

Historians' Picnic in Kurdistan

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Puddles of rain on the pavement. A gypsy band bounces rhythms off a façade. It's the middle of the Istanbul night and three men can't sleep. Fighting jetlag and nerves, escaping to an all-night bar, they plan a panel for tomorrow's conference.

"I hate these huge Turkologist meetings" says Omar, the well-established professor at a German university. "Where do all these bores from provincial universities come from? Have they never done research or opened a book? Why must we put up with all these retired ambassadors and generals posing as historians?"

"Come out of the woodwork," goes Faik, a younger scholar struggling for tenure in America. "The right family, religion, politics – that's enough. What do you expect from this government? They probably won't come to our panel. They think we're too radical. Unless of course the Islamists and nationalists come to harass us."

"Well, I still wish we didn't have to come. And I know some will come just to make a fuss."

"Ah, let's get working!" exclaims Kenan, an independent scholar from Kazakhstan.

Omar takes control: "OK, tomorrow we present our findings on population movements in the Late Ottoman Period. Useful euphemism, eh? Faik does the settlement of Balkan Muslim refugees, Kenan covers the Chechen refugees. And I treat the Christians who were forced to convert to Islam."

Kenan: "Most of this is straightforward. Just the normal when, where and how. Just dotting the i's."

Omar: "Well, you know my pet question has always been, what happens when the forced converts want to return to their original religion? Do they have to go through a new baptism ceremony?"

“Hold on! You can’t use the word ‘forced,’ the Islamists will lynch you.”

“Hmm. . . I can say it in the panel, I just can’t write it the finished article. Times are changing.”

“You hope!”

“But you know that no-one can answer that question,” replies Faik, trying to stop him. “You’ve asked everybody, and nobody knows. Anyway, it isn’t an issue for many people. Once you are a Muslim, you can’t change, on pain of death.”

“I’m not so sure. We know there were thousands of forced converts, and some could change back just after World War I ended. It was a window of opportunity for a few who survived the genocide.”

“My god, are you going to use the G-word tomorrow.¹ They’ll throw eggs at us. This isn’t Germany, you know.”

“No, of course not. I’ve got a survival instinct, too. I promise not to say ‘genocide’. But I do need to have my question raised.”

“So what? You even asked that American guy G about it. And he didn’t know.”

“I thought he was Swedish.”

“No, he just lives there. Some small university, something with a lot of dots.”²

“Why Sweden?”

“Don’t know. Must be running away from something”

“Well, he’s the ‘Where are the skeletons?’ fellow who challenged Halaçoğlu.”

“Really stupid move. How could he be so dumb as to get involved with those evil nationalists?”

“Eh? He must have done something right since Halaçoğlu got into deep trouble,” replies Omar.³ What a brute he was! How many careers did he ruin? I don’t miss his face on the TV all the time going on about how sinful Armenians are. How treacherous they were. How Turks treated them so generously, and how they were so ungrateful. Pack of lies.”

“I remember G,” says Kenan. “I helped him at the Ottoman archives. We collected documents on the genocide. No idea how he got permission. We gathered a lot. Worked hard. He had these lists of names, dates, and keywords, a little Turkish dictionary. Pored over the

catalogues, day after day. I could see him running back and forth to check dates in the reference book at the reception desk. Most of the findings went into a book.”⁴

“I helped him, too,” adds Faik. “Some years later, when the Second Section finally opened. Don’t think he found much. Most of the important papers were gone. Probably when Halaçoğlu headed the archive.”

Conversation peters out. Three tired men lean back with their drinks. Look around. The bar is empty. It is a converted old-fashioned patrician apartment. Carved woodwork, strange mythical paintings. On the walls, photos of Armenian families in antiquated headgear. The previous owners, now silent onlookers. Across the street, a sign on a building bears the inscription ‘Pera Hellenic Association’. Witness to the overpopulated ghost town that is now Istanbul. A funny kind of nostalgia grows like moss here, feeling like a mix of melancholy, remembrance, and humourless absence. Not really good, but not truly bad. Memories don’t help. Live for the moment.

“It’s a strange story. I mean for academic historians,” begins Kenan. “I met G’s interpreter, Sabri, a while ago at a hotel in Diyarbakir. We were both staying there. He spoke something that wasn’t Kurdish, so I asked. He said it was Turoyo, a local dialect. I asked him if he knew G, and we fell to talking. Sabri told me the story of how G and Halaçoğlu made that expedition to investigate the mass grave. G claimed the skeletons could have been Armenians – like the villagers said – or even Assyrians. Halaçoğlu insisted they were from Roman antiquity.”

This was Sabri’s account:

“It all began in October 2006. Kurdish villagers in a hamlet called Xirabêbaba⁵ were digging a hole. All of a sudden, they hit an opening, and one of them jumped in. What he saw was a mass of skulls and bones – the remains of perhaps twenty people. The skulls showed signs of stabbing and blunt force injuries. Somebody contacted the radical newspaper *Ülkede Özgür Gündem*.⁶ They sent out a reporter to write a story. According to the article, the villagers thought they had found a mass grave of massacred Armenians. They published pictures of the skulls and bones. This article circulated on the internet and was published on the WATS discussion forum.⁷ G had just finished his

book and he suggested that if the victims were from 1915 then they could have come from Dara or from Mardin because there were witnesses who told of death marches from those places. He wrote this on the discussion forum. In no time at all, Turkish newspapers were reporting that a foreign historian believed that we had finally found a mass grave of Armenians or Assyrians.

That would be a sensation. It would prove decisively that there was an Armenian genocide. The controversy over genocide could no longer be denied. Speculation would stop. But it was impossible for Halaçoğlu to admit that there could be a mass grave with murdered Armenians. Well, you know Halaçoğlu everybody knows he really hates Armenians and uses racial slurs. When thousands marched in protest over the murder of Hrant Dink⁸ he accused all the demonstrators of being crypto-Armenians. So all of a sudden he turns this hasty suggestion by G, into world news. It's in the papers, on the evening news, in the talk programs. It cannot be Armenians.

In Sweden an Assyrian lobbyist informs G of the goings on, shows him newspaper clippings. Gives him more photos of the site. He tells him this is an opportunity to prove that Armenians and Assyrians had been massacred. Why not issue a counter challenge to Halaçoğlu? Let's see if we can rattle his cage. And they come up with the idea of sending a very polite fax to the Turkish Historical Society proposing to make a joint investigation. After a few days G received a polite fax accepting the idea. Sabri thinks G deep down hoped that Halaçoğlu would never agree. But of course neither of them could back down. But you could see they hesitated, it took forever to agree on a date. In the end G played what he thought would be a dirty trick and proposed April 24, the day of Armenian Genocide Remembrance, hoping that this would be totally unacceptable. Surprise! Halaçoğlu accepted."

"Yeah," says Omar. "I get it. But there's another side, one the interpreter probably didn't know. At Munich airport, I ran into Elazar Barkan who used to be at the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation.⁹ He had been in contact with G for some time and they had been discussing how to start a dialogue among historians. Barkan had some experience of mediating with Yugoslav historians. Maybe it would be possible for honest historians to sift through the facts of the Turkish-Armenian conflict and find some sort of shared history to

replace the disputed history. But there was a problem. G had promised a joint expedition. The Turks would easily organize a huge multi-disciplinary team. G couldn't turn up just by himself. Barkan suggested that G should work in association with the IHJR.

Next G tried to draw on a few Swedish government contacts. The minister for foreign aid had once listened to the idea of creating an independent commission. She had been sympathetic to the idea of Swedish mediation since political recognition of the Armenian genocide was such a diplomatic hot potato. But she was no longer in office. The Foreign Office listened to the idea of using the mass-grave expedition as a stepping-stone to an opening with the Turkish government. No-one had tried this, and Sweden, as a friend of Turkey, was in a good position to mediate. But no-one there would give G more than an encouraging pat on the back."

Omar concluded: "What was left was 'Track-Two Diplomacy', that is, negotiations on a non-government level aimed at solving an inter-governmental conflict through dialogue between concerned citizens. But this was a question of disputed history, so it had to be resolved by historians, who are seldom diplomatic. But how in the world did they think that our super-Turk would be willing to co-operate with professional historians? He can be accused of many things, but professionalism has never been one of them."

"Well, maybe it was a long shot. I might have done the same, it's worth the risk," continues Kenan. "After all, if you actually get the ultra-nationalists to the negotiating table, more moderate historians would also be able to work on this. But if Halaçoğlu isn't part of it, then life will be hell for any other participating historians. A friend of mine, a dental expert had promised to be part of G's team. But as the date neared, he got increasingly worried. He couldn't risk his entire career. He pulled out. Fact of life."

"Barkan told me that he fixed a really good contact for G with the Physicians for Human Rights (PHR).¹⁰ They had done forensic work on mass graves in Bosnia and Iraq. They were very keen and promised to send some of their best people. And G consulted with Dutch experts who had excavated in Kosovo, and one volunteered. The PHR experts studied the photos and could see that the persons had been killed somewhere else. Then their bodies had been placed in a heap inside

the hole. It was very important to understand that the site should be treated like a crime scene and the bodies not be tampered with. An investigation should not be limited to examining the bones; it is important to go through the soil underneath to see whether there are bullets and items of clothing that can help to date the find. This kind of careful investigation takes months. Obviously, this would not be possible, so the aim of the expedition was only to see if the site was suitable for a later study under the protection of the Turkish authorities. But all this depended on the outcome of the preliminary inspection.

As April 24 grew closer, G's team dwindled. The Dutch government would not let its expert go. One EU commissioner warned – like he always did – that this was just not the right time for a move that might upset Turkey. The worst possible outcome would be if the issue of the Armenian genocide exploded. Due to prior commitments the experts from the PHR could not come, and when they asked for postponement, Halaçoğlu refused. G went alone, armed only with an internet course in forensic investigation. Not happy.”

Sabri met him at the airport. They both felt uneasy as they planned for an early night to catch the redeye to Diyarbakir. The telephone rang. Courteous, Halaçoğlu wondered when they would arrive. His team would be waiting outside Nusaybin. Then the chief of police called and requested that they stop at headquarters to pick up an escort for their personal security. Security? Who had thought of that? Sabri said that when they got to Mardin's police station, they waited. Out came guys in black suits and got into a car with Ankara licence plates. Big shots from the internal secret police. Once they got to the site, these guys would parade around with machine-guns.

They were late, because they had stopped in Diyarbakir to talk with people from the human rights NGO. The NGO people spoke of many mass graves and even places where skeletons had become exposed after heavy rain. But Sabri and G should not stop to look, because they were undoubtedly being shadowed. There were concerns about what they would find; the NGO people were sure the bodies were Armenian but the Turks would use this against the Kurds. They would blame the killings on Kurdish bandits.

The tiny expedition was greeted on the steps of the motel by Halaçoğlu's team of historians, archaeologists, local authorities, and

dozens of journalists. Maybe forty people. It was now a media event. All went off in convoy in the pouring rain. Off the main road, onto a smaller road, then onto a dirt track that went on and on for what seemed like forever. Up and down rolling treeless hills dotted with stones, passing sheep and goats huddled in the rain. They came to six or so dwellings surrounded by stone walls. Just grey stones and red mud. A clutter of cars and vans. Even more journalists were waiting. And there were curious villagers. Sabri overheard them talking. G must be French, since he was interested in genocide. The security police assembled their guns. Bad beginning.

Any possibility of making a quiet and professional preliminary study to see if the site would be suitable for a full-scale forensic investigation, soon disappeared. This was a three-ring circus orchestrated by the Turkish Historical Society. Could G have imagined it in advance? Probably not. The crowd pressed on, down a path, across stones and rubble. Rain poured down. Finally, the spot: a hole in the ground one metre deep. A man jumped down, took an iron rod and shifted a flat stone covering another hole. Very black. Sides very muddy. How strange, G observed, no one is rushing forward to look at the hole. Why is that? Aha, of course, everyone but me has already seen this hole many times! They've probably already been down here. That's why the path is so slippery. Then, one after another, they jumped down: an archaeologist, a research assistant, Halaçoğlu himself, and the district governor in a dark suit. All climbed down easily. Would G go down? He's not slim, and the others are younger. He hesitates, looks at the mud, wonders how deep the passage is. Slowly he slides down the incline, following the diagonal for at least two metres.

It took time to adjust to the dark. When he could see, he found himself in a circular space with niches on the side. Looking around, he made out the staring faces of the president of the historical society, his assistants and museum servants. Showtime! G rubbed his eyes, scanned the floor. It was very, very black. That's strange since the soil here is reddish. Has someone poured out a chemical? But, even weirder: where are the skeletons? No skulls at all, no leg- or arm-bones, either, some very black broken scraps lie scattered. On top, very clean fragments of antique pottery. They must be kidding! Is this a practical joke? They gesture to G to take a shovel. 'Take a sample of

the soil, professor.’ Stand still. Express surprise. ‘What, you don’t want to take a sample? Not get dirty? Well, let our archaeologist help you.’

No. No. G scrambles out of the grave. Rushes to get the photos he has so thoroughly memorized. For weeks he has focused on the position of the skulls, the injuries, and the placing of the bones. His primary goal was to determine whether the site was intact. The black chemicals showed it had been contaminated. The removal of the bones had destroyed the site. Grabbing the photos, he plunged back down into the grave and spread the photos out. ‘Where are these bones?’ he asked, pointing. The Turks grasped for answers. ‘Oh,’ said Halaçoğlu, these villagers are to blame. They left the grave open, and the winter rain brought in mud and covered the bones.’ ‘Is that so? Why is the soil black, then? And why is the antique pottery so clean and lying on top? I think you have tampered with this site. I won’t take a sample. I’ll touch nothing. I’m leaving.’ Leaving the Turkish side bewildered.

Ground ZERO! Three days of travel and five thousand kilometres to come back empty-handed! Back on the surface, G felt as if he had just run into a reincarnation of all the school bullies he had ever met, all concentrated in an ugly hole in the middle of nowhere. If you find yourself in a hole, don’t dig any deeper. Good advice to keep in mind, but what to do now? The point of the expedition was to build up a modicum of confidence to go on with planning a historians’ commission. But how to build up confidence when one party had already destroyed the evidence?

Catatonic, G stands in filthy clothes, shivering in the pouring rain. The machine-gun-toting secret agents police the perimeter. Over by the hole, Halaçoğlu is orating. Tells all who will listen that this is a Roman grave and chemical analysis will prove it. A few yards away a villager is trying to catch G’s eye, giving him a nod and wink. He wants to say that the gendarmes had taken the bones away months ago, but he can’t. He’s a brave man, but all the other villagers are petrified by fear.

G and Sabri gloomily ride the van back to the motel where a press conference is scheduled. What to say? There are numerous journalists squeezed into the lunchroom. At least three TV cameras. Halacoğlu

immediately takes command. Says that we have taken samples of the soil. They will be sent to an independent institute for chemical analysis. It will show that the grave is from antiquity. G counters by saying that we came to analyze skeletal remains, not date the dirt at the bottom of a hole. Since there are no corpses, there is nothing to study. The site has been destroyed. It is a scandal that the Turkish authorities have not preserved it intact. After this confrontation, one would expect all dialogue to break down. Suddenly Halacoğlu changes his tone, gives G a glass bowl as a present and begins to talk abstractly about further co-operation. G rises to the bait; he needs one more meeting, at least. OK, he says, let's meet tomorrow. How about the Mardin museum? OK. Ten o'clock.

Phones start ringing. The leftist, liberal, and moderate newspapers all plan to run articles. And these prove to be overwhelmingly negative towards Halaçoğlu. Where are the corpses? They imply that the site has been manipulated. Once again, the Turkish Historical Society has shown itself to be incapable of cooperating with international scholars. Many print G's comment that there were no skeletons and that the enterprise was a fiasco. Most note that he had said: "This is the most expensive picnic I've ever been on."

Later that evening there is a telephone call. It's Timothy Ryback of the IHJR. "Have you seen today's Herald Tribune?"

"No, I've been rather busy. Don't think they sell it here anyhow."

"Good news. Abdullah Gül¹¹ has a full-page ad stating that the Turkish government encourages the setting-up of a historical commission. The timing is perfect. Probably they are following your doings. This could be our big chance."

"I sure hope so, because today was a total disaster. We meet again tomorrow morning. Maybe it will happen."

"What are your feelings about Halaçoğlu? Can we work with him?"

"Doubtful. I can't read him. Today I felt like I was back in the playground of my primary school surrounded by the school bully and his gang, with no way out. But I guess we need to have him on board if the more moderate historians will stand a chance."

"That's right."

"I'll try, but don't get your hopes up."

Sabri and G are halfway up the steps of the Mardin Museum when

Halaçoğlu sweeps down on them. Standing within spitting distance, an angry Halaçoğlu demands that G retract his statements. Why did he have to say that the bones were all gone, of course they were there, they were just buried in mud. Holds up a newspaper. “Look here at this twisted article in Radikal, it’s out to get me! And it’s not the first time!” shouts Halaçoğlu. Then he turns on Sabri. “Maybe it’s you who gave out all these lies?” G realizes that the Turkish media are out of control and that Halaçoğlu is losing his grip and that all this is happening out in the open. He is heaping verbal abuse on a foreign colleague. After an intolerable tirade, G insists, “Have we come to discuss the Turkish media? Or have we come to discuss something more serious?”

“What’s that?”

“Let’s go inside.”

They pull up chairs in the director’s cave-like office. There were about twenty of them, including the secret agents, who are now unarmed. Tea is served all around. “OK,” begins Halaçoğlu. “What do you want us to talk about?”

“You know that this grave thing was to be the first step towards a collaboration?”

“Yes, but you said yesterday you don’t want to press that further.”

“No, that’s a dead end. Can’t study a tampered site. Nobody would give you any credence. Do your chemical analysis of that piece of dirt if you want, but no one will ever trust your results.”

“Well, what?”

“My mission is to see if the THS is willing to negotiate about forming an international commission on the Armenian question. There are many others who are interested. You must have heard of WATS already. This will mean a large-scale investigation like the Lithuanians have done for the Nazi period. Senior and young scholars getting free access to all the archives. Freedom to investigate all sorts of grave sites. No interference by authorities. Teams can be formed from all political, national and religious groups. What do you say?”

“This was expected.”

“Oh, really?”

“You know we also have things we would like to access.”

“That would be the Dashnak archive?”¹²

“Yes, of course. Such a commission must allow us access to their papers.”

“We have such contacts. It will be possible. Shall we make a date?”

So it came about that a date in mid- June was chosen. The meeting was to be held at the headquarters of the IHJR at Schloss Leopold in Salzburg.

It is a magnificent archbishop's palace against the backdrop of snowy Alps. A good place for scholars to ponder intricate problems of disputed history. But would it be a good place for Track Two diplomacy and hard-nosed discussions between implacable opponents? There came three on the Turkish side: Halaçoğlu, his assistant Çiçek, and another academic who was there because he knew German. The mediators were Elazar Barkan and Timothy Ryback from the IHJR and a scholar who could eavesdrop on the Turkish discussions. The only person who couldn't come was a former archivist of the Dashnak archive, who backed down at the last minute. On the other side sat the inexperienced G. “To keep us honest,” as Ryback put it, because building up a mutual respect often meant accepting outrageous statements from the other side. You let the other side state its case without correcting them. At least for the time being. G, however, tended to react to the slightest sign of denying or denigrating genocide and that could have a negative impact on building trust. So they played good cop, bad cop.

A one-day agenda. All agreed to form a commission. But at once the problem turned political. Who were to be the members? Halaçoğlu began by vetoing key Turkish scholars. No mention was to be made of Taner Akçam in his American exile. No, it was impossible to have anyone from the Tarih Vakfı. “We invite them to all of our conferences, but they never invite us to any of theirs”, he complained. No, No, No. OK, can we have some of the scholars from WATS? Yes, some. Finally, after two hours, there was a preliminary list.

How many junior researchers? How many teams? And so the talk went on solving the simpler of the many complex problems. The practical ones. Should there be an executive board with respected names? Yes, of course. Let's talk names. Who would you like? Thus the morning session passed. Then the IHJR team sat down to make a budget. It would total several million dollars, to be funded equally by

the Turkish government and, hopefully, the European Union. The Turkish team put together a draft of a letter of intent. They all reassembled at about four o'clock. The letter of intent was quite solid. The budget was presented, five million dollars over a five-year period. Halaçoğlu didn't bat an eyelid. "That's OK," he said. "I'll take it home to my masters." End of the day? Not quite. Barkan asked G to be the manager of the commission and, after several anxious walks around the palace duck-pond, agreed. For Halaçoğlu, this was the final insult. And the French scholar overheard another heated discussion. Not him, not G, no, never!

Everyone went home. Waiting. Weeks passed. Waiting for official signatures and confirmation of the agreement to set up the commission and apply for funds. Word never came. In August, the Turkish media began to write that Halaçoğlu should be fired. He refused to resign and it took until July 2008 before he was pushed out. Could it have anything to do with the commission? G, relieved not to have to manage a huge commission of warring Turkish and Armenian historians, withdrew into his own research like a Hobbit. Would he do it all again? Who knows?

Omar says, "Quite a mismatch. Halaçoğlu is the archetypical nationalist historian – half soldier, half preacher. Up against G, who is, who is . . .?"

"I know!" exclaims Faik "Haha, part Boy Scout, but the rest of him I just don't know."

Over in a corner, unnoticed, two journalists have been having a drink after sending their newspaper to press. They have eavesdropped on the conversation. Suddenly one, a tall, thin woman named Perihan, speaks up.

"Have you heard the latest about Halaçoğlu?"

"No, what's that?"

"He's going to run for the national assembly for the National Action Party. Finally showing his true nature."¹³

"Wow! Does that mean he was a Grey Wolf?"¹⁴

"Wouldn't surprise me. He was young back then, so he was the right age for it."

The historians ponder this in silence. It confirms their suspicions about the erratic behaviour of the Turkish Historical Society. But it

also gives some idea over his unceasing aggression against anyone who showed interest in non-Turkish peoples

“Do you know anything about what happened when Halaçoğlu came to the government with the proposal for a commission on the Armenian genocide?” asks Kenan.

“Sure. I tried to do an article for *Nokta*, but by the time I had enough research, the government had closed us down for good.¹⁵ Halaçoğlu was just the wrong messenger boy. Of course, Gül was waiting for him when he returned.

She continues. “But as far as I can see Halaçoğlu had no desire to push for it. So the future of the plan was dropped into Gül’s lap, and he got no further help. In fact, Halaçoğlu contacted his party friends to sabotage the whole thing. Turns out he had many like-minded friends among ambassadors, generals and judges.”

“The cabinet discussions were violent. Prime Minister Erdogan¹⁶ had never liked the idea in the first place, but that’s because he has so little international experience. But Gül does and that’s why the powers could pressure him to take an initiative,¹⁷ and the Prime Minister let him. They probably both thought that nothing would come of it, that the Armenian government would instantly reject anything that started as a Turkish initiative. A state-level commission between two historic enemies was a ridiculous idea. The whole cabinet realized that. What they didn’t count on was this track-two diplomacy thing. It came out of nowhere. No one quite knew how to handle it. No one knew if it was serious. If it really came from a serious and respected group, it would be a great danger for the Turkish government. Really there was a great risk it might turn out to have really been genocide. The popularity of the ruling party would likely fall drastically. People like the tough stance on the PKK and the Kurds, and they wouldn’t appreciate any sign of being soft towards the Armenians and Assyrians, to say nothing of the Greeks.”

“In the end, it was money and power politics that put a stop to it all. Who would pay? The foreign ministry refused. So did the education ministry. There was an election coming up at the end of July, and Erdogan’s party could not risk being perceived as soft, and it had to retain its Islamist voters. Members of the National Assembly began to talk of impeaching Gül.¹⁸ For a time, it looked like Gül was in real

trouble since the Kemalists were really active on preventing an Islamist from becoming president. So, all of a sudden, no-one was pushing for a historical commission. The idea died, and no-one seems to have regretted it.”

“So, it is dead?”

“As a doornail.”

“Why do the leaders keep on saying ‘leave it to the historians’?”

“They never mean it. If the historians took over, the genocide issue would simply sink slowly into the everyday, boring history that doesn’t matter. The politicians would lose a good flag-waving cause. So long as history is in dispute, you can win votes.”

Epilogue

This text illustrates a growing problem in the field of history. Until fairly recently, nationalist historians have lived their scholarly lives in a favourable environment. They have had political backing, influence over school curriculum, access to the media on their own terms, and the privilege of setting the academic agenda, in addition to government funding. As a rule, when they write, they exclude or marginalize from the national-historical narrative ethnic and religious minorities as well as women and disadvantaged groups. When confronted with counter narratives, as in the case of the Armenian genocide, they enter a state of denial.¹⁹ Left without scholarly-researched history, minorities have only recourse to their collective memories. By default, it becomes the task of internationally-oriented professional historians to pioneer their cause.

Notes

1. In Turkish *Soykerim*. Use of the term “Armenian genocide” was forbidden under a law that has since been amended to a prohibition of “insulting Turkishness”.

2. Södertörn University, Stockholm, founded in 1997.

3. Then president of *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (The Turkish Historical Society THS), established in 1931 for the propagation of the Turkish Historical Thesis, has been the leading organ for denial of the Armenian genocide. Yusuf Halacoğlu (born 1949) was its president from 1993 to 2008. Previously head of the Ottoman

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Archive, he is associated with *Aydılar Ocağı*, a group of right-wing intellectuals which champions a “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis”.

4. *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors. Muslim-Christian Relations in Southeastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, N. J. Gorgias 2006). Turkish translation: *Katliamlar, Direniş, Koruyucular. I. Dünya Savaşında Doğu Anadolu'da Müslüman-Hıristiyan İlişkileri* (Istanbul: Belge 2007).

5. “Granddad’s ruins”, the official name is Kuru. An isolated hamlet near the Syrian border..

6. “The Country’s Free Bulletin”. The paper has been forbidden many times.

7. Workshop for Armenian Turkish Scholarship organized by University of Michigan since 2002. A book giving WATS position is: Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, Norman Naimark, eds. *A Question of Genocide. Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press 2011).

8. Turkish-Armenian journalist. Assassinated in January 2007.

9. IHJR, founded in 2004. See www.historyandreconciliation.org.

10. Founded by healthcare professionals in 1986 to investigate the consequences of human rights violations on health, it has participated in the excavation of mass graves throughout the world. In 1997, it shared the Nobel Peace Prize.

11. Usually described as moderate Islamist. Then Turkish foreign minister in the AKP government, since 2007 president of Turkey.

12. Dashnakzoutiun, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, formed 1890. Turkey claims that the Dashnaks had planned a revolt against the state and were legitimately punished.

13. Often described as a fascist party, the *Milliyetçi Haraket Partisi* was founded in 1969 with the goal of reuniting all Turkish peoples. He was elected in the election of June 12, 2011.

14. In the late 1960’s, *Bozkurtlar*, the National Action Party’s paramilitary youth section, launched a violent campaign of intimidation of leftist intellectuals, students and politicians. The campaign included bombings, robberies, kidnappings, and murders.

15. Nokta means “Dot” a weekly magazine started 1982 but closed in April 2007 under pressure from the military.

16. Born 1954, prime minister since 2003.

17. He studied in England and worked in Saudi Arabia.

18. He was elected president August 28, 2007 against the protests of the military high command.

19. Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering*. (Cambridge: Polity Press 2001).