CONSEQUENCES OF DENIAL
THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Aida Alayarian

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In my career I have been extremely fortunate to work with many colleagues who helped me to gain knowledge and to form my ideas and ways of thinking. These specifically include many supervisors, supervisees, and, indeed, my analysts, to whom I am very grateful.

Some chapters of this work were originally presented as a paper titled "Psychological consequences of not acknowledging Armenian Genocide" at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the World Psychiatric Association—Transcultural Psychiatric Section—in cooperation with the Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture, in the Medical University of Vienna. I therefore wish first and foremost to express my gratitude to all those colleagues who invited me and provided me with a platform allowing me to raise this issue.

I specifically would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr Micol Ascoli, because the very existence of this book originates from a discussion I had with her. In 2005, I was presenting at the International Society for the Psychological Treatments of the Schizophrenias and Other Psychoses (ISPS) in London a case of a refugee patient with psychotic symptoms that we were working with at the Refugee Therapy Centre. In the tea-break, Micol and I were sitting at the same table. She said that she enjoyed the presentation and we got talking.
I found out that she is from a half-Jewish background and when she discovered that I am half-Armenian we got on to the topic of the genocide. I expressed my personal view that if people in the international community had stood up and acknowledged the Armenian genocide, then the Holocaust and many other instances of genocide may never have happened. Micol was interested in this idea and spontaneously invited me to present something on this topic at a Conference in Vienna where she was presenting a symposium. Although I was flattered by her invitation, I was also surprised, because I had simply been talking to her about my feelings regarding genocide. I was very aware that my knowledge of the Armenian genocide was rather sparse. So, I expressed my gratitude to Micol and told her that I did not have the authority and the required knowledge to speak on this subject. None the less, she encouraged me to do it and asked me to think about it. She told me she was going to talk about Primo Levi—his depression and his consequent suicide and its relation to the Holocaust. This was something that is of great interest to me, so I promised her that I would think about it seriously. We communicated for two months prior to the conference, and during this time I started to research the Armenian genocide. It was at this point that I realized that there is nothing written about the psychological consequences of not acknowledging the Armenian genocide, and so I dared to set myself the task of trying to say something about it. Therefore, I informed Micol that I was accepting her invitation to present in Vienna, and that I am specifically interested in, and would focus on, the psychological elements of the Armenian genocide.

I would also like to thank Dr John Denford for reading my initial paper and for his feedback. He wrote to me saying that he thought it was a very good and, indeed, important topic and that I ought to make it publishable. He suggested that I should either cut it down to publish in a journal, or continue working on it to turn it into a book. I left that idea for a while, but soon enough I found myself studying and researching the topic further. I talked to Oliver Rathbone at Karnac as to whether he would consider publishing the book, sent him an abstract, and he kindly accepted it.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Ara Sarafian, from the Gomidas Institute in London, who initially so generously gave me information about books, websites, and other sources for my
research. Details of the study Dr Sarafian is engaged on can be found in Appendix IV.

I am also very grateful to Dr Hélène Piralian-Simonyan, a psychoanalyst in Paris who wrote about the psychoanalytic consequences of genocide denial (see Piralian-Simonyan, 1994, 2008). She sent me the English version of her article, which is the analysis of a story written by Denis Donikian, a second-generation Armenian writer, and kindly gave me permission to use it.¹

I also want to thank Dr Rouben Adalian from the Armenian National Institute (ANI), which is a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, dedicated to the study, research, and affirmation of the Armenian genocide, for his kind permission to use the resources on their website (www.armenian-genocide.org). Thanks are also due to www.genocide1915.info for their resources. They were both very comprehensive in comparison to many others that I came across and have helped greatly with the historical background. I am extremely grateful to them.

Finally, I am grateful to everyone at the Refugee Therapy Centre, my place of work, who provided me with help and support in the process of writing this book.

Note

1. Two of Dr Piralian-Simonyan’s articles in English can be found on http://www.crda-france.org/0en/aunconscious/piralian1.htm and http://www.crda-france.org/0en/aunconscious/piralian01.htm
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aida Alayarian, BSc, MSc, DocSc, PhD, has been a clinical psychologist and child psychotherapist since 1986, and in 1998 qualified as an adult psychoanalytic psychotherapist. She studied Medical Anthropology and also obtained an MSc in Intercultural Psychotherapy.

She is a Chartered Psychologist with the British Psychological Society (BPS), and a member of the Clinical Psychology Forum, Professional Member of Nafsiyat Intercultural Therapy, and a member of the Forum for Independent Psychotherapists (FIP). She is registered as a psychoanalytical psychotherapist with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapists (UKCP), under the Psychoanalytic Section. She is also an associate of Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility (PCSR), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, and a Council member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

She has worked with families and children in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural settings. She trains and supervises psychologists, psychotherapists, and counsellors, and is in demand as a speaker and seminar leader on refugees, trauma, and related issues.
She was coordinator of child and family referrals and worked with children and families at Nafsiyat Intercultural Therapy Centre from 1993 until 2000. She worked as a clinical psychologist in Adult Community Mental Health in the NHS and also at the Tavistock Clinic, Children and Family Department Learning Disability Service with children and adults, their families or carers. She is the former head of Therapy Service and Chair of Fostering Panel at Childcare Co-operative.

She is the co-founder and presently the Clinical Director of the Refugee Therapy Centre, a charity in North London providing psychotherapy and associated treatments to refugees and asylum seekers.

She is the editor of *Resilience, Creativity, and Psychoanalysis: The Work of the Refugee Therapy Centre* (Karnac, 2007), which relates to the experience of refugees and asylum seekers who survived human rights' violations.
FOREWORD: A FORTUITOUS MEETING

In November 2005 I attended a Conference in London, and during the lunch break I started chatting with a nice, smiling lady whom I soon discovered was of Armenian origin. For some reason our conversation, initially neutral and rather ordinary, soon shifted towards the Armenian genocide. Even today, I often wonder why. Perhaps it was because I had never met an Armenian before, and I wanted to know more about this issue. Or perhaps it was because I am of Jewish origin and the solidarity between Jewish and Armenian people has some clear historical foundations: both nations have been minority groups, both had a diaspora, both suffered from persecutions, both were left without a national state for many years, but somehow managed to maintain a social, cultural, and religious cohesion in spite of all hardships and adversities. Most importantly, genocide was clearly part of both of our cultural inheritances; hence the lady and I were, so to speak, on the same wave-length. Whatever it was, it immediately felt as though I had something in common with that lady.

Talking about the Armenian genocide has never been easy or politically correct. Even the exact number of victims is still a controversial issue. The Armenian genocide is deeply embarrassing for
Europe in its diplomatic relationships with an increasingly irritated Turkey. Official positions on the Armenian genocide vary. In France, its denial is a criminal offence. In Turkey, mentioning it in public represents an anti-patriotic behaviour and might lead to a three-year criminal conviction. In the USA, its historical truth is not officially acknowledged.

Let’s face it, the Armenian genocide is somewhat “uncomfortable”. For a start, it might complicate the debate on the Holocaust. However, there are striking similarities between the two. For example, death marches of Jewish Haftlinge from Auschwitz to Mauthausen resemble closely that of Armenians forced to move from Anatolia towards the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia, dying of starvation and exhaustion. However, while Germany openly reflects on the Shuldfrage for crimes committed by the Nazis, Turkey officially prefers to talk about a tragedy shared by both Armenians and Turkish people within the difficult circumstances of the First World War, causing reciprocal suffering and thousands of victims on both sides. On the other hand, some historians deny the existence of a clear genocide plan against Armenians in Turkey, based on the fact that not all Armenians in Istanbul were deported, and maintain that, in the Armenian case, a systematic plan of extermination comparable to the one set up by the Nazis against the Jews during the Second World War was missing.

Denying the genocide hurts its survivors and might lead to long-term psychological consequences. Jewish people know it very well. Because that lady seemed such a nice person, because of an immediate sympathy between us, and because I really like challenges, I invited her to present a paper on this topic at the Conference of the Transcultural Psychiatry Section of the World Psychiatric Association in Vienna in April 2006. It was not by chance that I was presenting a paper on guilt feelings in Holocaust survivors, as illustrated in the works of Italian writer Primo Levi, at the same congress.

Initially, the lady was extremely hesitant and reluctant, but in the end she accepted. Her paper was very successful and it was, as far as I am aware, the first time that the topic of the Armenian genocide and the psychological consequences of its denial on the following generations was dealt with at a Transcultural Psychiatry Conference. I must admit, I felt very proud to have been the one
who had opened the way to a debate on the subject within this branch of psychiatry.

The lady I am talking about is my dear friend Aida Alayarian, and I felt even more proud and honoured when she told me that this very book is, to some extent, the result of this lucky encounter between her and me, two human beings who have genocide as a common cultural inheritance, and between the Armenian genocide and transcultural psychiatry, my main field of interest and research.

Aida and I went to other psychiatric conferences together, but things with the Armenian genocide were not always so smooth as in Vienna. Last year, we were in Stockholm, where Aida was approached by a Turkish colleague who was adamant that the Armenian genocide had never happened. Amazingly, through her denial, she mainly seemed to be trying to “reassure” Aida and create a bond with her, rather than to defend the immaculate integrity of her national identity. I was surprised to see such an internalized mechanism of denial, and I was also surprised to observe Aida’s composed reaction, although I thought she was hurt, in spite of the “emotional tools” available to her from her psychoanalytic training. I wondered what it would have felt like for me to speak to a German colleague trying to convince me of the non-existence of the Holocaust. From this point of view, I am luckier than Aida, as in my own perception the Holocaust, except for some pathetic isolated individuals, is nowadays well at the core of western European identity and historical inheritance, while in the case of the Armenian genocide we are still years behind.

But I felt much better shortly afterwards, when my national pride was triggered as cinemas broadcast the film La Masseria delle Allodole, by Italian directors Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, based on the novel Skylark Farm, by Antonia Arslan. Once again, the Armenian genocide was being brought to the public’s attention and the debate seemed to rise once again. At the same time, in a kind of mysterious parallel destiny of our common tragedy, a programme based on Primo Levi’s If This Is A Man was being broadcast by the BBC.

My connections to the Armenian genocide continue, as does my friendship with Aida. Perhaps the deepest thing we have in common beyond our cultural diversity is the strong belief that memory is the basic foundation of ethics as well as the main component of the human being’s moral strength and resilience in the face of
adversity. I do not know if one day the Armenian genocide will be as widely acknowledged as the Holocaust, but I hope the struggle for its recognition will go on. Everybody is welcome to contribute.

Micol Ascoli
Consultant Psychiatrist
I am pleased to write the Foreword for this important book because I believe passionately in the profound importance of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide for at least three reasons.

First, there is the reason highlighted so powerfully by this book: the necessity of recognition for the beginning of the healing process for the surviving victims and their loved ones. The anguish of the memory of the horrors that they endured and witnessed must be massively compounded by the denial of the reality by those whose people were responsible for the horrors—and by others, such as the British government, which chooses to equivocate over terminology or evidence.

History has shown how acknowledgement of such crimes against humanity can be the beginning of forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, and hope for a new friendship between the aggressor and the victim. Germany's acknowledgement of the Holocaust ushered in a new era of healing relationships between the people and countries involved. But unless and until Turkey acknowledges the reality of the Armenian Genocide, there can be no healing for individual survivors or the families of those who perished. The wounds remain open, and salt is rubbed into them every time the reality is denied.

There is no excuse for prevarication about the evidence: the
abundance of compelling material has been available and readily accessible in excellent academic publications for many years. Anyone who remains in doubt but who sincerely wishes to seek the truth should visit the powerful Genocide Museum in Yerevan. However much a visitor may be sceptical about the inevitable partiality of purpose, the overwhelming evidence transcends any inherent bias and testifies to the world the intentionality and systematic co-ordination of the massacres that constituted genocide of the Armenians. It also portrays, in so far as this is possible, the brutality of the perpetrators and the anguish of the victims.

However, although nothing can diminish the suffering that was inflicted, there could be comfort in the admission of the truth; and that comfort could help to initiate a process of healing between the peoples of Armenia and Turkey.

The second reason why recognition is important is for the sake of the Turkish people themselves. No people can live with integrity and peace while their history is falsified, yet there is such fear that the truth may emerge that the Turkish authorities impose brutal censorship, denying that fundamental freedom—freedom of speech. The fate that has been meted out to Hrant Dink and other brave Turkish people who have acknowledged the genocide is a symptom of the pathological effects of the denial of history.

Some years ago, I had the opportunity to visit Turkey in my professional capacity as a nurse, to help to develop nursing research in universities in Istanbul and Ankara. I met many professional colleagues who all knew the reality of the Armenian genocide and confided in me that they wished their government would acknowledge it, since they were deeply unhappy about being forced to live a lie. They said they felt “schizophrenic”, and yearned for acknowledgement of the truth so as to bring psychological healing to the Turkish people.

But, in discussing the desirability of Turkey’s admission of the genocide, it must be remembered that there may be a fundamental theological and psychological problem. There is a profound difference in acknowledgement of guilt between cultures rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition and those which have deeply entrenched concepts of shame and honour. In the former, there is an inherent potential sequence from sin and guilt through to repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration of relationships. By con-
contrast, cultures, including those within the Islamic tradition, that give great importance to concepts of honour and shame may have far greater difficulty in admitting culpability as this would bring shame on those designated guilty. Often, within this theological and cultural tradition, the only adequate response to guilt is expiation and punishment. Reflections of this worldview are seen in so-called “honour-related” violence in many parts of the world. The Turkish Islamic theology and culture may therefore find it exceedingly difficult to find an appropriate way of acknowledging this massive evidence of guilt and the shame it would imply without the cultural trajectory of confession and absolution. This will be a profound challenge to the people of Turkey, and to the rest of the world.

The third reason why recognition of the genocide is so important is that every genocide that is not acknowledged is an encouragement to other potential perpetrators to commit new genocides, reassured that there is a strong likelihood that they will do so with impunity. Hitler’s infamous statement on the eve of Nazi Germany’s assault on Poland, “Who speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”, is a chilling example of the dangers of allowing any genocide to escape the judgement of truth.

Therefore, I welcome this book, which requires us to consider the psychological effects of failure to acknowledge the Armenian genocide—not only for the sake of the Armenian people, but for the sake of humanity.

As a Christian, I remember that the Bible teaches us that it is only the truth which can make us free. While truth is denied, freedom is diminished. And freedom is indivisible: we cannot truly enjoy our freedom while others are denied theirs. Therefore, those of us who have the privilege of essential freedoms, such as freedom of speech and scholarship, must use them on behalf of those who are denied them. This book is an important contribution to the discourse of truth, and I hope it will help to bring forward that day of recognition of the historical truth of the Armenian genocide so that a process of healing may begin between the peoples of Armenia and Turkey and, thereby, engender a greater hope for the world that truth can and will prevail.

Caroline (Baroness) Cox
March 2008
"One path only: To live together"

(Dink, 2007)\(^1\)

If genocide’s aim is the extermination of a whole people and, at the same time, an attempt to erase the past and future of its survivors, leaving them thus in a desert outside time, space, and humankind, then Aida Alayarian’s project, faced with this, is even more remarkable in that it can be understood as an attempt to reconstruct the boundaries of life of the survivors while also attempting to repair the symbolic human fabric destroyed by genocide. Her project becomes, through writing, a therapeutic step, doubtless strongly linked to her daily clinical work at the Refugee Therapy Centre in London.

The structure of the book itself, weaving like a symbolic repairing cocoon, works towards recovering the continuity of time and broken memory of the Armenian people, and this is no mean feat for a book addressing such a subject.

It could be, indeed, that from the restoration and inscription of these past, present, but also future links with the world, the surviving reader—or his descendants—foressees the possibility of coming out of the genocide claustrium in which others can only be thought of as either victim or executioner. It is also possible that
anybody who has been caught up in genocide will feel affected by
the rehumanizing link that this book offers.

To come back more precisely to the title of the book, *Consequences
of Denial: the Armenian Genocide*, the emphasis is on the psychical
effect of the denial of genocide, a denial particularly tenacious in the
case of the Armenian genocide since it has lasted for more than
ninety years. We know now, however, that denial is a constituent of
all genocides, whether it be against Jews or Tutsis or any others, for
the specificity of genocide is not only to want to erase a whole peo-
ple from the surface of the earth but to inscribe in their place noth-
ingness. There is trauma for survivors, linked to the murders of their
close ones, killed in atrocious conditions; but there is also, in the case
of genocide, another trauma added to the first, which is linked to the
denial of the very existence of these dead, who thus become, under
these conditions, no longer the dead for whom one can mourn but
the ones who “never existed”, and who can never be mourned.

Aida Alayarian analyses with much finesse, and with a richness
to her text, not only the psychical trauma that the genocide itself
engenders but also those effects that the genocide’s denial engen-
ders—that is, the consequences of the annihilation of the genealogy
of the survivors. She gives some examples of this, in particular from
Article 301 of the Turkish penal code (p. 203), which permits taking
anyone to court who “insults Turkish identity”.

Thus, Orhan Pamuk, a recent recipient of the Nobel Prize for
Literature, was brought to court for having declared to a Swiss
newspaper, “a million Armenians and 3,000 Kurds were killed
on these lands”, and Elif Shafak, author of the novel *Baba Ve Piç
(The Bastard from Istanbul)*, has also been sued for having put in the
mouth of one of her Armenian characters the following phrase: “I am
the grandson of a family whose children were massacred by the
Turkish butchers.” Interrogated during her trial by the prosecutor,
Mustafa Erol, she protested, saying, “Far from wanting to insult
Turkish identity, I wanted, on the contrary, to contribute to the
creation of a peaceful climate between Armenians and Turks.” She
was finally acquitted.

There is, therefore, a difference to be noted between the posi-
tions and the actions of the Turkish negationist government and the
involvement of some of its citizens, who themselves are not
immune to trial and imprisonment.
But beyond the numerous trials of Turkish citizens who work for acknowledgement of the genocide, another step into violence was taken when, on 19 January 2007, Hrant Dink, editor of the newspaper Agos was assassinated, probably under the orders of those who want to remain in hatred and who consider any truth and any attempt at rapprochement between Armenians and Turks as a danger.

It is thus that—with regard to a conference held in Istanbul amid much difficulty, wherein the word genocide was used, the "G word," as the Americans would say—the newspaper Radikal could write: “The conference took place, the word genocide was uttered. The world keeps on turning. Turkey is still there” (Radikal, 2005).

This says much about the imaginary violence of the repressed, the fantasy of the collapse of Turkey that the lifting of denial would possibly provoke, as if what was denied could not reappear as words but only as a violence so much stronger in reality precisely because it was refuted by the psyche.

On this subject, Aida Alayarian mentions how difficult it is to change one’s perception of the other. It is either fear and/or hatred, and this extreme perception is destructive for all concerned. She writes, too, how in a certain way the two communities are involved both in the trauma of genocide and its denial, and how they can only get out of it together by letting their perceptions evolve.

Can one say, then, that in a different way the descendants of either side are equally victims of this genocide, whether consciously or unconsciously?

Is it not time, therefore, that Armenians and Turks meet beyond fantasy, or perhaps even confront together these fantasies in order, precisely, not to mistake them for reality, and to inscribe them at last in a common past? In this event, mourning should be shared; mourning for all the treasures these murdered men, women, and children were carrying that were lost forever. As Elif Shafak said in his report of the conference, “Today we should start to cry for this loss” (Piralian-Simonyan, 2008, p. 204).

Is it not, finally, what Aida Alayarian, in her respectful humanity, wishes to communicate to us?

Hélène Piralian-Simonyan
Psychoanalyst
Notes

1. Title of an article by Hrant Dink written in June 2006 in the Armenian newspaper Agos in Istanbul. A collection of Dink’s articles has been published in French under the title To Be Armenian in Turkey (Dink, 2007).

2. Read on this subject, with regard to the trauma suffered by the descendants of the executioners and victims of the genocide of the Jews, Peter Sichrovsky (1985); and, with regard to the speech of executioners, Yolande Mukagasana (2001) (Rwanda); Rithy Panh and Christine Chaumeau (2003) (Cambodia).
“Man’s socio-genetic evolution is about to reach a crisis in the full sense of the word, a crossroads offering one path to fatality, and one to recovery and further growth. Artful perverter of joy and keen exploiter of strength, man is the animal that has learned to survive ‘in a fashion,’ to multiply without food for the multitudes, to grow up healthy without reaching personal maturity, to live well but without purpose, to invent ingeniously without aim, and to kill grandiosely without need”

(Erikson, 1964)

In addressing issues arising from the psychological consequences of the previous century, it is fundamentally important to note that it has been marked by unparalleled human cruelty, mass violence, and conflicts which are rooted in ethnic fear and envy. Most casualties are non-combatants, mostly women and children, and therefore these conflicts can and will cause post traumatic stress on a vast scale and destroy the community structure.

The issues of fundamental human rights, refugees, torture, mass violence, ethno-political conflict, genocide, and the concept of peace
INTRODUCTION

is consciously or unconsciously an integral part of all human psychological thinking. Unfortunately, on the whole, psychological education tends to ignore such topics. Service providers are, therefore, unprepared to meet the needs of those within the broader global community experiencing the trauma associated with these conflicts, either within their home countries or in diasporas. As a result we may at times feel inadequately qualified, or, in contrast, come to believe that these people are not psychologically minded. Indeed, we are unprepared to contribute to pre-conflict prevention or post-conflict resolution.

However, based on current knowledge, we have the ability to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the psychosocial roots of human cruelty, mass violence, ethno-political conflict, and genocide through assessment, intervention, and treatment. With this knowledge, we can work collaboratively with other disciplines to develop models and policies, working towards early prevention, peaceful conflict resolution, and encourage dialogues, reconciliation, and reconstruction.

While there are some levels of awareness of the Holocaust around the world, whether positive or negative, most people do not realize the extent of the brutality and actual loss of human life that was incurred. Even worse, so many people, communities, and nations around the world are unaware of the Armenian genocide, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, the killing fields of Cambodia, the disappearances in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, the death squad killings in El Salvador, the genocides in Rwanda and the Balkans, and the extreme violations of basic human rights in every single one of them. The world needs to remember that these atrocities have happened and that they can happen again anywhere without any advance warning.

This book seeks to provide awareness and understanding of the horrendous tragedy in the death of over two million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire between the years of 1894 and 1922. The sophisticated and diplomatic denial of the Armenian genocide by successive Turkish governments is an example of historical perversion. In order to assimilate the facts, it is important to consider the history of events that led up to this tragedy and to understand the danger accompanying its subsequent and ongoing denial. This collective state denial of the genocide, in which more
than two million Armenians lost their lives, is preventing the survivors and their descendants from healing. Long-term psychological consequences stemming from loss of contact with land, culture, and symbols, have only served to prolong this emotional numbness.

This book discusses the effects of the genocide on the Armenian people from a psychological point of view, focusing on the aspect of denial, as part of the internal and external processes, and the transmission of trauma across generations. It concludes that, unless this type of tragedy is understood and fully acknowledged, cross-generational trauma will continue and the threat of future genocide will remain.

The book outlines some of the theories most relevant to understanding (and thus working towards preventing) such tragedies. The psychoanalytic approach will be used to bring perspective and useful insights into the causes and effects of the Armenian genocide and the genocidal mind at large.

It is important to take into consideration that people’s history, culture, and the use of language plays an important role in imagining the other—the other within the self, and the other as self—as well as the enormously influential visual images each group can have of the other. In the need to emphasize similarity in difference, verbal metaphor can play a meaningful role in creating a climate for peaceful communication and understanding or lack of it.

Cultural supposition and conjectures that affect self-perceptions, in many situations may have an important and significant effect on an individual’s mourning process. In relation to the children of survivors of the Armenian genocide, they might carry historical burdens of rejection, denigration, and persecution, which, if left unresolved, impede the ability to mourn their losses and, therefore, to move on. This, if observed systematically, will be consistent in both Armenian and Turkish psychology, although in different patterns. It is a well-known fact that when one group suffers cultural catastrophes at the hands of another, the result is widespread feelings of inadequacy, shame, and helpless rage. Shame disrupts the capacity to pass along positive cultural values and traditions, including those associated with mourning. A heritage of oppression encourages the perpetuation of negative self-images, which each successive generation attempts to heal in the self by healing the parent, generally unsuccessfully.
For many Armenians, their identity is largely associated with a culture of violence or being violated rather than that of their cultural origin. The way in which they relate to their cultural origins is often influenced by the feelings associated with loss, anger, and rage at having lost their culture without being able to adopt an acceptable new culture or integrate fully in another culture. Often, especially for those living in Turkey and retaining Armenian names, there is the perception of being an outcast, someone who is somehow suspect and therefore at risk.

One of the issues that even Armenians themselves do not easily talk about is the fact that so many women and girls were repeatedly raped, both those who were killed and those who survived. So, it is imperative to understand the importance of gender and hate propaganda in the genocidal campaign, and its effects on the survivors. Armenians focus so much on the fact that the Turkish government denies the genocide that they neglect to acknowledge and reflect what has happened to them.

The concepts and reality of loss for Armenians is not only about their freedom and the loss of their loved ones, but about the total annihilation of every external reference point of the self, the total destruction of family, community, tradition, and way of life, which inevitably enforces central existential and, therefore, psychological confrontations. The lives of many Armenians also indicate that for some, although loss can appear to threaten their very existence, it can also offer the opportunity for thoughtful, reflective, and philosophical transformations. Those Armenians who moved on must have been through the process of healing that requires the ability to embrace parts of the self that carry the inherited but existential fear of being persecuted once more, and of not being able to protect one’s children from the extraordinary hatred and dehumanization that destroyed so many of their families and their loved ones in a burning cave.

However, violence, in all its manifestations, is a phenomenon put into action by individuals who have been politicized as a group to give and receive violent death, to possess the enemy’s land, homes, women, children, and any other cultural values, and perhaps, at some level, filling the gap of their own loss—whatever this gap might be. The splitting of the self and the other into friend and enemy, or love and hate, relieves the normal psychic tension caused
by human ambivalence when love and hate find two separate objects of attention. In this way people do not feel guilty, as the destructive impulses are mobilized by their own superego, acting together with the State and societal superego. These, of course, have projected the guilt they might feel on to the created enemy who should be killed; hence, they would kill them.

In other words, the charging of the enemy with guilt by which the superego of the State mobilizes the individual’s superego seems to be of fundamental importance in escaping the sense of guilt and remorse in those engaged in the killing. It also allows the denial and disavowal of any remorse or responsibility. Yet the mobilization of superego activities can still involve the individual’s self-punitive mechanisms, even though most of the person’s guilt has been projected on to the enemy. This projection will be mainly in the name of civilization, or ownership and justice. However, when people reach a stage in life where they can reflect on their past, this totally projected guilt can become a problem, leading to varying degrees of mental illness. It is also true that some people do not feel guilty even after reflection; thus, the killing of an enemy cannot be truly mourned as it has not been an individual decision or action. Therefore, there remains an unconsolatory, unresolved mourning to be lived with over and over again and perhaps passed on to succeeding generations.

The first part of the book, after investigating the historical background, concentrates on trauma, people’s responses, and denial of the genocide. The focus will be on the victim–perpetrator dyad and, indeed, the international community’s response or lack of it. It provides a historical and cultural background to the Armenian genocide, and goes on to discuss the importance of understanding the psychological responses to the event. The meaning of trauma will be explored, along with the particular psychological trauma imposed upon Armenians in the aftermath of the genocide. By analysing their collective response, it can be argued that the effect of trauma has been exacerbated by a lack of acknowledgement and/or outright denial of what they endured by order of the Turkish government. It then attempts to interpret the concept of denial and its role in the genocide’s aftermath, linking the effects of denial to trauma, and presenting evidence that spontaneous experience has led to cross-generational trauma among Armenians. It is
emphasized that this can further be demonstrated through relationships within families and the collective community that have been marred with the scars of pain and sorrow, producing a predisposition in the subsequent generations to vulnerability and impairment of ability to respond to future trauma, a response that often follows exposure to mass violence.

The second part of the book discusses how a psychological approach, in conjunction with other disciplines, constitutes a vital element of learning from these instances of mass violence, and explores the steps that can be taken to cultivate a mentality that does not accept war, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and terrorism as tolerable, and the importance of mutual understanding as prevention of further violence. It examines the psychological consequences of genocide and trauma through psychodynamic concepts; as from a psychodynamic point of view the essence of a traumatic situation is an experience of helplessness on the part of the ego in the face of an accumulation of excitation, whether of external or internal origin. It also demonstrates how the denial of the Armenian genocide had, and continues to have, far-reaching and severe consequences, including further genocide, such as the Holocaust. By considering other instances of genocide in the twentieth century, and the global response to the Armenian situation, it suggests that acknowledgement is essential to healing and recovery, and further tragedies can be avoided only through inward-looking processes and self-reflection, together with dialogue with the feared or hated other.

The book poses the question of whether the Holocaust and other instances of genocide could have been avoided had there been proper acknowledgement by the international community of the Armenian genocide, and points out the well-documented incongruence in the manner in which the two tragedies have been recognized and memorialized. It will be demonstrated that the lack of accountability and bringing to justice of the creators of the Armenian genocide gave Hitler and his administration reason to believe their actions would be likewise overlooked, thereby empowering them in instigating and carrying out the Holocaust. Finally, the book explores the possibility of taking adequate steps at personal, group, national, and international levels to prevent the recurrence of genocide.
PART I

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
AND TRAUMA
CHAPTER ONE

History of the Armenian genocide to the present day

“What unites most races, and keeps them together that way is not the manifestation of love, or friendship, nor the respect they have for one another. It is the common hatred they feel against their enemies”

(Chekhov, 1920)

Before Rwanda and Bosnia, and before the Holocaust, the first genocide of the twentieth century happened in Turkish Armenia. This was a terrible precedent that has come to haunt Armenians, Kurds, and Turks, as well as others throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

In trying to find out why genocide is happening, one needs to see how people in a community come to fall outside the constrictions of moral responsibility and commitment. It is also necessary to think and reflect in order to identify what it is that admired illusions and complicated enquiries concerning the nature of individuals, of nation-states, and of civilization. It is important to investigate to see what is the psychological mechanism that compels individuals to become part of a process of mass destruction. Is
genocide an historical deviation or aberration, or an integral part of the culture of civilization that may impart a sense of inequality, of superiority and power?

Concerning the Armenian genocide, as time has passed the Turkish government has continued not only to remain silent about it, but also to adamantly and consistently deny that any genocide was committed against the Armenians, bringing about a type of social amnesia or a mode of forgetting in which almost a whole society separates itself from its discreditable past. This kind of collective denial may happen at an organized, official, and conscious level, through deliberate cover-ups and the inaccurate recording of history, or through the type of cultural slippages that occur when information disappears. Successive Turkish governments have continued this official state denial for more than ninety years from the official memorial day of the genocide and more than a century since the beginning of systematic killings, through the use of deliberate propaganda, “forged documents”, suppression and destruction of archives, and “bribing scholars” or, when bribery was unsuccessful, “persecuting and executing” them (Dadrian, 1995).

If we approach these issues from a developmental perspective, we can see that our understanding of an adult psyche is fundamentally different from that of a child, who depends for its healthy development on interaction with other people who are sufficiently benign and reflective—this is inherently intersubjective, requiring relationships between subjects for the individual to develop a capacity for self-reflection.

**Recent developments in the acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide**

There has been a strong relationship between the United States of America and the Turkish government, in which Turkey aligns itself in a special relationship with the USA and acts as a regional base for the American military to supply their forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. None the less, in October 2007, the USA for the first time officially challenged the Turkish denial, disavowal, and refusal to acknowledge the Armenian genocide.
On 10 October 2007, the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee was expected to approve a bill that called on the USA to recognize the Armenian genocide. However, President George W. Bush promptly urged United States legislators not to pass a resolution declaring the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks to be genocide. Just before the Foreign Affairs Committee began debating the resolution, Bush warned of the enormous and negative impact of such a resolution being passed, not only on the USA, but worldwide, claiming that “This resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings, and its passage would do great harm to our relations with a key ally in Nato and in the global war on terror” (Goldenberg, 2007).

This seemed to be a panic response from President Bush to the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s reaction; he threatened that the bill’s passing would result in a “significant weakening” of his country’s ties with the USA. President Bush was not the only person in panic; many of his political colleagues were also anxious about the issue. One of them was US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, who claimed that “the passage of this resolution at this time would be very problematic for everything we are trying to do in the Middle East”. Defence Secretary Robert Gates felt that “Access to airfields and to the roads and so on in Turkey would very much be put at risk if this resolution passes and Turkey reacts as strongly as we believe they will.” This tie is so significant for the USA because, at that point, 70% of their air cargo passed through Turkey on its way to Iraq and Afghanistan, along with about one third of the fuel utilized by their military forces (Guardian Unlimited, 2007).

This would not be the first time that Turkey reacted to the issue in an extreme manner. Relations between France and Turkey in October 2006 serve as a good example. The national assembly of France voted to regard as a crime the denial that the Armenians suffered genocide between 1915 and 1917, and recommended the punishment of one year’s imprisonment and a fine of 45,000 Euros for anyone who did so (Chrisafis, 2006). Turkish authorities were so angry that they went as far as to terminate all defence contracts with France.

Evidence of the threat from Turkey if such a resolution was passed can be seen in a quote by the US embassy in Ankara, who issued a statement saying that:
If, despite the administration’s concerted efforts against this resolution, it passes committee and makes its way to the floor of the House for debate and a possible vote, there could be a reaction in the form of demonstrations and other manifestations of anti-Americanism throughout Turkey. [Guardian Unlimited, 2007]

Yet, on 10 October 2007, despite pleas from the White House to reject the resolution, the House’s Foreign Affairs Committee voted in favour of the official US recognition of the Armenian genocide, by twenty-seven votes to twenty-one. The majority of support came from the Democrats, including the speaker, Nancy Pelosi. By 17 October 2007, however, this group of Democrats, having voted one week earlier for the official US recognition of the Armenian genocide, suddenly withdrew their support. They claimed that they withdrew the resolution to protect relations with Turkey at what they viewed as a critical time in global history. As if to prove them right, just as the Democrats withdrew this resolution, Turkey’s parliament was voting to give its military the authority to enter northern Iraq to attack several thousand Kurdish guerrillas based there. It is a sad reality to see how politics overshadow what is right and what is wrong. It is also an indication that generations after Young Turks and the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish government is still willing to create a power to kill when they wish, even if the whole, or the majority of, the international community is against this. This also raises the issue of whether all these discussions and arguments actually had their roots in an attempt by America to prevent the Turkish authority from killing Kurds, rather than real concern and acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide.

In recent years, especially during the past two decades, there have been some more substantial affirmations of the Armenian genocide by scholars, states, and international organizations. These affirmations are a matter of recognition, not the legislation of truth; although they do offer recognition that the Turkish government’s denial is essentially political and not a historical representation of reality. In contrast, some states have aided Turkey in its denial out of convenience, rather than acceptance of Turkish arguments.

The Armenian campaign for recognition, acknowledgement, and condemnation of what happened has been going on for decades
worldwide, and has been supported by many non-Armenians who believe in human rights. As a result of these ongoing campaigns, the European Parliament voted to recognize the Armenian Genocide in 1987 and in 1990. Bill Clinton, former President of the USA, issued a news release (1987) calling on all Americans to join with Armenians in commemorating the Armenian Genocide on 24 April. The Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, Yossi Beilin, on 27 April 1994, in answer to the claims of denial by the Turkish Ambassador, said, "It was not war. It was most certainly massacre and genocide, something the world must remember".

In contrast to Yossi Beilin, a few years later, on 10 April 2001, the Foreign Minster of Israel, Shimon Peres, was quoted as saying, "We regret attempts to create a similarity between the Holocaust and the Armenian allegations. Nothing similar to the Holocaust occurred. It is a tragedy, but not a genocide". This statement was repeated by the Israeli Ambassador in Armenia, Rivka Cohen, in February 2002 (Auron, 2003; Demoorjjan, 2003). These statements are clearly based on the political situation and foreign policy of Israel and their relations with, and benefit derived from, the Turkish government. It is surprising, but it is also sad, that Israeli ministers so easily change their tone politically. After the Holocaust one would expect that no government in Israel would compromise over such an issue. This type of denial is an escalation from passive to active denial, from moderate denial to hard-line denial, by those other than the Turkish government for political reasons.

Who are Armenians?

Until their persecution, Armenians were seen as belonging to a nation-state. The first record of an Armenian state dates back to the early 6th century BC, and the state itself has a long history of conquering, or being conquered and ruled by, Persians, Byzantines, Arabs, Mongols, and Ottoman Turks. In this regard it is no different from many of its neighbours, who also shared similar fates. However, post-genocide Armenians are now regarded as an ethnic group, despite the declaration of independence of Armenia from the USSR in 1991.
What is genocide?

Since the term “genocide” has been the source of much heated debate in the Armenian context, it helps to understand how the word is understood and defined.²

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (Soanes, 2002) describes genocide as: “The deliberate killing of a very large group of people from a particular ethnic group or nation”. So, in plain English, this is what happened to the Armenians.

**United Nations Convention**

The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) provides a legal definition of the term. Article 2 of the CPPCG defines genocide as

any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. [See Appendix II for full text]

While “genocide” as a legal term was not conceptualized until after the mass persecution of Jews and gypsies during the Second World War, it is a definition that is directly relevant to the mass killing of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire and successive Turkish governments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Historical documentation**

A vast amount of reliable historical detail concerning the Armenian genocide is documented mainly on two websites, which I use as the main resources in regard to historical data. Many Armenians in the diasporas have written passionately on this topic, emphasizing that the nature of the genocide was not just about the eradication of the Armenians, but also the extensive destruction of their history and
culture. But, much of the historical data and information can be imperfect and, in some cases, contradictory, so, obtaining empirical information by and large can be challenging. Therefore, I owe much of the research on the history of the Armenian genocide website to the Armenian National Institute (http://www.armenian-genocide.org). They have carefully sifted and collated the information available, and seem to provide a comprehensive and reliable source of information on the Armenian genocide.

It is documented that Armenian genocide falls into four stages. In a series of mass murders, the following number of Armenians were killed:

- in 1894–1896, around 300,000;
- in 1909, around 30,000;
- between 1915 and 1916, 1.5 million;
- from 1918 to 1922, about 300,000.

Over two million Armenians in total were killed in an attempt by Ottoman Turkey to exterminate the Armenian nation (Dadrian, 1995), and by 1922 the Armenians had been almost entirely eradicated from their historic homeland. Some survivors took refuge under French administrative rule in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Later, in 1939, when the Turkish authority threatened to occupy the district, many fled to Syria and Lebanon. It is estimated that out of two million Armenians, currently 40,000–70,000 are living in Turkey, mainly in Istanbul.

**History of the Armenian genocide**

The Ottoman Empire was a multi-national state from the sixteenth century to its collapse following the First World War, and its territory included historic Armenia. Although by the early twentieth century, this state had become restricted mainly to the Middle East, and although it was still a diverse society, its rulers governed by Turkish authority and maintained institutional favour of a Muslim population. In the main, those of Turkish origin treated Christians and Jews as less important. The Turkish majority was allowed to dominate within the society and to treat Christians and Jews as
second-class citizens, justifying their actions with a range of discriminatory laws and regulations imposed both by the state and its Islamic officials.

It is indicated that from 1894 to 1896, Sultan Abdul-Hamid II killed around three hundred thousand Armenians, mostly men, in a series of massacres in 1895. This type of systematic and organized violence by the central authorities and head of state inevitably resulted in widespread hatred and violence towards Armenians by the Turkish.

Initially, these actions took place in response to fear, and the intention was to prevent the growth of Armenian nationalism. The sultan, particularly, was concerned about the growth of Armenian political groups and their possible activity in the civil rights' movement's plans for Armenian autonomy. Sultan Abdul-Hamid was quite right to be fearful about the development of the Armenian Nationalists, since any nationalist movement may present a danger for the society in which it occurs. However, his shortcoming was that he did not take into consideration that, like any ethnic or national group within a population, Armenians were not unified and held different political views and/or allegiances to each other. Those who aligned themselves with the Armenian Nationalists and believed in extreme separatism were different in their philosophy from those Armenians who actually advocated the reform of an existing institution and constitution, and different again from those Armenians from small isolated villages, who did not have the knowledge, wish, or capacity for such political activity in the first place. Based on his short-sightedness in seeing the reality of the Armenian movement, the sultan's decision to destroy the Armenians actually increased their sense of nationalism. As a result, instead of reflecting on his decision to try to identify whether it was right or wrong, he took his action further in order to exclude the Armenians from having a role in their own government, without considering that depriving the Armenians of their political existence was not a sensible way of dealing with the growth of nationalism either.

Balakian, 2003, reports that

In the aftermath of 1878, as Armenian frustration grew, a new Armenian activism emerged. Because article 61 of the Berlin treaty
was an obvious hollow clause, Armenian expectations for reform were dashed and, in fact, conditions grew worse. With the treaty of Berlin signed and sealed, Abdul Hamid felt emboldened to send masses of Muslim refugees (muhajirs), whom the Russo-Turkish wars had driven from the Balkans and the Caucasus, into eastern Anatolia. This led to open violence against the Armenians—as murdering, looting, and pillaging were sanctioned. Enraged that the Armenian Question had become an international issue, the sultan by 1890 had created the Hamidiye, a well-trained force made up of Kurds whom he armed and had clothed in distinctive uniforms. [p. 43]

Balakian further suggests that

In forming the Hamidiye (literally, “belonging to Hamid”) regiments the sultan could both control the unruly Kurds and at the same time use them to deal with the Armenians as he wished. The lands over which the Kurdish nomads roamed bordered on and often dovetailed with those of the Armenian peasants, whom the Kurds resented for their relative prosperity. It was the old scheme of divide and conquer. [ibid., p. 44]

However, in 1908, the Turkish government was overthrown by a group of reformists known as the Young Turks; and otherwise known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), who decided to “Turkify” the multi-ethnic Ottoman society in order to safeguard the Ottoman state’s remaining in power, and to prohibit any aspirations or demands of the various minorities. Refusal to accept or to go along with these measures essentially led to a situation where, by and large, the minorities, and specifically the Armenians, were not treated as equals within the society in which they were living and were therefore unable to integrate. When the First World War broke out in 1914, the Young Turks found a perfect opportunity to clear the country of its Armenian population. They perhaps formed a mental picture of the synchronized victory of an empire in the east, incorporating Turkish-speaking peoples in Iran, Russia, and Central Asia.

Balakian (2003) reported that because Germany was the Ottoman Empire’s closest wartime ally, there is a large body of extraordinary Germany testimony about the Armenian genocide.
For example, Colonel Stange, the highest-ranking German guerrilla commander in the Russian-Turkish border region, referred to the chetes as “scum” (Gesindel), who “in the area of Tercan killed without exception all the Armenians of the convoy coming from Erzurum”. This incontestable fact, he wrote, was carried out with the assistance of the military escort. Balakian also reports that German consul Scheubner-Richter, reporting on the massacres from Harput to Erzincan also referred to the killing squads as “the scum”. The German consul in Aleppo, Dr Walter Rossler, in a 1915 report, noted that the killing squads were created by “the Turkish government which released convicts from the prisons, put them in soldiers’ uniforms and sent them to areas through which the deportees are to pass” (Balakian, 2003, p. 184).

In his report of 28 July 1915, from Erzurum, Vice-Consul Scheubner-Richter actually referred to this operation as a “shadow or a parallel government” (Nebenregierung) assuming power over the provincial government. He attributed the severity of the deportations to the party administrators, who vetoed the governor-general’s decree exempting the sick, families without men, and women living alone. The Responsible Secretaries, Delegated, and Inspectors admitted, Scheubner-Richter reported, that their job was to see to the total obliteration (die ganzliche Ausrottung) of the Armenians. Colonel Stanger reported that, in Trebizond Province, Dr Shakir and General Mahmud Kamil “ruthlessly and constantly pushed for the expediting of the deportations” with the knowledge that the convoys were being massacred on order. From Adana, German consul Eugen Buge reported to his embassy in Constantinople that the local party chier (derhiesige Komiteefuhrer) promised to massacre all the Armenians of Adana if any of them were spared deportation.

Balakian (2003) reported that

One remarkable document was discovered and translated in early 1919 by British officials in Turkey, who labeled it “The Ten Commandments”. It is a blueprint of the Armenian extermination operation and appears to have been the centerpiece of a secret party meeting, which took place sometime in late December 1914 or in January 1915. The document was obtained by Comm. C. H. Heathcote Smith, the right-hand man of Adm. Somerset Calthorpe, the British high commissioner in Constantinople. Fluent in Turkish,
Smith had served as British consul in Smyrna before the war, and he first learned of the “Ten Commandments” from the former British intelligence agent Percival Hadkinson, in Smyrna.

The document (along with several others) came into British hands through Ahmed Essad, the wartime head of the Ottoman Ministry Department II, Intelligence. Essad had served as secretary at the conference at which the “Ten Commandments” were issued—a conference presided over by Talaat Pasha, the minister of the interior, and Drs. Nazim and Behaeddin Shakir, the masterminds of the Special Organization.

One page of a nine-page correspondence between the British High Commission in Constantinople and the Foreign Office in London in early 1919 is headed “DOCUMENTS RELATING TO COMITE UNION AND PROGRESS ORGANIZATION IN THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES.” The subtitle reads: “The 10 commandments of the COMITE UNION AND PROGRESS.” A note following the text of the ten-point document, added by the British High Commissioner’s Office in Constantinople, suggests that that office translated the document into English: “Above is a verbatim translation—dated December 1914 or January 1915”. [p. 189]

Adalian (1991) suggested that, from a scholarly perspective, there are two ways of looking at the Armenian experience in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. He has suggested that first

the series of across-the-board killings from the 1890s to the 1920s [are] evidence of continuity in the deteriorating status of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire . . . once initiated, the policy of exposing the Armenians to physical harm acquired its own momentum. Victimization escalated because it was not countermanded—or an order or instruction that a previous order or instruction should not be followed by prevailing outside pressure or attenuated by internal improvement and reconciliation . . . the process of alienation was embedded in the inequalities of the Ottoman system of government and . . . the massacres prepared the Ottoman society for genocide.

He further indicates that

the brutalization of disaffected elements by despotic regimes is a practice seen across the world. The repressive measures these governments use have the limited function of controlling social change and maintaining the system. In this frame of reference,
genocide is viewed as a radical policy because it reaches for a profound alteration of the very nature of the state and society. These scholars emphasize the decisive character of the Armenian genocide and differentiate between the periodic exploitation and occasional terrorization of the Armenians and the finality of the deliberate policy to exterminate them and eliminate them from their homeland.

The rise of the Turkish Nationalists, whose main aim was to secure a new and prosperous Turkish state, was preceded by both the destruction of the Committee of Union and Progress and the Ottoman’s defeat in the First World War. All but the Ottoman government’s rule on the Armenians were rejected by the Nationalists when forming their new policies.

It was in 1915 that the Turkish Nationalists’ plans for the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians prevailed. With the intention of seizing land in order to create a new and “pure” Turkish nation, the Nationalists began their attempt at the eradication of all intellectual and military Armenians in their native land. All Armenian soldiers were deported, put into labour camps, and killed by Ottoman officials. Next, Armenian political and intellectual leaders were gathered together and murdered on 24 April 1915, a date which is now the annual day of commemoration for those who died.

Finally, any Armenians left were rounded up and placed in concentration camps in the desert between Jerablus and Deir ez-Zor. Here they perished from the heat, from lack of food, and some performed the “death walk”, whereupon the prisoners were taken to caves and left to rot or instead were thrown into the sea.

The few remaining Armenians had no choice but to roam from one country to the next in search of refuge. Many had lost their families, and whole communities were completely destroyed. Following such destruction and trauma, very little sense of Armenian tradition and culture within a community were recreated after the genocide. A gradual assimilation began. Traumatized people had no choice but to acclimatize and try to move on. Many suffered from psychological disorders, and had to deal with their feelings of guilt for having survived when so many others had not. In addition, the Armenians had to struggle through the pain they had endured and were still enduring without any help from the international community.
The perpetrators of the 1915 genocide saw no differentiation between members of Armenian society; men, women, children, young, old, able-bodied, disabled people, all had to be destroyed. The Nationalists massacred as many Armenians as they could find. The thousands of men who were in the army were killed first; then the rest of the adult population was rounded up, arrested, and murdered in remote locations. Sanasarian describes the treatment of the women in transit. Many died en route, having been already subjected to horrifying abuses. Rape was used as a weapon by the Nationalists against Armenian females:

In the Armenian case, deported women were subjected to murder, rape, mutilation, and abduction. Destruction and dehumanization went hand-in-hand . . . During deportation, younger and beautiful women and girls were abducted, eventually resulting in slavery and forced marriages. . . . The abduction and slavery of Armenian girls during deportation were cited and reported widely. [Sanasarian, 1989, p.453]

The Armenians were transported to isolated, uninhabited places in order to be massacred, rendering escape more or less impossible. Christian minorities had been protected by the Allies, who had warned the Ottomans not to take any arbitrary measures against them, thus justifying slightly the murder of the Armenians in the minds of the Nationalists. At the start of the First World War, all journalists had been confined for safety to Istanbul, so access to the outer regions of Turkey were reached with difficulty and the government controlled telegraph system of communication meant that the authorities could censor facts at their discretion (Sachar, 1969). None the less, news of the deportations was leaked reasonably early on, but the remoteness of the sites of the massacres resulted in a large gap between the actuality of the events and in the world being informed of them.

Whereas the massacres of 1895 and 1909 involved the desecration of all Armenian property, the 1915 perpetrators decided to go one step further and actually confiscate anything Armenian, from property to goods. This method was used in order to besiege the Armenians into complete and total starvation from every possible angle. It was a particularly insidious method, because it enabled the Nationalists not only to thieve anything and everything belonging
to the Armenians, but also to meticulously transport and conserve all goods and property in order to reap the maximum profit from their worth. The Armenians had nothing and the Turks visibly had it all. As the Young Turk Party were in control of the government, the local party chiefs found themselves in positions of greater power as financial brokers, thus increasing the incentive to follow government orders.

One of the most frightening aspects of the Young Turks' regime was its clinical sophistication. Unlike the Sultan, who tended to use mob violence as a method of killing, the Young Turks approached the massacre of the Armenians as they would a military exercise, and involved as many of their Turkish counterparts as they could to ensure their smooth ride to the murder of two million Armenians. They enlisted 'Butcher Battalions' (Bryce, 1916; Trumpener, 1968, pp. 200–270), made up entirely of convicts whom they released from prison especially to form teams for murdering the Armenians. The Young Turks utilized the government as a means of manipulating the massacre and so created new government departments as and when they saw fit, in order to delegate efficiently and so succeed in the total massacre of the Armenian. The process was well-designed: the initial orders came from the Young Turks, the deportations were delegated to the army and local gendarmerie, a special government agency was created to take charge of and redistribute the confiscated Armenian wealth, and as soon as the Armenians had reached their deportation destinations, in came the convicts to finish them off.

The Armenian genocide coincided not just with the introduction of new weapons of war, but also with the modernization of the Ottoman Empire's transport and communication systems. Although not as developed as those in the European countries, by the beginning of the twentieth century railroads connected the vast majority of the larger towns of the Ottoman Empire. Instructions for deportation were issued in minute detail, from the order to fill the cattle cars used for transport to maximum capacity in the regions, to the transportation of Armenians from European Turkey across the Sea of Marmara to Anatolia in order to be put on trains, added to the cattle cars, and transported to Syria along with the rest.

As telephone lines were mainly in use in the capital city, Istanbul, extensive communication was via telegraph lines that connected the entire empire. Without the installation of a widespread Turkish
telegraph system, the nationwide synchronization of the Armenian massacre by the Young Turks would simply not have been feasible. As the process of modernization leads to increased bureaucracy and paperwork, there is a tendency to accumulate substantial records of information. In the case of the Armenian genocide, a much-modernized massacre, the paper evidence of the murders was cleverly avoided thanks to telegraphic communication, a highly efficient method that left barely a trace.

The shuttling of all Armenians from their homes to their deaths meant that the Young Turks obtained their goal of extinguishing the Armenian community and reconstituting the state of Turkey. However, and somewhat ironically, many of the Armenians that managed to escape fled to the part of Russia that was historically Armenian. This area eventually became the smallest of the republics belonging to the former USSR, and the official country of modern Armenia.

The happenings of the First World War meant that the Armenian genocide was nowhere near the top of the international community's list of priorities. When the war was over, negotiations for a peace treaty did not include humanitarian policies to protect the Armenians from further persecution, despite the release of abundant documentation in evidence of the Armenian genocide. To some degree, this lack of action by Allied leaders served, in fact, to validate the success of ideological radicalism. When the Germans were defeated, a new Ottoman government, based in Istanbul, was put into power, following an armistice. Despite the new Ottoman government recognizing the culpability of the disbanded party, barely any of the guilty sentences pronounced could be carried out as most of the perpetrators had fled the country. The lack of policies negotiated by the Allied Powers in the post-war period has negatively affected the Armenians ever since.

The new Ottoman government was weak, and weaker still with its capital city under Allied occupation. They were of little help to the remaining Armenians, who returned to their homes only to find them at best occupied by new inhabitants, or at worst bereft of anything but the bricks that held them together. Meanwhile, the Nationalists were becoming more powerful as popular support for the flaccid new government waned. In 1922, the new government lost its hold over the provinces when the forces of nationalist Turks formed a separate government based in Ankara. This devolution
entailed the annulment by the Nationalists of the sentences passed on those of their fellow perpetrators who had been imprisoned post 1918; thus, people who had committed murder on an unimaginable scale were set free.

As the Istanbul government’s power weakened, the Ankara-based Nationalists’ powers strengthened. In 1919, an army officer named Mustafa Kemal Ataturk led the Turkish Nationalists in a drive to rid Turkey of Allied authority following the armistice and to reject the authority of the central government. Ataturk ordered his newly organized forces to go to Cilicia, the former home town of many Armenians. Many of the remaining survivors had repatriated to French-governed Cilicia in 1919, only to be slaughtered by Ataturk’s forces that very same year. The next city to be targeted was called Marash, where yet more Armenians lost their lives. Armenians in Hadjin fought for seven months, but were reduced to around five hundred people and were forced to flee their besieged and burning town in October 1920. In October 1921, the French agreed to evacuate Cilicia, and so any remaining Armenians were again deported. To add to this, the Ankara government had gone to war against the Republic of Armenia. The Nationalists had also given secret instructions for the physical annihilation of the land of Armenia. Indeed, half of the Republic of Armenia was then seized by General Kiazim Karabekir in November 1920, as Red Army units Sovietized the remaining areas.

Yet, the rest of the world continued to do nothing. Wherever surviving Armenians settled, the Kemalists were able to find and annihilate them. Some Armenians rose up to resist, only to be killed, while others chose to flee from their homes once and for all. No help came for the Armenians from the Allies in the nearby Middle East, and it became evident that the international community had decided to turn a blind eye to their plight.

The final stage of destruction occurred in September 1922, when a fire began in the Armenian part of the city of Izmir in Anatolia. The fire destroyed the entirety of the Christian neighbourhood before forcing the remaining Armenians to flee to the coast, where they boarded boats with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. The “purification” of the new Turkish state was well under way.

Ataturk, now the President of the newly proclaimed Republic of Turkey, having achieved control of Turkey and Anatolia, decided to
embark on the modernization and Westernization of the new Turkish state. He introduced national secularity and the Latin alphabet, and in 1931 he founded the Turkish Historical Society, charged with the guardianship of the state's official history. In 1934, he was officially given the surname "Ataturk" meaning "father of the Turks" as a symbol of gratitude at his reshaping of modern Turkey. In 1936, Ataturk put pressure on France to hand over a district on the Mediterranean under French administrative rule, known as Sanjak of Alexandretta, or Iskenderun, because many Armenian survivors had congregated there. In 1938, preoccupied with the deteriorating situation in Europe, France yielded when Turkish troops invaded, and so the remaining Armenians were forced to flee from Turkey. Ataturk died that same year.

Simpson (1993) suggests that

Several dozen new international treaties intended to defend human rights have been signed since the end of World War II, including conventions against slavery, torture, race and sex discrimination, apartheid, and genocide. Each new agreement suggests that there is broad popular support for fundamental change in this aspect of state behavior and international relations. This sentiment is embodied, albeit imperfectly, in the United Nations, the European Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a similar intergovernmental organization in Africa, the private association Amnesty International, and many other groups that monitor human rights issues and publicize offenses. Today's popular resistance to crimes against humanity is more sophisticated, better equipped, and better informed than ever before in human history. But the actual implementation of these treaties and the legal framework supporting human rights efforts remains notoriously weak. The horror of the Nazi gas chambers was unambiguously condemned in the wake of the Holocaust, for example, but both side's practice of bombing civilians (and its tactical cousin, missile attacks on cities) has not only escaped criminal prosecution, it has become the centerpiece of the major powers' postwar national security strategies. Usually there is little effective protest on behalf of the people living under the bombs. Similarly, after dragging its heels for four decades, the US Senate in 1986 finally approved a simple international convention declaring genocide to be a crime. At the same time, however, the senators wrote a restriction into their endorsement that effectively barred any US
court from actually enforcing legislation—which it has yet to do. Such loopholes are present in virtually all international agreements concerning crimes against humanity. [p. 284]

Focusing particularly on genocide, but also on other forms of mass killing, torture, and war, Ervin Staub (1992) raises the question: how can human beings kill or brutalize multitudes of other human beings? He explores the roots of group aggression and discusses the reasons why one group desires to harm another, taking into consideration the cultural and social patterns predisposing to violence, historical circumstances resulting in persistent life problems, and needs and modes of adaptation arising from the interaction of these influences. He talks about prejudice, devaluation, societal self-concept, moral exclusion, the need for connection, authority orientation, personal and group goals. Staub addresses the behaviour of perpetrators and bystanders in four historical situations: the Holocaust, as the main focus of his study, the genocide of Armenians in Turkey, the autogenocide in Cambodia, and the disappearances in Argentina. He reflects on caring and the psychology of helpers, and on the societal systems that facilitate the development of caring people and of care among groups. Staub offers a psychological way of understanding genocide and group violence. According to Staub (1992), genocidal societies usually go through an evolution during which the different strata of society literally learn how to carry out group murder. In his book, he contends that genocidal atrocities often result from military stress, usually led by authoritarian parties that wield great power yet are insecure in their rule, such as the Nazis in Germany and, indeed, the Ittihad (Committee of Union and Progress) in Turkey. The ideologies of such parties can vary in important respects, but they are, none the less, often similar in that they create unity among group members through the dehumanization of others outside their group.

The current Armenian situation

Around eight million Armenians survived, three million of whom (mainly descendants) now live in Armenia, an independent country since the dissolution of the USSR. The remaining survivors, who spread out across the continents from Russia to Syria to the UK and
the USA, currently constitute one of the largest diasporas in the world.

During the genocide, the Armenians not only lost thousands upon thousands of lives, they also lost most of their cultural heritage through the attempted eradication of all things Armenian. Monuments, churches, historical artefacts and manuscripts were simply obliterated by the Young Turks. Although a less tangible, yet equally damaging, loss, the Armenians were also bereft of what united them with their people; as the survivors dispersed to find refuge, Armenian folklore, dialects, and regional ethnographic diversity quickly disappeared.

Many Armenians were faced with not only the mourning of those whom they had lost, but also the guilt of having survived when others had not. Insufficient support networks in their adopted countries, coupled with the trauma they had endured, made their immediate needs for ongoing survival a priority. With no systematic support from the international community, no official acknowledgement of the genocide, and no coherence as a displaced nation, Armenians remained dispersed, uncoordinated, without the protection of an international law, and therefore an easy target for the Turkish government to discredit.7

Towards denial

In its immediate aftermath, the fact of the Armenian genocide was widely accepted and acknowledged. The governments of France, Great Britain, and Russia made a declaration, on 28 May 1915, denouncing the massacres as “crimes against humanity and civilization” for which all the members of the Turkish government would be held responsible, together with its agents implicated in the massacres.

The warning given to the Turkish government on this occasion by the governments of the Triple Entente dealt precisely with one of the types of acts that the modern term “crimes against humanity” is intended to cover: inhumane acts committed by a government against its own subjects.

The first peace treaty with Turkey, the Treaty of Sevres, signed on 10 August 1920, contained, in addition to the provisions dealing
with violations of the laws and customs of war (Articles 226–228 corresponding to Articles 228–230 of the Treaty of Versailles), a further provision, Article 230, by which the Turkish government undertook to hand over to the Allied Powers the persons responsible for the massacres committed during the war on Turkish territory. The relevant parts of this article read as follows:

The Turkish Government undertakes to hand over to the Allied Powers the persons whose surrender may be required by the latter as being responsible for the massacres committed during the continuance of the state of war on territory which formed part of the Turkish Empire on the 1st August, 1914... The Allied Powers reserve to themselves the right to designate the Tribunal which shall try the persons so accused, and the Turkish Government undertakes to recognize such Tribunal.

The provisions of Article 230 of the Peace Treaty of Sèvres were obviously intended to cover, in conformity with the Allied note of 1915 referred to in the preceding section, offences that had been committed on Turkish territory against persons of Turkish citizenship, though of Armenian or Greek race. This article constitutes, therefore, a precedent for Articles 6c and 5c of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Charters, and offers an example of one of the categories of “crimes against humanity” as understood by these enactments.

However, the Treaty of Sèvres was not ratified and did not come into force. It was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on 24 July 1923, which did not contain provisions regarding the punishment of war crimes, but was accompanied by a “Declaration of Amnesty” for all offences committed between 1 August 1914, and 20 November 1922.

In 1923 the international community abandoned the Armenians when the European Powers agreed to the Treaty of Lausanne in which Turkey was absolved of further responsibility for the consequences of the policies of the expired Ottoman state. Turkey took license from this posture to embark upon a policy of denial, suppression of public discussion, and prevention of any official mention of the criminal treatment of the Armenians. The mood in Europe of escape from the horrors of WWI, isolationism in the US, and revolutionary utopianism in Russia, further stigmatized the
Armenian survivors as witnesses of a catastrophe policy-makers and the public wanted to forget or bury. World War II, however, brought the problem of mass extermination into sharp relief as the revelation of the Holocaust revived the sense of international obligation toward victimized peoples. As this sense of duty to a moral order respectful of human life and of the dignity of the individual became embodied in a number of international covenants forged under the auspices of the United Nations, Armenians began to find renewed hope that their case would receive attention again. The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide attached a label to mass slaughter and a new word entered the post war political vocabulary: genocide. With it came the realization among Armenians that they had been victims of a crime which at the time still lacked a name. [Adalian, Armenian National Institute, 1998-2008]

What impact have the events of history had on the last four generations of Armenians, and what is the likely impact for future generations?

It is not surprising that these issues have not been discussed thoroughly, yet they deserve answers, not just from an emotional standpoint, but rather from a rational view of the psychological consequences of denial of genocides. This is important, and specifically important for the prevention of any further unnecessary suffering of both Armenian and Turkish offspring.

Feeling and believing that they have been victims of genocide in the not too distant past, Armenia’s population is extremely sensitive to security issues. It is possible to think that this type of sensitivity was partly responsible for the unparalleled determination on the part of Armenian fighters during the Karabakh war. The Nagorno-Karabakh War refers to the armed conflict that took place from February 1988 to May 1994, in the small ethnic enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, in southwestern Azerbaijan, between the predominantly ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, backed by the Republic of Armenia, against the Republic of Azerbaijan, the population of which is Turkish. As the war progressed, Armenia and Azerbaijan, both former Soviet Republics, became enveloped in
a protracted, undeclared war in the mountainous heights of Karabakh as Azerbaijan attempted to control a secessionist movement in Nagorno-Karabakh. The enclave's parliament had voted in favour of uniting itself with Armenia, and a referendum was held in which the vast majority of the Karabakh population voted in favour of independence. The demand to unify with Armenia, which proliferated in the late 1980s, began in a relatively peaceful manner; however, in the following months, as the Soviet Union's disintegration neared, it gradually grew into an increasingly violent conflict between the two ethnic groups, resulting in claims of ethnic cleansing by all sides.

The war was the most destructive ethnic conflict, in both terms of lives and property, that emerged after the inter-ethnic fighting between Turks and Armenians broke out shortly after the parliament of Nagorno-Karabakh, an autonomous oblast (a type of administrative division) in Azerbaijan, voted to unify the region with Armenia on 20 February 1988. The declaration of seceding from Azerbaijan was the final result of a “long-standing resentment in the Armenian community of Nagorno Karabakh against serious limitations of its cultural and religious freedom by central Soviet and Azerbaijani authorities” but more importantly, as a territorial conflict “fueled by a consuming attachment” to the land (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007; Cooley, 2002, pp. 150–151; Croissant, 1998; de Waal, 2003; Duursma, 1996; Griffin, 2004, pp. 185–186; Lieberman, 2006, pp. 284–292; Rieff, 1997; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_War).

For Armenians, psychological security, a feeling of safety, is of equal importance to such traditional basic layers of national security as those related to the military and the economy. Psychologically, the loss of native land and cultural history has deprived the Armenians of everyday contact with their national symbols, both man-made and physical, thus hampering the natural spiritual development of the nation. At the same time, the genocide has implanted in many Armenians an inferiority complex, negativity, and distrust concerning others and, indeed, their future. In some cases, there is a kind of self-hatred and rejection of Armenian values in favour of all things foreign, or even denial of being Armenian.

For Armenians, thinking about cultural history is a recollection of historical events, including the massive killing of innocents, that
does not follow a straight or continuous path. The survivors of the Armenian genocide were often silent, but the pain and trauma were there. In due time, the stories would be told within the Armenian families and community, but not much beyond it. The trauma, as well as the rage and humiliation engendered by denial, would continue down the generations. This is an indication of how the genocide does not end with the last atrocity.

One of the significant continuing concerns of the Armenian population around the world centres on the arguments of denial, which refuse to accept that the term "genocide" is applicable to the events of 1915–1917. It has to be acknowledged that, in recent years, there has been some affirmation of the Armenian genocide by scholars, states, and international organizations.

Political leaders, including Winston Churchill, Bill Clinton, and the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, as well as the European Parliament, have recognized the occurrence of the Armenian genocide. It becomes clear that, in continuing to deny the existence of such an event, the Turkish government, the Israeli government, and others are not merely disagreeing about the facts but are continuing the original hostility and aggression aimed at the Armenian people during the genocide. In order to end the acceptance of violence as a way of life, one must accept responsibility for projections of potential psychic phantasies based on superego hatred and violence. This would involve relating and identifying with the other in a goal of agreement and accord. Sadly, there is still lack of recognition of the Armenian genocide, and no international recognition of the Memorial Day. Tragically, the lack of accountability of the Turkish government and the leaders involved, and the lack of energy or willingness to bring about justice that was experienced and seen in the Armenian genocide, gave Hitler reason to believe his actions would be likewise overlooked and ignored, and, it could be posited, therefore empowered him in instigating and carrying out the Holocaust.

This is one example of how a continued acceptance and implicit endorsement of violence in one situation may lead to other states and rulers continuing to view extreme violence as a feasible option in political struggles.

It is difficult for the Armenian people to forgive or forget the genocide. This is because the minimum requirements for forgiveness
are acknowledgement, apology, and making amends to the extent possible for reconciliation. Turkey has much to gain from facing its own history and accepting responsibility for what has happened in the past, under past governments, and, if it concludes that what has been done in its name has been and is unacceptable, condemning the act and offering an apology. It is hoped that this will occur as Turkey becomes a more open, democratic, and pluralistic society as a result of joining the European Union.

To retrieve the memory of their forgotten genocide, Armenians worldwide, in their diaspora domiciles, initiated efforts for national and international recognition. These began with the introduction of commemorative resolutions in the United States Congress in 1975 and with efforts to enter the subject on the record at the UN, which occurred with the 1985 adoption of a report on genocide by the UN Commission on Human Rights. In 1987, broader recognition was achieved with the adoption of a resolution by the European Parliament, which stated that “the tragic events of 1915–1917 ... constitute genocide”. In the following years, the legislatures of countries such as Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Greece, and Russia adopted resolutions affirming the historical record on the Armenian genocide. Acknowledgement also came through declarations by heads of states and pronouncements by legislators. Among these have been the statements issued by presidents of the USA and many members of Congress about 24 April 1915, extending official condolences to the Armenian people on their day of mourning, although, bowing to Turkish government pressure, US presidents to date have avoided the word genocide. These efforts have contributed to greater media attention and the education of the broader public about the legacy of genocide in the twentieth century.

In February 1990, in the USA, a group of Armenians attempted to introduce commemorative resolutions into the House of Representatives and in the Senate in the hope of getting a formal US acknowledgement of the genocide. The Turkish government, in light of the possibility of these resolutions being passed, consequently imposed sanctions on US businesses and military installations in Turkey, and the State Department responded by opposing the passage of these resolutions. The US House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee was expected to approve a bipartisan bill in October 2007, which called on the USA to recognize the
Armenian genocide. However, President George W. Bush promptly urged US legislators not to pass a resolution declaring the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks to be genocide. Just before the Foreign Affairs Committee began debating the resolution, Bush claimed that “this resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings”. It is widely thought that this was a panic response to the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s claim that the bill’s passing would result in a “significant weakening” of his country’s ties with the USA. These ties are largely based on the military, as Turkey is used as airspace to supply American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan (BBC, 2007).

The experience and memory of persecution and abandonment have left deep psychological wounds in Armenian people, wounds that later erupted in the form of terrorism by clandestine Armenian groups in the mid-1970s, which resulted in the assassination of approximately twenty-five Turkish diplomats. The Armenian groups, who justified their acts by Turkey’s denial of the Armenian genocide, did not, however, gain much mainstream Armenian support or succeed in achieving any acknowledgement for the genocide by Turkey. Their actions only served to increase the strength of Turkey’s denial policy, as they set about a comprehensive plan of widely distributing publications that both denied and distorted evidence of the Armenian genocide.

This sustained denial continues to create conditions that, in the view of many Armenians, necessitate the continuation of the search for international reaffirmation until such time as acknowledgement is made universal and irreversible.

Notes

1. See the following link for further details: www.armenica.org.
2. It should be noted that when reference is made to the “Armenian genocide”, numerous interpretations of what took place exist. It is therefore important to clarify early on in this book that many of these accounts are just that—interpretations—and have been subjected to heavy political laundering in order to make this strand of history more palatable to the Turkish government and its allies. That the author acknowledges that genocide, using today’s terminology, did occur, and is not some
figment of the Armenian imagination, is fundamental to the comprehension of this study and its subsequent recommendations.

3. As with all facts and figures surrounding the Armenian genocide, the numbers of dead is the subject of ongoing debate. Hampered, as with many such periods in history, by differing contemporary accounts, relatively few survivor stories, and restricted access to government papers, as well as the strong sentiments involved, it is practically impossible to come up with definitive statistics. The ones used here are those that are widely accepted in circles that do not actively deny the genocide.

4. Appendix I contains a map of the Armenian genocide, including major centres of violence, concentration camps, and deportation routes.

5. “Turkification” is another contested term, used to describe “a systematic process of depriving non-Turks of their established social, political, and cultural rights” in order to assimilate them into a cohesive Turkish society (Kayali, 1997).

6. This is quoted in Balakian. However, Balakian is quoting from Dadrian, The Armenian Question, p. 58, and Dadrian is quoting from the German Foreign Ministry archives, Turkei 183/41, A23991.

7. It should be noted that some states were willing to accommodate Armenian child refugees: in particular, America, France, Britain, Russia, Syria, and Iran, and in this regard there was a sense of support, but it was by no means systematic.
CHAPTER TWO

Silence, denial, and trauma

"Man is born as a freak of nature, being within nature and yet transcending it. He has to find principles of action and decision making which replace the principles of instincts. He has to have a frame of orientation which permits him to organize a consistent picture of the world as a condition for consistent actions. He has to fight not only against the dangers of dying, starving, and being hurt, but also against another anger which is specifically human: that of becoming insane. In other words, he has to protect himself not only against the danger of losing his life but also against the danger of losing his mind"

(Fromm, 1968, p. 61)

Although the recollection of the historical reality of killing innocents does not follow a straight or continuous path or the erosion of memory, the Armenian genocide does help us to understand many of the conditions for such acts and the relations between war, ethnic cleansing, persecutions, torture, and, indeed, genocide.
By and large, successive Turkish governments, with their academic arguments of denial of genocide, refuse to accept the fact that genocide is applicable to the events. They theorized the genocide as being an unfortunate event and purely circumstantial.

Israel Chamy (1992) in "The psychology of denial", details a number of important messages of the denial of genocide that are pertinent to the Armenian situation. He advocates that one must see in the denial of genocides a symbolic repetition of the same factors that drove the perpetrators to kill. Through such denial, the survivors' rationality, truth, and even history, are also "murdered". Denial, therefore, becomes a means of celebrating the past destruction of the victims and rubbing more salt in their already gaping wounds, as they are subsequently resigned to a falsified version of their own history.

The arguments of denial refute the fact that the term "genocide" is applicable to the events, and reduce the significance of the events through rationalization and relativization.

The initial response of Armenians to the genocide was a traumatized silence, as survivors and spectators alike struggled to comprehend what they had witnessed. Herman (1992) explains how it is that survivors fail to articulate what they have experienced. Some atrocities are too horrific to articulate and are therefore forced from the conscious mind. They become "unspeakable". However, the very nature of atrocities necessitates people's inability to ignore them, buried or denied. Acknowledging atrocities is therefore a precedent for individual healing and the restoration of social order. Psychological wounding and trauma is, in essence, the conflict between denying the atrocity and needing to articulate it.

Trauma and shock are universals that can occur in any time and place, and it is necessary to recognize that, by and large, despite the cultural differences, most people of both past times and the present will react in a psychologically universal way. This is applicable to recorded memories of the Armenian genocide. Although survivors fell silent, the pain and trauma remained and was passed on to the following generations.

Notwithstanding that initial shock followed by silence, stories of what happened to the Armenians would be told within the families and the community, but rarely beyond these social constructs.
A narrative

One example of how stories were passed within families is documented by Denis Donikian, a second generation Armenian writer. Entitled “From father to son”, this excerpt is taken from his book Le Peuple Hai (The Hated People). There, he describes this destruction—disappearance of bodies, where his hero finds himself in an “untemporal” world of inhumane petrifaction.

I have always been surrounded by flesh, by blood and by carnage. I was born in the world of death at the age of ten, when the crutes (Kurds) massacred my family and other families and everyone else that were not like them. We the children were taken tied to one another far away from the village behind a hill, in a deserted place where no paths were to be seen. Other crutes arrived. They surrounded us and started to slit our throats. I played dead, and soon enough, I was covered by blood; the blood of the children that splattered on me. It even ran down my mouth. I stayed still until dusk. They had said they would come back with shovels to bury us. Wild growling dogs started to pull on the dead flesh. I pushed aside the bodies that were on top of me and I edged my way out towards a slump in the ground. Luckily, no-one was there. I then ran far away as fast as possible.

Rescued by a Kurd for whom he now keeps sheep, the hero describes his reaction as he watches his employer slaughter an animal:

From time to time, he would cut the throat of one of the animals, take off its skin and head and then cut the body in quarters. I looked at him doing it knife in hand, from the first motion to the last. I tried hard to keep my eyes fixed on that blade, to think of the blade and only the blade.

In France, I worked with a butcher as an apprentice. Beef carcasses were hanging in the back of the store. I was taught how to cut the pieces. I worked long hours knife in hand, the blade deep in flesh to take out the bones. Once a week, my boss took me to the slaughterhouse. It was an immense room with white tiles on the floor where the blood would stream down towards a manhole. A cylinder gun placed on their forehead killed the animals. They would bluntly collapse on the floor stricken by the blow, their legs still shaking. They were then hauled up with an electric winch and stripped apart. I learned the job and became a killer. I later established myself as a butcher in a provincial town. Now, my son also
works as a killer. He kills indiscriminately chickens, rabbits, cattle
and lamb. He resembles me. I can say that I am proud of me, I
vanquished my memories. [Donikian, 1995, pp. 67–68]

Piralian (personal communication), indicated that such a testi-
mony leads us to question how the father dealt with his suffering
from a psychological perspective and whether the controlling of
such violence is also transmitted, so victims do not become directly
perpetrators. In shifting the murderous act from man to animal by
becoming a butcher, the narrator, on the one hand, perhaps spared
himself and his son, and maybe even the following generation, the
fate of becoming man killers, and, on the other hand, perhaps in
trying to survive his bloody memory he sublimated and transferred
the killing from man to animal and made it part of his daily life.

If the will to “dehumanize” the human body can be found at the
core of every genocidal action, by transferring this to an insignifi-
cant act such as cutting meat as a butcher, the narrator simply trans-
poses this scene of cutting up from man to animal. In so doing, the
narrator is quite successful in using this scene to keep the other at
a distance, thus preventing the constant return of the images of the
murder of his family and the slitting of the throats of the children
that so marked his memory. Or perhaps it can be seen as a desper-
ate attempt to separate his human body from the animal body, as if
killing the animal was a way to move away from the unresolved
shock and psychological state of disbelief of the murder of the chil-
dren that he had encountered when he was only ten years old and
should have been in a playground with the other children that he
witnessed being killed. Another dimension can be his guilt feeling.
This is perhaps about not screaming, about his pain at seeing others
killed in order to stay alive himself; so, by becoming an animal
killer, perhaps he is killing part of himself that he cannot compre-
hend on a daily basis.

However, few Armenian survivors had sufficient strength to
write about their ordeals as they sought the strength of mind to
assert the will to live and made life a priority over death.
Consequently, the trauma they endured would be left unresolved
and, therefore, would be transmitted to future generations. In many
cases where parents experienced depression and mental illness as a
result of their traumatic experiences, and may therefore have been
unable to fulfil their parental responsibilities fully, inadvertently exposing their children to accounts of violence, the children were unable to form a healthy attachment with their primary care-giver, and this was passed on down the generations. In cases where adults were affected by traumatic experiences, but did not speak about what had happened, children could sense the sadness, but had to make sense of what happened to their parents and grandparents in their imagination, rather than being able to speak about and come to terms with the reality within the family.

Although there is no empirical evidence, it is possible to hypothesize that many Armenians who survived the genocide may well have been suffering from the central symptom of what is now referred to as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a type of emotional response that occurs when one is exposed to danger or is under the threat of death. Sufferers of PTSD may show physical, emotive, and/or cognitive symptoms, such as avoidance and numbness, fear and anxiety, guilt, grief, lack of confidence and self-esteem, flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety, and depression, all of which, in the Armenian case, are manifested in silence.

Is it possible to hypothesize that everyone who endured and survived the terror of the genocide may suffer from this symptom, regardless of the extent to which other anxiety symptoms are inflicted upon people? This is an indication of the long-term suffering of the Armenian community for generations after the death walk of 1915.

Response to the threat of a violent death is the central psychological aspect of the genocide survivor’s experience. One reason many collapsed and died during the death walk, apart from rape, murder, and physical torture, was that they could not psychologically endure after a certain point in the ongoing trauma. In this way, their reaction was similar to that reported of some Auschwitz detainees, who one day refused to get out of bed and return to hard labour. They had simply lost their will to live, amid all the death and destruction, and would soon themselves be dead (Frankl, 1959).

In order to comprehend further the psychological response to genocide, the threat of death, and the consequent effects on those that did survive, it is necessary to examine in detail the nature of denial and its multi-faceted processes in the context of Turkey’s denial of the Armenian genocide. This is quite relevant, as the
CONSEQUENCES OF DENIAL: THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Trauma endured by victims of mass violence is often exacerbated when the atrocity that befell them is denied and the scale of their tragedy is not fully acknowledged. This has been, and still is, the case for the Armenian people.

The Turkish government vehemently denied the atrocity they had imposed upon the Armenians, ridiculing any claim to killings and, in later years, any legal definition of genocide. Cohen (2005) has explained that this is not unusual, that “... even the most self-righteous governments will contest the public labels of ‘torture’ and ‘genocide’” (p. 106). In explaining the legal loopholes that states will use to absolve themselves of any responsibility, it is useful to begin by fathoming the multi-faceted process of denial.

Herman (1992) indicated that after every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable lines, such as “it never happened”; “people are lying or exaggerating”; “they brought it upon themselves”; “it is time to forget the past and move on”. Denial usually involves repetition of such arguments, or what Cohen (2005) terms “continuous”, “centripetal” or “linear” denial (p. 244) that only seeks to reinforce the erroneous beliefs, as was the case for the Armenians. The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater his prerogative to name and define reality, and the more his arguments prevail, the more the survivors are traumatized by this denial.

Herman (1992) explains how the accounts from victims that do surface are easily reduced to “allegations”, “feelings”, “claims” or “rumours”, suggesting that people who have survived atrocities may not be able to tell their stories in a coherent manner. Survivors often express themselves in a highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented manner, and this is used by others to undermine their credibility. For those who seek help, the truth may be recognized and survivors can then begin their journey on the road to recovery. Unfortunately, too often the story of the traumatic event surfaces not as a verbal narrative between a person and the therapist, but as a symptom.

Such complex and emotional accounts of atrocities and their negative reception are by no means a new phenomenon. Another recent example of this forms part of the Israel—Palestine conflict and, ironically, the Palestinians’ ethnic cleansing by the Israeli government. For years, this truth was washed away by people’s disbelief of the victims’ rhetorical and emotionally charged stories.
of the ‘Nakba’, almost sixty years ago. It was perhaps easier to believe the more logical and consistently repeated arguments made by the Israeli government that “it never happened”, and that “these people are prone to exaggeration and lies” (Masalha, 2004; Pappe, 2004), thereby discrediting the poorly coordinated attempts of the victims to correct history.

**Genocide and trauma**

People use the word trauma to mean a highly stressful event or situation. The key meaning of psychological trauma refers to an event that is extremely stressful and overwhelming for the person involved, and that may affect that person’s ability to cope.

**Definition of trauma**

In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, trauma is defined as:


In *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, Laplanche and Pontalis (1974) define trauma as:

An event in the subject’s life defined by its intensity, by the subject’s incapacity to respond adequately to it, and by the upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organization. In economic terms, the trauma is characterised by an influx of excitations that is excessive by the standard of the subject’s tolerance and capacity to master such excitations and work them out psychically. . . .

In adopting the term, psychoanalysis carries the three ideas implicit in it over on to the psychical level: the idea of a violent shock, the idea of a wound and the idea of consequences affecting the whole organization.

The notion of the trauma fits primarily—as Freud points out himself—into an epsyconomic perspective: “we apply it to an experience which within a short period of time presents the mind with
an increase of stimulus too powerful to be dealt with or worked off in the normal way, and this must result in permanent disturbances of the manner in which the energy operates”. The influx of excitations is excessive in relation to the tolerance of the psychical apparatus, whether it is a case of a single very violent event (strong emotion) or of an accumulation of excitations each of which would be tolerable by itself; at first, the operation of the principle of constancy is held in check, since the apparatus is incapable of discharging the excitation. Freud suggested a figurative conceptualization of this state of affairs in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), envisaging it in terms of an elementary relationship between an organism and its surroundings: the “living vesicle” is sheltered from external stimuli by a protective shield or layer which allows only tolerable quantities of excitation through. Should this barrier suffer any breach, we have a trauma: the task of the apparatus at this juncture is to muster all its available forces so as to establish anticathexis, to immobilize the inflowing quantities of excitation and thus to permit the restoration of the necessary conditions for the functioning of the pleasure principle. [Laplanche & Pontalis, 1974, pp. 465–466]

Traumatizing events can have an acute emotional effect on individuals involved, even if the event did not cause physical injury or immediate psychological problems. The definition of what is psychologically traumatic, consequently, is fairly broad, and includes responses to powerful occurrences. It is difficult to determine in general whether a particular event traumatic to one person will be the same in another. Usually, the intrusion of the past into the present is one of the main problems confronting the person who has endured trauma.

There are, by and large, two components to a traumatic experience: the objective and the subjective. Usually, the subjective experience of the objective events constitutes the trauma. The more we feel and believe that we are endangered, the more traumatized we can become. Psychological trauma might be any type of event or encounter that causes an overwhelming emotion and a feeling of absolute helplessness. There may or may not be physical harm; but rather psychological harm, which can result in physiological disturbances and create confusion between mind and body that plays a most important role in the long-term effects and presentation of trauma.
Silence, Denial, and Trauma

Single and multiple or complex trauma

It is important to note here a distinction between single and repeated traumas. Single shocking events such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, volcanoes, plane crashes, chemical spills, nuclear failures, robbery, rape, and murder can certainly produce trauma reactions, but the traumatic experiences that result in the most serious mental health problems are usually prolonged and repeated, continued over years of a person’s life.

The single unexpected direct trauma can cause typical symptoms of relentless flashback, persistent avoidance, and increased arousal. It does not appear to cause the massive denials, psychic numbing, self-anaesthesia, or a personality disorder that characterizes the PTSD symptoms, though this type of trauma can impair some areas of psychological functioning.

In contrast, complex traumas are continuous and repetitive ordeals that gain prolonged and appalling anticipation in one area of human functioning and produce the most severe effects on mental health such as dissociation, somatization, and depersonalization. Such trauma creates enormous defence mechanisms of repression, denial, dissociation, somatization, self-anaesthesia, self-hypnosis, identification with the aggressor, and aggression against the self. The impairment in emotional processing includes the absence of feelings, a sense of constant anger and frustration, and deep sadness and fear, which is quite common in those who have experienced or witnessed organized violence. Protracted stressors, inflicted with intent by persons, are much more convoluted to tolerate than accidents or natural disasters.

If harm was inflicted deliberately in the context of a relationship, the predicaments are greater than of an accident. In situations where the injury is caused deliberately in a relationship with a person on whom the injured party is dependent, the effect can be horrendous. Sadistic abuses on the subject of interpersonal violence by care-givers as an eruption of passions in the severest forms are those inflicted deliberately. Premeditated and long-term cruelty is usually more terrifying and injurious than impulsive violence. Experiences of war or political violence, such as persecution, imprisonment, torture, execution, and assassination of the loved one are usually enormous in scale; they are brutal, repeated,
extended, and volatile. Moreover, they are often compounded by witnessing life-threatening events, and possibly by doing violence to others and embracing the identity of an executioner. Situations such as torture, kidnapping, rape, and domestic violence are disturbances that are usually associated with a longer period of helplessness, fear of injury or death, lack of support, or negative consequences from disclosure. Witnessing someone else being beaten is stressful, and the greater the attachment to the person, the greater the stress is for the one witnessing. Watching violence directed towards a parent or care-giver is devastating for the child because of the fear of losing his/her primary source of security. Coercive power, which has been used in prisons, concentration camps, and in some families, has overwhelming and destructive effects on the receiver.

The formation of a sense of identity, agency, and self-efficacy is a developmental milestone to adulthood with affirmative consequences for an individual’s well-being. Self-sufficiency or development of a positive identity builds the emotional independence of the individual, which leads to feelings of being competent and in control of the self and of relations with others. Trauma such as sexual and physical abuse, domestic violence, rape, slavery (prisoners of war), torture, and genocide can disturb attachments and cause feelings of loss of self and helplessness in adults, and in childhood can disturb the development of healthy attachments, autonomy, and identity formation.

As human beings, we interrelate within a set of connections that give us emotional, social, and material support as well as a sense of social entrenchment, belonging, and meaning to life. We also develop a system of accustomed social contingencies that are psychologically and emotionally rooted as the basis of feelings of safety, security, and belonging. Events that threaten these connected networks and well-established connections can be traumatic. Displacements, especially when involuntary, form a large part of the Armenian experience and mean the loss of attachment by suspension.

Some traumatic events can affect more than one value-processing sub-system. For instance, genocide can disturb attachment and autonomy as well as collective identity, interdependence, and community sub-systems, and demobilize one’s psychological
resources from responding, which can overrule all other subsystems. This experience can shatter one’s schema—beliefs, assumptions, representation, and judgements about the self and the view of the world, and about the efficacy of the existing value-processing mechanisms that one may possess.

Emotional trauma can create lasting difficulties from very early childhood and the early stage of development. One way to determine whether an emotional or psychological trauma has occurred, perhaps even early in life before language or conscious awareness were in place, is to look at the kinds of recurring problems one might be experiencing in adult life. These can serve as clues to an earlier situation that caused a deregulation in the structure or function of the brain. Forward-looking neurological research is beginning to show to what degree trauma affects people on a biological and hormonal basis, as well as psychologically, cognitively, and behaviourally. In traumatic experiences and interruptions of normal development, the hyper-vigilance of the individual’s autonomic structure is compounded and reinforced by significant changes in the brain. So, we can say that trauma is a complex combination of biological, psychological, and social phenomena.

Our social behaviour is motivated usually by the pursuit of goals that are central to our perception, and the values and components of our behaviour based on our evaluations of our prospective targets. So, our failure to achieve a target that is perceived essential, in this case part of the Armenian history and identity, can itself be traumatic.

This type of trauma can disturb the individual’s automatic functions that execute the automatic activation of schema, although it may be beyond the existing repertoire of schemata to direct the adaptive response to such a feeling in response to a historical traumatic event. This may direct a demand for novelty towards new value-processing structures, at both conscious and unconscious levels. Furthermore, as a result of this type of transmitted traumatic memory, some Armenian people may exhibit behaviours that do not match their personalities and value systems prior to experiencing that particular traumatic feeling to a high degree: hence the change of personality without the individual even knowing that this has happened. Paradoxical morality, the committing of immoral acts to survive, which is a highly developed order of
surviving in comparison to moral goals, is one of the potential behavioural components of trauma response that can, if unattended, later become unmanageable for people who are survivors of such genocidal events and multiple traumas.

Some of the common patterns of emotional trauma may result in compulsive behaviour patterns; self-destructive, uncontrollable reactive thoughts; an inability to make choices; dissociation by splitting off parts of the self; and an inability to maintain close relationships.

**Common patterns of historical trauma**

Over time, even without professional help, symptoms of an emotional trauma usually can subside and normal daily functioning slowly but surely returns. However, in some cases, such as genocidal trauma, the symptoms do not go away, or they may appear to be gone but then surface again in another stressful situation. When a person’s daily life functioning or life choices continue to be affected, than the effect of trauma is greater than one may have thought or hoped for. Although this may require expert help, in many cases the survivors do not even know that they are suffering from psychological problems. In particular, in the survivor of genocide such as that suffered by the Armenians, there may not be recognition or awareness of the psychological problems as people accept the way that they feel and behave as normality. So, there is perhaps not the knowledge of cause and common effects or conditions that may occur as a result of historical trauma. Often, people do not associate their symptoms with the precipitating trauma.

**Symptoms**

The symptoms that might result from unresolved trauma are:

- Physical: eating disturbances, sleep disturbances, sexual dysfunction, low energy, chronic unexplained pain.
- Emotional: depression, spontaneous crying, despair and hopelessness, anxiety, panic attacks, fearfulness, compulsive and obsessive behaviours, feeling out of control, irritability, anger
and resentment, emotional numbness, withdrawal from normal routine, feelings of worthlessness, and problems in relating to others and personal relationships.

- Cognitive: memory lapses, especially about the trauma, difficulty in making decisions, decreased ability to concentrate, and feeling distracted or disorientated.

By and large, most people who directly experience a major trauma have problems in the immediate aftermath. Many feel better within a few months of the event, but others recover more slowly and some do not recover sufficiently without help. Some of the most common problems after a traumatic experience are amnesia, flashbacks or re-experiencing the trauma, avoidance of situations that resemble the initial event, sleep disturbances or nightmares, numbness, detachment, depression, guilt feelings, grief reactions, an altered sense of time, increased sensitivity or arousal, such as hyper-vigilance, jumpiness, an extreme anxiety, and a sense of being on guard, increased sensitivity, and overreactions, including sudden unprovoked anger, insomnia, obsessions with death and dying, emotional numbing, fear, and anxiety.
The stage and severity of people’s memories of trauma are influential in the individual’s state of mind, which determines the impact of ongoing stressors and which might then have a different emotional impact on each individual. One of the most important components that people need in order to cope with such an atrocity as genocide is the avoidance of reminders of the trauma. It may be helpful if people can avoid these intrusive thoughts and want and, indeed, manage to start the psychological process of reconciliation in their minds and integration to the environment they find themselves living in. But unconscious avoidance commonly might also associate with numbness, rather than conscious and reflective avoidance, which is an ordinary way of managing trauma-related emotional pain. The most customary reaction is avoiding situations that are a reminder of the trauma, such as the place where it happened, and not reading or talking about it. Another way to enhance avoidance is to push away painful thoughts and feelings. This can lead to feelings of numbness, where people find it difficult to have both frightening and enjoyable and affectionate feelings. Sometimes, painful thoughts or feelings may be so intense that the mind blocks them out altogether,
and in some cases people might not remember parts of the trauma. Lacking feeling in the here and now sometimes results in an inability to recall the traumatic situation, or to avoiding thinking about the trauma and anything or anyone associated with it. So, this may result in total isolation and alienation of one’s own background and the relationship one may have with community.

In many cases, the devastating effect of traumatic events is the total disruption of ordinary life. It is an existential reality that most of the Armenian survivors were forced to leave their home country and lost the opportunity to have the normal life processes that other people have. Those very few Armenians who survived and stayed converted to Islam and changed their names in order to remain living there. The way in which what happened in the past relates to people’s ability or inability to recount their life stories in the present might bring debilitating depression, anxiety, and other psychological difficulties. We need to understand both the inner and the outer worlds of the people concerned, and the ways in which their past affects their present. The observation and perception that people have of their experiences is a central factor in the way in which they handle their experiences, which is a process that could contribute either to a gap in, or a creation of, a psychic space. The way in which a person relates his story in the present is seen as a function of the interplay of these components. The countless ways in which some people experienced physical and psychic invasion is made all the more moving by the accompanying description of their capacity for creating a space. In spite of the extreme and overwhelming external circumstances, specifically designed to exterminate, sometimes the life histories bear witness to processes of reparation and creativity. The creation of this space, which enables people in some way to regulate their experiences, either in fantasy or by action, is helpful in allowing people to move on.

The ways in which the effects of trauma are regulated during recall are related to narrative, according to whether the traumatic association is direct or dominated and transmitted by generational relation. This is not always an either/or question, as both forms of association can be present at different times. This relation is a dynamic balance, which can also be influenced by ongoing events. The effect of trauma, irrespective of previous personality structures, by and large influences people and their capacity to express painful
events. This is a relatively important factor in the way in which people recount their life histories. The ability to create a space for thinking is seen as being linked to the quality of object representations and, indeed, to external events and opportunities.

Winnicott's (1971) idea of potential space has logical associations to the formulation of traumatized people and to understanding the need for creating a psychic space. One could speculate that some of the mechanisms of defence do indeed have a peculiar function. It seems less likely, for example, that a young Armenian would be filled with a sense of adventure and excitement while peering out from a fire in a cave where an Armenian was burned to death in the genocide. There are many other examples that can be cited where the person is at a disadvantage. The concept of resilience and survival strategies is important when we are seeking to make sense of how people survived such atrocities and to establish whether they are deeply affected, regardless of how well they may have been able to compensate for it. This was the time that people had to make their move from psychological isolation and helplessness to a connection with life, with themselves, and with others, without any use of therapeutic help or support networks—as this was not available to them. The few remaining survivors of the Armenian genocide have felt that the severity of the tragedy is so strong that they could not talk about what happened to them. It seems that coping skills, qualities of resilience such as creativity, intelligence, a sense of humour and ambitions, perhaps have been characteristic of people who survived such an atrocity.

It is especially important to look at the psychological effects of atrocities on a child, because the survivors of the Armenian genocide, in the main, have been children. Childhood trauma, starting as it does when the individual’s personality is forming, shapes one’s perceptions and beliefs about everything. Traumatic stress in childhood that influences the brain is usually caused by poor or inadequate relationships with the primary care-giver/s. Sources of this relational trauma include forced separation in early life from the primary caregiver; chronic lack of attunement of a care-giver to child’s attachment signals; or reasons such as physical or mental illness, depression, or grief. Early life trauma may create weak defences and vulnerability for experiencing future traumatic responses; although sometimes it is the foundation of resilience.
Childhood trauma can also cause the disruption of basic developmental tasks and can cause deficits in abilities such as self-love and respect, self-esteem, confidence, seeing the world as a safe place, trusting and turning to others, and organized thinking for decision-making and reasoning. Disruption of normal childhood developments can result in adaptive behaviour; for example, self-love and respect will be replaced by low self-esteem and agitation, paranoia, a lack of organized thinking for decision-making, or even to psychosis, self-harm, self-destructiveness, and self-sabotage.

It is not difficult to assume that the psychological consequences on Armenian orphan children have been great, but their ongoing stresses have not been identified and they have not been able to mourn their grief; thus, their psychological difficulties remained unrecognized. The effects on people's mental health as the result of such an environment have, unfortunately, not been documented, because the genocide is not generally recognized or documented. However, one area I have identified in my work with refugees, that might be useful to explore further is the question of whether the capacity of children who have survived traumatic events, such as genocide, to become effective parents themselves is impaired by the trauma they have suffered, and whether failing to acknowledge their suffering prevents the healing process (Alayarian, 2007). It is important to reflect on whether the effects of this type of mass trauma and societal dysfunction will result in people becoming homogeneously incapacitated.

With this type of socio-political circumstance and its effect on childhood, trauma continues and is passed on through generation after generation. It is hard for the generation following the one that actually experienced what happened to be able to finish the memory of it, or to have the ability to find words for it. So, it would be challenging for people to find the strength and a vocabulary to verbalize their feelings. This is partly because the experience, and therefore the feelings about it, does not belong to them; they have to imagine it.

The way in which trauma in early life affects both one's ability to mourn loss and to make and sustain emotionally meaningful, mutually enriching intimate relationships in adulthood is quite an important factor in the analysis of the Armenian genocide; as survivors mainly have been children. The trauma they have
endured is not just in terms of overt separation, loss, and abuse, but also derives from the cumulative effect of severe affective misat-tunement in a disorganized relational system in the society in which they have lived.

Cross-generational transmission

Transmission of trauma is quite important in this context, as it differs between persons or generations with different mechanisms, such as symbiosis, empathy, attachment, enmeshment, personal or collective identification, projective identification, introjections, dependency, co-dependency, interdependency, parenting, compensation, and acculturation.

The intergenerational transmission of trauma, and of secure, insecure, and disorganized patterns of relatedness, together with characteristic variable affects, will be reflected, in part, by patterns of parents' and grandparents' experiences and their historical and socio-cultural contexts, both conscious and unconscious. It is important to consider how the internal representation of early self-other relational patterns tends to persevere and become activated and externalized in adult relationships with partners, children, friends, and colleagues, particularly at times of stress involving separation and loss.

The provision of the emotional functions of the parent for the child, and the relationship with the partner in the adult relationship, help to meet the child's and the adult's needs. The loss of parents and repeated abuse and trauma that many Armenian children experienced, together with the kinds of environment they might have been in, may well be the foundation of long-standing psychological difficulty, as well as a challenge to emotional and psychological growth in many Armenian individuals, thereby affecting life expectancies in otherwise "normal" circumstances.

If we take it that the individual co-exists in a system or a network of intertwined relationships that transmit the effects of different significant events, it helps to recognize the importance of the trauma that many Armenians suffered for generations, as well as the transmission of trauma. An example of the transmission of
trauma is shared psychotic disorder; that is, the development of a delusion in a person who has a close relationship with another person(s) who has an already established delusion (DSM IV, 1994). Traumas can have similar effects on persons in relationships, or within a strong collective identity, even for those who did not directly suffer the atrocity themselves.

In this context, trauma such as genocide, civil war, and ethnic cleansing can affect not only one person, but also a social unit, succeeding generations, a community, or sometimes a whole society. However, the transmission of trauma does not always automatically occur, for the same reason as an extreme traumatic event may not necessarily result in post trauma symptoms in a person with resilient qualities. The transmission can happen from one person to another, or to a connected group that has been affected by trauma and whose members have collectively lost their healthy defences and coping mechanisms. There are also indirect traumas and their effects, which may transmit within a family system across generations, such as domestic violence, physical abuse, incest, and, indeed, genocide. The intergenerational continuity of these family patterns are often expressed by young children becoming violent or perpetrators of abuse themselves. They may also collude with the role of the victim, thus repeating the intergenerational cycle of victim and perpetrator of violence. The young person may remain angry and somehow stuck in life, and may also develop melancholic depression and live with it without seeking help.

Projective identification is a useful concept in the context of looking at the parent–child relationship, and explains the possible mechanism that can facilitate the transmission of unresolved trauma experienced by parents or primary care-givers to the child in their care, mainly by unconscious communications. Projective identification involves the parent’s conscription of the child to perform a particular role for the parent’s externalized unconscious fantasies, and is thought to harm a child by weakening the child’s capacity to experience his or her own subjective awareness, insight, and feelings as an acceptable reality. A child in the parent’s projective fantasies leads to a collapse of the potential space within the parent–child relationship that allows for the development of the child’s autonomy—although it is important to acknowledge that this transmission is not an automatic and generic function.
Collective cross-generational trauma transmission across generations can be divided into collective traumas. This is a complex type of trauma, as it is inflicted on a group of people that has specific group identity or affiliation to collective culture, such as ethnicity, colour, national origin, religion, and political beliefs. Historical information prior to traumatization and the intensity of traumatic exposure is important. Historical trauma can predispose the individual to respond poorly to later traumas. Prior traumatization is generally associated with more symptoms and a longer recovery period in those affected, specifically the multi-generational transmission of political or structural violence that constitutes the creation of extreme social disparities and deprived social structures. This has been the case in the Armenian genocide and for the consequent events that have followed; the traumas have been transmitted and re-enacted in the ongoing and unresolved political situation between Armenian and Turkish authorities (i.e., ongoing war and bloodshed connected with Karabach, explained in Chapter One).

Chronic and ongoing threats to a secure life that survivors of genocide experience can either stimulate or overwhelm their sense of survival. It can disturb people’s values and processing to differing degrees; for example, from one area of psychological functioning to, in some cases, all areas of psychological functioning. Furthermore, the effects of deprivation by poverty of rights, citizenship, and immigration status can cause further trauma and lead to demoralization, socio-economic disadvantage, lower levels of achievement, and an increased level of socio-psychological problems. Poverty may also result in the halting of intellectual development and in educational deprivation for many, even for those who have no apparent biological restrictions to learning. The direct and indirect cross-generational consequences of such structural violation of basic human rights is devastating and enduring for those who suffered and, to a lesser extent, for those who believe in human rights. These ongoing traumatic conditions are of a type that can, and in many cases will, transmit across generations and indeed across communities. However, people who, for one reason or another, possess resilient qualities are less prone to severe psychological problems and are more creative in dealing with psychological difficulties.
Resilience and response to the unpredictable

Healthy individuals with independent and interdependent performance, and a flexible attitude towards life, develop resilience in individual functioning. We are biosocial organisms who possess unique genes, unique personal values, and self-structures that mediate the psycho-socio-physiological reactions to environmental stressors and traumas. Trauma may cause physiological changes in the central and peripheral nervous systems that regulate the whole physiological interaction and body functioning. Ordinary human experience contributes to shaping the structures of an individual’s value system through the development process from infant to adult and to old age. However, extraordinary traumatic events can contribute to the creation of resilience; a more developed self-system that can process and cope with the out of the ordinary experiences. A resilient person or a more developed and advanced self-processing system can handle extraordinary traumatic events. The traumatic events can disturb and damage self-processing structures, or rebuild or reinforce the existing, stable resilience. One is based on the subjective experience, the processing mode, and the area of functioning that is adversely affected—and anything further is based on the objective characteristics of the events.

In reality, all emotional traumas contain common elements that were unexpected, for which those traumatized were unprepared and unable to prevent. Despite this, it is important to recognize and validate that it is not the event that determines whether something is traumatic to someone (and if it is, to what extent), but the person’s psychological being and level of resiliency. How one might experience an unpredictable event determines how one may react to it. If we are used to being in control of emotions and events, it may be surprising and even embarrassing to discover that something can be so debilitating. Thus, an event or situation may create psychological trauma as it devastates our perceived ability to cope and leaves us feeling emotionally, cognitively, and physically overwhelmed, fearing death, annihilation, mutilation, or even psychosis. The circumstances of genocidal events commonly include abuse of power, betrayal of trust, entrapment, helplessness, pain, confusion, loss, and deprivation of basic human rights. There are similarities and patterns of response across the range of stressors,
and it is useful to think broadly about trauma, specifically in relation to the offspring of people who have been traumatized and physically survived genocides. Attention has not been given to people's psychological being and functioning, unless it results in acute psychiatric disorders.

The effects of chronic stress on physical, psychological, relational, and social functioning are dependent on the degree of people's vulnerability and resilience. Relatively minor stressors may trigger a symptom in a vulnerable person, while a catastrophic event might induce similar reactions in a resilient person. However, multiple external or environmental stressors can create psychological difficulties even in the resilient person.

When we see presentation or symptoms as a result of trauma in a patient, it is important to observe adaptation strategies that people develop after traumatic exposure in order to survive. Then it is easier to investigate what rationale this performance serves that may have helped them to cope at some point in the past and in the present. With further exploration we, together with the patient, can look at those patterns and so understand how these behaviours are an adaptation as the result of trauma experience, and then focus on learning ways to replace challenging behaviour.

Culture influences in psychological well-being

Culture is a context of symbols and meanings that people create and recreate for themselves during the process of social interaction. Culture is represented externally in artefacts, roles, rituals, and institutions, and internally as values, beliefs, attitudes, identities, accumulation of knowledge, and world view.

The defining characteristic of a traumatic stressor or of psychological trauma is the presence of an implicit or explicit life-threat and reactions that are extreme and generally negative. The development of trauma-related stressors may be only one of many related consequences of exposure to trauma. There are many other stressor effects that can be considered, most of which reflect the effects of life-threat on biological, emotional, or cognitive functioning. The ongoing traumatic stress may be associated with unusual or unique endocrine changes, immune system changes,
cognitive distortions, and existential anxiety. These changes may occur as a function of direct threat, as when one is diagnosed and treated for serious illness, or, more indirectly, as a function of witnessing. For the most part, they occur because of the life-threatening situation that one is involved in, and this threat or its direct implications form the core of an emotional complex that appears to be the reason for the restructuring or changing of one’s perception of the world.

If the focus of threat to life is not based on a past event, but is based on the future, which has been the case for some of those still living in the areas of conflicts in Armenia and Turkey and not in diasporas, as is currently the case for many Armenians, the intrusions and re-experiencing of symptoms that occur may be of a different type than those experienced by individuals exposed to one traumatic event. The idea of re-experiencing symptoms acting as a guidance for PTSD is totally dependent on past trauma exposure rather than future-orientated events, or, indeed, the transmission of trauma. Some offspring of Armenian survivors of genocide who are having intrusions that consist exclusively of the past events affecting the previous generation/s and are seeking psychological help, may also have future-orientated intrusions (e.g., will the society I am living in accept me as a equal citizen if they know about my background? Will my children will feel better and progress better in and with their lives? Will I see my parents’ home town and their heritage in my life? Will I ever learn my own language (Armenian)? Will I ever be able to know exactly what happened to my parents/ grandparents, now that they are not alive any more? What would have happened to me and my children, if I had been there? Would my children be provided for if I were dead there? Will the international community accept and acknowledge what happened? The list can go on and on). These future-orientated intrusions will consist of many unfinished thoughts. The only way to examine this empirically is to set up research and to ask people about the content of their intrusive thoughts, to establish whether this is a reflection of the Armenian’s psychic being or, rather, an intellectual psychological assumption. Qualitative analysis is needed to determine the types of intrusive thoughts that Armenians experience, in order to re-examine categorizations of these experiences as being future- or past event-orientated.
If identity, social organization, and ideology are the symbols through which the native culture is transmitted to future generations, then the effect of their loss is a loss of the ability to transmit culture effectively. This can be described as cultural failure, or, more accurately, cultural disintegration. As more recent genocidal events in the Balkans, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and other places around the world tragically reveal, civil wars, ethnic cleansings, revolutions, and mass expulsions reduce cultural systems to meaningless customs, pointless rituals, vague collective memories, and, in many cases, collective prejudice. The disintegration of culture inevitably gives rise to fierce nationalism, tribalism, and fundamentalism, all regressive forces that act to release individuals both behaviourally and ideologically from an intolerable complexity that cannot be managed or used in a productive way. When culture can no longer provide identity and meaning, it is these kinds of regressive forces that rush in to fill the vacuum.

Although much yet needs to be learned about cultural disintegration and its repercussions for individuals, it is important to acknowledge that when culture disintegrates, the individual’s problems will grow in proportion to it, with the avenues of personal vulnerability following the routes vacated by the culture. Thus, paranoia might substitute for trust; aggression might replace nurturance and support; identity confusion or a negative identity substitutes for a positive identity, and hate might replace love. While this hypothesis does not seem to bode well for all too many people around the world today, history shows that, once the collective traumatic event recedes or ends completely, people almost always reconstruct their society on the loose ends of the culture upon which they had been so dependent.

In many situations, cultural supposition and conjectures that affect self-perceptions may have an important and significant effect on an individual’s mourning process. In relation to Armenians, children of survivors of genocide carry historical burdens of rejection, denigration, and persecution, which, if left unresolved, impede the ability to mourn their losses and, therefore, the ability to move on. This, if observed systematically, will be consistent with both Armenian and Turkish psychology, in different patterns. It is a well-known fact that when one group suffers cultural catastrophes at the hands of another group, the result is widespread feelings of
inadequacy, shame, and helpless rage. Shame disrupts the capacity to pass along positive cultural values and traditions, including those associated with mourning. A heritage of oppression encourages the perpetuation of negative self-images, which each successive generation attempts to heal in the self by healing the parent, by and large unsuccessfully.

The experience of trauma, at its worst, can mean not only a loss of confidence in the self, but a loss of confidence in the foundations of the family system and the community in general, in the structures of human authority and in the larger logics by which people live—the loss of common humanity that is necessary for mental health and well-being.

For traumatized individuals whose emotions may be labile and behaviour immoderate, who have an existential need to mourn the unmourned for meaning and sense, and for people whose bonds with others and with their culture may have been torn, an acknowledging and understanding of their losses is a necessity and plays an integral role in people's healing process. This is something that many Armenians feel they have been deprived of and denied by successive Turkish governments. They feel let down.

Collective trauma and its effect

The tendency for collective trauma can push already socially marginalized groups such as the Armenian community further away from the cultural centre, as well as bringing people together in a kind of social interaction to recreate culture. One response to their inadequacy is the creation of memorials; that is, the collection of mementos, usually of a symbolic nature, that people bring to, and leave at, the site of the collective traumatic event, which is also the position of the recreation of many losses and specifically of the lost culture. The spontaneous memorial represents people's efforts to create a new, meaningful, and public ritual that acknowledges the grief and fear of the larger community, lifts constraints on the duration of mourning and the expression of emotion, and offers the role of mourner to anyone who participates.

It is also essential to understand the importance of gender and hate propaganda in the genocidal campaign, which to some extent
is lost in the literature of the Armenian genocide. It is difficult to determine which part of the culture prevents Armenians from focusing on this important aspect of the genocide. Nevertheless, gender issues comprised significant elements of the social construction of boundaries between ethnic groups and notions of equality and justice or the lack of it. As such, a consideration of gender may shed new light, and an understanding of one another for the Armenians and Turks, on the complexities of the genocide.
PART II

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO GENOCIDAL VIOLENCE
CHAPTER FOUR

Psychoanalytic perspectives on the causes and effects of genocide

"All men dream: but not equally.
Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds
wake in the day to find that it was vanity:
but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men,
for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible"

(Lawrence, 1926, p. 7)

One of the most noticeable consequences of genocide is the traumatic effect of the event that sometimes alters the survivor's capacity for symbolic thinking. This may cause difficulties, because when the capacity for symbolization is hindered it is poorly available for the process of working through. In trying to find a way forward, there is a need for understanding why genocide happens. As discussed at the start of Chapter One, in order to understand why genocide happens, and keeps happening, we need to understand the pathology operating in society where "ethnic cleansing", torture, persecution, rape, and indeed, genocide
occurs. To understand and gain a deep meaning, it is helpful to use a psychoanalytic approach.

Why is a psychoanalytic approach helpful in this context?

Psychoanalysis, by definition and conceptually, is of historical importance in the study of trauma and specifically of atrocities such as genocide, since it is a theory that applies comprehensive psychological meanings to human behaviour. Its epistemological position on the non-reducibility of mental phenomena to physiological or neurological explanations offers extensive psychologies of meaning. The importance of psychoanalysis is that it is not limited to meanings in the conventional sense, but is also concerned with unconscious ideas whose meanings can only be inferred from otherwise inexplicable thoughts, feelings, and actions accessible to observation. Psychoanalysis is a unique method of discourse that proposes to decipher the meanings of forbidden wishes and unconscious ideas by interpreting their disguised symbolic expressions. The method applies counter-intuitive canons of interpretation that take their cues from theoretical constructs such as primary process thinking, repression, a dynamic unconscious, and human relations to each other. Its constructs serve a convenient explanatory approach to a vast collection of mental phenomena. Therefore, psychoanalysis introduces a set of abstract metapsychological propositions that are designed to explain mental phenomena in terms of biological and neurological mechanisms as well as the social and cultural environment that creates atrocities such as the Armenian genocide.

Psychoanalysis leads those who are willing to make the journey on a path towards greater responsibility for their miseries and self-destructive behaviours and towards emancipation from their personal and social-cultural illusions to a great understanding and greater responsibility. It is helpful way to search for truthfulness, without the focus on the notion of truth or scientific certainty. It specifically focuses on the irrational dimensions of people’s mental life, but its goal is a rational procedure to achieve understanding rather than judgement, by implying a radical and insubordinate stance towards personal and social reality. Yet, it suspects all formal political programmes and ideologies as potential sources of
people’s self-deception. So, psychoanalysis is a unique method of discovery that distances itself from any theoretical superstructure, and that exceptionally and distinctively uncovers meanings without exploiting and distorting these as raw material for new conceptual methods and systems or theories. Psychoanalysis focuses on emotional or personality formation. It aims to help people to a better understanding of both their own thoughts and feelings and their relationships with others and others within themselves. It focuses on understanding minds, looking at how thoughts, feelings, and other mental processes interact to generate problems of experience and behaviour, including unconscious wishes and ideas. Psychoanalytic ideas are also helpful in determining how different people’s minds can affect each other; how one’s ways of thinking and behaving may affect others. Psychoanalysis provides the capacity to think about one’s own self and others.

What psychoanalytic ideas are useful in this context?

Acts of genocide often occur under certain sets of circumstances. One of them is a clear superiority of power of the perpetrator over his victim. This superiority is generally dependent on the behaviour of third parties. Third parties consist of the majority of people who are not directly involved in the action. Third parties can be divided into three sub-groups:

- those that support the perpetrator, because of his power and other pragmatic considerations;
- those that support the victim. Examples are those who tried to help the Jews and the Armenians because of humanitarian values, risking their own lives in doing so. This is, sadly, always a small minority. They are responsible people risking their interests and their lives for the good of others;
- the bystanders; those who are not involved directly in the genocide but do nothing to come between the perpetrator and his victim. The bystanders remain indifferent, silent, and passive in the face of suffering, so, their silence inevitably supports the perpetrators. When one chooses to be passive while knowing that what is happening is wrong, no matter how hard one tries to convince oneself, the reality is, in fact, that the
silent person takes the side of the aggressor. Morally, it is not possible to accept the argument that nothing can be done, or that such things just happen.

Cohen (2005) refers to these mechanisms of denial as literal and interpretative (p. 12) forms of denial ("it didn't happen"); "it happened too long ago to prove"; "the facts are open to different interpretations"; "what happened was not genocide") that, by a contemporary and post-modern discourse, has led to the coining of the phrase "a discourse of mindless relativism" (p. 244). Cohen discusses the fact that bystanders are also "those who come to know, see or hear, either at the time or later". By extension, this includes those who are

(i) immediate, literal, physical or internal (those who are actual witnesses to atrocities and suffering or hear about them at the time from first-hand sources); (ii) external or metaphorical (those who receive information from secondary sources, primarily the mass media or humanitarian organizations); and (iii) bystander states (other governments or international organizations). [ibid., p. 15]

This analysis, therefore, serves to include the bystanders that followed the Armenian Genocide: the mass media, which was not fully equipped or developed to deal with the scale of the atrocity, as it almost was during Bosnia and Kosovo, (ibid., p. 160) and the international community, who did not appropriately acknowledge the event for over ninety years. Similar responses of the international community resonate in the Holocaust, Rwanda, Kosovo, and Chechnya, and more recently Sudan, where bystander states demonstrated what Cohen terms a "selective refusal to intervene" (ibid., p. 17).

One of the main psychological questions is how such superiority, such indifference to others, can occur. How is it that people can bear witness to such atrocities and even partake in them, and what makes it possible? Psychoanalysis may bring some light to bear upon these types of questions in relation to the Armenian genocide.

In "Introduction to psycho-analysis and the war neuroses" (1919d), Freud reconciles the existence of what he calls "danger-neuroses" with a view that neuroses are caused by a conflict between repressed libidinal impulses and the "ego instincts" of self preservation. Prior to this, Freud first wrote about defences in
“The neuro-psychoses of defence” (1894a), as well as in Studies on Hysteria (1895d). He was interested in what subsequently became known as repression, and broadened its meaning while still equating it to resistance within treatment. Later, Freud (1935b) defined defence to include all procedures that have the purpose of the protection of the ego against instinctual demands.

Enemies are threatening and do generate reactive defences. The question is: to what extent does the degree of defensiveness characteristic of genocidal behaviour represent the personal and emotional needs of individuals for an enemy to hate? Do these individuals manage to keep their conflicted selves together by getting involved with genocide?

Universal concepts such as enemy and ally, love and hate, with me or against me, I and we, us and them, as well as any general sense of belonging, either to a particular ethnic group or to a nation state, are all largely bound up with the one’s sense of self. Individuals within an ethnic or national group by and large tend to see their group as special, privileged, or superior, and enemy groups as less privileged and, in some instances, sub-human.

Our capacity for splitting and projection plays an important part in how we see others and feel about others and, through the process of projective identification, how we make others feel about us.

This very much depends on the formation of one’s superego, which is grounded in the renunciation of loving and hostile wishes that are subsequently refined by the contributions of social and cultural requirements such as education, religion, and morality. The social and cultural requirements in which the superego is grounded might be used by the state and its authority to activate aspects of the individual’s aggression during conflicts such as war, ethnic cleansing, and genocides in a way that does not happen in ordinary circumstances. The theory of splitting and projective identification plays an important role in the concept of difference and otherness as enemy. Bion’s (1956) theory of the “container” and the “contained” offers some way out of the psychic dangers of projective identification by suggesting that we may be able to access our internal psychic world as a transformative power to combat violence, both internal and external.

The individual may see the superego of the state as their own idealized superego. This might, in turn, help to explain how, during
wartime, the social superego is placed in the individual and how in turn the individual is either against or colluded with the state, which in turn affects the individual’s position in society. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930a), Freud wrote about the ways in which the regulations and demands of a civilized society harbour the risk of the death instinct, and discussed how aggression can be released at any favourable opportunity, especially when combined with Eros, under the alleged reason of idealism, nationalism, and patriotism, for example. This is especially true when there is a leader who elicits a strong socio-economic and emotional connection to secure justification over and from a group or nation.

Genocide can be seen as an unconscious attempt at treatment, carried out by a social institution that, precisely by institutionalizing it, increases the magnitude of destruction from what initially could have been an elementary defensive mechanism of the ego in the schizoid–paranoid phase. In other words, it provides objects for the psychic need to deal with unconscious fears and desires.

In *The Ego and The Id* (1923b), Freud formulated a perplexing dilemma in the human psyche; the eternal conflict between the dual instincts of Eros, the civilizing life instinct, and Thanatos, the unattainable death instinct. He identified some aspects of the death instinct with superego aggression, suggesting that the superego is the agent of the death instinct in its cruel and aggressive need for punishment, and that its operative feeling was frequently a punitive hatred. Other aspects of the superego, meanwhile, were protective. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930a), Freud emphasized that when diffusion or separation of the dual instincts occurred, aspects of aggression frequently dominated, and that it is the purpose of the ego to find objects for love as well as for aggression, either in phantasy or reality—the process that later was termed projective identification by Klein (1946). But Klein traces the beginning of the superego back to early infant oral phantasies of self-destruction, which is a direct manifestation of the death instinct. Although Klein’s work relied on the dual instinct theory postulated by Freud, she redefined the drives by emphasizing the way in which the destructive instincts attached themselves to the object, in particular the good and bad, which is a useful concept when looking at atrocities such as genocide.
For Armenians who experienced the genocide, the process of mourning (or lack of it) had quite important implications for themselves and their offspring. Freud (1917e) initially indicates that mourning comes to an important and “spontaneous end” when the survivor has detached emotional ties to the lost object and reattached the free energy to a new object—thus achieving comfort in the form of a substitute for what has been lost. This assumes a view of subjectivity and object-love and an optimism for post atrocity recovery that Freud articulated in “On narcissism” (1914c), in reference to post war situations. He defended against the cultural repression of loss by defining mourning as an essential process, theorizing the psyche as an internal space for grief work, and bringing a discussion of bereavement into the public domain. Later (1923b), he redefined the identification process previously associated with melancholia as an integral component of mourning. By viewing the character of the ego as a melancholic formation, he identified similarities between the two responses to loss, suggesting that mourning and melancholia involve similar symptoms. He indicated that “profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity” (ibid., p. 244) and “reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, and ideal, and so on” (p. 243) can lead to melancholia.

Here, it can be assumed that many Armenians may have been stuck in melancholic mourning, never able to grieve and, as a result, never able to move on. In contrast to the predominant feelings of love that make the completion of mourning possible, melancholic grief has ambivalent feelings of love and hate for the other. In Freud’s view (1917e), this ambivalence stems from “a real slight or disappointment coming from this loved person” (p. 249). Also, each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hyper-cathected and the detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it . . . when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again. [ibid., p. 245]

With this in mind, one can assume that many Armenians who survived the genocide lived with inhibitions. Freud’s description of primary narcissism, like his theory of object-love, implies that we
love others less for their uniqueness and separateness, and more for their ability to contract our own profusion: that is, to represent and reflect the part of our self that we have invested in them. This means that loved people are replaceable, and it is difficult to distinguish precisely how other they are. It is this model of the narcissistic subject that informs Freud’s early mourning theory, where the loss of a love object is understood as a temporary disruption of one’s self as the mourner. This provides stimulation to give up the lost object by believing that love for the other fundamentally derives from self-love, involving less grief for the passing of a unique other, and more a process toward restoring a certain economy of the self. By doing that, one is reclaiming a part of the self that has been projected on to the other; a part of the self necessary to the construction of one self-image as a complete and autonomous being. Losing a loved one therefore threatens to shatter one’s imaginary psychic integrity.

This threat explains why people cling to the lost object, since acknowledging the loss would bring in grieving and force them to recognize the full extent of what has been lost; that is, an irrecoverable attribute of the self necessary to one’s sense of coherent identity. Going back to Freud’s view comparative to genocidal situations, we can see that in response to the First World War, he returned to the subject of mourning in two of his papers, “Thoughts for the times on war and death” (1915b) and “On transience” (1916a). Here, he emphasized cultural ideals lost as a result of the war, addressing the loss as “so much that is precious in the common possessions of humanity” (p. 275) in seeking to dissolve the “mortification” and “painful disillusionment” (p. 285) with which wartime violence and brutality is regarded. Later, in The Ego and The Id (1923b), he renounces the lost other, and incorporates the loss through a consoling substitute. The self is restored and the work of mourning brought to a decisive close, when the free libido has been reinvested in a new object. There is a perplexing dilemma in the human psyche; the eternal conflict between the dual instincts of the life and the death instinct. One aspect of the death instinct is superego aggression, which is suggesting that the superego was the agent of the death instinct in its cruel and aggressive need for punishment, and that its operative feeling is frequently a punitive hatred, while other aspects of the superego are protective.
As mentioned earlier, in the case of genocide, war, or other political conflict, an individual may see the superego of the state as their own idealized superego. Indeed, this may be the explanation of how, during these periodic atrocities, the social superego is placed in the individual mind and how, in turn, the individual is positioned in the social circumstances and so acts on it, by and large without reflecting on the action and its consequences. This is an effect that again crosses generations. Many Turkish descendants are not able to accept that what happened with the Armenians was wrong. Moreover, as they do not believe that anything is wrong, they do not search for a way to apologize to Armenian descendants or call for reconciliation. Thus, starting the process of moving on from this ancestral state of mind, or disowning the history by developing the capacity to accept it and apologize for it, simply does not occur. Furthermore, it is clear that unless this acceptance of historical wrongdoing happens at a state level, it does not bring general remedy, rehabilitation, and reconciliation, and remains only at the level of the relationship between individual Turkish and Armenian people.

There are structural sets of internal needs that lead to the projecting on to others of the qualities the person wants to see in order to fulfill these needs. This is important in genocides because, although a person has survived the genocide as an external trauma and moved on in his or her view, he or she still may have delusional projections of 'the other'—those who persecuted them are always be seen through the distortion of emotionally loaded internal relationships. Then, it is possible that:

- there will be no realistic perception of self as object to other for Armenians who carry the psychological pain of denial of the genocide;
- the real other, i.e., Turkish people presently within the contemporary culture, and, as people who condemn the genocide cannot be perceived without contamination by the self-internalized other, this includes the relationship with the other, which can be received in distorted form;
- the more pathology, the less the person will be able to perceive others as they are, so, instead of the dyad existing as a dialogue, it exists in constant projections and in contrast, constant introjections and projective identifications.
Understanding these concepts is relevant, since surviving genocide involves a total loss of social environment, as well as a total loss of the self or part of the self. Many people go through a consolatory, or troubling and inadequate model of mourning, with some force, as they acknowledge the socio-political morals and principles that are involved in their loss. Not being able to resolve or make sense of what has happened, they pass these emotions and confusion on to the next generation. This means that a lot of projections and introjections are going on, generation after generation, without appropriate reflective dialogues. Many who lost their loved ones did not grieve and did not go through consolatory mourning, and therefore may internalize and dramatize the pathology of melancholia as a less loving, ambivalent, distractive, and ongoing antagonistic grief that, in many cases, has been passed to the next generation, unresolved. The following generations internalize these feelings through their imagination of what happened, and have to carry them on psychologically, as they have not witnessed or experienced these atrocities and losses directly, but never the less hold on to the pain of loss.

Freud’s mourning theory and its development are important if we are to understand both the private and public pain that many Armenians have been through. His reflection on, and reassessment of, the issue of consolation, and his apprehension of the problem of bereaved aggression, are integral concepts in looking at psychological consequences of not acknowledging the Armenian genocide and, indeed, other disputed genocides.

However, it is important to note that Freud’s changing ideas about mourning in the context of war stand in contrast to wartime mourning practices in which groups of people represented their shared grief and found collective consolation through memorializing acts informed by cultural traditions. It seems that Freud was very close to writing about his own experience, indicating that the trauma during the First World War and mourning was, for him, about loss of object. He (1916a) describes mourning as a mode of personal and social recovery—a process of reality testing in order to soberly acknowledge that lost objects no longer exist. For an Armenian, however, this might be something much more: it can be a total disruption, like the total loss of the self. Freud (1914c), in his early mourning theory, indicated that, when we reject the belief that
everything has been lost, we are inspired by ourselves. For that reason, our libido becomes free—then, we are able to replace the lost objects with new ones that are as loving as the old ones, or sometimes even more precious. He later redefines the process of identification associated with melancholia as a fundamental part of both subject formation and mourning an object that was lost and has been set up again inside the ego: that is, an “object-cathexis” that has been replaced by an identification. He (1917e) acknowledged that previously he did not appreciate the full significance of this process and did not know how common it was. This suggests that the identification process he had previously linked to a pathological failure to mourn in fact makes available the only stipulation whereby the id abandons or relinquishes its objects. Later (1926d), his view changed again, and, in relation to his daughter’s death nine years earlier, he came to believe that even though the intensity of mourning does eventually fade, substituting the loss is impossible. If we are able to find a substitute to close the gaping wound, it will never resemble the person we have lost and now mourn. He argues that only by such a process can we continue to feel the love we felt for what or whom is now lost. This is very important in the case of Armenians, many of whom may have lost all loved ones in the most sadistic and atrocious manner. Indeed, the whole social being of the first generation Armenian survivors never had the opportunity to go through consolatory mourning. These survivors had to be strong in order to survive, and grateful and compliant to those who rescued them and gave them a new home. In showing their sadness and grief in that sort of cultural climate, the survivors would fear that they would be perceived as selfish and ungrateful.

Coming back to Freud, he describes the enduring bonds of love that remain long after the other has departed (1917e), elaborating the identification process as a positive incorporation of the lost other. Laplanche’s (1999) critique of Freud’s mourning theory addresses this affirmation of otherness in the self, of an enduring “voice” belonging to the other, understood as “related to the super-ego, but which is not entirely merged with it” (p. 254). Freud (1914c, 1926d) distinguished object from narcissistic or ego libido, and differentiated instincts in the service of attachment, intimacy, and interpersonal relatedness, from aggressive instincts that are
necessary for autonomy, mastery, self-definition, and resilience. He discussed two sources of anxiety that are useful in this context (1926d): (1) deriving from guilt due to aggression and the internalization of authority in the superego; and (2) deriving from social anxiety, which involves primarily the fear of loss of a loved one, and of contact with others. This fundamental distinction between individuation and primary narcissistic union is expressed in various modes of separation and union. It identifies a basic split inherent in individual existence that is based on Freud’s dualistic conception of instincts, of individual character, and of life itself, as a relevant concept when considering this type of atrocity.

The concepts of projective identification will be discussed in detail as a key concept in relation to Turkish and Armenian history. It is of vital importance because, in the process of projective identification that often involves fear, envy, and rivalry, people project feelings of hatred to the other and introject those feelings from the other. By doing so, parts of the self are put into the other, thus reducing and diminishing ego strength, self-esteem, confidence, and resilience. This can be overwhelmingly disturbing, and can create feelings of separateness, isolation, worthlessness, and mistrust. In the psyche, this might result in the position that Melanie Klein (1946) called paranoid–schizoid, which is the splitting of good and bad objects, with the good being introjected and the bad being externalized and projected out. This concept is helpful, as it provides the insight that there is always the opportunity for both Armenians and Turks, through their psychic mechanisms of splitting, to play upon negative and feared connotations of the other, of the enemy, and of difference. Projection prevents a nation’s people from exploring, and thus understanding, what it is that actually divides them from a particular group (the other), and what is the reason to be so angry with that group, hence fostering hatred and enactment in genocide. All of this prevents mutual response and recognition by promoting exclusivity. It will be helpful to reflect on the roots of aggression in the genocidal act.

Erikson (1950) suggests that pre-oedipal rage generates aggression and makes people capable of acting out their rage and perpetrating atrocities. He explains the processes by which an enemy is dehumanized so as to provide the distance a group needs from its perceived enemy.
The dynamics of this process is that at first the group becomes preoccupied with "the enemy". Then mass regression occurs to permit the group to recover, recuperate, and restimulate more primitive instincts. What they then use, in this regressed state of mind, tends to contain aspects of primitive and out of control rage. In this state of mind, the enemy as an object will be internalized and perceived as having nothing but bad and negative aspects. Further, any responsibility will be denied by a perpetrator or facilitator of genocide. The use of denial allows a group, in this case the Turkish authority and their supporters, to ignore the fact that its own externalizations and projections are involved in this process. Through creating a psychopathology that allows them to do this, the enemy then become so despised as to be considered no longer human; it will then be referred to in non-human terms; will be perceived as demons, and will represent an evil that must be annihilated. A tangible, ongoing current example of this, which is much more widely known than the Turkish–Armenian situation, is the Israel–Palestinian situation, which has become extreme during the past six decades. Many Israelis consider most Palestinians as dirt beneath their feet, sub-human; most Palestinians think of most Israelis as plunderers of the land they are supposed to share; and the whole world has not been, and is not, able to deal with the situation.

In other words, the problem of the mentality of aggression mobilizes people’s deep anxieties in such a way as to prevent critical reality testing—hence, it creates the issue of denial. If one could learn the difficult and painful task of reintrojection, of taking back one’s projections, one’s hatred, anxieties, fears of the other and of difference, and fear of annihilation before they harm the other, there might be a transition. This transition can provide a link from the state-sanctioned violence of genocide back to individual violence; and restore the responsibility of each individual for re-enactments of their aggression. With this argument, one might learn to challenge the negative projective identification and turn it into a positive identification as a means of empathizing with the other and thus containing difference. The violence of the individual could then be contained and sublimated in peaceful ways; integrating and harmonizing, querying contending interests by asking what exactly these opposing interests are, and exploring dynamics at both the conscious and unconscious levels. This opens the possibility of
substituting the libidinal object-ties involved in projective identification and re-introjecting the object into ego strength and resilience, thus achieving a common feeling of sharing with other, and of being part of the other.

Bion (1957) theorizes that reintrojection can, at times, be dangerous, if the dominance of projective identification confuses the distinction between self and the external object. He believes that this awareness depends on the recognition of a distinction between subject and object. His theory of the pairing group, or the container and the contained, suggests that the outcome of such pairing is either detrimental to the contained, or to the container, or is mutually developing for both. So, the reciprocity of the container and the contained relationship, through positive projective identification and introjection or reintrojection, results in a positive allowance of difference—that is to say, a healthy acceptance of, and adaptation to, the other within the self and the self within the other.

One's drive is always orientated towards an object; not as separate from objects, but as turning to objects for gratification. The mental representatives of the drives came to be conceived of as unconscious phantasy. Klein's (1946) perception of trauma on the psychic re-traumatization—and the paranoid–schizoid position—indicates that, owing to the traumatizing effect of the death instinct, anxiety has to be deflected and projected for detoxification. The internal death instinct as the source of the trauma is therefore based on psychic organization. With the introjection of the complete object, both the loved and hated aspects of the other are no longer felt to be so widely separated. The result is an increased fear of loss and a strong feeling of guilt. This is a state similar to mourning, because the aggressive impulses are felt to be directed against the loved object. Through this process, the depressive position has come to the forefront. The concept is helpful for understanding the mechanism of survivor’s guilt and anger, which are common presentations in people who have survived external violence. It is also helpful in gaining a dynamic understanding of post traumatic stress symptoms.

Bion's (1957) concepts of “attacks on linking” (projected to cut off problematic object relationships, but which, in the end, lead to a destruction of one's good objects), as well as of “containment” of the anxiety in the relationship, are also useful in understanding the
psyche of a person who has survived a large-scale genocide. Bion believed that, through the use of projective identification in therapy, the patient can project intolerable, anxious feelings on to the therapist, who, in turn, contains and interprets back to the patient the experiences in a cohesive and manageable form. This is very relevant to people who have a high level of anxiety and are in constant need of a containing environment and a contained relationship. But, unfortunately, people who are affected as the result of genocide usually do not or cannot seek help.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930a), Freud wrote about the ways in which the regulations and demands of a civilized society harbour the risk of the death instinct, the aggression being released at an encouraging opportunity, especially when combined with life lived under the pretext of idealism and devotion. This is especially true in situations like the Armenian genocide, when there is a leader who provokes and draws out strong emotional attachments from a group or nation. Freud (ibid.) further emphasized that when diffusion or separation of the dual instincts occurred, aspects of aggression frequently dominated and, furthermore, that this is the purpose of the ego; to find objects for life/Eros or aggression both in phantasy or reality—the process of projective identification.

Klein (1932) saw similarities between young children’s coping strategies in play, and psychotic symptoms. She stressed that all adults at some level hold on to such psychotic processes, and are involved in a constant struggle to cope with paranoid anxiety and depressive anxiety (1940). What is helpful, from Klein’s point of view, is to recognize that the other that is hated can also be the other that is loved, and to accept the idea that the depressive position occurs when the other is taken in as a whole object. This can lead to feeling a need to attack, and to containing the feeling within the self. It can also lead to taking in and tolerating more pain, which is linked to ambivalence: the feeling that one can both love and hate the other person and still have a relationship. In this context, the depressive position is reached when one realizes that love and hate are directed to the same object, when the unconscious impulse is to repair objects felt to have been damaged by destructive attacks of hate that are inherent in depressive feeling.

Anxiety originated in aggression is innate and grounded in the projection of the death instinct outwards from the self. This anxiety,
internal danger threats, and the workings of the death instinct have important consequences for the concept of phantasy and also for the nature of creativity.

The concept of the inner world playing between splitting, projective identification, and persecution on the one hand, and integration, depressive anxiety, and reparation on the other, is helpful for our understanding of the combination of internal and external trauma and its psychic functions—specifically in relation to atrocities such as genocide. If the irrational feelings and thinking could be neatly placed on one side of the line, and the rational on the other, life would be much less complicated, but, in reality, the function of the mind can be disorganized and muddled for a variety of reasons, mainly early developmental process. It is necessary for there to be constant reordering between these basic positions, managing paired emotions of love and hate, envy and gratitude. In this regard, Klein’s (1955) concepts and explanations about reparation are wider than Freud’s (1926d) concepts of undoing in obsessional neurosis and of reaction formation. Klein’s view includes the variety of processes by which the ego feels it undoes harm done in phantasy, and thus restores, preserves, and revives objects. So, the importance of this tendency, bound up as it is with feelings of guilt, also may lie in the level of contribution that it makes to all forms of sublimation—and, therefore, to psychic functioning and mental health or illness.

Along these lines, Hinshelwood (1999) emphasizes that two important concepts in contemporary thinking are those of “containment” and the “‘K’-link” (as the central components of the container-contained relationship that is the “balance of mind”). He focuses on Klein’s description of “splitting” as the potential phenomena by which to understand people whose minds are damaged psychically. He also summarizes key ideas and concepts in Kleinian thinking with clarity and insight (1994), formulating them into seven points that are helpful in understanding a mind that creates genocide as follows:

First is... the death instinct... its clinical manifestations as envy and the subtle interplay between love and aggressive derivatives of the death instinct.

Second is the clarity of distinction between internal and external worlds, and thus between internal and external objects...
Third, meaning is an experience contributed from the subject’s state of mind...
Fourth is the elaboration of unconscious phantasy and meaning into thoughts, and then into a mind with which to think them.
Fifth, . . . counter-transference is an intra-psychic [phenomenon], a property of the active internal world of the analyst resonating with the intrapsychic world of the patient.
Sixth, . . . interpretations should address the immediate here-and-now reverberations of the transference in the sessions . . .
Seventh, . . . the pathological organization as the personal institution within the personality of a self-directed destructiveness derived from rather unmodified derivatives of the death instinct; and the precise, subtle but enduring impasse in the psychoanalysis to which these organizations give rise. [Hinshelwood, 1994, p. 237]

All of these concepts are quite important in helping to analyse the Armenian genocide. They are specifically helpful when considering the beginning, and smoothing the process of rehabilitation and reconciliation between Turkish and Armenian people and, indeed, others, such as the Israelis and Palestinians.

Greenberg and Mitchell’s (1983) clear descriptions of splits in objects provide another example of psychoanalytical understanding that can be helpful in deciphering the psyche of the Turkish–Armenian dynamic. They explained that splits in objects precipitate and correspond to splits within the ego. The developmental concept of projective identification is helpful for describing the extensions of these types of splitting, in which parts of the ego are separated from the rest of the self and projected into objects/others. In projection proper, discrete impulses are attributed to objects; but in projective identification the attribution concerns actual segments of the ego. Projective identification is an interactional concept for both projection and identification. Further, Greenberg and Mitchell (ibid.) emphasized that the repetition of painful experiences is meaningfully understandable in terms of instinctual conflict that results in subsequent anxiety and guilt, which is very important in the Armenian and Turkish psychic functioning even today, after almost a hundred years. The earliest objects of the drives are desired so intensely, and the fear of retaliation for desiring forbidden gratification carries so much weight, that reaching out for any kind of pleasure brings with it the perpetuation of infantile danger situations
that are the cause of repetitive neurotic misery. The fact that retaliation is feared, even within an objectively benign atmosphere, suggests that such a fear is based on projected aggression. The problem is inside the person who struggles with powerful and conflicting instinctual needs. So, if there is no room for knowledge and reflection to resolve the conflict in a healthy manner, it principally remains in environment deprivation and failures that are inevitably activated in some way or other. Hence, a result could be atrocities such as genocide.

The other important factor that prevents people from moving on is the Klein's (1952) concept of mourning, which involves the repetition of the emotional situation that one may experience. She explained this in relation to the mother–infant relationship, and suggests that under the stress of fear of loss of the loved other, one struggles with the task of establishing and integrating the inner world and of building up secure good objects within the self. Klein (1946) believed that the ego is incapable of splitting the object, both internal and external, without a corresponding splitting taking place within it. And this is exactly the dynamic that is happening in the psyche of those committing atrocities such as genocide. One of the main processes that come into play in these types of idealization and action or reaction is the operation that is based on hallucinatory gratification. This is the splitting of the object and denial of both frustration and persecution. This frustrating and persecuting object is kept widely apart from the idealized object. The bad object is denied, as is the whole situation of frustration and the psychic pain to which frustration gives rise. This denial of psychic reality is the result of strong feelings of omnipotence, an essential characteristic of the early psyche. Omnipotent denial of the existence of the bad object and of the painful situation is, in the unconscious, parallel to annihilation by the destructive impulse. So, in such states of mind, it is not only an object that is denied and annihilated, but also an object relation. Therefore, a part of the ego, from which the feelings towards the object originated, is also denied and annihilated. Understanding this is very important for people who have survived the trauma of genocide, who themselves, as a result, have various ways of splitting the ego and internal objects. This type of psychic function or lack of it can cause the feeling that the ego is in pieces, leading to a state of disintegration and total disturbance.
This then may result in dissociation, both normal and pathological. The very fact of being involved in genocide and mass killing also results in disintegration, fragmentation, and, to some extent, deper­sonalization—a total loss of resilience and healthy ego function, and total subjection to the state’s superego’s wish and order.

I am not arguing that there are not some important aspects of the social superego that are beneficial; for example, the ethical and moral values that shape a better society and bring protection for people, especially the more vulnerable members of society. Nevertheless, when an atrocity such as genocide is happening, it is precisely these civilizing aspects of the social superego that are ignored or repressed and replaced with aggression, which needs ratification and building up with strength. During times of geno­cide, the externalized superego perpetuates killing and violence in a way that is not allowed in ordinary circumstances. Such violence against others would be considered state sanctioned, although it is, in fact, the gratification of militaristic aggression, thus ensuring that acts need not incur guilt. But, at time, no one will think about the aftermath, so that guilt and responsibility can be denied and disavowed successfully for that period. It is there, however, and it will emerge and come to the surface, so that people will not be able to live in denial for ever.

Why do some people accept genocide, support it, and, indeed, in some cases enjoy it? Psychoanalysis posits the idea that aggres­sion is not behavioural but instinctual, not social but psychological. It is the very nature of humanity. So, it is vital to create a culture and common language in order that humankind can find a more mature, less primitive way of dealing with individual and collective hatred and aggression than war and genocide, for the sake of humanity, peace, and harmony.

**Collective mentality**

The most characteristic cruelty in genocides is its collective men­tality, as it requires group co-operation, organization, shared mentality and togetherness to torture, kill, destroy and destruct. One of the primary cohesive elements binding individuals into this type of primitive human association is the defence against inhibition and psychotic anxiety. It seems that upon joining this type of
constitution, the individual is brought into conditions under which s/he is allowed to act out the repressions and aggression of their unconscious instinctual impulses in a socially respectful manner and so be viewed as a hero and heroine rather than a criminal. The characteristics one displays are the manifestations of the unconscious, in which all that is malevolent in the human mind is contained as a predisposition. An oppressed and isolated mind may be a sophisticated individual in the society. But it is a barbaric mind that belongs to a human being acting by primitive instinct, possessed by fears and unable to control the impulsiveness, the violence, the ferocity, while also possessing the enthusiasm and heroism of primitive beings.

Genocide is a collective phenomenon that mobilizes anxieties and allows original sadistic fantasies of destructive omnipotence to be reactivated and projected on to the hated people. Thus, for the oppressors or killers, hated people are external stabilizers that bring a sense of identity and inner control, and create a group identity that masks the personal internal conflicts of each member of the group. They may therefore have an emotional investment in the maintenance of the antagonism and hostility. In other words, the hated people are needed objects that the oppressor unconsciously fears will be lost. When cooperating in aggressive acts of genocide, the individual is acting for the group, from which one derives psychic strength and support. These identifications require strong emotional attachments. The attachment between members of a group is in the nature of identification, based upon an important and common emotional quality of attachments in the nature of the needs of the members and their dependency on the leader.

What Bion says in Learning from Experience (1962a) is quite useful in this context. He indicates that a social group functions to establish a fixed social order of things, and that the individual has to be contained by the establishment of the group. This is a very pertinent statement in relation to Armenian and Turkish relations. It indicates that, even after a century, although many individuals wish to leave in peace and harmony from both the Armenian and Turkish communities, there is still a need to belong to a group and be part of society. So, in meeting the criteria of being part of your group and not being considered an outsider, one needs to follow or pretend to follow the group superego, its belief and function.
emphasizes that the rigidity of the “me” system crushes the individual’s creativity. Alternatively, certain special individuals erupt in the group, which then goes to pieces under their influence. He cites Jesus within the constraints of Israel as an example. He suggests that there are also positive forms of projective identification in the group that result in the underlying empathy. This is specifically helpful to concepts and methods that will help to smooth the process of rehabilitation and reconciliation, in which the group responsible for the process of reconciliation will hear the dialogue from both sides, contains projected painful and hostile feelings, detoxifies them, and then, at a phase-appropriate moment, returns them to Armenian and Turkish people in a digestible and constructive form to be sublimated.

Defences

Thomas’s (1995) concept of the “proxy self” highlights the workings of strong psychic division relevant to this type of situation. In his paper “Psychotherapy in the context of race and culture”, he discusses the dynamic process between a client’s defensive relation to and with the therapist in the consulting room. His discussion is based on a white therapist and a black patient and the issue of self and other, trust and relatedness. Nevertheless, it is a quite relevant and helpful discussion to apply to understanding the aftermath of the genocidal situation. Thomas emphasizes that some white professionals may have great difficulties in hearing the racist experiences of black people, probably because of their fear of hatred in the transference. He indicates that this fear might mobilize defences in the therapist against the patient. This is specifically a helpful concept in understanding Armenian feelings and defences and, indeed, Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide and defensiveness about acknowledging it.

Defensiveness is a compulsion that comes primarily from the Turks’ intrapsychic perspective of their psychic life. There are conflicts between wishes and the external reality, which produces inner tension and anxiety. These conflicts may develop the different agencies in and between the minds of individuals and, indeed, a group whose members share the same experiences, which form their identity.
The pushing back of unacceptable wishes from consciousness is the classic primary defence mechanism. The main features of defences may be used in the following contexts by Armenian and Turkish people alike:

- normal and adoptive as well as pathological;
- in the function of the ego;
- mainly unconscious;
- dynamic and changing; in some cases rigid and fixed systems in pathologic states and in character formation;
- associated with different psychological states, e.g., trauma, repression, dissociation, isolation and undoing, and depersonalization;
- associated with levels of development as primitive and as mature.

Some types of common defences used and acted out in situations such as genocide are detailed in the following paragraphs.

*Splitting*, which refers to the division of an object into good and bad in one’s psyche; projection, and projective identification, which has been explained in detail earlier, plays with the split part of the ego. The importance of projective identification as a method of control of the object and of unmanageable feelings is when whole aspects of the ego are split off and projected on to another person, who then represents and becomes identified with the split-off parts. Attempts may then be made to control those split-off parts, by asserting control over the other person and feeling gratified by this process. So, this explains that in the very act of killing the Armenian as the enemy, the Turkish killer destroys the part of himself that is projected on to the other—the Armenian. And that enemy within still prevents the Turkish authority and its supporters from facing the pain of hating an inherent part of themselves. The concept and use of projective identification are again helpful in relating to the impact of trauma in this type of situation. Use of projective identification aids the attempt to further clarify the roles of trauma and its intense affects in the Turkish psyche, particularly in respect of the rage in their regressive defensive activation of projective identifications.
Repression and dissociation, which are aimed at removing an aspect of internal reality that is not manageable from consciousness. One of the central characteristics of this type of dissociative behaviour is lack of authenticity. The masochistic and sadistic forces in interaction with others, the dominance, control, and submissive reaction to the acknowledgement of genocide, is a powerful recurring theme in the Turkish authorities’ encounters with both the Armenian community and the rest of the world. This masochism and psychopathic sadism can be viewed as differing post-trauma adaptations that rely upon defensive dissociation. Through masochism, people can dissociate their rage and aggression; with psychopathic sadism, people can dissociate from their vulnerability, their lack of inappropriate attachment, and, indeed, their dependency upon, and need for, the other. Within the domain of these phenomena, the psyche can be divided into three deep divisions, involving constant interplay between the parts that are projected: victim as self-state, perpetrator as self-state, and self-observer or storyteller. Whereas the masochist part can dissociate the self-state of perpetrator, largely through internalizing it, the psychopathic sadist part has to be bent and twisted to control the lives of others around, so that the person can dissociate the self-state of victim by having thus externalized it. Janov (1980) emphasized that Repression is not a deliberate mental trick; it is a reaction of the entire system. It is something the brain and body do together to abort painful experiences, especially when we are young and almost completely vulnerable. . . . Pain, as an alien force, is like an antigen and stimulates those forces which will counteract it, much like antibodies. The repression of pain is a two-edged sword. It keeps the body from feeling overwhelmed and thus keeps the body from feeling. It both saves and destroys because when one can no longer feel, there are no great sorrows or joy, no keen disappointments or pleasure, no exciting surprises or discoveries. The immune complex of repressed pain results in a state of neutrality, a feeling of living behind a wall, where life seems to be going on beyond one’s reach, somewhere “out there”. [p. 16]

Thus, recovery depends on individual social situations and the amount of acceptable support that victims receive. Because of the experiences most refugees have endured, and the difficulties they
encounter in accessing services, they form a group at high risk of experiencing mental health problems.

*Denial or disavowal* deals with external reality and enables an individual to repudiate or to control affectively their response to a specific aspect of the external world. Denial also involves splitting, repression, and dissociation, in which there is cognitive acceptance of a painful event while the associated painful emotions are repudiated.

Although people will always carry with them the psychic signature of their past social experience, these signatures are affected by the cultural idioms of distress into which they are woven and whether current psychological issues are given any importance and meaning. Past social experiences are related to life journey in very complex and intricate ways. For example, while the enactment of a cultural idiom of distress may help to resolve or give meaning to a form of unrecognized mental illness or pain, that very enactment might also cause or exacerbate other forms of suffering, depending on how it is used and articulated by any given individual and society. It is this fear that leads the Turkish denier to continue to disavow the Armenian genocide without realizing that it is not just Armenians who are suffering as a result; they are themselves in the same situation, if not a worse one. By denying the genocide, Turkish people are not denying the history of the Armenians, but they are perversely denying their own history.

Because the documentation of the Armenian genocide is inextricably connected with the denial of the genocide by its perpetrators, any efforts at documenting the events must confront the Turkish response, which has now grown into an industry of denial. This inevitably brings with it anger, disappointment, frustration, and, indeed, prejudices (conscious and unconscious) that will affect the narrative and interpretations of events. It is imperative for historians and analysts to gain a greater understanding of the psychological, cultural, political, and societal roots of human cruelty, mass violence, and genocide in order to develop an objective view in the documentation and discussion of the events.

From a theoretical perspective, the denial of known events of genocide is an act of psychological aggression against humanity by the perpetrator. There are different types of defence mechanisms and
denials that will be used by perpetrators to justify their sophisticated historical contradiction. There is a continuum in the denial of known genocides, which ranges from innocent denial to outright malevolence. There is also a continuum of attitude to violence and denials of known genocides, which ranges from moral innocence and disavowals of violence to the celebration of violence.

In the types of denials that are based on a kind of innocence and naivety, the deniers are relatively unaware of the real facts of the genocide and/or are seeking to picture our universe as more decent and secure for human beings than it really is, and in doing so to project themselves as fine, justice-seeking, and advancing "good people". These types of conscious qualities are used as a cover for unconscious choices, and imply a delight in joining in the celebration of genocidal violence. This is implied by all denials of known genocides. Those who are truly innocent participants in the denial may not at all be aware that they are seeking or taking benefit from their position as denier.

There are also many instances of professed or seemingly innocent denials that are not innocent at all, but are the full-blown defamation of deniers who are attempting to look like honest peace-promoting people, and are doing so through deliberately misleading denial propaganda. Assuming that one accepts that there are genuinely innocent deniers who lack conscious knowledge of the denied genocide, and/or are sincere in their conscious protestations of disavowing violence, one must still look out for and try to identify dissimulation and manipulation by people who really do know better, and who are pretending innocence. In other words, the styles of thinking in the various categories of misinterpretation of the data of history can be adopted by innocents who consciously do not intend, or do not know they intend, to do harm, and also by persons who are avowedly, viciously, 'anti' a specific race or ethnic group. While knowing fully the true history of the genocide, the latter often purposefully adopt the disguise of innocent, justice-seeking people, putting forth seemingly well-intentioned, legitimate differences of opinion.

In the process of a continuum from innocent denial to malevolence, the type of denial of known genocides can be ascertained by the extent to which the deniers are manifestly and consciously aware of the facts of the genocide, or, to the best of their judgement, despite
being at some level aware of the writings and public expression, as well as evidence known from named objective sources, are engaging in more innocent denial. For example, it could be a sincere belief of a denier that people could never be such inhuman, monstrous killers as the story of the genocide implies.

In the array of moral innocence and disavowals of violence to the celebration of violence and denials of known genocides, there is the question of the extent to which the denier of the genocide manifestly, or by undisguised suggestion and implication, celebrates the violence that was done to particular people, incites further violence to the same people or to others in the world, or justifies the violence that was done in the name of whatever cause, or in the vested rights of legitimate authority. One example of this is the current situation in Afghanistan and Iraq, in the name of the “war against terror” by Western powers, mainly the USA and the UK. One of the main questions here is that to what extent must people become engaged to cause such atrocities against other human beings? Are those involved re-enacting their internal horror and aggression, and to what extent are they satisfying their needs?

There is a need to understand the history of the Turkish people who have been involved with genocide, and to learn what happened to them in the first place that enabled the creation of a psychology that could plan and organize such events. It is also important to understand those who tolerate mass murder and stay silent. Currently, there is a lack of studies and a definite need for a further understanding of the events. Until both sides’ psychology is understood, there will be no place for psychological recovery of both the Armenian and the Turkish peoples. With a lack of such an understanding, the Turkish authorities continue to deny the event and the Armenians remain angry and frustrated, and there will be no systematic way of recognizing and preventing such an event in the future.

While this is not studied objectively here, understandably the general feelings of the Armenians are anger, dissatisfaction, humiliation, and dehumanization, and for the Turkish people healing may not even have started as all the material surrounding this issue is so confusing for a lay person. The situation of the past still exists today and looks likely to be the case for the near future: nothing but expressions of anger about inhumanity and aggression, and
disappointment with Turkish governments focusing on minority Turkish people (who may support their government).

Within all of these there are different types of deniers, such as:

- the denier who clearly repudiates the evidence in history, but at the same time claims s/he would not want to violently harm anyone;
- the denier who innocently engages in denials of history, not really distorting known facts, but colluding to create a situation where one cannot see the historical reality as it was. At the same time, s/he may let it slip that s/he is accepting, if not more openly celebrating, the violence that took place;
- the denier who may go all the way in disavowing the violence.

There are distinct elements of identification with, justification of, and celebration of genocide. None the less, again, it is important to note that even when one is genuinely qualified as an innocent denier, there is no implication that these kinds of denial are less dangerous or less deserving of serious moral criticism and professional censure. Even if the process of denial is unconscious, we have an understanding that in his or her inner being, the denier knows the facts of the genocide; even if the statements of the denier are full of homilies of moral sincerity, there can be no acceptance of rationalization or recontextualization of the horrors of mass murder of human beings.

The process by which such innocent deniers bring about mitigation of the significance of a case of genocide and decontextualization of its reality is manipulative. This kind of innocent denial makes the genocide seem not real enough to have occurred; this is a dangerous, sophisticated new form of revisionism.

It is widely known that psychopathological symptoms characteristically incorporate and are built on precisely such contradictory trends, where people seek simultaneously to destroy and preserve a loved–hated emotional object. The innocent deniers of genocide keep their world clean and their own hands clean of being members of a killing nation or group. Yet, at the same time, with silence they indulge in the pleasures of identifying with and encouraging the supreme ill-will and disposition necessary for destroying others.

It is the very persistence of such denials that prevent the Armenians from healing, and is what perpetuates the psychological
effects of trauma across generations in both Armenian and Turkish offspring. The existence of this type of thinking, belief, and behaviour gives allowance and praise to creators and followers of the more recent genocides around the world.

Reaction formation and identification with the aggressor, which often acts as a bridge to more mature defences such as sublimation, but can be highly specific. Reaction formation occurs when a person feels an urge to do or say something, but says something that is effectively the opposite of what they really want. It also appears as a defence when there is a fear of social punishment. If one fears criticism, one may visibly act in a way that shows one is a long way from the feared position. A common pattern in reaction formation is where a person uses excessive behaviour; for example, being compliant or using exaggerated friendliness when the person is actually feeling unfriendly. A cause of reaction formation can be when a person seeks to cover up something unacceptable by adopting an opposite stance. Freud called the exaggerated compensation that can appear in reaction formation “over-boarding”, as the person is going overboard in one direction to distract from and cover up something unwanted in the other direction. For example, if a person fears genocide, he may be convinced that genocide and killing is wrong rather than being full of anger and hatred and in constant panic because of his fear. When people feel that their freedom to choose an action is threatened, they get an unpleasant feeling that could be the motivation to perform the threatening behaviours, thus proving that their free will has not been compromised. Reaction formation reduces anxiety by taking up the opposite feeling, impulse, or behaviour. According to Freud, people are using reaction formation as a defence mechanism to hide their true feelings by behaving in the exact opposite manner. Reaction formation goes further than projection, in that unwanted impulses and thoughts are not acknowledged.

As with all defensive pathologies, reaction formation alters the structure of the ego in a permanent way, so that the defence is used even when the danger is no longer present. This is very relevant to the current situation of the Turkish government. While we are in the climate in which almost the whole world acknowledges and accepts that what the Turkish did to the Armenians is considered genocide, the Turkish government persists in not only denying the fact, but in
being prepared to take confrontational political positions (recently with France and now with the USA) in order to disavow their own history.

Experts in the field of mental health define psychological trauma in different ways. By and large, it identifies events that are outside the range of the individual’s usual experience as having the potential to be exceptional mental and physical stressors. However, the range of events that are traumatic to individual Armenians is as diverse as the trauma responses themselves. Traumatic experience and memory of genocide are the ultimate, or most severe, form of stressors. Genocidal traumas are the out-of-the-ordinary stressors that have low expectancy, probability, and controllability.

Isolation and undoing is a distinguishing feature separating hysterical conversion and obsessional neurosis. With regard to obsession and compulsion, undoing enables the individual to reverse hostile wishes that have been perpetrated in the doing. The attempt to undo is not just an attempt to make up for some error, but aims to attack the reality of the original hostile thought or wish, and recreate the past as though such intentions had never existed. In searching for biological equivalents of isolation, one may think of resilience and autonomy, which is instanced by the self elimination of an injured part of the self that would correspond to a combination of isolation and projection. A more appropriate model may be found in separation, isolation, and lack of integration, in which hard to digest experiences such as genocide will be separated and encapsulated. Laplanche and Pontalis (1974) described isolation as mechanism of defence

which consists in isolating thoughts or behaviour so that their links with other thoughts or with the remainder of the subject’s life are broken. Among the procedures used for isolation are: pauses in the train of thought, formulas, rituals and, in a general way, all those measures which facilitate the insertion of a hiatus into the temporal sequence of thoughts or actions. [p. 232]

Freud (1926d) talked about this in his paper Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety. One of the most important characteristics of isolation in Freud’s discussion, which is very relevant to Armenians and, indeed, others who survived extreme social atrocities, is touch. He indicated that the tendency to isolate came down to an archaic
mode of defence against an instinct, in this case the prohibition of touching, as touching and physical contact generally are the result of both loving and aggressive feelings towards the object.

Undoing is helpful in trying to understand the dynamics between Turks and Armenians today, and is quite relevant to the Turkish denial and disavowal of the Armenian genocide. It is a mechanism of defence in which

the subject makes an attempt to cause past thoughts, words, gestures or actions not to have occurred; to this end he makes use of thought or behaviour having the opposite meaning ... a compulsion of "magical" aspect which is specially characteristic of obsessional neurosis ... takes various forms. Sometimes an act is "undone" by an opposite one ... other times the same act is repeated but the meaning attached to it—whether conscious or unconscious—is the opposite one ... Or ... the act of undoing may be contaminated by the act it is supposed to annul. [Laplanche & Pontalis, 1974, p. 477]

**Internalization** subordinates introjections, identification, and processes by which an individual builds their inner representational world by taking in and modifying the external world. It is a process through which intersubjective relations are transformed into intrasubjective ones, such as internalization of conflict in a relationship that is transposed through a structural differentiation within the psyche so that relational conflicts may be lived out on the intrapsychic level—a psychical apparatus.

Internalization is a transformation of object libidinal energy in the object into an investment of energy in the self, which generates intrapsychic coherence and integration. Effectively, it turns an object into a personal subject, converting something separate into the self. This bringing into the self resonates with integrated wholeness. Internalization occurs when objects are installed into the ego, so that they are both integral to the sense of self and experienced as separate and concrete internal objects. So, the external world is brought into the internal world and incorporated with it. Of the various notions, internalization is one of the important concepts of how one takes experiences into the internal world.

But these very much depend on the capacity to integrate with self and other. Mental health is characterized by a high capacity
to integrate events. This integrative capacity is one's ability to distribute and utilize psychic energy that allows for reflective thought and action. Lack of integrative capacity is probably related to the effects of stressful life that are associated with integrative mental action. High levels of integrative capacity enable individuals to use a high level of mental energy in order to produce reflective thought and action, leading to adaptation, integration, and modulated levels of dependency. High integrative capacity is needed for the emotional systems essential for daily life to be consistently activated. Low levels result in poor and inconsistent activation of these emotional systems, with reflexive action based on emotionality, impulsivity, avoidance, and lack of critical thinking, with lack of integration in one's life. The lack of capacity to integrate often is the result of disturbed attachment and an inability to engage with others or to cope with difficult circumstances. The individual thus needs to rely, to a greater or lesser degree, on another to guide and support him, and such a person is more at risk of getting involved with genocidal acts or similar atrocities because of his lack of reflective thinking and his dependency upon the supporter, which, in the case of the Armenian genocide, has been the state superego.

Intellectualization and rationalization. Intellectualization covers a range of sub-defences, including thinking instead of experiencing, and paying undue attention to the abstract in order to avoid undoing as well as rationalization. Anna Freud (1937) described intellectualization as a defence mechanism, a normal process by means of which the ego attempts to gain a hold on the instinctual processes by connecting them to ideas that can be dealt with in consciousness, and this represents one of the central aspects of ego function. It is a "process whereby the subject, in order to master his conflicts and emotions, attempts to catch them in a discursive form" (Laplanche & Pontalis 1974, p. 224).

Rationalization similarly offers explanations believed to be logical for irrational behaviours that have been prompted by the unconscious. People may attempt to present what in their view is logical explanation and ethically acceptable, but they themselves are to some degree aware of the fact that their attitude, ideas, action, and motives are different. What is important here, in the context of the Armenian situation, is not what the Turkish authority is saying to
bring rationale to their denial, but what they know and are not saying. This is clearly one of the main defences that the Turkish authority and their supporters have adopted for almost a century now. It has resulted in their not listening to, or hearing, the Armenian narrative of, and feelings about, the event that they are denying. One should ask why there is such a massive difference between the views of these two communities or nations about the same event.

The usefulness of psychoanalysis

Why are psychoanalytical ideas useful in looking at this subject, why bring in all of these types of defences, and, indeed, why there is so much emphasis on psychoanalytic thinking? This is because psychoanalysis provides a model for understanding trauma, specifically in relation to genocide and its psychological consequences, and, more importantly, because it offers the possibility of finding an avenue that will allow moving on. Psychoanalysis is, by and large, useful for social research, which reflects the importance of divergent, different, and peripheral accounts in relation to the Armenian genocide its context. The psychoanalytic theory of group relations offers an opportunity to bring perspective on the subject as a good starting point. The development of relational psychoanalysis and its implications for understanding social dynamics in relation to the denial of the Armenian genocide offers a new paradigm for dialogue, negotiation, and healing.

The way of moving on is based on rehabilitation and reconciliation. These processes need clear ways of thinking, hearing, containing, reflecting, and responding. A psychoanalytic approach will help in the understanding of how one can deal with this type of ongoing trauma, transmitted from one generation to another, through the work of mourning, language, dialogue, and in relating to others, or in dealing with the inability to do so because of a lack of these tools.

Mourning

The psychoanalytical framework provides a helpful model for thinking about the psychological consequences of not acknowledging the Armenian genocide. Specifically, it is useful for both Armenians and Turks to understand the important process of mourning or lack of it
(which may lead to melancholia) that is reflecting the idea of aggression as a component of human subjectivity. The work of mourning is a process of elaborating and integrating the reality of traumatic losses or traumatic shock by remembering and repeating it in a symbolic and dialogic manner, which should have been, and is, an integral part of the process of moving on. This process has not happened for many Armenians and Turks, even after four or five generations. It is a necessary process of converting and representing loss that may encompass a relation between language and silence that in some senses could have been, and is possible to be, ritualized. Mourning also involves a process of obsessive remembrance of the lost other and, indeed, the lost self in the space of the psyche, replacing an actual absence with an imaginary presence. This restoration of the lost other enables the mourner to assess the value of the relationship and to comprehend what has been lost to the self in losing the other. With a very specific task to perform, ordinary mourning seeks to convert loving remembrances into a memory, and thus allow moving on. But, in the case of the Armenians, it seems to be that part of the mourning is related to the loss of the self, or to that part of the self which made the process of mourning impossible, because in many cases there has been no self to mourn the loss of the other, or the lost loved one. Therefore, there has been no self for relatedness and definition.

Ideally, the struggle should take place in the interpersonal and intersubjective relational medium—thereby getting lost and replaced by various defences or dissociation to construct a self in response to external demands. Thus, ego organization, or lack of it, which is in the provision of adaptation to the environment, will be fragmented, as will the procurement of object attachment. Repeated compliance with such demands, associated with a withdrawal from self-generated spontaneity, leads to an increased stifling of impulses for spontaneous expression, thereby culminating in a false self-development.

**Mourning: the false self as safeguard and protection**

The false self is adopted in vulnerable states of mind as a defence against the unthinkable and the exploitation of the true self. It may
be constructed in response to the fear of death, both of the self and of others. Such fear is a form of existential anxiety, which is experienced by many people who survived genocides or other forms of degrading human experience.

In such circumstances, it is possible to think that the unconscious displacement of the emerging false self is presented within the interpersonal conditions of the earliest object relations. In this context, the false self, as a collection of behaviours, thoughts, and feelings, is motivated by vulnerability and the need to cling to the object. In this case, this is the bad object: people who created the genocide and those who are denying it after almost a century. I believe this is not just a result of external trauma in adult life; it must be rooted in earlier trauma. It makes sense, and it is not hard to imagine, that an ethnic group whose members have been subject to genocide must have been under previous pressure in a society where their leaders came to the decision to eradicate them from the planet. Therefore, societal oppressions, discrimination, and marginalization must have existed prior to the genocide.

Coming back to the discussion of the false selves, it is possible to see that the self, in such a situation, will function defensively against separation, anxiety, fears of abandonment, and fear of death and annihilation. This represents the vulnerability of integrating the whole self-object representations, which is the basis of autonomy, resilience, and an integrated and cohesive self. As a result, the capacity for spontaneity, autonomy, and self-assertion is blocked further and lost in a false self created to survive the unresolved internal conflicts and external atrocities—hence its effect on the internal being. For that reason, mourning may not be just about the loss of the good object; it can also be about the loss of the self. It is about both fear of annihilation of the self and fear of the loss of the other. And, in some cases, the false self is totally lost and neither the true nor the false self exists. This is a state of total psychic numbness, which may have been the case for many young Armenians who were rescued and survived the genocide.

What specifically is helpful in understanding this type of psychical pain or numbness is the clarity of the emphasis on different angles of loss. There is some difference between the paranoid-schizoid position, which involves fear of annihilation and total destruction of the self, and the depressive position, which is grief
for the loss of the other and the self. There is also the loss of the good object and the resultant grief that the psyche as an internal space goes through. The distinction lies in how other the lost other is; where the self is. Here, again, the concept of projective identification of mourning is helpful in seeing that the loss of a love object is equal to a disruption of the self. This is usually normal and temporary in ordinary mourning, but has not been temporary in many Armenian cases. For many Armenians the mourning continues, and brings with it the continuing psychological consequences. This is because the lack of acknowledgement and in some cases the outright denial of the Armenian genocide, has, for many, blocked the process of mourning. Indeed, this delay in mourning has passed to the following generations, where it still remains.

Returning to the self, it is clear that if the good object becomes damaged and lost, it affects the ego, and the ego becomes less organized and loses part of its identity. So, the person loses internal resources and the ego is not able to identify with the good internalized object. The persecutory feeling and dread of the superego may first be replaced by the part of the ego that has been lost. As a result, the mourning of the lost ego and of the love object creates persecutory anxiety, the ego loses its function, and it is gradually replaced with fear and guilt. Consequently, the psyche contains, and may present, an abnormality about internalizing the object; the inability to accept or to identify a good enough object that might be available. This can be an indication of a total loss, and what we may see is the failure of the system of defence and the modes of functioning—the loss of the self due to the external trauma and environmental impingements.

The connotation of trauma as impingement offers a way to understanding this process better in an Armenian psychic relationship and in its complexity, which can be a combination of feelings of love and affection and violent, aggressive, hateful, and envious states. What is also quite relevant is the fact that this is a state of mind that can be impinged further due to loss of culture and language. Although there is a mass of literature about this cultural loss, there is no discussion about the psychological impact on the Armenians internally. This is very important, as it provides dimensions that are also integral to a fuller understanding of the possible effects on, and retraumatization of, the Armenians who survived
the atrocities, and, indeed, on the transmission of trauma between survivors of genocide and their offspring. One integral part of the cultural aspect is mourning. Experiences of loss put people face to face with their own vulnerability. This can be trouble for an individual, preventing her from mourning the loss, whereas successful mourning may be a positive, transforming experience permitting growth and a positive outcome. Grief becomes even more difficult to work through when it evokes old, unresolved issues. However, current experiences of loss may also provide an impetus for exploring and working through these more remote or unresolved loss issues. In relation to this, the Armenians are still going through unsuccessful mourning and the Turks deny and disavow any losses, therefore not seeing any reason for mourning. So, both are stuck in mourning without actually mourning.

There are few dimensions in the mourning process. At the individual level, one may find it difficult to mourn a current loss when there are previous losses that have not been mourned, whether these losses are associated with an actual death or with early deprivation at the hands of a perpetrator. The same defences that had worked in a positive sense to prevent the individual from being overwhelmed by previous losses might also work to insulate one from the experience of loss more generally. Cultural factors may contribute to an individual inability to mourn, dictated by the societal superego, as may efforts to allay anxieties associated with both individual mortality and the loss of significant others and the acknowledgement of that loss. Mourning, itself, is in many ways culturally defined: although it is a personal feeling, it is a process that, to a great extent, can be structured and defined by social and historical forces. So, the individual, by and large, is not able to find meaning for the loss as the process cannot be in conflict with a societal view.

All of these are indications that personality development throughout life, from infancy to adulthood, occurs as the result of complex dialectical developmental forces. The development of an increasingly differentiated, integrated resilience and mature sense of self is contingent upon establishing satisfying interpersonal relationships. Equally, the development of mature, reciprocal, and satisfying interpersonal relationships depends on the growth of a mature self-definition and resilience. Relatedness, or attachment of
developmental lines, enables people to note more clearly the dialectical developmental transaction between relatedness and self-definition, and this dimension has been taken away from many Armenians and the Turks alike.

If the self has not been totally fragmented, we need to consider that there may be a need for containing, restoring, and reclaiming part of the lost self, which, in not being able to go through consolatory mourning, has been projected onto the lost other and transferred to the following generations. The process is important for reclaiming an autonomous and resilient self for the younger generation of Armenians, who carry the unresolved anger and frustration, and perhaps unconscious guilt at surviving. It can only be possible if the international community and the Turkish government unite to acknowledge the genocide, apologize for their ancestors' wrongdoing, and call for real reparation and reconciliation, rather than a polemical dialogue. Although they do not presently consider it necessary, the Turkish authority needs to accept the trauma and pain that Armenians have been through, generation after generation, as the result of Turkish authority action, and to realize that genocide is a fact in history that cannot be changed, no matter how much we wish that it could. This matter can be resolved only if the Turkish authorities accept what happened to the Armenians and are willing to work beyond a debate on whether it was extermination or genocide. Making the decision to evict an ethnic group from their ordinary living environment without a second thought, burning them in a cave or leaving them to die of thirst and hunger, all of these scenarios can be considered genocides whether the current Turkish authority accepts this or not, and whether the United Nations had any constitutions about it at the time or not. It is clear that what was intended by the Ottoman regime was the total eradication of the Armenian communities in this part of the world, and this constitutes genocide.
Twentieth-century genocide: brief examples from history

"The man who wrote that word upon the wall disappeared from the midst of the generations of man many centuries ago; the word, in its turn, has been effaced from the wall of the church; the church will, perhaps, itself soon disappear from the face of the earth" (Hugo, 1831, p. viii)

The twentieth century was marked by unparalleled human cruelty, ethno-political conflict, war, terrorism, and genocide. Unfortunately, the trend towards mass violence is continuing unabated into the twenty-first century. During the past century, government genocidal policies alone resulted in over 210 million deaths: eighty per cent of these were civilian deaths (170 million) and represent nearly four times the number of individuals killed in combat during international and domestic wars during this same period of time (Robinson, 1998; Rummel, 1996).

In a time when human rights violations and structural violence continue to occur in many countries, indicating enormous disrespect not just to human rights, but also to human life, in both physical and psychological terms, it becomes important to look at the historical roots and long-term effects of such violence. This can
enable a closer and cross-cultural understanding of the psychosocial roots of human cruelty and organized mass violence, and the serious consequences of ignoring these. This is particularly important in relation to the prevention of such tragedies for future generations.

The Holocaust

Hebrew Sho’ah, Yiddish and Hebrew Hurban ("Destruction") the systematic state-sponsored killing of six million Jewish men, women, and children and millions of others by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War. The Germans called this “the final solution to the Jewish question”. The word Holocaust is derived from the Greek holokauston, a translation of the Hebrew word “olah”, meaning a burnt sacrifice offered whole to God. This word was chosen because in the ultimate manifestation of the Nazi killing programme—the extermination camps—the bodies of the victims were consumed whole in crematoria and open fires. [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007]

While the term holocaust is widely used to refer to the state-sponsored murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany, it also encompasses the killing of various groups then considered undesirable in society, such as gypsies, people with mental illness, disabled people, homosexuals, communists, and other political dissidents.

The Destruction of the European Jews, by Raul Hilberg (1961), shaped the framework for academic discourse and popular understandings of the Holocaust, although Hilberg himself avoids using the term Holocaust. He poses the question of the relationship between ideology and structure in the execution of the "Final Solution", opening up debates about what the essential conditions for genocide are; the extent of criminality and complicity within society; the responses of bystanders; and, indeed controversially, the reaction of the people who survived the genocide.

Hilberg (1961) presents a narrative of the "destruction process" at the heart of the Nazi genocide. He suggests that the Nazi campaign proceeded from legislative discrimination against Jews in Germany after 1933, to the organization and liquidation of Jewish businesses and assets from the mid nineteen-thirties, then to the
physical and temporal removal and concentration of the Jewish populations in Nazi-occupied Europe from 1939, and then to their murder and annihilation after 1941.

He argues that the "Final Solution" was a bureaucratic process of the Nazi state, involving further radicalizations of the policies for Jews. According to him, the Holocaust was a systematic implementation of a programme to annihilate "5 million [this is Hilberg's figure] victims (p. 46)"; a model that was further applied throughout occupied Europe. This same inhuman process spread throughout the continent of Europe, resulting in further murderous decisions. Indeed, this process could be seen as the framework within which the new and ever more detailed Holocaust historiography may be understood. Furthermore, it is a framework that can be helpful to us in coming to understand the phenomenologically identifiable Nazi attack on the Jews of Europe and other attacks, and, indeed, the attacks of the Israeli government on Palestinian Arabs.

This is a comparatively simple point, but helpful in establishing what constitutes genocide; in other words, what events have to have occurred to be regarded as a genocide and what policy has to be implemented to be identifiable as a genocidal policy, regardless of whether the UN Convention defining genocide was established at the time or not. This also will enable us to recognize that a genocide such as the Holocaust should not simply be seen as the result of Nazi or neo-Nazi thinking, but as a product of a complex set of social, economical, and political circumstances at a specific historical moment. It is important to acknowledge that every administrative grouping in the machinery of government, and also other social institutions in German society at the time, that perpetrated atrocities did have officials and groups of individuals responsible for the management of matters arising from their actions (this is applicable to any society where genocide occurs). In this sense, policy, or lack of it, actually lay outside the sphere of what we might understand as politics. This is an essential element of the regime involved in any genocide or ethnic cleansing, underpinning a great variety of assumptions and initiatives, affecting every administrative structure that could be argued to have been the driving force of politics itself in the genocidal act. This hypothesis can lead to the argument that the officials who made up the Nazi institutions were not
simply the predictable racist or psychopathic individual murderers, but could be the enthusiastic implementers of a social and political vision (and, indeed, there has been acknowledgement that many Jews were involved in the initial administration). In a sense, their intention was not removed from their function, so the same goes for those who carried out what happened in Hiroshima, Kawasaki, Rwanda, the Balkans, and Palestine, as well as more recently in Afghanistan, Iraq, Zimbabwe, and Sudan.

This understanding of the political and psychological mechanisms of genocide is important to remind the world that the circumstances that lead to genocide can be comparable. In other words, the Holocaust did not just arise out of Hitler or Nazi Germans' hatred of Jews. This kind of broad understanding of the circumstances that led to the Holocaust can, and indeed should, be applicable to other attempts to destroy an ethnic group, such as the Palestinian Nakba. This means not giving credence to the contention that the idea of anti-Semitism as traditionally understood is enough to completely encapsulate Nazi attitudes towards the Jews, but it is an implicit acknowledgement that anti-Semitism was, for many, cast in the context of a much wider racial vision in the Third Reich. The deportations of Jews from the Reich, and inside occupied Poland, were one element of a vision of a racially restructured Europe. So, anti-Semitism functioned as a part of diverse political purposes in the Nazi era, and it is also possible to see how the annihilations and murder of Europe's Jews were intended as a part of an economic modernization of Europe, specially Eastern Europe. This way of thinking can provide us with a narrative framework within which we can locate these diverse purposes of anti-Semitism, which were put to diverse policy ends, and to understand that such actions in any circumstances always start from these types of unacceptable explanations.

In the light of this argument, it is possible to see that what happened to the Palestinians can be considered as resulting from Holocaust survivors' belief in their undeniable right for recompense and reparation through having their own homeland. The Holocaust survivors had survived the most atrocious trauma and violations of their human rights, and perhaps for this reason unconsciously re-enacted their trauma on the people living in the land which they saw as their home.
This framework of considering both the perpetration and perpetrators of genocide is helpful in showing that there are identifiable stages that are similar throughout all genocides, which can be the result of the characteristic of manic psychological function utilized in an ideological state of being that is fixated and unchangeable. This may be the continual dynamic of genocidal policy and action that happens over and over again. It is important to widen our understanding about the overall context within which individuals, as well as a collective group, get involved for economical and political reasons. This prevents the structures and relationships of organized genocides from getting lost in the fragmented narrative of emerging memories of people who survived and their descendants. Creating a framework to analyse the complexity of genocide helps us to understand, and contributes to our understanding of, the behaviours of perpetrators as well as the consequences for those who have survived genocides.

Coming back to the Holocaust: the survivors, like Armenians who survived the genocide and their descendants, have faced difficulties with moving on into normal life. Following the liberation of the concentration camps in 1945, Holocaust survivors set forth on yet another challenging expedition—that of a new life. Although trying their best to suppress the trauma sustained during those terrible years, many hoped to have a chance of a future without the pain of the past, but the reality, by and large, was quite different. Despite their best attempts to “move on”, the façade of wellness soon began to give way, and what resulted was an array of emotional and psychological difficulties. Even for those willing to speak, there was very little help for their emotional rehabilitation. Often, their stories were too horrifying for others to listen to and they were greeted with silence: “some survivors recall trying to convince others to believe what they themselves cannot quite believe” (Cohen, 2001, p. 131). A painful silence was imposed on survivors, to the detriment of the healing process, intensifying people’s sense of isolation and compelling many to focus everything on their new lives and families as if nothing had happened. It is only recently that some people wanted to hear about elderly Holocaust survivors’ memories at a time when, sadly, many have already passed away.

These above characteristics are common to all genocides and, indeed, to the Armenian genocide. The dynamic of not being able to
move on in life may give rise to, and engender the repetition of, atrocities. The correlation between the situation that many survivors of the Holocaust and their descendants created in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is an example of this. A case in point is the large-scale evacuation of Palestinian Arabs during the 1948 Israeli–Palestinian War—commonly known as the Nakba, which, in the Arabic language, means “catastrophe” or “disaster”.

Nakba and Israel–Palestine

During the 1948 Israel–Palestine war, many Palestinians had to flee as they were expelled from their homes in the part of the land that would become the State of Israel. Palestinians were forced to go to other parts of the land or to neighbouring countries. About two-thirds of Palestinian Arabs had to leave the territories that came under Israeli control. Therefore, the majority of the Palestinian population became refugees and were denied the right to return to their land following the war. Shlomo Ben-Ami, the former Israeli foreign minister, sheds some light on what brought the Palestinian refugee problem into existence in his book *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli–Arab Tragedy* (Ben-Ami, 2006):

The reality on the ground was that of an Arab community in a state of terror facing a ruthless Israeli army whose path to victory was paved not only by its exploits against the regular Arab armies, but also by the intimidation and at times atrocities and massacres it perpetrated against the civilian Arab community. [p. 42]

This is the view of an Israeli official about the large-scale injustice inflicted on Arab Palestinians. The UN estimated the number of Palestinian refugees after the war as 711,000, while the Israeli government estimated the number to be 420,000 and the Palestinian authorities estimated the number as 900,000. The degree to which the flight of the refugees was voluntary or involuntary has been fiercely argued and is still debated. However, the number of Palestinian refugees registered with the UN has grown from 711,000 in 1950 to over four million in 2002. (Cleaveland, 2004, p. 270).
Because there is no accepted definition of who can be classed as a Palestinian refugee for legal reasons, there are approximately one million people who have no form of identification other than an UNWRA identification card (Bowker, 2003, pp. 61–62). The psychological impact of this type of situation for Palestinians is unquestionably and incontestably tremendous, and is a principal indication of the kind of unrecognized and unresolved human rights violations that are affecting the world—wars, genocide, and various forms of violence.

Saida Nusseibeh, in “The Palestinian refugees—a personal insight”, wrote:

So the collective memory of the Palestinians is the trauma of being denied [their right] to call themselves by the name of the land where generations of their fathers came from, and being denied by the world that they existed, their attachment to a certain part i.e. being specific as mentioning the name of the town, helps them to affirm that they do come from that part—to prove it, they mention that city. Their need is belonging—and their need is that the world admit to their existence. Of course, they feel that now the world admits [they] are Palestinians, the next step would be the world admits that they have a right to return. [2002]

It can be argued that we can find parallels between the catastrophic evacuation of the Palestinians and similar events in both Armenian and, indeed, Jewish history. The Jewish people were themselves historically denied the right to be called Jewish; some even had to change their names to be accepted, and they were denied the use of their language. Although Germany (and the world) has now admitted its guilt, many Jews still feel a devastating sense of injustice that people in the world stood by in silence, observing and ignoring the massacres taking place during the Holocaust. Historically, both the Armenian and the Jewish peoples lived for long periods as ethno-religious minorities among populations who were both different from, and hostile to, them. Both peoples adhere to an ancient religion. Both were religious minorities of their respective states. Both have a history of persecution. Both have new democracies. Both have been surrounded by enemies. Both are, in the main, hardworking, talented, and creative people living as minorities, which perhaps can create envy, hate,
and rage in others, resulting in persecution out of obscurantism. But treatment such as the above does not excuse the re-enactment of the trauma by creating atrocities for others.

The Holocaust has become a formative component, not only in the historical memory and identity of Israel, but also in the identity of Jewish communities in the diaspora. The Holocaust Memorial Day—quite rightly so—is noted on many European as well as American civil calendars. But it is important to acknowledge that the Nakba is not widely known and acknowledged in the world, and, more importantly, has not been noted in official Israeli history (although Israeli intellectuals have written about it). This is a sad and perverse reality of modern Israeli governments. It would be appropriate if current Israeli authorities revisited the ideals of the initial declaration of Israel’s independence, in which Jews set themselves to live in peace and democracy. It would be good for Israeli officials to listen to the lyrics of the Israel’s National Anthem “HaTikvah—the Hope” and hear the meaning behind them. This may be helpful for those in power, or those supporting them, to question themselves, and whether their lack of empathy for the Palestinians is the result of their own pain, trauma, and humiliation regarding what they and their ancestors have endured, and the fear of being yet again put in that vulnerable situation. While denying themselves this process of recognition, communication, and reconciliation in a peaceful manner, they are projecting to the Palestinians a part of themselves that they hate to acknowledge and, instead of correcting themselves for the better, they hate and kill Arab Palestinians with the unconscious hope of killing the part of themselves that they hate. This self-denial has materialized into the hatred of the Palestinians and a wish to destroy them totally, with the unconscious hope and desire that this will destroy their own anger, pain, and disgust that they cannot face. Hence, they cannot feel any connection with, or sympathy for, the Palestinians. It would be helpful for the Israeli authorities to think about what Arab Palestinians did to the Jews before the Nakba, apart from sharing their wish to stay in their homeland in peace.

The history of the Palestinian mass departure and evacuation is closely tied to the events of the war in Palestine, which lasted from 1947 to 1949. Many factors played a role in bringing it about. What exactly those factors were, and how each of them contributed to the
course events took, still remains an emotional and intense debate between very few and has not been given sufficient attention in the international community.

Because of the complicated nature of the issue, along with the length of time during which it has persisted, both Israelis and Palestinians regard themselves as being in the right. Therefore, the issue of victimhood comes into play. A complicating aspect of victimhood is that sometimes both groups in a conflict see themselves as the “victim” and their opponent as the “aggressor”. In dialogues, they may even compete over who has suffered more and who has been more victimized by the other. Each side will try to persuade third parties that the other group has been the obvious oppressor or aggressor. Many Israelis and Palestinians currently exhibit this mentality, due to their fear of the other and the memory of past encounters between the two groups. Both Israelis and Palestinians see themselves as having been “the victim” in their conflict since before Israel became a state (Rosenberg, 2003).

Knowing full well they cannot go back to Haifa, Jaffa, and so on, the Arab Palestinian refugees still insist they want to go back to a place that has been already occupied by other families for the past sixty years (that is, by generations of Israelis who are living there). Those who work with refugees in the Lebanon suggest that there are reasons for this. The refugees in the Lebanon are the forgotten people. They live in ghettos, with sewage surrounding them, and with electrical wires almost trailing on the ground. Children play very close to them and women get electrocuted because of the many wires connecting too many things. There are no paved roads. In some areas they are not allowed out of the ghettos. They cannot go to the Lebanese schools or universities. They cannot work in many professions, even though they have relevant qualifications. They can work only in the camps. Among the professions that they are not allowed to practise outside the camps is medicine, so they cannot work as doctors or nurses. For doing such work within the camps, they are paid by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which is also poor. A doctor only gets paid $200 a month, not even ten per cent of the remuneration their Lebanese colleagues receive, so Palestinian doctors and nurses have to find other jobs to be able to survive (Nusseibeh, 2002).

Many doctors and psychologists argue that, in a strong patriarchal society, if there is no strong father figure, there is no strong
family. The feeling of a Palestinian “collectiveness” has decreased, as people have to be, and are, preoccupied with their basic needs and personal security. When there is no satisfaction of basic needs and personal security, there is no collectivism and no ideological father to protect these children (Srour, 2003).

Palestinian families have been under tremendous stress those since the Nakba in 1948 and some since 1967 (Intifada). Therefore, these issues are now causing trauma to a third generation of Palestinians. A person born in 1948 is now about sixty years old, and in most cases will be a grandparent. A parent raised in a stressful environment all his or her life does not have necessary resources and, therefore, may not have the capacity to be a good enough parent. In other words, a Palestinian child has fewer chances of having a parent who is not stressed and was not traumatized than the average child in the rest of the world (Jabr, 2004, pp. 18, 76).

Many Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli prisons, some (grand)fathers and (grand)mothers. After release they went back to live with their children. In this type of atrocity prisoners are, of course, one of the most traumatized and retraumatized groups of people in any society. Children who live with fathers or mothers who are affected and were traumatized, especially by prison experience, have less chance of developing a healthy attachment and, therefore, are at risk of a poorer emotional development due to the fact of their parents’ anger and depression. In some cases the parent may suffer more serious mental problems, such as severe post traumatic stress disorder. Because of these inevitable psychological difficulties, many parents, despite their wishes, will not be able to be available emotionally when a child or adolescent needs them. It is also possible that those parents share their traumatic experiences with their children, and unconsciously transmit their trauma and their psychological problems to them.

The absence of Palestinian legal and welfare systems means that Palestinian families who experience undesirable behaviour, such as domestic violence, physical, emotional, or sexual child abuse, alcoholism, or drug abuse, have little or no recourse to government or non-governmental organized interventions, and therefore the prevalence of negative tendencies has increased. It is reported that: “Familial trauma can be seen to be more and more stressful to the
Palestinian child. An indirect relation to an increase in violence increases factors of familial trauma” (Srour, 2003).

The Palestinian refugee situation is the largest and one of the longest-standing refugee situations in the world today. It is reported that more than six million people, which encompasses three-quarters of the Palestinian population and nearly one-third of the global refugee population, remain without a secure and lasting solution to their predicament and their plight. More than half of all Palestinian refugees lack basic day-to-day protection, such as physical security, freedom of movement, and access to employment (El-Haddad, 2005).

If the Nakba and, indeed, the Intifada and its effects are having long-term and complicated negative emotional repercussions, and as the Palestinian situation is largely ongoing, the psychological situation should not be looked at as a temporal crisis, but as a permanent problem that necessitates professional intervention. The challenge does not belong to the past, but to the present, and it already has, and is having, tremendous effects on world peace and the economy. The international community needs to take the responsibility and initiative to develop a strong, multi-professional mental health service as well as the welfare systems to accompany appropriate interventions. These need to include provision of psychological and associated support and intervention for children, young people, and their families, and indeed for individual adults and the older generation. If support services are available to help people who are traumatized, and those who are suffering from the long-term conflict, then the foundations can be built for the prevention of further crimes against humanity (genocide, terrorism, killing, and other atrocities) that are born out of revenge.

There is a need for a real intercultural approach and intervention. This system should be stable, willing to know and be respectful to the tradition of people in the conflict area, and not temporal in application, vulnerable to economical and political changes. One of the first steps for possible aid workers to take, as a foundation for change, should be to set up a system to work with parents and teachers in order to provide a relaxing home and school environment, thus bringing psychological relief to the children in conflict areas. It is also important that preventive programmes should focus on providing appropriate professional help for children who have
symptoms of trauma. Children who are under stress as the result of being violated and/or their parents having been violated and therefore traumatized, but are themselves not yet showing symptoms, should be encouraged to partake in after-school activities that focus on peace, mental health, and resilience. These can involve activities such as drawing or sports, so that children can find expression for their negative emotions in a facilitating and containing environment. This would gradually lessen the possibility of these children developing serious mental health problems and growing up with much unresolved anger and frustration, and would therefore be the starting point for sowing the seeds of peace for future generations in the conflict area and in the world.

It is very important that the above intervention should have some insight and awareness of the cultural aspects of the society that the services are there to help and to serve, especially the traditional aspects. For example, in a culture where girls are not permitted to express their feelings, and therefore to act out their emotions as behavioural problems in the same way that boys can in the same society, girls’ psychological trauma should not be forgotten: the trauma and its effects are still there. It is, therefore, important to take into consideration gender differences and the inherited power imbalance in society, and to be aware that these girls will be the mothers of society’s future boys; hence, special attention needs to be given to facilitating an environment in which both girls and women are able to mourn their losses.

Another very important aspect of any long-term plan is to encourage dialogue and research about the emotional trauma of the first generation, as well as their descendants from the second and subsequent generations. In this way, provision can be made for, and the public can start becoming sensitive to, what the children of today are going through, while helping the previous generation. Traumatized adults of all ages can start to become aware of the emotional landscape that they have been living with. People can come to realize that their reaction has been, and may still be, a normal reaction to an abnormal situation, and they can make the decision to change this abnormality for their children and for future generations.

Several other genocides and massacres took place during the previous century, and there are several continuing to take place in
the present one. The memory of massacres between 1930 and 1945, including wartime and the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima, is still fresh to those who suffered. In respect of the bomb, both the Japanese and the Americans are resistant to dialogue and change. They are reluctant to humanize the victims of the atomic bomb, who included both Japanese and American citizens. People still find it difficult to accept the fact that this action was not necessary and caused massive and long-lasting destruction and suffering. There is a need for the Japanese and the American governments, and, indeed, the populations supporting their governments, to realize that taking responsibility is not unpatriotic; it is, rather, an appropriate response to the ramifications of the governments' actions. Only when both governments can genuinely accept responsibility for their actions can an international history be written, and a stable relationship developed to unite these countries in a way that will ensure that such mistakes will not be repeated.

**Rwanda**

We can find similar cases to what happened to the Armenian and Jewish people in Africa, too. In Rwanda, genocide was able to take place without any international intervention. This was mostly carried out by two extremist Hutu militia groups during a period of about 100 days, from 6 April to mid-July 1994. The number of victims is estimated at around a million. This is quite remarkable, not just because of the number of people massacred in such a short period of time, but also because of the inadequate response of the United Nations (UN) and international communities in general. Despite worldwide news media coverage of the true scale of violence as the genocide unfolded, most first-world countries failed to intervene or speak out against the planned atrocities. Canada continued to lead the UN Peace-Keeping Force in Rwanda.

Although, after the events, the UN established the Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) in October 1993 to help implement the Peace Agreement by monitoring the border and ensuring that no weapons or troops were entering the country, prior to and during the genocide the UN did not authorize intervention to bring to a close the killing and other atrocities in Rwanda. So, in reality,
the UN failed to prevent the genocide. Such failure to intervene became the focus of bitter recriminations towards the UN, Western countries such as France and the USA, and individual policymakers, including Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh and US President Bill Clinton, who later admitted that the US operation in this regard was the biggest regret of his administration. Well, once again, genocide occurred and steps were not taken to prevent it. But the difference between the Rwandan genocide and the Armenian one is the fact that, in the former, the international community, even if they were bystanders before and during the genocide, still showed regret and remorse afterwards. Because of this acknowledgement and regret, steps have been taken to remedy the consequential after-effects of genocide (Gourevitch, 1999).

Ervin Staub, a Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts and the author of *The Roots of Evil* (2003), which is discussed earlier in the historical section of the Armenian genocide, also conducted a study on Rwanda’s genocide. He explores the roots of violence between groups and the prevention of renewed violence, using Rwanda as a primary example, and discusses how children can be raised so that they will adopt humane values and act according to humanitarian principles, making violence between groups less likely. He explores the contributing factors lead to genocide, including devaluation of the other, a history of devaluation in the culture, the psychological consequences of past victimization, and an evolution in which individuals and groups change as a result of their own harmful and violent actions. He argues that in order to prevent new violence and genocide there is a need for survivors’ healing, since they are profoundly affected by the perpetrator group, whose violent actions and, indeed, their silence, are the foundation of the survivors’ psychological wounds. He noted that a series of interventions in Rwanda were needed to focus on the general population, national leaders, and media, aiming to promote healing and reconciliation, together with an experimental evaluation, in order to show positive effects. The role of understanding the origins of violence, specifically the roots of the genocide in Rwanda, in facilitating healing, reconciliation, and preventive actions by leaders is stressed, as well as development of moral courage.

However, recent events in Sudan reiterate the fact that genocide is still a serious threat in the world, despite some important
developments in international law. It is becoming clearer that the military and legal preventive measures cannot address the underlying causes of genocide. The socio-psychological factor contributes to genocidal behaviour, the foundations of which are nationalism, ethnocentrism, collectivism, authoritarianism, a culture of impunity and the distortion of morality, and economical and political poverty. The effective way to prevent genocide is to change the moral fabric of genocidal societies by fostering caring societies that encourage individual and group obligation and responsibility, respect for life and universal dignity, and respect for human beings and their rights. Educational and other institutions can play an important role in changing the moral habits of societies by not compromising themselves by seeking political power or serving specific races, nations, ethnic groups, or ideologies. The responsible institutions also need to encourage individual moral responsibility and, where needed, reconciliation, justice, and peace; they should try to be active, not silence bystanders in conflict situations, address difficult life conditions, and promote respect for everyone’s life.

Whereas each individual as a private citizen can attest to the appalling presence of malevolence in our daily lives, most people have acted as if the problem of aggression could be safely ignored, or the character structure of the perpetrators of dreadful and atrocious actions could be reduced to known and well-understood psychological problems. This psychological denial and reductionism has not served to provide meaningful explanations of, and solutions to, social problems such as human cruelty and genocidal behaviour. The problem of human aggression as a most important issue for humankind to address has been largely overlooked in the studies of genocides. This needs meaningful re-examination, and this book is intended to serve as a step in this direction.
CHAPTER SIX

Psychological consequences for those who survived

"If a man is killed in Paris, it is a murder; the throats of fifty thousand people are cut in the East, and it is a problem"

(attributed to Victor Hugo, 1827)

There are many historical studies of the Armenian genocide, yet few have sought to understand more deeply the trauma suffered by survivors and their descendents. The psychological consequences of the genocide are barely traceable in the narratives written by survivors of the Armenian genocide. Although it can be hypothesized, it is difficult to pinpoint the specific psychological diagnosis due to a lack of systematic rehabilitation and, indeed, mental health intervention documentation. Aside from having seen their families and friends annihilated in very frightening ways, the events of the time in general traumatized surviving Armenians deeply and, in some cases, irreversibly.

Survivor syndrome

Thus, in order to understand and explain the situation of the Armenians it may prove useful to draw from examples in history
that have been extensively researched. For the Jews the will to return to normality without confronting the terror of the past, including dealing with issues of loss, had led to psychiatrists and psychologists identifying and naming a group of disorders, such as “survivor syndrome” and “concentration camp syndrome”, that are exclusively experienced by groups that have lived through these and similar circumstances and in some cases extend to their families.

What is survivor syndrome?

The predominant symptoms include an inability to work, and even at times to talk. Anxieties and fears of renewed persecution, such as fearing uniformed police officers, are apparent. There are also many feelings of guilt, for having survived when others had not. “Why am I alive? Why not my sister and brother? Why were my whole family killed?” The survivors present symptoms involving thoughts of death, nightmares, flashback, panic attacks, and various other psychological and psychosomatic symptoms. Marital problems combine with disinterest in life and relationships; people experience a feeling of being cut off from others and sometimes they even feel cut off from reality. It has been suggested (DePrince & Freyd, 2002; Lifton, 1986; Lindley, Carlson, & Benoit, 2004; Pitman et al., 2002) that the complex of disturbances that constitutes “Survivor syndrome” can be summarized as follows.

1. A pervasive, depressive mood with morose and pessimistic behaviour and the tendency to withdraw, generally experienced as apathy alternating with occasional shortness, angry outbursts, feelings of helplessness and insecurity, lack of initiative and interest, prevalence of considerable psychosomatic stress, persecutory attitude, and expression.

2. A severe and persevering guilt complex related to the fact of having survived when so many others had perished.

3. A partial or complete somatization that can range from rheumatic or neurological pains and aches in various body areas to such psychosomatic diseases as peptic ulcers, colitis, respiratory and cardiovascular syndrome, and hypertension. These may be accompanied by mental confusion or nightmares.
4. Anxieties and agitations, including inner tensions and feelings of worthlessness, which often culminate in paranoid ideation and reaction. Such survivors may appear chronically apprehensive and afraid to be alone.

5. Personality changes showing more or less radical disruption of the entire maturational development, behaviour, and outlook. In the most severe cases these are fully developed psychotic disturbances with delusional or semi-delusional symptomatology, paranoid formations, morbid brooding, complete inertia, or agitation.

Who is a survivor?

In defining who is a survivor, Dr Joel Dimsdale (1974) gives the following definition: "A survivor is one who has encountered, been exposed to, or witnessed death, and has himself or herself remained alive."

Five psychological themes in survivors have been described. The first is the death imprint, which is related to anxiety about death. Involved here are images not just of death, but of grotesque and unacceptable forms of death. For many survivors, the imagery can include many forms of memory—the smoke or smell of the gas chambers, the brutal killing of a single individual, or simply separation from a family member never seen again. The survivor can feel stuck in time, unable to move beyond the imagery.

The second category is that of death guilt. Death guilt is epitomized by the question "Why did I survive, while he, she, or they did not?" Before this happens, however, the imagery mentioned previously has already taken shape. Part of the survivors' sense of horror is the memory of their own helplessness and inability to act in ways they would ordinarily have thought appropriate (save people, resist, etc.), or even to feel appropriately (rage, compassion, etc.). Death guilt begins in the gap between the physical and the psychological. That is one reason for the recurring imagery in dreams and in waking life. Within the imagery is the survivor's sense of debt to the dead and responsibility to them. The irony is that survivors are likely to feel more guilt than the perpetrators do. The sense of guilt can be especially strong concerning the death of
close relatives or friends. Guilt need not always be pathological, as can be seen in the writings of Elie Wiesel (1970, 1982), who wrote of the transformation of death guilt and debt to the dead into that of responsibility in his books One Generation After and Night.

The third category of survivor syndrome is that of psychic numbing or the diminished capacity to feel. Psychologists have come to recognize psychic numbing as a necessary psychological defence against overwhelming images. However, this can easily outlive its usefulness and develop into withdrawal, apathy, depression, and despair. The most extreme cases are apparent in people who have been in detention or in concentration camps. Many survivors describe having survived by losing “all feeling”. In Hiroshima, survivors have made similar comments such as “I became insensitive to human death.” In numbing, there is a separation of image and feeling.

A fourth category has to do with survivor sensitivity to, or suspicion of, counterfeit nurturance. The survivor feels the effects of his or her ordeal, but frequently resents help that is offered because it is perceived as a sign of weakness. Following the death immersion experience, the survivor’s sense of a counterfeit universe may well continue. This sense seems to be confirmed when people realize that other people view them as in some way carrying the taint of the Holocaust, as persons to be feared and avoided as though they were contagious. They may, in some cases, inwardly accept this social response and feel themselves to be tainted. These conflicts can lead to patterns of distrust in human relationships, mutual antagonism, and the sense that much of the world around them, even life itself, is counterfeit.

The fifth and final category is the survivor’s struggle for meaning. Survivors of Nazi death camps have been called “collectors of justice”. They seek something beyond economic or social restitution. They seek something closer to acknowledgement of crimes committed against them and punishment of those responsible in order to re-establish at least the semblance of a moral universe. The impulse to bear witness, beginning with a sense of responsibility to the dead, can readily extend into a mission. The psychological impact of loss of identity and meaning in one’s life for many survivors took the form of involvement in the creation of the State of Israel.
Where death occurs on the scale of the Holocaust, survivors are denied not only the physical arrangements of mourning, such as the grave, the remains, and the service, but also the psychological capacity to absorb and to feel their deaths and to complete the mourning process. This aborted mourning can create, for the survivor’s existence, a “life of grief”. The survivor may be especially vulnerable to various kinds of psychological and bodily disturbances.

Therefore, after more than sixty years from the event, the emotional scars of the survivors are still clearly visible. Clinical reports shows that many elderly Holocaust survivors still suffer from the late effects of trauma exposure in their early life. Some of these survivors struggled with psychological distress in the distant past and remained symptom-free for decades, only to have a recurrence in late life when they are alone and less busy with work. They now suffer from anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic disorders as well as loneliness and isolation. Elderly survivors, being one of the most vulnerable groups in society, are furthermore exposed to a host of other problems, and coping with a number of issues at the same time can become overwhelming.

**Effects of silence**

While there may be only a small proportion of survivors who are known to mental health professions as the result of suffering acute mental distress, people who survived genocides are all at risk. Many studies have indicated that, because of survivors’ inherent vulnerability, latent anxieties surface when they are exposed to stress. More generally, however, these anxieties arise because people are scared of being stigmatized or of seeming weak or emotionally unstable, and thus they have kept silence for year after year. People who have survived this type of atrocity are generally apprehensive about turning to mental health services with their psychiatric problems. Moreover, they often feel uncomfortable using local community services, such as family, health, and social security. Professionals working in these busy institutions generally lack the necessary understanding and professional experience to provide the substantial and special help needed.
Until the mid 1990s, the world related to the Armenian genocide and its survivors with a kind of conspiracy of silence. Nobody talked about it and nobody asked about it; and when occasionally children or grandchildren would dare to enquire what had happened, the person would change the subject politely. Today, much of this has changed, and there is a general interest in this tragic period of the Armenian people. The Armenian young generation wanted to know. *Screamers* is a 2006 documentary by director Carla Garapedian. The film explores why genocides have recurred into the modern day, and involves Serj Tankian's grandfather, who is an Armenian Genocide survivor, the human rights activist and journalist Professor Samantha Power, and various people involved with genocides in Rwanda and Darfur. The importance of this film lies in its focus on genocide denial in present-day Turkey, and the attitude of neutrality that the USA has been taking towards genocide generally. Carla Garapedian managed to track down and interview the only remaining survivors of the 1915 genocide (Garapedian, 2007).

However, while much of the general attitude towards people who survived has changed, this film also shows that little attention is given to their special needs in old age, whether Garapedian intended to do this or not. People need a safe environment in which they can continue to mourn their immense losses and find some peace of mind.

Alongside the trauma suffered by this group of people, the most obvious difficulty has been that the ageing people's physical and emotional health was deteriorating without any clear reason. Watching *Screamers* and listening to the interviews, it is possible to see how the very nature of the ageing process means that historians writing about the Armenian experiences have the task of interpreting history by combining hard evidence with the subjective experience of those that have lived through the traumatic event. This task will, of course, be extremely difficult and complicated further by the modern phenomenon of mental health and illness and the concept of psychological trauma and post traumatic stress disorder, where traumatic experience is elevated to the level of the extraordinary; the effects of intensity of violence inflicted repeatedly on the Armenians is therefore virtually unimaginable. The stress, trauma, killing, and dislocation experienced by the Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Turks was unprecedented in human history. For the
survivors, its immense impact created an astonishing challenge to their ability to create lifelong adjustments and coping mechanisms.

There has been, to my knowledge, no systematic study of the mental health of the Armenians who survived. However, it is possible to learn something about this from what has been documented about survivors of the Holocaust, from which the result has been reported largely as being physically and mentally damaging, not only leaving every survivor with scars (Brink, 1994) but transmitting post traumatic effects even to many second- and third-generation individuals (Bar-On, 1994; Robinson & Winnik, 1981; Rosenthal, 1998). Although it is fair to say that scientific studies of the Holocaust are still beleaguered by disagreement and research problems, as well as resources and limited knowledge (Nadler, Kav-Venaki, & Gleitman, 1985), bewilderment, and ambiguity. This is because the long-term effects of such enormous trauma are yet to be seen, as the survivors of the Holocaust also remained silent and very few, only from the 1980s onwards, started talking about what in reality happened, in as much as they could remember and as much as they could put their experiences into words. As the result of these disclosures it became apparent that the Jewish people were denied the right to be called Jewish. Many Jews were so afraid of repeated persecution that some even changed their names so that they could blend in and be accepted. They had to ensure somehow that they could have the right to do anything, from sitting on a bench to working to feed their families. In this way, they were denied the use of their language, since this would identify their "otherness". This is exactly the same thing that happened to the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and is still, to some degree, happening in Turkey.

Dealing honestly and responsibly with survivors is an essential part of the process of moving on and preventing the transmission of problems to future generations. Nowhere is the pain of this not happening more evident than in the following extract by a narrative from one of the Armenian children who survived the genocide and settled in America.

A survivor narrative

Aghavnie Yeghenian, a survivor of the Armenian genocide, was asked by his friend, "How does it feel to be an Armenian in
America?” Yeghenian stared at him and said, “Do you wish to change places with me just once?” The friend, in response, urged, “Write it, if you can’t tell me.”

The story was written on 29 June 1921: Yeghenian began by writing, “Yet even while I write these lines I wonder if he [the friend] will really read [what] promises to be so painful.”

Being an Armenian—an Armenian anywhere—gives one strange feelings. My mind is torn by the conflict of opposing emotions growing out of my racial inheritance and my living experience. Fear struggles with courage; pain with the will to endure; worry with optimism; depression with buoyancy; sorrow with faith; despair with hope; overshadowing death with promising life.

Aghavnie Yeghenian here starts with the split in his mind: the negative feelings that are part of his suffering, and his other part, the resilient part that survived the genocide and was surviving the aftermath of his catastrophic experience. He continued:

The injection of my friend’s question into such a consciousness makes me gather my life into a shifting scene in which we Armenians, bleeding, wounded, murdered, outraged, drowning in the sea of barbarism, beaten by the waves of civilized cruelty, call out to the multitudes dwelling on the shore of security.

We cry the story of our life-long suffering, of our murdered manhood, our outraged womanhood, our drying [sic] babies, our tortured mothers, our crucified leaders. We cry in anguish and pain. We show our wounds. We call for help. The crowd on the shore throw out some handfuls of pennies which fall leaden into the waters. Our cry has not been understood.

Perhaps that band of strangers will be stirred by the story of our marvellous history of heroism. We tell of our struggle for liberty through the ages, of our martyrs who are countless, of the ever-undaunted courage of our men and women, of our undying faith in the triumph of right, and our unfailing hope of human goodness. Again we have failed to thrill the crowd upon the shore. What has happened to the people who look out at the Armenian sea of suffering. They are incomprehensibly unresponsive. They seem almost motionless. We detect, however, a slight movement. It seems to spring from an emotion like that described in a cartoon published
in a well-known American magazine, showing the gaunt figure of Armenia disturbing the peace of a fat congressman, who, handkerchief to his eyes, exclaims, “Get out. You are breaking my heart.” Yet, there almost seems to be a slight movement, a turning of the back to avoid a harrowing picture. The scene gives way in my mind to a question that stands out in letters of living fire: Has the world a heart? Alas! This is Armenia’s eternal and unanswered question. People who appear great and noble talk about the heart of the world. Do they really believe in it? Are they sincere? Have virtue and love of human valor died? Is there only the false and pretentious?

The suffering that comes from feeling that we live in a shallow and isolated world is more tragic than the danger of impending death. For death we have always met fearlessly, but [it] is life, good, brave, real, serious life, which Armenia craves; and the time when she feels her wings most broken is not when the Turk is out killing and plundering, but the time when England is deceiving her and France is betraying her, and when America is to be bitterly disappointed. To this country, this America so beloved, so rich, free, happy, it seems impossible to impart the sadness of an Armenian’s life.

Aghavnie Yeghenian is talking about impossibility of being happy as a survivor of the Armenian genocide. He talks about scars of the trauma of genocide. The important of his narrative shows that, although the Turkish massacres had not been specifically yet recognized by The Hague and Geneva conventions, these actions were inherently criminal under the most elementary norms of human rights; thus, it is a crime against humanity. He continues:

But why do I suffer? Haven’t I the privilege of living in America, a privilege envied by others of my countrymen? Haven’t I all the opportunities of an American? All this I have, freedom, position, opportunities, friends, but the happy smile of an American I can neither achieve nor buy. I walk about like one in a dream, my head heavy, my throat choked, my spirit crushed. I go to church and the minister reads from the old prophet of Israel, “How do the City sit solitary that was full of people! She is become like a widow, that was great among the nations! Is it nothing to you, all that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.” I do not comprehend the application of the words. I keep asking myself, “Isn’t it of me that the minister speaks? Is there anyone else in the
congregation who has lost his country, even as did the prophet?" I review the desolate cities of Armenia, its burned homes and ruined churches, its solitary hills and deserted streets. The rest of the minister's words are lost to me. As I walk out I cry silently to the passing crowds, "Is it nothing to you, O Americans, that I suffer, that my people are murdered, that my country is destroyed, that the virgins of Armenia die in shame in Turkish harems, that our children are starving, that our youth are still falling in the field so sacred to you, the battlefield of liberty? Is it nothing to you?"

I go to the mountains and the memory of the green hills of Armenia takes me back to its present valleys of tears. I leave the mountains and run away to the beach in despair. The gay crowds marching up and down bring to me the dark picture of columns of women and children marching up and down the plains of Armenia in search of herbs for food. I attend a dinner party and note the luxurious gowns and wasted food, and I am forced to think of the rags in which the once wealthy and beautiful women of my land are now clad. I pass through the streets where American children play, pretty, happy, careless, and in my vision rise the rows of our orphanages with their pale, solemn-faced babies. The bright side of every situation points out to me with unmistakable clearness the other, the darker side, the Armenian side, and so, confined in my Armenian being, I cannot step out into the freedom of America. I wait, still I wait for America to break my chains.

This is how it feels to be an Armenian in America. [Yeghenian, 1921]

The Turkish extermination of the Armenians is the first full attempt at disciplined, methodically organized genocide. The ingenuity and intelligence that the Turks used to implement the mass murder of Armenians is the historically significant sign to which the international community needs to give attention. Like the Nazi Party, the Committee of Union and Progress understood the power that resided in bureaucracy. Whether, at any time, they thought about the aftermath of their actions and the scars they would leave in survivors and the following generations is difficult to ascertain. What is possible to determine is a mechanism to help the current Turkish government and their supporters to understand this pain, and, even if they are not yet able to take responsibility, at least to acknowledge the pain that their ancestors brought upon the Armenian people.
1. Serj Tankian is a member of the award-winning rock band System of a Down, all the members of which are survivors of genocide. They feature in Screamers, as do seven of their songs.
Anger with no end: the tragic consequences of denial

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted in 1948, years after the Armenian Genocide (see Appendix II). Armenians worldwide have sought from their respective governments a formal acknowledgement of the crimes committed during the First World War. Countries such as France, Argentina, Greece, and Russia, where the Armenian descendants live, have officially recognized the Armenian Genocide, as have influential individuals such as the Pope. However, the present-day Turkish government adamantly denies that genocide was committed against the Armenian people. Moreover, Turkey dismisses the evidence about the atrocities as mere allegations and regularly obstructs efforts for acknowledgement.

Social amnesia

The mode of forgetting by which a whole society separates itself from its ignominious past record could be termed social amnesia. This might happen at an organized, official, and conscious level,
incorporating deliberate cover-ups and the false writing of history, or through the type of cultural slippage that occurs when information disappears. The result is a collective and far-reaching denial.

Affirming the truth about the Armenian genocide, therefore, has become an issue of international significance. The regular recurrence of genocide in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has made the reaffirmation of the historic acknowledgement of the criminal mistreatment of the Armenians by Turkey an all the more undeniable obligation for the international community. Genocide denial is so prevalent that it is now becoming a field of study in its own right.

It was after the First World War that the triumphant allies chose to ignore the Armenian tragedy. The Turks denied, and continue to deny, the crimes they committed against humanity in the mass killing of the Armenians, belittling the scope and significance of deeds intended utterly to destroy a civilian population, probably, as I indicated earlier, because they are not able to examine their actions in relation to the pain of others. However, I would say that humanitarian response to the sufferings of others, even those alien to us in blood and remote from us in distance, cannot but strike the deeper chords of our soul and weave between us and our fellow-sufferers that deep bond of sympathy. By refuting the pain that Armenians have suffered at the hands of their ancestors, Turkish deniers deny themselves the peace, harmony, and compassion integral to human happiness. Denying the genocide has brought, and will continue to bring, psychological problems for them and their future generations; it is unhealthy for both Turks and Armenians alike.

This process requires the recollection of historical events, including the mass killing of innocents, which is not easy and does not follow a straight or continuous path. It is the reality about which even Armenians themselves were, and often still are, largely silent. The pain and trauma existed and still exists in silence, and continues to have its consequences. Unfortunately, the hatred of Turks is what unites—not all, but many—Armenian descendants of the survivors; such a sad, unhealthy, and destructive way for a group to be united. These types of unity cannot be denied any more, as in the current climate the world faces the consequences of the problems with fundamental Islamic movements and the enactments that
result from the anger that some people feel at a level that leads to the wish to destroy.

Deniers

The arguments of denial, for Armenians, refute the facts, refuse any collective or individual responsibility, and do not acknowledge that the term genocide is applicable to the events. Thus, in denying the significance of the events, it is necessary to rationalize, relativize, and trivialize them as an integral part of moving on. In recent years there has been widespread affirmation of the genocide by scholars, scholarly organizations, states, international organizations and, indeed, the Pope. These affirmations are a matter of recognition, not a legislation of truth by the Turkish government. They also offer recognition that the Turkish government’s denial is essentially political, rather than historical. However, some states have aided and abetted Turkey in their denial, out of expediency rather than acceptance of the Turkish arguments. One of the examples of this is the Israeli governments and scholars who, during the past few decades, have given opinions and messages in regard to the Armenian genocide that differed, according to the prevailing political climate at the time.

However, recovery seems to depend very much on dialogues and reconciliation, which can take place at both the individual and the state level. It is difficult for an individual to forgive or to forget the genocide. Forgiveness would require, at minimum, acknowledgement, apology, and making amends to the greatest extent possible. At a state level, partial reconciliation may be possible without acknowledgement of the genocide; the example of the USA and Japan shows that, although reconciliation not perfect, it is possible. The USA has good relations with Japan even though Japan refuses to acknowledge its war guilt.

However, for the bettering of humanity, there are various steps that Turkey could take, especially now that the government is working towards joining the European Union. For instance, one of the basic actions that would seem appropriate for the Turkish government to take is the diplomatic recognition of Armenia. Turkey could do this by lifting embargos (Turkish government
restrictions and prohibitions on commerce and trade with Armenia) and allowing Armenia access to the sea. Even without acknowledgement of, and acceptance of responsibility for, the Armenian genocide, or a call for full reconciliation, this type of diplomatic action can take place at state level, smoothly, if it is considered necessary and there is willingness.

As time is passing and as yet there is no ratification or acceptance, Armenian attitudes towards the genocide—particularly for younger generations—and its cultural implications remain a crucial element in contemporary Armenian identity around the world. The genocide is a central constituent and module of thinking today in the feelings of many young Armenians globally when identifying themselves to others as Armenian. Their standpoint, and the foundation of their anger, is based on the continued denial and disavowal of the events by successive Turkish governments and the silence of international communities. The study of the Armenian genocide and its psychological consequences will, therefore, be a helpful response to this unresolved and existential anger. It is also helpful in understanding many of the conditions that give rise to such tragic acts generally, and might result in the drawing up of preventive measures designed to rule out such actions in future. In particular, such a study will aid the elucidation of the relation between war and genocide, and might alleviate some of these extremely negative experiences so that a positive outcome can be achieved. So, a systematic research that can be implemented in the education system might be the appropriate route to providing awareness that it is wrong to silently witness such atrocities and that threats of intervention that are not carried out may well be even worse than silence.

**A recent case: the assassination of Hrant Dink**

When considering the dangers of silence and a sustained lack of acknowledgement, a recent case comes to mind. The assassination of Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist and human rights activist, is a clear example and indication of the situation today, showing how lack of appropriate intervention feeds Armenian anger in the diasporas.
ANGER WITH NO END: THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES OF DENIAL

The assassination of Dink is also a symbol of the situation of the Armenian community within Turkey. Looking at this case is helpful in identifying the ongoing deep psychological problem in both Armenian and Turkish cultures. This is now happening almost a hundred years on from the genocide, a clear indication that the issue is fresh in people's minds, even though the people involved are fourth- and, in some cases, fifth-generation Turkish and Armenian descendants.

Hrant Dink, aged fifty-two, the editor of Agos, the Turkish-Armenian weekly newspaper, was assassinated on 19 January 2007 outside the paper's Istanbul offices. He was the most well-known and outstanding believer in and promoter of mutual respect between Turkey's majority population and its Armenian minority. Lionized by human rights activists for his stance against prejudice, chauvinism, and intolerance, he was detested by Turkish ultranationalists and seen as a traitor. Dink was prosecuted several times for the crime of "insulting Turkish identity" (Pen American Center, 2006). In 2005, he was given a suspended jail sentence of six months. Shortly before his assassination, he had received numerous death threats, and had pleaded unsuccessfully with the Turkish authorities for his safety to be taken seriously. If we look at Salman Rushdie's case, it makes it very easy to see the difference between the Turkish and the British governments' and authorities' responses to a threat to an intellectual individual's life by fundamentalists.

Hrant Dink was born in Malatya, Anatolia, into an Armenian family. His first name was an officially registered Turkish name—Firat. He was the son of a tailor whose marriage broke down during Hrant's childhood. At the age of seven, he was sent to Istanbul, where he lived at the Gedikpasa Armenian orphanage. There he met his wife, Rakel. Hrant was expelled from his first secondary school for being involved with leftist political activity, but later managed to finish his school and gained admission to Istanbul University. He continued postgraduate studies in philosophy, but dropped out to become involved in youth work. Along with other journalists, writers, and intellectuals, including the Nobel prize laureate Orhan Pamuk, Dink was systematically attacked and subjected to a series of prosecutions, as well as verbal and physical intimidation, even in court. Dink experienced what he described as "psychological torture" as he tried to deal with the hatred targeted
at him. “My computer’s memory is loaded with sentences full of
ger and threats,” he wrote in his last column in Agos, published
on 10 January 2007. “I am just like a pigeon ... I look to my left and
to my right, in front of me and behind me as much as I can”
(Independent, 2007). It is reported that, during one of his television
interviews, he broke down from stress, but continued the interview,
saying, “I will not be silent. As long as I live here I will go on telling
the truth.”

Dink’s commitment to humanity and his liberal stance regarding
the truth were respected and admired greatly by progressive
Turkish society. He became a centre of attention for progressive
groups, inside Turkey and abroad, campaigning for freedom of
expression. His case was raised in the European Commission in the
context of Turkey’s aspiration to join the European Union and, with
his encouragement, the European Court of Human Rights inter­
vened on his behalf. This, of course, further enraged the Turkish
nationalists, who reject any external interference in Turkey’s affairs.

According to the Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish state’s concept
of “minorities” covers only the non-Muslim communities (Hellenic
Resource Network, 2007). The number of these minorities is about
100,000, and within them the Armenian community constitutes the
largest group, with a population of 60,000. Minorities as individu­
als should not face any obstacles concerning economical freedom,
equality, and human rights, but here there is an exception. In
Turkey, minority members cannot be high-ranking soldiers, state
officers, or bureaucrats.

In terms of their religious beliefs, Armenians, in theory, have
total freedom without any pressure. But at this point they are still
not allowed to have an educational institution. Not staying silent
about these issues cost Dink his life. His talk at the International
Publisher’s Association/International (PEN) and his discussion on
Freedom of Expression in Turkey held at the UN Commission on
Human Rights in April 2004 was one of many events at which he
expressed his views. He said:¹

Since a few years [ago], Turkey is making special efforts with the
framework of [its] “Struggle against Unfounded Armenian Claims”
and against the discourse and studies presented by Armenians
spread all over the world about “Armenian Genocide”. An impor-
tant part of these efforts is devoted to the works in school. For this purpose, a new curriculum has been prepared focusing on the unfoundedness of Armenian claims, and the text books prepared about this issue will start to read in our schools starting at the next school year [that is, 2005]. Meanwhile, the Ministry of National Education has sent to all schools, including Armenian ones, a circular letter on April 14, 2003 demanding from the schools to organise conferences and composition competitions dealing with the "struggle against unfounded Armenian Genocide claims". Human rights associations and Bar of Diyarbakir have brought suits at the Supreme Council stating that this circular letter is contrary to international agreements and that it can lead to feelings of hostility among children, and therefore demanding the nullity and cease execution of it. But the Ministry did not take back the circular letter.

This mentality has a wrong attitude. It leads generations to be raised as enemies to each other by dictating to the brain of children one-sided information about a subject on which even the adults have not agreed among themselves. In fact, school should be the place where the information is questioned, not dictated.

Moreover, Armenian history cannot be taught in Armenian Schools. It is a psychological torture to demand from the young people whose right to learn their own history of three thousand years has been prevented, to learn lessons denying their own history and identity and even to expect them to write humiliating sentences about their history and identity.

The fact that the Armenian Genocide is still a taboo subject is proven by two recent examples:

1. The display of the film Ararat was hindered due to the threats of ultranationalist groups (the Ministry had allowed the display).
2. The news of AGOS about Sabiha Gökçen, the 1st [World] war woman pilot in Turkey who is known as the adopted daughter (passed away a few years ago) of Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, that her origin may be Armenian caused a huge reaction. This varied from the claims of her being Armenian origin is a blow against the unity and integrity of Turkey to questions about what kind of plots were present behind the publication of such kind of news. Of course, there were also democratic reactions that Gökçen can naturally be Armenian. . . .

These 2 developments reveal once again how difficult it is to speak about the "Armenian issue". However, Turkey should be able to
take this historical issue back to its original territory, preventing it to be discussed and used as a trump at international political area. This can only be possible by providing a free atmosphere of speech and expression, where alternative thesis can also be discussed too. [Dink, 2004]

Dink’s talk was effective, and attracted some responses both for and against his view.

Dink was one of dozens of writers to be charged under controversial laws against insulting ‘Turkishness’. He had said to the Associated Press News Agency in 2005, “I don’t think I could live with an identity of having insulted them [Turks] in this country . . . if I am unable to come up with a positive result, it will be honourable for me to leave this country”. BBC News, on 19 January 2007, reported that “Turkey’s relationship with its once-sizeable Armenian community is still fraught with tension. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians died or were driven out of Turkey in 1915, in what many Armenians say was a genocide at the hands of Turks”.

Sadly, shortly after his speech, Hrant Dink was assassinated. Dynamically, his death, as his life, managed to bring much attention to the controversy of the Armenian genocide.

Jonathan Fryer wrote in the Guardian on 22 October 2007 that

[Hrant Dink’s] detractors accused him of undermining the Turkish state, but as he protested: “I am an Armenian from Turkey, and a good Turkish citizen. I believe in the republic, in fact I would like it to become stronger and more democratic.” . . . Dink had critics even among the Armenian diaspora in Europe and North America as he failed to endorse their condemnation of Turkey’s refusal to acknowledge that the massacres of Armenians in the closing years of the Ottoman Empire amounted to genocide. Though he did not underestimate the gravity of these events, he was appalled by the successful campaign by French-Armenians to get a law passed last year making it a crime in France to deny the Armenian genocide. He believed that this was contrary to freedom of expression.

An Amnesty International press release on 19 January 2007 says,

The Turkish government must redouble its efforts to protect human rights defenders and open its political climate to a range of views.
Recent legal reforms have brought many areas of Turkish law in line with international human rights standards, but existing limitations on free speech such as Article 301 must be repealed. ... Last year, Dink was prosecuted for the third time on charges of "denigrating Turkishness" under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Amnesty International called for the repeal of that law and condemned his prosecution as part of a pattern of judicial harassment against him for peacefully expressing his dissenting opinion. Dink had already been given a six-month suspended prison sentence in July 2006 following an October 2005 conviction on charges of "denigrating Turkishness".

More information regarding Article 301 is presented in Appendix III.

On 19 January 2007, the Human Rights Association Administrative Board of Turkey wrote:

Hrant Dink, our friend, human rights/peace-democracy defenders, author-journalist, intellectual, was killed by a damnable gun attack. We have great anguish for this attack. Hrant Dink, who [was] also our member, was the voice of justice and conscience in the society. The attack targeted to the principles that Hrant Dink support[ed]. These principles are: peace, democracy and human rights. As in the past, groups that do not like peace-democracy and human rights atmosphere in our country decided to the (Un)known Murder. However, everyone should know that Hrant(s) [sic], who support(s) [sic] living together and freedoms will stop talking in this society. Any groups will not prevent peace and democracy struggle in Turkey. We will continue struggle to fulfil his dreams, defend his ideals, live together with different ethnic-cultural groups and walk to common future in our country.

Until now; unknown murders has not been identified in Turkey. We call for States all institutions and the Government to catch [the] murderer or murderers and find [the] persuaders or planners ... responsible for the attack.²

Huseyin Gulerce, from Today's Zaman, a Turkish newspaper, wrote on 25 January 2007:

The assassination of this "son of the nation," though of Armenian descent, Hrant Dink, led us to remember our long-forgotten values
and characteristics that promote coexistence. We recalled chanting "We are human beings first." We remembered the power of love. We remembered that we have actually forgotten to be more possessive of "the pigeons" that we were supposed to protect. We remembered our compassion and lamentations from anguish together. Not all of us are mature enough to do that; but if only we are able to tell, we could convince our people that our most prominent force against hatred, extremism and separatism is an understanding based on love, tolerance and respect.

Certain circles are trying to marginalize this society and make it inclined to hatred and enmity, and expending efforts to inject a benign "ultranationalist" view that envisions the replacement of real Turkish patriotism with a hostility-based and flawed nationalism. Holders of this defective view are so appalled by the nation's tribute to Dink's funeral, which was marked by the attendance of tens of thousands, that they have been hardly able to act and speak consistently as observed in their oral and written comments and statements that have appeared in some TV shows and newspapers. Certain circles have abused the previous political murders in an effort to create artificial social segments and polarize the society. For the first time, the murder of a prominent Turkish citizen created a completely opposite outcome to what they wanted. This time, they were unable to blame the so-called reactionary movements.

The Amnesty International USA press release about Dink's death says,

Amnesty International deplores the murder today of the prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. The organization believes that he was targeted because of his work as a journalist who championed freedom of expression.

"This horrifying assassination silences one of Turkey's bravest human rights defenders," said Maureen Greenwood-Basken, Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) Advocacy Director for Europe and Central Asia. "Writers put their lives on the line when they cover human rights violations, as the cases of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, and now Hrant Dink, brutally illustrate.

"But legitimate debate about ideas must be protected."
Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed official revulsion at the killing, without any reference to government ongoing persecutions of Hrant Dink.

Robert Fisk wrote an article in the Independent (20 January 2007), stating that

Hrant Dink became the 1,500,001st victim of the Armenian genocide yesterday. An educated and generous journalist and academic—editor of the weekly Turkish-Armenian newspaper Agos—he tried to create a dialogue between the two nations to reach a common narrative of the 20th century’s first holocaust. And he paid the price: two bullets shot into his head and two into his body by an assassin in the streets of Istanbul yesterday afternoon.

It was not only a frightful blow to Turkey’s surviving Armenian community but a shattering reversal to Turkey’s hope of joining the European Union, a visionary proposal already endangered by the country’s broken relations with Cyprus and its refusal to acknowledge the genocide for what it was: the deliberate mass killing of an entire race of Christian people—1,500,000 in all—by the country’s Ottoman Turkish government in 1915. Winston Churchill was among the first to call it a holocaust but to this day, the Turkish authorities deny such a definition, ignoring documents which Turkey’s own historians have unearthed to prove the government’s genocidal intent. . . .

The EU has demanded that Turkey repeal the law under which the country also tried to imprison Nobel Prize-winning novelist Orhan Pamuk. At the time of his trial, Dink appeared on Turkish television in tears. “I’m living together with Turks in this country,” he said then. “And I’m in complete solidarity with them. I don’t think I could live with an identity of having insulted them in this country.”

Hrant Dink was ultimately unsuccessful in his attempt to promote peace between Armenian and Turkish people. It is a remarkable paradox that Hrant Dink had, in one of his articles, laid blame on Armenians for allowing their hostility and antagonism towards the Turks to have a poisoning effect on their blood. The authorities took the article out of context and asserted that Dink was referring to Turkish blood as poisonous (BBC News, 20 January 2007).

Dink, in one of his interviews in 2005, said that at his primary school, he had to take a traditional Turkish oath, saying: “I am a
Turk, I am honest, I am hard-working.” In his defence, Dink said, “I said that I was a Turkish citizen but an Armenian and that even though I was honest and hard-working, I was not a Turk, I was an Armenian.” He also said that he did not like to sing a line in the Turkish national anthem that refers to “my heroic race”. He said his reason for this was “because I was against using the word ‘race’, which leads to discrimination” (Fisk, 2007).

Huseyin Gulece, from Today’s Zaman newspaper, attended Dink’s funeral and wrote his experiences of the event on 25 January 2007:

We had a moral debt to him. He was always with us, so too should we have been with him on his last journey. . . . Patriarch Mutafian gave an eloquent speech where he emphasised the need for unity. He urged everyone listening not to politicize the murder; he also said that the criticisms directed at our country in relation to the assassination had caused additional wounds in hearts. He further added they had long been living together with the Turkish nation on these lands and asked for a comprehensive campaign to eradicate the elements that instigate hostility and hatred towards Turkish Armenians. Dink’s body is not with us anymore, but he left us so many reminders, so that from now on we cannot run away from our obligations of being a human being.

There was another tribute to Dink in the Guardian on 22 January 2007, entitled “He believed his love for his country would save him. Murdered editor Hrant Dink did more than most dared hope to bring Turkey—and his two peoples—towards peace”. In this article, Fiachra Gibbons said,

The last time I met Hrant Dink he joked that he was “not dead yet”. The next time I saw him was on television last Friday, murdered outside the newspaper he founded in Istanbul. Even with all the death threats, he believed his clear love of his country would save him. “They don’t shoot pigeons here.” Dink was an orphan. He was given up by his parents when he was still a small boy. To be an orphan in Turkey, a country where family is all, is a heavy burden. To be an Armenian orphan in Turkey is to simultaneously carry the genocide and the troubled consciences of all you walk among. . . .

It is all the more painfully tragic that in his own death he has been accepted into the Turkish family in a way that he never quite achieved during his lifetime. . . .
What rankled most with him to the end was that he had been held by the state to have insulted Turks. “I wish he could hear the thousands of people lining up all the way from Osmanbey to Harbiye shouting, ‘We are all Hrant, we are all Armenian!’” a friend of his told me on the night of the killing.

Only those who know Turkey can possibly imagine the emotional charge released by those last four words. Just as they will have winced at what the boy who shot him in the back of the head shouted as he ran away: “I have killed the gavur [the infidel, the foreigner]...”

Turkey has a long way to go to be at peace with itself, but a process has begun. And it has already gone further than anyone might have dared to dream a decade ago, thanks in good part to Hrant Dink. He did not just preach generosity, bravery and forgiveness, he lived it.

Which is why he walked out of his office on Friday rather than hide away as if he had anything to be ashamed of. His newspaper is called Agos, after the Armenian word for opening a furrow for planting. It is for others now to stand at his plough. [Gibbons, 2007]

Orhan Pamuk

Also important is the case of Orhan Pamuk. This well-known Turkish novelist, who, in an interview with a Swiss newspaper in February 2005, made a clear reference to the Armenian genocide, said that “one million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it.” This comment led to several death threats being made to Pamuk. It also resulted in an official order for the removal and burning of his books.

Pamuk, then a fifty-three-year-old respected Turkish writer, had been prosecuted and charged by a prosecutor in Istanbul (under Article 301) on the grounds that his remarks amounted to “public denigration of the Turkish identity”. Although it is unbelievable, his prosecutor demanded a prison term of between six months and three years.

The crime of “insulting Turkishness”

Because Pamuk was charged under an ex-post facto law, Turkish law required that his prosecution be approved by the Ministry of Justice.
A few minutes after Pamuk’s trial started on 16 December, the judge found that this approval had not yet been received and suspended the proceedings. In an interview published in the Akşam newspaper the same day, Justice Minister Cemil Çiçek said he had not yet received Pamuk’s file but would study it thoroughly once it came.

On 29 December 2005, Turkish state prosecutors dropped the charge that Pamuk insulted Turkey’s armed forces, although the charge of “insulting Turkishness” remained (BBC News, 2006).

The assassination of Hrant Dink once again emphasizes the importance of denial in the history of the Armenian genocide, as well as that of the others that followed it in the past century. It indicates that prevention of mass violence and genocide seems to be beyond the scope of human capability. It also indicates that we have an obligation to be mindful of the warning signs and predisposing factors for conflicts, violence, and genocide. It is a reminder of the need for the development of policies, strategies, and programmes designed to counteract these atrocities and build strategies for reconciliation and reconstruction post conflict. It is also a sign that everyone, both Armenians and Turks, are scarred by this and have not had the opportunity or the mechanisms to heal.

It is important to understand the psychological response to this genocide, and the principles for such understanding can be applied to many diverse areas of human experience. As mentioned before, trauma and shock are universals that can occur in any time and place, and it is necessary to recognize that, even with cultural differences, most people of both past and present times will react in a psychologically universal way when their psychological scars are left open.

Failure of human rights

Who could fail to be dismayed when we compare the reality of the human rights situation around the world with the idealistic aims of the Universal Declaration? The Hrant Dink assassination shows that the most basic right—the right to live—has, in the case of the Armenians, been violated and continues to be violated on a daily basis. Because of this, the dream that such horrors as the Armenian massacre and the Holocaust would never happen again will turn to nightmare. This has been the case in the face of Rwanda, Cambodia,
the Balkans, and very recently in Central Africa, Somalia, and the Sudan. This is partly because people increasingly find their culture and identity under threat. Sadly, the Turkish government still resorts to arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and execution in the name of service to their human rights obligations.

A person's response to the threat of a violent death is the central psychological aspect of the genocide survivor experience and the guilt of the perpetrator. One reason many Armenians collapsed and died during the 1915 death walk, aside from murder and physical torture, was that they could not endure psychologically after a certain point in the ongoing trauma of the death walk. The need to comprehend the survivors' psychological response to genocide and the threat of death is important for succeeding generations of Armenians as well as the Turkish community.

There is a general indication that the perpetrator cannot, in the long term, prevail, either socially or psychologically, if people on the receiving end of violence will not accept or comply with bullying sadism. Although people may suffer from the effects of their trauma for their entire life, the strength of mind to assert the will to live and life's priority over death can also help to defeat it; but the Hrant Dink incident makes this quite a challenging concept.

It is sensible if, as human beings both Turks and Armenians accept that they should explore their personal and collective history and identity. Knowing and facing one's own history is part of one's behaviour and consciousness in the present and in the future. One cannot be oneself while avoiding this self-examination, which must involve looking at both good and bad or difficult aspects of one's individual and collective past and owning it. This includes the Armenian memory, their attitudes about the trauma of genocide, and their common responsibilities, as well as those of the Turks, regarding the moral issues of this type of atrocity. Only after this process might their society avoid extreme acts of violence such as the Dink assassination.

Note

1. Salman Rushdie, an Indian-English novelist, was condemned to death by the former Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on
14 February 1989, after publishing his book *The Satanic Verses*. In February 1999, Ayatollah Hassan Sanei from Iran promised a $2.8 million reward for killing the author. Rushdie was living under the protection of the British government. In 2007, after Rushdie was knighted by the queen, demonstrations broke out across the Islamic world. A government minister in Pakistan also declared that Rushdie’s knighthood was a justification for suicide bombing.

2. Copy editor’s note: other than the additions in square parentheses, no editing has been done on this extract.
In conclusion, whether or not Armenians can forgive the Turkish people, at this stage the international community needs to give special attention to the issues involving the Armenian genocide. There is a need to look at the psychological consequences of not acknowledging the genocide through examination of the history, language, symbols, and politics, as well as focusing on the legal, media, and academic institutions. Empirical documentation is needed of the Armenian genocide and, indeed, the oppression in Turkey of those who survived the genocide and the consequent conflicts. This is important in order to gauge the possibility of creating the conditions that encourage alternatives to anger, fighting, killing, and revenge. Looking at the evidence, and the current state of events, it seems that even today the international community has come to rely too heavily on retribution as the only form of justice and is thus incapable of offering a sufficiently methodological approach of addressing atrocities such as state violence, ethnic killing, and genocide such as the Armenian genocide.

The recent international tribunals, such as those investigating the genocide in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia, evidently were not without shortcomings. In Rwanda, for example, people
Through having sustainable and engaged dialogue, Armenians may discover that Turkish people acted as they did because they, too, have been vulnerable and had to obey orders, or in the name of religion and duty to a god, or out of fear for their own lives, or due to envy of Armenians as others. So, a two-way dialogue is essential to create an environment in which the Turkish authorities and their supporters in denial have to face what their ancestors have done and what they are themselves currently defending, by denying such an atrocity.

The dialogue should begin in a thoughtful setting where people have time to reflect on the ordinary human lives that have been shattered, and the reason why this should never happen again. In so doing, the Turkish authorities and their supporters are invited to negotiate the opening between their dysfunctional minds and the world of peace, harmony, and exoneration; and to being alive and allowing others to live. This burden of responsibility is the greatest punishment for any perpetrators and their supporters. It encourages them to stop denying themselves and the Armenians this step towards truth, and part of this truth is the fact that they were human all along; they and their ancestors understood the difference between right and wrong, but still decided to go ahead with the genocide and take away the lives of so many innocent people. This process may bring hope that the next generation will learn from their parents' and grandparents' mistakes and choose never to be trapped in a prison created by their own minds and actions through killing others.

The act of humanizing the Turkish authorities and their supporters as perpetrators, therefore, brings punishment and rehabilitation for both Armenians and Turks alike. Dialogue creates the possibility of setting a person's/a people's/a nation's actions through testimony and thus witnessing the brutal framework of the socio-political context that may have supported and even directed the perpetrators' deeds. It is this component of the genocide, the one residing at the systemic, institutional, and policy level, rather than at a personal level, which makes a lot of difference for the future of humankind.

Currently the Armenian genocide and its consequences are notoriously difficult subjects, as it is challenging to substantiate evidence that determines what exactly happened to the Armenians.
On the one side are the Armenians, who, frustrated, angry, and screaming for help, need to find people around them who recognize the Armenian genocide. On the other side there have been successive Turkish governments and some parts of the Turkish population denying that such a thing happened, disavowing their responsibility and even suggesting that the genocide is an Armenian delusion.

This past century has seen hardly any dialogue between the Armenians and the Turks, and that represents the life of four generations since the genocide. In spite of that, the wound is still fresh. If one feels like a victim, feelings of anger, frustration, and of revenge against those who committed the genocide are understandably easier to develop and sustain than attitudes that seek engagement and dialogue.

*Humanizing the other*

People often distance themselves from their anger against those who have hurt them, because there is the fear that if you engage with “the enemy”, then you will compromise your moral stance and so enable the perpetrator’s entry into the human community. The hardest struggle in this process for Armenians who see themselves as victims is their attempt to step into the shoes of the Turkish as the murderers of their ancestors by means of empathy. This can be achieved by sustainable dialogue that enables the Armenians to gain the capacity to empathize, to listen, and to hear what the Turks have to say, and enables the Turks to listen and to hear, to acknowledge and to apologize, which will help the Armenians and the Turkish to understand one another better, and so try to understand one another’s weaknesses and strengths.

I remember working with an Armenian man who had presented with severe and long-standing depression. One of the main sources of his feelings of trauma that he put into just a few words was a certain episode that he could not forget. The incident he described was the day he had to sign the wedding papers for his daughter to marry a Turkish man. The emotions he felt were incredibly intense, the strongest feeling of all being overwhelming humiliation and a sense of betraying his parents. This man was a third-generation Armenian, and the incident he described had occurred many years
earlier, but the memory of, and feelings engendered by, that experience were still something he found unbearable. The man explained that what he finds particularly hard now is referring to his Turkish son-in-law’s family in first-name terms, and being referred to himself in that manner by them. He says he found it impossible to articulate properly this feeling, but that, simply put, every interaction with his Turkish family by marriage was experienced by him as humiliation, betrayal and suffering.

I asked this patient if he had any direct experiences with Turkish people that could explain why he finds it so difficult to relate to them. He said that he never directly had a negative experience with a Turkish person, as he never mixed with Turkish people. However, as the third-generation descendant of people who perished in the Armenian genocide, when a member of his family marries a Turkish person, it feels both disrespectful to the Armenian community and to the memory of what happened to his grandparents merely because they were Armenians. He saw his psychological condition as the fault of Turkish people.

With further discussion and reflection, he became aware that he was taking refuge behind the entire Armenian community, who were the only people he felt comfortable sharing with. Despite his desire to reach beyond his feelings of revulsion against the Turkish, and his attempts to see Turkish people in a fresh light, he found it incredibly difficult to escape his feeling that essentially the executors of the Armenian genocide were Turkish. He could not initially separate his perception of evil and the Turkish as the same thing, and he did not want anything to do with evil. As we worked further and the therapy progressed, however, he was able to understand that even if, in his view, Turkish people were evil, they are people none the less. Although he found it difficult, he did come to terms with this, resulting in a great deal of relief from his depression and a better relationship with the daughter he adored and her family.

In the process of accepting his conflict and his depression, the man was suddenly able to understand his own story. He came to realize that a large part of his depression was due to the fact that he has not seen any evidence of acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide, that he has not seen or heard a single trace of genuine remorse and regret for the destruction of his ancestors. The destruction of his descendants left his father an orphan, which in turn
affected his own relationship with his father, who had difficulty forming close attachments following the loss of his parents. As a consequence, my patient found it difficult to relate to his own children. He began to realize that, even four generations on, he was angry, upset, and humiliated by the acts of the Turkish authorities. He felt devastated by the fact that an Armenian today is still unable to connect at all with the international community, who, by not acknowledging and sometimes even denying that the Armenian genocide happened at all, made him feel that he and the Armenian community had been completely let down. He said he feels, much like many of his fellow Armenians, that his emotions have been dismissed despite the facts of the evil that was committed. In his view, the atrocity was committed because of religion and race, and yet, despite all the developments of the twentieth century with regard to equal opportunities and human rights, what was done to the Armenians is still widely dismissed. It was for this reason that any connection with Turkey and Turkish people was humiliating for him. He felt very anxious about the fact that, when his daughter married a Turkish man, he felt he had lost not just his identity, but also his child. What we further discussed was how he would feel if the current Turkish authorities showed real signs of regret and remorse. Would he feel that his daughter’s marriage could be a success? Could he be happy for his daughter? He simply could not comprehend this notion. To him, imagining this possibility would be pointless.

The therapist–patient relationship we shared was quite a connecting relationship. He was comfortable coming to see me, because I was helping him to let go of some of the negative ideas in his mind and, in so doing, helping him to reinstate his humanity. This made him feel that there was a strong bond between us. I asked him if he would feel the same if he discovered I was of Turkish ancestry, and he replied that it was impossible that he could feel this connection had I been Turkish. Although I had told him nothing about my background, he was sure in his mind that I was not Turkish. When I asked him if he thought all Turkish women were evil, as well as the men, he responded by saying that he didn’t believe that many women could be evil. In his mind, it was always the men who perpetrated such evil acts as genocide. In this way, talking to Turkish women would not leave him feeling quite as
humiliated as talking to a Turkish man. I then asked him how he would feel if his son had married a Turkish woman. He explained that this simply would not be so bad, because tradition has it that all women go the husband’s family. Therefore, by marrying a Turkish man, his daughter, in his eyes, had been taken away forever by the Turks.

This is just a brief example of one person’s perception and feelings, but it is true that a great many Armenians, especially those in the diasporas, tend to view Turkish people, at least those who do not acknowledge the genocide, as evil and monstrous. This makes it very easy for the Armenians to distance themselves from the Turkish people. The distance has allowed them to dismiss the psyche of the Turkish people, with whom they live in the same land, as simply unacceptable. It allows them to view the Turkish people as an exception to humankind, something that is alive out there, and is a constant threat. They see Turkish people as ‘others’, far away from reality. This proves to be a difficult and also a delusional dynamic. It closes off the possibilities of dialogue about the real subject at hand: the genocide. It closes the possibility of understanding the inner minds of those people that committed the genocide. Even if it has always been the case in their minds that all Turkish people are evil, dehumanization merely closes Armenians’ thought-processes and so hides the truly human faces of the perpetrators. Connecting a human other with what they see as evil, therefore becomes a profound and impossible fight for the Armenians, since it also forces them to confront the potential for evil within themselves.

Towards reconciliation

If it is to become a reality, the start of this genuine dialogue would be the letting go of the trauma both for those Armenians who continue to suffer, generation after generation, as well as for the percentage of Turkish people who acknowledge the Armenian suffering. It will be helpful if the theme of dialogue does not focus on judgement or forgiveness, because the act of genocide is so radical that no amount of punishment can balance what has been done. The genocide is unforgivable because it is impossible to find a
method of erasing decades of pain and suffering that Armenians endured at the hands of the Turkish, and, in turn, the horrific trauma that people suffered as a consequence of continued denial and disavowals. What happened to the Armenians is something for which the language of apology and forgiveness may not be entirely appropriate or sufficient. But reconciliation can be a good way forward, as the language of reconciliation enables everybody—Turkish and Armenian—to deal with a traumatic past and to consider how, if people cannot forgive and forget the past, they can at least begin to let go. Reconciliation may be taboo to many Turkish and Armenians, but, with intellectual support among both communities as well as the international community, there can be a way of finding remedies that centre on the principles of being human. Opening up the dialogue of reconciliation would promote truth-telling to all those who are suffering as a result of genocide. While there may be value in recognizing, acknowledging, and apologizing for the genocide, it would be constructive for Armenian and Turkish societies, as well as the international community, to focus on discovering and nurturing a condition that makes letting go ultimately possible. One of the major requirements for this is focusing on people’s psychological being.

What distinguishes one Armenian who can let go from one who is unable to do so? What may enable an Armenian to let go of this crime against humanity? Is it through the language of reconciliation? Is it through the psychological intervention that focuses on Armenian and Turkish encounters? To find the answers, both Armenian and Turkish dialogues should focus on beginning to put into place the symbols and vocabulary of feeling associated with all these questions in order to find a way of letting go, perhaps even through compromise.

There are existing internal psychological dynamics that may help most Armenians towards forming an empathetic connection with a Turkish person as another person in pain; a pain that draws that Turkish person into their own pain, regardless of who he or she is. The possibility of making an empathetic connection with somebody who victimized or killed one’s grandparents and ancestors, as a response to the pain of their remorse, stems significantly from this underlying powerful dynamic of human connectedness and identification with others. The precipitous fact of being human can draw
Armenians to rescue the other (Turkish people in pain), almost as if this were a learned response, embedded deep within their transmissible and evolutionary past. Armenians would be induced to empathy because there is something in the other that is thought to be part of them, and something in themselves that they may feel and think belongs to the other. Being able to have empathy with Turks allows Armenians to feel what “the other” feels in a reciprocal emotional process, which they have wanted for years, as have, at some level, those people in the international community who may see it as their business to ask for it.

The reciprocal response occurs when “the other”—the Turkish authorities and some of the Turkish population who were denying the genocide—genuinely offer empathy to the Armenians. This empathy reaches out to the Armenian through “the Turkish other” and, one hopes, in the process the Turks can admit to their real pain and perhaps say to the Armenian other, “I can feel the pain you feel”, so that the Armenian can feel this, accept it, and say, “I can feel the pain you feel for having caused me pain.” Only when both Turks and Armenians, who have been carrying so much anger and rage for so long, reach this stage can they let go of the past. Then, Turkish and Armenian people could cease being imprisoned by the fact of the genocide, generation after generation. Certainly, this process may take time, but it is a possibility and it could free the following generation, at the very least. This would enable the antagonists to think about what makes it possible for “enemies” to connect in a way that might otherwise seem unimaginable. It is a way of seeing the enemy within the self and of being able to relate to the external enemy when they meet and to see part of themselves in them. This exchange of bringing a part of themselves with them can lead to empathy; therefore the enemy can become a friend.

It is a hopeful sign when both sides recognize the perpetual dynamic between victim and perpetrator and the potential for movement between the two positions—specifically, the dynamics of their own internal world that may motivate those who feel they have been victimized to discriminate against others. There is a broad consensus that in order to kill, to torture, to persecute, the perpetrators must first exclude the victims from the moral obligation that they may feel towards the world in general, and in particular to those with whom they are socially and politically
connected. This exclusion from normal human rules serves to form a community that, in the eyes of the perpetrators, deserves to be treated immorally. This makes the victim invisible, in order for the perpetrators to continue their torture, killing, and other forms of destructive behaviour. So, it is important that when the perpetrators express remorse and can bring themselves to acknowledge what has been done, they are validating the victims' pain. In a sense, if the Turkish authority and its supporters propagate the acceptance of the Armenian genocide, they are giving the Armenians back their humanity, empowerment, and validation by this single act of acknowledgement and apology.

This would provide an opportunity for many Armenians who are still suffering as the result of genocide to find a neutral way of extending and deepening their healing processes, by going a step further and starting a journey. This journey involves turning around and letting go of what was torturing them in their minds for almost a century, generation after generation. The motivation to do this does not seem to stem from altruism, although it does require high moral principles. The Armenians, as part of the process of becoming ordinary human beings, in a sense need to let go. They need to let go in order to find their whole selves and to walk away from the power that the Ottoman Empire used to maximize destruction. By letting go, Armenians can regain their own identity, separate from being victims of the Ottoman Empire; and, while letting go of their identities as victims of this genocide, they can discover the part of themselves that has been lost. It is all part of the process of reclaiming the self: reciprocating with empathy and letting go.

The current Turkish authorities, in light of the deep frustration felt by so many Armenian descendants, are capable of effecting a profound difference in the moral community. It is important to emphasize that most Armenian people have been able to function quite well in the context. However, in those moments where something reminds them of their past, and how it was for their parents and grandparents, naturally they feel deep sadness, and the fact that they should not be treated in such a way naturally brings anger. Thus, if the Turkish authorities were to acknowledge the genocide, they would feel humanized again. Currently, many Armenians feel very strongly that they are treated as inferior and
ineffective; even when functioning fully in the society in which they are living, this part of their lives reminds them again and again that they have been told that they do not matter, that the ordinary moral obligations do not apply to them.

The Turks, the Armenians, and the international community need to take steps towards solving this difficult problem. Taner Akçam is right when he questions whether coming to a consensus will be possible where the tension between the “real and alleged aims” of governments' actions continues. In his book *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, Akçam discusses the historical context at the time of the Armenian genocide and how this affected Turkey's denial of the genocide:

What is important is how Turkish society perceived “human rights” and “democracy” in this context. Because the Great Powers used these terms to legitimize the most obvious colonial moves, Turks began to view both notions as “Western hypocrisy”. Beyond the specific historical reasons, the fundamental problems that lay behind the failure to bring the perpetrators of the Armenian genocide to justice persist to this day. If it is not possible to draw a clear line of division between humanitarian goals, on the one hand, and a state's economic and political interests, on the other, then how are we to come to a consensus about ethical norms? [2006, p. 424]

This suggests a challenge for the international community to put pressure, to support, and to provide infrastructure to the Turkish government in order to help them to remove the gap between Turkey's economic and political motives and human rights.

Further, reconciliation requires recognition of the fact that there are two communities, intrinsically mistrustful of each other, that need help and appropriate intervention to open up a helpful dialogue for reconciliation. If this is to be achieved, the language of reconciliation must offer people a chance to look at the evidence that shows how ordinary people, under certain circumstances, are capable of grave inhumanity and violence. Conversely, just as human beings are capable of grave inhumanity, so it is important to realize that humankind is capable also of far greater virtue than one can imagine. Thus, the same societal groups can transcend this cycle of violence and, in so doing, let go the pain of the past. If they are not fully able to reconcile themselves to it, the Armenians need
to let go of their anger at the very least, and the Turkish need to let go of their denial and disavowal. This uncertain process can probably become a reality when it is acknowledged and underpinned by both the Turks and the Armenians that they can construct the language and symbols of reconciliation between themselves, even though they have been two nations who did not understand each other before. If the Turkish and Armenian ethnic populations can reach this stage, the result, although it may not initially be a total reconciliation in its full sense, is the start of the process none the less.

Following this beginning, the various narratives and experiences of people can be told, and in this way both Turkish and Armenian communities can start to let go and to heal themselves, the other, the other within their selves and their selves within the other. By promoting a discourse about the tragic past of the Turks and the Armenians, a more lasting sense of self-esteem and worth can be facilitated and made possible.

One of the main challenges in this process perhaps would be the definition of morally acceptable grounds from which to start up genuine dialogue. There may be the question of identifying precisely who the victim is and who the perpetrator is. Who is in the position to grant the perpetrator mercy and allow their grandchildren to become free of a crime they have not committed? Should this depend on rueful acknowledgement and regret and a commitment to efforts that will ensure that such an act never happens again? Should it also depend on agreeing and accepting that the Armenian population in Turkey does not need to live in fear of being assassinated in the streets for talking about peace between the two communities? Should it depend on the creation of a mechanism to identify those who refuse to see the bloodshed of the genocidal regime, who dishonour the process of reconciliation, or who have not learnt to grieve for the loss of so many innocent Armenians. Should such people be watched closely and offered rehabilitation? What are the appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the process of communication should go both smoothly and cautiously, in the hope that society accepts the responsibility to embrace those, especially from the Turkish population, who see, and even lead their communities along, the road of shared humanity ahead?
The ability to create the capacity for such humanity would be a profound gift from the current Armenian and, indeed, the current Turkish population. A dialogue of reconciliation is an encouraging concept, creating the possibility that the brutal world that humankind has created, in the name of differences in race, nationality, religion, culture, and political persuasions, can change for the better.

This process of letting go, forgiveness, and having empathy with one’s enemy, is a way of transforming the Armenian and the Turkish trauma into a legacy of hope. This legacy is that of a heroic journey that many generations of Armenian children have endured because their ancestors were part of an unacknowledged genocide. There is no doubt in my mind that, through dialogue, this journey exploring inhumanity and psychological scars has a real possibility of reaching its end and finally establishing an amenable closure for the good of these two communities and of humanity in general.

**Personal and collective responsibility**

The challenge for us today lies in creating the psychological climate of opinion that will permit the development of a mentality that will reject war, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and terrorism as feasible solutions to both internal and external conflict, and to recognize and take responsibility for our projections of what might be dangerously irresponsible psychic phantasies based on superego hatred and violence and not to act on them.

We need to learn to challenge the way in which the state superego can manipulate our responses in its own interests, even taking away our subjectivities. We should acknowledge and learn to displace the violence in ourselves in socially harmless ways, getting rid of our fears and anxieties of the other and of difference by relating and identifying with the other and thus creating the sincere desire to live together in harmony rather than despair.

What seems to be needed is an intact, integrated object world, a world that will be able to contain unconscious fears, hatred, and anxieties, without the need for splitting, projection, and acting out. We must learn to link our internal and external worlds so as to act as a container of our own and of the other’s fears and anxieties, and thus in turn to encourage the others to reciprocate as a container of
their and our hatreds and fears. If we accept that violence represents cultural formations that in turn represent objectifications of the psyche via the superego of the individual and of the State, then it is possible to reformulate these psychic social mechanisms of projection and superego aggression. Internalizing what it is in one's understanding about genocide as an act of violence will liberate oneself from the history of a collective traumatic past and the imperatives it has imposed on people. The inner psychic world of the individual has an enormously important adaptive role to play here in developing mechanisms of projective identification, not as a means of damaging and destroying the other, but as a means of empathy, of containing the other, and in turn being contained.

We need to learn not to project too much into people or groups around us. It is helpful to think that we might need gradual evolution in our own psyche rather than speedy revolution that would change the other. Our first step towards this is to understand the other so that we can reduce their motivation to kill us and to remember that peace is a state of mind and a way of thinking.
Maps of 1915 Armenian genocide

The maps on the following pages show the principal routes of deportation and the sites of massacres (reproduced from Armenian Genocide online source: http://www.armenian-genocide.org/genocidefaq.html, by permission of Dr Rouben Adalian, Director of the Armenian National Institute).

All maps are based on those prepared by Z. Khanzadian for the Armenian National Delegation and Raymond H. Kevorkian and Eric Van Lauve for the Bibliothèque Noubar.
Map of the 1915 Armenian genocide in the Turkish Empire Complete map (default selection) (http://www.armenian-genocide.org/map-full.html).
MAPS OF 1915 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Map of the 1915 Armenian Genocide in the Turkish Empire. Boundaries of the eastern provinces (http://www.armenian-genocide.org/map-full.html).

See http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html

Article 1
The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

Article 2
In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article 3
The following acts shall be punishable:

(a) Genocide;
(b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
(c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
(d) Attempt to commit genocide;
(e) Complicity in genocide.

Article 4
Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

Article 5
The Contracting Parties undertake to enact, in accordance with their respective Constitutions, the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and, in particular, to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3.

Article 6
Persons charged with genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those Contracting Parties which shall have accepted its jurisdiction.

Article 7
Genocide and the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall not be considered as political crimes for the purpose of extradition.
The Contracting Parties pledge themselves in such cases to grant extradition in accordance with their laws and treaties in force.

**Article 8**

Any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3.

**Article 9**

Disputes between the Contracting Parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the present Convention, including those relating to the responsibility of a State for genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3, shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the request of any of the parties to the dispute.

**Article 10**

The present Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall bear the date of 9 December 1948.

**Article 11**

The present Convention shall be open until 31 December 1949 for signature on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State to which an invitation to sign has been addressed by the General Assembly.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

After 1 January 1950, the present Convention may be acceded to on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State which has received an invitation as aforesaid.

Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
Article 12

Any Contracting Party may at any time, by notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, extend the application of the present Convention to all or any of the territories for the conduct of whose foreign relations that Contracting Party is responsible.

Article 13

On the day when the first twenty instruments of ratification or accession have been deposited, the Secretary-General shall draw up a process-verbal and transmit a copy of it to each Member of the United Nations and to each of the non-member States contemplated in Article 11.

The present Convention shall come into force on the ninetieth day following the date of deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

Any ratification or accession effected subsequent to the latter date shall become effective on the ninetieth day following the deposit of the instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 14

The present Convention shall remain in effect for a period of ten years as from the date of its coming into force.

It shall thereafter remain in force for successive periods of five years for such Contracting Parties as have not denounced it at least six months before the expiration of the current period.

Denunciation shall be effected by a written notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 15

If, as a result of denunciations, the number of Parties to the present Convention should become less than sixteen, the Convention shall cease to be in force as from the date on which the last of these denunciations shall become effective.
Article 16

A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any Contracting Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General.

The General Assembly shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request.

Article 17

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall notify all Members of the United Nations and the non-member States contemplated in Article 11 of the following:

(a) Signatures, ratifications and accessions received in accordance with Article 11;
(b) Notifications received in accordance with Article 12;
(c) The date upon which the present Convention comes into force in accordance with Article 13;
(d) Denunciations received in accordance with Article 14;
(e) The abrogation of the Convention in accordance with Article 15;
(f) Notifications received in accordance with Article 16.

Article 18

The original of the present Convention shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.

A certified copy of the Convention shall be transmitted to all Members of the United Nations and to the non-member States contemplated in Article 11.

Article 19

The present Convention shall be registered by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the date of its coming into force.
Justice Minister Cemil Cicek, who has been determined in his opposition to any changes in the much-criticized Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), has begun to change his mind, according to recent reports.

Speaking to journalists in Berlin, where he is was attending a Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (TUSYAD) meeting, Cicek said there was no such thing that Article 301 could not be changed, noting that the real problem was what changes were to be introduced.

Despite government arguments that the new TCK, which came into effect last year, constituted significant progress in terms of rights and freedoms, Article 301, which criminalizes insulting Turkishness, state institutions and Ataturk, has created an uproar with one celebrated writer after another being tried as a result.

While writers Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak were found not guilty of violating the article, many other lesser-known authors were victimized as a result without attracting too much media attention.
The European Union, which Turkey wants to join, insists the article needs to be changed or annulled, with the government seemingly agreeing on the necessity of a review.

The opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) is opposed to any such change and has said it would not support amendments to the article.

Earlier this week the court that found Shafak not guilty said, “Efforts to limit freedom of thought and expression may have serious consequences” in its full opinion on the Shafak ruling. “It is unthinkable to talk about crimes committed by fictional characters. … It is necessary to define the boundaries of the ‘Turkishness’ concept and place it on firm ground.”

The government has said it needs more time to assess whether it is necessary to change Article 301. It fears a nationalist backlash ahead of elections due next year if it tries to change the law.

Cicek said they were under pressure from the EU to change the article but noted that he kept asking EU officials about the bill French Parliament would soon discuss that criminalizes the refusal to accept the Armenian genocide.

He said the government was working on changing the controversial article. “However, citizens’ concerns need to be taken into account. If we annul it, what will we tell the people when they ask: ‘Are you ashamed of being a Turk?’”

Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul has been openly insisting that the article be changed, but Cicek was opposed to any such amendment, arguing that the judiciary would fine-tune the article on its own.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has also said the government would consider changing the article.

A European Commission source told Reuters that Brussels would study the opinion but said a higher court has already imposed a suspended jail sentence on another writer under Article 301 and that this ruling set a precedent in the evolution of case law on the issue. “We understand there is a will in Ankara to solve this issue through case law, but this will take many years to build up. We believe Article 301 needs to be changed now,” the source said.

Note

Previous, recent, and current involvement in the question of the Armenian genocide by world leaders, significant figures, and the media

Various media spokespersons, prominent figures within society, and government authorities worldwide over the past century have had their say about the Armenian genocide. Below are some examples.

Wangenheim, Report of Wangenheim, German ambassador in the Ottoman Empire to the Reichskanzler Behtmann-Hollweg on 17 June 1915:

Deportation of the Armenians from their homes in the vilayets of Eastern Anatolia, and their resettlement in other regions is implemented cruelly . . .

It becomes obvious that deportation of the Armenians arises not only from military necessity, the internal minister Talaat Bey told about it honestly to Doctor Mortsman, who is employed at the Empire Embassy now. Talaat said: “The Sublime Porte intends to make use of the world war for cleaning the whole country from internal enemies, the local Christians, so that foreign countries won’t hinder doing it by their diplomatic interference. This measure will serve to the interests of all allies of Turkey, especially the Germans and so the latters will be able to consolidate.”
D. Sazonov, From speech of S. D. Sazonov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the State Duma, June 25, 1915

... I had to refer to the unprecedented sufferings of this unfortunate nation before. Under the favourable control of the allied Germany, the Turks evidently intend to fulfil their long-standing dream to exterminate the Armenians, which do not submit to the influence of the Muslims and hinder the plans of Germany to subdue the Turkish Empire in economy and politics ...

Smirnov, Dispatch of Smirnov, the Russian envoy to Cairo, to S. Sazonov, Russia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs. (June 25, 1915)

Cruelties committed against the Armenians in Syria and neighboring vilayets, violations, massacres and very often mass slaughter of the population of the Armenian villages are constantly repeated; families are cruelly separated, wives are separated from husbands, children are separated from parents, and all of them are exiled in various directions. Especially the Armenian clergy are pursued cruelly; the priests are haunted, tortured, their nails are pulled out.

12,000 Turkish troops lately occupied Zeitoun which was a stronghold for the Armenians and didn’t let the Turkish forces come near. Threatening, lying and giving promises the Turks made the Armenians surrender and occupying the city they settled accounts with the inhabitants and the defenders of the city. Thousands of people were slaughtered in spite of the promises of security ...

House of Lords, Hansard (5th series), Vol. XIX, 6 October 1915.

The massacres are the result of a policy which, as far as can be ascertained, has been entertained for some considerable time by the gang of unscrupulous adventurers who are now in possession of the Government of the Turkish Empire. They hesitated to put it in practice until they thought the favourable moment had come, and that moment seems to have arrived about the month of April.

I am sorry to say that such information has reached me from many quarters goes to show that the figure of 800,000 which the noble earl thought incredible as a possible total for those who have been destroyed since May last is, unfortunately, quite a possible number. That is because the proceedings taken have been so absolutely premeditated and systematic; the massacres are the result of a
policy which, as far as can be ascertained, has been entertained for some considerable time by the gang who are now in possession of the government of the Turkish Empire.

Valery Brusov, (1873–1924) Russian writer, literary critic, and translator.

Turks continued their previous policy. They would not stop to commit massive and most awful massacres that even Leng Timur would not dare to do. [1916]

Count Wolff-Metternich, German Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire July 10, 1916, cable to the German Chancellor

In its attempt to carry out its purpose to resolve the Armenian question by the destruction of the Armenian race, the Turkish government has refused to be deterred neither by our representations, nor by those of the American Embassy, nor by the delegate of the Pope, nor by the threats of the Allied Powers, nor in deference to the public opinion of the West representing one-half of the world.

Lord Robert Cecil, Under-secretary of state for foreign affairs (House of Commons, Hansard (5th series), Vol. LXXV, 16 November 1915, Cols. 1770–1776.)

I think it may be said, without the least fear of exaggeration, that no more horrible crime has been committed in the history of the world . . . This is a premeditative crime determined on long ago . . . It was a long-considered, deliberate policy to destroy and wipe out of existence the Armenians in Turkey. It was systematically carried out. It was ordered from above . . .

US Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Ambassador: Morgenthau’s Story, 1919

When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact. . . . I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.
Theodore Roosevelt, May 11, 1918, letter to Cleveland Hoadley Dodge

... the Armenian massacre was the greatest crime of the war, and the failure to act against Turkey is to condone it ... the failure to deal radically with the Turkish horror means that all talk of guaranteeing the future peace of the world is mischievous nonsense.

Mustafa "Ataturk" Kemal, Founder of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923 and revered throughout Turkey, in an interview published on August 1, 1926 in The Los Angeles Examiner, talking about former Young Turks in his country

These left-overs from the former Young Turk Party, who should have been made to account for the millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven en masse, from their homes and massacred, have been restive under the Republican rule.

Adolf Hitler, while persuading his associates that a Jewish holocaust would be tolerated by the west, stated

Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?

Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, 1952

The association of Mount Ararat and Noah, the staunch Christians who were massacred periodically by the Mohammedan Turks, and the Sunday School collections over fifty years for alleviating their miseries—all cumulate to impress the name Armenia on the front of the American mind.

Jimmy Carter, 16 May 1978, White House ceremony

It is generally not known in the world that, in the years preceding 1916, there was a concerted effort made to eliminate all the Armenian people, probably one of the greatest tragedies that ever befell any group. And there weren't any Nuremberg trials.

Ronald Reagan, 22 April 1981, proclamation

Like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it ... the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.
The European Parliament, 18 June 1987: voted to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

George Bush Sr, 20 April 1990, speech in Orlando, Florida

[We join] Armenians around the world [as we remember] the terrible massacres suffered in 1915-1923 at the hands of the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. The United States responded to this crime against humanity by leading diplomatic and private relief efforts.

The Russian Duma (lower house of the bicameral Russian legislature), 20 April 1994: voted to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

President Clinton, 24 April 1994, issued a news release to commemorate the “tragedy” that befell the Armenians in 1915.

Yossi Beilin, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister. 27 April 1994 on the floor of the Knesset in response to a TV interview with the Turkish Ambassador

It was not war. It was most certainly massacre and genocide, something the world must remember ... We will always reject any attempt to erase its record, even for some political advantage.

Statement of Professor Bernard Lewis, Princeton University, in his “Distinguishing Armenian case from Holocaust”, Assembly of Turkish American Associations, 14 April 2002, argues that:

There is no evidence of a decision to massacre. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence of attempt [sic] to prevent it, which were not very successful. Yes there were tremendous massacres, the numbers are very uncertain but a million may well be likely ... [and] the issue is not whether the massacres happened or not, but rather if these massacres were as a result of a deliberate preconceived decision of the Turkish government ... there is no evidence for such a decision.

Lewis thus believes that “to make [Armenian Genocide], a parallel with the Holocaust in Germany” is “rather absurd”. In an interview with Haaretz, he further stated:
... the deniers of Holocaust have a purpose: to prolong Nazism and to return to Nazi legislation. Nobody wants the "Young Turks" back, and nobody wants to have back the Ottoman Law. What do the Armenians want? The Armenians want to benefit from both worlds. On the one hand, they speak with pride of their struggle against the Ottoman despotism, while on the other hand, they compare their tragedy to the Jewish Holocaust. I do not accept this. I do not say that the Armenians did not suffer terribly. But I find enough cause for me to contain their attempts to use the Armenian massacres to diminish the worth of the Jewish Holocaust and to relate to it instead as an ethnic dispute. [Karpel, Dalia. "There Was No Genocide: Interview with Prof. Bernard Lewis", Haaretz Weekly, January 23, 1998. Retrieved April 26, 2007]

John Evans, US ambassador to Armenia, said to American Armenians on 19 February 2005

Today I shall call this Armenian genocide. I think that we, the US government, owe you, our fellow citizens, a more straightforward and honest discussion of this problem. I can tell you as a person who has studied this problem—I have no doubts about what happened. I think that it is inappropriate for us, the Americans, to play with words in this case. I believe that we must call a spade a spade.

Gomidas Institute, London, 26 February 2007. Dr Ara Sarafian offered to begin a case study of the events of 1915 and the fate of Armenians in the Harput region of the Ottoman Empire (see http://www.gomidas.org/press/20Feb07PressRelease.htm). Dr Halaçoğlu, the head of the Turkish Historical Society has accepted the proposal.

The core of their work and commitment so far, based on the proposal made to Dr Halaçoğlu, is the following:

1. The Gomidas Institute will present Dr Halaçoğlu relevant records which explain why they think the events of 1915 in the Harput region should be called "abuse", "massacre" and "genocide," and not simply a deportation program (tehcir).
2. D. Halaçoğlu will present Ottoman records which detail how deportations were implemented in Harput and its surrounding villages. He will show deportation records, family by family and
village by village, accounting for the deportation and resettlement of each village from the Harput area.

3. The Gomidas Institute will then critically examine the materials presented in each set of records and see if either one can make a convincing case. Perhaps both set of records may have merits, or both may be flawed. They will examine the nature of agreement and disagreement between the two sets of records. They will then make these records, as well as all deliberations, open to the scrutiny of others.

The Gomidas Institute is already planning for (a) the collection of published, archival, and audio sources in English, Armenian and German languages related to the events of 1915; (b) the organization of such data so that they can be readily utilized by all; (c) the use of these sources to present an argument about the events of 1915 in Harput. The Institute will list much of this data on its website so that interested parties may contribute or scrutinize our work.

A special report by British journalist Robert Fisk, 28 August, 2007

*The Forgotten Holocaust*

*The Independent Extra*: pp. 1–5

The issue of the Armenian genocide has been brought to attention again in recent years by individuals and politicians who recognise the importance of revisiting history and acknowledging the events, which had profound consequent effect on the human perception and behaviour today.

The *Independent Extra* on Tuesday 28th August 2007 features a special report by Robert Fisk titled: “The Forgotten Holocaust”. Even though such articles are not a regular occurrence, they do highlight the extent of human suffering at the hands of other men, and thus are significant, especially for those who have been directly or indirectly, physically, emotionally and psychologically affected by what Fisk calls “the First Holocaust of the 20th century”. Even though relatively little, such public acknowledgement of a group’s or a nation’s sufferings, could be the beginning of a long process of healing for the people.

The photographs Fisk published in his article, not published by the Western Media before, are a small part of the evidence collected in
connection to the genocide. These are a reminder that the lack of evidence is not the reason for the Turkey’s denial of these events. As a matter of fact Hayuk Demoyan, the director of the Museum of the Armenian Genocide, indicates that new materials are being uncovered on a regular basis: “We are still discovering more ... these pictures even survived the Second World War. Today, we want our museum to be a place of collective memory, a memorisation of trauma ... we are hearing a lot of places in the world are like goldmines of archive materials to continue our work—even here in Yerevan. Everyday we are coming across new photographs or documents.’

There is a clear indication that the new Armenian generations want to learn the facts about the genocide. The genocide forms an integral part of the nation’s historical identity. Armenian diaspora have put a strong emphasis on the importance of ‘memorisation’ of these events. Away from the homeland diasporic communities tend to have a much more acute relationship with their national and historical identity. Robert Fisk indicates that it is these people who are most interested in the Turkish acknowledgement of Armenian genocide, more so than the population of the modern Armenian state.

“When visitors come here from the diaspora—from America and Europe, Lebanon and Syria, people whose parents or grandparents died in our genocide—our staff feel with these people. They see these people become very upset, there are tears and some get a bit crazy after seeing the exhibition. This can be very difficult for us, psychologically” (Hayuk Demoyan).

It is interesting to consider here Franz Fanon’s (1967) writing about the “complex of inferiority” of the Algerian population in the light of French occupation, in which he argued that in order for the healing to take place an outbreak of violence has to happen. Although one may disagree with this observation it could be said that the free expression and exchange of views as well as the international recognition of the Armenian tragedy are the vital factors for the successful resolution of this issue.

There is clear evidence that at the time of the Armenian genocide many European countries were notified by their informants in the region of the scale of the mass murder of Armenians, but no action was taken to prevent them. In fact much of the evidence is gathered from Russian or European private collections.
We have information that some Germans who were in Armenia in 1915 started selling genocide pictures for personal collections when they returned home ... In Russia, a man from St Petersburg also informed us that he had seen handwritten memoirs from 1940 in which the writer spoke of Russian photographs of Armenian bodies in Van and Marsha in 1915 and 1916" (Hayuk Demoyan).

Robert Fisk (2007) draws clear lines between the Armenian and the Nazi genocide. He also emphasises that some of the German officers present during the Armenian atrocities, later worked in the Nazi extermination programmes during the Second World War. He finds many similarities in the methods employed by the Nazis in the extermination of the Jews and the extermination of Armenians. In this light, any action taken by the bystanders at that time to protest the mass murders of Armenians may have prevented the Nazi genocide of the Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, people with disabilities and chronic illness and those marginalised, from happening.

The contempt of the European nations has been presently addressed with numerous acknowledgements of the Armenian genocide. Numerous demands have been placed on Turkey to confess to the atrocities in connection to its EU membership ambitions. Despite the fact that, by admitting to the Armenian genocide, Turkey would benefit its human rights record, improve its chances of joining the EU and help Armenians come to terms with the tragedy and start the process of healing, the opposite seems to take place in the present political climate of Turkey.

The stance of the current Turkish government [in denying the genocide] is proving they are proud of what their ancestors did. They are saying they are pleased with what the Ottomans did. [Hayuk Demoyan]

While willing to express themselves, Armenians are very weary of their vulnerable geographical situation—positioned between Turkey and Azerbaijan. They are concerned with the possible reaction from these countries, as elaborated by Hayuk Demoyan:

The fundamental problem, I think, is that in the diaspora many don’t want to recognise our statehood ... We are surrounded by two countries—Turkey and Azerbaijan—and we have to take our
security into account; but not to the extent of damaging memory. Here we must be accurate. I have changed things in this museum. There were inappropriate things, comments about ‘hot-bloodied’ people, all the old clichés about Turks—they have now gone. The diaspora want to be the holders of our memories—but 60 percent of the citizens of the Armenian state are "repatriate"—Armenians originally from the diaspora, people whose grandparents originally came from western Armenia. And remember that Turkish forces swept through part of Armenia after the 1915 genocide—right through Yerevan on their way to Baku. According to Soviet documentation in 1920, 200,000 Armenians died in this part of Armenia, 180,000 of them between 1918 and 1920.

The Turkish government came under greater international pressure and scrutiny this year “following the decision of the US House of Representatives’ newly installed Democratic leadership to follow France in endorsing a bill officially recognising as genocide the 1915 killings of Christian Armenians by Muslim Turks”, according to Simon Tisdall of The Guardian (2007).

“If this measure is adopted it will create tensions in US-Turkish relations,” a senior Turkish official said on 15 February 2007. “You cannot put Turkey in the same shoes as the Nazis,” reported Tisdall, who added that “Armenia (and the Armenian diaspora) should accept a proposal by Turkey’s prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to set up a joint commission to study what happened, the official said.” However, the prospect of a dialogue between Turkey and Armenia was stifled in 2005 when Turkish government banned the Armenian International Conference in Turkey.

The “unjust suppression” of the freedom of expression among their own citizens has also attracted a lot of criticism of the Turkish authorities. In 2005, Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish Nobel Prize-winning novelist, barely escaped a jail sentence. He publicly admitted that the mass killing of Armenians had taken place in 1915. Pamuk was charged with “insulting Turkishness”. It has become clear, however, that more prominent people in Turkey feel the need to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. In late 2007, Turkish MP Mehmet Ufuk Uras became the first Turkish politician to speak of the necessity to recognize the 1915 events in an interview with journalist Raffi Arax:
We committed a terrible massacre against Armenians and Turkey must recognize it. It's not important how we name this calamity: genocide, ethnic purification, etc. The most important thing is that a terrible massacre was committed and it is undeniable... We must face up to the history, bandage the wounds, develop the relations with Armenia, defend our Armenian compatriots and restore what was the property of their ancestors. I come from the area of Durig close to Sebastia where I heard the truth from my parents... We are confident that with the negationism [we] will drive to nothing... [08.09.2007, PanARMENIAN.Net, also mentioned in hayazg.com and einnews.com]

The Turkish government's acknowledgement of the brutal killings by the Ottoman Turks in 1915 of the Armenian population can only be a small step but, none the less, a vital and significant one towards a brighter future for the generations of both Armenians and Turks to come. The psychological consequence of the genocide and trauma experienced by several generations can only be mended through a long-term course of action starting from the acknowledgement of the emotional and psychological pain caused to Armenians. As Robert Fisk suggests, if Ottoman Turks were held responsible at the time of the atrocities, a painful but valuable lesson would have been learnt that could have saved the lives of millions of Jews. Furthermore, one can only imagine the consequent effect of the Nazi brutality on Jews if there had been no "memoralization" of the trauma. History should be remembered, studied, and discussed, as our present perceptions and actions are often rooted in the depths of our past.

Note

APPENDIX V

Turkish quotes about the Armenian genocide

Talat Pasha, June 1915, in a conversation with Dr Mordtmann of the German Embassy:

Turkey is taking advantage of the war in order to thoroughly liquidate (gründlich aufzaumen) its internal foes, i.e., the indigenous Christians, without being thereby disturbed by foreign intervention.

After the German Ambassador persistently brought up the Armenian question in 1918, Talat said, "with a smile”,

What on earth do you want? The question is settled. There are no more Armenians.

Cemal Pasha, 1915, upon seeing the deportations in Mamure, said to a German officer:

I am ashamed of my nation (Ich schame mich fur meine Nation).

The Minister of the Interior of Turkey publicly declared on 15 March that on the basis of computations undertaken by Ministry Experts
800,000 Armenian deportees were actually killed... by holding the guilty accountable the government is intent on cleansing the bloody past.

Enver Pasha, one of the triumvirate rulers, publicly declared on 19 May 1916,

The Ottoman Empire should be cleaned up of the Armenians and the Lebanese. We have destroyed the former by the sword, we shall destroy the latter through starvation.

In reply to US Ambassador Morgenthau, who was deploring the massacres against Armenians and attributing them to irresponsible subalterns and underlings in the distant provinces, Enver’s reply was,

You are greatly mistaken. We have this country absolutely under our control. I have no desire to shift the blame onto our underlings and I am entirely willing to accept the responsibility myself for everything that has taken place.

Prince Abdul Mecid, Heir-Apparent to the Ottoman Throne, during an interview:

I refer to those awful massacres. They are the greatest stain that has ever disgraced our nation and race. They were entirely the work of Talat and Enver. I heard some days before they began that they were intended. I went to Istanbul and insisted on seeing Enver. I asked him if it was true that they intended to recommence the massacres which had been our shame and disgrace under Abdul Hamid. The only reply I could get from him was: “It is decided. It is the programme“.


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Consequences of Denial seeks to provide some awareness and understanding of the horrendous tragedy of the Armenian genocide. This book illuminates the little known fact that over two million innocent Armenians died at the hands of the Ottoman Empire between 1894 and 1922; a genocide that has been, and continues to be, denied by successive Turkish governments.

In this book, the author demonstrates the need not only for remembrance, but first and foremost for the acknowledgement of genocides, from government level downwards. Only by taking adequate steps at personal, group, national and international levels to acknowledge such massacres, and the trauma they create, can humankind attempt to prevent such atrocities from ever happening again. By documenting the psychological effects of the "forgotten" Armenian genocide and by linking these effects to cross-generational trauma and processes of response and denial, this book aims to shed light from a psychoanalytic perspective on an insufficiently researched aspect of this genocide.

‘This book is about the vital importance of historical research and the public recognition of traumatic social events. Alayarian convincingly shows how the denial of the Armenian genocide denies the victims the opportunity to make sense of their experience, and how easily witness accounts can be dismissed as "rumours" or "allegations" without the legal and intellectual framework of societal efforts of remembrance and restitution. The unbearable pain of genocide has been followed by suspicion and disbelief, and Turkish society is unable to come to terms with its past, and therefore with itself.’

Dr Sigrid Rausing

‘Consequences of Denial is one of the very few books highlighting the long-term psychological plight of forgotten human atrocities and genocide. The importance of the book comes not only as a reminder of the forgotten human tragedies and genocide, it also sheds light on the new role of mental health professionals in understanding the psychological consequences of mass trauma and victimization. It also provides directions to proactive measures in preventing human sufferings.

The book gives noticeable lessons on how to pave the road towards peace and reconciliation: acknowledging human atrocities, apology for survivors and their families, and recognition of others are steps towards forgiveness and reconciliation.’

Abdel Hamid Afana, PhD

‘This book is an important contribution to the discourse of truth and I hope it will help to bring forward that day of recognition of the historical truth of the Armenian genocide so that a process of healing may begin between the peoples of Armenia and Turkey – and thereby engender a greater hope for the world that truth can and will prevail.’

Baroness Caroline Cox