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Tall Tales of Genocide

An Argumentative and Comparative Analysis of Western
Denial of the Holocaust and of the Armenian Genocide

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Abstract

This paper studies Western academic, and pseudo-academic, denial of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust. The study is constructed around a comparative methodology, and argues that all kinds of genocide denial – independently of which genocide is being denied – shares common sets of characteristics and strategies. Utilizing historian Richard Hovannisian’s phrase “patterns of denial”, the study presents four different strategies prevalent among most deniers of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide alike. The study furthermore questions the deceptively simple and clear-cut dividing line between the legitimate writing of history and illegitimate denialism. There are, it is argued, “gray zones” separating history and denial, represented by controversial historians such as Bernard Lewis and Ernst Nolte.

Introduction: Setting the Stage

This is not an essay on the brutalities, persecutions, and gas chambers which made up the Holocaust. Neither is this a study on the death marches, misery, and massacres that composed the Armenian Genocide of 1915. In fact, this investigation, albeit written within the growing field of genocide studies, is barely dealing with the reality of genocide at all. Rather, this study will be focused on post-genocide denial, and the proposed non-existence of genocide. Instead of arguing and narrating within a scholarly set of rules and conventions, genocide denial attempts to turn what has been into what never was, and argue that what you think was, was in fact something else. In accordance with the logic of denial, the horrors of the concentration camp gas chambers during the Second World War, the atrocities of the death marches of the First World War, and the general dehumanization and massacre that is genocide are turned into non-events or trivialized beyond recognition. The deniers of genocide maintain that gas chambers were solely built as a means of delousing German enemies, organizing death marches was a benevolent act of evacuation, and what has been termed the genocides of the Jews and the Armenians was, in fact, the genocides of Germans and Ottoman Muslims.¹

This study will attempt to analyze the topic of genocide by comparing the denial of the Holocaust and of the Armenian Genocide. It will be argued that those attempting to deny the reality of genocide may, as it seems, not necessarily share common sets of ideas, beliefs, hopes, values, and world views. They may not even be of the same nationality, generation, or background, and, indeed, they may not even be familiar with each other's work. Yet, they tend to share a large, non-coincidental, amount of common characteristics, strategies, and objectives.

Choice of Topic

Much like the topic of my second term paper,² this study is centred on one very particular aspect of genocide – the denial of it. In regard to this topic, two active choices have been made. The

¹ For these specific denialist arguments, see, for instance, Arthur Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century: The Case Against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry*, Chicago: Theses & Dissertations Press 2003, p. 21; Stanford Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808 – 1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1977, p. 315; Austin App, *The Six Million Swindle*, retrieved at <http://www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/livres9/APP6million.pdf> (16 January 2010), 1973, p. 3; and Samuel A. Weems, *Armenia: Secrets of a "Christian" Terrorist State: The Armenian Great Deception Series – Volume I*, Dallas: St. John Press 2002, p. 5.

² Maria Karlsson, "'a hoax and a sham': An Argumentative Analysis Investigating Western Denial of the Armenian Genocide", second term paper, Lund: Lund University 2008. In comparison, this study is partly an independent

first one, deciding to write an essay within the growing field of genocide studies, should, following the ruthless and violent history of the twentieth century, need little justification. Whether utilizing deportations, concentration camps, gas chambers or outright shootings, totalitarian regimes and authoritative dictators caused the deaths of countless millions of people. The genocides of the last century are, as it would seem, the ultimate act of inhumanity of man against man. Therefore, in the light of the magnitude, impact and frequency of modern genocides, it seems rightly both one of the key areas of study within modern history, and the basic choice and context of this investigation.

Secondly, it has been an active choice of this study to, instead of studying and comparing genocides as such, focus on the more or less widespread denial of two cases of genocide. However, allowing denial any kind of time and space has understandably been frowned upon. Despite constant assurance that genocide denial is used as an object of study, and not as the “other side” of a legitimate revisionist debate, historian Deborah Lipstadt, when writing her book on Holocaust denial during the late 1980s and early 1990s, could note that the comments directed at her were constantly of the type: “Why are you wasting your time on those kooks?”³ She has commented, acidly, that “[m]y intention to write a book on this topic would have evoked no stronger a reaction if I were to write about flat-earth theorists”⁴. She adds with emphasis, however:

Not ignoring the deniers does not mean engaging them in discussion or debate. In fact, it means not doing that. We cannot debate them for two reasons, one strategic and the other tactical. As we have repeatedly seen, the deniers long to be considered the ‘other’ side. Engaging them in discussion makes them exactly that. Second, they are contemptuous of the very tools that shape any honest debate: truth and reason. Debating them would be like trying to nail a glob of jelly to the wall.⁵

And indeed, writing about genocide denial, no matter how critically, involves dangers. Primarily, there is always a risk of fuelling deniers’ claim to fame, convincing them that they have an impact and are heard by the scholarly community. However, *not* writing about denial and its advocates

investigation, and partly an extended version of “a hoax and a sham”. The disposition of the two essays are somewhat similar, as is the choice of denial of the Armenian Genocide – however, this study is concerned with a far more extensive source material, new hypotheses, a comparative approach and a developed theoretical discussion.

³ Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, New York & Toronto: The Free Press 1993, p. vii.

⁴ Lipstadt, 1993, p. vii.

⁵ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 221.

would open the door for denialists claiming that the silence of the academia is a sign that the deniers are making valid points of which there is no need, or no possibility, to refute.

Furthermore, genocide has more than historical relevance and, if nothing else, denial has to be studied for didactical and future needs. As several scholars have noted, those denying genocide often present a more credible and plausible version of the past than does the unimaginable reality of genocide itself. To a school class in 2050 or 2090, once all the survivors of the past century's major genocides have passed, which of the following histories sounds more believable: that relocated Jews, of which most were poor and diseased, were deloused and put in work camps during wartime, where some unavoidable casualties befell them – or that a group of Germans, together with civilian helpers, killed off several millions of innocent Jews in technologically advanced gas chambers? Or, in the case of the Armenian Genocide, that a revolting minority population attempted to form their own state while the multinational Ottoman Empire was at war, and that they, much like all the other minorities of the Empire, suffered substantial, but unavoidable, casualties. Or, that the ruling Turkish elite and their helpers, mid-war, decided to cleanse the Ottoman lands off its Armenian population, and as a result raped, shot, forcibly converted, robbed, starved, and sent hundreds of thousands of women, children and elderly to perish in the desert, while the Armenian men of the Ottoman Army were disarmed and massacred?

In both cases, the former versions, as advocated by the deniers, tend to be judged as more logical, and more understandable, as a result of genocide being an essentially incredible event. History is ample of violent wartime security measures, forced labour camps, and attempts at self-government. Modern genocides, however, stand out in history as utterly brutal atrocities, hardly explainable and almost incomparable. Therefore, genocide needs to be studied on its own terms, and genocide denial needs to be included as part of that investigation, displayed both as part of and as a consequence of genocide. The final aim ought to be to present and investigate the latter scenarios as the historical reality, and at the same time invariably refute the former ones. Prevention for the future, the didactical aspect of genocide studies, consequently remains the central argument in favour of dealing with denial. As scholars of genocide have often maintained, our perception of the past influence how we react to future events.⁶ Therefore, if/when genocide is denied or forgot the danger of it reoccurring is vastly increased. Additionally, genocidal regimes of today are through denial given the signal that, for the most part, perpetrators of genocide get

⁶ Roger W. Smith, "The Armenian Genocide: Memory, Politics, and the Future" in Richard G. Hovannisian, (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, Houndmills: Macmillan 1992, p. 1.

away with mass killings, as the collective memory of the world seems both limited, impressionable, and short.

Purpose and Questions at Hand

The purpose and underlying intention of this investigation is to present genocide denial as an area that in many ways calls for further study. One of the premier experts on the Armenian Genocide and its consequences, Vahakn Dadrian, noted over a decade ago that “genocide denial is so prevalent that it is now becoming a field of study in its own right”⁷. The former part of Dadrian’s observation seems increasingly valid as genocide denial *is* prevalent in nearly all cases of modern genocides. In fact, it seems rather the exception than the rule that cases of genocide are universally and unanimously accepted and recognized. In this sense, the German post-war repentance and recognition of the Holocaust stands alone in the bloody history of the twentieth century. All the more common are the instances where either the perpetrators or their successors, in complicity with third party individuals and groups, choose to deny their crimes. The second part of Dadrian’s conclusion, however, demands some reflection. Historians and other scholars have, as will be discussed below, been rather hesitant towards dealing with denial, dismissing it as the activity of a deranged minority. When denial, on the other hand, has been taken seriously it has, as historian Tony Taylor has observed, been approached on a topic-by-topic basis, analyzing *either* Holocaust denial *or* the denial of other specific genocides.⁸ Rarely has genocide denial been treated as a genre and a phenomenon on its own, and as a result the field of genocide denial studies is still under development. Consequently, it is within the purpose of this study to both highlight the topic as such, and to present an area of study open to further analysis and discussion.

The primary purpose of this study is, however, the analysis of genocide denial as a separate genre. There is, most definitely, both Holocaust denial, dismissing the use of gas chambers and refuting the testimonies of perpetrators, and denial of the Armenian Genocide, advocating evacuation instead of intentionally fatal deportations and recounting stories of rebelling Armenians. However, the thesis of this study is that both instances of denial belong to a broader structure of *genocide denial*. The intention, to be precise, is to establish the structure and strategies of this phenomenon. What constitutes genocide denial? How is it maintained? And, what are the objectives of its advocates?

⁷ Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The Key Elements in the Turkish Denial of the Armenian Genocide: A Case Study of Distortion and Falsification*, Cambridge & Toronto: The Zoryan Institute 1999a, p. 1.

⁸ Tony Taylor, *Denial: History Betrayed*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press 2008, p. viii – ix.

It should, however, be emphasized that the intention of this study is *not* to test the content, validity, and substance of genocide denial. Neither is it the purpose of this study to “prove” the reality of either the Holocaust or the Armenian Genocide. Rather, the analysis below will be performed in the interest of displaying the faulty methodologies and twisted logic of genocide denialists. Genocide denial is, as it will be maintained, a matter of analysis – not debate.

Given the broad, structural intentions of the study at hand, specific questions have had to be employed when approaching the sources under investigation. The questions which this study seeks to answer are, therefore, as follows:

- To what extent can it be argued that Holocaust denial and denial of the Armenian Genocide is part and parcel of the same overall structure and phenomenon of genocide denial?
- What “patterns of denial”, and internal structures of argumentation, are discernible when comparing Holocaust denial and denial of the Armenian Genocide?
- To what extent are there different levels of sophistication and strategies of denying genocide? Are these context-bound (i.e. differing between Holocaust deniers and deniers of the Armenian Genocide) or genre-bound (i.e. comparable and similar among the advocates of both genocides)?

A Note on Terminology

Writing on the topic of genocide denial infallibly means stepping into a minefield of historical research. Choosing an appropriate terminology has, in this context, meant to tread a fine line in order to analytically and scientifically define the phenomenon of denial, while still distancing oneself from it. As a result, most scholars writing on the topic have tended to avoid the term “revisionism”,⁹ mostly used by deniers and organizations promoting denial in an attempt to pass themselves off as genuine advocates of science.¹⁰ Revisionism, in its most traditional definition, has represented the ultimate kind of scholarly activity, either approaching new material on previous hypotheses and conclusions, or vice versa. In terms of genocide, however, sound revisionism tends to be concerned with how or why genocide happened, and not with whether or

⁹ Perhaps with the exception of French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who has stated that “I shall call ‘revisionism’ the doctrine according to which the genocide practiced by Nazi Germany against Jews and Gypsies did not exist but is regarded a myth, a fable, or a hoax”. See Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust*, New York: Columbia University Press 1992, p. 79.

¹⁰ Indeed, Australian scholar Tony Taylor has in his study of genocide denial, noted that revisionism is the “single most important word in denialist vocabulary”. Taylor, 2008, p. xiv.

not it did happen. On the other hand, revisionism has also, during modern times, been defined as the absolute opposite of its original meaning. Here, it tends to refer to the ultimate of unscientific activities, where sources are utilized in order to motivate personal and ideological aims, disregarding common scholarly ethics and academic conduct. In this sense, avoiding the term revisionism as a description of those denying genocide has been a simple task for most scholars. However, as this study will attempt to show, the essential divide between denial and science does not always appear to be as waterproof as it has been made to seem. As will be maintained below, there are most definitely gray areas where even professional historians have had (and to some extent still have) difficulties noticing the absolute divide between revisionism and denial. Therefore, this essay will be using the term both when referring to sound and unsound revisionism, though rarely as a replacement for the more common term “denial”. By far, this is the most frequently used term referring to those denying the reality of genocide.¹¹ “Denial” has originally been referring to a common type of psychological defence mechanism, helping people to cope with situations that would otherwise appear as worrying, or awkward. Telling yourself that things are alright when they are not, or ignoring the fact that you do not have the time to go to the movies because you ought to be working on your essay, are both individual examples of denial. While deceiving, this type of denial seems rather harmless in comparison to the kind of denial that occurs once the stakes are higher.¹² In accordance with this conclusion, denial of genocide, affecting millions of murdered victims, survivors and their relatives, as well as the political development of the world at large, appears as the most extreme, and most worrying, form of denial. And it is in this sense of the word that the term will be utilized in this essay.

Less commonly used, though still in circulation among scholars, is the term “negationism”.¹³ In this investigation denial will be the term used to describe the phenomenon of denial as a whole, whether it is represented by absolute denial, trivialization or relativization. Negationism, on the other hand, will mainly be used in reference to absolute denial, where the reality of genocide is negated altogether. No genocide, no victims, no perpetrators, no gas chambers, and no death marches. In this definition, “denial” has the possibility of being both absolute and partial, while “negationism” remains at all times the absolute negation of the reality of genocide.

¹¹ A swift look on the title of several of the secondary sources included in this essay, for instance, shows the popularity of the term. See *Denying the Holocaust, Denial, Denying History, Holocaust Denial, Denying Genocide* and so on.

¹² Taylor, 2008, p. vii.

¹³ Employed, in particular, by French intellectual and writer Alain Finkielkraut in his *The Future of a Negation: Reflections on the Question of Genocide*, Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press 1998.

Besides the term “denial”, this study will also refer to the more comprehensive term “denialism”. While denial largely remains an individual problem, a psychological mechanism, consisting of single arguments denying, consciously and unconsciously, events and processes, denialism, on the other hand, refers to a larger, orchestrated, ideological, political, and historical structure of denial. This type of dealing with the past through denial has been the activity of what within genocide studies have been termed as “bystanders”, of individuals and governments that were not perpetrators and, in effect, are not responsible for the genocide. As is the case of other “-isms”, denialism includes an agenda, a world view, argumentative traditions and structures, motives and motivations, and a set of advocates. When, for instance, former US President Bill Clinton denied his involvement in what in hindsight has become known as the “Lewinsky Affair”, his arguments were those of denial in favour of a political purpose. However, when Turkish diplomats, officials, politicians, historians, newspapers, and individual bloggers refer to the well-documented, scholarly dissected, and recognized Armenian Genocide of 1915 and onwards as an Armenian “genocide claim”¹⁴, and the deportation orders which in effect would kill countless Armenians as a “relocation decision”¹⁵ it is part of a much broader phenomenon of denialism. Here, the denial of a single event amounts to the maintenance of an entire world view. It is this latter type of all-encompassing denial of genocide, here termed “denialism”, that will remain the central issue of this study.

Additional terminology in need of a brief explanation may be the phrase “patterns of denial”, originally used by historian Richard Hovannisian.¹⁶ However, as maintained in a previous study, while Hovannisian utilizes the phrase as a descriptive term, aiming at explaining the chronological development of denial, I intend to use “patterns of denial” as an analytical tool.¹⁷ Here, the term refers to the broader structures, form, and function which together make up genocide denial. The separate patterns are here entitled: absolute denial, rationalization and trivialization, relativization, self-images and self-delusion. Within each of these broader themes, or patterns of denial, individual arguments, rather based on the character and content of denial, will be presented.

¹⁴ Kamuran Gürun, *The Armenian File: The Myth of Innocence Exposed*, Nicosia: Rustem 2001, p. 251.

¹⁵ Gürun, 2001, p. 209.

¹⁶ Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Armenian Genocide and Patterns of Denial” in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, New Brunswick & Oxford: Transaction Books 1987.

¹⁷ For earlier discussions on the term see Maria Karlsson, 2008, p. 9.

On Comparing Genocide Denial: Methodological Concerns

Comparative studies, such as this one, entail certain fundamental difficulties, both in regard to the scholarly subject of history, and when approaching the, often highly emotional, subject of genocide. In regard to the former of these two dilemmas, historians have tended to emphasize the importance of the specific, and composed detailed studies of individual cases. The particulars of time and place, as well as the determinants of a specific culture, and the restraints of empirical source material have kept historians open to the possibility of the uniqueness of past events.¹⁸ As a result historical accounts of the past have, unlike sociological ones, been disinclined to present the past in terms of generalizations, or as part of larger systems and theoretical structures. There are therefore numerous separate studies of, for instance, the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, but relatively few comparative investigations of genocide. To be fair, however, detailed and empirically based accounts of specific genocides have proven their value time and again, and this investigation is by no means an attempt to discredit the great benefits that comes from the comprehensive analysis of a single historical event. Naturally, there is also a built-in danger of over-simplifying and rationalizing historical events by placing them in a comparative framework. On the other hand, as historian Eric Weitz has noted in his comparative genocide study, it is an unfortunate consequence that “deep immersion in the history of a particular people [or event] makes it difficult to move beyond individual cases”¹⁹. In accordance with Weitz’s argumentation, this study agrees that the major obstacle of individual studies to be a limited overview of a historic phenomenon. The hope is that this study, comparing two cases of modern genocide denial, will tread a middle ground and go beyond the individual case while still maintaining the historians’ call for detail and consideration of the primary sources and their context. The main argument in favour of a comparative study of genocide denial has therefore been that a comparative aspect might enable the highlighting of new features of denial, both in the case of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, and in the case of genocide denial in general. In this sense, a comparative approach might help to underline the primary assumption of this investigation, stating that there is not only the denial of specific instances of genocide, but that there is also a common phenomenon or genre of genocide denial.

The latter of the two dilemmas proposed above, that of comparing genocide, has proven to be a methodology of great controversy, especially when involving the Holocaust. Even sociologist Leo Kuper, one of the first to employ a comparative approach in relation to modern

¹⁸ Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*, London & New York: Penguin Books 1987, p. 18.

¹⁹ Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press 2003, p. 11.

genocide, has noted that “[t]he very act of comparison is an affront”²⁰. Each genocide, it has been maintained, can only be understood on its own terms, and within its own historical context.²¹ In the case of the Nazi extermination of the European Jews, these objections have been put forward with unusual emphasis. Some scholars have even pointed towards the utter uniqueness and unprecedented character of the Holocaust.²² However, while most scholars would agree that the Holocaust stands apart as being the “apotheosis of mass destruction”²³ in modern consciousness, few would claim the incomparable and irreplicable uniqueness of the Nazi horrors. Doing so would, as will be discussed below, categorically reduce all other modern genocides to mere bleak copies and non-genocides, and would consequently deny much suffering of other victim groups.

This study will attempt to question both dilemmas presented at the top of this section. In fact, the author of this essay would like to challenge the notion of history as the study of the individual and the particular, and emphasize that historians compare all the time. Indeed, even maintaining the truly unique aspects of the Holocaust requires comparisons with other cases of genocide. This seems equally true in the case of genocide denial. In order to understand specific instances of genocide denial more comprehensively it is necessary to examine other instances of genocide denial as well. Scholars have noted the many comparable features of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, such as the impact of war and revolution,²⁴ or the similarities of the victim categories,²⁵ and, correspondingly, the similarities between the denialist tactics of the two cases of genocide are striking, as this essay will attempt to show.

The main predicament of comparative studies seems then, as always, to be what political scientist Robert Melson calls “the pitfall of comparative studies”²⁶, namely the assumption that comparison means equivalence. This is naturally not the case, and the comparison of two different incidents of genocide denial is here preformed in hopes of revealing both similarities and differences.

²⁰ Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press 1981, p. 9.

²¹ Kuper, 1981, p. 9.

²² See, for instance, Marrus, 1987, p. 18 – 25, particularly p. 23. See also Yehuda Bauer, “On the Place of the Holocaust in History”, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1987, p. 213.

²³ Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press 1992, p. xv.

²⁴ See Melson, 1992.

²⁵ See Kristian Gerner & Klas-Göran Karlsson, *Folkmörderns historia: Perspektiv på det moderna samhällets skuggsida*, Stockholm: Atlantis 2005, p. 40.

²⁶ Melson, 1992, p. 247.

Delimitations

The choice to focus this study on the denial of, specifically, the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide requires some explanation. Both cases stand out as increasingly central cases of genocide and mass violence during the past century. Within the academic sphere these two cases of genocide have been termed and justly defined as the “paradigm”²⁷ and the “archetype”²⁸ of modern genocides. Similarly, both the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide have proven of continual importance outside the arena of science and genocide studies. The Armenian case was part of the political agenda during the 2008 US presidential election, and stands at the centre of Turkey’s entry into the European Union. During the past year, the reinstated diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey have likewise brought the almost century-old genocide to the forefront. Still, in comparison to the contemporary significance of, and interest in, the Holocaust few historical events can compare. In Sweden, for instance, the *Levande historia* project was initiated in 1997 as a means of informing the public about the Holocaust, and in many cases the Nazi treatment of the European Jews has been made to serve as the absolute evil of modern society, a horror story of the past, and a warning example of what has to be prevented. As a result, denial of these two cases of genocide have had incomparable political consequences.

It could, further, be argued that denial of the Armenians Genocide stands out as the most “successful” attempts at denial, and one of the most widespread cases of denialism. Deniers of the Ottoman treatment of the Armenians are, still, welcomed into international peer-to-peer reviewed journals, and published at the hands of respected publishing companies²⁹. Holocaust denial, on the other hand, stand out as, perhaps, the most discredited case of genocide denial, particularly in the wake of David Irving’s unsuccessful libel trial against historian Deborah Lipstadt in 2000.

A few lines might, furthermore, be devoted to explain the choice of modern, twentieth century examples of denial. Primarily, it seems that the greater, and more traumatic, the event – the more arduous and widespread is the denial of it. Among traumatic events, the bloody cases of genocide stand out as exceptional during the past century. As Taylor has noticed, “[t]he most strenuous forms of denial surround the issue of genocide and its definition”³⁰. Secondly, genocide became, following the Second World War, a definable and punishable crime. As a result, interpretations and denial of genocidal events turned out to be an important issue beyond the

²⁷ Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 35 –38.

²⁸ Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 39 –40.

²⁹ Denier Justin McCarthy’s review of a book on the Armenian Genocide was, for instance, welcomed into the renowned international journal *Slavic Review* (as “The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide (Book Review)”, *Slavic Review*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2007), and Cambridge University Press published, for instance, Shaw & Shaw’s *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*.

³⁰ Taylor, 2008, p. xvi.

walls of the academia. Following the trials against the perpetrators of genocide, at Nuremberg immediately post-war, against Adolf Eichmann in 1961, and later at the International Tribunal in the Hague, the deniers of genocide have, similarly, been put on trial. In accordance with the legislation of some nations, genocide deniers have even been sentenced to prison. This development, in practice (though not necessarily in theory) equating the roles of perpetrator and post-genocide denier, does, if nothing else, speak in favour of scholarly interest in and analysis of the phenomenon of genocide denial.

Disposition

As mentioned above, this study is intended both as a case study of Holocaust denial and denial of the Armenian Genocide, and as a presentation of a wide subject intended for further analysis. Therefore, in the interest of further study, some additional space has been accorded to the theoretical and historiographical aspects of genocide denial making up the second chapter of this investigation. The chapter will, as a result, include arguments and perspectives of a more experimental nature, hopefully opening up for further discussion.

The third chapter will present the historical backgrounds of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, and of the development of genocide denial in both cases. In connection to this presentation, the deniers whose narratives are under investigation will be presented and placed in their respective contexts. The fourth chapter will, subsequently, include the analysis of the denialist sources. It will present, in turn, absolute denial, rationalization and trivialization, relativization, and self-images and self-delusion as the patterns of denial. In the fifth and final chapter the results of the analysis will be summarized, discussed, and developed. Additionally, a brief discussion on the future of genocide denial and of areas worthy of further study will be included.

On Genocide Denial: Theoretical Implications and Previous Research

The complexity and theoretical implications of genocide denial, as well as the historiographical dilemmas and difficulties facing historians dealing with denial will be presented, explained, and discussed in the chapter below. The section is, however, also meant to pin-point, to define, genocide denial in terms of this study. What constitutes the phenomenon of denial? And how is it related, if at all, to professional historiography?

What is Genocide Denial?

Rather than being part of the scholarly discipline of history, genocide denial seems included in a larger, generic structure and phenomenon of denialism. Denialism can, however, be viewed in accordance with different perspectives and fill a variety of roles in relation to the past.³¹ The first of these perspectives defines denial as a *function* of historical culture. Here, denial of genocide fulfils certain needs, be it the apology of the Nazis or the Young Turks, or the confirmation of a world-wide “Jewish conspiracy”. Denial, when viewed as a function, tends to be defined as the “consequence”³² of genocide. As a result genocide and genocide denial are viewed as two separate and distinct phenomena.

Secondly, denial can also function as a *structure*, as it often does in this investigation. Denial is here a largely genre-bound entity,³³ well suited to comparative perspectives. If the definition of denialism as a function was centred around the questions of *why*, denialism, when viewed as a structure, tends to be focused on *how*. Interpreting denial as a structure means being concerned with the techniques and strategies used among the deniers, similar to the intention of the study at hand. There is, however, an additional, third, aspect and definition of genocide in which denial can be termed as a *process*. Within this third definition, genocide denial has both chronology and agency. Consequently, denial, when interpreted as a process, has a direct link to the event of genocide. Historian Richard Hovannisian, among others, has explained it well, stating:

It has been said that denial is the final phase of genocide. Following the physical destruction of a people and their material culture, memory is all that is left and is targeted as the last victim. Complete annihilation of a people requires the banishment of

³¹ Much like has been viewed in the case of specific genocides. See for example Klas-Göran Karlsson, “The Holocaust as a History-Cultural Phenomenon” in Martin L. Davies & Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann (eds.), *How the Holocaust Looks Now: International Perspectives*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan 2007.

³² As, for example, genocide scholar Colin Tatz chooses to define denial. See Colin M. Tatz, *With Intent to Destroy: Reflecting on Genocide*, London & New York: Verso 2003, p. 122.

³³ See, for instance, Robert Eaglestone, *Postmodernism and Holocaust Denial*, Duxford: Icon Books 2001, p. 50, 57.

recollection and the suffocation of remembrance. [---] Senseless terror gives way to reason, violence adapts to explanation, and history is reshaped to suit a contemporary agenda. [---] The process of annihilation is thus advanced and completed by denial.³⁴

As a process, denialism tends to be viewed, according to Hovannisian, as the “final stage” of genocide, fulfilling the perpetrator’s ultimate intentions by erasing the one thing remaining of those who died and those who were left alive – the memory of genocide. While this third definition, viewing genocide as a process and continuation of genocide, displays, perhaps, the most intriguing interpretation of denial, worthy of further study, this investigation is mostly aimed at investigating the two former versions of denial.

Historian Tony Taylor has further suggested that denial on a larger scale might be divided into political denial, and historical denial. The former of these two, political denial, is maintained by denying, distorting, and wilfully misinterpreting large portions of reality, in accordance with domestic and international political purposes. In this sense, political denial has much in common with the functional aspect presented above. When, for instance, the South African government, under the Presidency of former President Thabo Mbeki, declared that they did not view the spread of AIDS as a problem in their country, it amounted to political denial. Clearly, reality was denied in favour of a more pleasant state of mind, and as an example of political denial it obviously had political (and practical) consequences.

In contrast, Taylor continues, historical denial is represented by “a self-deceiving fantasy about a *more fully known and explored past*”³⁵. The Japanese government’s denial of the Nanjing massacre or Australian denial of the historical treatment of the nation’s Aboriginal natives are, for instance, examples of historical denial according to Taylor.³⁶ In cases of historical denial the definition of denial as a process seems prominent. Historical denial is intimately tied to the historical event in question and, as opposed to political denial, a process of chronology, development, and agency.

This study would, however, both like to add to and develop Taylor’s dichotomy of denial. Genocide denial, it will be maintained, acts both as political *and* historical denial. Indeed, genocide denial could be viewed as representing the very extreme of historical denials, where the

³⁴ Richard G. Hovannisian, “Denial of the Armenian Genocide in Comparison with Holocaust Denial” in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1999, p. 202.

³⁵ Taylor, 2008, p. viii. Emphasis in original.

³⁶ See primarily chapter 3: “A Culture of Denial: Explaining the Politics of Remembrance in Modern Japan”, respectively chapter 6: “Failing the Scholarly Test: Australian Denial and the Art of Pseudohistory” in Taylor 2008.

utmost examples of modern tragedies are transformed into non-events. In the case of genocide denial in particular, the two types of denial are not essentially different, but rather mutually complementary. In contrast to the generally apolitical descriptions of historical denial,³⁷ genocide deniers, while most certainly denying a historical reality, are more often than not part of a political and ideological agenda, and a planned campaign. As the act of genocide during the twentieth century was turned into a judicial issue, and a criminal act, denying the reality of genocide has turned out to involve political consequences evidently outside the academic sphere of historical denial. Several deniers, primarily denying the Holocaust, were taken to court during the late twentieth, and early twenty-first, century and consequently sentenced to pay compensations or symbolic fines to survivors and their families. In some rare cases, deniers were even sentenced to spend time in prison.³⁸ Likewise, the “why question”, dealing with the motives and motivations behind genocide denial, share many of the political and ideological themes of political denial. Among Holocaust deniers, for instance, anti-Semitic sympathies and a neo-fascist political agenda have been clearly discernible.³⁹ In the case of the Armenian Genocide, denialists have both been found lobbying for Turkey, and denying the Armenian Republic’s claim to statehood.⁴⁰ Therefore, denial of genocide is not merely an academic discussion, but also an issue on the political agenda.

In addition to Taylor’s two types of denial, a third, essential type of ideological denial seems unavoidable. The ideological aspect, utilizing schematic and carefully orchestrated acts denial in order to confirm, strengthen, or even create a specific world view, seems, at least in the context of this investigation and its sources, as a central application and motivation of denial. This ideological type of denial is often mentioned and discussed among scholars, but rarely clearly defined and theorized. Advocates of Holocaust denial have, for example, been thoroughly defined as deniers, anti-Semites, and racists, aiming to uphold and implement a world view of their own. Similarly, both the advocates of Turkish state-sponsored denial, and its Western supporters, have been recognized as both denialists and ideologues.

It is, however, not only the motivations, causes, and consequences of genocide denial and denialism that have to be defined properly. The very essence of denial and the possible scholarly perspectives of the phenomenon have to be mapped as well. What is denial, how do we characterize the very phenomenon in its historical context?

³⁷ See, for instance, Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering*, Cambridge: Polity Press 2001, p. 12, 14.

³⁸ Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel was, for instance, convicted and sentenced to spend five to ten years in prison in Germany in 2007, and a year prior David Irving was sentenced to three years in prison in Austria.

³⁹ A argument that is one of Deborah Lipstadt’s primary conclusion, having dissected Holocaust denial.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Weems, 2002, particularly p. 353 ff.

History, the Historians, and Genocide Denial

In November of 1993 *Le Monde* printed what would turn out to be a highly controversial interview, starring British-American historian, and one of the world's leading Middle Eastern experts, Bernard Lewis. Lewis, born into a Jewish middle-class family in London 1916, fluent in a multitude of Middle Eastern languages, an adept and worldly scholar, had, three years prior to the interview been awarded the National Endowment for the Humanities, the United State's highest honour for achievements in the humanities. In all essential matters he was, therefore, a highly regarded and revered scholar, and publisher of several renowned books on Middle Eastern history. Five years prior to the interview, in 1988, Lewis' *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961), had been translated into French and subsequently published. In the original 1961 edition, the Armenian Genocide had been only briefly mentioned, which in itself could have been cause for critique. Lewis had concluded that "[f]or the Turks, the Armenian movement was the deadliest of all threats"⁴¹, and that what had developed in the late Ottoman Empire was "a struggle between two nations for the possession of a single homeland, that ended with the terrible holocaust of 1916 [sic], when a million and half Armenians perished"⁴². In the French edition, however, the latter passage had been rewritten. It now read: "a struggle between two nations for the possession of a single homeland, that ended with the terrible *slaughter* of 1915, when more than a million Armenians perished, *according to certain evaluations, as well as an unknown number of Turks*"⁴³. Hence, what in the first edition had been viewed as slightly controversial, yet within the freedoms of the historian, had in the French edition been stepped up a notch or two. Still, the controversy surrounding the book was limited – up until the 1993 interview. Lewis had, in *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, after all, not denied the objective reality of the Armenian Genocide. Rather, he had maintained that the million of Armenians that died had died, and that they had done so at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. He had, however, engaged in the trivialization and relativization of genocide, which the 1993 interview was to further exemplify.

"Why do Turks still refuse to recognize the Armenian Genocide?" had the journalist from *Le Monde* asked. Lewis answered: "You mean recognize the Armenian version of the story?"⁴⁴ What consequently unravelled is in France known as the "Lewis Affair".⁴⁵ In

⁴¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, first edition, London & New York: Oxford University Press 1961, p. 350.

⁴² Lewis, 1961, p. 350.

⁴³ The French passage of the text is translated by, and quoted in, Yves Ternon, "Freedom and Responsibility of the Historian: The 'Lewis Affair'" in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1999, p. 243. Emphasis added. In the 2002 English edition included in this study, the passage reads more or less the same as the French version. See Lewis 2002, p. 356.

⁴⁴ Both question and answer are quoted in Ternon, 1999, p. 243.

accordance with French law, forbidding the denial of both the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide,⁴⁶ Lewis was sued twice and taken to court. He eventually lost both cases, and was in 1995 sentenced to pay a symbolic fine for having caused irreparable damages to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and their families, and for having failed to fulfil his duties as a historian.⁴⁷

To concerned historians around the globe, Lewis' statements, and the fact that he stood by them in a court of law, raised a series of fundamental questions about the nature of History, and the discipline's relation to historical, and genocide, denial. To what extent can, for instance, the freedom of the historian be maintained? To what extent are historians free to include and reject sources, material, and perspectives in accordance with his or her agenda or theoretical framework? Which are furthermore the responsibilities of a historian?⁴⁸ And, above all, how was it possible for a respected and scholarly educated historian such as Bernard Lewis to engage in the trivialization of acts of genocide? History, in the hands of a professional historian and within the borders of a scholarly discipline, and history at the hands of a liar, fabricator and denier was, it had been maintained (and still is), two essentially and fundamentally distinct activities and phenomena.⁴⁹ Denial can never be history, it was concluded, and in history there is no aspects of denialism. How was it then to be explained that the leap between the two appeared to have been made so effortlessly in the "Lewis Affair"? And how was it possible for Lewis to compose an account of Middle Eastern history that in many respects was viewed as professional, while still engaging in the denial, or trivialization, of part of that very history? How do you write acknowledged history on one hand, while taking part in denial on the other?

As historians during the past decades have attempted to approach and analyze genocide denial, the picture has been all but nuanced. They have, as mentioned above, often tended to be dismissive of denial as an area of research altogether.⁵⁰ Or, when the subject has been the object of study, it has been more or less examined on a topic-by-topic basis.⁵¹ Similarly, many writings

⁴⁵ Ternon, 1999, p. 238.

⁴⁶ In effect, the French Gayssot Act, adopted in 1990 and which Lewis was charged under, forbids the denial of all acts classified as crimes against humanity, such as defined in the London Charter of 1945.

⁴⁷ See "Condamnation judiciaire de Bernard Lewis", June 21 1995, retrieved at: <http://www.voltairenet.org/article14133.html>. The sentence concluded, for instance, that "Bernard Lewis ne peut être considéré comme un historien, sur la question arménienne, n'ayant publié aucune étude à ce sujet ; il considère qu'il est en réalité un intellectuel engagé, se livrant à une intense activité de 'lobbying' en faveur de la Turquie."

⁴⁸ An inquiry that, for example, the above referred historian and expert witness in the 1994 trials against Lewis Yves Ternon focused his, slightly polemical, article upon.

⁴⁹ See, for instance, Taylor, 2008, p. viii.

⁵⁰ Some have, like Holocaust scholar Michael Marrus, noted that they "have had no difficulty excluding from this book any discussion of the so-called revisionists – malevolent cranks who contend that the Holocaust never happened". See Marrus, 1987, p. xiv.

⁵¹ Taylor, 2008, p. viii - ix.

on denial have been focused on refuting denialist claims.⁵² This remains, however, a futile effort. As many scholars have noted, arguing individual details, such as the closing mechanism of a gas chamber vent, or even importance of the Armenian descendent of Henry Morgenthau's secretary, amounts to very little enlightenment and tends to debate the deniers on their own territory. Lipstadt has, rightfully, noted that “[i]t is the speciousness of their arguments, not the arguments themselves, that demands a response”⁵³. Even after having argued this very sensible point, however, analyses of genocide denial have had a hard time not to proclaim the deniers' arguments off the chart faulty.⁵⁴

The common denominator among these attempts to either dismiss or approach genocide denial remained, however, the very fundamental conclusion that history and denial were two independent phenomena. This study is, consequently, an effort to somewhat nuance the very black-and-white picture presented by scholars. To be certain, it should be made perfectly clear that I tend to view denial and history as two essentially distinct and separate genres, or phenomena. While professional historical writing is concerned with evidence, source criticism, and impartiality, denial is rather concerned with provocation, deceiving, and giving the impression of objectivity and source criticism. However, in opposition or as a complement to, earlier discussions on denial, I would like to add the perspective of history and denial as being part of intersecting discussions of, in this case, the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. As Lewis' case above has shown, history does not automatically cancel out denial. It would seem, therefore, that as little as there is absolute truth there are absolute lies. There is, as the analysis below attempts to show, indeed different stages, patterns, and types of denial, but whatever one wishes to call them, some of those patterns have definitely touched upon the methodologies and appearances of professional historiography. This does, obviously, call for an even greater need to discuss, disassemble, and investigate the methods and motives of genocide denial. If denial imitates, and replicates, qualified scholarship so well even professional historians have trouble separating them, imagine the confusion of the general public. Herein lies the danger of denial. In order not to turn denialism into “the other side”, the arguments, tactics, methods, and objectives

⁵² See, for instance, Dadrian 1999, or *Truth Prevails: Demolishing Holocaust denial: The End of the Leuchter Report*, Shelly Shapiro (ed.), New York: The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation & Holocaust Survivors & Friends in Pursuit of Justice 1990; or even Markus Tiedemann's *In Auschwitz wurde niemand vergast'. 60 rechtsradikale Lügen and wie man sie widerlegt*, originally published in 1996, and available in Swedish translation as *Förintelsen och förnekarna – lögnen kring Förintelsen och hur du bemöter dem*, Malmö: Gleerups förlag 2004.

⁵³ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 28.

⁵⁴ Even Lipstadt has, for instance, dedicated the appendix of her study to refuting denialist claims on the chemical properties of Zyklon-B, the construction and uses of the gas chambers, and the authenticity of the *Diary of Anne Frank*. See Lipstadt, 1993, p. 223 – 235.

needs to be analyzed. If not, cases like the Lewis Affair will remain absurd and inconceivable, and leave historians content that they are not the least involved or affected by genocide denial – while it is rather the other way around. The fact of the matter is that deniers imitate genuine historical research, and, as Deborah Lipstadt has rhetorically inquired, if historians does not deal with denial, who will?⁵⁵

Genocide Studies and Denial

One of the fundamental truths of the field of genocide studies seems to be the unusual position of the Holocaust as the paradigm of modern genocides.⁵⁶ Similarly, analyses of genocide denial seem to invariably originate in discussions and investigations on Holocaust denial. Among these, Lipstadt's aforementioned study *Denying the Holocaust* stands out as the authoritative narrative against which most genocide denial literature tends to position itself. The main part of Lipstadt's study on Holocaust denial is aimed at placing the deniers and their arguments in the larger sociopolitical context on which they feed. She emphasizes, for instance, in particular the anti-Semitic and racist legacy of Holocaust denial, from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to the post-World War I revisionists and the increased anti-Semitic publications following the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁷ In the final chapter of her book, however, Lipstadt attempts to discuss Holocaust denial in relation to scholarly genocide studies. She sets out to criticize, primarily, German historian and *Historikerstreit* front figure, Ernst Nolte in his efforts to compare Nazism and Fascism. However, as historian Ward Churchill has noticed, Lipstadt does not merely criticize Nolte's conclusions, but in effect also the comparative method he has employed.⁵⁸ To Lipstadt, anyone not attesting to the total and utter uniqueness of the Holocaust engages in, if not denial, then at least the distortion of history.⁵⁹ As a result of the absolutism proposed by Lipstadt, however, she also presents a type of denial comparable to that of her objects of study. Commenting on the Armenian Genocide, Lipstadt notes, for instance:

The brutal Armenian tragedy, which the perpetrators still refuse to acknowledge adequately, was conducted within the context of a ruthless Turkish policy of expulsion

⁵⁵ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 222.

⁵⁶ Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 35 – 38.

⁵⁷ See, for instance, Lipstadt, 1993, p. 49, 65, 85. See also chapter 6: "Denial: A Tool of the Radical Right", p. 103 – 121.

⁵⁸ Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present*, San Francisco: City Light Books 1997, p. 30.

⁵⁹ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 215.

and resettlement. It was terrible and caused horrendous suffering but it was not part of a process of total annihilation of an entire people.⁶⁰

Indeed, even the index item in Lipstadt's book reads "Armenian massacres" – not genocide. Accordingly, her, in most cases admirable, study on Holocaust denial is, in the words of Churchill, "reduced to an exercise in holocaust denial"⁶¹. This "uniqueness question", to many scholars central to understanding the Holocaust, therefore affects the topic of Holocaust and genocide denial as well. Maintaining the complete uniqueness of the Holocaust, as Lipstadt does, invariably seem to lead to the denial of other instances of genocide. In this sense, Churchill even speaks of "uniqueness as denial"⁶² discernible among many of those scholars attesting to the total incomparability of the Holocaust.

As maintained above, it seems, in the light of both Lipstadt's and Lewis' trivializations of genocide, that although denial is not part of history, there are still some zones of contact between science and denial. If it was not, then the transition from scholarly investigation to denialism would not have been made as easily. Therefore, I would like to present a possible structure of approaching genocide, where denial and absolutism are placed as the utmost extreme, and interlocking, ends of the scale. Together with the scholarly genocide interpretations typically termed "functionalism" and "intentionalism", have consequently been added "Holocaust absolutism", claiming that the Jewish Holocaust is a completely and utterly unique event, and "denial" to the equation, as seen in Figure 1.

⁶⁰ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 212. Lipstadt has, however, subsequently revised her stand on the Holocaust as an entirely unique event. In her 2005 account of her trial against David Irving she commented that "The Holocaust has certain unique elements that distinguish it from other genocides. However, at the same time, I disagree with those who argue for its utter uniqueness". See Deborah Lipstadt, *History on Trial: My Day in Court with David Irving*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers 2005, p. 24. Furthermore, in a 1996 letter to the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* she, together with Sociologist David Riesman and writer William Styron, and signed by eleven other distinguished writers and scholars, published a letter on the denialist attitudes and actions of Heath Lowry. She contends that "[d]enial of genocide – whether that of the Turks against Armenians or the Nazis against Jews – is not an act of historical reinterpretation", and that Lowry "ignores the fact that the Armenian Genocide is documented by an abundance of official records of Turkey's wartime allies, Germany and Austria; the proceedings of the post-Armenian Genocide Turkish military tribunal; photographic evidence; official reports of diplomats and missionaries; the testimony of survivors; and eight decades of scholarship". See Deborah Lipstadt et al., "Armenian Genocide", letter to *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, vol. 96, no. 14, 1996.

⁶¹ Churchill, 1997, p. 31.

⁶² Churchill, 1997, p. 31. For a full discussion on the issue see, primarily, p. 31 – 36.

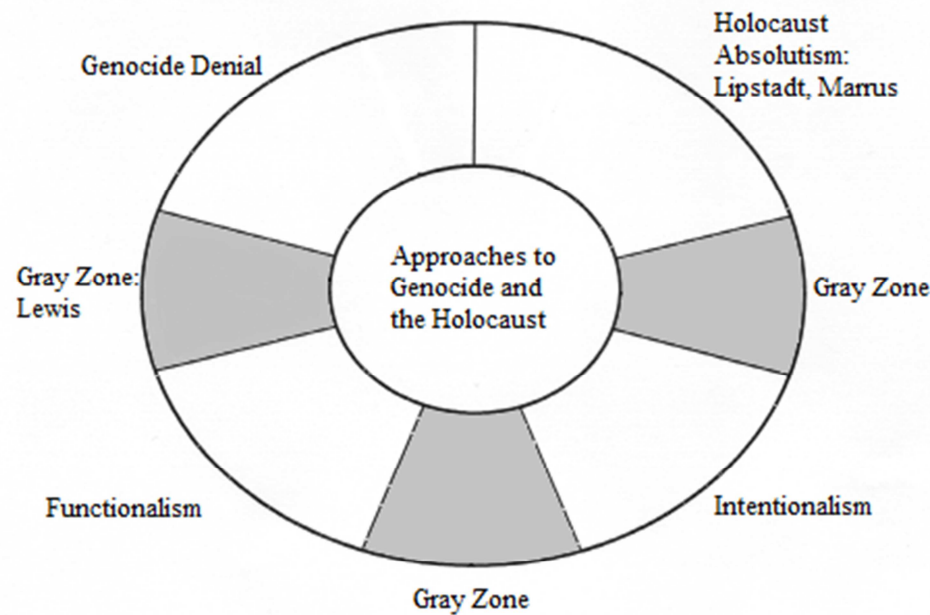


Figure 1: Visual representation on the relations between different, scholarly and non-scholarly, approaches to the Holocaust and genocide.

This figure, though by no means a complete and final representation on genocide and denial,⁶³ does visualize some interesting features of the post-genocide treatment of the Holocaust, holocausts and genocide denial. In contrast to Lipstadt’s definite divide between denial and history, the figure above attempts to show that genocide denial is not as essentially different, and as far away as historians have portrayed it to be. Above all, the figure allows for “gray zones”. Firstly, the gray area in between intentionalism and functionalism allows for the, not uncommon, idea that (modern) genocide cannot occur without the proper structural conditions *and* a, more or less expressed, intention to mass murder. Secondly, the gray area separating the absolutists and the intentionalists account for an interpretation of the Holocaust where the intention remains the central aspect of genocide, and where the intention of the Holocaust, especially, turned into a, more or less, unique event. Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer has, for instance, proclaimed that “[w]hat made the Holocaust unique is, I think, the motivation of the murderers”⁶⁴. The primary interest of this study is, however, partly the gray area separating functionalism from denial, and partly the lack of the one that would be separating denial from absolutism. The former of these

⁶³ Primarily, the figure fails to determine whether it is possible to combine a functionalistic view with the idea of the Holocaust as a unique event.

⁶⁴ Bauer, 1987, p. 213. It should be duly noted, however, that I do not claim Bauer’s statement as an attempt to deny, or minimize, the genocides of other groups of people. It is my firm opinion that the Holocaust include certain aspects of “uniqueness” (such as, if nothing else, the post-genocide almost symbolic position of the Holocaust and Auschwitz as the ultimate of modern evils), and that these can – and should – be openly discussed.

two, the existing gray area in between functionalism and denial, has been made to represent cases such as the Lewis Affair discussed above, and the case of Ernst Nolte as discussed by Lipstadt. In some sense, the arguments of this part of the figure might be comparable to what Lipstadt has termed the “yes, but”-arguments, largely agreeing to the factual realities of genocide (“yes, many people died”) but in fact minimalizing the importance and exceptionality of the event by adopting arguments here presented as trivialization, rationalization, and relativization (such as, “they had it coming” or “but others died too”). Finally, the lack of a gray area in between the absolutist stance and denial represent, largely, the denialist conclusions unavoidably drawn by Lipstadt above. If the Holocaust was a unique event of genocide, then there are no other events even remotely comparable. As a result, the proposed incomparability of the Holocaust in effect reduce other genocide to second rate ones. In this case, there are no gray areas. Maintaining the absolutist interpretation means having to deal with the denial of other cases of genocide. Therefore, in this case – as always – the extremities collide.

However, as any model of theoretical discussions, this remains a simplified version of reality and it is only natural that those engaging in interpretations of the Holocaust and other genocides are able to move in between the areas of this figure. Lipstadt did, for instance, start at the very top of absolutism and denial, only to end up at an intentionalistic approach. Similarly, David Irving was able to move from the gray zone of functionalism and denial, to full denial. In effect, it is the two areas which Irving exemplified that are under investigation in this study.

Behind the Scenes: Contexts and Material

Historical Contexts

The basic dictum of History seems to be the declaration that no historical event stands alone. It is, by nature, surrounded by causes, consequences, and contexts. This remains true even in relation to historical events of such an incomprehensible nature as genocide and denial. Hence, this section will present the backgrounds of both the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust in an attempt to place the reader of this essay in context, and in order to, to some extent, present the traditional account of both genocides. The presentation of the Holocaust will, however, principally be made in relation, and in contrast, to the Armenian case – this being the less commonly known of the two cases of genocide. The chronological development of both cases of denial will, likewise, be presented below as a means of placing the individual deniers under investigation in their proper contexts.

The Armenian Genocide

Though hindsight may beguile an interpretation of the past in terms of what was to come, the outcome of the Armenian Genocide was never written in stone. In fact, when the Young Turk movement revolted against centuries of Sultan rule in 1908, and subsequently gained control of the vast Ottoman Empire, the change of power was initially not viewed ominously. Rather, as Henry Morgenthau, the United States Ambassador in Constantinople, noted, the new regime aimed at transforming the Turkish mentality, “especially in its attitude toward subject peoples”⁶⁵. The largest of the Ottoman Empire’s many *millet*s⁶⁶, the Armenian, therefore held high hopes for improved civil rights and political influence on par with their community’s economic strength. The Armenians had suffered extensive persecutions during the last decades of Sultan rule,⁶⁷ and compared with what had been, and what was to come, the Armenian population was during the first decade of the twentieth century enjoying relative peace and quiet within the Ottoman borders.⁶⁸ This was, however, soon to be subject to change. Ambassador Morgenthau commented in his memoirs that all aspirations the Armenians had projected on the new regime soon “vanished like a dream”⁶⁹. What had begun as a reformist movement rapidly and unexpectedly turned its interests towards strengthening Turkish nationalism, and empowering the central government. As a result the triumvirate of the Young Turk leadership, Talaat Pascha, Enver Pascha and Jemal Pascha, gained an increased authority, and the Ottoman society was increasingly militarized in accordance with a newly developed pan-Turkish ideology. Historian Richard Hovannisian has commented that at this point “extreme Turkish nationalism triumphed over multinational Ottomanism”⁷⁰, and the Christian minorities of the Empire were singled out as internal opponents. In combination with new ideological and nationalistic tendencies, the Young Turk, or *Ittihadist*, leaders also faced what can only be termed a gradual war catastrophe. In

⁶⁵ Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story: A Personal Account of the Armenian Genocide*, New York: Cosimo Classics 2008 (1918), p. 195.

⁶⁶ The Ottoman Empire organized its minorities in accordance with a so-called millet-system, in which the respective groups were allowed self-control in matters involving religion, education and law – but allowing for very little political influence on a national level. For further discussion on the Armenian millet see, for instance, Gerner & Karlsson 2005, for a broader discussion on the millet system see David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I*, Piscataway: Gorgias Press 2006, p. 11 – 13.

⁶⁷ The most extensive was the so-called Hamidian massacres, conducted between 1894 and 1896 under the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid II.

⁶⁸ Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Historical Dimensions of the Armenian Question, 1878 – 1923”, in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, New Brunswick & Oxford: Transaction Publishers 1987b, p. 20. See also Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, New York: Metropolitan Books 2006, p. 19 – 20.

⁶⁹ Morgenthau, 2008, p. 196.

⁷⁰ Richard G. Hovannisian, “Introduction: History, Politics, Ethics” in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, Houndmills & London: Macmillan 1992, p. xvi.

the midst of Ottoman political turmoil in 1908 several European territories were lost, and in the years to follow Ottoman Turkey lost practically all of its European domains.⁷¹ As a result, it was a politically vulnerable Empire that faced further European war in 1914, and a triumvirate of Ottoman leaders which were not bound to view minority claims for political influence with lenience.

The Ottoman Empire entered the First World War in late 1914 by declaring war on their Russian neighbours, further increasing the existing domestic tensions. The Armenians were pointed out as treacherous and on April 24 1915, Armenian intellectuals, together with religious and political leaders of the millet were arrested in the capital of Constantinople. Consequently, they were taken out into the deserts of Anatolia, and shot. As a result, the first genocide of the twentieth century was set in motion, carefully orchestrated by Talaat Pascha's Ministry of Interior.⁷² Armenian men, enlisted in the Ottoman Army, were disarmed and divided into so-called labour battalions, only to be disposed off in the deserts. The rest of the Armenian population, mainly women, children and elderly, suffered what in some way has become the most well-known feature of the Armenian Genocide: the deportations, or death marches. Morgenthau noted that "the real purpose of the deportation was robbery and destruction; it really represented a new method of massacre"⁷³. On a similar note, the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople proclaimed mid-genocide: "It is simply a scheme for exterminating the Armenian nation wholesale, without any fuss. It is just another form of massacre, and a more horrible form"⁷⁴. During the marches through the Ottoman deserts many died as a result of famine, disease or random violence by Kurdish tribes or released prisoners and robbers. Infants were thrown into the Euphrates and the Tigris; young women were converted by force and distributed as property

⁷¹ Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*, New York: Perennial 2003, p. 161.

⁷² As in the historical writings of any genocide, advocates of intentionalism and of functionalism have argued the case of the Armenian Genocide as well. Vahakn Dadrian presents, among others, a fairly intentionalistic account of the Armenian Genocide, presenting a traditional Ottoman way of dealing with its Armenian millet, which finally erupted in its most violent form according to a pre-conceived plan of the Young Turk leaders. See, for instance, Dadrian's *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*, New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers 1999b. A younger generation of historians represent, on the other hand, an increasingly functionalistic view of the Armenian case, where chance decisions, war, nationalism, and the developing pan-Turkish ideology form the basis of genocide. See, primarily, Donald Bloxham's *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005.

⁷³ Morgenthau, 2008, p. 212 – 213.

⁷⁴ The Armenian Patriarchate, James Bryce & Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915 – 1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Gray of Falloden by Viscount Bryce*, uncensored edition, Ara Sarafian (ed.), Princeton: Gomidas Institute 2000 (1916), document no. 6, p. 49.

to whoever was willing to take them. The end result of the marches and the massacres has been estimated by scholars as somewhere around a million Armenian victims, including massacres of the less numerous Christian minorities of the Empire, such as the Syriac Christians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Pontiac Greeks.⁷⁵

The Holocaust

As Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power during the 1920s and 30s, German contemporaries had good reason to worry, as opposed to their Ottoman counterparts. While the Young Turk movement was not based on racist ideology (but rather developed an excluding nationalist position post-revolution), the NSDAP had at the outset incorporated anti-Semitism as one of the core values of their political manifesto. In this sense, the Holocaust appeared as an unprecedented version of genocide, in which the victim group was doomed on the basis of their origin. The European Jews were viewed as condemned by their blood and race, and neither conversion of their faith nor disavowal of their sympathies could disqualify them.

However, much as the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the European and German Jews were not categorized as enemies and adversaries as a result of genocidal realities. Rather, genocide appeared as a result of long periods of victimization and exclusions of both categories.⁷⁶ Jews, as well as Armenians, both representing economically prominent diaspora groups, had enjoyed the dubious role of second-class citizens, enabling them to work and live but disqualifying them from political influence and several basic civil rights. While the Ottoman Armenians were disarmed and deported, the Jewish community's societal status was instead dismantled by the Nazi regime over time. The Nuremberg Laws were, for instance, adopted in 1935, and at the end of the 1930s the NSDAP began the "Aryanization" of Jewish businesses, the removal of Jewish rights to practice law and the prohibition of Jewish doctors' treatment of non-Jews.

When world war broke out once more in 1939, the "Jewish Question", much like the "Armenian Question" a few decades earlier, turned into mass extermination. Hitler claimed in 1939 that the likelihood of a new war was to be blamed on the Jewish population, and much like in the Armenian case the outbreak of war enabled both the incentive and the practical possibility of genocide.⁷⁷ During the course of the Second World War, around six million Jews fell victim to

⁷⁵ For a comprehensive account of the murder of the other Christian groups of the Ottoman Empire, see Gaunt, 2006. For a balanced discussion on the death count see, for instance, Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 128.

⁷⁶ Tigran Matosyan, "Comparative Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide" in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers 2008, p. 291 ff. Matsoyan also observes similar Armenian and Jewish strategies, such as petitions, international connections, bribes and protection payments, to deal with their limited access to the Ottoman and German societies.

⁷⁷ For further discussions on the relationship between genocide and war see Melson 1992, p. 19 – 20. Within a functionalistic approach the relation between war and genocide tends to be emphasised, while maintaining that war

the Holocaust, together with millions belonging to other groups of the population, such as Romani, homosexuals, disabled and prisoners of war. A principal historical difference between the two genocides seems the greatly increased number of deaths, much due to “refined” techniques, communicative and bureaucratic systems.⁷⁸ The introduction of gas chambers at the beginning of 1942, designed to replace the mass shootings applied earlier, enabled the few to murder the many in a way that was, until then, unparalleled. Germany was, in the eyes and minds of the Nazis, to become *judenrein* and a Third Reich, much like the Ottoman Empire was to become a “Turkey for the Turks”, a Turan.

Phases and Faces of Genocide Denial

Mass killings, either under or without the guise of major conflicts, was not a new phenomenon of the twentieth century. By all means, the modern genocides of the previous century did display an unusual efficiency, extent and rate of occurrence, but the mass killings of different categories of people seem in all fairness an ancient technique of attaining, maintaining or holding on to power. The subsequent denial of genocide, however, seems in many aspects a modern phenomenon. The rulers of ancient times boasted about their annihilations of other peoples, erected great memorials attesting to their might, and had history written in accordance with the victor, and the perpetrator. In modern times, on the other hand, negating genocidal events and/or trivializing their importance seem rather like the rule than the exception.

In the case of the Armenian Genocide especially, denial has often prevailed. Death marches, rape, mass killings, forced conversions, the tearing down of churches and eradication of Armenian culture have, in many instances, been turned into non-events. The Turkish Republic has, as successors of the Ottoman Empire, refused to recognize the Armenian Genocide and is, together with a minor community of Western scholars and writers, effectively denying the reality of genocide. In terms of denial, the aftermath of the Holocaust has developed rather differently, as will be explained below. The Germany that was built on the ruins of the Third Reich has emphatically shown repentance, recognition, and paid reparations to the state of Israel as a representative of the victims. As a result, denial of the Holocaust has been the activity of a continually fringe group of individuals and organizations. Denial of the Holocaust has, much like

does not necessarily mean genocide, and that genocide in turn does not always require war. However, as Gerner & Karlsson observes, a society that has prepared for war is likely to be structurally prepared for genocide as well. See Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 285.

⁷⁸ And, according to the advocates of an intentionalistic account of the Holocaust, as a result of an unequalled ideologically based intention to wipe out the Jewish race altogether. See, for instance, Lucy Dawidowicz's *The Holocaust and the Historians*, Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press 1981, p. 11 – 15.

denial of the Armenian Genocide, gone through a series of phases, each represented by different advocates, ranging from the initially crude and unsophisticated denialist techniques to the more subtle strategies practiced by notorious Holocaust denier David Irving, among others. The sections below will present both the phases of denial and faces of denial of both cases of genocide.

The Armenians, State-Sponsored Denial, and Western Involvement

Roupen, an Armenian refugee of the Sassoun region in the north-eastern corner of Asia Minor, comments in one of the victim testimonies included in Viscount Bryce's and Arnold Toynbee's so-called Blue Book⁷⁹:

When a detailed account of the horrors which accompanied these massacres is fully disclosed to the world, it will stand out in all history as the greatest masterpiece of brutality ever committed.⁸⁰

His conjecture, shared by many contemporaries who experienced the unrestrained violence and massacre, held true during the course of the First World War, including a few months post-war. During the genocide the plight of the “starving Armenians” was given much attention in the West. In the United States, “The American Committee on Armenian Atrocities” was founded in 1915, and the case of the Armenians received international media coverage.⁸¹ In 1919, a series of courts martial were set up in order to deal with those responsible for the treatment of the Christian minorities of the Empire.⁸² At the end of the year, however, the new Kemalist regime came to power, and the remaining war tribunals were left by the wayside. The international post-war peace treaties followed the same pattern. The Treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920, recognized the Armenian plight and called for the formation of an independent Armenian state. Three years later, however, the Lausanne Treaty, signed by the new Kemalist government, lacked any mentions of the Armenian case and manifested the beginning of the international neglect of the Armenian case. Since the signing of the final treaty, different Turkish governments have, with

⁷⁹ The British Blue Book on the Armenian Genocide, entitled *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, is a collection of victim and witness testimonies of the Armenian Genocide, assembled and published mid-genocide in 1916. See, for instance, Maria Karlsson, “Narrating the Harrowing: An Investigation of the Narratives of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915 – 1916*”, third term paper, Lund University 2009.

⁸⁰ Roupen, interview dated 6th November 1915, in Bryce & Toynbee, 2000, document no. 22 , p. 119.

⁸¹ Marjorie Housepian Dobkin has, for instance, noted that from 24 April 1915 until December of that year, *The New York Times* alone had printed over 100 articles detailing the Armenian Genocide. See Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, “What Genocide? What Holocaust? News from Turkey, 1915 – 1923: A Case Study” in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, New Brunswick & Oxford: Transaction Books 1987, p. 98.

⁸² Balakian, 2003, p. 334.

varying degrees, maintained the non-existence of the Armenian Genocide. Additionally, during most of the twentieth century, Turkey has been an important ally and trading partner of the West, lessening international calls for genocide recognition. Genocide scholar Roger Smith speaks of this movement from recognition of genocide, to abandonment and ignorance as the “erosion of memory”⁸³, and he notes that the prevailing Turkish strategy towards the Armenian Genocide – “silence where possible and diplomacy when necessary”⁸⁴ – has proven successful in deleting the Armenian case from the map of international politics.⁸⁵ In this sense, the Armenian case was for a long time an example of “how to commit genocide and get away with it”, an illustration of the “successful genocide”.⁸⁶

As noted above, Turkish official denial of the Armenian Genocide has naturally changed and adapted in accordance with changes in the international climate and of the historical development of the past century.⁸⁷ During the 1950s a relatively new strategy of denial developed. Denialist attitudes found resonance among a small group of Western scholars who ended up repeating and refining much of the Turkish denialist attitudes.⁸⁸ Additionally, the developing Cold War made the Western world generally favour the support of a strong, secular Turkish state, a strategy in which Western denial, or trivialization, of the Armenian Genocide fit well into. This Western revisionism culminated in the writings of Stanford Shaw, professor of Turkish and Near Eastern History at the University of California in Los Angeles, and his wife Ezel Kural Shaw.⁸⁹ In their narrative of Ottoman and Turkish history, entitled *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* and published in 1977, the Armenians are cast as the rebellious, provocative revolutionary force that, in fact, threatened the very existence of Empire, and the massacres and marches are depicted as civil war. Richard Hovannisian noted in a contemporary review that Shaw’s work on the subject of the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey was a matter of “distortions caused by the selective use or omission of crucial facts”⁹⁰, and represented a version of history that went “beyond revisionism”. Shaw had further, Jørgensen maintains, connections with the Turkish

⁸³ Smith, 1992, p. 3 – 4.

⁸⁴ Smith, 1992, p. 3.

⁸⁵ For a more detailed account of Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide see, for instance, Torben Jørgensen’s article “Turkey, the US and the Armenian Genocide” in *Genocide: Cases, Comparisons and Contemporary Debates*, Jensen, Steven L. B. (ed.), Copenhagen: The Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies 2003, or Dadrian, 1999.

⁸⁶ Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 142 - 144.

⁸⁷ For an example of relatively modern Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide in English translation see, for instance, Gürun, 2001 (1983), an among denialists oft-cited work.

⁸⁸ Jørgensen, 2003, p. 209.

⁸⁹ Jørgensen, 2003, p. 210.

⁹⁰ Richard Hovannisian, “The Critic’s View: Beyond Revisionism”, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 9, nr. 2, 1978, p. 381.

government and developed the genre of genocide denial in their favour, by adding footnotes, bibliographies and what was meant to appear as source criticism.⁹¹ As a result, denial of the Armenian Genocide was “professionalized”.

In the wake of Shaw’s denial both Heath Lowry, since 1994 the Atatürk professor of Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies⁹² at Princeton University and Shaw’s protégé, and Justin McCarthy, professor of history at the University of Louisville and a former student of Shaw’s, would appear. Lowry has often been seen as one of the key advocates of Turkish denial outside of Turkey, and in 1985 Lowry was involved in rallying 69 American scholars to sign a letter later published both in the *New York Times* and in the *Washington Post*, expressing their concerns and objections against an official US recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

What has become Lowry’s, perhaps most decisive, claim to fame was, however, a letter he composed in 1990, as a ghost-writer to the Turkish Ambassador in the United States, Nuzhet Kandemir. The letter was directed at American scholar Robert Jay Lifton, who in his book *The Nazi Doctors* had compared Turkish doctors’ treatment of the Armenians with German doctors’ treatment of the Jews, and it was maintained that Lifton had interpreted the history of “the so-called ‘Armenian Genocide,’ allegedly perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks during the First World War”⁹³ erroneously. Lifton was accused of using biased and unscholarly secondary sources⁹⁴, and was advised to turn to the objective works of Justin McCarthy and Heath Lowry instead. However, Lifton received not only the Ambassador’s letter but also Lowry’s original correspondence with the Ambassador, and his ghost-written draft, in the envelope. As a result, the close ties between the Turkish state and Western deniers of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the improper methods employed by deniers, were revealed.

In comparison to Lowry, Justin McCarthy has maintained both a slightly lower profile and a slightly higher skill in the imitation of legitimate scholarship. In fact, McCarthy is by no means an outcast or a stranger of the scholarly community in the same way as Holocaust deniers, or even Lowry, is. Rather, McCarthy’s books have been printed by large publishing companies, and reviews of his works are frequently made in renowned peer-to-peer journals. When a new

⁹¹ Jørgensen, 2003, p. 210.

⁹² A position established and financed by the Turkish state.

⁹³ All letters included in the conversation, Lowry’s discussion with Kandemir, Lowry’s draft letter to Lifton, and the Turkish Ambassador’s final letter to Lifton are included in what is now a classic article by Roger W. Smith, Eric Markusen, and Robert Jay Lifton entitled “Professional Ethics and the Denial of Armenian Genocide”. For the quote above see the article in Richard Hovannisian (ed.), *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1999, p. 79 or 80.

⁹⁴ Highly esteemed genocide scholars, all referred to in this essay, Vahakn Dadrian, Helen Fein and Leo Kuper, have by Lowry been made the target. Lowry even notes in his letter to the Ambassador that as it turns out “our basic problem is with authors such as Dadrian, Fein and Kuper, each of whom are now serving as sources for authors such as Lifton” He continues, “I strongly recommend that it be pointed out to Ankara that Lifton’s book is simply the end result of the Turkish failure to respond in a prompt fashion to the Dadrian articles and the Fein and Kuper books”. Both quotes found in Smith, Markusen, Lifton, 1999, p. 278.

book on the Armenian Genocide was to be reviewed in *Slavic Review* in 2007, McCarthy was welcomed to do so.⁹⁵ The review concludes that historians of the “Armenian Question” should “[speak] against the politicization of history and [call] for scholarship that *ignores the question of the existence of genocide* and concentrates instead on historical research that is empirically grounded”⁹⁶. Arguments such as these occur frequently in the writings of McCarthy, attempting to appeal to sound scholarly values of objectivity and source criticism – but in fact denying, and trivializing, the Armenian Genocide. Imagine, for instance, the quote above included in an article on Holocaust historiography.

McCarthy is often referred to as a demographer, and has written extensive accounts on demographics and the population changes of the late Ottoman Empire. In McCarthy’s strategy of denial, the main argument is, as will be further discussed below, one of civil war, attesting to the truism that “people die in war”. As a result the sufferings of the Armenians remain to McCarthy one of many “population exchanges” of the time.⁹⁷

In this triad of Western deniers of the Armenian Genocide the remaining two included in this essay appear the odd ones out, and enables the reflection that the development of a denialist position is not a logical movement from crude and one-dimensional negationism (i.e. “there was no genocide”), towards a more sophisticated, “professionalized” and diverse argumentation of trivialization, relativization and rationalization of genocide. Samuel Weems, for instance, has more in common with early Holocaust deniers such as Austin App (as will be shown below) than with the final writer included as an example of denial of the Armenian Genocide, the above-mentioned Bernard Lewis. While Lewis remains a qualified scholar, albeit utilizing strategies of denial minimizing and relativizing the importance of the Armenian Genocide, Weems, on the other hand, utilizes any strategy, argument or conspiracy theory available in order to deny the Armenian Genocide. A retired district attorney and judge from Arkansas, Weems manages to avoid any resemblance to professional scholarship and consequently presents one of the most polemical and crude accounts of genocide denial included in this study. Similarities have, rightfully, been noted between Weems’ *Armenia: Secrets of a ‘Christian’ Terrorist State* and the forged anti-Semitic publication *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ See Justin McCarthy, 2007, p. 337 – 338.

⁹⁶ McCarthy, 2007, p. 338. Emphasis added.

⁹⁷ Bloxham, 2005, p. 210 – 211.

⁹⁸ Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 361.

The Holocaust and the Development of “Revisionism”

As has been maintained above, the Armenian Genocide and its Jewish counterpart shared several common features and origins. The historical development that followed both instances does, however, stand out as two rather dissimilar developments. The Armenian case was an internationally recognized tragedy and received wide media coverage as it happened. The attention was, however, short-lived. The courts martial were readily abandoned, and the peace treaty of 1923 thoroughly ignored the Armenian Genocide and its survivors. As a result, public knowledge and memory of the “starving Armenians” faded fast. In terms of the Holocaust, on the other hand, the international community has reacted with world-wide condemnation and recognition of the event.⁹⁹ Still, as the Holocaust was set in motion, and during the massacre of millions, international and public knowledge and attention was limited. Initially, information came through Soviet reports of death camps, which were quickly rejected as propaganda, and later during 1942 both from underground Polish sources and through Jewish channels of communication.¹⁰⁰ The names of camps, the brutal treatment of the inmates and the direction towards which the Jews of occupied territories were headed was cabled out over the world but, as Walter Laqueur has maintained, “the news about the murder of many millions of Jews was not accepted for a long time and even when it had been accepted the full implications were not understood”¹⁰¹. Once the war was over, however, the Nuremberg trials developed distinctively different from the Constantinople trials. While not set up specifically in order to punish those guilty of the Holocaust, the trials did include a charge on “crimes against humanity”, and the final verdicts were in fact executed.

As a result, the question of the Holocaust remained a topic on the agenda of international politics, further emphasized by the trial of Eichmann in 1961. The Holocaust remained, however, a highly sensitive and politically controversial subject. The Nazi treatment of the European Jews received, therefore, a history of effect where the act of genocide grew into something vastly more extensive than the sum of its historical parts. It has, for instance, been noted that the Holocaust today has become part of a discussion on “European values” within the European Union – defining the absolute evil in a post-modern world of conflicting interpretations.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See, for instance, Helen Fein, *Denying Genocide: From Armenia to Bosnia: A Lecture Delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science on 22 January 2001*, Occasional Papers in Comparative and International Politics 1, The London School of Economics and Political Science n. d., p. 21.

¹⁰⁰ Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's 'Final Solution'*, Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown and Company 1980, chapters 4 and 6.

¹⁰¹ Laqueur, 1980, p. 204.

¹⁰² Østergård, Uffe, “Holocaust, Genocide and European Values” in Steven L. B. Jensen (ed.), *Genocide: Cases, Comparisons and Contemporary Debates*, Copenhagen: The Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies 2003. On a more comprehensive overview of the impact of the Holocaust on the post-genocide world see primarily *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, David S. Wyman (ed.), Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1996.

As scholarly and public interest in the Holocaust grew during the course of the twentieth century, so did, however, also a small group of individuals that, despite and in opposition to heaps of evidence – even including perpetrator testimonies and confessions – were denying the reality of a Jewish Holocaust. Drawing its inspiration both from traditional anti-Semitic and racist argumentation and motivation, and from what once was a scholarly respected group of American revisionists, Holocaust denial appeared not long after the Second World War had ended – and developed in accordance with the scholarly study of the Holocaust.

As Deborah Lipstadt has shown, the American revisionist school to which most Holocaust deniers claim kinship consisted of a group of revisionist scholars who shared a common concern for American involvement in the First World War. Among these, only the, originally respected, historian Harry Elmer Barnes manages to link together the scholarly revisionism and Holocaust denial.¹⁰³ By the 1950s, the foundation was in all respects laid for outright denial of the Holocaust. These deniers made no attempt to hide their anti-Semitic sympathies and as a result early deniers, in this essay represented by, primarily, German-American Austin App, appear rather crude and unsophisticated in comparison to modern Holocaust deniers such as David Irving. App presented the bulk of his denialist arguments in a 1973 pamphlet writing entitled *The Six Million Swindle*, in which he accounts for his eight “incontrovertible” assertions disproving the “myth of the six million”. Lipstadt notes that App’s assertions later were adopted by most deniers and denial oriented organizations as essential tenets of Holocaust denial.¹⁰⁴

During the late 1960s and 1970s the style and content of denial of the Holocaust altered slightly as the activity was tied firmer to neofascist groups and organizations, in this investigation represented by British denier Richard Harwood’s *Did Six Million Really Die? The Truth at Last*, published in 1974. At first, the booklet was thought to be a genuine scholarly effort as it appeared to have an academic disposition, and concerned itself with numbers and sources. Additionally, writer Richard Harwood was presented as being a specialist on the Second World War, and associated with the University of London.¹⁰⁵ As it turned out, however, the University of London had no affiliation with Richard Harwood at all – and the name of the author was rather a

¹⁰³ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 31 – 34. A link that Holocaust deniers themselves hold on to proudly. On the below mentioned Institute of Historical Revisionism’s website Barnes is quoted as the ideological backbone defining the fundamental purpose and intent of the Institute to be the “blasting [of] the historical blackout”. See <http://www.ihr.org/main/about.shtml>.

¹⁰⁴ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 99.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Harwood, *Did Six Million Really Die? The Truth at Last*, 1974, retrieved at <http://www.ihr.org/books/harwood/dsmrd01.htm> (16 January 2010), p. 45. The paging of Harwood’s pamphlet refers to a printed copy in the possession of the author.

pseudonym hiding the identity of Richard Verall, editor of the British neofascist publication *Spearhead*.¹⁰⁶ Lipstadt has observed that Holocaust deniers have continued to cite Harwood's publication as an authoritative source, and that within less than a decade over a million copies had been distributed in over forty countries.¹⁰⁷

During the last decades of the twentieth century, Holocaust denial has in many ways altered its appearance yet again. Both Arthur Butz, originally a professor of engineering at Northwestern University, as well as British writer and denier David Irving, among many others, represent a distinctively more sophisticated form of Holocaust denial than does both App and Harwood. As a result of this new type of denial, the Institute of Historical Review (IHR), founded 1978 in California, would become the center of modern Holocaust denial. Under the leadership of deniers such as David McCalden and Willis Carto, the IHR has represented a deceptively scholarly veneer of denial. "Revisionist Conventions" have been held, featuring prominent Holocaust deniers, and *The Journal of Historical Review*, published by the IHR 1980 – 2002, has imitated scholarly peer-to-peer journals on a monthly basis.

The former of the two modern Holocaust deniers here under investigation, Arthur Butz, has, according to Lipstadt, moved "denial from the lunatic fringe of racial and anti-Semitic extremism to the realm of academic respectability"¹⁰⁸ – much like Stanford Shaw "professionalized" denial of the Armenian Genocide in the 1970s. Butz's most frequently cited work, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, first published in 1976 and continually reprinted in new editions, definitely presented more subtle strategies of denial, as well as a surface of objectivity, scholarly standards, an apparent academic system of references together with an extensive bibliography. It has been noted that Butz seemed willing to address topics other deniers had avoided, and he gained scholarly esteem by criticizing other deniers' works as unreliable and laden with factual errors.¹⁰⁹ The intention of Butz's writings remains, however, the same as for App or Harwood – to "prove" the Holocaust as a Jewish "hoax", and the Germans and Austrians as the proper victims of genocide. His book, it has been observed, has been adopted as "the bible of the [denialist] movement"¹¹⁰, and Lipstadt has noted that "[t]ogether with such other infamous works

¹⁰⁶ In an attempt to avoid confusion Richard Verall will be referred to under his pen name: Richard Harwood.

¹⁰⁷ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 104.

¹⁰⁸ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 142. According to Richard Evans, Butz performed what in many ways was the "first attempt to present Holocaust denial in a pseudo-academic form". See Richard J. Evans, *Telling Lies About Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial*, London & New York: Verso 2002, p. 115.

¹⁰⁹ Butz, 2003, p. 26 – 27.

¹¹⁰ Michael Shermer & Alex Grobman, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why do They Say It?*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press 2000, p. 40.

as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, it will serve as a standard against which other implausible and prejudicial theories will be measured”¹¹¹.

The latter of the two modern Holocaust deniers included in this study, David Irving, is in Lipstadt’s study accounted for as “one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial”¹¹². Until the book was released in 1993, however, Irving had remained a Holocaust denier somewhat outside of the limelight. Irving had published several books, among them a, relatively well-received, monograph on the bombing of Dresden in 1963. In the years to come, Irving stirred some debate through new books, but generally sold well and had his studies printed in several new editions.¹¹³ Irving remained a controversial writer on the Second World War, having accounted for rather shockingly high German death rates in his Dresden study, but was in general still not viewed as a Holocaust denier on par with, for instance, Arthur Butz or Richard Harwood. For instance, the respected German historian Hans Mommsen commented on Irving in 1978, remarking that “[i]t is our good fortune to have an Irving. At least he provides fresh stimuli for historians”¹¹⁴. With the publication of the massive and controversial work *Hitler’s War* in 1977, however, Irving would come to be recognized as, if nothing else, a Nazi apologist. He argued that Hitler, as opposed to other highly ranked Nazis, did not know about the Holocaust until 1943, and that he both before and after did everything within his power to tone down and relieve the German Jews of the worst treatment. Irving furthered the controversy surrounding his book by offering a cash reward to anyone that was able to prove him wrong.¹¹⁵

In additional publications Irving would, however, adopt the mindset, arguments and motivations of a Holocaust denier.¹¹⁶ With the release of Lipstadt’s study Irving would come to enter into both international fame and mainstream Holocaust denial. Having read Lipstadt’s book, Irving decided to sue both her and her British publishing company, Penguin Books, for libel. Consequently, the issue of Irving versus Lipstadt became one of denialism versus history, with the eyes of the world watching by the sidelines. In court, Irving was substantially accused of deliberately misinterpreting and excluding evidence and of transforming the historical reality to fit his ideological and racist agenda. Historian Richard Evans, who testified as one of the expert

¹¹¹ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 136.

¹¹² Lipstadt, 1993, p. 181.

¹¹³ Evans, 2002, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Mommsen quoted in Shermer & Groban, 2000, p. 49. The quote featured on Irving’s webpage until 1998, when Mommsen wrote to Irving requesting to have it removed, claiming the context of the quote to be no longer comprehensible for the public.

¹¹⁵ Evans, 2002, p. 11.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Shermer & Grobman, 2000, p. 49 – 51 for a narrative on Irving’s definitive turn towards Holocaust denialism.

witnesses against Irving, maintained in court as well as in his subsequent book on the case that Irving “ignored or deliberately suppressed material when it ran counter to his arguments. When he was unable to do this, he expressed implausible doubts about its reality”¹¹⁷. When the final verdict was delivered, it became clear that Irving had sorely lost the case. Irving, it was maintained, had not adhered to the professional responsibilities and objectives of a historian, and he had willfully disregarded, discarded and mistreated evidence. Additionally, the judge ruled Irving to be both an anti-Semite and a racist, being in close contact and relationship with neo-Nazi and right-wing extremists and organizations.¹¹⁸ In the end, Irving was therefore judged as sharing the same objectives and motivations as earlier Holocaust, and genocide, deniers – connecting him to other deniers such as App and Harwood, but also to deniers of the Armenian Genocide such as Shaw, Lowry and McCarthy.

¹¹⁷ Evans, 2002, p. 75.

¹¹⁸ See, for instance, Evans, 2002, p. 233 – 236. For the full judgement, and case history, in an electronic version see: <http://www.hdot.org/en/trial/judgement>.

Analysis: The Anatomy of a Lie

As noted above, the analysis of this study will present the types, themes, or patterns of denial discernible in denial of both the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. Four patterns of denial, mainly concerned with the *how* of genocide denial, but indirectly touching upon the issues of *what*, *why*, and *whom* as well, will be presented below. The initially presented pattern of absolute denial seems in many ways the most straightforward type of genocide denial, while the second and third patterns analysed represent an increasingly sophisticated and complex type of denial. The fourth pattern of denial, discussing self-images and self-delusion, differs further from the three patterns formerly presented. As an argumentative strategy on its own, it holds little credibility, but in combination with other patterns and arguments of denial, self-confirmation is commonly used among denialist narratives, acting as a pseudo-scholarly suspension of disbelief.

Additionally, it should be noted that much like the analysis below will present several patterns, structures, and strategies of genocide denial, so can a single, individual denialist writer mix different strategies of denial. Utilizing arguments of “absolute denial”, blatantly denying any aspects of genocide, does not rule out the use of other patterns of denial within the same narrative. Rather, it seems to be the general rule of denialist argumentation to use as many versions of denial as possible, regardless of the comparability and fit of the combined arguments and patterns. For instance arguments stating that nothing happened, while still maintaining that the victims of genocide provoked the (non-)event, is an illogical combination of arguments frequently used.

Absolute Denial

There was no 'genocide' as they claim.¹¹⁹

Arguments that in every respect deny the reality of genocide, such as the conclusion made by Armenian Genocide denier Samuel Weems above, are here termed as arguments of absolute denial. The basic argument requires little explanation. There was no genocide, there were no death marches, no gas chambers, and no holocausts. All is fabrication and lies, a hoax and a sham. Weems, in particular, represents this pattern of denial, consistently referring to the Armenian Genocide within quotation marks signalling the non-reality of the event, rather than fulfilling any form of grammatical function.¹²⁰ Additionally, he speaks of the “alleged genocide of

¹¹⁹ Weems, 2002, p. xvii.

¹²⁰ A technique commonly used by Holocaust deniers as well. App applies it below in reference to the phrase “gassed six million Jews”, and Harwood frequently questions the “myth”, and the “six million” utilizing citation marks.

1915”¹²¹, and refers to the events of 1915 as the “greatest tall tale being told by Armenians today”¹²². In the same way, Holocaust denier Austin App has utilized arguments of absolute denial in his effort to display the “lies” of the “six million swindle”. App refers to the Holocaust as “the fervently propagandized myth that the Nazis ‘gassed six million Jews’”¹²³. In contrast to “softer” arguments of denial presented below, App’s and Weems’ versions of absolute denial do not argue in terms of a lack of intention, of provocation, of definition of the term “genocide”, or of numbers – they simply conclude that *nothing* happened.

Absolute denial could, therefore, also be viewed as the perpetual objective of nearly all acts of genocide denial. In fact, most other patterns of denial, and their included individual arguments, could be seen as ultimately aiming to the absolute denial and negating of each specific case of genocide. However, as a pattern of denial, absolute denial remains a very specific type of arguments, namely those explicitly denying the total reality of genocide, such as Weems’ and App’s arguments quoted above. In this sense, absolute denial does not demand any additional contexts, arguments or evidence – it essentially stands on its own.

As a general rule, however, arguments of absolute denial cannot on their own make up a valid denialist discussion, even in the most crude and unsophisticated cases of genocide denial. Rather, absolute denial is in nearly all cases combined with other patterns of denial, in turn creating an awkward and perverse kind of internal logic. On its own, incessantly claiming that nothing happened does retain some kind of logic. But, maintaining that nothing happened while at the same time claiming that whatever did (not) happen was the fault of the victims, or not the intent of the perpetrators, defy all logic. While Deborah Lipstadt has termed the minimalization and trivialization of genocide as it is performed by professional scholars as the “yes, but”-syndrome,¹²⁴ this type of arguments of absolute denial could, contrastingly, be termed as the “no, but”-syndrome. App comments, for instance, that nothing happened, *but* the Nazis did at the same time not want to exterminate but to deport the German Jews.¹²⁵ In the case of the Armenian Genocide, Weems has noted that while there was no genocide “as they claim”, *but* the Armenians nonetheless had it coming, as a result of formations of Armenian nationalistic societies threatening the very existence of the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁶

Lowry, similarly, speaks of the Ottoman Turk’s “attempt to ‘exterminate’ the Armenians”. See Heath Lowry, *The Story behind Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, Istanbul: Isis Press 1990, p. 35.

¹²¹ Weems, 2002, p. xi.

¹²² Weems, 2002, p. 38.

¹²³ App, 1973, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 215.

¹²⁵ App, 1973, p. 8.

¹²⁶ Weems, 2002, p. 58.

Another common feature of absolute Holocaust denial has been the dismissal of the Nazi use of gas chambers.¹²⁷ Arguments claiming the non-existence of gas chambers usually question the scientific possibility of gassing large amounts of people, as well as the logic behind such actions. App determines, for instance, both that no Jews were gassed, and that the proposed gas chambers found post-war were in fact built by Allied forces in an attempt to disgrace the Germans.¹²⁸ The same arguments are found in Butz's denialist narrative, though he explains the physical existence of gas chambers by concluding that they were "obviously a chamber for disinfecting clothing; such equipment was necessary and existed at all of the German concentration camps"¹²⁹. Spinning the argument further, Harwood states that the Holocaust is nothing but a Jewish myth, and he maintains that Germany fought a costly war and did not afford to exterminate large portions of the work force.¹³⁰ He declares further that the famous concentration camps and their gas chambers were, in fact, nothing but industrial complexes.¹³¹ As proof, he argues that "no living, authentic eye witness of these 'gassings' has ever been produced and validated"¹³². As a result, the absence of survivors testifying to the reality of gas chambers means, according to Harwood, that there were no such things as gas chambers. Had there been survivors, on the other hand, this would have proven that there were no gassings, as no one could have survived them.

Rationalization and Trivialization

Arguments amounting to the rationalization and trivialization of genocide represent, in this investigation, a second pattern of denial. The arguments of this strategy place, in the words of Richard Hovannisian:

[e]mphasis [---] away from the planned, systematic process of mass murder, and genocide is explained in the context of general wartime casualties, the number of victims are minimized, and doubt is cast upon the reliability of the eyewitness testimony and documents relating to mass killings.¹³³

¹²⁷ Lipstadt refers to the entire "debate" as the "gas chamber controversy", primarily made public in the trial of Ernst Zundel in 1988, and through the *Leuchter Report* presented as part of Zundel's defense strategy. Zundel had posed as a technical expert, specializing on gas chambers and killing techniques. See Lipstadt, 1993, p. 157 – 182.

¹²⁸ App, 1973, p. 18, 23.

¹²⁹ Butz, 2003, p. 65.

¹³⁰ Harwood, 1974, p. 33.

¹³¹ Harwood, 1974, p.

¹³² Harwood, 1974, p.

¹³³ Hovannisian 1999, p. 202.

Here, the rationalization of genocide is not equal to professional attempts at explaining genocide, but rather point towards argumentative strategies aimed at diminishing the extent, magnitude, and scale of the Holocaust, or the Armenian Genocide. It is not argued that “nothing happened”, but rather that what you think happened was something else. Arguments of rationalization claim, for instance, that the victims of genocide provoked the perpetrators or maintain that there is no/not enough valid evidence to conclude an event of genocide. Similarly, arguments of trivialization claim that the lower the death count, the less of a genocidal treatment, and that though people may have died there was no intent to kill them. Rather than denying the very reality of genocide, as is the case of absolute denial, arguments of this second pattern tend to consent to the fact that *something* happened, people died, though claiming that whatever happened was not genocide.

Further, as opposed to absolute denial, which denies genocide as such, arguments of rationalization and trivialization tend to include all aspects of genocide (causes, event, consequences), and often include a much higher degree of historical detail, “discussing” death counts, killing techniques, archives and evidence. The general method proposed in relation to this pattern maintains that focusing on a single, conspicuous detail of genocide, and subsequently rejecting its authenticity or validity, means a possible rejection of the entire historical reality of the genocide.

The fundamental aim of this pattern of denial seems to be confusion. Arguments of trivialization and rationalization are often made under the guise of legitimate scholarly debate, and half-truths are presented as objective evidence and solid interpretations. However, as scholars have noted, it is only a more sophisticated presentation of denial, where “senseless terror gives way to reason, violence adapts to explanation, and history is reshaped to suit a contemporary agenda”¹³⁴.

The Question of Intent

What has to be absolutely established before anything else is that the Nazis had no plan and no wish to exterminate all Jews. To say that they had is a lie.¹³⁵

The central formulation of the commonly stated UN Convention on Genocide, adopted in 1948, seems, in hindsight, to be the definition that “genocide means any of the following acts

¹³⁴ Hovannisian, 1999, p. 202.

¹³⁵ App, 1973, p. 8.

committed *with intent to destroy*¹³⁶. The definition effectively and essentially separates genocide from natural disasters, epidemics, and other catastrophes out of human control, yet causing enormous human suffering, and from events caused by human intention. Division has further been made between events which sole purpose is the destruction and extermination of category of people, and events such as crimes of war, where the ultimate goal, to win the war, remains logically relatable, although producing abhorrent results. This intentional aspect of defining genocide has, naturally, proven central to the judicial treatment of perpetrators of genocide. To historians approaching the subject, however, genocidal intent has been a difficult category to analyze and provide evidence for.¹³⁷ In fact, stumbling upon explicit documents produced by the perpetrators, relating their intent to exterminate the entire victim category, is a rare happening. Historians have therefore tended to present “softer” definitions of intent. Helen Fein have, for instance, defined an “intent to destroy” as “a sustained attack or continuity of attacks by the perpetrator”¹³⁸, where it can be held beyond any doubt that “the deaths cannot be explained as accidental outcomes [...] [and where] [t]here is evidence of repetition of destruction by design or as a foreseeable outcome”¹³⁹. Nonetheless, intention and genocide seems invariably connected among genocide scholars.

Hence, it is no wonder that denialists to a very large extent have devoted much attention to this aspect of genocide. App’s quote above, stating that there is no such thing as a Nazi intent to murder Jews, is, therefore, an all but uncommon tactic among genocide denialists. The Jews that died did so, it is maintained, as a result of disease and “a total loss of control, not a deliberate policy”¹⁴⁰. If there was no intent to exterminate, then much of the arguments that follow below, stating that the killings were a result of provocation, civil war and so on, gain authority. As a result, deniers dismiss the whole idea of genocide through denying genocidal intent, consequently rationalizing and trivializing the event.

Among arguments denying intent, two sub-strategies have proven fairly common among the sources under investigation here, both in terms of the Holocaust and of the Armenian Genocide. The first one attempts to disqualify the notion of a genocidal intention by salvaging individual perpetrators and their historical reputations. David Irving performs, for instance, a valiant effort directed at convincing his reader that Hitler, for a long time, was unaware of the

¹³⁶ The United Nations, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 1948. Emphasis added.

¹³⁷ Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 63 – 66.

¹³⁸ Fein, n. d., p. 4.

¹³⁹ Fein, n. d., p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ Butz, 2003, p. 55.

Holocaust. While Irving contends that Hitler felt animosity towards, and wanted to rid Germany of, the Jews, he also maintains that of all the strategies put forward as a means of reaching this goal, Hitler opted for expulsion, not extermination.¹⁴¹ As the mind behind the extermination plans and actions, Irving rather places the blame on Himmler, adding that “[i]t is conceivable that Hitler was unaware that his November 1941 order forbidding the liquidation of the Jews was being violated on such a scale”¹⁴². Once Hitler was made aware of the “massacres”, according to Irving in August 1944, he ordered for the killings to come to a halt.¹⁴³ As a result, Hitler is displayed as a moral Führer, and any overall Nazi intent to murder all Jews is denied. Heath Lowry, denying the intent of the Armenian Genocide, displays a similar tactic, albeit aiming at reinstating the Ottoman Minister of Interior and one of the premier planners and executors of the genocide, Talaat Pascha, as a sympathetic person who has been unfairly slandered by history. In contrast to Ambassador Morgenthau’s depiction of Talaat in his memoirs, Lowry describes the Ottoman Minister of Interior as a man eager to help the US diplomat using any means possible and performing acts of “gracious kindness”¹⁴⁴. Morgenthau, Lowry contends, has painted a tarnished and principally faulty picture of Talaat who, in fact, were one of the “good guys”.¹⁴⁵

The second strategy commonly used in order to deny any intent to mass murder is the attempt to claim that what was intended was simply deportation and relocation, not extermination. Denier Justin McCarthy comments, for instance, on the death marches of the Armenian Genocide:

On 26 of May 1915, the government gave orders to relocate Armenians from potential war zones [---]. The intent, a common one in governments fighting guerrilla wars, was to deprive the rebels of the support they needed to carry on their battles.¹⁴⁶

According to McCarthy, the deportation orders were simply the adequate response to a threatening situation of Armenian upheaval. Confidently, he contends that “[t]he intentions of Istanbul were clear – to move and resettle Armenians peacefully”¹⁴⁷. Here, genocide by deportation becomes a matter of internal security, and the intention to murder becomes the

¹⁴¹ David Irving, *Hitler's War*, London & Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton 1977, p. 391. See further p. xiii – xv.

¹⁴² Irving, 1977, p. 393.

¹⁴³ Irving, 1977, p. 718.

¹⁴⁴ Lowry, 1990, p. 39.

¹⁴⁵ Lowry, 1990, p. 29 – 58, in particular p. 42 – 43.

¹⁴⁶ Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*, London: Arnold 2001, p. 110.

¹⁴⁷ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821 – 1922*, Princeton: The Darwin Press 1995, p. 193.

intention to relocate, in turn rationalizing the entire Armenian Genocide. Weems claims similarly that “[t]here is no genuine proof the Ottomans desired to do anything but remove this very real threat to their army and this is why the Armenians were removed”¹⁴⁸. The deportations were, according to Weems, based on sound military consideration, and he comments further that the “Armenians have produced fake documents in an attempt to prove otherwise”¹⁴⁹. In the works of Shaw and Shaw, McCarthy’s view is further developed, referring to the deportations as “evacuations”¹⁵⁰, a term of largely positive connotations. While you deport your enemies, you evacuate those you care of as a means of rescuing them from danger. Rationalizing and trivializing the Armenian Genocide yet further, Shaw and Shaw maintains that only Armenians living in the zones of war were “evacuated”,¹⁵¹ and that the Ottoman government in fact did everything in their power in order to protect the Armenian refugees, issuing protectors and supplying food and shelter.¹⁵² Once the alleged destinations were reached “[t]he Armenians were to be protected and cared for until they returned to their homes after war”¹⁵³. Here, the deportations are turned into a necessity, a common method of neutralizing troublemakers, a considerate program of evacuation, a temporary measure from which the deportees were to return home safely – in all cases attempts to trivialize and rationalize the reality of the deportations, and of dismissing the intent to acts of genocide.

In regards to denial of the Holocaust, the argument claiming deportation instead of extermination is equally widespread. Irving claims, as seen above, that Hitler’s ultimate aim and intent was the deportation of the Jews, not genocide. Similarly, Butz notes that “[t]he ‘Final Solution’ spoken of in the German documents was a program of evacuation, resettlement, and deportation of Jews within the ultimate objective of expulsion from Europe”¹⁵⁴. Harwood contends, further, that “transportation to the eastern ghettos and concentration camps such as Auschwitz constituted nothing but an alternative plan of evacuation”¹⁵⁵. Harwood has, much like Shaw & Shaw, chosen the term “evacuation” in order to describe the treatment of the German

¹⁴⁸ Weems, 2002, p. 58 – 59.

¹⁴⁹ Weems, 2002, p. 59.

¹⁵⁰ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315.

¹⁵¹ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315. In fact, Armenians from all across the Ottoman Empire were deported and sent to perish in the deserts, war zones and peaceful areas alike. Only Armenians living in the larger cities of Constantinople and Smyrna were, more or less, spared genocidal violence as a result of the foreign presence.

¹⁵² Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315.

¹⁵³ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315.

¹⁵⁴ Butz, 2003, p. 21.

¹⁵⁵ Harwood, 1974, p. 7.

Jews, emphasizing the relatively benign intentions of the Nazis.¹⁵⁶ In App's denialist version of the Holocaust, the intent to deport rather than exterminate is presented as the first, of a total of eight, "incontrovertible points"¹⁵⁷, proving the Holocaust to be a hoax. However, in relation to the rather sophisticated denialist arguments of intent and the Armenian case, the arguments propagating an intention to evacuate, not exterminate, the European Jews remain rather crude. App's arguments, for example, rarely present elaborate counter-explanations, but rather exclaim statements along the lines of "the charge that Hitler and the Third Reich wanted to exterminate all Jews is totally fabricated, brazen lie!"¹⁵⁸. App further argues that if Hitler had wanted to destroy the European Jews, he would have done so as "[t]he Third Reich was too efficient for any Jews to escape had it wished to exterminate all Jews"¹⁵⁹. A similar argument is presented by Samuel Weems in reference to the Armenian case. He asks rhetorically: "[i]f the Turks had wanted to massacre the Armenians why didn't they just do it rather than spend 261 million *kurush* to remove the Armenians?"¹⁶⁰. As a result, the very existence of genocide survivors denies the possibility of intent and genocide, all in accordance with denialism logic.

Latent Denial

Not to remember is not a neutral act – it is to side with the executioners of whole groups and peoples.¹⁶¹

The type of arguments here referred to as examples of "latent denial" differs in many ways from other attempts to deny genocide. Rather than presenting counter-facts, dismissing evidence or arguing in favour of a denialist thesis, latent denial is concerned with actively choosing not to deal with the topic of genocide, withholding and excluding arguments, discussions, and vital sources, thereby applying all the freedoms (and none of the responsibilities) of a historian. As Roger Smith notes above, this conscious refusal to deal with certain aspects of history simply because they do not fit your interpretation or world-view results only in the trivialization and rationalization of genocide, never in a valid historical interpretation. The conclusion to be drawn is that more or less all latent denial is based on motivations of ideological and political origins. In

¹⁵⁶ As an example of these kind intentions of the Nazis Harwood explains the "humane conditions" of the concentration camps. See, Harwood, 1974, p. 35.

¹⁵⁷ App, 1973, p. 3. See further p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ App, 1973 p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ App, 1973, p. 8.

¹⁶⁰ Weems, 2002, p. 59. Emphasis in original. See also Weems, 2002, p. 120, 256.

¹⁶¹ Smith, 1992, p. 2.

many ways, this latent type of denial seems to be the least visible of the arguments presented, and additionally the most difficult to define.

Generally, within the material scope of this investigation, deniers of the Armenian Genocide tend to utilize strategies of latent denial to a far higher degree than deniers of the Holocaust. Stanford Shaw's *Turkey and the Holocaust* is, for instance, a prime example of this.¹⁶² The topic of the book seems, at first glance, as a justifiable object of study, narrating how a Muslim nation, albeit a rather secular one, aided Jews during the Second World War. However, as Shaw has remained one of the foremost deniers of the Armenian Genocide, the book is simultaneously aimed at denying the Armenian Genocide. The very first sentences of the book declares that the world does not sufficiently realize the extent to which Turkey and the Ottoman Empire "over the centuries served as major places of refuge for people suffering from persecution, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, from the fourteenth century to the present"¹⁶³. To the minorities being driven out of, and exterminated within the country, Shaw pays little attention. Turkey's role as a safe-haven for the poor, the hungry, and the persecuted remains unquestioned throughout the book,¹⁶⁴ and the only persecutions and massacres discussed are those affecting the Muslim population of the Empire and the Republic. This, Shaw maintains, constitutes "a true genocide which the world still does not recognize because it was carried out by Christians in the name of liberation from Muslim rule"¹⁶⁵. Latently, and consciously, Shaw manages to deny the Armenian Genocide – the "untrue" genocide – without even mentioning it. McCarthy, often following in Shaw's footsteps, attempts a similar tactic in his *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1812 – 1922*, published two years after Shaw's book.¹⁶⁶ McCarthy presents the history of Turkish victimization and, while there indeed were Turkish victims of violence, in the context of McCarthy's denialist position, he in effect trivializes the Armenian Genocide.

Among the deniers of the Armenian Genocide, however, it is Bernard Lewis that utilizes the technique of latent denial most effectively in what can only be viewed as an attempt to trivialize the genocide. Lewis' *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, in fact, tells the story of the fall of

¹⁶² Shaw's book is also a prime example of a modern Turkish strategy of denial, namely to attempt to create a breach between Armenians and Jews by playing on the "true" and unparalleled horrors of the Holocaust, and on the incomparable position of the Jewish victims. The Armenians, claim deniers, attempt to rob Jews of the "victimhood". See Hovannisian, 1987a, p. 128.

¹⁶³ Stanford Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust: Turkey's Role in Rescuing Turkish and European Jewry from Nazi Persecution, 1933 – 1945*, New York: New York University Press 1993, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ See, for instance, the concluding lines of the book. Shaw, 1993, p. 305.

¹⁶⁵ Shaw, 1993, p. 2. Emphasis added.

¹⁶⁶ Additionally, McCarthy's book was read and commented in manuscript form by both Shaw and Lowry. See, McCarthy, 1995, p. xiii.

the Ottoman Empire, and the development of the new Turkish state, while barely mentioning the Armenians. His narrative is divided into two separate parts, the first one concerned with a chronological overview of the emergence of Turkey, and the second one concerned with “aspects of change”, such as the style of government, religion, culture, and social system. During the first part of the book, the Armenian Genocide is left without a single mention. The term “repressive and centralist policies of the Young Turks”¹⁶⁷ is mentioned on one occasion, but no account of these “repressive” policies is made. In the grand scheme of things, Lewis has concluded, the Armenian Genocide holds no place. Rather, the “terrible slaughter of 1915”¹⁶⁸ is briefly discussed on one and a half page in the second part of the book under the heading of “The Religious Minorities”. Had Lewis been a regular scholar writing on the history of the Turkish Republic, his account, or lack thereof, of the Armenian Genocide could be explained as a problem of communication. He has, in fact, written about the Armenian Genocide as an utterly real event with horrific consequences. The extent to which it is covered would, however, still be worthy of critique, but could have been explained as an unintentional slip, or unawareness. Knowing Lewis’ background, however, and being aware of the changes that were made between the original 1961 publication and the latter ones, it seems clear that Lewis’ account of the Armenian Genocide is an attempt to trivialize the event. He has consciously and actively decided not to include the genocide in his grand narrative, and he has, in opposition both to overwhelming evidence and to other scholars, further decided to portray the Armenian Genocide as a parenthesis of history and as an unfortunate event among others.

Among the Holocaust deniers included in this study few, if any, utilize strategies of latent denial. Most have rather decided to counter-claim every detail of the “Holocaust hoax” in a very explicit manner. Even in David Irving’s biography of Hitler, a narrative not explicitly aimed at the Holocaust, the “bloody and mindless massacre of the Jews”¹⁶⁹ is mentioned on a frequent basis, and it seems clear that Irving in general have been utilizing other arguments and patterns of denial in order to rationalize and trivialize the Holocaust.

The Ethical Stand: Humanism and Scientific Methodology

The ‘traditional’ view of the history of the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Anatolia is less than complete, if not misleading, because the histories of the Ottoman minority groups

¹⁶⁷ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, third edition, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, p. 219.

¹⁶⁸ Lewis, 2002, p. 356.

¹⁶⁹ Irving, 1977, p. xiii. A description the David Irving of today might have a hard time defending; see Evans, 2002, p. 119 – 123.

are taken out of context. A major part of that context is the suffering of Muslims, which took place in the same regions and at the same time as the sufferings of Christians, and often transcended them. The few who have attempted to alter the traditional view have been derided as ‘revisionists’, as if revision were an academic sin and contextual historical accuracy irrelevant. In fact, revisiting one-sided history and changing deficient traditional wisdom is the business of the historian, and in few areas of history is revision so needed as in the history of the Ottoman peoples.¹⁷⁰

A common denialist strategy, seemingly effective when appealing to the consent of students and the general public in particular, is to present the denialist narrative and perspective as taking an ethical and moral stance. Within this context, deniers of genocide have often described their position and arguments as combating political correctness, and as a struggle for freedom of speech.¹⁷¹ The basic logic behind these types of arguments involve ideas appearing to be of humanistic concern, where denying genocide is said to mean that you recognize the suffering of *all* humans involved, instead of the sufferings of one particular group, be it Jews or Armenians.¹⁷² The roles of victim and perpetrator are as a result non-existent. Those dying carrying arms in battle and those dying unarmed, persecuted, and as a result of a planned, systematic process of mass murder are, in accordance with the argument, equally tragic casualties. Roger Smith has accounted for these types of arguments as belonging within a “flawed moral discourse”¹⁷³, where originally sound, empathetic, scholarly, and common-sense statements are proposed in an off-context, in turn denying, trivializing, and rationalizing genocide. Arguments within this pattern of denial appeal to the humanistic side of people by appearing to place the individual accounts of suffering above political considerations. In McCarthy’s quote above, the humanistic appeal appears in the first couple of sentences, where he maintains, as he does throughout his book, that the sufferings of one group have been overshadowed by the sufferings of another – and that the truly human thing to do would be to lay political considerations and controversial terms such as “genocide” aside, and view the event for what he claims it to have been, namely a civil war in

¹⁷⁰ McCarthy, 1995, p. 2 – 3.

¹⁷¹ See, for instance, Hovannisian, 1999, p. 225 – 227. See also Lipstadt’s chapter on “The Battle for the Campus”, discussing Holocaust denier Bradley Smith’s ad, published in several college newspapers. He called for “open debate” on the Holocaust, presenting Holocaust denial as a version of history not in line with the “politically correct” version of history, and emphasizing his right to freedom of speech. Lipstadt, 1999, p. 183 – 208.

¹⁷² See, for example, Weems, 2002, p. 113.

¹⁷³ Smith, 1992, p. 4.

which all people suffered.¹⁷⁴ In the same way Shaw and Shaw describe the events of the Armenian Genocide as “a general tragedy that engulfed *all* the people of the Empire”¹⁷⁵. Here too denial of the Armenian Genocide is described as a humanistic concern. As a result, those not agreeing with McCarthy and Shaw is portrayed as disagreeing with the truism attesting that that all suffering is bad, and that you avoid the “racism”¹⁷⁶ displayed by those who define the treatment of the Armenians as genocide.

Attempts at humanistic concern are made within the context of Holocaust denial as well. Harwood concludes, for example, in his *Did Six Million Really Die?* that “[d]oubtless, several thousand Jewish persons did die in the course of the Second World War, but this must be seen in the context of a war that cost many millions of innocent victims on all sides”¹⁷⁷. Butz has equally declared that “[e]verybody in Europe suffered during the war”¹⁷⁸. All things considered, the humanistic arguments of McCarthy and Shaw, and of Harwood and Butz all maintain the trivialization of genocide.

The second ethical stand taken by McCarthy at the top of this section, and by deniers in general, concerns the topic of scientific and scholarly methodology. McCarthy writes above of those few, the “revisionists”, who have questioned the “traditional view” of the many, and consequently have been shunned by much of the academic community. However, McCarthy claims, as most deniers do, that he is only attempting to show “the other side” of the “debate”.¹⁷⁹ Founded in the scientifically sound notion of seeing every side of an issue, of remaining unbiased, McCarthy and other deniers appeal for scholarly legitimacy, stretching the saying “there are two sides to every story” to its utmost. McCarthy, Lowry, Shaw, and Weems all present themselves as “a neutral seeker of fact”¹⁸⁰, and genuine revisionists of a one-sided history. Similarly, the deniers of the Holocaust included in this study present themselves as the “revisionist”¹⁸¹ side of a historical debate, terming the “others” as “the ‘extermination’ writers”¹⁸², or “extermination mythologists”¹⁸³, and referring to their position as the “‘extermination’ thesis”¹⁸⁴ or “extermination claim”¹⁸⁵.

¹⁷⁴ McCarthy, 2001, p. 109.

¹⁷⁵ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. x. For a similar statement, see McCarthy, 1995, p. xv.

¹⁷⁶ McCarthy, 1995, p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ Harwood, 1974, p. 45.

¹⁷⁸ Butz, 2003, p. 287.

¹⁷⁹ See Lipstadt, 1993, in particular p. 2, for a thorough discussion and refutation of the “two-sides”-argument.

¹⁸⁰ Weems, 2002, p. xviii.

¹⁸¹ See throughout Butz, 2003, for example p. 8, 11, 298, 369, 376

¹⁸² See, for example, Harwood, 1974, p. 8.

¹⁸³ Butz, 2003, p. 130.

¹⁸⁴ Butz, 2003, p. 28.

¹⁸⁵ Butz, 2003, p. 35.

The scholarly sound intention to use diverse and varied sources and the application of what is meant to appear as source criticism are, likewise, claimed by deniers in an attempt to confuse the readers. For instance, Shaw and Shaw state, seemingly insulted:

We make no apology for using Ottoman sources for a history of the Ottoman Empire. [...] No history of France would be considered methodologically sound and balanced if it were written on the basis of English or Italian observations.¹⁸⁶

Out of context, their source judgement makes perfect sense – as does most denialist arguments taking the ethical stand. Sources ought to be varied when writing the history of an event, a person, a culture, or a process, and naturally, a history of the Ottoman Empire should include, among other things, Ottoman source material. However, within the context of genocide denial, be it of the Armenian Genocide or of the Holocaust, arguments such as the one above indeed display the “flawed moral” commented by Smith above. Shaw and Shaw maintain further that “[c]onsiderable further study is needed to determine the exact degree of blame and responsibility that can be assigned to each of the parties involved”¹⁸⁷. Arguments such as this, though outwardly diplomatic and carefully worded, do, in a context of genocide denial, result only in a clouding of the issue of blame and responsibility, and of the roles of victim and perpetrator.

The Denial of Evidence

Should anyone be misled into believing that the extermination of the Jews was ‘proved’ at Nuremberg by ‘evidence’, he should consider the nature of the Trials themselves, based as they were on a total disregard of sound legal principles of any kind. The accusers acted as prosecutors, judges and executioners; ‘guilt’ was assumed from the outset.¹⁸⁸

To anyone interested in the borderlands separating history and law the judicial aspects of genocide present an interesting case study. In both the Armenian and the Jewish cases of genocide, trials were held post-genocide in an attempt to punish the perpetrators, and to educate the general public. As a result, a judicial truth was added to the perceived historical truth, and the

¹⁸⁶ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. x.

¹⁸⁷ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 316.

¹⁸⁸ Harwood, 1974, p. 15.

sentences of the court together with the testimonies of those accused have together been viewed as strong evidence in favour of genocide. Hence, the deniers of genocide have usually had to devote time and effort in order to attempt to deny genocidal evidence. In the case of the Constantinople trials, however, the deniers have largely been outright dismissive, declaring as McCarthy does that “[t]he government [...] held kangaroo courts in which officials and generals of the past government, usually tried *in absentia* and thus unrepresented, were convicted of crimes real and imagined”¹⁸⁹. The trials of the Ottoman leaders are claimed to have been a series of show trials, conducted only in an effort to please the victorious powers of the war. Hence, the courts martial are overall dismissed as evidence.

The Nuremberg trials, along with subsequent trials and a number of perpetrators’ testimonies in the form of memoirs and interviews, have, however, proven somewhat more of an obstacle to Holocaust deniers. App, Harwood, and Butz devote large sections of their denialist narratives to rebutting and “disproving” perpetrator testimony and depositions, as well as rejecting all instances in which the Holocaust has been on trial, much like Harwood does in the quote above. The trial proceedings are referred to as, for instance, “the most disgraceful legal farce in history”¹⁹⁰, “the rigged Nuremberg trials”¹⁹¹, and as a “deliberate mockery of any conception of due process”¹⁹². Butz further makes comparisons between the Nuremberg trials and the, by history ridiculed, witchcraft trials of earlier centuries.¹⁹³ As a general rule the trials are viewed in utter contempt, and their verdicts are by and large disqualified. Butz, in particular, seems to place particular significance in “disproving” the trials and the perpetrator testimony as he notes that “without the evidence generated at these trials, there would be no significant evidence that the program of killing Jews ever existed at all”¹⁹⁴.

By and large, this type of reasoning appears to be common among genocide deniers, claiming that the disproving of a minor detail results in the dismissal of the whole genocide “myth”. In particular, Holocaust deniers have applied this logic when questioning the use of gas chambers, explaining to their readers that as they are able to prove that no Jews were killed in Auschwitz, this is evidence that no Jews were killed anywhere. Butz explains, for instance, that “because the central part of the extermination legend is false, there is no reason why the reader should believe any part of it, even if the evidence might appear relatively decent at first”¹⁹⁵.

¹⁸⁹ McCarthy, 2001, p. 129. Emphasis in original.

¹⁹⁰ Harwood, 1974, p. 15.

¹⁹¹ App, 1973, p. 14.

¹⁹² Butz, 2003, p. 40.

¹⁹³ Butz, 2003, p. 232 – 233.

¹⁹⁴ Butz, 2003, p. 24.

¹⁹⁵ Butz, 2003, p. 215.

Consequently, the “investigation” of details, and rejections of traditionally verified evidence, have remained a large part of denialist argumentation.

In terms of rejecting the perpetrator testimonies, however, the deniers of the Holocaust have had particular trouble. The dismissal of victim testimonies and memoirs, an activity particularly directed at *Anne Frank’s Diary*¹⁹⁶, has been a standard and fairly easy task for deniers. However, as scholars studying denial have maintained, “[i]t is one thing to attack victim credibility, but quite another to try to explain why someone would admit to a crime”¹⁹⁷. Generally, the deniers have tended to explain most perpetrator confessions as a result of physical torture¹⁹⁸, or admitted because the allied prosecutors had promised the Germans on trial leniency if they confessed.¹⁹⁹ Butz declares further that the accused did not know what they were doing, and “[i]t seemed probable, or at least quite possible, to them that the Allies were not completely serious about carrying out executions and long prison sentences”²⁰⁰.

Among the testimonies frequently dismissed by Holocaust deniers, the testimonies of former Auschwitz Commandant Rudolph Höss have been among those most intensely denied. Höss wrote memoirs, first published in 1958, stating in detail the genocidal massacres taking place at his camp site, and appeared as a witness at the trial of SS leader Ernst Kaltenbrunner in 1946. Butz thoroughly discusses Höss’ testimony, dismissing it as a “pack of lies”²⁰¹, as does App.²⁰² Harwood, developing the denialist dismissal of Höss’ testimony further, argues that the memoirs were a forgery authored “under Communist auspices”²⁰³. He explains that Höss while in Polish prison was both tortured and brain-washed, and notes that “his testimony at Nuremberg was delivered in a mindless monotone as he stared blankly into space”²⁰⁴. In a similar fashion most other perpetrator admissions, memoirs, and testimonies are denied as well.

Among deniers of the Armenian Genocide, denial of specific evidence has rather been directed at bystander narratives, memoirs, and evidence. As a general rule, it has remained slightly more sophisticated than its Holocaust counterpart. Among the sources included in this study

¹⁹⁶ The dismissal of which have become a standard feature of Holocaust denial. See, for instance, Butz, 2003, p. 59, Harwood, 1974, p. 31 – 32, alternatively Holocaust deniers David Cohen and Ditlieb Felderer’s *Anne Frank Diary — A Hoax?*, Part I, Täby: Bible Researcher 1978. For a scholarly discussion and refusal of denial of the diary see, for instance, Lipstadt, 1993, p. 229 – 235.

¹⁹⁷ John C. Zimmerman, *Holocaust Denial: Demographics, Testimonies and Ideologies*, Maryland & Oxford: University Press of America 2000, p. 91.

¹⁹⁸ See, for instance, Butz, 2003, p. 40 or Harwood, 1974, p. 16 – 17.

¹⁹⁹ Harwood, 1974, p. 21.

²⁰⁰ Butz, 2003, p. 221.

²⁰¹ Butz, 2003, p. 135.

²⁰² See App, 1973, p. 14 – 16.

²⁰³ Harwood, 1974, p. 28.

²⁰⁴ Harwood, 1974, p. 28.

Lowry's *The Story behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* is a prime example of this tactic. His book is essentially written with the intent to discredit the Morgenthau memoirs. Dadrian has even called Lowry's attempt a "crusade" against Morgenthau, and notes that Lowry is "trying to indirectly invalidate the Armenian genocide story that is anchored in the accounts of Morgenthau"²⁰⁵. While attempting to display an appearance of scholarly objectivity, Lowry discusses both the authenticity and the value of Morgenthau's memoirs, devoting much attention to archives and comparative sources – as that is what valid scholarship ought to do. In order to disqualify the bystander memoir, and in effect the Armenian Genocide as a whole, Lowry spotlights Morgenthau's Armenian connections,²⁰⁶ maintains that the memoirs in fact were written by someone else,²⁰⁷ and determines that the sole purpose of writing the memoirs was a "short-term propaganda coup"²⁰⁸.

As a denialist tactic the "questioning" of evidence tends therefore to disqualify both judicial and historical evidence, as well as perpetrator, victims, and bystander testimony. A denialist type of source criticism is attempted in all examples above, questioning the validity, objectivity, and authenticity of the material at hand. However, it seems clear that to genocide deniers source criticism is only valid as long as it serves their purposes.

The Provocation Thesis

The internal threat was a massive Armenian revolt in eastern Anatolia.²⁰⁹

In the late spring of 1915 events unfolded in the Ottoman city of Van, located in the north-eastern corner of Asia Minor, which would prove significant in terms of the developing Armenian Genocide, and in terms of its subsequent denial. The Ottoman leaders had entered the First World War in late 1914, and was the following spring fighting the Russian Army at the eastern borderlands separating the two empires. Following some initial Ottoman success, the fortunes of war changed and the Russians were able to advance into the Ottoman lands. The city of Van, holding a great Armenian majority, reacted to the widespread violence and persecutions directed at Armenians all across the empire, and the city of Van became one of few instances of outright resistance to the persecutions and harsh war requisitions, aimed especially at the

²⁰⁵ Dadrian, 1999, p. 40.

²⁰⁶ Lowry, 1990, see for example p. 11, 14 ff.

²⁰⁷ Lowry, 1990, p. 10 – 11. In fact, on page 23 Lowry has further altered the authorship of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* to "Morgenthau *et al.*".

²⁰⁸ Lowry, 1990, p. 37.

²⁰⁹ McCarthy, 2001, p. 106.

Christian minorities.²¹⁰ When the Russian Army was pushed back, however, the Armenians of Van were left at the hands of the Ottomans. Morgenthau noted in his memoirs that “[i]nstead of following the retreating foe [...] the Turks’ Army turned aside and invaded their own territory of Van. Instead of fighting the trained Russian Army of men, they turned their rifles, machine guns, and other weapons upon the Armenian women, children and old men”²¹¹. The denial narratives, however, tend to label the events at Van as a “large scale rebellion”²¹², and as an “open Armenian revolt against the sultan”²¹³. McCarthy describes, for instance, the state of eastern Anatolia in 1915 as a two-dimensional conflict of both Russian invasion and civil war.²¹⁴ The historical context of persecutions and violence directed at the Armenian millet has been removed from the “revisionist” version, and Armenian revolutionaries are portrayed as the instigators and perpetrators of an *actual* internal threat.²¹⁵ Armenians were terrorists, and the revolt taking place was “massive”, transforming the Armenian Genocide into a “civil war”²¹⁶ fought between two sides of equal strength. Hence, the provocation thesis also disregards the apparent differences between an armed and trained army, and a scattered, defenceless minority people. This is incidentally a point where the narratives of Shaw, Weems, and McCarthy cross paths with the historical narrative of Bernard Lewis. As seen above, Lewis chose to define the Armenian Genocide as a “desperate struggle between two nations for the possession of a single homeland”²¹⁷. Hovannisian has stated that arguments of this type tend to “show that the alleged victims were not free of guilt and that the security measures taken by the state were no different from what beleaguered governments have done before and after”²¹⁸. Shaw and Shaw have further excused and explained the actions taken by the Young Turk leaders, commenting that it would have been “impossible to determine which of the Armenians would remain loyal and which would follow the appeals of their leaders”²¹⁹.

²¹⁰ Balakian, 2003, p. 197 ff.

²¹¹ Morgenthau, 2008 (1918), p. 205.

²¹² McCarthy, 2001, p. 106. Indeed, the sections discussing the Armenians in McCarthy’s books are entitled: “The Armenian Revolution” (1995), and “Armenian revolt” (2001).

²¹³ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315. The Ottoman sultan was, though overthrown in the Young Turk revolution of 1908, formally still holding on to the title of sultan 1915. His political influence and constitutional powers were, however, none. See Balakian, 2003, p. 144.

²¹⁴ Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of Empire*, New York & London: New York University Press 1983, p. 118.

²¹⁵ McCarthy, 1995, p. 188.

²¹⁶ Weems, 2002, p. 4.

²¹⁷ Lewis, 2002, p. 356.

²¹⁸ Hovannisian, 1999, p. 207.

²¹⁹ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315.

Furthermore, the argument of Armenian provocation is often emphasized by describing the Armenians of eastern Anatolia acting as a Russian fifth column. Shaw and Shaw have maintained that “Armenians [...] flooded into the czarist armies”²²⁰, and Weems writes that the “Armenians alleged genocide when they joined the Russians in attempting to overthrow the Ottomans and the Ottomans reacted to defend their country”²²¹.

As opposed to denialist treatment of the Van incident, the few instances of Jewish resistance have remained rather invisible in the denialist literature included in this study.²²² In general, other arguments are utilized. However, Harwood performs an attempt at transforming the German Jews into a hostile faction of the war, writing that “[i]t is widely known that world Jewry declared itself to be a belligerent part in the Second World War, and there was therefore ample basis under international law for the Germans to intern the Jewish population as a hostile force”²²³. While not explicitly provocative, the Jews, according to Harwood, behaved in a way that rationalized the Nazi treatment of them.

The Numbers Game

‘About 500,000 of Israel's 2.6 million Jews had been in a Nazi concentration camp.’ But if half a million Jews now in Israel survived Nazi concentration camps, then the Nazis evidently had no orders to ‘gas’ them! Obviously, then, Hitler and the Third Reich had no plan or desire to exterminate all Jews. They had plenty of time to have executed these 500,000!²²⁴

Most deniers of genocide play the numbers game in an attempt to trivialize and rationalize. They try to establish, like App in the quote above, that it is statistically and logically impossible for the victims of genocide to have died in the numbers that they did. Together with the denial of the gas chambers, Lipstadt notes in her study of denial, the numbers game is “the most critical component of their [the deniers’] enterprise”²²⁵. The numbers stated are usually either exaggerated or excessively lowered, un-sourced or depending on other denialist material, and presented in a manner intended to confuse the reader. Hovannisian has, accurately, noted that the

²²⁰ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315.

²²¹ Weems, 2002, p. 102.

²²² The 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is, for instance, barely mentioned in any of the Holocaust denial narratives included, and in no instance is it referred to in an attempt to prove Jewish provocation. Harwood does write about the “terrorists in the Ghetto uprising”, however, he does not draw any distinctive conclusions out of the attempted resistance. See Harwood, 1974, p. 27.

²²³ Harwood, 1974, p. 6.

²²⁴ App, 1973, p. 3.

²²⁵ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 90.

deniers playing the numbers game consistently “[pretend] to engage in academic inquiry, deniers make quantitative comparisons to obscure qualitative comparisons”²²⁶.

App tends to present high, and imaginative, numbers of Jewish survivors.²²⁷ Subsequently, he argues along the lines of “[t]he Third Reich was too efficient for any Jews to escape had it wished to exterminate all”²²⁸, hence any survivors, but especially large numbers of survivors, “prove” the “six million hoax”. Butz, on the other hand, present a slightly more sophisticated denialist discussion on the Holocaust and “demographics”. He states, along the lines of the ethical stand, that statistics and demographics is a dangerous, and uncertain, area of study. The sources are difficult both to find and to evaluate and the numbers finally arrived at can at best be approximations.²²⁹ He recognizes specific problems and obstacles, such as the demographic calculations that have to be done on incomplete East European material, and he agrees that the very significant drop, and virtual disappearance, in the statistics of the Polish Jewry poses an issue.²³⁰ He calmly explains, however, that what was Polish in 1939 was Soviet in 1945, and all the Polish Jews had by then dispersed into the Soviet Union.²³¹ In the end, he recognizes that is Jewish and “Communist” sources as being used for demographic calculations, it is clear that several millions of Jews disappeared during the war years, but, as both Jews and Communists are biased, the sources are not valid, and should not be used.²³²

When the numbers game is played by deniers of the Armenian Genocide the central issues discussed are those of the pre-war Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the total number of victims. The result is usually a minimization of both the *possible* and the *actual* number of Armenian victims. The typical denialist discussion on the Armenians and population statistics, as presented by Shaw and Shaw, goes:

Armenians claim that as many as 2 million were massacred, but no counts of the dead were ever taken, and the actual total can only be inferred. These claims are based on the supposition that the prewar Armenian population [...] was 2.5 million. According to the Ottoman census in 1914, however, it was at the most 1.5 million. [---] One can conclude

²²⁶ Hovannisian, 1999, p. 212.

²²⁷ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 91.

²²⁸ App, 1973, p. 8.

²²⁹ Butz, 2003, p. 27 – 28.

²³⁰ Butz, 2003, p. 30.

²³¹ Butz, 2003, p. 30 – 31.

²³² Butz, 2003, p. 32 – 33. Rather, Butz maintains, French Holocaust denier Paul Rassinier’s demographic calculations ought to be used and trusted.

that about 300,000 died if one accepts the Ottoman census reports, or 1.3 million if the Armenian figures are utilized.²³³

The fewer the victims, deniers seem to argue, the less valid are claims of genocide. Even the, at first glance, most sensible type of demography discussions, like Shaw and Shaw's above, abide by an idea where the amount of victims determines the definition of genocide. In the quote above both the Armenian pre-war population, and the final death count are questioned. The traditional numbers are contended by claiming that Ottoman source material reduces the number of Armenians present and the number of total victims considerably. A number somewhere in between the two extremes is never suggested, and relying solely on the statistics of the perpetrator government in order to deduce the numbers is never questioned. As is usually the case of denialist argumentation, source criticism is only applied when it serves the proper purpose.

Samuel Weems, in an attempt to cloud the issue of the numbers game even further, draws on, and exceeds, Shaw and Shaw's argument above. At first, Weems challenges the traditionally cited number of 1.5 million Armenian victims as he exclaims that "Armenians are coming up with more Armenians murdered than there were Armenians in Anatolia"²³⁴. A few pages later, however, he dismisses the possibility of 2 million Armenian victims by noting that "[n]o historians of the 1915 time period list the number of Armenians as more than 1.5 million in total"²³⁵, suddenly agreeing with the number formerly refuted. Through Weems' illogical deduction the inherent essence of, and purpose of, the numbers game becomes apparent. Arguments including and discussing numbers appear, at first glance, solid, practical, and concrete, excluding the ideological or political bias that can be so apparent in other denialist arguments. However, within a denialist context, statistics rather result in a clouding of the issue, ignoring, as it does, vital contextual aspects of genocide.

Conspiracy Theories

The sad story is what the Armenians did thereafter to deceive Christians of America and the world. The Armenian leaders sent paid agents throughout the Christian world to tell untrue stories about how hundreds of thousands of their Christians had been massacred by the terrible Turk Muslims.²³⁶

²³³ Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 315 – 316.

²³⁴ Weems, 2002, p. 39.

²³⁵ Weems, 2002, p. 78. See also p. 111 for further attempts at disproving the numbers.

²³⁶ Weems, 2002, p. xv.

The core question of genocide studies seems to centre on the issue of *why*. Why does genocide occur, and how, if at all, can an essentially illogical cruelty of man against man, be explained – and, ultimately, prevented? This question of why has, in many ways, formed the centre of denialism thought as well. However, as discussions aimed at denying genocide from the outset have agreed upon the non-existence of genocide, the “why”-question has rather been formed along the lines of traditional conspiracy theories. Why does the world pay attention to lies? What political, economic, and ideological forces are at work behind these “shams” of genocide?

Weems, in particular, has devoted his entire work to attempting to explain the existence of a proposed Armenian genocide myth. The Armenians are depicted as the scum of the Christian world,²³⁷ as the single reason why “Muslims hate America”²³⁸, and as a people who “love to hate”²³⁹. The Armenians furthermore, according to Weems, spread their tall tales of genocide as a means of smearing the reputation of the friendly and innocent Turkish people.²⁴⁰ During the course of the First World War the Armenians, notes Weems, “played the Christian versus Muslim ethnic-card, and told stories about an imagined massacre to gain sympathy”²⁴¹. Their aim was, as the quote above explains, to create sympathy for the Armenian revolutionary cause, and to lure other Christian nations into giving them financial aid. Weems concludes that he has “uncovered facts that prove Armenian-Americans are spreading tales claiming a massacre and genocide in an effort to get mega-dollars out of both the Turks and American Christians”²⁴². The conspiracy theories presented by Weems in his attempt to explain the genocide “myth”, though ludicrous, are by no means uncommon among genocide deniers. Rather, most Holocaust denial seems to be built on the use of conspiracy theories. In most denialist fiction Zionists are behind the Holocaust “hoax”, the “dead Jews” spend their time hiding either in Israel or the US, receiving and demanding huge reparation payments from Germany.²⁴³

According to App, utilizing most classic anti-Semitic stereotypes, Jews also control the media of the Western world, and hence they are able to constantly promote their own Holocaust

²³⁷ The chapters of Weems’ book are, for instance, titled “What Kind of Christians Are the Armenians Who Claim to Be the First Christian State?”, “Bloodthirsty Armenian Bandits”, “Armenian Cruelty”, “Armenian Leaders Establish Worldwide Political Organization to Support Campaigns of Violence and Terror”, and “The Armenians Were a Dangerous People to Get Mixed up With”.

²³⁸ Weems, 2002, p. ix.

²³⁹ Weems, 2002, p. xvii.

²⁴⁰ Weems, 2002, p. x.

²⁴¹ Weems, 2002, p. 115.

²⁴² Weems, 2002, p. xi.

²⁴³ See, for example, App, 1973, p. 3 – 4.

“myth”.²⁴⁴ Harwood claims, for example, that the Holocaust has become one of the “most successful of deceptions”²⁴⁵, serving the Jewish people in every possible way. Rhetorically, he asks his reader if it is “possible that the story of the Six Million Jews is serving a political purpose, even that it is a form of political blackmail?”²⁴⁶. The Holocaust, he states, was deliberately fabricated in order for the Jews to form their own nation out of Arab land, and as an attempt to upset the, according to Harwood, basic principles of nationhood and national pride, even threatening “the survival of the Race itself”²⁴⁷. The conspiracy theories presented by genocide deniers are, as can be seen in all examples above, expressions of anti-Semitic and racist points of view. They are partly aimed at explaining what they perceive, or at least want to portray, as the historical past. However, utilizing conspiracy theories is mainly an attempt to rationalize and deny the causes, occurrences and consequences of genocide.

The most widespread conspiracy theory presented among the deniers of this study is, however, claims that allied war propaganda created the now circulating “myths” of genocide. Usually, it is maintained that what did happen has been blown out of proportion through Western attempts at raising public opinion against Turkey and Germany. Justin McCarthy writes, for instance that “[t]he British and French were victims of their own wartime propaganda. In alliance with the American missionary establishment, the British propaganda office had built a picture of ‘starving Armenia’ that played on emotions at home and abroad to mobilize animosity toward the Ottomans”²⁴⁸. Similarly, Harwood begins his booklet by terming the “six million myth” a creation of “atrocities propaganda”²⁴⁹, ready to be debunked.

Relativization

Arguments denying the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust through relativization represent, in this study, a third pattern of denial. Much like the arguments of the previous pattern, the basic reality of the genocidal event is not completely denied. In fact, most deniers utilizing this pattern agree on the fact that *something* happened. That something, however, is being minimized and denied by using logically flawed comparisons in a denialist context. As discussed above, relativizations of genocide have been made by legitimate and professional scholars as well as deniers, as in the case of Deborah Lipstadt. In her narrative the uniqueness argument turned into a relativization argument as she noted that the Holocaust remains incomparable, and thus

²⁴⁴ App, 1973, p. 10, 15, 28.

²⁴⁵ Harwood, 1974, p. 1.

²⁴⁶ Harwood, 1974, p. 1.

²⁴⁷ Harwood, 1974, p. 2. A statement that through its choice of words, if nothing else, reveals the political sympathies of Harwood.

²⁴⁸ McCarthy, 2001, p. 121.

²⁴⁹ Harwood, 1974, p. 1.

relativized the importance of all other instances of genocide. They were horrible instances of mass violence, she concurred, but they were not genocide in the same sense as the Holocaust. However, while Lipstadt's somewhat clumsy and unbalanced discussion ended in the relativization of genocide, there has to be made some sort of differentiation and separation between the unconscious relativization made by Lipstadt, and, respectively, the very conscious relativization of genocide deniers. Lipstadt's conclusion was a result of her will to prove the existence and importance of the Holocaust, in opposition to denialism. The relativization of the deniers, however, remains the result of their will to disprove the very reality of genocide, in accordance with their political and ideological agendas. The motives and motivations of the two cases of relativization are therefore highly, and essentially, different. Hence, only the latter form of relativization will be dealt with in this section.

Juxtaposing Losses

The number of alleged victims is placed at 1 million here. Many years later, this number was jacked up to 1.5 million Armenian victims. [---] Moreover, the number of Muslim victims, which is about 2.5 million (roughly four Muslim casualties for every Armenian casualty) is never given, as if they do not count.²⁵⁰

In many ways, the tactic of juxtaposing the casualties of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders of genocide is a relativizing extension of the above discussed numbers game. In the rationalizing version of the game, the number of possible and actual victims were questioned and lowered; the relativizing version, however, attempts to minimize the overall importance of the deceased victims, and of the entire scope and significance of genocide as an especially brutal catastrophe. As a result, casualties of war are equalled to those intentionally murdered in the deserts or gas chambers, and the losses of the perpetrator group are equalled to the losses of the victim category – as Weems does above. Butz relativizes through the juxtaposing of losses as well, and refers to all casualties as caused by war.²⁵¹ He notes accordingly:

Everybody in Europe suffered during the war, especially the people of central and eastern Europe. The people who suffered the most were the losers, the Germans (and Austrians),

²⁵⁰ Weems, 2002, p. 139.

²⁵¹ Butz, 2003, p. 161.

who lost 10 million dead due to military casualties, Allied bombings, the Russian terror at the end of war, Russian and French labor conscriptions of POW's [i.e. prisoners of war] after the war, Polish and other expulsions from their homelands, under the most brutal conditions, and the vengeful occupation politics of 1945 – 1948.²⁵²

According to Weems, App, and Butz, the sheer number of the casualties of other groups equates them with the victims of genocide. However, Helen Fein has accurately described this type of argument as an attempt to avoid “examination of intent, equating the random civilian victims of bombing (such as World War II bombing which produced victims in London and Birmingham as well as Berlin and Dresden) with the victims purposely taken from their homes and deported to Auschwitz to be gassed”²⁵³. The primary flaw of the argumentation, as emphasized by Fein, is, however, the deniers’ inability to see the whole picture. Fein continues:

[I]f 8,000 members of a victimized group of 10,000 persons were killed intentionally, 80 percent would be victims. But if 10,000 members of a victimizer group out of 100,000 were killed randomly, 10 percent would be dead. The apologists for the victimizers could truthfully say that their 10,000 dead exceeded the 8,000 of the other group.²⁵⁴

As Fein highlights, the comparisons of the denialists tend to display both statistical inaccuracies and essentially flawed comparative perspectives. Additionally, as previously mentioned, juxtaposing losses tends to emphasize only quantitative differences, ignoring qualitative variations and contextual particulars.

Redistributing and Inverting the Roles of History

They [i.e. Western diplomats] concluded it was Armenian revolutionary societies doing the revolting, slaughtering, and massacring of Muslims. [---] The Armenians always managed to send reports stating that they were being killed when the truth was it was they who were massacring civilians.²⁵⁵

One of the most fundamental features included when genocide is denied and relativized seems to be the blurring of the roles of perpetrator and victim. These, the most basic of historical roles,

²⁵² Butz, 2003, p. 287.

²⁵³ Fein, n.d., p. 6 – 7.

²⁵⁴ Fein, n. d., p. 7.

²⁵⁵ Weems, 2002, p. 5.

are, usually, clearly separated in genocide narratives. The men, women, and children led out into deserts or gas chambers, shot into open mass graves, or intentionally starved to death are clearly attributed the role of the victim, while those holding the guns, guarding the deportees, or signing the orders have been defined as the perpetrators. Among some denialist narratives, however, these two clear-cut roles have been reversed and redistributed. As in Weems' conclusion above, the victims of genocide are sometimes, in accordance with denialist intentions, made to appear as the perpetrators, and vice versa. In the quote above, Armenians are claimed to be the killers, while the Muslim civilians are presented as the innocent victims of ruthless violence and massacre. Hence, while the arguments of provocation was an attempt to redistribute guilt and responsibility equally between perpetrators and victims, emphasizing that "everybody suffered", arguments reversing the roles rather place *all* responsibility on the Armenians, or on the Jews. Through these types of arguments, genocide denial is, perhaps, even reaching beyond the realms of relativization, and into the actual re-inventing of the historical past. Weems has even claimed that what the Armenians did to the Muslims constitutes genocide, something that the Armenians since then have refused to recognize.²⁵⁶ It seems in accordance with common denialist logic that the victims of genocide, in Weems' narrative, are turned into denying perpetrators. App, usually presenting the crudest and most unsophisticated denialist tactics among the Holocaust deniers under investigation here, likewise presents an argument entirely inverting the roles of perpetrator and victim in this case of the Holocaust. He explains the "Holocaust myth" by proclaiming that the Jews, in fact, were scheming to exterminate the Germans. Indignantly, he concludes:

Because the Jews [---] were barbarous enough to have plotted the extermination of a hundred million Germans, their guilt complex forced them to imagine that the Germans, too, could have been equally barbarous so as to want to exterminate Europe's six million Jews!²⁵⁷

While certainly a form of denial, Weems' and App's arguments almost have to be defined as something more than relativization. Where, it seems valid to ask, should the line be drawn between denial and outright lies? Not telling the truth, keeping silent, rationalizing, trivializing, and relativizing instances of genocide are certainly unsound, and unquestionably non-scientific, ways to approach historical events. Drawing new scenarios and re-inventing new courses of

²⁵⁶ Weems, 2002, p. 193.

²⁵⁷ App, 1973, p. 3.

events out of thin air, however, seem to reside on another level of denial. What in the above presented denial turned genocide into a non-event has here been further twisted into a new, wholly opposite, narrative where all guilt has been placed on the original victims, and all compassion directed towards the original perpetrators of genocide. Hence, while the above presented denialist arguments tend to argue in opposition to another, traditional narrative, lies, on the other hand, stand in opposition to nothing. In a painfully obvious way Weems has through these types of arguments abandoned all intellectual considerations, surrendering completely to ideological aims and purposes.

More frequently occurring among the deniers of this study is, however, the redistribution of the role of *either* perpetrator or victim, as opposed to both. McCarthy has, for instance, noted that the “revisionist” narrative of 1915 is one starring Turks and Muslims as victims,²⁵⁸ and Shaw and Shaw has, as cited above, defined the attacks on the Ottoman Muslims as a “true genocide”²⁵⁹. Similarly, Holocaust deniers tend to present Germany and its allies as the victims of the Second World War, while portraying the Allied powers as perpetrators. Butz writes, for instance, as he comments the scenes witnessed by allied forces as they entered the concentration camps once the war was over:

[T]hese scenes, repeated in varying degrees at other German camps, e.g. Dachau and Buchenwald, were much less related to “extermination” than the scenes at Dresden after the British-American raids of February 1945, when many, many times as many bodies were found lying around.²⁶⁰

Butz’s conclusion, by Lipstadt termed as “equalizing”²⁶¹, amounts to two particular motivations discernible among deniers. Firstly, it clouds the roles of perpetrator and victim, confusing those that does not know all the facts, and indirectly denies the Holocaust. Secondly, stressing the importance of German suffering and victimization Butz hints that massacring was not a typically German way of reaching political and military aims. If the Allies, and indeed everyone involved, were behaving badly, then there would seem to be nothing special or sensational about the German treatment of the Jews.

²⁵⁸ McCarthy, 1995, p. 3.

²⁵⁹ Shaw, 1993, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ Butz, 2003, p. 55.

²⁶¹ Lipstadt, 1993, p. 42.

Chronological Confusion

Armenians saw how the world responded to what the Nazis did to the Jews during World War II. Then, more than forty-three years after the event, Armenians cried out

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the Turks committed a terrible ‘genocide’ in 1915. Modern-day Turkey didn’t even become a nation until 1923 – eight years after the Ottomans kicked the Armenians out of their country for being terrorists and disloyal.²⁶²

The most basic, and perhaps most widespread, view of history tends to focus on the genetic development of the past. Much like the genetic development of man, passing down traits from ancestor to offspring, history is viewed as following a chronological passing of time, where causes breed events, which in turn end up presenting various consequences.²⁶³ To these genetic versions of the past, the historical event itself remains the ultimate focal point. The facts and faces, answering “how”, “why”, “when”, and “where”, are settled in an attempt to present the most probable interpretation of the past, and the question of “why” is searched for among the causes. Furthermore, according to the logic of chronology, the consequences of historical events are, all in all, equal only to the subsequent effects of the event. Consequences are therefore, in accordance with a genetic perspective on history, not affecting the historical event from which they originated.

However, historical consequences could also be viewed from a *genealogical* perspective. Here, historical events are approached, and historical questions are asked, from a post-historical, or contemporary, point of view. Historical events begin, in a genealogical sense, in the questions we ask and the needs we have today, hence the consequences of an event are here included as part of the original event. If genetic versions of history, therefore, present history as a forward movement, genealogical perspectives alternatively present the past as a function of the present. These fundamentally different, though usually complementary, views of history have, in the hands of genocide deniers, been turned into an illogical and odd perspective of history, where the consequences of a past event are handled as causes, and where the relativization of genocide is maintained by comparing what was to what became.

²⁶² Weems, 2002, p. xv.

²⁶³ For further discussion on the particulars of a genetic view of history, see Gerner & Karlsson, 2005, p. 307 – 314.

Granted, these types of argument are all but frequent among the deniers of this study. Samuel Weems, denying the Armenian Genocide, presents, perhaps, the foremost example of this chronological confusion. He attempts, in the quote above, to explain that the Turkey of today cannot be held responsible for the events of 1915.²⁶⁴ In itself, the argument seems valid. In the historio-political context of the Armenian Genocide, however, Turkey's on-going, state-sponsored denial unavoidably ties the republic of today both to the empire of yesterday, and to its genocidal actions. Weems' argument is, in this context, an attempt to deny Turkish responsibility and involvement.

In his *Armenia*, Weems furthermore attempts to explain, and excuse, the Armenian Genocide on the basis of the actions taken by what today is the Republic of Armenia. In fact, most of Weems' book is concerned with the history of post-1919, taking place both after the fall of Empire and after the acts of genocide. Armenia, he maintains, is a "terrorist state", and the political and diplomatic conflicts faced and instigated by the Armenian Republic are all presented in an attempt to excuse, and explain, the Ottoman treatment of the Armenians. In what can only be described as a racist and anti-Armenian portrayal of the Armenians Weems claims that this "tiny band of people"²⁶⁵, and their "so-called Armenian state"²⁶⁶, is responsible for a "long list of deceptions, fraud, abuses, massacres, and terrorist acts"²⁶⁷, in turn relativizing the Armenian Genocide by attempting to explain the event by presenting its consequences as causes. Post-genocide Turkey cannot, according to Weems' denialist interpretation, be held responsible, post-genocide Armenia, however, explains and relativizes the events of 1915. If Armenia and Armenians behave badly today, he argues, then the massacres of yesterday make more sense, and become less serious. If nothing else, this kind of irrational reasoning serves to show that arguments of denial are not rigid, but can be used as is seen fit, in order to fulfil denialist aims and purposes.

Self-Images and Self-Delusion

French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, one of the first scholars to disassemble and analyse aspects of denialism, maintained in his renowned *Assassins of Memory* that "[i]t is the distinguishing feature of a lie to want to pass itself off as the truth"²⁶⁸. This quote most definitely highlights one of the key patterns of denial employed by the deniers of this study, namely the wish to portray themselves as objective seekers of truth. Vidal-Naquet further emphasized that truth, in itself,

²⁶⁴ Seemingly applying the "no, but"-argument as well. "No, there was no genocide, but for what happened Turkey was not responsible."

²⁶⁵ Weems, 2002, p. x.

²⁶⁶ Weems, 2002, p. xv.

²⁶⁷ Weems, 2002, p. xvii.

²⁶⁸ Vidal-Naquet, 1992, p. 51.

does not entail universality, but that what may act as truth within a sect, or an ideology, may in other instances be myth or lie. Among denialists, however, truth in itself does not appear to be of any primary concern. Rather, it is the *appearance of truth*, of reliability and objectivity, that seems to be of interest. In order to create this appearance of truth and professionalism, deniers both tend to confirm their own excellence, and constantly point out the inadequacies of “traditional” scholars. Both argumentative strategies will be investigated as parts of this fourth pattern of denial.

Self-Confirmation

I saw myself as a stone-cleaner – less concerned with a wordy and subjective architectural appraisal than with scrubbing years of grime and discoloration from the facade of a silent and forbidding monument, uncertain whether the revealed monument would prove too hideous to be worthy of the effort.²⁶⁹

Irving’s quote above, relating how he approached his object of study in *Hitler’s War*, is in many ways indicative of how most deniers’ arguments of self-confirmation are made. The common strategy is to portray yourself as fighting for truth against a rigid and corrupted establishment. Irving indicates that he goes to the bottom of things, leaving beside all biases of subjectivism and political motivations, and that he does not take the conventional, “grimy”, and “discoloured” notion of Hitler for granted.²⁷⁰ The same argument has been given by several deniers of the Armenian Genocide included in this study.²⁷¹ Irving maintains that he, as a professional historian, has turned only to the sources, not to these earlier versions of Hitler presented by others. In a 2001 updated edition of his books *Hitler’s War* and *The War Path*, Irving noted that “each successive biographer repeated or embraced the legends created by his predecessors”²⁷². This approach was presented as a testimony to Irving’s objectivism, but the approach in reality only displayed a disturbing unwillingness to see beyond his own historical interpretation. Irving displayed himself as especially fit for the assignment, and consequently showed both self-confirmation, and self-delusion.

²⁶⁹ Irving, 1977, p. xi.

²⁷⁰ See, primarily, David Irving, *Hitler’s War and The War Path*, London: Focal Point 2001, p. vii – viii.

²⁷¹ See, for instance, Lowry, 1990, p. vi, or McCarthy, 1995, p. 2 – 3.

²⁷² Irving, 2001, p. xviii.

In a similar fashion, Arthur Butz comments on his, and many other Holocaust deniers', lack of professional training and academic degrees. He states that much historical work is written outside the walls of the academia,²⁷³ and accuses professional historians for not taking Holocaust "revisionists" seriously because of this.²⁷⁴ Butz's statements are both examples of when deniers of genocide present and describe themselves as the martyrs of history. Irving writes:

As the author of this work I have had my home smashed into by thugs, my family terrorised, my name smeared, my printers firebombed, and myself arrested and deported by tiny, democratic Austria – an illegal act, their courts decided, for which the ministerial culprits were punished; at the behest of disaffected academics and influential citizens, in subsequent years, I was deported from Canada (in 1992), and refused entry to Australia, New Zealand, Italy, South Africa, and other civilised countries around the world (in 1993).²⁷⁵

In a less well-formulated style, Armenian Genocide denier Weems has attempted to turn himself into a martyr much the same way. In the preface to his book he has included hate mails and letters he has received from individuals, and recounts the threats presented to his fellow colleagues Stanford Shaw, Heath Lowry, and Justin McCarthy.²⁷⁶ This proves, he concludes, that he is "a teller of the truth"²⁷⁷.

The Denigration of Others

I have suggested that the negative reactions to revisionists of the Final Solution have been on the whole emotional, and I made no distinction between reactions of professional scholars and laymen. This was no oversight. I am sad to report that to an extent that stunned me the reactions of very many scholars have been what one might have expected from a hyperemotional Jewish grandmother.²⁷⁸

As a complement to arguments of self-confirmation, of attesting to that you are fit for the assignment at hand and a fighter for truth against the establishment, deniers of genocide tend to present arguments slandering their opponents. David Irving has, for example, frequently noted

²⁷³ Butz, 2003, p. 8.

²⁷⁴ Butz, 2003, p. 9.

²⁷⁵ Irving, 2001, p. viii.

²⁷⁶ Weems, 2002, p. xix – xxii.

²⁷⁷ Weems, 2002, p. xxiii.

²⁷⁸ Butz, 2003, p. 374.

that the reason he is not taken seriously within the scholarly community is because of the prejudiced and unfair attitudes among professional scholars, and not the result of his actions. They, he has concluded, have acted upon emotion, while he, on the other hand, has acted on the basis of reason. Much in the same manner, Butz has maintained that he has not been welcomed into the academic world, not because of who he is – but as a result of the narrow-mindedness and pettiness of historians. However, he concludes, the primary explanation of this unwillingness is that “they don’t want you to know these things! They are trying to hold back the wind”²⁷⁹.

Those advocating the “myth” of genocide are further denigrated, as it seems, just for the sake of it. Among the Holocaust deniers of this study it is primarily Gerald Reitlinger and Raul Hilberg, both among the first scholars to compose studies devoted solely to the Holocaust, who are presented and dismissed as the “extermination mythologists”²⁸⁰. Butz notes that “once the extermination legend had been buried, these books [by Reitlinger and Hilberg] will become significant only as supreme examples of total delusion and foolishness and will be referenced only in connection with the great hoaxes of history”²⁸¹. Reitlinger, who published his work on the Holocaust prior to Hilberg, seems to be viewed as the primary authority and is subsequently presented, along the lines of denialism’s ties to anti-Semitism, as “[y]et another Jew”²⁸², and as “the Jewish ‘expert’ Reitlinger”²⁸³.

The deniers of the Armenian Genocide apply the same arguments in their treatment and presentation of their primary target, Richard Hovannisian. Hovannisian, persistently misspelled as “Hovannissian” by Weems,²⁸⁴ is presented as “the chief historian of the self-called Republic of Armenia”²⁸⁵ and as one of many “Armenian spin doctors”²⁸⁶. On the whole, deniers of the Armenian Genocide tend to present the “traditional view” of genocide advocated by Armenians, and “partisans”²⁸⁷ of the Armenian cause. Lowry explains that these pro-Armenian scholars “tend to defend their positions from behind ‘blindlers’ which allow them to see only what they want with no regard for the larger picture”²⁸⁸, one of many statements displaying the irony of denialist argumentation and exemplifying the process of projection, i.e. accusing others of what they are accusing you of, common among genocide denialists.

²⁷⁹ Butz, 2003, p. 14.

²⁸⁰ Butz, 2003, p. 297.

²⁸¹ Butz, 2003, p. 289.

²⁸² App, 1973, p. 23.

²⁸³ Harwood, 1974, p. 11.

²⁸⁴ Weems, 2002, see, for example, the endnotes, p. 375 – 382.

²⁸⁵ Weems, 2002, p. xviii.

²⁸⁶ Weems, 2002, p. xv.

²⁸⁷ Lowry, 1990, p. vi.

²⁸⁸ Lowry, 1990, p. vi.

Discussion and Conclusion

At the outset of this investigation it was questioned to what extent the denial of the Holocaust and, respectively, denial of the Armenian Genocide belong to a common, overall structure of genocide denial. The theoretical implications of this denial were laid out in the second chapter of the study, and the patterns and arguments of denial present in the primary sources included in this investigation were subsequently presented in an attempt to display the many features shared by both cases of denial. The strategies, or patterns of denial, discernible among the denialist narratives under investigation are summed up in Table 1.

Denial of the Armenian Genocide	Denial of the Holocaust
<p><i>Absolute Denial:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no “genocide”, nothing happened. • “No, but”-syndrome: Nothing happened, but for what did happen the Armenians are to blame. 	<p><i>Absolute Denial:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no “genocide”, nothing happened. • “No, but”-syndrome: Nothing happened, but the Germans did not was to exterminate but deport. • There were no gas chambers.
<p><i>Rationalization and Trivialization:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no intent to exterminate the Armenians, the ultimate goal was deportation not extermination. • Latent denial. • Adopting an ethical stand: all peoples of the Empire suffered during the war; the “revisionists”, representing the “other side”, bravely challenge the one-sided traditional narrative; irrational source criticism. • Denying evidence of bystanders, questioning or ignoring the Constantinople trials. • Armenians formed a revolutionary minority, and provoked the Ottomans to take action. • The numbers game: questioning and confusing the numbers of both the total pre-war Armenian population and the post-genocide number of Armenian victims. • Conspiracy theories: present a racist world-view where Armenians use the 	<p><i>Rationalization and Trivialization:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no intent to exterminate the Jews, the ultimate goal was deportation not extermination. • Latent denial. • Adopting an ethical stand: everyone in Europe suffered during WWII; those “questioning” the “exterminationist” narrative represent the “other side” of a debate; • Denying the evidence of perpetrators, questioning the impartiality of trials, and dismissing survivor narratives. • The Jews were a belligerent part of WWII, and Germany therefore had to take care of this internal enemy. • The numbers game: questioning the number of survivors, point towards the unreliable statistics involved. • Conspiracy theories: present the Holocaust as a “myth”, aimed at politically and economically

<p>“alleged” genocide in hopes of financial gain.</p>	<p>blackmailing the Western world.</p>
<p><i>Relativization:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Muslims than Armenians died during the war, hence the Muslim population suffered more. • Redistributing and inverting roles: Armenians were the perpetrators, Muslims were victims. • Chronological confusion: the Turkey of today cannot be held responsible for what happened in 1915, but the actions of present-day Armenia explain and excuse the past treatment of Armenians. 	<p><i>Relativization:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germans and Austrians suffered most during the war due to Allied bombings. • Redistributing and inverting roles: Jews planned to exterminate Germans; Germans were the true victims of genocide.
<p><i>Self-Images and Self-Delusion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confirmation: Deniers are the “seekers of truth”, and have been made to personally suffer for it. • Denigrating others: the “traditional view” of the Armenians case is advocated by Armenians and “partisans” of the Armenian cause, hence they are failing to see the “whole picture”. 	<p><i>Self-Images and Self-Delusion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confirmation: Deniers are, in fact, proper scholars with noble intentions of presenting the truth, as a result they are placed in immediate personal danger. • Denigrating others: those who “adopt” an “exterminationist point of view” do so on the basis of emotion, and not as a result of objectivity and science. Scholars writing on the Holocaust are Jews, and hence biased.

Table 1: Summary of the patterns of denial under investigation in this study, and the respective arguments of each pattern used by the deniers of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide.

As it would seem, there are more than enough similarities present between the two cases of genocide denial in order to conclude that the denial, more or less, form a genre and a phenomenon of its own. Using absolute denial, rationalization, trivialization, relativization, and flawed self-images deniers of the Armenian Genocide and of the Holocaust both deny the reality of genocide on some level. The foremost conclusion to be drawn seems that genocide denial share similar traits of *form* and *function*. The way genocide is denied, through the use of similar patterns of denial, and the subsequent functions of those patterns are very much the same among the sources investigated here. As can be expected, it is the *content* of the patterns and arguments that differ between the two cases of denial. Among the deniers of the Armenian Genocide, denial of gas chambers is, for instance, not present, as no gas chambers were used in 1915. In this sense, the “gas chamber controversy” is indeed specific to Holocaust denial. The argument however,

though in content specific, belong to larger patterns of denial related to both absolute denial and trivialization, and these patterns are apparently used in the denial of the Armenian Genocide as well.

As has been exemplified above, all deniers present utilized not one, but several of the patterns and arguments in order to form their narratives. The question initially posed inquired into whether these combinations of patterns and arguments were context-bound, or genre-bound. As it turns out, it seems far more likely that the use of patterns is bound by genre than by context. It is, for instance, of greater use to compare Armenian Genocide denier Samuel Weems to Holocaust deniers Austin App and Richard Harwood, than to the other deniers of the Armenian case. In fact, these three deniers could be termed as representing “type 1” of genocide deniers. All three utilize as many strategies as possible, regardless of their internal inconsistencies,²⁸⁹ and the general tone and style of their argumentation and writing remains crude, unsophisticated, and largely racist. Furthermore, the deniers of this first type commonly tend to dismiss and insult their opponents on the basis of who they are, not what they have written. By Holocaust scholar Israel Charny the type of denial presented by Weems, App, and Harwood is termed “malevolent denial and celebration of violence”²⁹⁰, and according to Lipstadt it seems a dying and aged form of denial.²⁹¹ The second type of genocide denial is represented by Armenian Genocide deniers Stanford Shaw, Justin McCarthy, Heath Lowry, and Holocaust deniers Arthur Butz and, to some extent, David Irving. Among this second type of genocide deniers, the reality of the genocide in question is not necessarily denied as such, but it is increasingly questioned, rationalized, trivialized, and relativized. Denial has here become less crude and more sophisticated, utilizing practical and visual signs of professional scholarship, such as footnotes and bibliographies, but paying very limited, if any, attention to general scholarly conduct and responsibilities. Sources are dismissed solely on the basis of not agreeing with their “interpretation”, irrational comparisons are made with the sole interest of relativizing, and playing the numbers game is a frequent attempt to diminish the reality and impact of genocide. This second type of deniers, furthermore, tends to push for their own personal objectivity and credibility. More than any other type, this second category also attentively and repeatedly denies to be deniers.

²⁸⁹ They often argue along the “no, but”-argument, for instance.

²⁹⁰ Israel W. Charny, “The Psychological Satisfaction of Denials of the Holocaust or Other Genocides by Non-Extremists or Bigots, and Even by Known Scholars”, *Idea*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2001, p. 8.

²⁹¹ Lipstadt, 1993, chapter 4 and 5, especially p. 65.

Among all deniers represented in this study, the case of Bernard Lewis remains, as it would seem, the odd one out. Charny has suggested that the denial of Lewis could be termed “innocent denial”, maintaining that this type remains the “ultimate puzzler”.²⁹² Lewis is an

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unusual example of genocide denial as he is, still, regarded as a highly esteemed scholar and, as such, not as someone that would be consciously bigoted or vulnerable to outside pressure and realpolitik. However, it is also clear that Lewis made a conscious choice to deny the Armenian Genocide, as he stood by his conclusions in court and against the experts on the topic who witnessed against him.²⁹³ Charny, therefore, notes that while he cannot entirely support it, he would like to place Lewis among those virulent deniers above termed as type 1.²⁹⁴ Setting aside one’s personal feelings about Lewis’ conduct and stance, Lewis’ denial is still very different from Weems’, App’s, or Harwood’s. Lewis has, mainly, regarded the Armenian Genocide as a non-question, at times arguing against any Ottoman intent to exterminate, and in favor of the provocation thesis, and he does, in some sense, form a third type of genocide denial. This third type might as well be considered as representing the gray zone separating functionalism from denial in Figure 1. The deniers placed within this zone are difficult to analyze and define as they inhabit an area in between denial and historical science which most historians dealing with denial have not recognized. As a result, the case of Bernard Lewis is still open to debate. Lewis could be argued to represent a historian forced into a “debate” on genocide he did not initially wish to partake in, but forced to as there are people denying the very existence of the event. He could, however, also be viewed and analyzed as *both* historian and denier, such as he has largely been viewed in this study. Here, Lewis could be made to represent the very fine line separating professional and valid history from its unscientific and fraudulent imitator, pushing for the increased importance to discuss the freedoms of a historian in relations to his or her responsibilities.

The Irving of 1977, when *Hitler’s War* was originally published, could also have been included in this category. Post-1977, however, Irving has clearly become a type 2 denier, and he remains today both the most commonly known of Holocaust deniers and the one that most incessantly denies being a denier.

It should further be concluded that this study has primarily focused on the denial of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, but the framework, structure, and patterns of denial,

²⁹² Charny, 2001, p. 9.

²⁹³ For instance Yves Ternon, see Ternon, 1999.

²⁹⁴ Charny, 2001, p. 9.

outlined are intended to apply also to other cases of genocide denial. For further study, a wider investigation of denial might therefore aid in developing and analyzing both individual cases of genocide denial, as well as the phenomenon of genocide denial as a genre on its own.

On the Future of Genocide Denial and the Future of the Past

Traditionally, history is defined either as the events and processes of the past, or as the study of the same. However, as this study would hope to have emphasized, history is often as closely tied to the present and the future, as it is to what once was. While the tragic and bloody genocides of the past century certainly took place in what is now past tense, this does not, by any means, limit their influence and importance to the past. Genocides are, as it seems, intimately tied to the present through a widespread need to interpret, approach, and use genocides both as existential points of reference, and as a common set of myths which in a post-modern world clearly separates the good from the bad. Similarly, the denial of genocide is neither merely a thing of the past. It remains, rather, a phenomenon closely tied to the present, and the future. In the present, genocide denial persists. Those denying the Nazi extermination of the Jews during the Second World War remain active, not least online. The Institute for Historical Review arranges “revisionist” conferences, publishes books and articles, and provides for a comprehensive archive of denialist writings on their website.²⁹⁵ Similarly, David Irving has founded his own publishing company, Focal Point Publishers, and hosts a personal website that allows for the free downloading of all his works, as well as a monthly newsletter.²⁹⁶ In the case of denial of the Armenian Genocide, the online “debate” seems never-ending and the Turkish state-sponsored denial of genocide continues, albeit in a “softer” form of rationalization, trivialization, and relativization.²⁹⁷ These types of arguments, frequently stating that “everyone suffered”, have lately seemed to become a regular feature of Western news media reports as well.²⁹⁸ In this sense, genocide denial seems all but passed and an area of study in need of attention and analysis.

Of further importance, genocide denial also belongs to a broader field of historical research directed at making amends with the past and dealing with history in the present. While we may not live in a post-genocide world, we do live in the aftermath of many brutal genocides

²⁹⁵ See IHR’s webpage, <http://www.ihr.org/>.

²⁹⁶ See <http://www.fpp.co.uk/>, where Irving and Focal Point are presented as “Publishers of works of Real History”.

²⁹⁷ Taylor, 2008, p. 211.

²⁹⁸ See, for instance, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten / TT*, “Normalisering Turkiet-Armenien”, 31 August 2009. The article states that “Armenians claim” genocide, “Turkey admits that many people died, but maintains that many Turks fell victim to bloody internal struggles as well”, and refers to the whole issue as a “*debate* on whether or not it was ‘genocide’”, utilizing many of the above analyzed patterns and arguments of denial. Emphasis added. Translations made by the author.

which have called both for understanding and justice. Both within history and law has the issue of genocidal guilt been approached, discussed, and, at times, solved. If anywhere, this is indeed an area of history in need of further study. Cases of perpetrator guilt have been a central issue of genocide studies, but what, if any, is the relationship between perpetrator guilt and denialist guilt? Indeed, denial of known genocides further the objectives of the original perpetrators, and cause

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additional harm to survivors and their relatives – but how has it been dealt with? Attempts have been made, as seen above, to deal with deniers within the walls of the courtroom, but little historical analysis has been made using the material of these attempts. War crimes trials, aimed at punishing the perpetrators, have been analyzed in relation to the formation of genocide history and memory. The trials of genocide deniers have, however, not yet been analyzed in relation to the attempted deformation of genocide history and memory.

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