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# THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN PERSPECTIVE

Edited by  
**Richard G.  
Hovannisian**

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**Richard G. Hovannisian**

*Introduction by Terrence Des Pres*

*Preface by Israel W. Charny*



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## Foreword

*Richard G. Hovannisian*

During the deportations and massacres of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire in 1915, hundreds of descriptive articles and books were written about the genocide by eyewitnesses, diplomats, correspondents, and humanitarians of many nationalities. Scholarly study of the subject, however, is only just beginning. This may be explained in part by the fact that for years the exiled survivor generation concentrated its energies on adapting to new environments, rescuing and caring for family members who somehow had remained alive, and organizing schools and churches to perpetuate, as well as possible, a national cultural heritage in diverse and often alien surroundings. Moreover, the failure of the Allied Powers after World War I to fulfill their pledges to repatriate the survivors and to create a separate Armenian state, and the subsequent international abandonment of the Armenian Question in 1923, deprived the Armenians of the status and resources that could have encouraged and facilitated scholarly investigation of the genocide. But perhaps the main reason for the general disregard for scientific study was the feeling that there was neither need for, nor purpose in, dwelling upon that which the entire world accepted as common knowledge, that is, the systematic dislocation and annihilation of the Armenian population by a dictatorial regime bent on creating a radically different political order with a radically different ethnoreligious composition. With the humiliating but accurate phrase “starving Armenian” broadcast the world over, the survivors would have found it unimaginable that within a generation there might be those who would either deny or else try to minimize the scope of their victimization by casting it into the context of the general horror and havoc of war. Ironically, however, that is exactly what happened. And with great new international crises gripping the world in the 1930s and 1940s, the Armenian experience in World War I became the “forgotten genocide.”

It was not until the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide in 1965 that the children and grandchildren of the survivors were able to penetrate the wall of silence around them just a little and to voice their pleas for international recognition and rectification of an outstanding crime against humanity. Many younger Armenians, affected by the transgenerational trauma of genocide, became involved in political and demonstrative activities. The Turkish government, on the other hand, came to regard the modest revival of interest in the Armenian case as a serious menace. Since the 1960s it has engaged in an intense campaign of denial and refutation, using to advantage its geopolitical position, its international diplomatic, military, and economic associations, and its organized machinery of state. The determination of that government to prevent the Armenian Question from ever again becoming a subject for international consideration has led it into extreme positions, not excluding threat and intimidation. Indeed, most of the papers in this volume, presented during the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide in Tel Aviv in 1982, were delivered under the heavy shadow of intimidation. Yet in spite of the pressure to exclude discussion of the Armenian genocide or else cancel the conference, people of good conscience prevailed, refusing to put political considerations above moral and humanitarian imperatives. It was because of such people that the Tel Aviv conference became reality.

Since the preparation of the papers in this volume, the campaign of denial has been unrelenting. Public relations firms have been engaged to refine the tactics and strategy. School boards and public officials have been visited by delegations with publications and materials aimed at placing in question the truth and scope of the Armenian genocide. Repeated attempts have been made to preclude discussion of the genocide in textbooks and in public forums. The advocates of denial hold forth the defense interests of the United States and of NATO, play upon the fear of international terrorism, appeal to a sense of fair play, and demand with allusions to legal action equal time to present their views. In 1985, on the seventieth anniversary of the genocide, the Turkish government exerted such extraordinary pressure as to prompt the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the White House to lobby against passage of a congressional joint resolution designating April 24 as a day of remembrance of man's inhumanity to man with particular reference to the Armenian tragedy. National defense requirements were invoked by many who participated in the effort to obscure the historical record, evidence of which abounds in the National Archives, almost within sight of both the Capitol and the White House. Sadly, some academics, too, have lent their support to this campaign, raising the specter of possible



things to come once the Holocaust generation has passed from the scene. Fortunately, however, there are still many conscientious people who will not submit to the coercion nor acquiesce in the perversion of national interests to thwart the quest for truth and justice. These have been the bold and the brave, those who have withstood the pressure, who have gone forward with forums and programs on the Armenian genocide, and who remain committed to remembering the past for the sake of the present and the future.

This volume includes the papers presented at the Tel Aviv conference, together with contributions by Leo Kuper, Robert Melson, and Donald and Lorna Miller. The informative conference papers of Professors Vahakn Dadrian, Alen Salerian, and Avedis Sanjian do not appear in this volume but may be published elsewhere. The variety in discipline and specialization of the authors is clearly reflected in the content, focus, interpretation, and style of the individual articles. Collectively, however, the anthology may be viewed as an attempt to address a few of the complex issues relating to the Armenian genocide and its manifold consequences. It may provide answers to some questions regarding the Armenian past and, it is hoped, will be of use to those dedicated to the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide.

## **Preface**

# **One Is Either for Human Life or Not**

*Israel W. Charny*

I am honored and pleased to have been invited to write the preface to this important volume, and gratified that much of the work it contains was first developed for and presented at the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide, held in Tel Aviv in 1982. Although in a basic philosophical sense the task is endless, I am sure that the excellent papers presented here constitute a major contribution to our knowledge of the Armenian genocide. The Armenian genocide was a cataclysmic event to the Armenian people—indeed to all people—and to the very process we call civilization. To study the Armenian genocide is to do honor to the Armenian people and their history, and it is also to affirm a commitment to protect and fight for the rights of all peoples.

I write this piece shortly after returning to Jerusalem from Boston, where I participated in a noteworthy conference on the theme, “Seventy Years after the Genocide: Lessons from the Armenian Experience.” I am impressed by the increasing range and depth of scholarship on the Armenian genocide. I also sense an upsurge of pride in one’s Armenian heritage, a greater resoluteness in articulating the story of the injustice done to the Armenians. In addition, it is very heartening that an increasing number of Armenian scholars and leaders are ready to join scholars and leaders of other ethnic, national, and religious communities in studying the history of different genocides in a broad human rights perspective, and out of a shared concern for the future fate of all peoples.

I would like to think that the milestone conference in 1982 and the continuing work of our Institute of the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide have something to do with these developments. If I have understood my Armenian colleagues correctly, the conference was the first time in several decades that the Armenian case was presented

in an international forum of scholars. I remember vividly the deep concern and sometimes outright anxiety of Armenian participants when the conference organizers took a stand against the Turkish government's heavy pressures to have the Armenian topic removed from the conference and against the Israeli government, which, to the unending shame of many of us, succumbed to Turkish demands and attempted to close down the conference. It was a powerful lesson that Armenians and Jews—and all other peoples—must stand together in a common battle against those responsible for past events of genocide, and against all those who seek to deny the truth of such past events.

I often wonder what it meant to Armenians to see some of us Jews, and our beloved Jewish state, bow to realpolitik and agree to suppress Armenian history. Even in 1985, upon returning to Israel from Boston, I found that the government had attempted to pressure the mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, not to participate in a meeting at the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus in commemoration of the Armenian genocide. Happily, I have also been encouraged by a strong editorial in the *Jerusalem Post* (April 25, 1985) insisting that “no political considerations can supersede the imperative against joining the forgetters and distorters of the genocide of another people.” This is the Israel I believe in, and the voice of human integrity that I am always thrilled to hear.

Nonetheless, it is a fact that among the people who experienced the Holocaust there are individuals who are willing to collaborate with the killer-apologists of another people because it serves their immediate sense of self-interest. This sobering restatement of truth about human nature and the potential evil that exists in people is not unrelated to the very dynamics from which sprang both the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust. Sadly, a readiness to court violence and to revel in power is present in all peoples. Thus, in the burst of a new Armenian pride these last years, there has also emerged a terrorist movement that has claimed the lives of Turkish diplomats, their families, and other innocent people. Although many of us can readily understand the deep rage felt by the Armenians against the Turkish government, which is currently engaged in massive campaigns to obliterate the history of the Armenian genocide, the killing of innocent people cannot be the way for those of us who believe that the essential evil in all genocide is the preempting of another human being's inherent right to life.

Similarly, the Jewish national experience in its reconstituted homeland instructs us again in the truth about human nature. Even a victimized people, with their deep sensitivity to suffering, must guard against the hubris of power, the corruption of pragmatism, and the lure of militarism. One can but hope that the ethical traditions of Judaism and the basic

democratic structure of the State of Israel, along with the never-to-be-forgotten legacy of the Holocaust, will prevail in reestablishing the Israeli commitment to "purity of arms," that is, a commitment to power only for self-defense, and never for inflicting or cooperating in a reckless destruction of another people. We who have been victims have a profound responsibility to guard against wanton violence even in our struggles against our oppressors. Each and every human being, at any given time in human history, has a connection with all the genocides that have taken place in the past, and with the potential for genocide against any people whatsoever in the future. *One is either for human life or not. There is no such thing as indifference on this issue.*

The new forms of mass murder available today on our planet threaten the continuation of human existence. It is the responsibility of us all to be aware of the dangers of nuclear holocausts, multiple genocides, or omnicide that can obliterate millions of human beings belonging to many different groups.

We should not forget Pastor Niemoeller's brilliant epigraph to the Holocaust:

*First they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for the communists  
And I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a communist.*

*Then they came for the trade  
Unionists and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for me—  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me.*

## Introduction

# Remembering Armenia

*Terrence Des Pres*

May 5, 1985: The President of the United States travels to Bitburg to honor German troops who died in World War II, among them forty-nine members of the Nazi SS. Despite great protest against an event that honors Hitler's killer elite, Ronald Reagan goes on record as saying that between the murderers and the victims there is no distinction; that the crimes of the past are better forgotten; and that this vastly powerful signal to the world—the champion of holocaustal weapons absolving the agents of the Holocaust—is “morally right.”

The contempt for history is plain to see. So is the pain caused to survivors, those of the death camps as well as those who endured or fought to stop the Nazi onslaught. Even worse is the news that “SS Veterans Feel ‘Rehabilitated’ by Reagan Visit” (*New York Times*, May 3, 1985). Worse yet, there is the damage such an action inflicts upon ethical consciousness, on our capacity to distinguish, and believe in, the difference between good and evil. Conscience, as Schopenhauer put it, arises from humankind's knowledge concerning what it has done. The message of the Bitburg visit is that conscience does not count.

After the fury has subsided and the long view again becomes possible, the U.S. homage to fascism will take *its* place in history, and we shall look back upon it as an emblematic gesture, a potent sign of the times. For Ronald Reagan is nothing if not timely, the perfectly representative man for an age increasingly committed to military solutions, to brute force and carnage. Now victimization is taken for granted. Now nations are written off, whole peoples dismissed as “acceptable loss.” The line between war and genocide blurs, and we may expect to see increasing hostility toward those of us who would salvage distinctions. Such political hostility is, in fact, the challenge that this volume of essays rises to meet.

The issue is nothing less than power versus truth, and we have the Bitburg incident as evidence that politics disdains the historical record. In the Orwellian world of modern governments, the past is rewritten or excised as shifting policy dictates.

One wishes the Bitburg blunder were the isolated event that, magnified by press coverage, it might at first have seemed to be. But in the West, no less than in the East, history submits to politics. The will to truth is cowed by pressure of numerous kinds, reasons of state on the one hand, economic necessities on the other, and, not least, the pure careerism of intellectuals who put their expertise in the service of power as a matter of course. When governments and professional elites find reward in the sophistries of might makes right, truth is bound to suffer. Some of the damage can be gauged by observing that nowadays the delivery of fact comes in two formats: "official" and "alleged." There are, furthermore, "two sides to every issue," which leaves the outcome to cosmetics and the technologies of persuasion. We live in an age of intense propaganda, and the demand for "acceptable" versions of events would seem to suggest that old-fashioned bringers of bad news—witnesses, scholars, serious journalists—may henceforth expect hard going.

Milan Kundera, the exiled Czech novelist, has written that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." This single remark, in my view, sums up the human predicament today and puts the burden of responsibility exactly where it falls—on writers, and now more than ever, on scholars. Kundera is obsessed by the spectacle of Soviet tanks rolling into Prague. Such a concrete historical image, in turn, becomes the emblem of culture besieged; and any people or nation, we need to keep in mind, is only as strong as its culture's integrity. National catastrophes can be survived if (and perhaps only if) those to whom disaster happens can recover themselves through knowing the truth of their suffering. Great powers, on the other hand, would vanquish not only the peoples they subjugate but also the cultural mechanisms that would sustain vital memory of historical crimes.

Franz Werfel defended memory when he wrote *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, and I find it significant that Werfel spent the first third of his life in Prague, the second third in Vienna, and the last as a permanent exile initially in France and finally in the United States, a species of diaspora that Kundera calls the "typically Central European biography." After 1915, how many thousands of Armenians wandered in exactly the same way? By now the biography of exile has become standard, a universal type, and not for individuals only. Kundera's sympathies, like those of Franz Werfel, are for peoples threatened by obliteration. When modern states make way for geopolitical power plays, they are not above removing

everything—nations, cultures, homelands—in their path. Great powers regularly demolish other peoples' claims to dignity and place, and sometimes, as we know, the outcome is genocide. In a very real sense, therefore, Kundera is right: against historical crimes we fight as best we can, and a cardinal part of this engagement is "the struggle of memory against forgetting."

I say "we," and have in mind a definite group, those among us disciplined in the recovery of facts and the validation of lost worlds. I am addressing the community of scholars, thinkers, and writers whose profession is the work of remembering. Even more specifically, I am concerned with men and women for whom the labor of truth takes them into areas of conflict where the older ideals of humane enlightenment—the values of detachment, suspended judgment, and the long view—no longer suffice or cannot be counted on.

The problem today is that scholarship has had thrust upon it the *necessity* of partisan practice, and about this I would like to be very exact. When power of any sort, be it political, professional, or institutional, takes a hostile stance toward certain directions of study and the results of such study, then scholars can no longer pretend to escape political consequence. Antigone might wish only to give her brother decent burial, but Creon has ruled otherwise and, like it or not, she is forced to perform her private duties within a context defined by the king. This is what I mean by "political intrusion," by now a nearly universal affliction in private as in public lives, for men and women dedicated to knowledge no less than for men and women committed to action. The curse is general, and scholars are neither immune nor exempt.

We have come, I think, to a parting of roads. As scholars beset by political pressures, we can beg off, plead innocence, and allow established policy to go on directing our interests. Or we can find a niche within the power structure and speak with that authority. Or—the militant course in a militant time—we can counter these temptations by deliberately setting our work against any approach to, or from, worldly agencies of power, with a special distrust for ideological blandishments, whether from left or right or from the deceptive middle. The unpalatable fact, in this age of disinformation, is that political order requires the subservience of knowledge. How to respond is everyone's problem. For scholars repelled by politics, one solution is to take up an oppositional or antithetical style of inquiry. What this means in practice is to proceed with healthy disrespect for things official. As a spokesman for the U.S. Department of State quipped, "Don't believe anything until it's officially denied." The willing suspension of belief has always been a part of academic method, but never more so than now.

The political control of knowledge goes deeper than censorship and is more subtle than outright propaganda. It includes the conditions under which research will be funded and given a forum, and also the designation of legitimacy to be conferred or withheld in specific fields of inquiry. Jobs, tenure, professional advancement, all can come to depend on taking the approved line. Adjacent to these disturbing developments in the academy, the high-pressure phenomenon of the “institute” and “think tank” proliferates, with, in most cases, government backing of one sort or another. What all this scrambling means, finally, is that the struggle of memory against forgetting must compete with official versions and special interests, with public and private demands for serviceable knowledge, with the kinds of on-line information geared to expedient needs. Amid this din the scholar’s independent voice is hard to hear, unless, of course, it too is “backed.”

We who pride ourselves on learning must now decide if research is to become the service industry that governments require. We are accustomed to denigrating Marxist distortions, and we point with scorn to situations in which Soviet scholars produce results useful to the state. Such cases are highly visible, and the means of coercion, which include exile and imprisonment, make the Soviet example impressive. But coercion may take other forms as well—appointments and grants, for example—which remind us that the economic factor is always active; or the bias of one’s profession, which opens its best avenues of advancement to those whose methods have been duly authorized; or finally, the influence of nationality, by which I mean the need to display in one’s work a patriotic spirit, especially in times of political distress. At its worst, pressure of this kind becomes McCarthyist; at its best the subtle nudge of commonweal.

The political manipulation of truth is ruinous to any free society, to the scholarly community especially, for if we cannot trust our standards and each other, our enterprise is groundless. Perhaps, however, my description of this threat has been more extreme than the situation warrants. We can readily agree that things go badly behind the Iron Curtain, and the example of Nazi Germany is ever before us. But surely in our academies, among our intellectuals, the life of the mind bends to no one. Academic discourse, at least among the nations of the Free World, proceeds without interference or intimidation, or so we presume and sometimes boast. But if “academic freedom” were still intact the essays in this volume would not have been written, or rather, they would not be possessed by the urgency that defines their occasion.

Professors Hovannisian, Kuper, and Melson set forth the basic history of the Armenian genocide at the hands of the Turks in 1915–16. Professors



Hamalian and Oshagan trace the imprint of these events upon literary imagination, and Professors Boyajian and Grigorian point up the hypermnesia—the violence of memory—found in survivors and their children, whose ability to deal with historical trauma is vastly complicated by the denial of the events that haunt them. These and other essays offer us a triple perspective. First of all, they increase our understanding of the nature of genocide by examining the Armenian case. Secondly, they stand as a challenge—the challenge of scholarship—to the deliberate policy of denial on the part of the Turkish government, and the policy of support for this denial on the part of the United States government. And lastly, they emerge as a primary instance of scholarship interfered with and intimidated by the state.

As Israel Charny documents, when in 1982 the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide was getting under way in Tel Aviv, officials of the Israeli government importuned individual scholars to stay away. This extraordinary action was in response to messages from representatives of Turkey who had approached the Israeli Foreign Ministry with remarks about the well-being of Turkish Jews, remarks that might have been vague and indirect but that caused officials in Israel to attempt to abort the conference. “There was a sense,” Charny records, “that actual Jewish lives were at stake.” Suddenly, leaders of Jewish communities in the United States and elsewhere were insisting that the conference might better be cancelled. The spiritual leader of the conference, Elie Wiesel, decided (after a visit from Turkish representatives and messages from the Israeli government) not to attend, citing danger to Jews in the Near East. According to the *New York Times* (June 3, 1982), which interviewed Wiesel in Paris, “the Turks let it be known there would be serious difficulties if Armenians took part in the conference.” The conference took place as planned, which speaks well for intellectual courage, but the point to keep in mind is that political interests were mobilized against an *academic* conference. It was a gathering of *scholars*, nothing less and nothing more, learned men and women convening to pursue understanding.

It was once fashionable to expend one’s pity upon the “starving Armenians,” a sort of tea-time sympathy requiring no action but at least recognizing Turkey’s attempt, during the war, to exterminate its Armenian population. It is now fashionable to be shocked at Armenian terrorists and to sympathize with “the Turkish side of the story.” This sort of windblown compassion is not autonomous; it is the social expression of changes in political outlook. During World War I, when Turkey was allied with Germany, the governments of Great Britain and the United States vigorously condemned the genocide then in progress. By 1923,

however, when Turkey achieved its status as a modern nation-state, political allegiance began to shift. As a traditional enemy of Russia, Turkey was worth wooing; and as the Cold War warmed up, the geopolitical importance of Turkey—its strategic position on the border of the Soviet Union, its willingness to transform Mount Ararat into an outpost for Western surveillance—worked to inhibit criticisms of official Turkish policy, in the past as well as in the present. As Jeane Kirkpatrick made clear in her defense of authoritarian governments, political regimes “friendly” to the United States are automatically acceptable, no matter what evils—torture, military rule, contempt for human rights—might need whitewashing. And so it has come about that, at a time when Turkey refuses to admit that a genocide occurred, our State Department backs off from its own records and designates the Armenian genocide as merely “alleged.”

My point is that as politics goes, so goes a goodly part of what passes for educated understanding. Far from being something as simple as hypocrisy, the current predicament of scholarship reveals a terribly complicated *modus operandi*. One of the best commentators on the relation of power to knowledge has been Michel Foucault. The bearing of politics upon learning becomes, in his later work, a function of the services knowledge and power perform for each other. Some reciprocal trade-off, in Foucault’s view, is always in the works. He argues that more than we have cared to admit, scholarly discourse has depended upon the institutions that permit, control, and legitimate its practice, institutions that are locked into the larger grid of power relations on a spectrum running from the lowliest academic squabble to oil wars and the nuclear terrorism of the superpowers.

The term *discourse* has pretty much replaced the word *truth*, an indication all its own of the way our professional modes of thinking and speaking are controlled by shifts in institutional authorization. Strange to think that the people least likely to use the word *truth* are the sophisticated scholars who staff our universities. There are reasons for this reluctance, no doubt, in particular the victory of rhetoric in matters of public consciousness. Today we possess at most a nostalgia for truth, evident in the persistence of the word, which suggests that *truth* in its nonironic usage might still be, in residue, a term of empowerment. What cannot be doubted are the problems that arise from the deep entanglement of knowledge in the agenda of power, kinds of subversion and complicity that Foucault illuminates in an essay entitled “Truth and Power.” In particular, Foucault reminds us that “truth is a thing of this world,” not a Platonic entity above and beyond history but very much a bargaining chip in humankind’s struggle with power. “Each society,” Foucault tells

us, "has its regime of truth," and he goes on, "that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as truth."

That there are "regimes of truth" cannot be doubted. Until some fairly recent date (perhaps midway through the eighteenth century), educated elites openly served their political masters. The Enlightenment, to which Kant assigned the formula "dare to know," then announced the era of independent knowledge. But after only two centuries of intellectual autonomy, of critical thinking *vis-à-vis* the ruling powers (the heyday of liberalism), the repoliticization of knowledge seems to be gaining momentum. We cannot, perhaps, escape this predicament, but neither are we, by necessity, its absolute victims. If knowledge caters to power, the case is also, as Foucault insists, that power depends on knowledge, a small wedge of hope, perhaps, but one we cannot surrender. Scholarship is under attack because, quite simply, knowledge counts. To judge from increasing attempts to suborn the academy, we might even conclude that knowledge counts a very great deal.

With what general courage the academic community comports itself remains to be seen. In an immediate way, however, our scholarly conduct is put to the test by this question: Will the Armenian genocide of 1915 in Turkey be recognized, or will it go down, with much else, into Orwell's memory hole? It is perhaps evident that the issue here is not only the attempt on the part of the Turkish government to rewrite history and blot out the past. It is the relation of power to knowledge, and how, in real and concrete ways, governments are attempting to deprive academic scholarship of its autonomy and make of it a service industry. The issue, then, is whether or not we wish to be menials, for at the very least, scholars who spend their resources defending the honor of nation-states serve something other than truth.

The case of terrorism, in its present Armenian enactment, is of special interest because on the face of it, such violence ought to invalidate Armenian claims to a hearing. Who will listen to the voice of the victims when, as attacks upon Turkish embassies make clear, the present victims are innocent Turkish officials? And who would have supposed, even a few years ago, that the world-bane of terrorism could have a bearing upon the outcome of scholarly research? In this respect the last essay in this volume, by Professor and Mrs. Miller, seems especially revealing as a study in responses to the trauma of genocide when that trauma includes defeat, dispersal, and the obliteration of national identity.

We might consider that international terrorism (as opposed to state terrorism or the strategic use of violence by indigenous groups in postcolonial conflict) began after World War II with dispossessed German and Japanese groups suffering the deracination of national defeat. Next came the violence of the Palestine Liberation Organization, another group without a country. By now, of course, the kind of terrorism that crosses borders has become universal. But if we take the experience of nations seriously, and therefore consider events such as genocide and defeat in war as sources of psychic upheaval, then we must go on to the case of terrorism, which puts violence at the disposal of international quarrels, and decide to what degree this kind of action arises from loss of nationhood. The burst of Jewish terrorism, directly after World War II, soon ended because a homeland was established. But what of those for whom a homeland was lost?

It should go without saying (but nowadays nothing goes without saying) that the effort to understand terrorism is not a justification. Nothing excuses violence, although we see immediately that the PLO established itself and now operates as a legitimate power precisely through its use of violent measures, and we see also that world opinion would never have taken up the Armenian question (“Who today remembers the annihilation of the Armenians?”) had the issue not been forced upon us by Armenian attacks against Turkish diplomats. To the extent that terrorism succeeds, we do live in the shame of a world where might makes right. The most recent example of terrorism making good is the case of the “Contras” or, as they have now earned the right to be called, the “Freedom Fighters” in Nicaragua, a group that began as a small band of terrorists backed by the CIA but that now enjoys Washington’s recognition as a political party with rightful claims to “government” in that sad country. The utility of terror, in such instances, is perfectly evident.

Armenian terrorism cannot *go* anywhere, of course; the Armenian part of Turkey is simply gone. But the situation is perhaps hopeful in another, more spiritual way. As the Millers’ paper suggests, what drives Armenian extremists to violence is less the hope of a homeland than the deeper need for recompense, which would mean, in this case, to have Turkey and the rest of the world recognize the enormity of Armenian suffering. I mean to suggest a real connection between current acts of terror and Turkish denial. Terrorist violence, in the present situation, is an especially ugly response to the aftermath of genocide when the terrible emotions generated by that legacy find no adequate outlet—emotions like grief, despair, and neurotic repression, but also rage and the pressure of rage to find expression in revenge. An examination of the body of oral testimony confirms that these are common feelings among survivors of

the Armenian tragedy, and, as we have learned from study of the children of Holocaust survivors, there is a strong tendency for the present generation to live out the emotional needs of their parents and grandparents. One of the principal discoveries to come out of follow-up studies of the Jewish and Armenian catastrophies is that the impact of historical trauma does not lessen but rather *grows* with time, both in the memory of aging survivors and in the passions of subsequent generations, if, that is, no way to reconciliation presents itself.

Many Armenian survivors and their children are resigned to the geopolitical realities that make recovery of their homeland impossible. What they are not reconciled to, and what increasingly they cannot abide, is the denial of their own historical suffering. That the world refuses to credit the central event of their fate is painful in the extreme and, for some, a cause of violent rage. More than ego, more than politics, what is at stake is the soul of an ancient nation. When one considers the widespread deployment of terrorist tactics by governments of every stripe (the CIA's manual on assassination, for example), it is hardly difficult to make sense of the Armenian case, in which the driving forces are historical tragedy, permanent loss, and the pain of memory mocked by denial.

Because genocide is a crime against humanity, victims naturally appeal to "the world" for redress; and it is not so much the world's indifference as its current collusion with the perpetrators of the crime that turns the victims' appeal into violent expression. Terror is awful in any case, and also self-defeating. The use of violence to voice Armenian claims tends to fuel the righteousness of denial. There is no clear gain, but rather a deepening of desperate confusion. Rage then feeds upon itself, and with it the possibility of yet more terrorist attacks. We must surely wonder how the Armenian agony, caught up in a circle so vicious, might come at last to expiation.

Just here the role of scholars counts more than we might have supposed. I do not refer to those among us busy revising the historical record, but rather to the kind of men and women who, against some very ugly pressures, went ahead with the Tel Aviv conference. In the struggle of memory against forgetting, the situation comes down to this: as things now stand, terrorist actions stain the truth that scholars labor to make clear. But if the truth were made clear, the terrorism would stop. What is now wanted is victory over denial and, in consequence, an end to obsession. For a people to possess the dignity of their own tragic past becomes sufficient ground for renewal, for turning with new heart to carry on with life. To this decency the authors of the present volume contribute.