

THE INTEGRITY AND COURAGE TO RECOGNIZE ALL THE VICTIMS OF A GENOCIDE:

*Naming all other victims alongside one's own people, and where necessary even
acknowledging violence done by our own victim people, without defining oneself a traitor*

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It is no secret that I am Jewish, in fact proudly so. This includes the fact that although born in the US, and after reaching an age where I was fully accredited in my profession as a clinical psychologist and enjoyed a thriving practice and academic career, I chose to make my life in Israel where I have now lived some 35 years.

It is also no secret that I feel deeply the horror of the Holocaust to my people. It was my encounter with this horror that led me as far back as in the 1960's, when I was still living and working in the US, to cry out in a dream that I, a trained psychologist having just then earned my certification also as an advanced specialist, understood *nothing* about how the Nazis and their collaborators did what they did to my people in the Holocaust. I literally cried out one night in response to a dream, "How could *human* beings smash infants against walls, kill children gleefully in the face of their parents, beat people sadistically to death with their own hands, or round up fellow human beings in naked herds and send them to their choking deaths in gas chambers?" I woke up in the morning with the realization that, although I had been trained at an outstanding American university and had been working in a first-line

psychiatric hospital, I had literally received no training whatsoever in understanding human cruelty, evil, destructive aggression, and worse the homicidal readiness of people to destroy masses of other human beings. I then knew that I would devote the rest of my life, along with clinical practice which I conduct and love to this day, to learning and advancing knowledge of this aspect of our human natures. My first professional presentation on the subject in those early years was at a college for Jewish Studies (Gratz College, Philadelphia), and became my first publication which was entitled, "Teaching the Violence of the Holocaust: A Challenge to Educating Potential Future Oppressors, and Victims to Nonviolence," and was published in 1968 in a journal for Jewish educators.²

In my judgment to this day, it is a good and sensitive piece, but it was never honored or referred to very much in the developing professional literature of the Holocaust, including in works specifically about the so-important area of teaching children about the Holocaust. Why the lack of interest in the article? I think this was because I referred to *all of us* human beings as cut from the same cloth; and that we *all* have serious work to do not simply mourning and overcoming our peoples' experiences as victims; but in developing ourselves as strong decent human beings who will do our utmost neither to be victims (– we have to fight back against those who seek to murder us), but *a/so* not to be oppressors who kill others if and when we find ourselves in historical-societal circumstances that call on us and enable us to have the power and the opportunity to be the ones who commit genocide to others.

Acknowledging Any Genocidal Violence to Others by Victim Peoples

I think that the victims of past genocides of many peoples “like” being spoken about (sympathized with) as victims and celebrated for overcoming the traumatic losses of the genocides of their people, but don’t like any discussions of past or possible future destructiveness by their people to others. Once, when we were preparing the memorable first encyclopedia of genocide³, the Serbian ambassador to Israel came to me. He proved an affable, attractive man; indeed the two of us were fellow tennis players and had an immediate sense of sharing with one another an attitude of enjoying life along with our serious professional activities. Moreover, the ambassador told me that one of his parents was Jewish and had been in Auschwitz, and of course that bonded us on a more personal level too. But his basic intention in coming to see me was to present to me for the encyclopedia the (quite serious and important) information of genocidal murders of Serbs by Croats (who, of course, had been the vicious killers of Serbs and Jews in World War II) and Muslims in the war and genocidal events of the early 1990’s. I replied to the ambassador that his data were very welcome, but that we could only accept the data if they were part of -- accompanied by – the fuller picture that included the genocidal murders perpetrated by the Serbs against the other ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia, like the genocide of six or more thousand Bosnians at Srebrenica, for in the 1990’s round of ugly genocidal destructiveness in the Balkans it was the Serbian murders of others that were the predominant though not the exclusive story of evil. The ambassador stormed out of my office and home.

“Well,” the reader may say, “you are obviously right that we are all human beings with whatever tendencies and potential for being mass murderers that apparently our whole human race will need to face in itself if we are to make any progress in stopping genocide on this planet. But you are asking a lot from people to recognize this part of themselves, especially when they are legitimately concerned with their own painful losses to the evils of others. Apparently this is a delicate educational and spiritual task that is going to need a lot of talent to get across to people and is going to take a lot of time.”

Indeed, returning to my own Jewishness, together with my colleague, Daphna Fromer, I have been the author of a study of the attitudes that we Jews and Israelis harbor towards a past genocidal massacre that we indeed committed⁴, and the author of studies of the attitudes of us Jews/Israelis towards fictional scripts of what we could conceivably do in future scenarios.⁵ In a larger perspective, I am quite proud of the fact that, overall, while being beleaguered and threatened by extinction by an overwhelmingly larger Arab force surrounding us, we Israelis have maintained a remarkable record of decency and humanistic values in our military actions. But there have been some small but clearly vicious and obviously *genocidal massacres* – the term the great Leo Kuper created for smaller scale events of mass murder⁶ for which we must take responsibility; and like all people we need to become aware of our potential for doing such things.

The first of the above studies that Fromer and I did in this series that we ended up calling *a series of studies of the psychology of evil* was of the attitudes of Israelis to the murder of 49 defenseless Arab men, women and children in Kfar Kassem, at the

time a village outside of Tel Aviv, on the day of the outbreak of the Sinai War in 1956. We wanted to show what number of Jews/Israelis who otherwise evidently go to strong lengths to pursue their concerns about the Holocaust will approve or condone or “understand” the murders done of unarmed Arab civilians. Did I get hell from my colleagues at Tel Aviv University for that study?! Of course, they couldn’t exactly say I was a traitor, so they said the study was “unscientific” (– what may well be the most hurtful or serious criticism in the world of academia, I say with wry humor), and therefore inadmissible (although the study subsequently passed the more rigorous tests of the editors of a significant journal and was properly published as legitimate science⁷).

Other studies Fromer and I did were of students in the three helping health professions of medicine, psychology and social work, and how far these Jewish-Israeli students of ours could and would go in the simulations we created towards doing harm to other human beings. Would you believe it? Here too the results show a regrettable readiness to do harm to others (overall, about a third of the subjects attested that they were ready to do harm to the stated objects in the studies). These studies resulted in a series of publications in fine American journals. However, they were never published in Hebrew. One Israeli journal (*Sichot* by name) in fact had first accepted an article, but then succumbed to a reader’s report that said, unhesitatingly and unambiguously, that our reported results were “fraudulent lies,” and canceled its intention to publish. Our efforts to discuss the judgment with them were to no avail; they would no longer speak with us.

I purposely bring up instances of doing harm to others and genocidal massacres by my own people in order to make the point that we always need to consider the historical facts and learn whether a known victim people *also* has a history of destroying others. For the facts of life seem to be that genocidal destruction is a serious potential of every people, and we are not going to get very far for our common humanity on this planet by dividing simply and naively into victims and perpetrators. Thus, as noted, the Serbs are today implicated as the main perpetrators of genocide in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990's, but they were not alone in committing genocidal crimes, and they too were the victims of genocidal killing by others. Moreover, the history of the area shows a ping pong over the years, and that in World War II it was the Croats who served as allies of the Nazis – there were many who said they surpassed the Nazis in their viciousness – and executed genocide of both the Jews and Serbs. Historian Nicholas Robins has shown that Peruvian Indians in the 18th century were *both* victims of genocide by the Spanish as well as perpetrators of genocide against the Spanish. To the best of my knowledge, Robins is the first scholar to make the firm theoretical point that has been missing from the literature of genocide, and is singularly missing from the public minds of victim peoples who are understandably concerned with mourning their losses, that victims of genocide can also be perpetrators—in the same historical period or at other times in history.⁸

“OK,” may say the perturbed reader. “We got the point. Victims don’t like to admit that they have been perpetrators or could be perpetrators. So we have our work cut out for us in education about genocide. But surely we have to recognize first and foremost the grief and anguish and rage of people at being victims. That’s also sound

psychology and pedagogy. Join with people in their suffering first of all, and then go on to work with them on their own ethics towards others.”

The Sorry Recurrences of Denial of Genocides

Presumably when it comes to identifying the known victims of a given genocide, once the historical information is all in to the satisfaction of most serious scholars, there is not going to be very much ignoring or distortion of the facts. Unfortunately, this too turns out not entirely true, for as is well known we have serious cases of denials of most genocides, to the point where denial has been identified by many scholars of genocide as “the last stage of a genocide.” Thus, we have serious deniers of the facts of the Holocaust such as by the David Irving’s⁹ and Ahmadinejad’s¹⁰ of this world who make antisemitic mockeries of the facts; and we have the Bernard Lewis’s¹¹ and Turkish governments¹² who devote major energies to denials of the Armenian Genocide. Denials of known genocides have emerged as a major subject worthy of grave consideration in the scholarship of genocide.¹³

But then after dealing with the problematic people and governments who make denials of a known genocide their paths to being aggrandizing nationalists, or heroes of bigotry, or exhibitionistic troublemakers, surely we can finally relax that there are not going to be any more serious sources of denials among the majority of fair-minded people.

It is hard enough that we have peoples who were victims of genocide denying when their people too are or have been perpetrators in history; it is provocative and seriously aggravating that we have professional deniers who say that a genocide

didn't take place or who warp the facts of a given genocide, such as minimizing the numbers of dead, denying the intentionality of the murders, or denying the facts and revising how the murder process was executed, such as in the use of gas chambers by the Nazis. But surely the large majority of decent people in this world will not be drawn to ignoring, bypassing, concealing or denying information about who were the victims of a given genocide. Most of all, we expect unhesitatingly that *we will be able to rely on the many peoples who themselves have been victims of genocides to spell out accurately the full information of what transpired in their genocidal event.*

Again we have an unhappy surprise, for it is not that way at all. First, we find that there are large numbers of people who are drawn to some measure of belief, support or allowance of denials as a possible alternative point of view of history. Second, to add grievous insult to injury, we find that some victim peoples not only don't want to know about genocides to other peoples other than their own, but that they actively seek to remove, reduce or ignore knowledge of other victims who were killed alongside them, by the same perpetrator, in the genocidal event they suffered!

I have given the name "innocent denials" to the first of the above regrettable phenomena, a term that I use for the many people, in many cultures, who are available to be seduced by the extreme propaganda of the deniers, including in a democratic culture by the notion that "there are two sides to the story," and that whenever this is the case a truly free and democratic person will give full opportunity to both sides to be heard.¹⁴

I am reminded of an amazing scene on American radio that was described to me by a wonderful Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, Lili Kopecky, who had been forced by

the Nazis to go into the “old crematorium” at Auschwitz to collect the ashes of non-Jewish prisoners in urns for their families who had paid the Nazi government to receive them. In her capacity, Kopecky saw first hand the *sonderkommando* or the detail who were responsible for pulling bodies out of the gas chambers and moving them to the crematoria. Kopeczky, who lived in Israel where she ably headed one organization of Auschwitz survivors, was a capable intellectual who also devoted some of her time to lecturing in the United States, including in particular at Emory University in Atlanta which published several of her lectures.¹⁵ One radio show on a cable news network sought to pitch Kopecky against a known denier of the Holocaust, Arthur Butz, a professor of engineering at Northwestern University who was an arch American denier of the Holocaust and its gas chambers.¹⁶ In a dramatic scene that ensued in their live-radio telephone debate, Kopecky, a small, dainty but fearless woman who had seen it all, confronted Butz with her totally personal testimony that she had been there!¹⁷ After bearing the brunt of Kopecky’s relentless first-hand rebuttals, Butz broke off the conversation, “I don’t want to hear any more,” and hung up.¹⁸ Butz was hardly an “innocent denier,” but an obvious antisemite and bigot. But beyond their need to create radio entertainment because that was their job, the radio station programmers who naively sought a “debate” between a denier and a witness, and the countless listening audience who sincerely wanted to weigh the “opposing viewpoints,” were engaging in innocent denial by supporting the public appearance and notoriety of a vicious denier of the Holocaust. Giving deniers a public platform as if they deserve to have their “viewpoint” heard isn’t simply an exercise in free speech and an interesting public debate, it constitutes a kind of respect for the denial. In

effect, it allows for further circulation of the denial as a possibly legitimate notion and thereby supports the metamessages of denials of known genocides which are a combination of celebration of the past genocide being denied and a paving of an approving way for future genocides.¹⁹

It turns out that there are a variety of motives and needs that lead people who are not bigots to be interested, approve or actively support the rabid denials of a known genocide even though they themselves consciously do not really want to be racists or bigots, but we shall not explore this subject in depth here. Our purpose at this time has been to assemble a knowledge of several forms of denials of valid historical information about genocides as a background for our encountering still another largely unrecognized form of denial, which in this essay we want to introduce into the literature of genocide, namely, how strong efforts are made by several survivor or constituency groups to obscure, ignore, conceal or at least minimize awareness of other victims who died alongside “their” “preferred” victim group in a given genocide.

The Courage to Name Other People as Victims of Genocide alongside One's Own

It turns out that several victim peoples have shown intense tendencies to drown out, ignore, and even question the veracity of the facts about other peoples who were exterminated right alongside of them.

My first experience of this sad phenomenon was, again, with my own Jewish people. Slowly and uncertainly word came out that there were other peoples who suffered and died alongside of ours, including notably the Roma (Gypsies), Russian POW's – as hated Slavs, homosexuals, and to a lesser and less lethal extent,

Jehovah's Witnesses. It should also be noted that some of these victims found their deaths in "our" gas chambers. The historical and human bonds between the different victims of the Nazis should be a strong one, but they are not. I know that for the Jewish people, the profound ethnic-nationalistic experience of identifying with the Jewish victims does not easily admit awareness of other "stranger" victims alongside them, so that these other victims were only rarely recognized at Holocaust commemoration events. And if they were brought up by someone, the reactions of many Jewish leaders were distinctly negative. Rarely were there invitations to these other peoples to participate with Holocaust survivors in shared memorial events; and there was also considerable resistance even to intellectual recognition and public mention of these other victims. Regrettably, these negative reactions often were also expressed in revealing statements as well as nonverbal gestures that conveyed the clear superiority, let alone greater significance, of the Jewish victims over these other hapless and obviously less significant populations.

It is not that the factual record was censored as it is routinely in totalitarian societies, or for that matter as various information about genocide, especially about perpetrating genocide, is denied even in some otherwise free societies such as Japan which denies its genocidal acts against the Chinese in Manchuria in the 1930's. In the academic record, the information about other victims of the Holocaust was available, but it was not incorporated into the popular or cultural record where it was largely ignored. Thus, an outstanding Holocaust professional, who served as the second in command in the creation of the excellent U.S. Holocaust Museum, Prof. Michael Berenbaum, personally authored a very valuable book on the non-Jewish victims in

the Holocaust.²⁰ The authority of this work is unquestioned in the literature of the Holocaust, and yet the influence of this work and of its author nonetheless have been circumscribed in the real politics of Jewish communal life. Thus, when the United States Holocaust Museum came into being, a fierce battle erupted among the directors with regard to excluding the participation of any representative of the Roma on the board. It was only after some years that a spokesman of this community, Prof. Ian Hancock, was reluctantly voted in as a member of the board of director.

The same Hancock has continued to write with deep feeling about Jews' predominant attitude of superiority and exclusivity as victims of the Holocaust. In an interesting literary piece that summarized a prevailing emotional-political attitude of the Jewish community towards recognizing the Gypsies as victims, Hancock wrote thus:

In a play by Sydney Schiffer, The Far Side of Enough, the representative of a fictitious international Gypsy organization offers to give a talk on the Romani Holocaust at an equally fictitious Jewish Holocaust memorial center, but is told that while such a talk would be possible, even welcome, the wording would first need to be changed. The rabbi explains that "we believe the Nazis singled us out for extermination in a way that justifies our applying the term 'The Holocaust' to us and us alone....I would feel honored to have you speak, if you would only agree to substitute the term 'Genocide.'" The Gypsy becomes angry, and the discussion after his departure centers on how any trouble he could make might be "neutralized." Someone else says, "Let the Gypsy speak. We'll ask our

friends in the media to bury it -- so deep no one will notice.” We are left wondering at the end of the play whether the address is ever given. While insistence on the uniqueness of the Jewish tragedy has taught the world that the racial persecution of the Jews was a destructive and vile disease, has it really learned that racial hatred against all humanity is equally destructive and vile? Is society really sensitized to the dangers of its happening again, but to another people next time?²¹

To my great disappointment, but not surprise, for all our peoples after all share a single common humanity and each of our peoples repeat and mirror our common human traits, I have seen the same phenomenon in the Armenian community – for whatever reason especially among American Armenians, but not only among them.

It turns out that many of us were not at all sufficiently aware that alongside of the Armenian victims of what we rightly know of as the “Armenian Genocide,” there were also victims of other peoples at the hands of the same Ottoman Turks, in a good number of cases literally alongside the Armenians in shared geographical areas. These victims included other Christian peoples, the Assyrians and the Greeks, and as this information has been brought more and more to the fore in recent years there are some who have even proposed renaming the Armenian Genocide, or at least giving it an alternate name of the “Christian Genocide.”

In truth, even the title, “The Christian Genocide,” is not the best choice insofar as it could seem to remove from the Armenian community their hard-won gains for recognition of the genocide of their people. It would be similar to renaming the Holocaust to not focus on the Jewish victims, because in fact, as we noted, there were

also *millions* of non-Jewish victims at the hands of the Nazis, such as the Roma (Gypsies), Russian POWs (as hated Slavs whom Hitler had in his sights for mass extermination as well), homosexuals, and others. We would never want to remove or attenuate the identification of the Holocaust as an overwhelming persecution of the Jewish people, but at the same time we do need to develop clear identifiers for recognizing the other non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and of the Nazi regime in general, as well. Besides, the name "Christian Genocide" for the period of the Armenian Genocide also would not even do full justice to the facts because there were also still other victims of the Turks, the Yzedis, sometime referred to as a pagan people because they are not Christians (although they incorporate some themes from Christianity in their religious practice). Our western world was rudely reacquainted with the Yzedis just a few months ago when a mega suicide-bomber terrorist attack was directed at the Yzedis in northern Iraq, and there were write-ups in our western press describing the unique religious identity of this people. The point for the Turks during the period beginning in 1915 was to advance a pan-Turkism, that non-Turks were to be destroyed, and insofar as Turkish national identity was closely entwined with an Islamic religious identity, the genocide was a jihad against non-Moslems.

Thus, a report in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in November 1916, recorded: "The extermination of the Armenians is well under way. Thousands of Nestorians and Syrians [of the Assyrian Orthodox Church] have vanished from the face of the earth. More than 300,000 Greeks have been deported from the Ottoman Empire, and many more sent to the interior. The fate that awaits the surviving Christians and Jews -- in fact, of all the

non-Turkish elements -- depends on the term of the fratricidal war and its fortunes. The Young Turks are watchfully waiting to carry out their program: 'Turkey for the Turks.'

Clearly there were additional victims, and the job of every decent and responsible person is to recognize, name, and honor each and all of the victims. How to do so, including what names to apply to the interlocking genocides of different peoples, is important and interesting, but reasonable people will not want to dispute or conceal or omit the facts of these additional genocidal murders.

Yet I have had the experience a few years ago of participating in a seminar in Yerevan of outstanding intellectuals from around the world, a great majority of them Armenians but not only, when a world-renowned Armenian scholar from the United States, who was chairing a session of the seminar, proposed that the seminar recognize officially the Assyrian, Greek and Yzedi victims of the genocide along with the Armenians, and again this was a scene where all hell broke loose. I confess that *part* of me was laughing, though of course only silently inside of me, as I pictured the who knows how many times that I had witnessed angry Jewish faces around tables of counsel in our Jewish institutions barking at 'traitorous' proposals to recognize with whichever non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The proposal was defeated that day in Yerevan, not by an actual vote which as far as I could see would have turned out at least equal and maybe even in favor of the proposal, but by dint of the rage and vehemence of the protestors and, as I characterized Jewish life, insinuations that those who would propose such recognition were traitors to their real Armenian cause.

Fast forward to 2007 and a proposal to recognize Assyrians and the Greeks as victims of genocide by the Ottoman Turks alongside the Armenians comes up before

the honorable leadership of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) as a resolution to be brought to a vote by the membership which read as follows:

RESOLUTION - IAGS 2007

WHEREAS the denial of genocide is widely recognized as the final stage of genocide, enshrining impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, and demonstrably paving the way for future genocides;

WHEREAS the Ottoman genocide against minority populations during and following the First World War is usually depicted as a genocide against Armenians alone, with little recognition of the qualitatively similar genocides against other Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire;

BE IT RESOLVED that it is the conviction of the International Association of Genocide Scholars that the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted a genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association calls upon the government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocides against these populations, to issue a formal apology, and to take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution.

Historically, the IAGS -- when it was named simply the Association for Genocide Scholars -- had played an important role in recognizing and ratifying the historical validity of the Armenian Genocide. At its second biennial international conference in Montreal in June 1997, the association had voted, unanimously, the following resolution:

That this assembly of the Association of Genocide Scholars in its conference held in Montreal, June 11-13, 1997, reaffirms that the mass murder of Armenians in Turkey in 1915 is a case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. It further condemns the denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish government and its official and unofficial agents and supporters:

Through the years this resolution has been cited over and over again in many historical and political forums, and very much in battles against efforts to deny the Armenian Genocide; and it also became an important facilitating base for a next milestone in intellectual politics in 2000 when at the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches, convening at St. Joseph University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 126 Holocaust scholars, signed a statement affirming that the World War I Armenian Genocide is an incontestable historical fact and urged the governments of Western Democracies to recognize it as such. The petitioners, among whom was Nobel Laureate for Peace Elie Wiesel who was the keynote speaker at the conference, eminent Holocaust scholar Yehuda Bauer from Jerusalem, and Elizabeth Maxwell from the UK, also asked the Western Democracies to

urge the Government and Parliament of Turkey to finally come to terms with a dark chapter of Ottoman-Turkish history and to recognize the Armenian Genocide as “an invaluable impetus to the process of the democratization of Turkey.”

So it is in the perspective of the history of significant resolutions that IAGS now faced its new proposal to recognize additional victims of and alongside the Armenian Genocide. Again here madness erupted! What now happened was amazing and deeply disappointing to me. First came tedious demands for additional scholarly documentation of the victimization of these groups that in effect were calculated to stall and derail the resolution process, although here I also say fair enough: Even though the demands were disingenuous efforts to block the resolution, IAGS is an organization of scholars and it is fair game for opponents of any process in the organization to express and anchor the politics of their position in demands for scholarly evidences. Led by Thea Halo, author of a moving book on her mother’s experience of the Greek Genocide²², and Adam Jones, a professor at University of British Columbia and recent author of the first issues-oriented comprehensive textbook on genocide studies for college and graduate school instruction²³, the resolution was now buttressed with heavy reference sources. For example, they pointed out that the Assyrian Genocide had just recently been studied extensively in an article published in IAGS’ own influential journal, *Genocide Studies and Prevention*: “Native Christians Massacred”: The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians during World War I.”²⁴

In truth, in the heated back-and-forth public discussion of the resolution that took place on the association’s blog and in many other e-mail communications, the genocide of the Assyrians seemed to me to be accorded greater consensual validation, but there

was more pressing opposition to the subject of the genocide of Greeks. The authors of the resolution also produced additional documentations of the murders of the Greeks both in the early period of 1916 and later towards the end of the genocidal process in 1922. Thus, in the present essay, we already saw earlier the example of a report from the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1916. Additional sources were cited such Frank W. Jackson, Chairman of the Relief Committee for Greeks of Asia Minor, who wrote on October 17, 1917:

Along with the Armenians most of the Greeks of the Marmora regions and Thrace have been deported on the pretext that they gave information to the enemy. Along the Aegean coast, Aivalik stands out as the worst sufferer. According to one report, some 70,000 Greeks have been deported towards Konia and beyond. At least 7000 have been slaughtered. The Greek Bishop of Aivalik committed suicide in despair."

Also quoted was American Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau, who had fought energetically with the Turkish leadership to stop the Armenian Genocide, who wrote in 1919 in his famous book, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, "The story which I have told about the Armenians I could also tell with certain modifications about the Greeks and the Syrians."²⁵

In their memo of supporting evidences, Halo and Jones²⁶ also cite the American Consul at Aleppo, Jesse B. Jackson who filed a report on April 5, 1922 from Dr. Mark H. Ward and Dr. F. D. Yowell, Director of the Near East Relief unit at Harpoot. In it Ward and Yowell testified to the tens of thousands of Greeks from the Black Sea region --

two-thirds of whom were women and children -- being marched south, with medical attention, food and shelter denied to them, causing many thousands to perish from 'starvation, exposure, typhus, and dysentery.' Yowell and Ward reported that the road was strewn with thousands of dead bodies along the way, and that armed guards had prodded the 'deportees' on. Yowell, wrote on May 5, 1922 as follows:

Conditions of Greek minorities are even worse than those of the Armenians. Sufferings of the Greeks deported from districts behind the battlefield are terrible and still continue. These deportees begun to reach Harpoot before my arrival last October. Of thirty thousand Greek refugees who left Sivas, five thousand died on the way before reaching Harpoot. One American relief worker saw and counted fifteen hundred bodies on the road east of Harpoot.

In Harpoot district our relief has been to give these needy people in opposition to the wishes of the Turks who did everything in their power to prevent our doing so. We were not allowed to employ any Greeks in our work or to take any orphan children, left by dying Greek deportees, into our orphanages. Sick Greeks could not be received into our hospital except on the written order of the Turkish Commissioner.

Two thirds of the Greek deportees are women and children. All along the route where these deportees have travelled Turks are permitted to visit refugee group and select women and girls whom they desire for any purpose.... Their whole route today strewn with bodies of their dead, which are consumed by dogs, wolves, vultures. The Turks make no effort to bury

these dead and the deportees are not permitted to do so. The chief causes of death are starvation, dysentery, typhus. Turkish authorities frankly state that is their deliberate intention to exterminate the Greeks, and all their actions supports this statements.

Nonetheless, notwithstanding the considerable references that were marshaled by the authors of the resolution, there continued an amazing degree of intense protest against the resolution, including by some outstanding scholars in IAGS – although it can also be proffered for the record that the resolution was fully supported by *all* the members of the then-presiding and incoming Executive Boards of the association. A major political attempt now followed to prevent the resolution being brought before the membership for a vote. This big push to derail the resolution took place at a meeting which combined several IAGS leadership boards which had been convened in the course of the association's biennial conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia in July 2007. This meeting was held prior to the association business meeting scheduled for later in the week, and the opponents of the resolution were hoping to get a decision that would stop the voting on the resolution at the business meeting.

As noted, the opponents of the resolution included distinguished scholars whom we all respected and appreciated for their contributions over the years. Intriguingly, a majority of them were clustered at a single institution and obviously had come to a joint policy decision among themselves, so that there were some who questioned whether there was a specific funding source involved in their work whom they were appeasing, but this was without any information available to support such a conjecture, and to me it

was inconceivable that such noteworthy scholars would be susceptible to economic realpolitik. One other leading member of the opposition was an internationally famous and beloved Armenian scholar who, in fact, in the past had written explicitly about the genocide of the Assyrians and Greeks as well as the Armenians.²⁷

What was this madness? For myself – and I was then the presiding president of IAGS-- I was heartbroken. In the brouhaha that followed, I did my best to tell a very amusing and I felt convincing story of an experience that had taken place when I had been in Armenia not that long before, when I had actually been asked by the Director of the Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum in Tsetsnikabard to go and greet a large crowd that had gathered at the Memorial to celebrate the memorial of the Greek Genocide! The Armenians in Yerevan had no questions. Greek flags flew unfurled in Yerevan at the Genocide Memorial! They recognized the Greek Genocide and event and honored it! I told the Director at Tsetsnikabard that (long before the IAGS resolution) I had encountered many questions and much resistance to recognizing any other victims of the genocide other than the Armenians, and he laughed at the notion of victim exclusivity. “Oh, you know how those Americans are,” the Director laughed with characteristic gusto -- naturally addressing me as the Israeli I am and ignoring my also being an American-born citizen of the US (I hold my citizenships in both beloved countries).

I myself cannot subscribe to any scurrilous interpretations of our colleagues' opposition, and I can only understand their positions as expressions of a dynamics of insistence on an exclusive victim status of a given victim people to whom they are

devoted, and to whose memorial they make huge contributions. There may also have been some honest intellectual skepticism and caution by some of these scholars who really want a clearer intellectual record than we have amassed in our western world for some of the other genocides or some aspects of them. But I was shook and disappointed. The unpleasant IAGS battle caused me to lose some friendships that were dear to me for years, not because of any honest questioning or differences of opinion, but because of the adamancy and political strongarming of the opposition, and in some cases even threats of resignation from the organization (since when do we insist on 100% representation of all our ideas by a major professional organization to which we belong?). I simply could not understand the readiness of some of the opponents to rupture longstanding personal relationships or to leave the organization we had worked so hard to build because they disagreed about this resolution.

All of the above is no different than the opposition we frequently encounter to recognizing other victims of the Holocaust among my own people, as well as among some of the non-Jews who are brilliantly active in memorial of the Holocaust. As a resident of Israel—where of course I do most of my work and interact socially in the professional community of the country in which I live -- I have spent so much of my adult life in a sea of reserved feelings and silent critique of me for my insistence on recognizing *all* the victims of any given genocide including the Holocaust; more largely for my insistence on recognizing the genocides of *all* victim peoples and not staying focused exclusively on the uniqueness of the Holocaust; let alone my insistence on recognizing several instance of our Israeli lapses into being perpetrators of genocidal massacres. I have come to a deep conviction that a crucial intellectual and spiritual

task for *all* of us is to inventory our own selves and identify our quite natural participation in various prejudiced thinking and involuntary emotions towards various peoples who are different than ours. I feel convinced that the only way that makes sense in genocide studies, and in life on this planet in its entirety, is to honor and support unambiguously the rights to life of *all* peoples, and this to me is the larger meaning of scholarship to recognize all victims of each genocidal event.

Now I am happy also to write that as far as IAGS is concerned, this will also be a happy-end-story. The resolution indeed did not go to a vote at the business meeting. To this extent the opponents had won, but what was decided was that more time would be given to the members to study the pros and cons of the resolution and then vote by electronic ballot on the resolution a few months later. The result was now to prove salutary for a large number of members voted and the the resolution was accepted conclusively and resoundingly. The resolution thus becomes another constructive step towards a worldview of recognizing all victims of all genocides. And the whole story has also become an opportunity for us all to learn more about ourselves and our own participations in our flawed human race.

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April 2008

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² Charny, Israel W. (1968). Teaching the violence of the Holocaust: A challenge to educating potential future oppressors and victims for nonviolence. *Jewish Education*, 38, 15-24.

³ Charny, Israel W., Editor-in-Chief; Associate Editors: Rouben Paul Adalian, Steven Jacobs, Eric Markusen, and Samuel Totten. Bibliographic Editor: Marc I Sherman. (USA: December, 1999; UK, February 2000). Santa Barbara, CA and Denver, CO, USA; London, UK: *Encyclopedia of Genocide*. Two Volumes. ABC-CLIO Publishers. Forewords by Bishop Desmond Tutu and Simon Wiesenthal: "Why Is It Important to Learn about the Holocaust and the Genocides of All Peoples?" *2nd Printing, November 2000; Partial French Edition, Fall 2001: Le livre noir de l'humanité: Encyclopédie mondiale des génocides*. Toulouse: Éditions Privat; *3rd Printing, December 2002; Internet e-Book edition, 2003*.

⁴ Charny, Israel W., and Fromer, Daphna. A study of attitudes of viewers of the film "Shoah" towards an incident of mass murder by Israeli soldiers (Kfar Kassem, 1956), *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 1992, 5 (2), 303-318.
See also Charny, Israel W. (1994). Research out of commitment to face the potential for evil in all of us. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 1994, 7 (3), 479-483. Invited Commentary in response to Rejoinder to previous article by Milgram, Norman A. Ideological bias in the same issue of the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 1994, 7 (3), 467-472.

⁵ Charny, Israel W., and Fromer, Daphna. A study of the readiness of Jewish/Israeli students in the health professions to authorize and execute involuntary mass euthanasia of "severely handicapped" patients. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 1990, 5 (3), 313-335.
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<http://www.ideajournal.com/articles.php?type=1>

Charny, Israel W., and Fromer, Daphna. The readiness of health profession students to comply with a hypothetical program of "forced migration" of a minority population. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 1990, 60 (4), 486-495.

⁶ Kuper, Leo (1982). *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*. London: Penguin Books, 1981; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982.

⁷ See also Charny, Israel W. (1990). To commit or not commit to human life: Children of victims and victimizers -- all. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 12 (5), 407-426.

⁸ Robins, Nicholas A. *Genocide and Milennialism in Upper Peru: The Great Rebellion of 1780-1782*. Westport, CO: Praeger, 2002.

⁹ David Irving became one of the notorious deniers of the Holocaust of our era after enjoying at one point a certain amount of success and public prominence for his originality as a scholar of the Nazi regime (he is not academically trained and has no research degree, but his work was impressive and interesting). However, overall, Irving emerged in general as a manipulator of information and specifically as a virulent antisemite and Holocaust denier. It was Irving who brought his status in the western world to a head when he sued Deborah Lipstadt in London for having identified him as a denier. There followed a landmark decision by the British court in which Mr. Justice Gray ruled, "Irving is an active Holocaust denier; he is anti-Semitic and racist and he associates with Right-wing extremists who promote neo-Nazism" (quoted from the court ruling).

¹⁰ Even more serious than his denials of the Holocaust -- Ahmadinejad even devoted a government-sponsored "conference," accompanied by a public cartoon contest, to denying the Holocaust -- are Ahmadinejad's continuous statements of commitment to the destruction of the State of Israel. On Israel's 60th birthday in May 2008, Ahmadinejad gave a speech, in which, according to the official IRNA news agency, he stated, "Those who think they can revive the stinking corpse of the usurping and fake Israeli regime by throwing a birthday party are seriously mistaken. Today the reason for the Zionist regime's existence is questioned, and this regime is on its way to annihilation." Ahmadinejad brands Israel a 'stinking corpse'. *Khaleej Times Online* (May 8, 2008); Ahmadinejad brands Israel a 'stinking corpse'. *Yahoo News* (May 8, 2008). Ahmadinejad's denials of the Holocaust then add a further fuel to the fire of his hatred and flagrant antisemitism and thereby bolster the assessments of the dangerousness of his threats to see Israel destroyed. Needless to say, the accompanying nuclear-arms race by Iran under his direction is then the more ominous and terrifying.

¹¹ Bernard Lewis is a very eminent historian who had written about "holocaust of a million to a million and a half Armenians" in his book: Lewis, Bernard (1962). *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. New York: Oxford University Press. However, in a subsequent edition he removed this statement, and in various professional and public appearances clearly took on the mantle of a denier of the Armenian Genocide. After he gave an interview in Paris, he was sued by the Armenian community and found guilty – intriguingly -- of dereliction as a scholar, for failing to cite the considerable body of opinion contrary to his denial position. The Encyclopedia of Genocide reported this case as follows:

Professor Bernard Lewis Found Guilty of Denial of Armenian Genocide

In June 1995, Professor Bernard Lewis of Princeton University was found guilty by a court in Paris on civil charges that had been brought against him, as per the headline in *Le Monde*, "for denying the reality

of the Armenian Genocide.” This court, which was hearing a second *civil* case against Lewis following an earlier *criminal* case, found Lewis guilty of a “fault” and causing damage to another party because of his dereliction of responsibility as a scholar. The court ruled that in his denials of the genocide, Lewis calculatedly ignored and did not relate to major evidences and judgments by serious bodies, such as the UN Whitaker Commission in 1985 and the European Parliament in 1987, which have attested to the Armenian Genocide. Lewis was therefore convicted for “hiding elements which go against his thesis [that] the reality of the Armenian Genocide results from nothing more than the imagination of the Armenian people.” He was ordered to pay a fine of 10,000 francs, punitive damages of one franc and all court costs. *Le Monde*, in which Lewis had denied the Armenian Genocide, was ordered by the court to report the sentence. —Press Reports Source: Charny, Israel W. (1999). *Encyclopedia of Genocide*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio.

¹² The Turkish government is notorious for conducting over seemingly endless years a huge worldwide campaign to censor and cancel any reference to the Armenian Genocide on the part of other governments as well as in cultural products —books, art, musumology, movies, etc.

¹³ For an encompassing classification of many different types of denials of genocides, see Charny, Israel W. (2003). A classification of denials of the Holocaust and other genocides. *Journal Genocide Research*, 5(1), 11-34.

¹⁴ Charny, Israel W. Innocent denials of known genocides: A further contribution to a psychology of denial of genocide. *Human Rights Review*, 2000, 1 (3), 15-39.

¹⁵ Kopecky, Lili (1982). In *the Shadow of the Flames: Six Lectures on the Holocaust*. Atlanta, GA: Emory University Witness to the Holocaust Project. (Pamphlet)

¹⁶ Butz, Arthur R. (1975). *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*. Richmond, England: Historical Review Press.

¹⁷ The radio show was entitled “Freeman Reports” and it was broadcast on “Cable News Network” to an audience of several hundred thousand listeners. The program with Butz and Kopecky was broadcast on April 30, 1981.

¹⁸ Over a period of several years, Kopecky wrote a column for the international newsletter published by our Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem. The aforesaid story appears in one of her columns: Kopecky, Lili (1994). “Voice of an Auschwitz Survivor”: A survivor fights denials including a media debate with Arthur Butz

and an account of this survivor's work in the Auschwitz crematorium. *Internet on the Holocaust and Genocide*, April, Issue 48, pages 5-6.

¹⁹ Charny, Israel W. (1991). The psychology of denial of known genocides. In Charny, Israel W. (Ed.), *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review. Volume 2*. London: Mansell Publishing Co., pp. 3-37.

²⁰ Berenbaum, Michael (1990). *A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis*. New York: New York University Press.

²¹ Hancock, Ian. From "Uniqueness, Gypsies and Jews," Presented at the Conference, Remembering the Future, London, 1988. Published as a feature in the *Encyclopedia of Genocide, ibid.*, p. 501.

The late beloved Simon Wiesenthal was a very strong exception in the Jewish community. He wrote personally and passionately of remembering Roma nearby him in the concentration camp and bemoaned Jewish opposition to recognition of the Roma as fellow victims, but even his voice was not welcomed or honored on this subject.

²² Halo, Thea (2000). *Not Even My Name*. New York: Pcador.

²³ Jones, Adam (2006). *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Oxford, UK and New York: Routledge

²⁴ Travis, Hannibal (2006). "Native Christians massacred": The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians during World War I. *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 1(3), 327-371.

Abstract: "The Ottoman Empire's widespread persecution of Assyrian civilians during World War I constituted a form of genocide, the present-day term for an attempt to destroy a national, ethnic, or religious group, in whole or in part. Ottoman soldiers and their Kurdish and Persian militia partners subjected hundreds of thousands of Assyrians to a deliberate and systematic campaign of massacre, torture, abduction, deportation, impoverishment, and cultural and ethnic destruction. Established principles of international law outlawed this war of extermination against Ottoman Christian civilians before it was embarked upon, and ample evidence of genocidal intent has surfaced in the form of admissions by Ottoman officials. Nevertheless, the international community has been hesitant to recognize the Assyrian experience as a form of genocide. The Assyrian genocide is indistinguishable in principle from its Armenian counterpart, however, and its recognition by scholars and the international community may assist in the resettlement and relief of the Assyrian remnant currently fleeing by the thousands from its homelands in Iraq" (p. 327).

²⁵ Morgenthau, Henry Sr. (1975). *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. New York: New Age Publishers Plandome. Originally published New York: Doubleday Page & Company: 1919. See Chapter XXIV, The Murder of a Nation.

²⁶ Notes on the Genocides of Christian Populations of the Ottoman Empire. Submitted in support of a resolution recognizing the Armenian, Assyrian, and Pontic and Anatolian Greek genocides of 1914-23, presented at the conference of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 2007. Prepared by Thea Halo and Adam Jones. Circulated to membership of IAGS in March 2007 and again on September 17, 2007 with a cover letter from Gregory Stanton, who was now the president of IAGS, calling on the membership to vote by November 16, 2007..

²⁷ While the death toll in the trenches of Western Europe were close to 2 million by the summer of 1915, the extermination of innocent civilians in Turkey (the Armenians, but also Syrian and Assyrian Christians and large portions of the Greek population, especially the Greeks of Pontos, or Black Sea region) was reaching 1 million." - Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*, pp. 285-286.