage point, this aggressive critique might privilege the standpoint of the scholar engaging in the criticism. It is for this reason that I propose that one has to, following the lead of feminist theory, interject the voice of the scholar into the text for the purpose of *transparency*. For in the world of the academe, the scholar can only

establish her morally accountability in relation to her text by revealing her own voice—in so doing, she enables her audience to assume the position of enforcing moral responsibility that the legal system assumes in society.

When 1915 is thus approached within the epistemological framework of the Holocaust and with the inclusion of the voice of the scholar, two possible interpretations of 1915 emerge. The first is that 1915 was, like the Holocaust was initially framed, "an aberration in history," a viewpoint still held by the Turkish nationalist historiography. The second is that 1915 was, like the Holocaust has been defined by most scholars, a product of modernity. In relation to the latter, what has not yet been adequately studied is the impact of Ottoman modernity on society at large. Even though there have been many detailed descriptive accounts of the Ottoman reforms and established institutions, how these actually affected the lives of the subjects of the empire need to be further analyzed.

1915 as an "Aberration in Ottoman History"

It is interesting to note that the Turkish state historiography refers to the traumatic events of 1915 as "a deviance that occurred during a state of war" and often blames the conditions of World War I for the unfortunate turn of events. This mode of explanation is similar to the argument made about the initial portrayal of the Holocaust by scholars as an aberration, a catastrophe, an "ethnic cleansing that ran out of control," "a case of neglect producing a kind of guiltless guilt," a deviation from the Enlightenment.[34] This was one of the ways in which scholars managed to avoid approaching the analysis of the subject, which would have led them to questioning the fundamental premises of Western civilization. Also such portrayal created a space for the suffering of the Germans under the same conditions as well. In his analysis of the construction of Holocaust historiography, Dan Stone therefore states[35] that what marked the aftermath of World War II as well as the Nuremberg trials was "a desire, which still holds, to isolate Nazism, to ensure its place firmly outside of the Western tradition." This "aggressive silence" that continued while the Allies set upon to reconstruct a Germany fit to fight the Cold War and while parliamentary democracy was becoming triumphant was only broken in 1961 with the publication of Raoul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*. It was only then that the Holocaust became an acceptable area for institutionally-based scholarly inquiry.[36] In terms of silences, the postwar German historiography was initially terrifyingly similar to the prewar one in that German postwar selective memory was ready and willing to talk about the suffering of the Germans, but not the Jews.[37] So the issue was not that they did not or could not remember but that they did so selectively even though, as Yehuda Bauer has noted, "the horror of the Holocaust was not that in it humans deviated from human behavior; the horror is that they didn't."[38]

The Turkish case demonstrates interesting similarities and differences from the German one. World War I, in which the Ottoman Empire was defeated, led to the partial occupation of Istanbul by the Allied Powers, which motivated the

Ottoman government to bring those who perpetrated the atrocities against the Armenians to trial. Yet the British, who took the lead in these affairs, committed a major error by arresting and imprisoning such perpetrators with persons who had resisted the Allied occupation with arms or had written critically about the Allies. What was thus an imprisonment of those who had committed the crimes against the Armenians in particular and a crime against humanity in general became intermixed with the imprisonment of those nationalist patriots who had attempted to defend their Turkish homeland from the Allied occupiers.

Of the large number tried for the Armenian massacres, only a few ended up being hanged for their crimes. Yet even more significant was the fate of those perpetrators of the atrocities who, in their attempts to elude the Allied Powers and escape trail, disappeared into the Anatolian countryside. Upon the consolidation of the Turkish War of Independence around the former Ottoman general Mustafa Kemal, which started after the Greek occupation (with Allied approval) of Izmir in 1919, these perpetrators joined the Turkish resistance movement and also fought alongside Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia, thereby throwing in their lot with the nationalists against the Allies. The eventual success of the War of Independence not only enabled them never to account for the crimes they had committed against the Armenians, but many of them became prominent statesmen in the Turkish National Assembly. In addition, their initial lack of accountability for the violence they had committed led them to sanction violence against minority groups in future Turkish events as well.

How this trajectory of lack of accountability for initial violence leads to violence sanctioning action later on is best demonstrated in the case of the prominent Turkish statesman Celal Bayar. Neither his official biography nor his autobiography mentions certain significant events in his life, thereby preventing the access of Turkish society to this significant knowledge demonstrating the close connection between lack of accountability and violence. Bayar entered political life by first becoming a member of the Committee of Union and Progress and later of its secret organization, the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*. He was especially committed to creating a Turkish Muslim bourgeoisie to replace the existing cosmopolitan Ottoman Christian one and this led him to assume a hostile stand against the Christian minorities of the empire. Bayar's first significant undercover operation in 1911 was the threatening and scaring of the Ottoman Greeks living in western Anatolia, thus employing informal force to get them to immigrate to Crete and other parts of Greece, away from Asia Minor which the Union and Progress leadership had started to consider in the aftermath of the Balkan wars as "the Turkish homeland." His success in this endeavor enabled him to rise quickly within party ranks and also led to his imprisonment by the British after World War I.

Upon his release from this imprisonment, Bayar joined the Turkish National Assembly to become one of its longest serving members. He attended the Lausanne treaty negotiations as a financial expert and later became the Minister

of Finance. He was serving as the president of the Turkish republic when the September 6-7, 1955, the state instigated and orchestrated attacks on the properties and, in some instances, on the lives of members of the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish minorities of Istanbul. Even though he was later tried in relation to his role in this and related events, he was acquitted by the military due to old age. I think this case and total lack of knowledge about it in Turkish society demonstrate that what is remembered and forgotten in a society is ultimately decided by those who control collective memory.[39] While following Santayana's famous dictum that those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it, Turkish society has had to face time and time again state violence against its minorities, as the state elites, following Claus Offe's counter-dictum that "those who remember history are condemned to repeat it," have kept employing the same extreme measures against the minorities.

In the remembrance of suffering, there is a difference between the German and Turkish cases because of the historical sequencing of events. Since the initial Ottoman defeat in World War I was followed soon thereafter by the Turkish War of Independence and the successful establishment of the Turkish republic in 1923, the Turks, unlike the Germans, initially did not have a long aftermath of defeat during which to privilege their suffering over that of the other. Once they established the republic, not only did they not mourn the loss of their empire, but instead celebrated with nationalistic fervor the victory they had won against what they perceived to be the Allied Powers in particular and the West in general. As a consequence, they instead talked about the new modern nation they were going to build and "put all the suffering behind them." Peter Burke states that the victors can afford to forget and also have the tools to enforce their forgetting; they also take what they have for granted.[40]

Hence the Turks, being the victors, could afford to forget and systematically erased the connection between memory and place so that there were almost no references left physically, historically, and culturally to the existence of an Armenian past in Anatolia which, in turn, made it easier to deny the Armenian suffering. A case in point is the erasure of topographical names in Anatolia that are of Armenian origin.[41] All was replaced by a nationalist rhetoric of a nation reborn from the ashes of an old, now destroyed empire; the nationalist victory and the Republic it produced were their compensation for all the suffering. I should note, however, that Turkey is not alone in choosing to forget the suffering in its past. In Spain, for instance, in the years following the dictator Franco's death, there was an unwritten agreement that the years of repression and human rights violations should be forgotten, at least in public.[42]

Since the Turkish republic was formulated in opposition to the Ottoman Empire, it had to define and defend its legitimacy against it which meant that the sole foundation of the Republic was predicated on repudiating any continuity with the Ottoman past in any shape or form. The Turkish state and nation was thus not only to forget the sufferings it had caused the Anatolian Armenians

and other groups in its past, or the sufferings it had experienced itself, but that it actually had a past. Every endeavor was instead oriented to the bright future that was to come. So the issue was not the selective remembrance of the Germans, but the total lack of remembrance. When the Turkish republic created a national past for itself, it was no accident that its vision first went past the Anatolian homeland to locate and create a mythical past in Central Asia that defined the Turkish nation as the source of all humanity and civilization, and by implication as the original people of Anatolia.

The nationalist rhetoric reproduced in the textbooks also hindered, until very recently, the critical examination of this imagined nationalist past that placed the Turks at the center of the world. And it is the persistence of the vestiges of this naturalized nationalism that enables the Turkish state to sustain its denial within Turkish society today. It is no accident, however, when 1915 has been recently discussed that the Turkish sufferings which had been initially repressed immediately surface as a defensive measure to delegitimate the Armenian claims. I should note in the context of denial that the Turkish state is not alone in denying the nature of the events in its past; Japan, for instance, likewise still denies the violence it engaged in on the Asian continent during World War II.[43]

Given the enormity of the tragedy, there exists in the German case "a guilt on the collective consciousness of a proportion that goes beyond the individual guilt of a relatively few perpetrators."[44] In addition, "because the victims were slain solely because they belonged to a particular community and not because of any individual transgression, the amount of guilt rebounds onto the entire collective" inviting, in turn, collective guilt which cannot be collectively resolved. The same dynamics also work for the Turks in that the entire Turkish nation stands accused because of the crimes perpetrated certainly by a smaller number. Those who did not participate in the atrocities are also overlooked; differences across time and space in the perpetration of the crimes are also rarely taken into account. In addition, the denial of the Turkish state of the intentional nature of 1915 compounds the problem. When the guilt spread over the entire nation is also denied, Anthony Kauders notes in the case of the Holocaust, it becomes "much easier for the population to deny its responsibility for the events of the past: being guilty amongst the guilty could not lead to the isolation or ostracization encountered by someone who is guilty and surrounded by the innocent."[45] Hence, in the case of the Turkish society as well, individual Turks draw comfort from the state denial because no one in civil society, which is still under the influence of the nationalist state rhetoric, admits to guilt either. This produces the rather farcical situation whereby denial of suffering and guilt, sustained by legal sanctions against declaring 1915 a genocide, thrives within the boundaries of the Turkish republic while the rest of the scholarly world outside declares the same event a genocide.

The Turkish collective guilt has the potential to turn into shame when Turkish state and society are eventually confronted with the interpretation of 1915 by the rest of the scholarly world. And such an opportunity has presented itself when

Turkey started talks to join the European Union. It was therefore no accident that the discussion of 1915 has become a significant topic of public discussion since the December 17, 2004 decision by the European Union that formally started Turkey's membership process. After all, according to Aristotle, shame emerges if "those who admire us, those whom we admire, those by whom we wish to be admired, those with whom we are competing, and those whose opinion of us we respect" think poorly of us. Hence, shame requires the presence of others to be actualized.[46]

And that is what the Turkish state has recently experienced when the European Union as well as the American government mentioned the necessity for Turkey's coming to terms with 1915. As these political bodies comprised the "civilized" moral communities the Turkish state and society had aspired and still aspires to join, a quandary ensued. The fallback position in Turkey was the nationalist rhetoric of denial while there are attempts within civil society for an alternate post-national recognition of the past. Ultimately, however, the current stand would only collapse "when the people lose confidence in the moral validity of their social and political systems."[47] Whether this would actualize depends on the strength of Turkish civil society in overcoming the nationalist rhetoric.

1915 as a "Consequence of Ottoman Modernity and the Ensuing Turkish Nationalism"

Recent scholarship has emphasized that the Holocaust, rather than an aberration in history, was located within and triggered by modernity. After all, as Cristina Rojas contends[48] "the process that made 'civilization' an element of the national consciousness of the West was the same process that authorized violence in the name of civilization. The self-consciousness of civilization authorized bringing civilization to others by violent means." Likewise, Zygmunt Bauman claims that modernity was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the Holocaust and as such "the Holocaust represents the greatest achievement of the principles of modernity, not a departure from them, where the principles are rationalization, bureaucratization, legislation, surveillance and social engineering."

Four dimensions of modernity become evident in the unfolding of German history that triggered the Holocaust; these four measures to create a more "modern and efficient" German society comprised of (1) bureaucratic rational planning, (2) resettlement, (3) scientific reasoning and (4) the exclusion of irrationality. First, Gotz Aly and Susanne Heim's historical research on the entire bureaucracy of the Third Reich demonstrated that the Holocaust owed little to racial hatred and much more to bureaucratic rational planning to create a more productive and efficient society under German domination.[49] Second, the Holocaust could only be understood in relation to a wider resettlement policy whereby ethnic Germans were forcibly settled from where the Jews were removed; hence a positive and negative population policy was practiced.[50]

Even though this social engineering was partially responsible for the Holocaust, however, it nevertheless did not explain the origin of the task.

Third, these tasks originated in scientific reasoning that, unchecked by moral imperatives and legitimated in the name of objectivity, started to develop totalizing patterns of thought.[51] As scientists aimed for progress, they set targets, as they reached them they set higher ones and, in the absence of moral parameters, kept sacrificing more to reach them. It was the outcome of concerns with racial hygiene and a better civilization that led them to remove the Jews to accomplish it.[52] This factor still does not explain the targeting of the Jews in the first place and the rage and fury behind it, however. Fourth, modernity suppressed irrational thinking. The violent impulses occurred because of modernity's exclusion of the irrational, of the forces that already existed in society which were repressed in a rational system. These were unleashed in Germany at the age-old hatreds that had sustained themselves, but had initially found outlets in religion and such beliefs. In all, as one scholar noted "the Holocaust was not a 'reversion to barbarism,' nor a 'break with civilization,' still less an '*Asiatic deed*.' But it was also far from being a 'historic black hole,' somehow beyond language, poetry and historical understanding, but rather a possibility inherent in European civilization itself."[53] I would further contend that outlets in religion and such beliefs were replaced in modernity with the ideology of nationalism; it was nationalism's exclusionary urge and ability to sacrifice all, especially human life, for the greater cause, especially for the sake of the homeland, that legitimated violence throughout the twentieth century causing it to be the bloodiest century in human history.

The similarities of the Holocaust to 1915 are striking in that all four factors of modernity could already be identified in the Ottoman case. Rational planning was the one significant dimension about which the Committee of Union and Progress had continually criticized the autocratic rule of the Ottoman sultan, arguing that the entire Ottoman administrative cadre should be made up of recent graduates of Western-style schools modeled after the "modern" European schools. This tension was referred to in the case of the military as between those officers who had risen through the ranks (*alaylı*) against those who had been "schooled" (*mektepli*) after Western models. A similar reorganization of Ottoman state and society ensued after the Young Turk revolution took place in 1908: it was actually the reorganization of the military and the retirement of elderly officers without Western-style military training acquired in the new Ottoman military academies modeled after their counterparts in the West that in an unprecedented swift Balkan defeat in 1912-13 created a flood of Muslim immigrants into Anatolia and also polarized and escalated Turkish nationalism and hatred against Christians.

Likewise, the existence of the principles of self-determination had alerted the Young Turk leadership to population proportions especially in the six provinces commonly referred to *Vilayet-i Selase*. In an attempt to reduce the proportion

of Christians in the population, the leadership re-districted these six provinces along with other provinces where the Christians were a majority in the cities. Following the Balkan wars, the Muslim immigrants were resettled consciously with these Anatolian Christian populations in mind. Even during the subsequent Armenian deportations, when the center received queries as to what to do with Armenian remnants, mainly women, children, and the elderly, the reply always was "disperse them in a manner so that they will not constitute more than 5 percent of the population." It is difficult to assess the radicalization thesis, although one scholar has successfully argued that this did indeed occur in the case of the measures taken by the Committee of Union and Progress.[54]

Yet probably the most significant and dramatic similarity comprises the last factor, namely the suppression of irrationality, which was unleashed against the Anatolian Armenians in 1915 under the guise of nationalism. The traumatic events of 1915 were committed by what were presumably the most civilized and educated elites of the empire who were educated in Germany and France. These were the leaders who had initially arrived in Constantinople in 1908 to proclaim, in the name of modernity, a constitution that was to complement and eventually replace the perceived arbitrary violence of the Ottoman sultan. They undertook social engineering to "remove the cancerous elements from the sick man" in an attempt to nurse him back to health. That the most radical instigators of the Armenian massacres, such as Dr. Nazım and Dr. Behaeddin Şakir (Shakir), were actually physicians ought to be noted in this context. The Union and Progress Committee attempted to save the empire and create a fatherland for the Turks. The target was the minorities in general and the Armenians in particular because the millet system had already defined their position in society as precarious; when one as an Ottoman considered the possibility of building a new Ottoman society, the bifurcated millet system already placed the minorities outside the imagined boundaries of the Turkish nation.

The Armenians, like all ethno-religious groups of the empire, attempted to become legal equals in Ottoman society since this was what modernity had promised everyone—just like the European Jews later attempted to so become in Europe after them with the same tragic results. The Armenians were also wealthy and, finally, could be replaced by the Turkish Muslim Balkan immigrants flooding the capital in the thousands to create a more ethnically homogenous population, one that would stop the European intervention in Ottoman administration. Hence, it is ironic that the European criteria imposed on the Ottoman Empire (of reform and equality), combined with the Enlightenment ideals of progress that the Ottoman educated groups had acquired, ignited under the pressure of war and nationalism to wreak vengeance on the most structurally precarious social group, the Ottoman Armenians. That the Europeans could not see the parallels between this act of extermination and the European Enlightenment has of course been one of the biggest surprises when I study the sources of the time. And yet, given what is noted in the literature on the Holocaust, that

it took so many decades after the Holocaust for the Europeans to recognize the calamity as a consequence of modernity rather than as a historical aberration, this may not be so surprising.

In relation to 1915, there was the additional filter of Orientalism that enabled the Europeans to dismiss what happened to the Armenians as an "Asiatic deed" executed by people of a "different faith" thereby emphasizing the difference of culture and religion to overlook totally the very strong discourse of nationalism and modernity under which these massacres were ordered, and then to refuse to come to the aid of the Armenians when the latter attempted to establish their own homeland after the war. Why was it that the Europeans were not able to draw upon the similarities, fathom the patterns of nationalism that had emerged in the Ottoman Empire at the time, formulated after German Romanticism, to "wipe out unwanted elements?" This was undoubtedly a result of the Orientalist posture, of seeing the Ottoman Empire dominated by the Turks who were Muslims as the "Other."

The modernist notion of progress combined experience and expectation and anticipated it in the spheres outside of Europe and, in so doing, precipitated events there in ways that led to 1915. The hegemonic paradigm of the Enlightenment story views modernity of non-Western societies such as the Ottoman Empire as a consequence of Western impact and influence. Yet when one expands, as Stuart Hall suggests,[55] the boundaries of the West "to the Rest," it becomes evident that the West would not have been able to represent itself as the summit of history without comparing itself to the Rest. This expanded scope highlights the significance of experiences outside of the West in the formation of modernity, actually providing early sightings of what was to come. Indeed, one might argue that 1915 became the laboratory of the dark side of modernity, foreshadowing what was to emerge a few decades later in Europe.

Yet if the research on the Holocaust is any measure, the scholarly attempt at an explanation that I have presented above will still not be satisfactory to the victims, in this case the descendants of the Anatolian Armenians who suffered so much from what transpired in 1915. In the case of the Holocaust, the memory of those who have been directly affected by the crime differs significantly from the memory of others who study the crime. While "the victim's perspective is guided by the question of the perpetrators' motives . . . researchers who lack any direct or indirect affiliation to the collectives involved with the crime tend to universalize its meaning."[56] In identifying the elements of European modernity as interpreted by the Ottomans as the main cause leading to 1915, I too have attempted to seek broader universal dynamics instead of the particularities in the characteristics of the perpetrators. In their own accounts, scholars of Armenian origin instead emphasize the religious, ethnic, cultural characteristics of the perpetrators—the Turks. Ultimately, however, it would be the ability of all scholars to be able to recognize each other's standpoints and to jointly respect and mourn the suffering caused by the trauma of 1915 that is going to make research on this extremely significant tragedy of Armenian, Anatolian, Turk-

ish, and human history possible. For it is only through "a democratic practice of history in which an ever growing chorus of voices is heard"[57] that one can make sense of the world.

Notes

1. Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1993), p. 24.
2. David H. Jones, *Moral Responsibility in the Holocaust: A Study in the Ethics of Character* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), pp. 7, 17.
3. James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 15.
4. See Mark Jackson, "The Ethical Space of Historiography," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 14:4 (2001): 80, for a detailed discussion of this ethical dimension.
5. See, for instance, Anita Shapira and Derek Penslar, eds., *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).
6. See, for instance, Gerry Van Klinken, "The Battle for History after Suharto—Beyond Sacred Dates, Great Men and Legal Milestones," *Critical Asian Studies* 33, 3 (2001): 323-350.
7. See, for instance, Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, eds., *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), p. 102.
8. See, for a more extensive discussion of this point, Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, 2 vols. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982).
9. See Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), p. 13, for a discussion of the ending point of the formative period.
10. See Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), for a discussion of the parameters of this period.
11. For a more detailed discussion, see Fahir ArmaoŸlu *Siyasi Tarih 1789-1960* [Political History 1789-1960] (Ankara: Sevinç, 1964).
12. See Vartan Artinian, "The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1963," Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1970, for a fuller discussion of this distinction.
13. Gulie Ne'eman Arad, "Nazi Germany and the Jews: Reflections on a Beginning, a Middle and an Open End," *History and Memory* 9, 1 (1997): 422.
14. See, for instance, Vahakn Dadrian, "The Structural Functional Components of Genocide: A Victimological Approach to the Armenian Case," in *Victimology*, ed. I. Drapkin and E. Viano (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1974), pp. 123-135; idem., "A Typology of Genocide," *International Review of Modern Sociology* 5 (1975): 201-212.
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16. Irving Louis Horowitz, *Genocide and State Power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1976).
17. Ibid., p. 26.
18. Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
19. Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killings and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

20. Patricia Marchak, *Reigns of Terror* (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 2003).
21. Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).
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23. Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1997).
24. Maud Mandel, *In the Aftermath of Genocide: Armenians and Jews in Twentieth Century France* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
25. Saul Friedlander, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 95.
26. See Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 43-72, for a discussion of this debate.
27. Quoted in James E. Young, "Between History and Memory: The Uncanny Voices of Historian and Survivor," *History and Memory* 19, 1(1997): 48.
28. Michael Mann, *The Holocaust in History* (New York: Meridian, 1987).
29. Ibid., pp. 41-42.
30. See the works of Dorothy Smith, esp. *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990).
31. Cited in Jon Simons, *Foucault and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 2.
32. See Omar Bartov, "Intellectuals on Auschwitz: Memory, History, Truth," in *A Holocaust Reader: Responses to the Nazi Extermination*, ed. Michael Morgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 309, for a discussion of this point.
33. Ibid., esp. pp. 7, 45-58.
34. See, for instance, Dan Diner, "On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives: Epistemological Observations Regarding the Holocaust," *History and Memory* 9, 1 (1997): 302, 307.
35. Dan Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust: A Study in Historiography* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), p. 84.
36. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
37. Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust*, p. 97; Diner "On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives," pp. 301-302.
38. Yehuda Bauer, "Holocaust and Genocide: Some Comparisons," in *Lessons and Legacies*, ed. Peter Hayes (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), p. 38.
39. See Gil Eyal, "Identity and Trauma," *History and Memory* 16, 1(2004): 5-6, for a discussion of this remembering and forgetting.
40. Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997), p. 54.
41. For a general discussion of this practice, see Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000).
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44. Diner, "On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives," p. 303.
45. Anthony Kauders, "History as Censure: 'Repression' and 'Philo-Semitism' in Post-War Germany," *History and Memory* 15, 1(2003): 100.

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47. Daniel Chirot, "What Happened in Eastern Europe in 1989?" in *Popular Protest and Public Culture in Modern China: Learning from 1989*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991), p. 221.
48. Cristina Rojas, *Civilization and Violence: Regimes of Representation in Nineteenth-Century Columbia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. xiii.
49. Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust*, p. 242.
50. Ibid., p. 243.
51. Ibid., pp. 244-245.
52. Ibid., pp. 246-247.
53. Gotz Aly, "The Planning Intelligentsia and the "Final Solution,'" in *Confronting the Nazi Past*, ed. Michael Burleigh (London: Collins and Brown, 1996), p.153.
54. Donald Bloxham, *Genocide on Trial: The War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
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56. Diner, "On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives," p. 308.
57. Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, p. 11.