

Paving the Way for Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation: A Personal Account

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- Only empathy will open the door to reconciliation between Turks and Armenians.
- The border opening is key to Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. Geography can provide the tools needed to bridge the historical divide.
- The failure of the last attempt at normalizing relations led to a reassertion of the Nagorno-Karabagh conditionality. The years ahead will bring the genocide issue at the forefront.
- Turkish-Armenian reconciliation is important for the further democratization of Turkish society and the country's political system. For the time being, there has been no significant change in attitude within Turkish official circles on the Turkish-Armenian issue.
- The Kurdish problem is the most powerful driving force behind the progressive redefinition of Turkish citizenship and national identity. Kurds themselves appear ready to engage in a historical reconciliation process with Armenians.



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A personal note

I am profoundly grateful to Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung for having given me the opportunity to reflect on my twelve-year long endeavor to bring closer Armenians and Turks. I am not one of those few Turks of Istanbul who had the chance to grow up with their Armenian neighbors. Being the daughter of a Turkish diplomat, I spent my childhood in a community that feared the attacks of ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia). However I realized retrospectively that I never had any negative opinion about Armenians. Children can have the wisdom to reject the thought that they might personally have enemies. Back in 2000, I was working as a PhD candidate at a research center in Istanbul. I was asked to focus on the Caucasus. I chose Armenia. I first travelled there in 2001 and have been returning regularly ever since.

Today, I feel at home in Armenia. Armenia is more than a neighbor to Turkey. The destinies of our nations are interlinked. We share the same history and geography. The sealed Turkish-Armenian border has symbolized for too long the gap between our two nations.

Looking back to the 90's : some noteworthy promising steps for the future of relations between Turkey and Armenia

Turkey was governed in the 1990s by a succession of coalition governments dominated by center right parties. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was considered as a major strategic gain which opened the gates of a large space defined as the Turkish/Turkic world. The definition of Turkish identity has often required projection into a geographical space. Throughout the 90's, the post-Soviet area is perceived a Turkish space by the Turkish elite at large. Interestingly, Armenia is not singled out. Turkey reacted very smoothly to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Yılmaz government decided to take the risk of recognizing the independence of all the ex-Soviet states before the USA and other western powers made the same decision. One of its last acts, before leaving office was to recognize Azerbaijan on 9 November 1991. The incoming Demirel government followed this policy, by recognizing all other ex-USSR states without any discrimination on 16 December. Between au-

turn 1991 and the spring 1992, it appeared likely that Turkey might be able to develop good relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

At the beginning of 90's there seem to be a clear understanding in the bureaucracy and in some part of the political and bureaucratic elite, and very interestingly where one expect it less – within right wing nationalistic circles – of the importance, from both a geographical and historical perspective, of establishing good neighbourly relations with the newly independent Republic of Armenia.

In this respect, Turkey made moves to relieve Armenia's chronic economic plight, which had been aggravated by an economic blockade on the part of Azerbaijan and the coincidental breakdown of transit routes across Georgia. In November 1992, it agreed to the transit through her territory of 100 000 tons of wheat to Armenia and to supply urgently needed electricity via a grid connecting the two countries. The latter was cancelled after protests in Azerbaijan. The meeting in 1993 between President Petrossian and the leader of the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Arparslan Türkeş, is a memorable event and the demonstration of the visionary and emboldened approach that once the nationalistic party had.

State recognition without official intergovernmental relations: background note on the intergovernmental agenda

The recognition of the Republic of Armenia by Turkey on 16 December 1991 is a meaningful decision: it reveals an intention and has further legal implications. Recognition is a unilateral act of a state with international legal consequences. Contrary to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which are as of today the only countries that do not recognize Armenia, Turkey viewed the recognition in his own interest to establish relations under international law. Paradoxically after having granted de jure recognition to Armenia, Turkey didn't officialize its relations with Armenia by establishing diplomatic relations.

It would be misleading to presume that the diplomatic channel is entirely closed between Turkey and Armenia. Turkey has de facto diplomatic relations with a country which it has recognized and to which it is a neighbor. The absence of the protocol for the establishment of diplomatic relations pre-



vents the opening of diplomatic missions and the accreditation of representatives. The absence of official diplomatic relations deprives both Turkish and Armenian states from a vital channel of communication which could have been of utmost importance in fixing their relationship.

In April 1993 Turkey sealed its border with Armenia by closing the Doğu Kapı/Akhourian crossing and halting direct land communications between the two countries in view of escalating conflict over Nagorno-Karabagh between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and more precisely after the Armenian offensive against Kelbajar which triggered a massive flow of refugees. The border has been closed since that date.

The Turkish official policy towards Armenia has remained to a large extent unchanged since the closure of the border and has evolved into a state policy which has been defining Turkish negotiation position with the Armenian government. From the Turkish perspective, the intergovernmental agenda of the negotiation for the normalization of bilateral relations has been dominated by three main issues, namely, the Nagorno-Karabakh conditionality, the genocide issue and the explicit recognition of the common border by Armenia. The closure and the ensuing refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia took place in view of the escalating conflict in Nagorno Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Armenia's ambivalence over the recognition of its common border with Turkey. The gravity of this ambivalence is magnified by the dispute over the recognition of the Armenian genocide, which Turkey fears could feed Armenian territorial claims over eastern Turkey.

Turkish and Armenian governments tried at several occasions to normalize their bilateral relations. Intergovernmental contacts accelerated in 1999. Questions about the connection between pipelines and peace in the Caucasus surfaced during the preparations for the OSCE summit held in Istanbul on 18-19 November, 1999; as a massive diplomatic offensive was launched aiming at concluding a peace deal between Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as a series of pacts on the Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline in Istanbul during the summit. Prospects for the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations were on the horizon during 2000-2001. This momentum was jeopardized by the recognition of the 'Armenian Genocide of 1915 perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire' by the French Parliament in January 2001.

In 2005 diplomatic contacts intensified again. The exchange of letters between Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Kocharian created an impression of dialogue. A new momentum was indeed launched by two public proposals - one Turkish and one Armenian. Prime Minister Erdoğan, in his letter to President Kocharian called for the creation of a joint commission to study the historical developments and events of 1915. This was accompanied by President Kocharian's proposal for an inter-governmental commission to meet and discuss all outstanding issues between the two countries with the aim of resolving them. These would have to be sustained by practical steps aiming at the full normalization of bilateral relations.

The inter-governmental level

A second golden opportunity to normalize Turkish-Armenian relations has been missed with the failure of the protocols process. The first opportunity was missed in the first years of Armenia's accession to independence during M. Petrossian's presidency. A difficult period lies ahead, since the stalemate is likely to last. Eventually, the bilateral context will be strained further by increasing interference by third actors, including Azerbaijan and the Armenian diaspora.

Azerbaijan's economic leverage vis-à-vis Turkey is increasing together with investments by SOCAR, the Baku's national gas company. SOCAR will soon be the biggest foreign direct investor in the Turkish economy. By late 2017, SOCAR's investments in Turkey, including the PETKİM acquisition and TANAP, the Azerbaijani-Turkish pipeline project, are expected to reach 17 billion USD.

It was primarily the Azerbaijani factor that obstructed the last effort at normalization between Turkey and Armenia, leaving the process dependent on a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. At the official level, there is now a clear understanding in Ankara that Azerbaijan is part of the Turkish-Armenian equation. In other words, Azerbaijan is now a stakeholder in Turkish-Armenian relations, while Turkey is a stakeholder in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. According to Turkish perceptions, since closing the border was retaliation for Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani territory, ending the decade-long, Turkish blockade is inextricably linked to the political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the liberation of Azerbaijani lands. The issue of the recognition of



the border lost of its importance over time. The failure of the last attempt at normalizing relations led to the a reassertion of the Nagorno-Karabakh conditionality.

On the other hand, as the 100th anniversary of the tragic events of 1915 approaches, the influence of the Armenian diaspora is destined to reverberate more and more inside Armenia. As one expects, the years ahead will bring the genocide issue at the forefront. The context might show similarities with the process in 2005 dominated by the exchange of letters between Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Kocharian on the issue of the establishment of a joint commission for historians. The Armenian government is likely to be more reluctant to get involved in a new bilateral process with Turkey.

■ The asymmetry in Armenian-Turkish relations

Turkish-Armenian relations are inherently asymmetrical in nature. A clear understanding of the effects of this asymmetry is of utmost importance to any attempt to improve Turkish-Armenian relations, be it at the official or civil society level. The balance of power is in favor of Turkey when it comes to economy, soft power, legal structures, and social development. Armenia is a small country, with a population of around 3 million, while Turkey's population is almost 80 million. Most Turks are unaware of this asymmetry.

Turkey recognized Armenia in 1992 and has since treated relations with Yerevan with something approaching indifference. For a country of Turkey's size and dynamism, Armenia becomes an issue only on specific occasions, and is ignored the rest of the time. Turkey might afford to ignore Armenia, but the latter does not have the same luxury. Turkey always ranks among the top three priorities on the Armenian agenda and the effects of the Turkish policy of indifference are felt beyond the border. Armenia's policy towards Turkey is motivated by the desire to become a "factor" for its big neighbor.

The Armenian diaspora acts as a third party, attempting to balance this asymmetry, notably via its international campaign for genocide recognition. Since 1998 the Armenian government has perceived the genocide issue as an important asset in its international communication strategy. This has enabled Armenia to assert itself in world politics.

The yearly calendar of Turkish-Armenian activities shows that 24 April, the date commemorating the tragic events of 1915, has become a mobilizing force in Turkish politics and Turkish-Armenian relations in particular. Year in and year out, Turkish interest in Armenia and Armenians peaks in the early spring. Turkish diplomats and lobby groups are sent on the offensive in an attempt to dissuade the US president from qualifying the massacres of the Armenians as genocide.

With Armenian activists mobilized for the opposite purpose, the period between mid-March and 24 April is the least favorable time for any Turkish-Armenian normalization or reconciliation initiatives. Sadly, it is also the only period when the Turkish government pays any attention to the Armenians and to Armenia. Unfortunately, international campaigns have proven the most efficient way to bring the Armenian issue on the agenda of the Turkish government. The looming 100th anniversary of 1915 has already begun having the same effect.

■ The politicization of history

Yet what do Armenian communities hope to accomplish through genocide recognition? Most Armenian organizations are aware of the regional balance of power. More than anything, recognition is seen as a moral victory for the Armenian side, a way to heal the emotional wounds of the survivors and the nation as a whole. Some also view recognition as a foreign policy tool, i.e. a way of maintaining leverage against Turkey.

To date, 23 countries, including 11 members of NATO, have officially qualified the tragic events of 1915 as genocide. (42 US states have done so as well.) Uruguay became the first country to do so in 1965.

The international campaign for recognition started well before the creation of an independent Armenia. It speeded up in the 70s and gained new momentum after 1998, when Armenian President Robert Kocharyan gave it official backing. (Armenia's first president Levon Ter-Petrosyan had steered clear of the issue.) A subcommittee of the UN recognized the genocide in 1985, followed by the European Parliament in 1987 and the Council of Europe in 1998.

Until the creation of an independent Armenian state, the Armenian diaspora had perceived itself as the sole representative of the nation. With the formation of the Republic of Armenia, it became Armenia's representative abroad.



It is doubtful whether the politicization of unhealed wounds is in itself a morally sound choice of policy. Using human suffering as a political bargaining chip appears at odds with the search for moral justice.

That the objectives of the international campaign have ever been met is also open to question. Can recognition bring real closure and moral satisfaction? Third country genocide resolutions cut communication lines, forcing advocates of Turkish-Armenian normalization to focus on damage control. The struggle for the acknowledgement of the Armenian identity should involve, and not preclude, constructive engagement with Turkey.

Opening of the Turkish-Armenian border and reconciliation attempts

It is a big opportunity that the Turkish and the Armenian states are neighboring each other. Yet it is exactly because Turks and Armenians live right next door that transcending the past and reinventing a common existence is an obligation for both. Shaping the present is the best way to deal with the past. Geography can provide the tools to bridge historical divides. That said, the fall of the Iron Curtain in Europe has led paradoxically to the closure of the Turkish-Armenian border. The border opening is much more than a matter of regional development and business opportunities. Akhourian/Arpacay and Aras rivers are today sadly symbolizing the historical gap between the two peoples. Border opening is the key to Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. Were it to happen, it would be the revenge of geography on history.

The closed border has been definitively a significant barrier to human interactions: the impossibility to reopen the border has transformed it into a barrier to direct human and business interactions, preventing the populations from the borderland from bridging the century-old gap dividing them. However the proximity factor between Turkey and Armenia has been at work even in the context of closed borders. The establishment of direct flights connecting Istanbul and Yerevan together with the improvement of transit conditions through Georgia improved cross-border contacts. Mutual mistrust and deeply enrooted fears can dissuade Armenians from visiting Turkey and vice versa. However curiosity can as well be a major driver especially in relatively open and young societies. Liberal visa regime, the low cost of travelling

by road allowed the proximity factor to work sustained by cultural affinities and intermingling identities. In dire economic context characterizing transition periods, people travel mainly out of necessity to make a living. In the 90s, small traders were the main agents of interaction. With the improvement of economic conditions, it was Armenian tourists who started visiting Turkey. The Mediterranean resort of Antalya became a popular destination.¹ Recently, some Armenians have begun traveling to cities in Anatolia.

Furthermore Viewing Mount Ararat and the ruins of Ani in Turkey from the Armenian side of the sealed border does nothing to lessen Armenian nostalgia and yearning for the lost historical homeland nourished with the grief and pain of a wound that has never been healed². This nostalgia and yearning could be satiated if the lost homeland becomes palpable and accessible with the removal of the barrier. It would not only bring a feeling of security diminishing the perceived threat, but also relieves frustration of being barred from the historical homeland. It would also diminish the perceived threat of "the other". By reopening the border, Turkey would show that it cares about the 'security' of Armenians and the development and well being of this country and its people. This would work to the benefit of both sides. The most stable and secure borders are those that disappear as a result of intense cross-border interaction.

The Armenian issue in the Turkish domestic context

The murder of Hrant Dink reinvigorated the debate around the issue of the genocide within Turkish intellectual circles. Turkish-Armenian reconciliation is seen as an important factor in the further democratization of Turkish society and the political system. Initiatives in this respect usually develop as intellectual forms of civic engagement. The issue is defined clearly as an internal Turkish question that only a societal awakening can address. Recent civil society initiatives have focused on overcoming collective amnesia, on reviving the memory

1 In 2011, some 50.000 Armenians travelled to Antalya. <http://www.epress.am/en/2011/06/14/armenian-tourists-to-prefer-antalya-again-this-year-aravot.html>

2 The public survey conducted by ACNIS on the genocide issue reveals that 73,5% of those interviewed expect "the return to historical lands and their inhabitation by heirs of the victims" as a result of the "acceptance of the genocide". The Armenian genocide survey, "90 years and waiting", ACNIS. April 2005.



of centuries of Turkish-Armenian co-existence, and on nourishing the Armenian heritage in Anatolia. Most of the initiatives have taken place in the fields of art and culture, as well as publishing (e.g. oral history projects, oral history archives, and books). The main objective is usually to raise awareness and historical knowledge of the daily lives of Ottoman Armenians.

Yet there has been no significant change in attitude within the Turkish semiofficial circles. The last round of official negotiations with Armenia left the impression of an unaccomplished task. Turkish policymakers now appear to be preparing the lines of defense ahead of 2015, the 100th anniversary of the genocide. While dealing with the Armenian issue, the 'official' Turkey is positioning defensively in a frontal opposition convinced of the need to counter the offensive. In Turkey, the problem is still seen as an academic dispute about history. The problem however is an acute one and is made of the tragic effects of a trauma that are long term and self damaging. The First World War and its aftermaths had been traumatizing for the entire population of Anatolia. However those who succeeded to stay on these lands have been taken into a new dynamic, a new project which proves today to have been successful. The time has come to deal with the wrongdoings of the past. The Turkey of today is mature enough to show empathy.

Understanding the problem through empathy

It isn't necessary to be a historian to be able to come to terms with the problem at hand. Only empathy will open the door: The readiness for Turks and Armenians to get involved in a true relationship is of utmost importance for Turks and Armenians. We need one another. It will take some courage for Armenians to acknowledge this need. It will take a certain amount of self-confidence for Turks to do likewise.

The problem is deep but not complex, the solution simple, the process leading to it emotionally demanding. The issue is about healing a broken relationship, rebuilding trust, and coming to terms with the past, while also building positive and constructive relations between the two neighbouring states and two intermingling identities.

What is needed to reach lucidity is not more time but intensity in the feelings and mutual exchange. Human brain has this faculty to understand by feeling. As a matter of fact I understood this in the very first year of my involvement with Armenians and Armenia. Particularly my first trip to Armenia and a road trip through Anatolia with a group of 70 Armenians had been both deep human experiences with a far reaching impact on my life.

I travelled for the first time to Armenia in April 2001. I was twenty-six years old. I did not have the feeling that travelling from Turkey to Armenia could be considered as something exceptional. I learned at the end of my three-week stay that Armenia was much more than a neighbor country. I understood that the border between us, even if sealed, never existed in the minds of most Armenians to start with. I discovered that a major part of the population of Armenia was originally from Anatolia.

A few months later, I had the opportunity to travel across Anatolia with a group of 70 American Armenians. The trip had been organized by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America with the support of the Turkish Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC). 150 US Armenians arrived in Istanbul at the beginning of June 2001. They traveled in the footsteps of Saint Gregory, across southeastern and eastern Anatolia, before going to Yerevan. I traveled with one of the groups to Kayseri, Malatya, Arapkir, Elazig, Mus, Diyarbakir, Bitlis, Van, Dogubeyazit, Igdir and Kars. It was neither a tourist trip nor a traditional pilgrim-



age.³ It was a return to one's roots in a forbidden land, a collective attempt to bring back the past. Armen Aroyan⁴, the famous tour organizer who has escorted more than a thousand visitors to Anatolian villages over the last two decades, was with us. Our pilgrimage was the largest and the most visible to date.

I understood a lot during this weeklong journey. On Akhtamar Island, I understood that identity was far more a personal issue of existential importance than a political one. During a religious service held at an 18th century church in Malatya, I found myself wondering about the last time so many people gathered here, the last time Gregorian chants resonated inside the building's walls. I witnessed the disappointment and sadness felt with the discovery of ruins where monuments once existed, as well as the happiness of the people in Arapkir during our visit to the village's only surviving Armenian family. In Harput, where nothing was left of the famous Protestant school, an old woman from our group started crying. She was born here, she said. Her family had left Harput and went to Aleppo when she was 10, leaving behind everything. She could remember every detail, like the house behind us or the steep street on our left. I noticed another man, also from Harput, who was picking up some of the local soil to place on his father's grave. In Palu, one of the women on the tour asked around for her aunt. Her mother was 10 when she was separated from her sister, who remained in Palu. I witnessed how spontaneously the villagers attempted to help. They took us to the home of an old lady whose own mother was Armenian, and who as a baby had been found in a garden and adopted by a Turkish family. Unfortunately, she could not help.

³ Trip journal was published by the Armenian Reporter on 14th July 2001.

⁴ <http://www.bvahan.com/armenianpilgrimages/>

The way forward: the restoration of Armenian identity in Turkey

Turks and Armenians share a history that spans some five hundred of years within the Ottoman Empire, a heritage that 20th century nationalist narratives have almost entirely erased from memory on both sides of the border. Past events must be seen in the context of a far longer period of history. Architecture acts as a powerful testimonial of the common Turkish-Armenian past. Restoring and rediscovering Armenian cultural sites around Anatolia would not only help shape public opinion in Turkey but also build bridges. A common ground can be found with the Armenian Diaspora through efforts aiming at protecting and rediscovering the Armenian heritage. Furthermore the revalorization of the cultural heritage can help shaping the public opinion within Turkey.

The renovation of the Surp Giragos Armenian church in Diyarbakir is a very good illustration of the ideal way to move forward and develop collaboration between Istanbul Armenians, the diaspora, and national and local authorities. The Surp Giragos Church, originally dating from 1515, was once one of the largest in the Middle East. Its bell tower was bombarded and destroyed by German/Ottoman cannon fire in 1915, since it was deemed unacceptable for the structure to loom over the local minarets. In 2009, the Surp Giragos Foundation in Istanbul launched a reconstruction project under the auspices of the Istanbul Patriarchate. The board secured a legal deed and title to the church, obtained the required permits for reconstruction, and launched fundraising activities worldwide. Raffi Bedrosyan, a civil engineer and pianist living in Toronto, organized the reconstruction project and helped raise money among the diaspora. The Foundation covered 70% of the restoration costs, or 2,5 million USD. The Diyarbakir Municipality paid the remaining 30%. The Foundation also succeeded in reclaiming other properties, rent from which will secure steady funds for the maintenance of Surp Giragos. The renovation started in 2009; the church opened for worship in October 2011; work on the bell tower concluded a year later.

Unlike the Holy Cross Armenian Church on Akhtamar Island, renovated by the Turkish government but converted into a state museum, the Surp Giragos Church is officially recognized as an Armenian church under the control of the Armenian Patriarchate. It is the first church property in Anatolia reclaimed by Armenians since 1915.



■ Armenian heritage in Kurdish populated cities

Kurdish-majority municipalities such as Van and Diyarbakir are very eager to restore Armenian heritage sites located in their respective cities and establish good connections with Armenians. Kurds, who consider themselves victims of Turkish nationalism, show readiness to enter into a historical reconciliation process with Armenians. They also acknowledge that Kurdish nationalism was at least partially to blame for Armenian suffering in Anatolia.

The peace process with Kurds as a decisive factor

The Kurdish problem itself is the most powerful force driving the search for, and progressive redefinition of, Turkish citizenship and national identity. Like the Armenian issue, the Kurdish problem has forced Turks to question official history and the founding myths of the Turkish nation. As a result, the Kurdish and Armenian issues have become intertwined. On the one hand, the Kurdish problem has fuelled further nationalist sentiment and polarization within society. On the other, the Kurds' main political party, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), has become the only political actor advocating for reconciliation with Armenians.

Opinions expressed during a 21 October 2009 parliamentary hearing on the protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia provide a good illustration of the political discourse on Armenia. MPs from both the opposition Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and Republican People's Party (CHP) repeatedly brought up the suffering of Azerbaijanis in the Nagorno-Karabakh war, as well as need for solidarity with the Azerbaijani cause. Only the Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP), as the BDP's predecessor was known, expressed its support for the protocols and argued in favor of Turkish-Armenian and Kurdish-Armenian reconciliation.

24 April 2013

Armenians around the world come together to commemorate the 98th anniversary of the symbolic date of 24 April 1915, when Armenian religious and intellectual leaders were rounded up in Istanbul. This day has also been commemorated for the last few years in Istanbul, Izmir and Diyarbakir.

This year a European delegation composed of twenty anti-racist and Armenian representatives from 15 countries were present in Istanbul for the commemoration of 24th April. The European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM) replied positively to the invitation of their partner in Turkey Initiative for "Say Stop to Racism and Nationalism" (DurDe) and they cooperated with the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)⁵ Europe to form a common delegation to take part in April 24th commemorations in support of Turkish human rights activists. The opening of dialogue channels between Turks and diaspora Armenians is of considerable importance for reconciliation. We, people of Turkey, have to find ways to re-link us to this Diaspora which is indeed ours. I can find parts of my identity spread all over the world in diaspora houses. We should remain dedicated to welcoming Armenians back home.

I can not agree more with the novelist Chris Bohjalian, who will be soon in Istanbul for the presentation of his new book "The Sandcastle Girls", on the fact that 'while 24 April is about mourning the dead, it is also about the triumph of the living.'⁶ On 24 April 2001, during my very first trip to Yerevan I paid a visit without thinking twice to the Tsitsernakaberd, the Genocide Memorial. Together with Meline, a young historian, I left one daisy at the memorial. It was a splendid spring day, and the clear weather offered a magnificent view of Mount Ararat. "That's already Turkey," I thought. It wasn't a day of mourning, but of hope.

⁵ The largest Armenian non-profit organization in the world, AGBU was founded in 1906 to preserve and promote the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural, and humanitarian programs annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians around the globe.

⁶ http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/3509.Chris_Bohjalian/blog/tag/musa-dagh



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