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Speaking to One Another

*TOOLBOX for working
on reconciliation in
adult education*



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Introduction

The present book – which we call a ‘toolbox’ – is the final outcome of a series of dialogue projects dealing with Turkish-Armenian relations that were implemented over the last eight years by DVV International and a number of Turkish and Armenian partner organizations and institutions. The toolbox reflects experiences gained during the above-mentioned projects, but it is not a documentation of these projects themselves. Instead, it focuses on the lessons learnt, generalizing them in the hope that they will prove useful in other contexts. In addition, this toolbox is a lively contribution to the field of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. In a world full of conflicts and divisions such an endeavor is needed more than ever.

We all agree that reconciliation projects are a very important part of adult education all over the world. A whole set of knowledges, skills, and competences are needed for this kind of work. Many people engaged in adult education reconciliation work and history projects are layman, that’s why it is important to reflect and elaborate on the experiences collected here. However, we hope that it will not just be laymen who will profit from the experiences made and gathered in this book.

At first sight the projects this toolbox is based on are not political, focusing instead on civil society and education. They are not meant to bring about change to highly politicized discussions on the level of politics and politicians. However, we believe that the focus on multipliers and the process of enabling and empowering them to spread change and educate change agents has a long-term impact.

This toolbox is not meant to evaluate what happened in the past, but instead to provide the tools needed to question and critically assess historical narratives. We do not want to provide ready-made answers but provoke critical analysis and questioning.

In the process of joint work we strove to develop a balanced position and harmonize our experiences. We are aware of the opportunities and limitations of reconciliation work, so we tried to better understand the differences and commonalities. As a group of authors we discussed and tried to reach consensus wherever possible, but we did not force ourselves to do so. For this reason some parts of the articles are not agreed on by all of us.

We are aware that there is no one grand narrative, and we cannot reach one single narrative and polish and narrow our work down. Instead we believe in a multiperspective approach, an approach which we strongly recommend for all work done in this sphere.

In reflecting on our experience, we have presented both our personal considerations as well as key concepts/terms that reveal general insights. We believe that they are both very relevant for other contexts too. The book combines two categories: articles and tools. The articles are derived directly from the project experiences, the tools are more general reflections that bring additional value and they are marked with the word ‘Focus’. The articles also discuss tools used during the projects.

During the working process we realized that we have been continually navigating between the concepts of justice, objectivity, and feasibility. This maneuvering is also visible in the structure of the book.

All photos are from our projects. All articles are signed by their authors.

We hope that the toolbox will contribute to more and better reconciliation projects in adult education wherever needed and necessary.

*Augsburg/Berlin, 2/12/2016
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From **Learning To Listen**
via **Speaking To One Another**
to **Acting Together**

Lessons Learnt from an Adult Education Reconciliation Project between Turkey and Armenia

Matthias Klingenberg, Vanya Ivanova, Nazaret Nazaretyan

From August 2009 to December 2016 DVV International conducted a project with the objective of facilitating the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation process through strengthening relations between students/young adults and multipliers from both countries; reducing prejudices and stereotypes of representatives from both societies; remembering the Turkish – Armenian past by telling individual stories from both societies; and strengthening the civil societies in both countries. The project was financed by the German Federal Foreign Office. After a century of conflict and lack of dialogue, this project aimed to build bridges between Turkey’s and Armenia’s populations through adult education, intercultural exchange, and oral history research. The three phases were conducted as follows:

- ❖ phase I: **Learning to Listen**
August 2009 – February 2011;
- ❖ phase II: **Speaking to One Another**
June 2011 – February 2013, and
- ❖ phase III: **Acting Together**
May 2015 – December 2016.

The sections explaining the APPROACHES we adopted in the project are titled in green.

The sections explaining our METHODS are titled in red.

APPROACH

What to aim for?

It may sound like a stupid question, but defining what to aim for is a difficult process. It is often too easy to overshoot the mark and overburden oneself. In the first project proposal for Turkish-Armenian reconciliation that we send to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs we stated our expected result as follows: Participants from both sides will overcome their prejudices towards each other. A nice idea indeed, but how realistic? We often copy our objectives, expected results, or impacts from the guidelines of the donor body where the desk officers often think they can save the world from their chairs, they think big and often have no idea about the situation on the ground. So don't copy thoughtlessly what they want you to achieve as stated in their papers. You can write things that the donor wants to hear, but please be aware that the reality of the project will look different. A project is limited in time, scope, and range and will be unlikely to get participants to completely overcome their prejudices. Most of the things we want to work on and change for the better are so deeply rooted and have evolved over so many years or even generations that it is naïve to believe that we could change them within a simple project or activity. When we aim for things that we cannot ultimately attain, we only bring frustration to the participants and ourselves.

However, we have also seen the opposite quite a lot in recent years: Aiming for too little so that the goals become meaningless. Adjusting your aims, goals, and expected results to reality may sound self-evident but if you take a closer look it isn't automatic. That is because a project without a vision or a utopian long-term goal is not a project that will bring the needed change. Perhaps this sounds puzzling. However, essentially one's goals should either be too ambitious, nor too low-profile. Instead they should be innovative, as well as containing a utopian element. Isn't that a bit too much to aim for? Not at all, if you know how, it is easy to do: Very often the innovative, utopian element is easily achieved by allowing space for it to happen. That means that you

should design a project so that there is still enough room for the unforeseeable to happen. If the project plan is so tight and so concisely predefined that nothing can develop spontaneously between participants and conflict parties, then something is wrong. As much as reconciliation and overcoming conflicts is a difficult process to plan, the project should still aspire to such a result.

Maybe you are familiar with the famous quote of the Irish avant-garde novelist and playwright Samuel Beckett: 'Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.' Or, to say it in the words of the German artist and theatre director Christoph Schlingensiefel: 'Failure is an Opportunity'. Both statements carry the idea that failure is not automatically a negative thing but that failure provides us with an opportunity for improvement. Yes, even failure can enhance creative thinking and acting. This idea is important to keep in mind when developing your project and is relevant to many other things in this manual: Don't be a perfectionist, instead allow for mistakes and corrections. Be inductive, let yourself and your actions be guided by the things that actually happen on the ground, among people, and not such much by the project proposal, log frame, and the guidelines. Or said differently, define your aims, goals, expected results, and impact indicators in a way that allow 'Ashnak Golden Moments' to happen in your project [see p. 28].

APPROACH

Target groups

The most important thing in designing a reconciliation or dialogue project is directing it at the right target group. If you make a mistake here, the entire effort can become meaningless. You will find the right target group where the possible overlaps with the meaningful. An example for clarification: For the successful outcome and impact of your reconciliation project it would be good to involve all of a country's schools and youth centers in your project, so that all the country's pupils and young people would be your target group. However, when you consider your budget, the human resources and your weak networking with the ministry of education you realize that it will be impossible to reach this target group as a whole. We need to be very realistic when it comes to the target group: If we widen that group it could result in an intervention lacking in depth/ if we invest in single individuals too much the target group will be so small that the project may lose its impact in the society. Choosing the right target group is always a balancing act. Doing the possible and meaningful also means realistically measuring and evaluating your own profile, expertise, and capacity. Not every organization is a good provider for all target groups. If we as an adult education organization were to organize a high-level meeting of foreign ministers, it would most probably fail.



We normally distinguish between direct and indirect target groups. Even if it may sometimes be difficult to decide who belongs to which sub-category it is important to understand that your project should reach people beyond the ones you are directly working with. The direct participants, students for example, belong to social networks, have friends and family, so if your project is working correctly they will disseminate what they have learned among them. With indirect target groups we mean the dissemination of the project's main message into the broader societies we work in. An example: If you should choose to implement the aforementioned high-level dialogue, the two foreign ministers would be your direct target group. If you choose to conduct an adult education project with students, the ministers and the ministries could be a (distant and difficult to reach) indirect target group. Maybe they will read about your project, or they will open an exhibition that the students have organized, or one of the student's fathers works in the ministry.

APPROACH

“Leave the comfort zone” / “Think outside the box”

The British management theorist Alasdair White defined the ‘comfort zone’ in 2008 as follows: The comfort zone is a behavioral state within which a person operates in an anxiety-neutral condition, using a limited set of behaviors to deliver a steady level of performance, usually without a sense of risk.

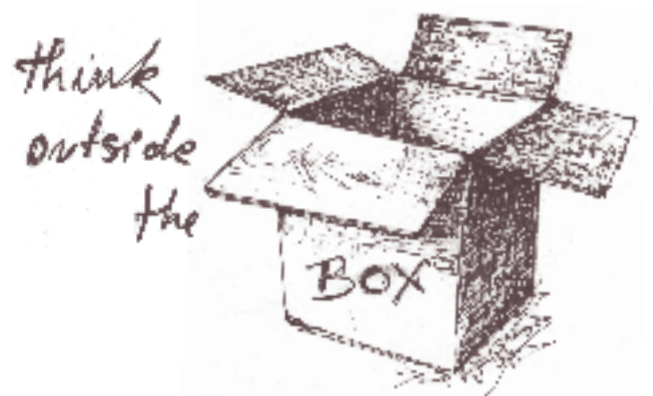
The idea of ‘leaving the comfort zone’ was first discussed after the ground-breaking experiment of the American psychologists Robert M. Yerkes and John D. Dodson in 1908. What they found is known today as the Yerkes-Dodson-law. The Yerkes-Dodson law defines and explains the relation between performance and arousal and shows that performance increases with mental arousal, but only up to a certain point. When the level of arousal becomes too high the performance decreases again. Combined with the idea of the comfort zone this means that a certain level of arousal generated as a result of the individual leaving her/his comfort zone results in a higher performance. However, if he or she oversteps the mark the benefits of leaving the comfort zone are lost. To put it differently: It is helpful to leave the comfort zone to a certain extent, for a certain time, but also important not to leave it completely for too long. In Adult Education we often say that we want participants (but also ourselves!) to step out of the comfort zone with one leg but to stay in it with another.

What does this approach mean for reconciliation and conflict resolution projects?

Increased performance in a reconciliation project means to open oneself up to new ideas, unusual solutions and real innovations. This demands a certain risk-taking from the one leaving his/her comfort zone; and it definitely also brings stress with it. However, especially in reconciliation and conflict resolution projects, this is essential because a deadlocked conflict will not be resolved by people who fail to leave their comfort zone; conflict resolution needs people and ideas that think outside the box.

There are many projects and initiatives on the ground that do not demand that implementators, parties involved, and participants, step out of the circle of the common and known. These projects repeat and repeat and repeat what has already been done. These projects are very often successful at first glance: Journalists from two hostile countries meet; the project evaluation and all oral statements from the project team and participants clearly show that they all got along very well, that there were no clashes between the groups and that they were even able to publish a joint article; all goals of the initial project proposal were reached; the impact indicators were 100% fulfilled and the expected results achieved. But did these journalists (and the project team) really leave their comfort zones? Could anything new be achieved within the project? Any progress? Any reconciliation? Very often not.

Unfortunately, most of the projects in the field of reconciliation today work like that: They do what can be done and do not risk entering unknown and uncertain territory. Such projects and activities are meaningless. A project that wants to make a real step forward, to bring real change, empowers its participants to think and act outside the box.



APPROACH

Low threshold approaches

When we talk about ‘low threshold’ in the context of reconciliation projects we primarily mean project approaches that provide an easy entry-point for our participants. In situations where relations between the parties are entrenched it may be extremely difficult for the representatives of the different conflict groups to enter into a dialogue oriented towards conflict resolution. In such cases it is often much easier to establish contact with each other via an unproblematic topic or activity, rather than directly talking about the conflict, its origin, and ways of resolving it. A lesson learned from our specific project is that ‘doing things together’ can very effectively lower barriers and reduce the fear of contact. This often works much better than debating even a supposedly unproblematic topic.



The book is called Narek after its author Grigor Narekatsi. It survived thanks to relatives of the owner while escaping in 1915 from Mush.

Photo: Sofia Manukyan

What kind of activities were these?

In the Turkish-Armenian projects people were (e.g.) send out to conduct interviews with contemporary witnesses, before which they received the relevant training. Another group who had to work on a joint publication first had to learn how creative writing works, what a catchy design should look like, or what kind of illustrations and photographs fit well. So, before dealing with difficult content, the participants shared a learning experience. The educational components of our projects were not only conflict mitigating but also an added value for the project as a whole. Some of the participants joined our reconciliation projects in the first place because of the education provided. And in this context it is also helpful if you have good and well known personnel who provide pulling powers. This can be a renowned professor, a prominent trainer, or an activist. A side effect of this modus operandi is that you may attract sections of the conflicting societies/groups that would not normally join a reconciliation project.

Using low threshold approaches also brings dangers with it: The biggest one is forgetting about the long-term objective of your reconciliation measure, which we have seen quite often. Project implementers concentrate on the low threshold activities and forget that this approach is meant as a door-opener and not as an end itself. The goal is to activate conflict partners for the reconciliation process not just for joint education. So without doing the oral history interviews after the classroom exercise your undertaking is pointless. The low threshold approach has to be understood as a ‘door opener’ not as the core issue. Neither is the use of the low threshold approach obligatory. In some groups it may not be necessary to provide an easy and smooth entry-point, for example if the participants already know each other from other reconciliation activities. The low threshold approach is an instrument to help launch your project, no more than that.

APPROACH

Foresighted risk management

Be aware that you designed your project in a certain political and societal situation, but this may also change, sometimes for the better, but sometimes for the worse. We need to take into account that the current situation we are living in and within which we are implementing the project or activity may be not a stable one. We need to take into account the possibility of change, especially change for the worse. A 'political climate change' can radically alter all the assumptions on which your intervention is based and – and that is the most important thing – endanger the attainment of your objectives and the psychological and physical integrity of your participants, the project team, and last but not least, yourself.

An example: In 2009 the overall mood regarding a reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia was very good. After long negotiations both sides agreed on establishing diplomatic relations and opening the border – an agreement called the 'Zurich Protocols' which was signed on the 10th of October by the foreign ministers of both countries. It was precisely that week that we conducted our first summer camp with students from Turkey and Armenia in Dilijan, Armenia. I clearly remember how we were all sitting and standing in the hall of the resort hotel staring with great interest at the flat screen hanging in one of the corners of the room. The signing process was then delayed by 3 hours, disputes were going on about some unclear formulations in the texts. We did not know anything about these disputes behind the scenes, but were speculating and beginning to doubt whether the protocols would be signed at all. Our nerves were all on edge, then they finally signed and the euphoria spread throughout the hotel hall. In the hopeful mood following the signing of the Zurich protocols we held our first summer camp, carried out interviews, and discussed endlessly for nights on end. The euphoric basic mood carried us through the whole first phase of the project, although there were already many signs that the protocols would fail immediately following their signing in Zurich.

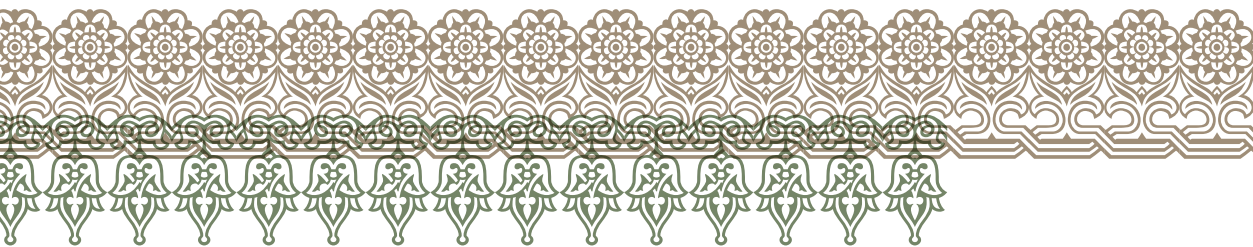
Somehow the majority of us did not want to listen to the skeptics, it felt so good to be on the optimistic side. Some workshops, traveling exhibitions, and summer camps later a documentary was shot about the project. And as the project was a very successful one, participants felt free to open up, to be brave and say things they had never said publicly before. This was very good for the documentary, made it richer, unique, and in this sense ground-breaking. It goes without saying that we had a long and intensive discussion among the organizers as to what extent we would and could allow the young participants to be so open, taking into account the situation in their home country. At that time the optimism still outweighed the skepticism which was already strongly felt by some. However, if we would have known how the political situation was to actually develop we would have perhaps decided differently. Maybe we would have been more careful. On the other hand, as I put these lines to paper, I have my doubts, because without its honesty and openness the film would not have made such an impact. The film was screened at many regional and also international festivals and is still screened today. It provides a powerful insight into what our project could achieve, and it still makes audiences think. What I want to highlight is the dilemma every reconciliation (or at least most of them) are faced with: As stated before, it is important to step outside the comfort zone and that means to take more risks than usual, that means encouraging participants to go beyond their own limitations and the limitations of their society's conventions. On the other hand, you as project organizers should act responsibly and implement a foresighted risk management strategy, taking into consideration that the current political situation can change rapidly without prior notice. What can be said freely today can be forbidden and punished with imprisonment the day after. It sounds naïve but do not risk the lives and integrity of the people you work with. Today's euphoria may be tomorrow's depression.

APPROACH

Expectations and building trust

In every project, training, seminar the very start is devoted to expectations. Everyone involved in an activity expects something – some people expect to gain knowledge of the topic, others to meet new friends, or to visit a new country. These expectations change in time and this is normal. The project manager in general expects a smooth work process, no conflicts, if possible, and to achieve some results. Participants have their own expectations, invited experts, researchers, and journalists as well. And it is not an easy task to manage all these expectations so that everyone is totally satisfied at the end. What is really important is to be aware that we are responsible for our expectations, that we should play an active role in realizing them. However, at the same time we need to be kind to ourselves and realize that each activity has its limits, and that it is not always healthy to push the limits.

Another very important aspect of reconciliation work is building trust among the people involved in a project. It is even more important when the projects address recent or distant conflicts. In this respect, two qualities of adult education work are crucial and vital for creating a safe space where everyone can freely express their hearts and minds. These are openness to listening to a different opinion, a different understanding on a certain issue, and respecting that others have a different opinion to one's own. Thus, the name of the first phase of the project, 'learning to listen', developed into 'speaking to one another' in the second phase and into 'acting together' in the third phase. Dialogue starts with listening. Listening was a key skill developed in the project – amongst the participants in the various activities, amongst the experts themselves, as well as when in the field listening to the stories of the elderly people from the neighboring country for the first time.



Neutrality

It is often underlined that neutrality is a key value for actors in conflict resolution. However, this is not possible or even productive in all conflicts. How could a conflict manager ignore the fact of the holocaust in a German-Israeli dialogue project after the Second World War. Such a project is simply unthinkable. We have similar situations in all contexts where genocide is involved or where the factual truth unequivocally assigns perpetrator and victim roles. And it is exactly here that it gets very difficult. It may be easier with cases where genocide has been largely acknowledged, but it can become extremely difficult in cases where the unequivocal truth is ignored by some of the parties involved or others indirectly involved in the conflict and the process of its resolution.

If we go back to the Armenian genocide one could argue that things are easy due to the high number of states that have recognized it and the scientific literature which is 99% on the side of those who recognize it. However, one could still be unsure if there was a sense that the acknowledgment or non-acknowledgement was politically motivated, and therefore prefer a neutral position. What understanding of the conflict does a person taking a neutral position have? This person is actively or implicitly stating that the solution to the conflict should be a balanced one, meaning that the resolution of the conflict should be a compromise between the conflicting parties. But can there be a compromise on genocide? Neutrality in this case undermines the authority of the conflict mediator and will hinder real reconciliation. In some conflicts an acknowledgement of the factual truth is a precondition for reconciliation. Or to say it in the words of Chum Mey, a former inmate of the Tuol Sleng Torture Prison in Cambodia: 'First comes justice, then comes reconciliation.'

On the other hand taking a position does not necessarily make it easier for the conflict mediator to obtain the trust of all conflict parties. Sometimes it may even make it impossible to deal with the conflict and its actors at all. Is it therefore acceptable to pretend to be neutral in the beginning and to take a clear position later? If we go back to our Armenian-Turkish project, we have to confess that not all the conflict mediators or actors involved positioned themselves clearly in the beginning. The author of these lines has to confess that he did not position himself clearly when the Armenian-Turkish project started. Did that help? Was that a good approach? Difficult to judge. In this specific case it was actually an obligation imposed on us by the project donor. The German Foreign office did not want us to use the term genocide for the 1915 events (that changed with the Bundestag resolution in 2016). And that made it – at least that is how I perceive it years later – easier for the Turkish colleagues to enter into dialogue with their Armenian counterparts. But in the end I am not sure if things would have been so much different if the organizers would have had a clear position on the genocide. I think it is more important to say that no participant should be forced to take any position, and that this has to be guaranteed by the conflict mediator no matter what position he/she takes.

METHOD

“Digging where you stand”

At the latest with the collapse of the major ideologies starting in the mid-eighties which became a reality in 1990/91, we can clearly recognize a tendency towards the fragmented, the medium sized, small, and individual. When the Cold War ended the idea of overarching omniscient meta-theories was dead. Earlier in the seventies, influenced by the multi-faceted cultural revolution(s) at the beginning of that century, a movement of people dissatisfied with the way history was taught and written began to grow in different countries of the so-called West. The history of big men and big events, mainly written by professional historians to feed the mainstream national narrative, left out the histories, life-stories, and experiences of the general population, the people living next door, the individual. Making use of the spirit of that time these unconventionally thinking people created a whole set of new and alternative approaches to dealing with the past and writing history:



In 1978 the Swedish writer Sven Lindqvist published his ground-breaking book 'Gräv där du står' (Dig where you stand) which was the main trigger for the History Workshop Movement in Europe. A history workshop is a network of predominately lay historians that researches the history of a certain location (local history), that can be a village, a street, a district of a city, or a workplace. A history workshop can be understood as a club composed of residents with an enthusiasm for history who explore the past of the place they live in. This approach goes hand in hand with the ideas of People's History and History from Below. All these approaches are centered around the average citizen and very often deal with the victims of history, with the people who have been killed, deported, and/or discriminated against. The topics they work on are very often unheard stories, historic narratives that do not contribute to the official narrative or the mainstream, which, on the contrary, are suppressed by the powerful. Dig where you stand means that history belongs to all of us, it is our past and we have the right and duty to research and draw conclusions from it. Therefore, it is a perfect tool for reconciliation and dialogue projects. By giving a voice and the main action to the people on the ground you create a new narrative beyond the competing official narratives of the hostile groups, societies, or countries. This creates a new and different space in which participants can discuss and work on their hostilities; a space which is not predefined by the conflict's stereotypes and the usual 'mainstream truths'. A good way of giving voice to the stories on the ground is to use the oral history methodology [see p. 64], which means conducting interviews with contemporary witnesses or their descendants (post or post-post memories).

METHOD

Student camps

Bringing young people together in a new place is enriching in many respects, beyond the benefits of the formal program with all its educational aspects. The students/participants have the opportunity to step out of their living environment and see things anew. Traveling to a new country might be challenging, especially if it is connected with a traumatic chapter from family history. Nevertheless, in a safe environment of learning and discussing, it could help in bringing about a new understanding and a recognition of the point of views of others. That is why one of the most important skills is to learn to attentively listen to others and be open to their opinions, which might be different to one's own – as hard as it sometimes is to really listen carefully through all the cross-talk in our heads, as hard it is to have the courage to openly express our opinions. This requires the building of a safe environment where everyone can speak their hearts and minds, without being judged or labeled. For the organizers and trainers at such student camps one of the most important issues is to ensure that everyone has enough time to freely express themselves and to explain from the very beginning that there are no wrong opinions and that together we are responsible for creating our learning experience.

At the first student camp, the program was designed around three thematic and training focuses, each of which was presented to the students in theory and practice – intercultural dialogue, oral history methodology, and working with history textbooks with case studies from the Balkans and South Caucasus. The aim of the second student camp was to empower the young people, the participants from the previous camp, to create their own micro-projects on reconciliation. Thus the program was also designed to cover the topic of project management, in addition to further input on memory studies and oral history. Three thematic groups were formed to develop professional skills in photography, video/documentary work, and creative writing [see p. 26–27].

An old lady from the village Voskehask, Armenia, who is the proud owner of the picture of Saints that she is holding on her chest brought from Kars.

Photo: Sofia Manukyan



METHOD

Student micro projects

The idea of student micro projects was born at the end of the first phase of the project. Students wished to play a more involved role, and they were indeed capable of doing so. To meet their wishes and fulfill this necessity, we came up with the idea of the student micro projects. Thus part of the program in the second student camp was devoted to the topic of project planning and implementation. The participants learned how to develop their own project ideas and to plan projects, as well as filling in applications and developing steps for the implementation of the projects. At the end of the summer camp, three groups of students developed three different project ideas. There was an Armenian group, a Turkish group, and a mixed group. After the summer camp, all three groups implemented their project ideas; two films entitled 'Nor&Eski' and 'Let's Talk, I'm Your Neighbour', as well as a publication entitled 'Armenian Voices of Istanbul' were the end results presented at the final workshop. This activity had both a very strong learning effect as well as providing an opportunity for an intensive exploration of the topic of reconciliation amongst participants from Armenia and Turkey.

METHOD

Interviewing (eye-)witnesses

When dealing with controversial issues from the recent past a key source of information are the (eye-)witnesses. The preservation of the personal stories and experiences of people who took part in or merely witnessed the events of the past under debate is enriching in various senses. Today, more and more professional historians are exploring and coming to value the method of oral history, thus exploiting opportunities to bring new perspectives to bear on our understanding of past events. In this way, the recorded interviews themselves become new historical documents. Although sometimes considered manipulative or one-sided due to their subjective character, the story of an (eye-)witness can serve as a complementary source adding a piece to the puzzle in order to better understand the recent past. Being personal it is quicker to touch the heart of the listener/interviewer/reader and at the same time transforms the grand narrative into a very concrete one. It opens up questions connected with responsibility, choices, and blame. It can heal or open wounds.



METHOD

Study visits

Study visits are very popular in adult education, as well in work focused on dealing with and processing the past. They serve as intensive learning opportunities bringing together both new knowledge and experiences, as well as a new perspective on the issue being studied. Usually conducted outside the participants' usual place of residence, and very often in another country, they provide a neutral space to reflect on a sensitive past from a new angle. Showing the experiences of another country helps to better understand your own situation, to broaden your view and gather ideas for the next steps. It develops analytical, critical thinking and observation skills, and raises many questions. Usually such trips combine academic lectures with visits to museums, history workshops, visiting places of remembrance, work in memorials, etc. Visits of this kind raise questions like – what evidence of the past is exhibited and what is its message? What topics are addressed, which ones are missing and why? How does this help us to understand how the past is constructed in the present?

The program of the study visit to Berlin was rich in approaches and formats. It included lectures and discussions on memory and history, a guided tour of the Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen, a visit to the memorial site 'Places of Remembrance', a visit to the Jewish Museum Berlin, a discussion about German-Polish cooperation, a screening and discussion of the film 'Stumbling Stones', a discussion with Members of the German Parliament, a presentation of the Digital Archive 'Forced Labour 1939–1945. Memory and History' (Oral History Project), a discussion on the experiences of the Franco-German Youth Office in reconciliation work – a jam-packed program including many talks on the way to and from all these sites and places.



Acting together – Growing Archive

Photo: Carmen Beckenbach

METHOD

Traveling exhibitions

A traveling exhibition is a method used in several DVV International history projects (the history project in South Eastern Europe, Turkish –Armenian reconciliation project, etc.) with the main aim of raising awareness and reflecting on controversial issues in a broader public setting. Opening its doors to the public for an extended period, it provides many visitors with the opportunity to come, see, and reflect on their own and then discuss with others. It provides a time and place for contemplation, for hearing one's own thoughts, for being open to different opinions. Within the adult education context, an exhibition is usually accompanied by additional public events, such as lectures, workshops, or discussions, which can approach the same topic and deepen reflection

on the issue. Being a traveling exhibition means that it stops off at several places, which requires work and good preparation. One option is for the exhibits to travel physically, another is to print them in the different countries, if possible. The exhibition can travel internationally, but also within a certain country. It can use static objects, posters, pictures, but it can also be interactive, providing an opportunity for visitors to take on different roles and shift from being an observer to an actor by giving his/her opinion on a question, for example. Such types of settings provide an opportunity for networking and questioning individual and collective memory, forming a space for intergenerational dialogue and a multiperspectivity of meanings.



Travelling exhibition in Gyumri, Armenia

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan

METHOD

Growing Archive

After successfully reinventing the idea of the Traveling Exhibition, the project designers of the last and most recent phase of the overall project developed the concept of the Growing Archive, which is in principle a fluid, interactive, and vivid interpretation and further evolution of the Traveling Exhibition. It was designed to start on the 24th of April, the day the Armenian intelligentsia were deported from Istanbul, and then grow from stop-over to stop-over until reaching the final destination of Yerevan in Armenia. People living along the projected route of the archive would not only contribute their own stories, items, and memories but also respond to the things already in the archive. At best this would initiate communication between the contributors and their contributions. Under the umbrella of the overall project topic people would be asked to enter into a dialogue with their own memories and oral tradition. In this way a collection composed of experiences, opinions, memories, perceptions, and maybe even prejudices and stereotypes of ‘the Armenians’ in today’s Turkey would emerge step by step, which would hopefully be critically reflected upon, added to, and maybe modified at the later stop-overs in the Republic of Armenia. A final exhibition open to the press and the interested public in Yerevan and (as planned in the proposal) at the German Bundestag would disseminate the results and guarantee a significant impact in the societies of all 3 countries involved.

The pedagogical concept of the Growing Archive follows – amongst others – the principle of the threshold approach [see p. 12]. The idea is to activate average citizens living on the route by offering them easy access, especially in consideration of the seriousness and severity of the topic and the political situation in their places of residence. It was our aim to facilitate participation in the Growing Archive first and foremost for those sections of the population that are not normally involved in reconciliation measures. Therefore, we tried to approach our participants with an offer that would not scare them, not



Acting together – Growing Archive

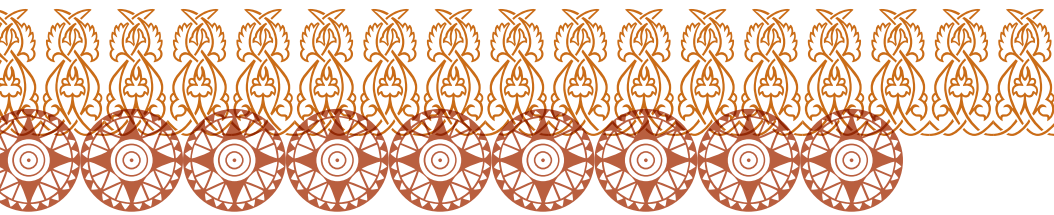
Photo: Carmen Beckenbach

demand too much of them, and give them sufficient space for free expression. In this way the Growing Archive is a grassroots approach and in a sense follows Joseph Beuys’s idea that ‘Everybody is an artist’.

Interested pedestrians would be asked the following very open question: *This is a growing archive exhibition collecting everything and anything that will travel by land from one place to another from Yerevan to Istanbul. What would be your contribution to this growing collection?*

The contributors were not restricted, it was completely up to them what they put in the archive and for what reason – nevertheless, more or less everything we found in the archive at the end of the journey was connected to Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. You could find drawings, jewelry, flowers, poems, diaries, glasses, photos, stones, and many more things in the archive. So the approach worked very well. The archive itself was stored in three old and over dimensioned steamer trunks. These suitcases had been modified with modern communication technologies that also allowed the screening of small clips. As part of the concept the suitcases were placed in public spaces. We tried to avoid ‘classic’ exhibition rooms, state institutions, all those places that would unnecessarily erect barriers and set limitations on the core idea of the Growing Archive.

Unfortunately, the deteriorating political situation prevented us from implementing the Growing Archive in Turkey. We had to change our initial plans: First we reversed the direction of travel, not from Istanbul to Yerevan but vice versa. Then, after violence increasingly spread, we had to cancel the Turkish part completely.



METHOD

Road Trip

“‘Deportation’ was just a euphemism for mass murder. No provision was made for their journey or exile, and unless they could bribe their guards, they were forbidden in almost all cases food and water.”

Walker, Christopher J. 1990. *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*. Routledge, p. 210, 205

Motion seems to be a pre-condition for genocide. At least if we take into consideration the two most devastating incidents of this kind in the 20th century: The genocide against the Armenians and the Holocaust. In both cases deportation came before extermination, with the two elements proceeding hand in hand and in parallel. Why do the perpetrators of mass crimes take people to another place before killing them? Do they want to commit their crimes unobserved? Do they want to hide the killings from the remaining sections of the population? Was their initial intention merely deportation not genocide? Is this an approach designed to facilitate the disposal of the bodies of those killed? We could dig much deeper here, but I think it already becomes clear why the idea of undertaking a road trip makes sense in the context of genocide, remembrance, and reconciliation.

On the 24th of April 1915 the majority of the Armenian intelligentsia living in Istanbul (at that time still called Constantinople) were deported from Haydarpasha Station heading east. Most of them were then murdered. The 24th of April 1915 is regarded as the start of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. Since the deportation was carried out by train, our initial idea was to travel from Haydarpasha with a mixed Turkish-Armenian group following the path of the 1915 deportation to the east. And as we were conducting a reconciliation project with the neighboring Republic of Armenia the route would not take us to the shores of the River Euphrates in today's Syria (where the death marches ended and tens of thousands of Armenians were killed, starved,

or died of thirst) but to Yerevan or even Meghri in the Republic of Armenia. It would then be a journey of understanding, meeting, and reconciliation between the two nations of today. An additional dimension was provided by the fact that many of the survivors fled to today's Armenia, which would focus the journey more on escaping and surviving, rather than turning it into a pure remembrance of those exterminated. It was planned that the Armenian-Turkish travel group would then stop at several stations on the way and try to involve local populations on the ground: Attempting to get in touch with them and opening up a dialogue on multiethnicity, the Armenians, and living peacefully together. We foresaw concerts, exhibitions, oral history interviews, film screenings, public discussions, theatre performances, and other creative things to be held at these stations. However, unfortunately the political situation and associated security concerns did not allow us to act as planned. First we had to postpone the Turkish part of the trip and to turn around the whole idea: Now the trip was to start in Armenia and, if the security situation were to improve, proceed to Istanbul. However, the situation in Turkey did not improve. Instead it worsened with every week; in the end the Turkish section had to be canceled completely. Nevertheless, we were able to see the high quality of the initial idea confirmed in its realization in Armenia where local citizens were actively involved in the Road Trip activities, e.g. the Growing Archive [see p. 21] or the Road Magazine [see p. 24], which were organized in parallel.

METHOD

Road Magazine and Travel Diary

Another attempt to reach new target groups. After finishing the first two phases, Learning to Listen and Speaking to One Another, one of the weaknesses exposed in the evaluation was the low level of dissemination among target groups not already working in the 'Armenian-Turkish sector'. In response the Growing Archive [see p. 21] was designed and the Road Magazine invented. I got to know the German makers of FROH! magazine in Georgia where they were carrying out a workshop for the young art-scene on how to make an up-to-date print magazine. The product called 'Mtkvari' was convincing, young, and addressed other target groups than those which our reconciliation projects were able to reach at the time. What if we were to produce such a stylish young and hip magazine with the content of our reconciliation work? Wouldn't it interest people that normally don't deal with genocide and reconciliation? Wouldn't that be a way to reach the inaccessible?

From its inception, the idea of the Road Mag was to reach people in all three societies which up to now had not been reached by our projects or the topics we worked on. And from the beginning it was clear that this would be a tightrope walk: Combining the loud, colorful, and trendy Cologne-based magazine with the traumatic fact of the Armenian genocide would be a difficult undertaking. We could easily have produced another book consisting of oral history, photography, performance, or scientific scholarly material; but all that would not have made a difference. We would not have widened our impact and reached new target groups. Following the self-imposed principle of leaving the comfort zone [see p. 11] we wanted to give this experiment a try. The basic idea consisted of a mixed Armenian-Turkish-German Road Magazine team that would produce the whole booklet on the trip while riding busses and trains through Turkey and Armenia. On the final station of the Road Trip the magazine would be ready for printing. However, things didn't go as planned: In Turkey, the war between the PKK and the Turkish army vio-

lently escalated, in addition several terrorist attacks took place and increased pressure on Turkish civil society made it impossible for us to implement the Road Trip from Istanbul to Yerevan as planned.

Nevertheless, in the fall of 2016 the magazine with the title 'Acting Together' was in print. To give you an impression of the content here are the titles of some of the articles included in the magazine:

- ❖ *Ararat in our hearts and minds.*
The history and legacy of the sacred Mt Ararat
- ❖ *We don't choose where and when to be born.*
An orphan saved up his entire life to reopen the orphanage that raised him
- ❖ *Depth of field. Places and their stories*
- ❖ *A close shave. Conversations about the 1988 earthquake in Gyumri's oldest barbershop*
- ❖ *Fire and water. The Taste and Sound of History*
- ❖ *Radio Yerevan. Republican Radio of Armenia, Kurdish Service, also known as Radio Yerevan, the Voice of the Kurds*

All the articles were written by young citizens of Armenia and Turkey and composed while traveling in Armenia. Special attention was paid to the photography and illustrations for the booklet using photographs from members of the Road Mag team. On top of the security issues already described, we also struggled with the increasing political tensions between the two, better three countries. With every week and month, it became more difficult to reach agreement on the text of the magazine amongst the participants and organizers from the different countries. The issue of how we would fill the gap of the cancelled Turkish section of the Road Trip also had to be resolved. We agreed on adding an insert to the

*A road trip with
the whole group from
Moush, Turkey to
nearby village Vardo,
Turkey*

Photo: Nane Khachatryan:



finished magazine reflecting the changed situation in Turkey and the region and within the project. On the 15th of July we had our final meeting in Istanbul, all open questions concerning the magazine and the other activities and publications seemed to have been resolved, or at least were well on the way. Then that night Turkey was hit by a coup d'état attempt whose results and impact rapidly changed the situation in the country for the worse.

Time will tell if the initial idea of the magazine will work out: Will it help generate interest in the Turkish-Armenian conflict, the Armenian Genocide, and our reconciliation work amongst new target groups? At this stage, a number of days prior to the printing of the Road Mag, we are certain, despite all the security and political concerns, that it will.

In addition to the Road Magazine it was planned to produce another publication virtually on the road: The Travel Diary was designed to be written by one author from Armenia and one from Turkey. The two accounts would then be translated into three languages and published together. The idea was that the authors would have as much artistic freedom as they wanted and needed but that they would keep

the diary idea, meaning that the narrative would somehow reflect the road trip and the things experienced and observed on it. A literary interaction between the two authors was not intended or necessary. The outcome would then be published in a book including two interpretations of one and same road trip: A perspective from a citizen of Turkey and an insight from a citizen of the Republic of Armenia in one joint book.

As mentioned above, the Turkish section of the Road Trip was not implemented, therefore the two diaries only cover the Armenian part of it. In the end, the political situation put a spoke in our wheel once again: We could not print the two diaries in one book because of the potentially negative impact on our colleagues in Turkey.

METHOD

Photography

Visualization is a very powerful tool for reaching people. In journalistic language there is a mantra that states that one good image is worth a thousand words. Having this in mind, and also the fact that nowadays everybody is continually taking pictures, our adult education approach led us to the conclusion that it would be beneficial to provide participants with the necessary skills to make good photos. In addition to the technical skills, a well-framed photo tells a story. One of the issues discussed in the photography group was what kind of stories do we want

to tell through our visual material? Photography is used to express ideas visually through the photographer's choice of framing. Reading this intentional framing we begin to understand the idea behind a picture. This workshop held during the second student camp helped participants discover a visual language and experiment to create photographs that tell stories. Thus, the objective was to teach photographic imaging techniques as well as artistic ways of expressing ideas through lectures and outdoor shootings.



Photographer Sibel Maksudyan taking photos for the project in Mardin

Photo: Leyla Neyzi

METHOD

Video/documentary making

Making documentaries is challenging, but at the same time they can be very effective tools, especially when working with sensitive issues. In a short space of time documentaries can present the essence of a story, revealing various angles and the main actors involved. The story itself is the most important element of any documentary, it should be a story you are passionate about and that is meaningful for you. After the initial idea begins the research phase when you need to collect the material needed for your work. Then you need to make a plan of where and how the shooting will take place, including the equipment needed. As in all projects good preparation is half the work. Within this Armenian-Turkish project three documentaries were produced – one by the professional director Somnur Vardar (The Beginnings) and two self-produced by some of the students/participants in the project ('Nor&Eski', 'Let's Talk, I'm Your Neighbor'). The students that were interested in shooting a documentary received instruction during the second student camp. The program highlighted how to record people telling their stories and included: Viewing various oral-history video recordings and discussing them; interviewing techniques, framing, audio and lighting; comforting the subject chosen, helping interviewees relax in front of the camera; in-class exercises with available equipment; participants interviewing each other or other volunteers on camera; trouble shooting during filming; a discussion of the recorded material; basic editing techniques; creating material for further documentary options using your recorded footage.

The Documentary „Beginnings“ (2013)

BEGINNINGS | YOLUN BAŞINDA |
Director: Somnur Vardar / Turkey / 2013 /
HDCAM / Color / 86' / English-Turkish-
Armenian-Kurdish; English & Turkish s. t.

A group of young people from Armenia and Turkey meet in two cities for the „Speaking to One Another“ project. First they search out the traces of Armenian life in Mush in south-eastern Turkey. Then they explore the memories of the people whose ancestors were expelled from Mush in 1915 and settled near Gyumri, Armenia. During their explorations friendships develop, however that involves them questioning the notions of friendship and trust as well as the issues of memory, history, genocide, denial, and the demand for truth. The documentary „Beginnings“ depicts how the discourses of conflict and reconciliation are discussed with passion, compassion, resentment, distrust, or simply with pure youthful joy.

APPROACH

“Ashnak Golden Moments”

These are very precious unexpected moments that are neither planned nor envisioned in the project, but have a huge impact at the personal level and make one realize the significance of all the work done. Ashnak is an Armenian village very close to the Turkish-Armenian border, mainly populated by descendants of genocide survivors from the Sasoun region in today's Turkey, which is why some of the inhabitants of this village were interviewed for the first book of the project 'Speaking to One Another'. During the International Workshop held in Yerevan within the context of the second phase of the project we received an invitation from villagers to visit them together with all our friends from Turkey. Our Armenian expert suggested using this opportunity to bring freshly published books to the villagers as a present. The interviewees, some of them in their 70s or even 80s were so overwhelmed with emotion and energy that the whole project was influenced in a very positive way. If our project management would have been 'classical', the 'Ashnak Golden Moment', that's how everybody called it later, would not have happened. It was a very emotional evening with lots of poetry, dancing, and tears.

We had a similar experience when visiting the village of Vakifli in Turkey. Vakifli is an Armenian Village in Turkey located on the Musa Dagh (Musa mountain). The Musa Mountain became famous thanks to Franz Werfel's book *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* which describes the resistance and rescue of inhabitants from six Armenian villages in the vicinity of the mountain. Vakif is one of those six villages and the only Armenian village remaining in today's Turkey. The project's second student camp was organized in Antakya/Hatay. It was planned to visit Vakif and conduct some interviews with villagers. During the meetings we received an invitation from villagers for a festive dinner devoted to the opening of the hunting season. As in Ashnak there was a warm atmosphere with lots of positive emotions, singing, and dancing. Neither of the visits were planned, nevertheless they made an important contribution to improving mutual understanding and are held in fond memory by all those involved.



*An interviewee receiving a book
and seeing her story in it,
Ashnak, Armenia*

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan

APPROACH

Principles and basic conditions of our work

- ❖ Bringing people together always pushes things in a positive direction.
- ❖ Learning about each other and learning with each other strengthens the common ground for respect and understanding.
- ❖ Adult education empowers people. All processes start within the participant. The individual as an actor and member of a social group stands at the center of all interventions.
- ❖ Past causes present, present causes future, past causes future. This 'universal truth' is also valid for the individual and his past (biographical approach).
- ❖ ('Big') History is a combination of (as many) smaller histories (as available).
- ❖ Historical truth is a rapprochement with factual truth. (One could therefore also argue that there is no historical truth only rapprochement with it).
- ❖ History writing is interpretation for the present but should be interpretation for the sake of a better future (controversial).
- ❖ Big history needs to be supplemented by history from below. People's history has to have the same significance as political history.
- ❖ Human beings' perception, decision-making, and processing is based on one's own experiences and learnt experiences. Remembrance – as a form of individual history writing – has a big influence on people's future decisions. The better this personal history writing works, the better the decisions taken for the sake of the future. (Hypothesis)



- ❖ Learning is not only an important tool for understanding the world better but also for strengthening one's own personal psychological health. Learning is therefore not only positive in a cognitive sense (gaining knowledge), it also allows people to reach higher levels of empathy, balance, and stability. All these are important preconditions for being a responsible citizen.
- ❖ Societies are a 'puzzle' of individuals living according to a certain, widely agreed convention. The educated (lifelong) learner contributes in a positive way to a democratic and free society of active citizens.
- ❖ Reconciliation projects should facilitate dialogue on conflictive issues and not ignore that a conflict exists or avoid conflictive situations.

History Workshops

Susanne Popp

History Workshops are groups or associations, which undertake research into and the presentation of local and regional history 'from below'. On the one hand, 'from below' refers to a type of historical narrative or research which attempts to account for historical events/processes from the perspective of common people rather than leaders. In particular, there is an emphasis on the underprivileged, the oppressed, the rebellious, the poor, or otherwise marginal or subordinated groups. This includes an interest in the repressed and buried history of common people on the ground (victims, but also perpetrators and collaborators) and asks how they managed their lives in politically, economically, or socially demanding circumstances. On the other hand, the principle 'from below' refers to an understanding of history which primarily looks at the everyday life and the direct living environment of the common people on the ground. Finally, the principle 'from below' relates to a democratic and empowering 'active appropriation of one's own history' by the 'people' that is oriented to the public. The (lay) researchers position themselves as subjects of their engagement with history. The idea of democratization includes the principle of collaboration between laymen and historians. Raphael Samuel, the founder of the British History Workshop movement, defined the movement as being '[...] the belief that history is or ought to be a collaborative enterprise, one in which the researcher, the archivist, the curator and the teacher, the 'do-it-yourself' enthusiast and the local historian, the family history societies and the individual archaeologist, should all be regarded as equally engaged.'¹

The History Workshop movement started in Britain in the 1970's with a strong socialist orientation. Famous publications from the early years of

the movement led many people to explore their local and personal history, e.g. the 'History Workshop Journal', launched in 1976 by Raphael Samuel (1938–1996), Sven Lindqvist's Swedish publication 'Gräv där du står' (1978, Dig where you stand. Guide to doing research on your own history) or, in the USA, Howard Zinn's 'A People's History of the United States: 1492–Present' (1980, revised 1995).

From its inception the History Workshop Movement was directed against a dominant type of historiography that only looked at 'powerful men', but also against an abstract social and structural history that gave no attention to the individual experiences of the 'ordinary' people in their daily lives and failed to investigate the impact of major political and other events on their lives. Finally, the movement saw itself as a critical corrective to a dominant historical culture [see p. 62], which suppressed, concealed, or was oblivious to certain parts of history that did not accord with the desired public image.

In later stages, new historiographical trends, like women's history or the history of migration, became influential parts of the History Workshop Movement. Today's History Workshop Movement has generally left behind the early leftist orientation, however four constant features remain: a critical awareness of the official historical memory and culture, a reference to everyday life and the 'ordinary' people, a focus on the local and regional history on the ground, and an orientation to the present.

The historical sources used by History Workshops are on the one hand written, visual, and material sources as they are available in archives and museums or in private collections, like e.g. newspapers, collections of files, trial records, historical photographs, maps, paintings, diaries, letters – to name

Traveling exhibition creative brochure

Photo: Carmen Beckenbach

but a few. On the other hand, striving for a history that does not deny individual experiences, personal testimonies of local people, biographical research (e.g. interviews) and – above all – oral history methods play a crucial role.

History workshops are characterized by a number of typical activities, including bringing local people together for (mostly) volunteer work on common history research projects and publishing books, articles, and brochures in print and/or online in order to share the findings with the public. For the mediation of the acquired knowledge to the public they also use innovative methods: There are e.g. neighborhood tours, which focus on the history of 'ordinary' people or historical topics that are excluded from the official city tourist guides; there are public discussions, lectures, and workshops dealing with interviews and testimonies by contemporary witnesses; there are forms of theatre (e.g. along the lines of the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' from the Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal), film and video projects, exhibitions, historical trails, and local cultural work, such as initiatives for the erection (or removal) of a memorial, the installation of memorial sites or the re-naming of a street ...

Finally, a highly enduring form of work needs to be mentioned: The establishment of archives, with documentations of interviews with eye witnesses and biographical testimonies (per audio or video recording), with collections of written sources and photographs or other visual sources – collected and organized for the further use of the public. Currently, the design of (interactive) websites and the development of mobile devices and apps are playing an increasingly important role.



FURTHER READING

- URL: <http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/>
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Gender History

Susanne Popp

Gender History is a sub-field of history and gender studies which looks at the past from the perspective of gender. The category 'gender' establishes a distinction between 'natural' sexual identity ('sex') and sex-based social structures, such as gender roles (femininity or masculinity) as a set of social attributions, expected behavior patterns, and specific possibilities and limitations of the individual's scope of action. The norms and values of gender roles are not based in nature, but in society (e. g. as a result of the division of labor, tradition, religion, education and – last but not least – power relations). Therefore, they change during the historical process. 'Gender roles' impact the lives of people all over the world. Therefore, the category 'gender' has to be understood as a fundamental category of historical research and representation, just like class or ethnicity.

In many ways, Gender History is based on Women's History. This approach, starting in the 1960's in the UK and the US in the context of the women's movement, was primarily dedicated to providing women with an identity-empowering view of history. Therefore, Women's History turned against prevailing male-dominated historiography (authors, texts) that excluded the female section of society with its specific experiences and scopes of action from historical research and historical representation. In a first step, the new approach searched for the 'forgotten' women of the past and studied the history of the women's movement by uncovering and using previously unrecognized sources. However, the program of 'making women visible' in history was not restricted to the 'outstanding' women of the past. Step by step the research included unknown 'ordinary women' – e.g. housewives or female workers – and their daily life experiences as

well as their activities in shaping their social, cultural, and political environment. This kind of research often focuses on local history and is often related to the History Workshop Movement [see p. 30] (e. g. biographical research and eye witness interviews; exhibitions, city tours, lectures; the setting-up of local archives and document and picture-databases etc.). In general, the approach of Women's History today is understood as a 'compensatory' approach insofar as it strives to have its findings integrated into 'general' history.

The beginnings of gender theory in the 1990's once again challenged commonly held ideas of the historical discipline as well as putting Women's History to the test. The gender approach which addressed the historical questions of the social practice of gender construction, the discourses of masculinity and femininity, and gender-related power relations in society, called for a paradigmatic shift in the historical discipline: Gender History's approach, influenced by the theory of 'constructivism', was concerned with all areas of the historical discipline instead of merely addressing a specific area (e. g. military history, the history of the workers' movement). The gender-historical approach required a general change of perspective in the study of social relations and systems of historical interpretation in order to ensure that the social orders of gender are conceived as central structural elements of any society which are nevertheless subject to change depending on the historical situation. The historical discipline was required to 'do gender' as a consequence of the recognition that all subjects in society play an active role in maintaining and/or shaping gender coded orders.

Gender History deals with traditional Women's History topics from a new perspective and establish-

Personal memory and object for the Growing Archive

Photo: Carmen Beckenbach



es different ones, e. g. by including the gender history of masculinity and its historical impact on men and women, or developing gender perspectives on topics like sexuality, family politics, or images of mothers, fathers, and families in media discourses. Since Gender History is not so closely linked to the women's movement as Women's History, it also initiated critical research on the participation of women in the social and cultural reproduction of gender codes and gender related social inequality. In Germany, for example, the role of German women under the Nazi dictatorship was critically examined.

Women's History did not neglect the various social factors that impact on the life of women. However, for Gender History the so called 'intersectional' methodological approach is indispensable as its main concern is the history of the social construction of gender. 'Intersectionality' means a multi-perspective analysis of gender topics that includes their highly complex interaction with aspects of social and economic status, ethnicity, cultural, national and/or religious affiliation, color, age, education level, and other axes of social inequality in social relationships.

Gender History has now become established in the universities (in historical and social sciences), however a lot of work is still done outside of academia – by groups and associations comparable to the History Workshop Movement.

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Difficult Pasts, Difficult Presents: Research Experiences in Turkey and Armenia

Leyla Neyzi

When I was invited by DVV International to take part in an exploratory meeting in Yerevan on the topic of a possible three-way collaboration between academics and colleagues working in adult education in Germany, Armenia, and Turkey, I was pleasantly surprised. Despite the seeming thaw at the time, there were no official relations between the Republic of Armenia and Turkey due to their intertwined but difficult history. I had never traveled to Armenia, and knew little about it. As an anthropologist and

oral historian trained in the U.S., I considered myself a global citizen and was open to learning from this new experience. I felt that my education abroad had allowed me to transcend parochial allegiances and develop a critical approach towards national(ist) histories. Little did I realize how challenging this would turn out to be.

The trouble started early. The lack of official relations between the two countries means that it is difficult to travel and difficult to cross borders. Flights



*Students from
Armenia and Turkey
near Turkish-
Armenian border*

Photo: Eylem Nazlı Taşdemir

from Istanbul to Yerevan do exist, but they are few and far between. When our small group of academics first landed in Yerevan in the early hours of the morning, those who worked at public universities and had official passports were inexplicably detained. This situation created a mini diplomatic crisis, and our colleagues were only allowed to join us after hours of waiting and some heavy telephone traffic between Yerevan and Ankara.

This example demonstrates that social scientists working on reconciliation between states with difficult histories must deal with their multiple, sometimes conflicting identities: those as social scientists and those as citizens. Educated in the U.S. as a cultural anthropologist, I saw myself as a global citizen. Yet my passport, and the fact that I was raised in Turkey, meant that I would invariably be perceived as a 'Turk' in the Republic of Armenia. Of course this is inevitable at the official level. Yet I was hoping that I would be able to transcend this perception at the personal level, in my relationships with fellow social scientists and university students. This would turn out to be more of a challenge than I had predicted at first.

During our workshop in Yerevan, after some ice-breaking exercises, we brainstormed about possible research and applied projects. We gradually came up with some ideas which turned out to be a winning combination: oral history, young people, living and working as a team over time with a focus on the process as well as creating distinct products for a wide audience.

The challenges of language and (cultural) translation

One of the biggest unexpected obstacles for me concerned language. When I agreed to take part in this meeting, I had not thought about this issue. It was only after traveling to Yerevan that I learned that most established social scientists in Armenia had been trained in the Russian system, and that their academic language was Russian (and Armenian). I, on the other hand, was trained in the U.S., and my academic language was English (and Turkish). When

I arrived in Armenia I found out that I and Hranush Kharatyan, the anthropologist and oral historian who was to be my counterpart there, do not share a common language. This meant that in all our meetings a translator had to be present. Not being able to communicate directly was a huge challenge, and I believe that a great deal of miscommunication and misunderstanding would have been avoided had we been simply able to speak. One of the lessons I learned from this project therefore is the importance of having a shared language when working together. Having been trained in different scholarly traditions, my colleague and I also differed in our approaches to social science in general and oral history in particular. Also, our attitudes towards our identities and the goals of the project differed. As someone who belonged to a newly independent country, Armenian national identity was a core identity for my colleague. I learned during the course of the project that the Armenian Genocide had been taboo in Soviet times, and that it formed the core of the Armenian national narrative since independence. I surmised that for my colleague the challenge of taking part in the project involved an opportunity to confront the Turkish state and public with the fact of and consequences resulting from the Armenian Genocide. For me, on the other hand, having been raised in a liberal, multilingual, multicultural environment, and having spent many years abroad, I consider myself as belonging to a community of like-minded social scientists the world over. As a social scientist I hope that my attitude towards nationalism is one of critical distance. This is why I, as an oral historian and individual, wanted to take part in a project which focused on reconciliation between ordinary peoples. I did of course want to see how and in what ways people in Turkey did or did not speak about this difficult history. But my attempt to write about the subject had to take into account the fact that the subject remained taboo in Turkey. Therefore my goal was to focus on the gray areas, the complexity, the ambiguities, and contradictions, which oral history effectively addresses through its use of people's own stories and anecdotes (including their silences).

A surprising encounter

I remember a surprising encounter I had on my first trip to Yerevan. I had just checked into the hotel and a young man at the reception desk was helping me. I automatically spoke in English. When I entered the elevator to go to my room I forgot that the elevator did not work unless you inserted your room key. What happened next was a surprise: The young man at the reception desk who understood what was going on, called out to me in Turkish: 'sister, use the room key!' I was so shocked that I went back to the desk, speaking in Turkish and finding out that his family were originally from Turkey and spoke Turkish as well as Armenian at home. This was an introduction for me to the complex present of Armenian-Turkish relations.

The oral history project

Our plan was to bring together English-speaking university students majoring in the social sciences in Armenia and Turkey. These young people would spend time together in both Armenia and Turkey, learning about the methodology of oral history. They would subsequently conduct oral history research under the guidance of a professional oral historian in each country. The results of the research would be shared with ordinary people in both countries in Armenian and Turkish in the form of a book of stories with illustrations, along with other products such as a website and a traveling exhibition.

In creating our proposal, preexisting constraints and the goals of the initiators of the project had to be taken into account. Preexisting constraints included the following: The lack of official relations between the Republic of Armenia and Turkey posed bureaucratic, administrative, and potential security challenges which affected the organization of travel, residence, work, and research. While not easy or guaranteed, Armenian citizens and Turkish citizens were nevertheless able to obtain visas for travel, and the thaw in official relations at the time made our situation easier. The biggest obstacle looming over

the project was the difficult history that necessitated the project in the first place: While the Armenian Genocide constituted the founding national narrative of the Armenian Republic, it was officially denied by the Turkish Republic, which meant that history books and common knowledge in Turkey offered an alternative national narrative in which Ottoman Armenians were represented as nationalists and revolutionaries who rose up against the Ottoman regime resulting in the wholesale deportation of the Armenian population. These different (and opposed) national(ist) narratives raised the question of how to conduct shared research which would address this difficult past. This is why we agreed that working with the younger generation, creating an arrangement that would make co-residence possible, and using the methodology of oral history would be most suitable.

It is important to point out that ours was a pioneering project. Since that time, many joint projects have been conducted between Armenia and Turkey, and travel between the two countries has become much more common. However, ours was one of the first academic and applied projects initiated between the two countries. This also meant that it was exploratory and experimental. To tell the truth, we had to work with our instincts, and were not sure what to expect. I think the decision to work with young people was extremely successful. We wanted to bring together English-speaking university students studying social science in an informal, face-to-face environment so that they would have the chance, first and foremost, to get to know one another as individuals.

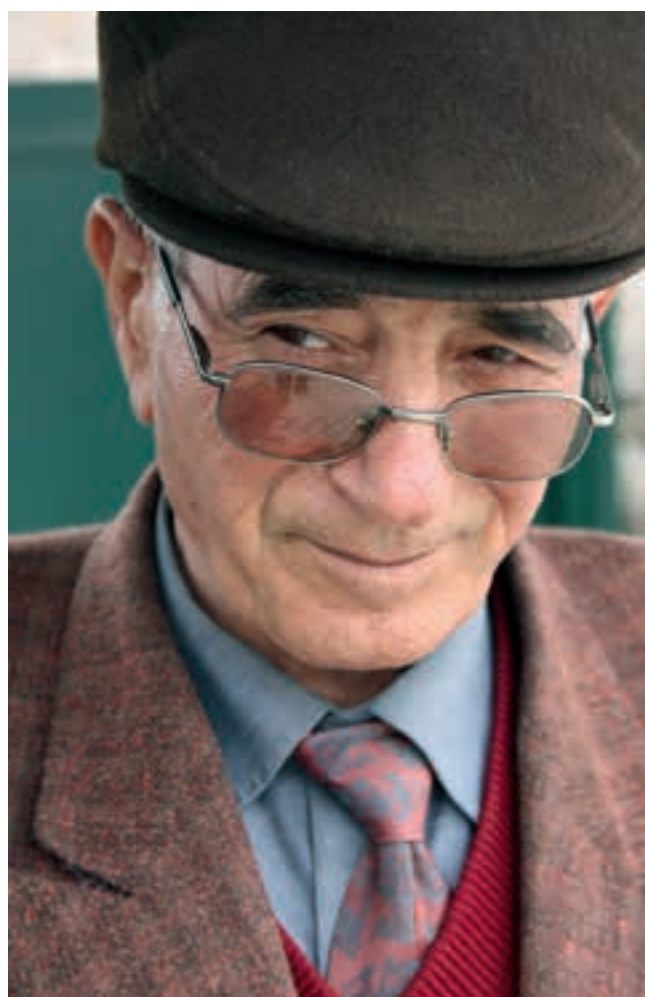
Our first camp in the beautiful surroundings of Dilijan, Armenia achieved just this. We stayed as a group in the same building with students from Armenia and Turkey sharing rooms. During the several days that we were together we had a tightly planned schedule which included educational as well as social activities. The idea was that despite their possible prejudices, stereotypes, and preconceptions, youth from the same age group would share some common interests derived from a common global

youth culture and their daily activities as young persons. Being in an isolated setting as a group, eating, working, and socializing together over an extended period was very successful in breaking the ice and creating a sense of togetherness.

In organizing the educational activities at the camp we had consciously decided not to focus on regional/national history per se, which would likely result in conflict and disagreement, but rather to introduce students to oral history methodology, a toolbox most were unfamiliar with. Unlike history, which focuses on the nation, oral history focuses on the individual. We believed—and found—that this would prove a much more successful point of entry into the subject of difficult histories. I taught an intensive class on oral history in Dilijan to a group of over twenty university students.

The student camp in Dilijan, Armenia succeeded in its goals of bringing young people face to face and forming a group that would work together to conduct research to get to know one another. It was important to be in a quiet, isolated, natural setting which allowed new acquaintances time to form both in a group and on a one-to-one basis. The fact that students roomed and socialized together in the evenings gave the camp an informality and a basis for friendships that would later be consolidated through social media and further camps, project meetings, and visits.

One of the challenges of our project was how to select the young people taking part. As the director of oral history research in Turkey I worked in cooperation with the Istanbul office of the German institution, DAAD. Students enrolled in social science programs in Turkey were asked to fill out an application in English and submit it to DAAD. Students were then selected based on their qualifications and essays. We were pleased that over ten very competitive young people from diverse backgrounds were able to take part in the project. Participants included students at the B.A. and M.A. levels studying at universities in Turkey where the language of instruction is English. While citizens of Turkey, these students had diverse ethnic, religious, and language backgrounds,



Interviewee in Kayseri

Photo: Sibel Maksudyan

including those who identified as Turks, Kurds, or Armenians. In Armenia the students were selected through the DVV International office in Yerevan.

Subsequent to the camp in Dilijan we proceeded to organize the oral history research in Turkey and Armenia. Due to the necessity of speaking the language, the team in Turkey conducted oral history interviews in Turkey and the team in Armenia conducted interviews in Armenia. However, it was possible for students in each country to gain some experience with fieldwork in the other country.

In Armenia, oral history interviews were conducted with the descendants of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, many of whom came from what is now Turkey. In Turkey, on the other hand, the focus of the oral history research was on how Armenians were remembered in Turkey. This previously unstudied issue was at first sight quite daunting. Given that the

Armenian Genocide was officially unrecognized and therefore taboo in the public sphere, any mention of Armenians in public in Turkey tended to flag political and diplomatic debates that were not conducive to productive oral history research. In addition, the focus of the project was reconciliation rather than war, genocide, and conflict. How were we to approach the research in Turkey? We even asked ourselves whether it was at all possible to conduct research on this taboo subject in Turkey.

We decided to employ an experimental, exploratory approach. We selected regions in Turkey where Armenians had been numerous in the past or continued to live in the present. The interviews would be conducted by myself, my research assistants, who were students at Sabanci University, and by the students in the project who had been trained in oral history. Rather than approaching any public or private institutions in the selected regions, we decided to locate our potential interviewees as much as possible through personal networks. This seemed the safest way to ensure acceptance and trust at the local lev-

el. Using the diverse social networks of the research team, we created a list of potential interviewees in the selected regions—including Istanbul, the Black Sea region, Central Anatolia, eastern Anatolia and southeastern Anatolia. These interviewees had little in common apart from the fact that they possibly shared memories about Armenians who had previously lived in Turkey (or were themselves Armenians currently living in Turkey). We tried to select potential interviewees who were as diverse as possible in terms of region of origin, age, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, and language. This was because we viewed our research as exploratory. Rather than focus on a particular region or group, we wanted to cast our net as widely as possible.

Once we had decided where to travel to and whom to visit and interview, we focused on preparing for the interview proper. How to approach the interview situation and what to ask and in what way were crucial to the success of the interviews. We relied on the fact that we were either acquainted with our interviewees in some way or had an intermedi-



Old copper bowl with oriental patterns and a small bead, that was carried all the way from Mush to Armenia during the Genocide.

Photo: Nane Khachatryan

ary to vouch for us. Our preference was to conduct the interviews in the home of the interviewee. Interviews were conducted in Turkish in a one-to-one relationship between the interviewee and interviewer. Prior to the interview we asked permission to record the interview using an audio recorder. We also asked our interviewees whether we could use their names or whether they preferred to remain anonymous.

Doing research on a taboo subject and on difficult histories poses particular challenges. One of the obvious yet most difficult issues that faced us was how to introduce our project to our interviewees. What would we tell them about the project, and how would this affect our planned interview? The issue of language and terminology is extremely sensitive in such situations. For example, would it be useful for us to use the word 'Armenian' or *Ermeni* in Turkish? Although it seems obvious that the project could not have been introduced without reference to the word 'Armenian,' we were also aware of the red flags that the term alone would raise, possibly even resulting in our inability to obtain permission to conduct and/or record an interview. Our use of the word 'Armenian' might start a debate about politics focused on the issue of genocide (or 'supposed genocide,' a term frequently used in public discourse in Turkey). This would make it difficult for us to get at what we were really after as oral historians, which concerned what particular individuals remembered and narrated about their own (or their parents' and grandparents') experiences of the past.

As a result, even though we hoped that our interviewees would speak about actual Armenian individuals who may have lived in the local setting in the past, we decided it would be more useful to introduce our research as one focused on local history. We told our interviewees that we were interested in their knowledge of and memories concerning the past—including their own, their family's and their community's past. We also phrased our interview questions in such a way so as to ensure that they were as neutral, descriptive, and open-ended as possible. We simply asked our interviewees to tell us about the past, going back as far as they could remember—in-

cluding memories passed down to them by previous generations. We asked them about their forebears, and what they knew of/remembered about their great-grandparents and grandparents. We asked them about the local setting, including their home and everyday life in the present and in the past. With these opening questions, and through deep listening techniques, we tried to create an atmosphere which would allow our interviewees to build a performance and narrative of their own.

We hoped that during the course of speaking about the past, our interviewees would introduce topics and key words that would be of interest to us. This would then allow us to probe further. For example, we found that when we asked questions about work, the division of labor, rituals and special occasions, homes, material culture and everyday life, in one way or another we would encounter stories about particular Armenians. This would then make it possible for us to learn about how Armenians were remembered as particular named individuals rather than as a category or an undifferentiated collective group. As oral historians are wont to do, we then tried to learn as much as possible about these individuals and our interviewees' relationship to them. This microscopic focus gave us insights into how our interviewees perceived Armenians and the history of Turkish-Armenian relations, but our point of departure was individual, local, and experiential, rather than national, general, and attitudinal.

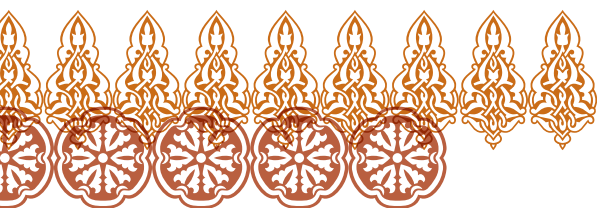
In order to carry out the oral history interviews our team traveled all over Turkey. This was an invaluable ethnographic experience for the young people who took part in the project. In some cases it was the young people themselves who were using their networks to interview individuals they had pinpointed in their own home town, in other cases they might be traveling to regions completely unknown to them. Traveling as a team was a very important bonding experience. It demonstrated how important ethnographic fieldwork is to oral history interviewing—spending time with interviewees beyond the formal interview is invaluable and adds to the researcher's ability to understand the context and to analyze and

interpret the data collected. One of the most valuable aspects of this project was our ability to focus on the process by which research data is collected and to learn how to work as a team.

During the course of the oral history interviews we used video and audio equipment as well as cameras to record interviews and to create a photographic record. Often, our interviewees showed us around their homes and we were able to view important mementos, family photographs, material culture, and the like. The collection, archiving, and interpreting of visual material forms part of the toolbox of the oral historian.

Once we had conducted the interviews the next step in the research process was transcription. The young people in our team and research assistants completed the time-consuming task of listening to the recorded interviews over and over again and creating a textual archive of all the interview data. These hundreds of pages of data provided the basis for the text we wrote for publication.

Just as the research process was completed as a team, we also worked as a team in writing our part of the book. Our goal was to produce a text in Turkish that would appeal to an audience of ordinary people in Turkey (as well as to an English-speaking general audience in English translation), rather than an academic audience. This was a particular challenge for academics used to writing for a narrow audience. Several research assistants and I took part in a writing retreat in which we decided to conduct an experiment. Our goal was to present our data in the form of a series of individual stories. We therefore went through all of the interview transcripts and discussed which stories were the most powerful. We wanted our stories to be both unique and at the same time representative of the types of people we interviewed as well as the themes we had investigated and come across in our research. After selecting a number of interviews we each selected one or more transcripts and experimented with writing stories based on individual life histories. We then read and commented on one another's texts. It was in this experimental fashion and through teamwork that the text based on the oral histories conducted in Turkey was created. Once the stories were in place we added an introduction. In addition, we carefully selected photographs taken by a professional photographer who worked as part of the team. As our interviewees mostly preferred to remain anonymous, our photographs were not portraits but rather an aesthetic reading by the photographer of the themes discussed in the text. We felt that using photographs in this oblique and artistic way, unusual in oral history research, added a unique, attractive dimension to our text. This seemed suitable since we hoped to reach as wide an audience as possible.



Armenian-Turkish Relations: Historical and Political Context, an Armenian Perspective

Hranush Kharatyan

In a historical perspective the Armenian-Turkish conflict is normally premised on the genocide (commonly referred to as the Armenian massacres, carnage, exodus, eghern, aghet among the Armenian people and Ermeni soykırımı, Ermeni Kırımı, Tehcir among the people of Turkey) and ethnic cleansings perpetrated by Young Turks in 1915–1918 and the followers of Mustafa Kemal / Atatürk in 1919–1922. The genocide wiped out the entire Armenian population in its historical homeland – Western Armenia (in Turkish official discourse it is known as Eastern Anatolia, however in daily conversations people often call it Ermenistan – Armenia), Cilicia and Kars-Ardahan – Eastern Armenian regions annexed by Turkey in 1921.

In 1915–1918 the Armenian genocide was carried out by the ‘Special Organization’ – an agency set up by the Union and Progress party of the Young Turks. The party announced that in the east of the Empire, during a war situation, the Armenians had shifted their allegiance to Russia and hence issued the ‘deportation’ order which, in fact, laid the groundwork for the execution of the Armenian Genocide.

The order called for the resettlement of the Armenians in Syrian deserts but, in reality, the Armenians were exterminated en masse both in their localities and on deportation routes (killed by fire, guns, knives, by drowning in the Black Sea or rivers, poisoning, starvation etc.). The Special Organization encouraged local people to take part in the massacres, allowing them to salvage the property of Armenians and kidnap the women. The authorities promulgated special directives forbidding the giving of

aid to Armenian refugees under pain of death. Only a handful of people reached the ‘intended exile destination’ – the desert of Der-el-Zor, where they were yet again massacred by the local armed gangs acting on the orders of the Special Organization. There is copious information about the final massacres of the Armenian caravans in the Syrian deserts of Ras al-Ayn, Intilli, and Der-el-Zor in the form of eyewitness accounts of the survivors and research (Aram Antonian’s book *The Great Crime*, published in Boston as far back as 1921 reads, ‘... the most atrocious crimes and massacres in those distant deserts took place in 1916 and beyond’). Certain groups of Armenian refugees managed to cross to the Caucasus.

The Ottoman Empire was on the losing side in the First World War and the Armistice of Mudros was concluded with the Allies in October of 1918. While the victor states were debating the fate of Turkey, the Young Turks – the main orchestrators of the Armenian massacres, fled the country. After the signing of the armistice a military tribunal was set up at the demand of Great Britain to prosecute the war crimes committed by the Young Turks, in particular the Armenian massacres. In his 1919 interview with an Italian newspaper Grand Vizier Tefvik Pasha suggested that an international committee should be created in order to ensure impartial trials and inspire confidence in the lawsuits, ‘That is the only way whereby Europe can uncover the truth. Not only we do not deny the tragic events that took place in Ermenistan [‘Armenia’ emphasis mine H. Kh.], we are also filled with deep regret for what had happened’.²



A river in Eastern Anatolia

Photo: Sibel Maksudyan

The trials were held between January-June 1919 and covered by numerous local and foreign newspapers but particularly the Turkish *Alemdar* and French *La Renaissance*. Although the hearings proceeded very slowly and appeared to be rather uninterested, certain hideous crimes came to light nevertheless, amongst others the atrocities committed by the head doctor of Trabzon hospital Salib Bey – the killing of Armenians by injecting poison, gathering Armenian children in the hospital and murdering them³, experimenting on Armenians by giving them the typhoid virus. Some other cases involved administrative officials stirring up and fueling massacres, looting the property of the Armenians, etc.⁴ The tribunal passed death sentences on seven persons, forty others were sentenced to other forms of punishment – prison, exile. However, only three convicts were executed, the rest were at large. The work of the tribunal was interrupted by the ‘anti-imperialist’ movement incited by Mustafa Kemal.

The situation took a dramatic turn in the summer of 1919. General Mustafa Kemal had started an ‘anti-imperialist’ struggle to liberate Turkey from

occupation by the imperialist powers. However, his calls for ‘liberating the fatherland’ would not win him the direly needed support, that is, until he found ‘the right means’: People answered the leader’s calls as soon as his rhetoric was replenished with ideas about being punished because of the treachery of the Armenians, returning the property taken from the Armenians, and warnings about the revenge the Armenians would unleash. According to Kemal’s close associate Falih Rifki Atay, ‘when the British and their allies resolved to punish the leaders of Union and Progress for the massacres of the Armenians, all who could potentially encounter trouble took arms and joined the resistance’.⁵ During the 1919–1922 ‘liberation war’ Armenian refugees who had returned to Cilicia, namely to Marash, Ayntap, Urfa, Sis, Zeytun, and Hachn fell victim to the ever increasing hatred towards the Armenians. In 1920 Mustafa Kemal, with the aid of Soviet Russia, launched military operations against the Republic of Armenia, slaughtering the Armenian population of the conquered regions. In early December an armistice was concluded between Armenia and Turkey, whereby half of the

territory of the Republic of Armenia was yielded to Turkey. Apparently, Russia's gain from this alliance was the sovietization of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

As a result, Turkey was almost entirely 'cleansed' of Armenians and Greeks. The Lausanne Treaty of 1923 established the sovereignty of the Turkish Republic within its new borders.

Another outcome of the 'liberation war' was the newly formed government of Turkey almost exclusively made up of criminal members of the Young Turks' 'İttihat ve Terakki' ('Unity and Progress') party and the 'Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa' (Special Organization).⁶

The Armenian Genocide in Historiography

Turkish official historiography and the country's political powers have continually denied the fact of the Armenian Genocide. According to the official historiographic narrative, during the war the Armenians sympathized with the enemy – Russia – and to prevent them from treacherously switching sides and hitting from behind the authorities of the time had to deport the Armenians. There were victims among the Armenians both on deportation routes and in the places of final destination, but the numbers are controversial. The Armenians, in turn, killed a lot of Muslim people, including Turks, which is why Turkish society has been negatively disposed towards the Armenians to this very day.

Giving due acknowledgement to other views on the causes of the Genocide, this article will focus on the alternative perspective of Turkish historian Taner Akçam. He claims that the Armenian Genocide addressed a purely rational challenge – it was premised on liberation of the Balkans from the Ottoman Empire, which, from the Turkish viewpoint entailed reduction of the 'Turkish homeland'. The Genocide was meant to transform Western Armenia into 'Turkish homeland'. He explains the enormous aggression towards the Armenians on behalf of the authorities and the civilian population as a consequence of the delayed emergence of Turkish national identity, the

negative connotations and image of the term 'Turk' in Christian Europe, as well as a striving for rapid modernization.⁷

Armenian-Turkish Relations after the Genocide

Armenian-Turkish relations in the aftermath of the Genocide should be discussed in at least two parallel contexts i. e. the Armenians who somehow survived and remained in the Turkish republic (direct relations) and those who fled from the Genocide or were ousted from Turkey (absence of direct relations). These are completely different situations.

On the Situation of Armenians who Remained in Turkey after the Genocide

According to article 40 of the Lausanne Treaty, 'Turkish nationals belonging to non-Muslim minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals. In particular, they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein'⁸.

Thus, the document refers to 'non-Muslim minorities' to all intents and purposes. From a legal perspective there have never been 'ethnic minorities' in Turkey: no Armenians, no Greeks, Assyrians or Jews. There are only non-Muslim minorities who are the precise subjects of the abovementioned article of the Lausanne Treaty.

The formulation 'non-Muslim minority' was yet to play a fatal role since Islamized Armenians were deprived of all minority rights (they were no longer a 'non-Muslim minority'). Islamized Armenians or Armenians who turned to Alevism were stripped of the right to speak their mother tongue and receive education in that language since it was seen as a language of a non-Muslim minority⁹. The absence of the words 'Armenian' or 'national' by definition rules

out any national rights for ‘Islamized Armenians’; ‘being Islamized’ they no longer fit in the category of a ‘non-Muslim minority’.

In 1924, 1928, 1930, 1932, and 1934 the movement of the Armenians across the country was prohibited along with Armenian names, surnames, and the right to sell property. There were cases of deportation both within and outside the country, namely to Aleppo, without right of return. A great number of Armenians fell victim to the 1937–38 Genocide in Dersim¹⁰.

It is noteworthy that the people of Turkey were exceedingly unaware of these events. It is highly unlikely that an average Turkish citizen knew about Armenians living in Turkey and those who did hardly grasped the fear and hardships the Armenians had to endure. As a matter of fact, the Armenians lived in Turkey in strict secrecy, revealing their identity only if the occasion required and basically kept silent about the anxieties of their past and present.

Armenians who fled or were exiled from Turkey

Immediately following the genocide, in 1919, the Armenians created the covert operation Nemesis, intending to punish the orchestrators of the Armenian genocide and those Armenians who cooperated with them. Nemesis resolved to put into effect the sentences pronounced by the Ottoman Military Tribunal of 1919 but which had not been executed. Hence, a list of 650 culprits was drawn up and 41 of them were singled out as major criminals. Between 1920–22 many people from the list were assassinated, such as Young Turks leaders Talaat, Enver, Djemal Pashas, the governor of Kharberd Behaeddin Shakir, the governor of Trabzon Djemal Azmi, etc. 3 Armenian traitors – Harutyun Mkrtchyan, Vahe Hssan (Yessayan), and Arshavir (Arthur Yasyan) – were killed as well. Operation Nemesis derived its name from the ancient Greek goddess of retribution.

Turkish authorities responded to the Armenian vengeance by glorifying the criminals sentenced to death by the Turkish tribunal but subsequently killed

by Armenians. Their families were provided with state benefits in the form of real estate and allowances drawn from confiscated Armenian property. At the same time the Armenians were stripped of their citizenship, whereby the refugees had no legal status whatsoever in the countries of residence.

Other signatories to the Lausanne Treaty violated it on numerous occasions on a par with Turkey. Article 72 of the agreement stipulated that those countries had individual rights and obligations, among other things, vis-à-vis the property and plundered goods located on the territories controlled by them. The proceeds were supposed to be paid to a Reparation Commission established by the Treaty of Peace concluded with the states concerned. The above-mentioned commission was supposed to take care, among other things, of the refugees who sought shelter in the areas under their control.

In his 2012 ‘The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide’ publication¹¹, Taner Akçam analyses the level of compliance with certain agreements embedded in the Lausanne Treaty and draws the conclusion that none of the parties to the Treaty were actually interested in overseeing the fulfillment of Turkey’s obligations towards Armenians since they circumvented their own obligations, among other things, with regard to refugees who settled in their countries. Specifically, a range of frauds and intrigues took place between France and Turkey intended to obstruct the return of property to the Armenians of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Moreover, treaties had been concluded regulating the transfer of such property to one another.

Afterwards, the topic of the Armenian Genocide was rendered silent for fifty years, until 1965. Throughout this time the surviving Armenians wrote and published numerous diaries, family stories, and some analytical pieces. In 1965 the parliament of Uruguay officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. The Armenians put fresh impetus into genocide studies. After another long political silence, on January 27, 1973, 78-year-old Armenian writer Gourgen Yanikian murdered two Turkish diplomats in the Californian city of Santa Barbara. The victims were

the Turkish Consuls in Los Angeles Mehmet Baydar and Bahadır Demir ²². Gourgen Yanikian was born in Erzurum in 1895 and had witnessed the horror of the Genocide when he was twenty years of age. At the trial he said he had committed the crime for justice.

In 1975 a group of Lebanese Armenians founded an underground organization ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) with the aim of propelling the Armenian question onto the international political and legal agenda. The group reached its heyday in 1982 and was active for approximately twenty years. ASALA's operations targeted Turkish embassies, consulates, diplomats, statesmen, military and police agencies, Turkish business circles, particularly the offices of 'Turkish Airlines'. Over 200 operations were carried out between 1980–1997, killing approx. 100 and wounding 200. ASALA's most active period overlaps with a Coup d'état in Turkey. The geography of their operations stretched across Europe – England, Greece, France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Hungary, the American continent – USA, Canada – Asia – Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Iraq. The last operation was held on June 21, 1997 in front of the Turkish em-

bassy in Brussels. It did not cause any loss of human life. ASALA claimed that their activities were aimed at bringing the issue of the Armenian Genocide back onto the table of international political institutions. After ASALA operations the 'Armenian question' was indeed revived both in the international arena and in Turkey, entailing the revival of 'Armenian hatred' and 'Armenian fears' (i. e. both the fears experienced by the Armenians and people who were implicated in the Genocide and/or misappropriated the property of the Armenians).

The first Turkish-Armenian dialogue about the Armenian Genocide either on a political or a personal level didn't take place until the 2000s.

The Armenian SSR did not have an independent policy within the USSR, while the topic of the Armenian Genocide was a taboo. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the independent Armenian state, Turkey recognized the Republic of Armenia on December 24, 1991, although it refused to establish diplomatic relations. Moreover, in 1993 Turkey unilaterally closed the air and land border with Armenia. The air border was reopened in 1995 under pressure from the international community.

*Traveling exhibition
in Vanadzor,
Armenia*

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan





Cover of the book
"Moush, Sweet Moush"

On October 10, 2009, in Zurich, Switzerland, the foreign ministers of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey signed , two documents known as the Armenian-Turkish Zurich Protocols; a/ On the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia and b/ on the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia. Two months later the Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that Ankara would not ratify the protocols as long as the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh remained unsettled. Four months later, on April 22, 2010, the president of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan suspended the ratification of the Armenian-Turkish protocols in Armenia, claiming that Turkey was not ready to proceed according to the initial agreements.

Since 1965 various international organizations and countries have recognized the genocide committed against the Armenians in the Ottoman empire under various formulations. The recognition process has gained impetus, especially since the 1980s.

In 1965 the Parliament of Uruguay recognized the Armenian Genocide.

After a long break, on 13th–16th April 1984, the Session on the Genocide of the Armenians of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal recognized the genocide, having compared the Armenian and Turkish stances. The verdict of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal can be seen here http://groong.usc.edu/the_permanent_peoples_tribunal_in_paris.html and http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.66/current_category.5/affirmation_detail.html. Three resolutions were passed by The Association of Genocide Scholars regarding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.¹³

The EU parliament has passed several resolutions in 1987, 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2015 recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide.

On November 8, 2013 the World Council of Churches adopted a protocol in the run up to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.¹⁴

The Armenian Genocide was recognized by: the parliamentary coalition of South American Republics, by Mercosur¹⁵ (Mercado Comúndel Sur / Southern Common Market, consisting of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay), the UN sub-committee on the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities, the Parliament of Latin America in 2015¹⁶, and other international organizations. Several countries have recognized it as well, including Uruguay (1965), France (1998, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2012), Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, The Russian Federation, Poland, Lebanon (2000), Italy, Latvia, Greece, Slovakia, Cyprus, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Canada (1996, 2002, 2004), the Vatican City State, Bolivia (2014), Austria (2015), Luxemburg (2015), Brazil (2015), Paraguay (2015), Germany (2016), 45 out of 50 states in the USA, numerous cities, and other administrative regions.

The Turkish government has responded to each new recognition by threatening to terminate diplomatic and economic relations.

Historical Truth – Quotes, Comments and Questions

“Objective history in the last analysis is history that is researched and written within the limits placed on the historical imagination by the facts of history and the sources which reveal them, and bound by the historian’s desire to produce a true, fair, and adequate account of the subject under consideration.”

Richard J. Evans. 2012. In *Defense of History*. London: New Edition. p. 272.

“Of course it is possible to get out of one’s own past, re-write one’s history, but it is impossible to change the facts that have already taken place. What is done cannot be undone. The society that does not want to understand and accept its own past is condemned to repeating it some time in the future.”

United for Intercultural Action. 2003. *History Interpretation as a Cause of Conflicts in Europe*, Leaflet No. 1 (URL: <http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/archive/pages/thema01.htm#1>).

“In addition, much of history depends on the viewpoint of those writing it. Although post-conflict societies could benefit from accounts of history that play down the differences between former enemies, some truths do exist: the so-called forensic truths, the ‘who did what to whom’ facts that human rights investigators seek to illuminate. Denying them results in dangerous moral relativism – [...] The challenge in these situations is to teach history that acknowledges these facts while finding enough common ground for former enemies to work toward a shared future.”

Cole, E. A. and J. Barsalou. 2006. *Unite or Divide? The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies Emerging from Violent Conflict*. Special Report of the United States Institutes of Peace, p. 9. (URL: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/39202/2006_june_sr163.pdf).

“The memory of the traumatic past has to be preserved as a condition of justice for the victims, as a guarantee that the past won’t repeat and history won’t be censored, and as a basis for democracy. The recognition of past injustice and taking responsibility for it is a reflective and self-critical act that makes the community truly democratic and stronger.”

Koleva, Daniela. 2010. *Belene – a Site of Memory? Anthropological Survey*. Sofia: Institute for Studies of the Recent Past and Ciela Publishers, pp. 17–18 (in Bulgarian).

Genocide and Collective Trauma

Hranush Kharatyan

During the discussions on possible paths towards Armenian-Turkish reconciliation we knew that we were dealing with a difficult issue. Not only have one hundred years passed since the actual fact of the Armenian Genocide, during which time both sides have consolidated and strengthened their convictions, explanations, and interpretations. We were also confronted with an issue marked by mass ‘participation’ on both sides, although in different ways. The question of identity was crucial for both, and the identity of people during that period predicated their voluntary or involuntary participation in genocidal acts: as perpetrators on the one side, and as victims on the other.

The genocide, the mass killings, permitted and even encouraged by the government, are different from other forms of political terror and repression in many ways, but in particular:

- ❖ Apparent difference of group/identity affiliation of the victim and the perpetrator. In the case of the Armenian Genocide, one of the sides had a religious identity, i. e. Sunny Islam. The political decision was made by the Turkish government, but the group involved in the genocidal acts had ethnic components – Turkish, Kurdish, ‘Circassian’¹⁷ – who were united as a group by Sunni Islam. Although the decision was made by the authorities, the absence of a distinct ethnic identity among Sunni Muslims was the objective basis for it. It is noteworthy that the Alevi population (Alevism is a branch of Islam) not only did not participate in genocidal acts, but even helped Armenians, sometimes risking their own lives. Meanwhile, the victim had a distinct group identity and ethnic affiliation, they were Armenians.
- ❖ Almost involuntary ethnic affiliation of the victim (religious, racial, or other form of collective identity). The victim/victims didn’t choose their conviction – to belong to this or that group, and it is unlikely that the victim was given the opportunity to choose at the time of the conflict. During the Armenian Genocide and up until the fall of 1915 it was permitted to waive the relocation of Armenians if they converted to Islam, but since such cases were rapidly increasing, permission was revoked after the fall. Thus, the victims could not change their position or belief, and were not able to prove their ‘loyalty’ to executioners of the political decision in any other way: Their ‘victimization’ was predetermined by their birth and was not subject to discussion or negotiation.
- ❖ Usually, genocides not only involve the political elite, military and police groups, employees of administrative bodies, and specially prepared repressive agencies (in the case of the Armenian Genocide – the Special Organization), but also a large number of people from the civilian population of the ‘other group’. Moreover, it is not just the criminals or violent people who get involved. Instead, the population as a whole is prepared for hatred in advance, with the irrational (ideological) and sometimes even rational (financial or social capital, such as career, change in social status, etc.) perspective of profiting in the future. For instance, apart from the Special Organization established by the Young Turks and the units it subsequently formed and trained, self-organized groups of Kurds, ‘Circassians’, and Turks (villagers and civilians alike) willingly participated in the

Armenian Genocide. The anti-Armenian hatred among this population had been purposely nurtured throughout the preceding 20 years, to the extent that in 1915 the Muslim population of the country was not merely ready to support the annihilation of the Armenians, but to actually participate in mass killings. Despite the internal discrepancies between Turks and Kurds, and Kurds and 'Circassians', a religious Sunni Islamic mobilization took place. As a result, one side became absolute perpetrator, the other – absolute victim.

- ❖ Participation in genocide is encouraged as a 'patriotic duty' (in the case of the Armenian Genocide, Turkey was being saved from traitors and Islam – from infidel Armenians). However, people who take part in genocide know that they are committing a crime, but they also know that it is a 'sanctioned crime' and they won't be punished (in the case of the Armenian Genocide, people who took part in killings always referred to their actions as ordered by the government²⁸).
- ❖ Genocides are usually 'open-air', i. e. the entire society knows what is happening. In other words, the society knows that an annihilation of a particular group is taking place. As a rule, at least the majority of the society stands by it (in the case of the Armenian Genocide, the Sunni Muslim society of Turkey agreed to it).
- ❖ During the genocides, violence towards the victim is particularly brutal and it does not discriminate on grounds of age or sex (in the case of the Armenian Genocide there are numerous descriptions of such cases in both Armenian and non-Armenian sources).
- ❖ Genocides result in the 'cleansing' of a social and/or physical-geographical area, which is viewed by the genocide perpetrators as a rational acquisition, while the victims perceive it as a great loss (in the case of the Armenian

Genocide, the homeland – Western Armenia and Cilicia, and the financial-economic market were 'cleansed' of Armenians).

- ❖ Genocides are normally followed by denial. Recognition of genocide has never been achieved through domestic courts or public consciousness; it has been enforced from 'above', through international courts or foreign policy decisions. Turkey continues to deny the fact of the Armenian Genocide.
- ❖ As a result of genocide, the opposed groups' mental perception of each other becomes critically hostile (in the case of the Armenian Genocide Turkish society perceives Armenians as 'traitors', 'infidels' (giaour or gawur), 'scoundrels', 'liars', 'tricksters'; Armenians are blamed for all the misfortunes that befell Turks and are called 'Armenian dogs', 'bastards'. Armenians perceive Turks as 'beasts', 'cruel', 'inhuman', 'barbarians', 'savages', and call them 'Turkish beasts', also 'Turkish dogs'). This can only change as a result of a legal solution, and by means of certain social-psychological programs.

All of the abovementioned factors have had a great psycho-social impact on future generations in both societies, and from the perspective of possible Armenian-Turkish reconciliation, the duration of the impact of these factors and their depth need to be taken into account.

Hatred, Cruelty, Humiliation

Hatred towards Armenians in Turkish society goes back at least one and a half centuries¹⁹ and to this day, all political regimes have spared no effort in maintaining this hatred, and sometimes even inflaming it. Hatred was also given a shade of religious patriotism²⁰. The killing of the Armenians was often accompanied by gaiety, dancing, and music typical of celebrations²¹. There are countless eyewitness descriptions of scenes of torture and the killing of Armenians – dismemberment of bodies, disembowelment, the cutting off of tongues, eye-gouging, flaying, smashing the heads of young children with stones, the gang rape of minors and women, the cutting off of sexual organs, nailing horse shoes to living persons, the collective burning of the entire population of settlements in churches, barns, etc.²²

Accustomization of Society to Acts of Violence, Promotion of Aggressive Public Psychology, Islamic Mobilization

In order to accustom society to atrocities and aggression, perhaps also to facilitate the Islamic mobilization, brutal violence and even rape and burnings were strictly demonstrative and took place in open air areas, streets, sometimes even in schools before the eyes of the children, as well as on Christian sacred sites. People were crucified under the scorching summer sun and left for days, while anti-Christian chants invited the civilian Muslim population to participate²³. As Mrs. Doughty-Wylie writes about Adana, ‘Turks are beating men to a pulp, and while the unfortunates swim in their own blood, their women are raped in front of their eyes ...’²⁴

During his meeting with Henry Morgenthau, the Constantinople Prefect of Police, Bedri Bey, said that the forms of violence perpetrated against the Armenians were decided during secret discussions of Union and Progress, based on the experience of the Spanish Inquisition and modified by the introduction of new forms.²⁵

Demonstration, Banalization of Evil

The torture of Armenians was presented as theatrical events. During the massacres in the Guller region, the Bogazliyan governor, Mehmed Kemal Bey, gave a speech, an invitation to the local civilian population: ‘We are going to watch a theatrical performance.’²⁶ At the ‘theater’, Kemal played a duduk and encouraged murderers, saying, ‘You don’t know how to kill.’ ‘The groups of bandits began to brutally slaughter everyone they met...’, the commander of the gendarmerie encouraged the population to participate in the massacre, while the governor himself smoked a hookah, observing the slaughter of 6,000 people²⁷. According to what father Benoit, representative of the French mission, reported on Adana, ‘There have been terrible games, terrible jokes. Armenians are caught and tied up, and on their motionless knees their children are being dismembered or sawed.’²⁸ It is likely that the violence was no longer perceived as it ought to have been, and was probably transformed into a source of pleasure; moreover, it was even perpetrated according to traditions stemming from the ethnic culture of the group that perpetrated the violence (Turk, Kurd, ‘Circassian’). In the memoirs of Aurora Mardiganian, there is a scene depicting a demonstration of Northern Caucasian jigit²⁹ strength and heroism. At the gates of Diyarbakir, the Chechens (‘Circassians’) who were guarding the Armenian caravan, forced girls to stand half way between two swords arranged in a long row. The remaining Chechens mounted their horses and gathered at the end of the line. At a signal the first man galloped down the row of swords, seized a girl, lifted her high in the air and flung her down upon a sword point, without slackening his pace. Each Chechen tried to seize more than one girl, and if they failed to fling the girl upon the sword point they forced her to stand back in the line again³⁰. In Northern Caucasus, these jigit skills were usually demonstrated on sheep, and were part of the festive atmosphere and the crowd entertainment. The boundary between cruelty and pleasure became exceedingly blurred and perhaps even merged. Peo-

ple were getting used to cruelty, torture, murder, and particularly, mass killings. They were gradually becoming, first, indifferent, then – collaborators. In such a way, total participation was achieved, hence, total complicity. Everyone was guilty, thus, everyone was innocent. And because this wasn't a single 'occasion', but a long process which lasted for months, even years, the evil became something banal and was no longer perceived as evil. People were becoming simple social (perpetrators of the lower level) or official (officials) agents of evil, thus losing their personal moral responsibility. In a very different way, but similar in its essence, this can be compared to the content of 'Eichmann and the 'Banality of Evil'' chapter of Hannah Arendt's book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.³¹

Mass Participation

The participation of ordinary citizens in the genocide of Armenians was a premeditated act instigated at a state level. The intention was to inflame the aversion of the Muslims towards the Armenians and leave their annihilation to the people, especially in

the provinces of Van, Erzurum, Adana, Kharberd (Elazığ), and Bitlis with their high Armenian populations.³² A more effective way to achieve this end was the profit motive, the desire to take possession of the property of the Armenians. The profit motive ensured mass participation, while the hatred accounted for the cruelty.

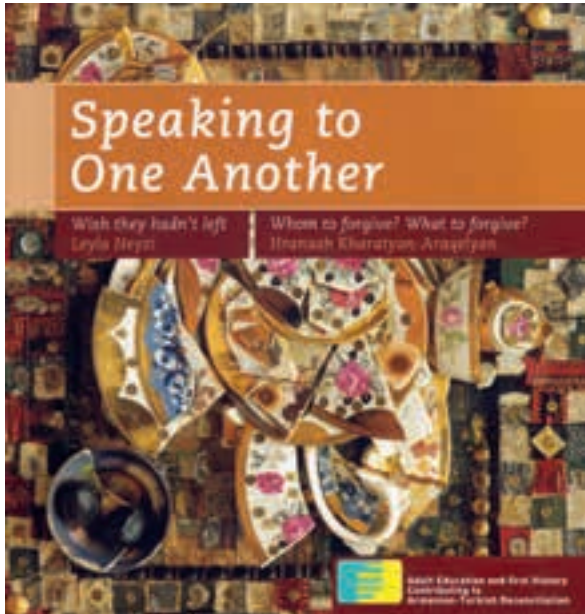
With respect to the appropriation of different types of Armenian assets, such as money in the banks, gold, real estate, production, etc., the lowest forms – houses, kettles, clothes, etc., often formed the share that fell to the lowest and most populous layer. Young girls and boys, who were viewed as an additional workforce and objects for sexual exploitation, often fell into their hands as well.

There is a conception that the massacres were committed by men and usually that is the case. Nevertheless, a large number of women participated in looting, robbery, and even killings. Hasmik Grigoryan collected evidence on cases of the mass participation of women (and even children) in the massacres.³³ Almost everyone rushed to benefit from the annihilation of the Armenians. Crime had become a widespread and daily phenomenon.

Traveling exhibition
in Yerevan, Armenia

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan





Cover of the book
 "Speaking to One Another"

This, too, makes genocide different from other forms of violence. One of the groups becomes a ubiquitous criminal, the other – a ubiquitous victim.

Awareness-Participation-Complicity of the Entire Society

Regardless of the scale or forms of involvement in the genocidal acts, the entire public was growing acutely aware of the consequences of the violence and was becoming a part of it one way or another. People used to run into unburied corpses bearing marks of severe violence, mutilated and disgraced; girls with their breasts cut off, women put on pikes, the naked bodies of children³⁴. On his way from Mosul to Aleppo the German Consul witnessed, 'Children's hands hacked off in such numbers that they could have paved the road with them'³⁵, '...the roads were covered with corpses of Armenians. The bodies had decomposed and the stench was terrible. Most of the men were impaled on pikes...' ³⁶, '...chopped off breasts of hundreds of women, heads of young men were piled next to the road'³⁷.

The local Muslim population, along with the Armenians and foreign residents, stood witness to all these horrors for months, even years. The countless corpses were disposed of either by burning or thrown into rivers. The Euphrates and Aratsani (Murad) were so full of corpses that their waters became contaminated, hence Talaat and Djemal Pashas ordered the bodies to be buried instead of tossing them into the rivers. The response of the Diyarbakir governor as of July 3, 1915, reads, 'The situation on the Euphrates has nothing to do with our vilayet [Ottoman province]. In all likelihood the corpses come downstream from the vilayets of Erzurum and Kharberd. Here the killed rebels [in documents the massacred Armenians were frequently referred to as 'rebels' or 'deserters'] are either thrown into gorges in desolate places or burnt. Burying is ruled out'³⁸.

'Burying was ruled out', however the banks of the Euphrates and Aratsani were densely populated and the currents carrying corpses and the contaminated waters were undoubtedly an everyday nightmare for the riverside populations.

Although the Euphrates flowed through Kharberd and the corpses from the nearest roads were dumped into the water, the situation on the roads far from the river was a thorn in the flesh of the authorities. 'The chief governor of Kharberd province informs that the roads are replete with corpses of women and children and he is not able to bury them all'.³⁹ A Turkish coachman testified in a court, 'On road from Kharberd to Sebastia I could not get rid of the stench of the corpses for days, I couldn't even water the horses'⁴⁰.

In turn, the corpses not only attracted wild beasts and dogs but also caused diseases. A cameleer Kerpala Ali Mehmet recounts, 'I was moving armament from Yeznka [Erzincan] to Karin [Erzurum]. In 1915 there were myriads of human corpses at Khotur bridge. All 12 arches of the bridge were blocked, the water was up against the corpses and was making by-ways. The scene was terrible. My caravan waited a long time until the bodies were cleared and I managed to cross the bridge. However, the entire road to Ginis was filled with dead people – elder people,

women, children. All reeking, swollen and rotten, the foul smell was so strong that it was impossible to travel by the road. Two of my men caught diseases and died and I had to change my route... They all were Armenians, unfortunate Armenians...' ⁴¹

In 1915–16 mutilated corpses and human skulls had become everyday 'images' in the east of today's Turkey – in the landscape of Western Armenia. The local people bore witness to those scenes – children, women, men – and that could not have passed without consequences. Henceforth, the lives of the local population would be full of ghosts.

There is a discourse of 'traumatic behavior' with respect to victims, however, the experiences and fates of the masterminds who bring societies to the verge of 'banal evil' and the perpetrator-accomplices of this evil have never been studied. Is their subsequent life traumatic, given that they have not been punished and isolated, but instead frequently encouraged?

The Culprits are the Heroes of the Turkish Republic (A Social Compact of Silence)

Towards the end of the Armenian genocide Mustafa Kemal formed the government of the new Turkish state – The Republic of Turkey. In fact, it was a cabinet of criminals guilty of genocide.

As far back as 8 April, 1919, when Turkey, defeated in the First World War, had just commenced the trials of the orchestrators of the genocide, the governor of Yozgat region was given a death sentence, which was executed the very next day. His funeral stirred popular wrath, there was a sea of flowers around the coffin with written statements: 'Innocent victim of the nation', 'For the innocent Muslim martyr'. The demon who had the blood of 35,000 innocent people on his hands was deemed innocent. A court testimony said that this administrative officer was encouraging peasants to slaughter unarmed women and children rounded up in front of them, 'Should you not give them what they deserve, I will kill you all myself. Didn't our mothers bring us to this world for this? What are you waiting for, go terminate them!

Kill them all from child to elder'. On his orders the deported Armenians were slaughtered in Elcheler village with scythes, axes, pickaxes ⁴², meanwhile the student delivering a fiery speech at his funeral, called for revenge, 'The hero Kemal Bey will seek revenge for the deceased' [he referred to Mustafa Kemal – H. Kh.]. The monster who did not hesitate to check the pockets of the massacred Armenians and remove the last lira, whose actions had earned him the name of 'butcher governor' ⁴³, was indeed awarded with people's admiration. The thought of it only seems possible as a consequence of mass scale mental derangement which, however, would only count as an explanation if in the years to come the public actually felt remorse.

The issue became even more complicated when the criminal masterminds and executors of the Armenian Genocide were officially glorified by the Turkish Republic. The Urfa district governor, Nusret, found guilty of massacres and executed by the Istanbul Tribunal, and the Boghazliyan governor, Kemal, were recognized as 'national martyrs' on 25 December, 1921 and 14 October, 1922 respectively. Pursuant to a February 1927 decree their families received remuneration from the funds of the 'abandoned property' of the Armenians.

A lot of other criminals were promoted to 'heroes' and continue to inspire the Turkish youth to this day. On 5 April, 2011 Andolu news agency reported that on 10 April at 13:30 a commemoration was to take place for Kaymakam Kemal Bey Anılacak, who was the Bogazliyan district governor at the time of the Armenian Genocide. Topal Osman ⁴⁴, notorious for drowning ⁴⁵ Armenians in Trabzon, became the mayor of Kirason town ⁴⁶. In that very office on 20 July, 1921 he and his gang of 3,500 chetes (an irregular band of Turkish or Kurdish forces), 'massacred the entire Christian population leaving none alive, old and young, man and woman, Armenian and Greek, all are gone' ⁴⁷. On 23 July, 1921 he slaughtered the 2,000 Armenians and Greeks of Marzvan and burnt their houses ⁴⁸, which earned him the position of the head of Mustafa Kemal's personal guard. In 1997 the Prime Minister of Turkey, Tansu Chiller, promised to open a universi-

ty⁴⁹ in honor of this sadist who had ‘saved’ Turkey from the peaceful Armenian and Greek population. In 2007 the grateful citizens of Kirason inaugurated a monument to Osman.

Mustafa Kemal started the biography of the new republic with the criminal members of the Special Organization who became ministers, governors of provinces and regions, and MPs⁵⁰. Decrees from 1925 and 1927 granted the families of Enver, Djamal, and Behaeddin Shakir (sentenced to death by the Istanbul Military Tribunal) pensions to be paid from the assets of Armenian property⁵¹. Kemal’s administration was consistent in its plan to plant the images of these felon ‘heroes’ into the very foundations of national education. Later their statues would decorate the country, streets and schools would be named after them⁵², and a new generation capable of committing genocide would be raised in their name. The long history of xenophobia in Turkey should, therefore, come as no surprise (the 1937–38 massacres of the Alevi and Armenian population in Dersim, the 1955 pogroms of Armenians and Greeks in Istanbul, the deportation of Kurds and Alevis in 1934, 1984–87, 1993–94, and other xenophobic acts).

In the Republic of Turkey the topic of the Armenian Genocide remained within the framework of ‘the guilty Armenians who massacred Turks’, and was silenced. Turkey entered into a period of ‘silence, denial and assimilation’, as expressed by Taner Akçam⁵³. Society embraced this non-formal condition, finding silence advantageous. However, this was not plain silence, but rather an attempt to erase the memory, alter or tame it. In other words, this is a case of the formation of social memory which has been rather poorly studied. It may be called an ‘*accord of silence*’ or a ‘*social compact of silence*’, which has arguably remained in effect until today.

The statements about ‘the guilt of the Armenians’ repeated throughout decades and entrenched in ‘collective knowledge’, only returned to life after the 1970s in connection with the operations of ASA-LA and the Kurdish liberation movement. The claims that the Kurdish liberation movement is a provocation and revenge act organized by Armenians have

been actively circulated since then. However, there is a great deal of obscurity to this thesis, since it is not clear who the Armenians are exacting their revenge on if, according to the official Turkish position, they were ‘the ones who slaughtered the Turks’.

Today discussions about the prospects for Armenian-Turkish reconciliation within Turkish society have to be conducted against the background of 100 years of silencing memories of the genocide, the shaping of social and collective knowledge of the guilt of the Armenians, and the raising of generations of young people on the glorification of criminals.

‘Anatolian Ghosts’ and the Anxieties of ‘Small People’

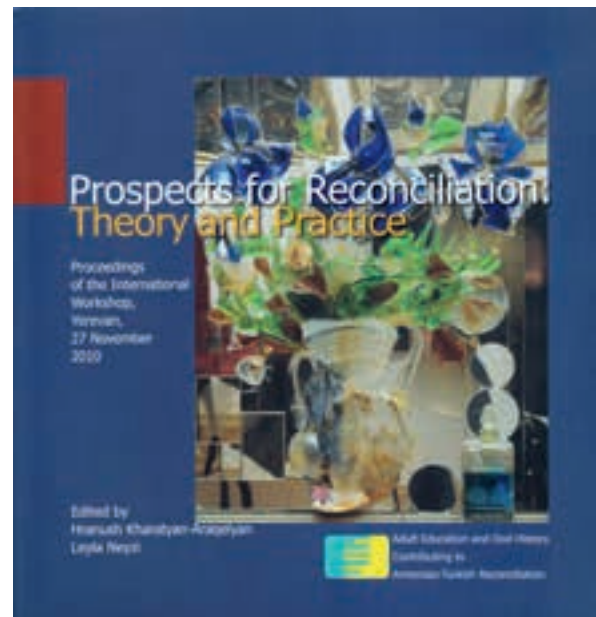
Among the Muslims of Turkey, instances of communicating memories of the Armenian Genocide, that is recounting them to one another, are very rare. At least, they occur very infrequently in written texts. The collective ‘memory’ coined by the authorities is largely at work here, claiming that ‘the Armenians betrayed the homeland’, ‘the Armenians murdered the Turks’, ‘the Armenians left’. Nevertheless, there are instances of communicating memories in some texts. One such example is the family story of Turkish intellectual Tolga Ergen. Ergen was born into a family of military men, both her father and grandfather were military officers. Her father used to serve in the Bogazlyan region of Yozgat for a time, and he claimed that the ghosts of murdered Armenians would visit him there⁵⁴.

Ergen considers these types of memories about Armenians as, ‘the bleeding wound of Anatolia’. Unfortunately, she is an exception in Turkish society. People like her are branded using the dirty word ‘Ermeni’ [Armenian]. Turkish historian Taner Akçam said to a conference in Yerevan in 2010, ‘I am one of those Turks who are called ‘Armenians’’. Being an ‘Armenian Turk’ in Turkey and in Turkish circles continues to be very dangerous.

You Are Not a Turk, You are Armenian: The Fear of Ethnic Origin Syndrome

In his 2005 interview with the Turkish newspaper *Yeni Aktuel* the Bishop of the German Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Garegin Bekchian, said that the 82nd Patriarch of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, Shnork Galstian, once told him that his mother had been kidnapped in 1915 and he, Shnork Galstian found himself in an orphanage. His mother eventually married the kidnapper and had three children with him. One of them, Shnork claimed, was Lutfi Dogan – the current head of the Department of Religious Affairs (spiritual leader of the Muslims of Turkey). According to the Bishop, the Muslim children of the Patriarch's mother, including Lutfi Dogan, attended her funeral. The interview stirred a lot of debate in Turkey as to which Lutfi Dogan had a cousin who was an Armenian Patriarch (in Turkey's history there are two people of the name Lutfi Dogan who headed the department in succession). Both of them immediately renounced the claims, while at the same time both made obvious hints about 'the purity of the other's origin'⁵⁵. Shnork Galstian was dead by the time, but in one of his interviews back in 1965, the year of the 50th anniversary of the Genocide, he was known to have answered a reporter's question about whether he believed there had been a genocide. 'In 1915 I was 7 years old', the Patriarch said, 'only me and mother stayed alive out of the 70 members of our family. During the deportation I lost my mother too, because she had to marry a Muslim man. Now, you tell me where my relatives are. Should you find the answer to that question, you will also find out whether there was a Genocide'.

Following the alleged family connection between Shnork Galstian and Lutfi Dogan the Turkish press spent a long time trying to prove or reject it. One of the newspapers reacted to the situation with a warning that, 'those making anti-Armenian statements should beware, lest Armenian origin should be discovered in the blood of the people originating from the respective geography'. This 'warning' was not misplaced, because there are numerous ardent



Cover of the book
"Prospects for Reconciliation"

'anti-Armenian Turkish nationalists' among Armenians who had converted to Islam during the genocide and kept their origins a secret. Furthermore, the accusation of 'Armenian origin' was an active rhetorical weapon employed by rival politicians. It can be argued that this topic is 'post-Genocidal'. Nowadays, having Armenian blood in Turkey is perceived as a grave, discreditory flaw. Back in 2004, when Hrant Dink wrote in *Agos* that one of the adopted daughters of Mustafa Kemal, Sabiha Gokcen, was an Armenian orphan, Turkish society was outraged. Turkish combat pilot Sabiha Gokcen was a source of national pride and suddenly she was being 'tarnished' by Armenianness. The Turkish military leadership reacted strongly against 'the schemes of the author of these false revelations to defile the sacred republican symbols' and the public lined up behind this, although, as Turkish intellectual Ahmet Insel put it, the public could have presented the problem in a different light, 'showing that Mustafa Kemal did not suffer from racism'.⁵⁶ Since it is extremely difficult, if not utterly impossible to prove one's 'pure Turkish origin', 'the syndrome of fear of Armenian origin' is a seri-



The Muş Plain

Photo: Sibel Maksudyan

ous factor in the normalization of relations between Armenians and Turks; any attempt at improving relations with Armenians could provoke echoes of the 'Armenian blood' label.

The Fear of the Armenians' Return Syndrome

The fear of 'Anatolian ghosts' takes on different forms. The anxiety that 'the Armenians would return and demand their property' is deeply rooted among the people of Cilicia and the east of Turkey. During my fieldwork in the provinces of Turkey in 1991 people used to ask me whether I had come to inquire about the 'property left by my grandfather'. I was often persuaded that a certain person was not to blame and although his shop, house, coffee shop, hotel, etc. once belonged to an Armenian, he had bought it from another person, or rebuilt it from ruins, and his grandfather hadn't killed Armenians. In some instances, people told me, 'if this is yours, come claim it, let us also be free of this fear'. The Alevi inhabitants of a former Armenian village said to me, 'Sunni Kurds were the ones who massacred your people. We merely bought this houses from them'.

A former tour guide, Ahmet Insen, recounts that in the 1980s, when Armenian tourists visited the villages and towns of their ancestors, the locals were convinced that they 'had come after their property,

their lands and houses'⁵⁷. 'Anatolian ghosts' keep reminding them of the yet unpunished crimes, and in a way punished them by instilling fear. It is noteworthy that this fear does not stem from the atrocities committed against the Armenians but trepidation concerning the 'reclaiming of their lands and property'.

Who does this Land's History Belong to: The Fear of Ermenistan Syndrome

The fear of 'Anatolian ghosts' is also preconditioned by the present day population's total ignorance of the land's 'Armenian past'. The knowledge of the locals is not only lacking when it comes to the Armenian past, but any past at all. They don't even have their own history; not because such history does not exist but because it has not been rendered into knowledge, has not been formulated and passed on. At best there are excerpts from local history concerning the heroism of this or that ashiret or bek. Chronological validation of these events is usually confined to phrases such as 'a long time ago' and a 'hundred years ago'. Chronology, and therefore local history, is punctuated by events such as 'at the time of the Armenians' or 'after the Armenians'.

In contrast, Armenians continue to perceive this territory as a historical and cultural cradle; although they haven't been living there for the past hundred

years. For them it remains a line of continuity extending from the present to the past and vice versa. Even for the youngest generation of people from Moush and Sasoun, the names of Moses of Khoren, Ghazar Parpetsi, Davit Anhaght, and Asoghik, who were all buried in the Holy Apostles Monastery of Moush, represent both this locality's 1,500 year old cultural, educational, and scientific legacy, but also the responsibility to preserve it.

The Armenians know that the author of the Armenian alphabet Mesrop Mashtots was born in the Hatsekats village of Moush in the 4th century and the first narrator of the history of the Armenians – Moses of Khoren – was born in the 5th century in the Khoronq (Khorni) village of Moush. The Tsronk village of Moush is considered the home of Tarban – the youngest son of the Patriarch Noy. These are names and phenomena that link the present with the past, which was an Armenian past that did not touch the Turks, Kurds, Circassians. In fact, the Armenians' Muslim neighbors were entirely ignorant of this history. This was a collective knowledge, something that the neighboring Muslims lacked. People sharing the same country, the same territory, had a completely different stock of knowledge, emotions, and experiences linking the past to the present.

This is a huge discrepancy when it comes to the formation of different groups' perceptions of the same country, and this discrepancy also influences attitudes towards the genocide.



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EXTERNAL LINKS

- Eyewitnesses published by the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia
- Twenty Voices: Full length film featuring interviews with eyewitnesses and survivor stories. (YouTube video)
- Interview with an eyewitness to the Armenian Genocide – 104-year-old Armenian woman from the film *Grandma's Tattoos* presented by Al-Jazeera.
- Excerpts featuring survivor witnesses from the documentary film by Carlo Massa: 'Destination: nowhere' (Vimeo video)
- <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/index.php>

A New Era? Turkish Society Begins to Face its Difficult Past

Leyla Neyzi

Despite the fact that the establishment of official relations between Turkey and Armenia has not yet come to pass, there has been unprecedented communication and exchange at the societal level in recent years. Much of this is spearheaded by NGOs, and involves academics, artists, and students, among others. DVV International played a pioneering role in this process. The tragic murder of the editor of the Turkish and Armenian language weekly *Agos*, the journalist Hrant Dink, in Istanbul on January 19, 2007, was an important turning point. The whole world

watched in surprise as thousands marched at Hrant Dink's funeral, carrying placards that read 'We are all Hrant, we are all Armenian.' This shocking event accelerated growing interest in the silenced past of Turkish-Armenian relations, and academics from Turkey began to write about this issue as books in other languages began to be translated into Turkish. Despite the lack of change in the official narrative, including textbooks, the Armenian genocide began to be discussed in Turkish society and media as works of history, oral history, memoirs, and fiction became available in Turkish. The groundbreaking and controversial academic conference which took place in 2005 opened the way for many more conferences, workshops, and meetings. A group of academics in Turkey created the 'I apologize' campaign in 2008, which was signed by over thirty thousand individuals online, leading to widespread debate. Despite all the controversies and attacks in the media, growing interest and activity made public discussion of the issue increasingly possible. These developments also resulted in important new research on the experiences of the Armenian community in Turkey. Historical and contemporary works of fiction and memoirs by members of the Armenian community are being translated and published in Turkish by an important cultural institution, the Aras Press in Istanbul. These changes in the public sphere are accompanied by exchanges between the Republic of Armenia and Turkey as young people in particular now regularly travel between the two countries for projects, education, research, or work. The Hrant Dink Foundation, set up in 2007, plays a key role in organizing and supporting these activities. Armenians living in the diaspora have also begun to increasingly



Interviewee in Istanbul

Photo: Sibel Maksudyan

visit Turkey, taking part in various academic, artistic and personal projects. April 24 has been commemorated as a public event in Istanbul since 2010, and attended by a diverse group of people from Turkey, Armenia, and the diaspora. It is the younger generation in Turkey in particular that is most effected by and active in these developments. The discussion of the Armenian genocide has also opened the way for debates on and writing about Turkey's more recent difficult past (and present), including the experiences of other communities including Assyrians, Greeks, Jews, Alevis, and Kurds. Turkey's recent experience demonstrates the key role transnational media and mobility play in empowering individuals and groups in civil society to begin to come to terms with difficult national histories.

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Historical-Critical Method

Susanne Popp

The subject of history is the human past, as far as we can reconstruct it from sources and other traditions. The scientific approach to the exploration of the past evolved in 19th century and to this day forms – despite many changes and developments – the indispensable basis for addressing the past in a way that can claim intersubjective verifiability. Intersubjective verifiability is – as in many other fields of scientific enquiry – a key requirement for historical research as it allows a critical discussion of the findings by the community of experts and by the public and thus offers a necessary safeguard against falsehood, fraud, and incompetence.

The pursuit of intersubjective verifiability comprises for example the disclosure of the guiding intentions, questions, and preconceptions of the researcher (e.g. ‘what you expect to find or prove’) and of the theoretical (e.g. social history) and methodological approach (e.g. oral history). Furthermore, this implies an analysis and explication of the state of research on the topic under question, a reflection on the stock of available historical sources relevant to the topic, and a justification for the selection of those sources that are used or preferred during the historical work.

An indispensable and characteristic feature of historical research is so called ‘source criticism’ (or information evaluation). This is the procedure of analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting an historical source (e.g. a written document, a picture, memories of contemporary witnesses, material relics, media discourses, phenomena of historical culture [see p. 79] like e.g. monuments and commemoration sites) or anything from the historical period of the respective event under consideration that can be used in order to gain knowledge about the past. In relation to a given research question, the information given

by a certain source may be more or less valid, reliable, or relevant. Broadly, ‘source criticism’ is the study of how information that can be drawn from sources can be seen as valid, reliable, and relevant for the historical topic under consideration.

The critical examination of historical sources has to ask many – and sometimes very complicated – questions. Questions of fundamental significance include:

- ❖ When was the source, written or unwritten, produced and what is its temporal relation to the historical phenomenon under consideration?
- ❖ Where was it produced (from a spatial, but also from a social or institutional perspective)?
- ❖ By whom was it produced? What do we know or what can we deduce indirectly about the author? What was the author’s intention? For whom did he create the written, pictorial, or material document? Would that recipient, customer, or audience be likely to require or suggest a distorted account on the part of the author? What could the author of the source possibly have an interest in overemphasizing or hiding?
- ❖ From what pre-existing material was it produced?
- ❖ In what original form was the source produced? Are there any indications that a given source may be forged or unreliable?
- ❖ What is the evidential value of the source?

Growing Archive interactions

Photo: Carmen Beckenbach

- ❖ While investigating a historical topic it is not usually sufficient to rely on a single source. You have to find, analyze, and compare multiple sources in order to ascertain whether the information drawn from one source is supported by other sources or not. However, this often confronts the researcher with the problem that the sources only partially correspond or even contradict one another. This requires a careful judgment of the comparative reliability, verifiability, and relevance of the different sources. It is possible that there is no unambiguous result – and this has to be clearly stated in the report about the research findings.

Finally, three aspects (selected from a multitude of other important aspects) must be emphasized, because they very often turn out to be relevant for the work with sources in history projects. The first principle may seem self-evident, but it is actually violated time and time again in the historical sciences: The source must be used and reproduced in a perfectly correct way. It is absolutely forbidden to add or delete something in order to form a better match with the assertions to be proved. This concerns not only the concrete content of a single document, but also its context. For example, it is incorrect to use and interpret an ironic statement as if it were a factual statement. Secondly, the historical sciences ascribe a 'right of veto' with respect to the historical sources. This means that (perceived) historical knowledge or a research hypothesis must be abandoned even if only one valid source contradicts it. Thirdly, a correct historical investigation is not permitted to solely look for and integrate sources that support its own research assumptions. Rather, anyone who seriously deals with history has to pay as much attention, due



diligence, and effort to looking for sources that could contradict the presupposition and call for its modification. Unfortunately, there are also quite a few academic historians who search unilaterally in the archives for documents that confirm their hypotheses, and ignore and neglect other ones.

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Oral History

Leyla Neyzi

Oral history is a theory and method developed to record, archive, and interpret the memories that living individuals have of the recent past. Oral history emerged in the post Second World War era at a time when historians and other scholars felt the need to supplement archival history based on written documents created at the time the historical events occurred with the testimonies of individuals who had experienced these events and lived to tell their stories. Oral history is important because the experiences of less powerful groups and individuals in society such as women, the working class, ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants, homosexuals, may not be sufficiently represented in the historical archive. Furthermore, oral history aims to access as directly as possible the voices of ordinary individuals. Oral history projects create their own archives which enrich and may be used conjointly with historical archives.

Oral history projects tend to focus on a particular historical event, social group, and/or topic related to the past. Before proceeding to conduct research, oral historians develop a bibliography and read secondary sources that are available concerning the chosen event/group/topic. Oral history projects tend to be interdisciplinary and oral historians may be trained in or collaborate with colleagues from fields such as anthropology, history, sociology, education, and psychology. Familiarity with the existing literature enables the oral historian to delineate the relevant questions that need to be answered on the basis of interviews. Depending on the event/group/topic selected, researchers then pinpoint which individuals to approach in order to conduct oral history interviews. The number of individuals interviewed will vary from project to project, though oral historians tend to prefer high quality, multiple, lengthy interviews with a limited number of key interviewees.

The heart of oral history research is the interview. Oral history interviews differ from other types of interviews employed in the social sciences due to their specialized focus on memories of the past in the present. As creating a visual, aural, and textual archive is central to oral history practice, researchers must abide by professional guidelines in gaining consent from potential interviewees prior to conducting the interview. They must provide potential interviewees with relevant background information about the research project, the goals of the project, the planned products, and the anticipated audience. Most importantly, interviewees should give their consent to audio or video recording, archiving, and use of the data by the oral historian and other potential users. In the contract between the oral historian and the interviewee, the interviewee may choose to remain anonymous or to limit access to the recording and/or the transcript of the interview. Oral historians are trained to be sensitive to ethical issues and to protect the privacy and rights of interviewees.

Once the oral historian has acquired consent, he/she makes an appointment with the interviewee to conduct what is often the first in a series of interviews. It is usually preferable that interviews take place in an environment where the interviewee feels comfortable and at ease, such as their home. The oral historian should explain that the interview requires a quiet setting where the researcher and interviewee can speak one-on-one for several hours without interruption. Prior to the interview, the oral historian should familiarize himself/herself with the recording technology to be used in order to ensure that there will be no mishaps. The researcher should always remember that an oral history interview means a recorded interview. While oral historians mainly used

*A place of living history:
A villager in Dashtadem,
Armenia, and his small
room, with old photos and
items*

Photo: Armenuhi Nikoghosyan



to use audio recordings, many now use video recordings with audio as a backup.

When the oral historian meets the interviewee for the interview, it is important that he/she set up the recording equipment as quickly as possible. This is because everything the interviewee may say is significant and even small talk before the formal start of the interview may be of use. Similarly, the oral historians should not stop the recording until they leave the house, as interviewees tend to provide important information during refreshment breaks or subsequent to the formal conclusion of the interview.

Often, even if they are interested in a particular historical event or topic, oral historians prefer to conduct extended life history interviews. The goal of life history interviews is to allow interviewees to create their own narratives about their lives. Accordingly, although it is the oral historian who initiates the interview, he/she makes sure to ask open ended, neutral, descriptive questions that will lead the interviewee to tell stories and anecdotes at length and to shape the content and the form of the narrative produced. The goal of the oral historian, particularly in the first interview, should be to engage in deep listening, avoid interrupting the interviewee, and use silences productively to allow the interviewee himself/herself to make connections between topics previously discussed and other significant topics. Deep listening and making use of silences are challenging methods

that improve with practice but are highly rewarding. They are especially useful in dealing with difficult histories where they may be preferable to direct questioning.

When interviewees stop speaking, oral historians deliberately use silences to encourage interviewees to make associations and continue to speak. In cases where the silences are extended and the interviewees turn back to the interviewers, the interviewer then uses the previous answers given by interviewees to develop new questions. In a first interview in particular, the goal of the oral historian is to allow the interviewee to speak as much as possible and to shape the content and form of the interview.

Oral historians now agree that the value of oral history lies as much in its concern with meaning as in the collection of facts or knowledge about a past event. Oral history is subjective as it deals with present-day interpretations of living human beings concerning the past. It is also intersubjective as each oral history interview is unique and produced through the dialogue between the oral historian and the interviewee. The practice of oral history allows ordinary individuals to act as theoreticians, in so far as they narrate, perform, and analyze their own life experiences for an audience. This can be an empowering experience for many interviewees.

An average oral history interview usually takes several hours. While there is no real end to an inter-

view, most people show signs of fatigue after talking intensively for several hours. Upon mutual agreement, the interview may be ended, although most first interviews will end with a plan for a second interview in the near future. Subsequent to the interview, the oral historian must immediately write his/her interview notes. These notes rely on the memory of the researcher to provide information that will be archived along with the transcript of the interview. This information may include a description of the interview setting, the intersubjective relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, technical issues, questions for the subsequent interview, and the like. The oral historian must also immediately copy and archive the visual and/or audio recording.

The next step in the research process is for the oral historian to view and listen to the recording and to create a written text or transcript that reproduces the spoken dialogue as accurately as possible. Transcription is an invaluable though time consuming task. To aid in the transcription process, oral historians use software which allows them to use keyboard shortcuts to slow down the spoken voice. Expresscribe is a freely downloadable transcription software that is commonly used. The transcript allows the oral historian to create a written archive to work with. At the same time, oral historians accept that the ultimate source for oral history is the spoken word (along with nonverbal communication). While researchers tend to write on the basis of transcripts, it is important to go back to the original aural/visual archive for additional information not reflected in the transcript.

After listening to the interview and creating a transcript, the oral historian usually prepares questions for a follow-up interview. In the second interview the researcher can use the experience of the first interview to take a more active role and ask more probing questions. Thus, while the goal of the first interview is to establish trust and a relationship and to allow the interviewee to create his/her own life story narrative, the goal of the second interview is to probe and ask questions about issues of relevance to the oral historian's research project. A second interview is also a good opportunity to ask interviewees about important material such as family photographs, letters, material culture, and to take photographs of the interviewee and his/her surroundings. This material will enrich the archive the oral historian is in the process of creating.

Once the planned interviews and transcriptions are complete, the archive is created. It is on the basis of this archive that the oral historian will now analyze the data and produce textual, aural, and visual products under his/her name. Thus while the interviewer and the interviewee participate in the process of data production, the oral historian usually works on his/her own in analyzing and writing up the material. In some cases the researcher may consult with key interviewees while writing in order to discuss his/her ideas. Nevertheless, as the author of the products of the research, the oral historian is responsible for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

While oral historians have tended to produce largely textual products, the emergence and availability of new media technologies have made it possible for researchers to share their data online and to experiment with a variety of aural and visual products such as websites, films, exhibitions, performances, and the like. In addition, writers and artists are increasingly attracted to oral history which they are beginning to use in order to create artistic products such as theatre productions and performances.

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Visual Sources

Susanne Popp

In addition to written or material documents, visual sources can be extremely useful for historical investigation and projects. Visual primary sources include a huge variety of different types, e.g. paintings, drawings, graphic art, etchings, and lithographs in many forms (e.g. cave paintings, painted vase pictures, history paintings, murals, portraits, architecture, scenes of the everyday life of ordinary people), prints, postcards, posters, pictures on coins and stamps, cartoons, comics, photographs (e.g. documentary photos, everyday photos, family photos), films (e.g. history films, documentary films, private films), or videos.

Visual sources are often expected to make the past more accessible, giving concrete shape to a world of the past that sometimes seems intangible. Indeed, visual sources can sometimes function as a documentation of past events, and in certain cases photographs or mobile phone videos are even accepted as valid evidence in court ('forensic truth'). From a more strictly historical perspective visual sources are very important in order to reconstruct e.g. the material culture of past societies (e.g. clothes, furniture, hairstyles, household items, tools, weapons, cityscapes, buildings, churches, ritual ceremonies). Moreover, visual sources provide an invaluable support to the reconstruction of a history of mentalities (e.g. a change in aesthetic, political, philosophical ideas and world views, historical culture [see p. 79], but also ethnic or religious stereotypes), a history of social and cultural practices and particular a history of everyday life, especially when it is possible to combine and compare them with other visual, textual, and/or material sources.

At the same time, contrary to what might appear to be the case, it holds that it is not easy to extract historical information from visual sources, since the cre-

ation of a picture must not be understood as a copy of a past reality but as a construction of an 'image of the past' that is influenced by many factors, like e.g. the point of view and the intention of the 'author', the potential adjustment to the expectations of a customer or audience, the orientation to social conventions and contemporary aesthetic norms and styles including symbolic systems, semantic codes, visual rhetorical devices, last not least, technical aspects. The apparent 'legibility' of the image hides its historical construction, the ways in which the picture was created, distributed, and read at the time it was produced and since. In short, the analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of visual sources require as much skill, due diligence, and reflection as the handling of written or material sources. Visual sources are no more direct transcripts of the past than any other primary source.

Let us now focus on photographs, although these visual sources only date back to the mid-19th century. The reason for this is that photographs, which are often used in history projects, seem to make particularly strong claims to being objective representations of the past without any intention, perspective, or bias (Roland Barthes called this the 'reality effect'). At the same time the following remarks about how to work with photographs as historical sources also generally apply to other types of visual sources. They also apply to the analysis of documentary or history films, however here many further factors must be included in the analysis (e.g. music, text, sequence of images).

According to the general methodological rules for the analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of historical sources [see p. 62] that are also to be applied to the analysis of visual sources, it is necessary to ask basic questions e.g. about the author (personal, so-

Old photos of a family living in Armenia, found in one of the villages of Talin, Armenia

Photo: Betul Kaya



cial, political background, world view, point of view on the topic under consideration, intention), the addressees, the time and place, causes and contexts of the creation of the source/picture and (maybe) its distribution (in the case of photographs these tasks can be very difficult). In the case of photographs these inquiries are very important. For example, it can make a big difference whether the photographs of refugee accommodation have been taken to illustrate a report by the responsible institution or by independent journalists in order to criticize the living conditions of the refugees on-site (or – which is possible too – to earn money) with eye-catching pictures.

With respect to the 'reality effect' of photographs, you always have to keep in mind that the pictures frame the 'reality' they depict. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze, for example, the effects of the chosen camera perspective, the chosen focus, the angle of the scene, the concrete moment on display, and of many other elements that influence the way a photograph looks and conveys its message to viewers. Moreover, it is necessary to ask if a photograph is cropped in order to eliminate certain elements while emphasizing others, or if photographs focus on specific subjects in order to present a specific impression of the 'reality'. You have to keep in mind that there are photos of pre-arranged scenes, and that there are others which are edited or manipulated. But do not forget that any photograph that is distributed by

mass media is edited and had to be edited from the beginning of press photography. Even if this practice is a long way from forging a photo it influences our reception of the picture.

In general, the elements of the image composition created by the photographer – in order to convey a certain message or not – have to be critically reflected upon during the analysis, evaluation, and interpretation process. In this context it may be helpful to speculate on what is perhaps excluded from the picture and what happened directly before and after the depicted situation. However, despite the common challenges of using photographs, this kind of visual source preserves more details of the past reality than any other image source.

In cases of contested history visual sources of history are being recurrently annihilated in conflicts. It serves the purpose of erasing 'the cultural presence' or 'the cultural trail of the other' i. e. the goal is to secure a space for own interpretation of history. This path often leads to destruction of religious and secular buildings, cemeteries, schools, places of folk religious practices, pictographs of ethnic or religious content, etc., that signify the 'identity of the other'.

Of course other ideological factors are also at play here, e.g. racism, hindering the religious practices of the deemed 'other' by the dominant ideology of the time, hindering the education of the 'other' and so forth. Therefore, a historian using iconic (visual)



Opening of the traveling exhibition in Yerevan, Armenia

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan

sources must take into account the destruction of material culture and use such cases in her/his reconstruction of history, as well as scrutinize the means and ways of their destruction.

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Politicized, Silenced, Tamed, and Contested Memories

Hranush Kharatyan

In the 20th century, when schooling has become universal and in the vast majority of countries entire societies draw their knowledge of history from the official school subject of 'History' (encompassing national history, local-regional, civilizational, or world history), the narrative of history textbooks encapsulates the stock of collective knowledge sanctioned by the respective state. The topics included in a 'History' textbook are normally selective and their choice generally rests upon political or moral-educational goals. At times it is premised on the dominance of public demand vis-à-vis a certain historical period and/or issue, obviously taking into account factors such as the limited space in textbooks, the existence or absence of respective professionals, etc. Nowadays, in democratic countries, such selectivity is somewhat counterbalanced by rapidly emerging alternative sources. However, history textbooks still remain in the political spotlight of the authorities. Consequently, collective knowledge of a certain historical event as told by 'History' textbooks may differ, which is typically the case. Nevertheless, the influence of the narrative and the teaching methodology of a 'History' textbook on collective knowledge, and therefore 'collective identity', is enormous. Effectively, during the second half of the 20th century, this influence is in direct proportion to the number of people enrolled in formal school education. The greater their involvement, the more uniform their collective knowledge of the past.

The selective character of history textbooks not only extends to the inclusion of topics about the past, but also to the deliberate circumvention of certain themes. For instance, the topic of Armenian Genocide is usually only added to a formal history textbook or curriculum after the respective country has

recognized the Armenian Genocide, i. e. almost 100 years later. Despite the fact that there was a sizeable Armenian population in the USSR and the Armenian SSR was one of its member states, regardless of the fact that thousands of survivors from the 1915 genocide committed in the Ottoman Empire found refuge in the USSR, this tragic period of the history of the Armenian people was not incorporated into the curriculum. More than that, writing on the topic of the Armenian Genocide was prohibited. Even researching this topic was forbidden. It was forbidden to speak about it, let alone 'remember' it aloud. Even those who had passed through those horrors and survived could not speak about it or 'remember aloud'. This prohibition was not embedded in the law but it was so strict that in the course of the political repressions of the 1930s, people were exiled for merely recounting stories about their ancestors killed in the genocide. Hence, the memory of the Armenian Genocide in the Soviet Union was a 'punishable memory', whereby 'tamed silence' was imposed on the bearers of these memories⁵⁸. It was only fifty years later, in 1965, that this taboo was partially broken. The thaw, however, was so tenuous that documentary material composed of standardized interviews conducted with 700 survivors in 1916–1917 was not brought out of the archives until recently. The material was published in three volumes in 2012, ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide (Armenian Genocide by Ottoman Turkey, 1915: Testimony of Survivors: Collection of Documents, Volume 1 – The Province of Van, Volume 2 – The Province of Bitlis, Volume 3 – The provinces of Erzurum, Kharberd, Diarbakir, Sebastia, Trabzon, Persian Armenia, National Archives of Armenia, Yerevan, 2012).

In the Republic of Turkey, on the other hand, the topic of the Armenian Genocide has been integrated into school textbooks and public education since the 1930s, although with an exactly opposite approach: It is claimed that during the First World War the Armenians proved to be traitors to their own country and were killing the Turks, whereby the authorities were compelled to deport them 'to protect the state from the Armenians'. As a matter of course, the textbooks remain silent about the Armenian massacres, including the acts of genocide that took place before the World War (Hamidian massacres of 1895 and the Adana massacre of 1909) as well as those committed after the war (1919–1920 killings in Marash, Hachn, Zeytoun, Kars, Alexandrapol, Akhalkalak, etc.). Of course this is not to say that Turkish society didn't have its own memory. On the contrary, these memories were quite alive, particularly in Cilicia and the east of the country – in the regions of Historic Armenia. However, these were predominately memories of involvement and participation in the crime, and for a long time it appeared to be beneficial for everyone to overlook and forget them. In other words, there was a social consensus around the issue of silence. The USSR worked to 'restrain the silence', whereas in Turkey a collective knowledge about the 'guilt of the Armenians' was planted and disseminated given the 'social silence' about the crime.

In this case we are dealing with two types of memory manipulation for political ends: 1) 'erasing the fact from social memory' and even turning it against the population for repressive purposes. 2) Modifying the collective memory about the fact, coining new 'memory-knowledge' and using it as a political instrument directed against 'the other' bearers of the memory.

Overall, the Armenian Genocide is a good case for researching 'forgetting' and 'remembering' in world history. 'Forgetting' the Genocide was in one way or another convenient for all parties to the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. In fact, they reached a silent accord with the Turkish state, renouncing the issue of the Armenian massacres which they had previously advocated. Such a settlement was also advantageous

to Germany, which played a role in the genocide but was not a signatory to the treaty, as well as the USSR – the main ally of Kemalist Turkey. Silencing the Armenian Genocide both on paper and in speech was an easy way to confine it to a forgotten paragraph of formal history.

Nevertheless, in the USSR, especially in Soviet Armenia, personal and family memories of the genocide have remained very alive and since a general analytical-interpretative narrative had not been produced at the time, the social memory was formed from a collection of personal-family-community memories of the victims of a concrete case, i. e. it evolved as a mosaic of the most brutal violence and was passed down to the third, in some instances even the fourth generation, in minute detail⁵⁹. No doubt, this does not qualify it to be described as history. Instead it is a summary of witnesses' accounts and/or fragmentary information. The constant prohibition on and precaution against speaking up about the past has sharpened the awareness of its importance and transformed it from memory into a demand to transmit it across generations. Eyewitness stories and experiences became 'secrets' confined to the family or a specific group (in this case the 'Turkish Armenians' – genocide survivor refugees who can be viewed as a non-formal extended family of people concerned with the same issue), that poured out after the dissolution of the USSR. The sensitivity and minuteness of details reproduced by the second, and even the third generation of refugees, is amazing. The third generation knows the very names of the districts of an ancestral village (in speech they don't call it 'my grandparent's village' but rather refer to it as 'our village'), the population size, when and how exactly their great grandfather/grandmother was killed, what hardships their relatives had to endure on the deportation and escape routes, how many days they wandered barefoot, where their paths lay, who helped them on the way, how many children they left behind and in what circumstances, etc. In these narratives 'the Turk' is a violent, wild creature devoid of human emotions, most often an askyar (soldier), an ugly and ill-bred one, armed with a scim-

itar. It is noteworthy that the narrators predominately use the words ‘Turk’, ‘the Turks’, even if eventually it turns out that the perpetrator was actually a Kurd/ Kurds or the identity of the murderer is unknown. Although at the start of the 20th century the word ‘Muslim’ was used much more frequently than the word ‘Turk’, Armenian social memory centers round ‘the Turk’.

The Armenians Need to Speak up, the Turks – to Keep Silent

The opportunities and means of oral and written expression of memories among the survivors who found themselves in counties other than the USSR, including Soviet Armenia, and Turkey, were different. Their ‘collective knowledge’ about the genocide and ‘the Turks’ took shape and was premised on family stories and social environment – the same deportation route, the same relocation camps, orphanages, searches for lost relatives, close-knit links within compatriot communities (Sasoun, Van, Moush, Zeytoun, Marash, Kesaria), debates around the issues of building a ‘national life’ in a new territory and reviving the national lifestyle, searches for a new habitat, construction of churches and schools, as well as some commemorative initiatives – the memorialization of

the Adana massacres, the fall of Hachn, the fall of Marash, the defense of Musa ler and many other anniversaries – the telling of stories and remembering the homeland and, of course, written texts – journalistic pieces, memoirs, fiction, etc.

While the authors of theories on the analysis of social life based on ‘oral histories’, ‘memoirs’, ‘personal biography’ were working to categorize them as a source and/or methodology for studying non-formal history and social life, and by the time this method had victoriously claimed its place in innovative historical narratives, the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, its eyewitnesses and bearers of these memories, were putting the stories of their survival and subsequent life to paper without any scientific theories and ambitions. If we were to come up with short descriptions for these memories, they could be aptly characterized as memories of terror, longing, pain, and fear. Most of them are very concrete and factual – what happened to the narrator, his family, the people of his village, how did that come to pass, when, at what exact hour, who was murdered and how, how long had they walked, hid, and managed to survive the violence, humiliations, injuries, killings, and the thirst, the relentless thirst The means of passing the memories on (as well as remaining silent) were and are very different. The written notes

Interviewees looking for their stories in the “Speaking to One Another” book

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan





*Hranush Kharatyan
welcoming guests at
the opening of the
traveling exhibition in
Yerevan, Armenia*

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan

of the first generation, i. e. the eyewitnesses, were typically testimonies, stories of personal life put down in diaries or memoirs to ease the burden of those experiences and to document the testimony. This is a strong argument against French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs's claim that as long as the 'case', the 'phenomenon' is a part of active memory, people do not tend to write about them. The necessity to write arises when the course of events ceases to be a memory and becomes a past which needs to be recorded and documented in written form. Average Armenian people had written about themselves, their relatives and localities, the things that happened to them when the experiences were still very fresh. Some of them, who could not write it down on their own because of the lack of literacy asked/demanded that their relatives put their memories to paper for them. Very few of these notes were published immediately. The majority covered long distances with their owners before being submitted to publishing houses, mostly after the death of the author⁶⁰. Some of them have not been published at all and it is still possible to encounter such notes in family archives, i. e. people did not always keep diaries with publishing in mind. Leaving the scientific analysis of these memory-narratives, their social impact, and the extent to which they were impacted by the social for another occasion, let us merely state that their titles alone convey a good idea of the emphasis of the overall narrative, e. g. 'Aghet [disaster]', 'Golgotha', 'The Death Caravan', 'In the Claws of the Turks', 'Black Diary', 'Tragedy'. This list can be complemented by active parts of speech encountered in

the diaries of other Armenian and/or foreign writers, e. g. 'Kharberd Massacres', 'Among the Ruins', 'Adana Massacre', 'The Terror of Cilicia', 'A Drop of Water for Burnt Hearts', 'The Extermination of Armenians', 'The Christian Girl who Lived Through the Great Massacres', 'The Massacres of Armenia', 'The Blackest Page of Modern History. Armenian Events of 1915', 'The History of Massacre of a Million Armenians', 'The Great Crime', 'The Massacre of Smaller Armenia and its Great Capital of Sebastia', 'A Hair's Breadth Close to Death', 'The Odyssey of my Life', 'The Survivors of the Disaster', 'Kharberd Massacre', 'Golgotha of the Armenian Clergy', 'Forever Smouldering Memories of Genocide', 'Crucifixion Roads', '40 Days Among the Corpses'⁶¹, etc.

In the vocabulary of these titles there are action words – 'crime, deportation, exile, massacre, extermination, killing, murder'; words denoting emotions – 'tears, pain, burnt heart, smoldering memory'; words denoting cause and consequence – 'ruin, death, corps, odyssey, blood, black year, disaster, tragedy, crucifixion, Golgotha, wound'. There are references to Christianity – 'crucifixion, Golgotha, Christian Girl'; as well as references to ethnicity – 'Armenian events of 1915, massacres of Armenians, Armenian Golgotha'. The titles are also rich with toponyms, but there are no words denoting revenge, animosity, or aggression.

The abovementioned are, of course, memoirs; the analyses were made at a later time and the vocabulary found in their titles is less emotional and more rational – 'Islam', 'Pan-Turkism', 'Pan-Islamism', 'Young Turks', 'Turkish army', 'genocide', 'politics',

'judgment', 'responsibility', etc. However, the analytical pieces written before the 1960s were rare, and effectively, the vocabulary used in the above-mentioned memoirs was the one in circulation. The exact same words also circulated in oral language.

No doubt, there are also genocide-related memoirs containing more passive vocabulary, for instance, 'Zeytoun in 1914–1921', 'A Tale of a Young Life', 'Memories from the Deportation of 1915', 'A Life of an Armenian', 'The Path of a Refugee' ⁶², etc. The pattern, however, remains the same – there is no mention of aggression or animosity. This matter requires a study of its own. The memoirs tend to be descriptive, containing enormous amounts of information about brutalities, suffering, and death. Although not documents, they are very sensitive, as well as being authentic and evidential. They are perfect illustrations of the 'people's history', encompassing almost the entire geography and almost all phases of the genocide. Even if the sensitive side of the story is based on subjective experiences, the narrative side is a description of specific events that contains such recurrent commonalities and patterns of individual/group subjectivity that they eventually develop into objectivity. In any case, these types of memories written down in Armenian, told in Armenian, and targeted at Armenians, or more specifically one's own children, can be called '*inward memories*'.

The other language of history/memory – memorialization, which gained momentum in the 1950s, was 'pure Armenian'. The monuments of this period are typically stone crosses, or a grieving woman holding the body of her deceased child, or an image of a desperate refugee. The inscription on the monuments is almost always a number – 1915. Such memorials speak of nothing, convey absolutely nothing to a person, unless he/she is of Armenian descent. Even if the monument bears a text, at best it reads 'In memoriam victims of 1915', 'In memoriam victims of Eghern', which does not say much to an outsider: What does Eghern mean? What victims? Who are these victims? The words 'Armenian' and 'Turk' are also absent from the monuments. Even the monument inscriptions bear an 'inward' message, while

the language of the inscription is always Armenian ⁶³. The Armenian pain was directed towards the ethnic environment; the Armenians remembered together and reminded one another.

It is noteworthy that Armenian diaries substantially differ from memories or descriptions ⁶⁴ of the Armenian Genocide produced in the same period by foreigners, which are bolder, more judgmental, and are put into perspective. In comparison, the texts authored by Armenians seem humbler; one might even say 'timid'. The memories of Armenians and the means of their transmission in the USSR and other countries are nothing like the memories of survivors who remained in Turkey, living a fearful, hidden life under the watchful eye of the Turkish authorities. Armenians living in Turkey forbade themselves to speak about what happened to them: Both the fear of the Turkish authorities and the surrounding Muslim population was at work here, but most importantly fears for the safety of their children. The children could not know, otherwise they could get in trouble for a thoughtless act of vengeance. Nevertheless, they lived in social surroundings that told them precisely what had happened: They used to hear a lot about the time of 'the massacre of the Armenians' from their Kurdish, Arab, Turkish peers and elder people. The lesson they drew was – Turkey is a dangerous place for Armenians, therefore it is preferable not to ask questions and not to display one's Armenianness unless really necessary. As a result, the Armenians in Turkey, especially the ones who lived in Turkey's provinces, were the least informed about the scale of the Armenian Genocide. They knew what had come to pass in their place of residence, but until the 1960s the majority was even unaware of the existence of Soviet Armenia. Instead, they were acutely aware of increasing anti-Armenian hatred ⁶⁵ in Turkey. Their memories are mostly about the post-genocide period and, as such, are crucial for research. Nevertheless, formal and non-formal knowledge, together with all these memories that have hardened throughout various political trials in the course of the previous century, become powerful factors in Armenian-Turkish reconciliation projects.

Memory Studies

Leyla Neyzi

In recent decades, memory has become one of the most widely debated issues in academia as well as in everyday life. Working on reconciliation in adult education projects necessitates a grounding in the basic concepts of memory as developed by the interdisciplinary field of memory studies. Memory studies also provides the wider theoretical frame for the practice of oral history.

While the discipline of history relies primarily on written archival sources created in the past, the field of memory studies is concerned with recall in the present. Marcel Proust and Walter Benjamin were key theorists who associated memory with the experience of modernity at the beginning of the twentieth century. Sigmund Freud was also a pioneer in the field of memory: He transformed western society's relationship to the past by suggesting radically that it is what he/she forgets about early childhood experiences that shapes the identity of the modern adult subject. Starting from a more conventional view of memory as the simple recall of past experiences, Freud gradually moved to a more constructivist view which claims that there is a distinction between what is experienced in the past (which may never be regained) and remembrance in the present. It is quite suggestive that, long after Freud's theoretical insights, experimental scientists have come to share this constructivist view of memory.

Recent scientific developments have revolutionized our understanding of how memory works in the brain. Neuroscientists now suggest that rather than simply being recalled in the fashion of a file opened in a computer, memories are actively (re)created at the time of recall. The recall context significantly affects the way the past is remembered and narrated. This constructivist view has enormous significance for our understanding of how memory works. It means

that the time of memory is not only the past but also the present. For example, when we interview individuals about their experiences of a historical event in the recent past, we cannot assume they will simply recount 'the facts' as lived at the time. The time that has ensued between the event and the present as well as the present context need to be taken into account in analyzing memories.

Any discussion of memory also necessitates a consideration of forgetting. Not only do human beings often misremember, they also consciously or unconsciously forget much of their lived experiences. As Borges has shown in his famous story, 'Funes the Rememberer,' the burden of remembering everything we experience is too great, so forgetting is adaptive. However, in the case of difficult histories, there may be particular reasons for forgetting or choosing not to remember what may often be painful and traumatic experiences. Reasons why individuals consciously or unconsciously 'forget' may include the fear of public opinion, fear of reliving a painful experience, wanting to spare the next generation, or choosing to silence or reframe the past.

While the experimental sciences tend to specialize in how individual memory works in the brain, social scientists who take a more sociological approach tend to focus on collective memories. The notion of collective memory proceeds from the assumption that the memories of an individual are shaped by the larger social, cultural, and political context. Since the rise of the modern nation-state in the nineteenth century, our collective memories have been influenced by institutions affected by the state such as the family, the school, religious institutions, the military, the workplace, and the media. In particular, researchers interested in collective memory study collective rituals, symbols, spaces/places, material

culture, and cultural heritage associated with the nation-state to depict how a national imaginary is created for citizens. This imaginary is invariably associated with a particular, largely positive account of the past for the purposes of the present. Researchers are especially interested in how space, time, and affect are utilized to create a sense of belonging for individuals and groups.

While acknowledging the power of nation-state narratives on collective memories, researchers in memory studies also ask questions concerning the gaps and contradictions within collective memories of the nation, and how and why individuals and groups challenge these narratives, developing alternative accounts of the past. For example, the difficult histories of most nation states result in the exclusion of the experiences and memories of particular groups such as ethnic and religious minorities. In such cases, how can the family and community act as a means of transmitting alternative memories intergenerationally? Might the family choose to silence its particular experiences due to fears of public exposure?

Theories of memory studies were largely shaped by groundbreaking research on the Holocaust. In addition, memory researchers have studied other genocides such as the Armenian genocide, the Rwandan genocide, the Cambodian genocide, and other traumatic events. Research on genocide raises important ethical, moral, and legal issues including the use of survivor testimony for legal redress and compensation.

While there is currently a controversy in memory studies concerning the theorization of traumatic memories, until recently many researchers suggested that traumatic memories differed from so-called 'normal' memories. Traumatic experiences tend to be associated with forgetting and repression on the one hand, and flashbacks and the reliving of past experiences at a later time on the other. Some memory theorists have recently challenged a number of the generalizations concerning traumatic memory developed in the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis, arguing for more cross-cultural comparison and a wider sociological and political framework. This cri-



Interviewing in Derik, Mardin

Photo: Sibel Maksudyan

tique also points to the differences between studies of memory at the individual versus the collective levels.

Today, globalization and new media technologies have made transnational media an additional powerful institution influencing our collective memories. The media constitutes one of the most important contemporary sites of struggle for different narratives of the past. Recent groundbreaking research suggests that new media technologies may even be changing the way subjective memory operates.

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History Didactics: Historical Consciousness and History Culture

Susanne Popp

In 1996 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe declared in its Recommendation 1283 (1996) on 'History and the Learning of History in Europe' that: '[...] history [...] can contribute to greater understanding, tolerance and confidence between individuals and between the peoples of Europe or it can become a force for division, violence and intolerance.'⁶⁶ We all know from many examples that 'history' can be used for very different, opposing political and social purposes – not only in Europe but elsewhere.

Therefore, one of the main tasks of the research field called 'History Didactics' is to develop quality criteria for the engagement with history. Of course, it has to be committed to the discipline-based theoretical and methodological standards of an inquiring historical approach as well as to the intellectual values of truth, valid argumentation, and respect for evidence. Additionally it has to be dedicated to didactic principles (or mediation principles) that promote critical thinking, self-reflection, tolerance, and dialogue while combating prejudices, stereotypes, and unilateral thinking based in and supported by historical narratives. Both aspects depend very closely on each other because without the verifiability and reliability of historical work the necessary basis for mutual trust and dialogue is lost. In general, the injustices and sufferings of the past can never be undone. However, there is, on all sides, a moral and social responsibility to contribute to a way of dealing with history that promotes a peaceful future in the interest of future generations. This means that the study of history, of course, has to name and expose past injustices based on evidence, but also has an

obligation to thoroughly track the 'other' narrative(s) and to avoid unilaterally projecting any form of negativity onto the opposite side.

The combination of these basic principles of History Didactics not only applies to cases of contested history or the investigation of a past that has been denied and/or suppressed, but also to any dealings with questions of history in general. These are not only valid for academic historians or history teachers, but also for all specialists or laymen that deal with history.

Basic categories of History Didactics: 'historical consciousness' and 'history culture'

The core concept of History Didactics is based on the twin categories 'historical consciousness' and 'history culture'.

The category '*historical consciousness*' indicates that 'history' is not identical with the 'past', but a certain interpretation of the past. Every historical approach is subject to the time, the knowledge, and the perspective of the researcher, narrator, or interpreter – even if it is conducted according to the most rigorous scientific principles and with the highest possible degree of critical self-reflection (which prevents an arbitrary approach to historical questions). Therefore – and this is often hard to accept, not only for the young – it is not a 'fallacy', but the 'normal case' that there are different interpretations of the same historical topic and historical sources, irrespective of any intention to lie or cheat. This is not only true for the different versions of the very same historical

questions relating to two peoples or states which were at war or used violence against each other. Rather, it is true for every society that there are different versions of the common past, dependent on whether men or women, the powerful or less powerful, rich or poor, the majority or a minority etc. are chosen as the point of reference. And even in a case where the forensic truth of facts which were previ-

ously suppressed or denied are revealed and made public, such a project is situated in a certain political and social context and guided by interests that have to be carefully reflected upon during the historical work.

In this sense, one can say that '*historical consciousness*' always links the past and the present (including present expectations for the future) in a reflexive way. Thus, dealing with history always encompasses past, present, and future – even if not everyone is always fully aware of this aspect.

The category '*history culture*' encompasses all manifestations of historical consciousness in a society – including e.g. museums and memorial sites, history exhibitions, monuments, memorial days, local and national festivals, street names, but also television, films, novels, music, drama, internet websites, or even computer games with a historical content as well as the (mis-)use of history in political arguments in public discourses. Each element of this multitude of phenomena reflects, but also affects the historical consciousness of the members of a society and, not seldom, influences it in an emotional way. The category '*history culture*' underlines the fact that the '*history*' relevant in a society or the life of an individual is not exclusively and not predominantly marked by academic research-based history, nor by rationality. The influence of the (mis-)use of history within '*history culture*' can never be overestimated. The same is true for the crucial role of the family and the social environment in the transfer of historical knowledge, judgments, and emotional attitudes where strongly held historical memories intertwined with fiercely polarized emotions sometimes prevail.

Consequently, a reflective engagement with history in projects should address two levels: (a) studying the past as such and (b) studying the (selective) presentation of the past in the historical culture around us.



Creating history, Growing Archive

Photo: Carmen Beckenbach

Some guiding principles for dealing with history in history projects

Dealing with the evidence of historical sources

All history projects have to be based on the finding, selection, critical analysis, and interpretation of historical sources in order to use them as 'evidence' in reasoned arguments. There is no knowledge about the past beyond the information that can be drawn from important artifacts from the past. Historical sources are those documents from the past (e.g. oral or written, pictorial or material sources) that came into being during the historical period which the historical project is focusing on. For example: If one looks at the history of the beginning of the 19th century, then 'historical sources' (or 'primary sources') are documents that date back to that time. If one starts to explore the kind of use the present society makes of the memory of that period, then those documents that originate in the present time are to be used as 'historical sources'.

Dealing with historical sources – for example researching in archives, searching for historical traces in historical places or memorial sites, interviews with eye witnesses, oral history projects, analysis of public history phenomena – requires a host of methodological skills [see p. 62]. There are many valid instructions available. However, three aspects should be highlighted here.

Firstly, oral, written, pictorial, and even many types of material artifacts, must not to be understood as direct (and 'objective') information about the past but as an interpretation by people who created those documents at the time. Those artifacts incorporate the knowledge (and the limitations of knowledge), the subjective experiences, points of view, and interests of the people of the past. Therefore the informational value and reliability of the available data have to be critically analyzed and compared to other doc-

uments. If you only have one significant document then it is enough to refute an existing hypothesis, but never to confirm it.

Secondly, in many cases the sources can be interpreted differently by the investigators even if both of them work very carefully. Therefore efforts should be made to create several lines of interpretation and to discuss and evaluate them (self-)critically.

Finally, it is very important to reflect on '*what is being talked about and by whom*' in the available sources. Be aware of the possibility that important aspects of the past are not documented in the sources you are using, while less important information could predominate; be aware that the documents preserve the 'voice' of certain people while other relevant social groups '*have no voice*' in the artifacts you work with. In general, the sources do not reflect 'the past' like a mirror, they are better understood as an incoherent and fragmented collection of particles – always insufficient to create an 'objective' and unambiguous portrayal of the 'whole' of the past. That is why the *principles of multiperspectivity and controversy* (see below) are essential for history projects.

Dealing with historiographic information ('secondary sources')

It is impossible for history projects to generate all findings from scratch, i. e. solely from historical sources. It is necessary to draw on scientific knowledge as it is presented in historiographical and reference works (sometimes called 'secondary sources'). But again, similar to the work with the historical sources, critical skills are required to assess not only the general quality (e.g. correctness, validity, reliability, source-orientation), but also the point of view and the context of the historiographical representations you use.

And this is also true for ourselves: As looking at the past is always influenced by the current stocks of knowledge, interests, questions, problems etc., we are obliged to reflect on this site-dependency of our approach as self-critically as possible, even if we can never overcome it completely. This reflection is very

important not only in ensuring the methodological quality of our history projects but – more importantly—with regard to our responsibility to deal with history, contested or not, in a way conducive to tolerance, dialogue, and mutual understanding.

Reflecting ‘perspectivity’ – the requirement for a multiple perspective approach

The term ‘perspectivity’ refers to the epistemological premise that there is no observer-independent perception of reality. This applies – as stated above – to the oral, written and pictorial sources and the majority of material artifacts. A fortiori it applies to the historiography (as based on ‘historical sources’) – and to the manner in which we deal with sources and historiography in a history project.

Within History Didactics, reflecting on the ‘perspectivity’ of historical sources (primary sources) and the efforts to find and to compare different ‘historical sources’ that represent divergent points of view on one and the same historical issue – is called ‘*the principle of multi-perspectivity*’. It includes the reflection on possible ‘*tacit social groups*’ whose perspectives are not represented in the corpus of sources used in the project – maybe because the people were not able to read and write or because their ‘voices’ were ignored or suppressed by the memory and/or historiography.

Within History Didactics the principle of analyzing and assessing the ‘perspectivity’ of historiography and other historical information (= created after the ‘past’ that is focused on) is called ‘*the principle of controversy*’. This underlines the necessity to identify those elements of the historical accounts and narrations used in the project that are controversial or likely to be controversial and to study other representations of the same historical topic in a comparative way.

Within History Didactics the principle of analyzing and assessing the ‘perspectivity’ of our own approach to a certain historical topic is called ‘*the principle of plurality*’ and is employed in order to

highlight the difference between the perspectivity at the three levels (= sources, historiography (literature), present-day viewer).

The names History Didactics has given to these ‘principles’ may not convince everyone. However, they remind us to reflect on perspectivity at three different levels, and this is important because ‘perspectivity’ and ‘change of perspective’ have to be integral elements of any history project committed to the promotion of understanding and dialogue. Regardless of whether a (shared) history is controversial or not the endeavor to perceive and to trace the point of view of the ‘others’ is an indispensable and, at the same time, a very rewarding and worthwhile element of historical projects. And in deadlocked situations the readiness to perceive the ‘other’ perspective and to compare perspectives is already a major step forward.

Differentiating approaches

From the point of view of History Didactics the following aspects are also important for history projects.

Avoid incorrect generalizations. When speaking about states, nations, ethnic, religious, cultural, and other groups, one has to pay strict attention to avoiding generalizations. For in every social entity, there are different subgroups, whether they are men and women, wealthy and poor people, socially privileged and deprived, supporters of the prevailing opinion or critics, perpetrators or victims ... This kind of differentiation, but also highlighting the common ground shared by subgroups of different nations, religions, or ethnicities, is a prerequisite for combating prejudices and negative stereotypes and images of enemies based on historical narratives. In this context the biographical approach is very important. The same is true for contrasting narratives of conflict and violence with counter-narratives of cases of humanity and solidarity, even if they were exceptions on an individual level.

Avoid unbalanced comparisons. While drawing comparisons between nations, ethnicities, cultures,

or religions, it is crucial not to unilaterally stress the differences but to balance them with similarities and common ground. Additionally, it is sometimes instructive to look at these differences from a bird's-eye-view. In some cases the differences become smaller against the backdrop of other, greater differences. For example, the differences between Islam and Christianity become considerably smaller if these two monotheistic revealed religions are compared to Buddhism.

Change in the viewing scale. In general, another kind of change of perspective is useful for history projects. Examining historical topics (especially conflicts) from the bird's-eye-view helps to contextualize historical conflicts and instead of separating peoples, states, and cultures it can inspire efforts to uncover common ground in the form of broad tendencies. This can help to build bridges for a new understanding capable of overcoming old blockages by means of dialogue.

The worm's-eye-view, however, can reveal aspects of everyday experiences that are shared by the so called 'ordinary people' across different nations,

ethnicities, cultures, or religions. Here too: The importance of the biographical approach cannot be overestimated.

Sometimes it is helpful or even necessary to look at one's 'own' (ethnic, national, cultural) history with a transnational or transcultural eye that identifies exchange with others – by encounter, migration, but also conflict and war – as an integral part of one's 'own' history. With respect to intercultural communication and/or coping with sensitive historical issues it can be especially helpful to visualize 'identity groups' (e.g. nations, civilizations, ethnic groups) not as self-contained units but rather as social arenas where many external and internal factors interact. To reject any essentialist characterizations of 'others' is a major challenge in our time – not only when dealing with history.

Broadening the contexts of the historical topic. Needless to say, it is very important to carefully broaden the contexts of the historical topic the project is focusing on and to fit it into overarching spatial, temporal, and factual interrelations in order to get new and fresh perspectives on it. Likewise, it is sometimes very valuable to look for likely historical

Video interviews as part of the traveling exhibition

Photo: Gohar Movsessyan



or contemporary situations in order to draw a comparison. In general, it is easier to recognize the specific peculiarities of a certain historical phenomenon while comparing it with a (more or less) similar case.

Multidimensional approaches. It is crucial that history projects explore their issues in a 'rich context' by using multidimensional approaches provided by the history culture, like memorial sites, poems, drama, films, websites, or historical societies. They always offer very different approaches to the past, i. e. the narratives about the past, especially with regard to the relationship between cognition and emotion, text and image, aesthetics and politics, or identity and self-reflection.

Final remarks

From the point of view of History Didactics the caliber of the historical approach is a necessary but not sufficient element of the quality of a history project. Of course, it is necessary to ask and answer questions like: What happened? How do we know? Why are there different accounts and interpretations? Why does it matter today and in the past? But it is also necessary to be aware that any engagement with history has to take a responsible attitude towards both the present and the future in order – at the least – to avoid increasing injustice and intolerance. Therefore history projects have to acknowledge the complexity of the past, to accept that there is no 'single truth' in 'a whole' and, finally, deal very carefully with the fact that history (often) touches upon identities and emotions and that a rational and factual engagement with it is complicated.

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Reconciliation from Theory to Practice

Vanya Ivanova

'Our lives can be a journey toward reconciliation.'

John Paul Lederach

How do people come to terms with the past? How can it be addressed in a constructive way? How can it be approached in a way that encourages greater understanding? These are among the questions that historians and adult educators asked themselves and other professionals throughout the eight years of making small steps in the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation process. But what does reconciliation mean?

There is no single definition of reconciliation or clear normative standards. In general terms it can be characterized as *an improvement in the relationship between two or more parties who were previously in conflict*⁶⁷. It is used to refer to either *a process or an outcome and goal*. In the best practice presented here it was considered a process. Over the last decade, the concept of reconciliation has increasingly been discussed as *a method* to prevent further conflict in war-torn societies⁶⁸. Reconciliation has its etymological roots in the Latin 'reconciliare': re-, 'again' and conciliare, 'bringing together' or 'calling together again'. Reconciliation is also understood as a *two-way process*, involving both perpetrator and victim, emphasizing mutuality. Among the many meanings used in different contexts, we find the following in recognized sources:

- ❖ IDEA handbook (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, IDEA, Stockholm): *[Reconciliation is] 'a process through which society moves from a divided past to shared future'*.⁶⁹
- ❖ Sida handbook (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency): *'Reconciliation is a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgment of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace'*.⁷⁰
- ❖ One of the leading scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution, John Paul Lederach, explains: *'Reconciliation can thus be understood as both a focus and a locus. As a perspective, it is built on and oriented toward the relational aspects of a conflict. As a social phenomenon, reconciliation represents a space, a place or location of encounter, where parties to a conflict meet.'*⁷¹ So, on one side we have the relationships as the core focus, and on the other a locus where experiences of the past and visions for the future meet.

When the focus is on improving relationships through the reconciliation process the literature recognizes four categories⁷²: 1) Changes in external behaviors (for example, an ability to renew cooperation with the other party); 2) changes in belief (for example, abandoning the belief that the other party is an enemy); 3) resolving negative emotions and attitudes (for example, overcoming fear, hate, or anger); 4) adopting or resuming positive emotions and attitudes (for example, mutual recommitment to a shared set of norms leading to mutual trust).

	Reconciliation on personal level	Reconciliation on structural level
minimum	Able to attend the same events	Acceptance of co-existence
moderate	Willingness to speak together and/or work together	Mutual cooperation
maximum	Positively valuing others and enjoying relations with them	Positive commitment to sharing society

Reconciliation processes are experienced on three levels – micro, meso, and macro. On the micro or personal level this includes the psychological reconciliation that occurs within the individual and the inter-personal reconciliation that occurs between people. On the meso or group level, a process could occur at the family level or within institutions and organizations, as well at a local community level. On the macro or structural level, this involves ethnic and/or religious communities, political parties, nations, and states.

Theorists also recognize that reconciliation is a ‘scalar’ concept which allows for minimum and maximum versions of improved relationships, an example is given in the table shown above ⁷³:

There is agreement between scientists and practitioners that reconciliation includes acknowledgement of past wrongs. Following knowledge of what happened in the past, the acknowledgement itself could be enacted through different public means. Three of them are briefly presented in the following section: truth telling, memorials, and apologies.

Truth Telling

What precisely happened? This is the question that concerns victims, survivors, and ancestors. Without clear knowledge about who committed the violent acts, who gave the orders, where the graves are, the suffering cannot be put to an end and the real process of mourning and healing cannot start. The process of truth finding and truth telling could also be understood as the ongoing suffering of victims and survivors. Nevertheless, the predominant understanding is that the efforts of recording, archiving,

and thus preserving and spreading the information in the format of educational materials or as background materials for seminars and trainings could serve future generations in preventing them from repeating the past.

A mechanism for revealing and documenting the past are the truth commissions. They are temporary official institutions that are specially created to explore wrongdoings in the past when needed.

Memorials

Memorial is a general term that can include monuments, museums, or sites of memory. These are all places that preserve the memory of past events. When these memorials are connected with past atrocities they can function in different ways – they can prevent forgetting and denial, they can serve as places of respect for the victims, they can consolidate the understanding of history of a particular group/nation, thus serving to shape a collective identity.

Apologies

Apologies are the most vivid way in which atrocities from the past can be acknowledged. They are considered one of the most significant actions in the reconciliation process and as an explicit step in the official recognition of the wrongdoings of the past. The act of apology can also be viewed as highly politicized, lacking authenticity and any real expression of regret and remorse and simply serving political ends. Whether sincere or just serving political ends, the apology is a public act that is considered a cornerstone in most reconciliation processes.

Reconciliation/Justice – what comes first?

Another important question is: What comes first reconciliation or justice? We will highlight three possible interpretations: 1) Justice comes first and is a precondition for reconciliation; 2) sacrificing justice for the sake of the future and 3) reconciliation is (part or all of) justice.

It is a hard question and the answers differ from context to context. For some theorists, practitioners, and victims, justice should come first as it is a precondition for reconciliation. The so called retributivists claim that perpetrators of wrongdoings deserve to suffer a proportional punishment because justice is a matter of holding wrongdoers to account by giving them the negative treatment they deserve.

Bearing in mind that reconciliation is also concerned with the future, the conflict between justice and reconciliation is most apparent when individuals or communities choose non-punitive responses in the hope of securing peace, thus *sacrificing justice*. Authors debate whether this sacrifice may be consid-

ered morally justified. Another view is that *reconciliation is (part or all of) justice*. Here justice is considered restorative and is about repairing relationships. Desmond Tutu ⁷⁴ responded to the criticism of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's decision not to pursue retributive justice by saying, '*We believe, however, that there is another kind of justice – a restorative justice which is concerned not so much with punishment as with correcting imbalances, restoring broken relationships – with healing, harmony and reconciliation*'. The focus of restorative justice is on achieving a morally appropriate state of relations, where victims' needs for recognition, security, and reparations are given special emphasis. Here promoting reconciliation is seen as promoting justice ⁷⁵.

The healing aspect

Ubuntu ⁷⁶ is a notion that expresses the understanding that we are all part of one community. In order for this community to be healthy it should open itself up to all its parts, including the perpetrators.

Students at
genocide memorial
in Yerevan

Photo: Sibel Maksudyan





Young people at the opening of the traveling exhibition in Yerevan

Photographer: Gohar Movsessyan

Making it possible for them to rejoin the community helps them to regain their lost humanity and results in healing for the whole community. Isn't healing the only way of overcoming division?

The role of adult education

To sum up, the role of adult education in the reconciliation processes is firstly to provide a safe space for an open-minded exchange, and secondly to equip the younger generation with skills and tools to question, to seek to understand the other side, to think critically and to grasp their personal responsibility for the past, present and future.

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- 76 Ubuntu means literally “human-ness”, and is often translated as “humanity towards others”, it is used by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to express the idea of connectedness: ‘I am, because you are, because we are’.



Authors



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