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ISRAEL'S STANDPOINT CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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The recognition of the Armenian Genocide is one of the key and intricate problems on the Armenian national agenda, often spoken and written about. A variety of political, historiographical, psychological and social analyses has been conducted, a profound mass of venerable literature has been created, thereby introducing the issue to the international community and drawing the consideration of both Armenian and foreign scholars. With such an abundance of materials on the Armenian Genocide, nevertheless, some aspects of the issue need a thorough examination. Today special attention should be paid to the study of linguistic facts which are key elements of the textual mechanisms of adequate interpretation or perversion and distortion of the historical events. The textological analysis of diverse interpretations is quite a new and important statement in the research of the issue under consideration and is aimed at studying the linguistic expressions of various attitudes towards the issue of the Armenian Genocide. The present article aims at studying Israel's attitude to the question of the Armenian Genocide from the above-mentioned standpoint which also implies a reference to the historical outlook of the problem as to a corresponding element of the vertical context of the given variety of speech.

Key words: *Armenian Genocide, Israel's standpoint, realpolitik, exclusivity syndrome, textological study.*

Гаспарян С.К.

Позиція Ізраїлю щодо питання про вірменський геноцид

Визнання геноциду вірмен є одним із пріоритетів національного порядку денного. Проведено низку історіографічних, психологічних та соціологічних досліджень, видано чимало авторитетної літератури, що представляє проблему міжнародному товариству з точки зору як вірменських, так і зарубіжних дослідників. Водночас, незважаючи на таку кількість матеріалів, деякі аспекти даної проблеми потребують ретельного дослідження. Сьогодні особлива увага приділяється вивченню лінгвістичних фактів як ключових елементів текстового механізму викривлення та фальсифікації історичних подій. Текстологічний аналіз різних інтерпретацій є новим і важливим підходом у вивченні даної проблеми, він спрямований на аналіз лінгвістичного вираження різних підходів до питання геноциду вірмен. Мета даної статті — текстологічне дослідження позиції Ізраїлю з урахуванням історичної перспективи як складової вертикального контексту даного різновиду мовлення.

Ключові слова: *геноцид вірмен, позиція Ізраїлю, реалполітик, синдром ексклюзивності, текстологічний аналіз.*

Гаспарян С.К.

Позиция Израиля в вопросе геноцида армян

Признание геноцида армян является одним из приоритетов национальной повестки дня. Проведен целый ряд историографических, психологических и социологических исследований, издано немало авторитетной литературы, которая представляет проблему международному сообществу с точки зрения как армянских, так и зарубежных ученых. Вместе с тем, несмотря на такое изобилие материалов, некоторые аспекты данной проблемы требуют тщательного исследования. Сегодня особое внимание

уделяется изучению лингвистических фактов как ключевых элементов текстового механизма искажения и фальсификации исторических событий. Текстологический анализ различных интерпретаций является новым и важным подходом в изучении исследуемой проблемы, он нацелен на анализ лингвистического выражения различных подходов к вопросу геноцида армян. Цель настоящей статьи — текстологическое исследование позиции Израиля с учетом исторической перспективы как составляющей вертикального контекста данной разновидности речи.

Ключевые слова: геноцид армян, позиция Израиля, реалполитик, синдром эксклюзивности, текстологический анализ.

According to D. Stone, past, present, and future have been generalized and institutionalized in the West as a specific culture called history. He believes, the areas of human thought, action, and suffering, that call for a specifically “historical thinking”, include “the construction and perpetuation of collective identity”, “the reconstruction of patterns of orientation after catastrophes and events of massive destruction”, “the challenge of given patterns of orientation presented by and through the confrontation with radical otherness”, and “the general experience of change and contingency”. Stone’s notion of “historical thinking” is closely tied to the concept of “historical memory” which refers to the ways in which groups or collectivities construct, identify, narrate and give thought to certain periods or events in their history.

It is obvious that the most traumatic historical memory of the Armenian nation — the 1915 Armenian Genocide — is fundamental to social and political identities of the nation and is reshaped to the present historical-political moment when the recent transitions from authoritarian rule and the formation of democratizing political cultures make the nation hopeful that eventually all the countries of the world, including the perpetrators, will recognize the systematic, murderous campaign carried out by Turks against the subject Armenian population (killing 1.5 million and leaving millions more displaced) as *the intentional destruction of a huge group of the Armenian nation (genocide in the broadest sense of the word)*.

Having all this in mind one cannot but reflect on the attitude of Israel towards the issue of the Armenian Genocide and genocides at large. I wonder what the historical memory of the Jews is and if they give thought to the official position with reference to the Armenian Genocide their government persistently takes for so many years. My reflections drive me to very natural questions: Why does Israel take the position of a denier (sometimes passive, or at times very obviously active), however surprising it may be? How does their historical memory work? Does it not remind them of the Holocaust — the atrocities carried out by Nazi Germany against the European Jews during World War II, which, thanks to the efforts of renowned politicians and statesmen, have already been recognized worldwide? I have to agree that the ability and the persistent work along

creating the world history of genocide after the war and establishing a legal framework for the recognition of genocide as an international crime to be punished and punishable through international cooperation are indeed worthy of high estimation and praising.

Still, the question remains unanswered. Why not the Armenian Genocide? Why can it not be recognized and condemned as an unpardonable crime against humanity, particularly when there is absolutely no doubt at all that those horrendous events in Western Armenia followed by attempts of attack at Eastern Armenia too at the beginning of the 20th century were in fact a genocide?

My considerations of this, at first sight, rather strange situation bring me to the idea that one of the important reasons why there still are individual politicians, parties, and even powerful and influential states who evade this undeniable fact, is that for them political interest and moral position are concepts far away in two opposite poles. In the issue of the Armenian Genocide the dilemma “policy vs. morality” faced also by such a country as Israel gives birth to some reflections [2, 4:105–128]. A nation that was itself subjected to genocide in the previous century and who struggles against the deniers of it, by ethical standards should have undoubtedly been the first to accept the Armenian Genocide [http://www.noravank.am/arm/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=4714 Retrieved 07.03. 2014]. However, Israel has quite a reserved attitude towards the genocide against other nations.

Moreover, the investigation of facts reveals, that albeit after the Holocaust the Jews put forward the slogan “Never Again!” just some years later, on 15 May, 1948 they, who had “tasted” the pain of the Holocaust, themselves made another nation feel it. The sufferings they had experienced themselves did not keep them back from another massacre, the genocide against the Palestinians. What is even worse is that the Jews deny their own guilt, and this is again a dilemma. The Israeli historian Benny Morris defining the genocide of the Palestinians expresses his firm belief that the overall, final good justifies harsh and cruel acts that are committed in the course of history. He even tries to justify the annihilation of the Indians for the sake of the creation of the great American democracy. Benny Morris’ thoughts sound paradoxical, particularly against his academic background. On the one hand,

he criticizes Zionism and its continuing oppression of the Palestinians, but on the other, he argues for the necessity of ethnic cleansing in 1948. He faults David Ben-Gurion for failing to expel all Arab Israelis, and even hints that it may be necessary to finish the job in the future. He views the conflict between the Israelis and Arabs as a struggle between civilization and barbarism. Can this be justified?

Some twenty years ago, Ben Neria Baruch, Israel's Ambassador to Armenia and Georgia, argued that the recognition of the Armenian Genocide was a very complex issue, since it involved other nations as well. He believed that in issues like the Armenian Genocide political interests were always important: it is impossible to live only in history, there are always interests. Certainly, there are, and they are numerous. The strategic alliance between Turkey and Israel is one of them, and this could, perhaps, be taken as the primary reason for Israel not to accept the reality of the Armenian Genocide. In fact, Turkey was the first Muslim state to recognize the statehood of Israel in 1949, and the latter has so far been almost always ready to resort to compromise in order to continue its neighbourly relations with Turkey. Therefore, in recent years the issue of the Armenian Genocide — more precisely, its performance — took on greater importance in the official policy of Israel, becoming a barometer for measuring the Israeli-Turkish relations.

Israel's refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide might well be accounted for by another factor — a subtle psychological one to which even more importance is attached, although it has nothing to do with the relationship between states and geopolitical developments. It is the idea firmly fixed in the mindset of the Jews that the Jewish Holocaust is a completely unique phenomenon, and this gives them the feeling of psychological prevalence.

A wide variety of contradictory ideas expressed by various statesmen suggests a dissociation of perceptions by different groups of the Jewish people, representatives of the Jewish intelligentsia and the Jewish state in connection with both the fact of the Armenian Genocide, and the genocide of Palestinians. Moreover, for some two or three decades running, Israel has been manifesting a mainly inactive position on the issue of the Armenian Genocide, although tacitly it has been leading a policy of preventing the attempts towards its recognition and condemnation both inside the country and in the United States. Thus, it was not surprising that in April, 2001, during his visit to Turkey Shimon Peres as the Israeli Foreign Minister at that time, in an interview to the Turkish news agency "Anatolia," made a statement which was a manifestation of active denial, and thus he marked the beginning of the Israeli policy of outright abnegation.

We reject attempts to create a similarity between the Holocaust and the Armenian allegations. Nothing

*similar to the Holocaust occurred. It is a **tragedy** what the Armenians went through but not a genocide. <...> **Israel should not determine a historical or philosophical position on the Armenian issue. If we have to determine a position, it should be done with great care not to distort the historical realities.***

(Shimon Peres, April, 2001)

Clouds of doubt in Sh. Peres' speech cover the Armenian claims of genocide, and this, first and foremost, can be noted in the application of the attributive word combination "*the Armenian allegations*" which in its turn excludes the possibility of comparing the events of 1915 with the Jewish Holocaust (*nothing similar to the Holocaust occurred*). Sh. Peres openly supports Israel's aspiration of exclusivity. Obvious enough that using the semantically broader and undifferentiated word **tragedy**, the speaker probably does not suspect that although he has managed to avoid using the term **genocide**, nevertheless both **tragedy** and **genocide**, even without being identical, eventually are in the same semantic field, and any genocidal event, including both the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, is in fact a tragedy, a tragedy of a whole nation never forgotten by the generations of the transgressed, even a century later.

One is bound to ask, why **Armenian allegations**? They are not allegations but real facts testified by both the survivors and the eyewitnesses [10, 12, 8], as well as facts established by historical, political and legal investigations [7]. As for similarity, then, of course, we have to agree that there can surely be no question of sameness because the Armenian people have been exterminated in their ancient homeland, together with their cultural heritage. This, in fact, was also a cultural genocide, unlike the Holocaust of the Jews who were far from their homeland, in Europe. So the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide are even to some extent incomparable, especially and more so as Armenians do not push forward a claim of such a comparison. It was Rivka Cohen, the Israeli Ambassador to Georgia and Armenia, that speaking at a press conference in Yerevan on February 8, 2002 announced the Holocaust — the genocide of the Jews — to be an unprecedented event, no tragedy, including that of Armenians, could be compared with. In this connection, the note of protest of the Armenian Foreign Ministry ran as follows: "Armenia considers unacceptable any attempt to negate or diminish the fact of the Armenian Genocide no matter what motivates the reasoning. Moreover, Armenia has never had a goal to draw parallels between the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust considering that any crime against human kind is unprecedented by its political, legal, historical and moral consequences". Elie Wiesel, a Romanian-born American writer of Jewish descent and Holocaust survivor, describes the denial of the Armenian Genocide as a "**double killing**"

process. He condemns Turkey's manipulation on different institutions of America in order to achieve the fulfillment of their desire of denying the Armenian Genocide. He is more than sure that no evasive euphemistic terms can be allowed to be used to appease the Turkish government, for what was accomplished in 1915 in Western Armenia was indeed a genocide.

It was not by chance at all that Raphael Lemkin, initiating the draft of the Genocide Convention, in 1944 referred to the Armenian Genocide identifying it as a **seminal example of a genocide** that subjected the Armenians to horrible massacres and caused a lot of suffering [6].

The Israeli officials following the official viewpoint worked out by Turkish authorities have consistently declared that only historians should deal with historical issues. But what can a historian do against facts which have deep roots in the reality, and against the pain that is always present in the memories of the survivors and on the ancient walls of the monuments doomed to destruction in Western Armenia! [9:455]

According to the passage adduced above, the Israeli officials do not consider it correct for Israel to **determine a historical or philosophical position on the Armenian issue** or if they have to, it should not misinterpret the historical reality. However, they do make a historical decision by giving a false account of history when they claim that **nothing similar to the Jewish Holocaust** (i.e. genocide) **ever occurred**. In order to avoid ambiguity and enhance the idea they have even found a clear-cut definition: *it was a tragedy what the Armenians went through but not a genocide*. Maybe Mr. Peres' firm belief that Israel should not express a historical or philosophical position can be explained by his inclination to give preference to political orientations. Especially interesting is that this statesman is trying to hide his country's flagrant, coarse denial with the "objectivistic" veil of not corrupting historical facts (*If we have to determine a position, it should be done with great care not to distort the historical realities*).

The interview of Sh. Peres adduced above was so scandalous that the Israeli Foreign Ministry had to spread a special message through its diplomatic missions. It stated that the Minister's words were wrongly interpreted in the Turkish media, and that in reality (allegedly according to the information received from Ankara) it had been said that the issue should be dealt with by historians, not by politicians, that they did not support comparisons between the Holocaust and the tragedy of Armenians, and that Israel did not intend to take any political or historical position on this issue. In other words, as Israel's Foreign Ministry asserted, the Turkish news agency had misinterpreted the Ministers words: "It is a tragedy what the Armenians went through but not a genocide". But even this way, the Israeli official's denialist position was obvious, and the Israeli Foreign Ministry's note simply rejected the fact of the official's

active position of denial. Such comments sound utterly unambiguous even for a hypocritical policy, especially that Mr. Peres did not make any practical step to refute his words as they had appeared in the Turkish media [2, 1]. Thus, when Rivka Cohen evaluates the Armenian Genocide as tragic events, but not a genocide, she actually repeats Sh. Peres *per se*, and views the Jewish Holocaust as an **incompatibly unique** (emphasis — S. G.) phenomenon of deliberate destruction of an entire nation.

Holocaust was a unique phenomenon — since it had always been planned and aimed to destroy the whole nation. At this stage nothing should be compared with Holocaust.

(<http://asbarez.com/46347/israeli-ambassador-says-noparallels-between-holocaust-and-1915-genocide/>)

The Israeli Foreign Ministry's official response on the issue of the Armenian Genocide was as follows:

As Jews and Israelis we are sorry for the killings and tragedies that took place articularly in 1915-16. We understand the outbursts of the feelings of both sides, know that there were many victims and realize the suffering of the Armenian nation. The examination of this theme requires discussions with participation of large communities of society and dialogue of historians, which will be based on facts and proofs.

(<http://www.turkishweekly.net/article/232/israel-sapproach-to-the-armenian-allegations.html>)

In the official response, expressions like **killings and tragedies, many victims, the suffering of the Armenian nation** at first sight make a faulty impression that the speaker is just about to use the term *genocide* too, thus giving credit to the already uncontestable historical truth confirmed long ago by numerous and various official documents, written and oral testimonies, feature and documentary reproductions [7, 2]. The above-mentioned estimations in the passage are an attempt to prove the necessity of a scholarly dialogue based on facts and evidences. However as the larger context shows, the main aim of the official response is to stress out again the uniqueness of the Holocaust in the history of mankind. Then, "graciously" or "justly," it is said that Israel accepts the tragedy of Armenians but those events cannot parallel with the Holocaust, although this, by no means, diminishes the scope of the tragedy. The most impressive response to Sh. Peres' scandalous declaration was given by Prof. Israel Charny in his open letter of April 12, 2001:

It seems to me, according to yesterday's report in the Ankara newspaper, that you have gone beyond

a moral boundary that no Jew should allow himself to trespass. <...> *Even as I disagree with you, it may be that in your broad perspective of the needs of the State of Israel, it is your obligation to circumvent and desist from bringing up the subject with Turkey, but as a Jew and an Israeli I am ashamed of the extent to which you have now entered into the range of actual denial of the Armenian Genocide, comparable to denials of the Holocaust.*

(<http://www.azg.am/EN/>)

Professor Charny's statement, though an open disagreement to Peres, diplomatically attempts to view the problem from the political perspective as well by using linguistic units which infer:

— some logical compromise (*even as I... it may be that...*);

— avoiding certainty on one side and admitting probability on the other (*it may be that...*);

— an emphasis on statesmanship from the viewpoint of *Realpolitik* (*in your broad perspective of the needs of the State of Israel*);

— sparing the person of the addressee at the expense of national and political necessity (*it is your obligation to circumvent... and desist from...*).

The very existence of such a context, however, does not veil Charny's real, honest and condemning approach to his addressee's immoral position. His criticism sounds like accusation. Primarily from the position of his national, then from that of his state and civil identity (*as a Jew and an Israeli*), he speaks most negatively (*I am ashamed*) of Peres' explicit denial (*comparable to denials of the Holocaust*), thus qualifying it as *going beyond a moral boundary that no Jew should allow himself to trespass*. At the International Conference "The Crime of Genocide: Prevention, Condemnation and the Elimination of Consequences" December, 2010, in Armenia, which different scholars on genocide from about 20 countries attended, in an interview to <Panorama.am> Israel Charny, evaluating Israel's official position on the issue as evil, expressed his attitude of anger and disappointment towards Israel's shameful failure to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Nevertheless, he was pleased to mention that they had culturally won the battle in Israel, since the people of Israel absolutely know the Armenian Genocide, they do not deny it.

It can be clearly seen that although the official circles have a negative attitude, nevertheless, the Jewish sound academic minds in Israel unequivocally condemn the Armenian Genocide and unanimously accept the fact of the crime against Armenians as an obvious example of a predetermined, meticulously organized and officially directed genocide. In this connection, Charny writes that the Armenian Genocide is notable in many ways, particularly as the earliest example

of a mass homicide of the 20th century which many consider a rehearsal for the Holocaust.

Yehuda Bauer, an American scholar of Jewish descent, also mentions that the massacre of Armenians is similar to the Holocaust. He perceives the mass destruction of Armenians during the period in question as the forerunner of the Holocaust of which the case of Armenians is the closest analogue. He is more than certain: "If we compare the number of Armenians killed by the Ottoman regime with the Armenian population in Turkey the number of victims excels or at least levels the ratio of Jews martyred during World War II".

Israeli Ambassador's infamous press conference and the above-mentioned response of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel echo in the comments of the Israeli genocide expert Yair Auron. He has no doubts that the historical significance of the official statement cannot be diminished for where did the victims, the broken fates and tragedy occur from if there was no Genocide, no Holocaust. It seems absurd to him that no murderer is notified as if a natural calamity had happened. Y. Auron expresses his firm belief that there is much cynicism, arrogance, intrinsic conflict and irresponsibility in that dangerous official statement. Declarations like that defile the memory of the Holocaust victims.

As an Israeli Jew, Y. Auron, apart from being a true scholar, is a responsible citizen of his country and is willing to apologize to each Armenian. He is convinced that the Jewish people cannot feel satisfied as long as Israel does not abandon its anti-historical recitation of the Armenian Genocide and does not change its immoral position.

Both Israel Charny and Yair Auron strongly condemn speculations on the Armenian Genocide and the policy of denial adopted by the state of Israel, and qualify it as a "terrible shame," "malfeasance," "failure" (I. Charny), "cynicism," "arrogance," "inner contradiction," "irresponsibility" (Y. Auron). According to Auron, such an attitude towards the genocide against some other nation causes immense moral damage to the Jewish people and desecrates the memory of the Holocaust victims and the significance of a fair position. Although, as we know, scholarly and official circles hold incompatible positions in the question of the Armenian Genocide, it should be noted however, that a small number of officials of the State of Israel have endeavoured on their own initiative to eliminate the existing discrepancy between pragmatic policy and moral justice.

On April 27, 1994, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, speaking to the Knesset (the legislature of Israel), expressed the idea that what had happened to the Armenians was certainly not merely a consequence of the war but undoubtedly a massacre and a genocide which cannot be forgotten for whatever political consideration.

It was no war. It was most certainly massacre and genocide, something the world must remember... We will always reject any attempt to erase its record, even for some political advantage.

(http://www.inhohome.com/index.php?page=historical_quotations)

On April 24, 2000, Yossi Beilin, as the Minister of Justice, once again confirmed his opinion that the fait accompli was an irrefutable fact of genocide, and that the Turks must be made clear the Israelis cannot accept the Turkish political claim to neglect the historical truth. The disappearance of one and a half million people was not a consequence of indifference or carelessness but a premeditated felony.

*Something happened that cannot be defined except as **genocide**. One-and-a-half million people disappeared. It wasn't negligence, it was deliberate. I do not think that the government has to take an official decision on the issue, but we must clarify to the Turks that we cannot accept their political demands to ignore a historical event.*

(<http://www.armenian-genocide.org/beilin.html>)

On the same day of commemoration of Armenian martyrs Israel's Education Minister Yossi Sarid on his own initiative visited the Armenian quarter and made the following statement:

*I join you, members of the Armenian community, on your **Memorial Day**, as you mark the 85th anniversary of your **genocide**. I am here, with you, **as a human being, as a Jew, as an Israeli, and as Education Minister of the State of Israel**. Every year Armenians gather in Israel and all over the world to remember and to remind the world of **the terrible disaster**, that befell your people at the beginning of the last century. For many years, too many years, you were alone on your **Memorial Day**. I am aware of the special significance of my presence here today along with other Israelis. Today perhaps for the first time you are less alone. The Armenian Memorial Day should be a day of reflection and introspection for all of us. A day of soulsearching. On this day, **we as Jews, victims of the Shoah should examine our relationship to the pain of others.***

*The massacre which was carried out by the Turks against the Armenians in 1915 and 1916, was **one of the most horrible acts to occur in modern times**. The Jewish ambassador of America to Turkey in those days, Henry Morgenthau, described the massacre as "**The greatest crime in modern history**." Morgenthau did not predict what was in store later in the 20th century for the Jews, the Shoah, **the most terrible of all** (emphasis — S.G.) *is still in front of our eyes.**

The person who was most shocked and shocked many people was the Prague-born Jewish author Franz Werfel with his masterpiece "The Forty Days

of Musa Dagh." <...> He wrote: *The pitiful scene of the starved and mutilated children of the Armenian refugees gave me the last push to redeem **the cruel fate of the Armenian people** from the abyss of oblivion."*

<...> Today in Israel very few youngsters have heard about Musa Dagh, very few know about **the Armenian Genocide**. I know how important the position of the Jews, and especially the attitude of the State of Israel to **your genocide** are for Armenians in the world. As Minister of Education of the State of Israel, I will do whatever is in my capacity in order that this monumental work "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" is once more well known to our children. I will do everything in order that Israeli children learn and know about **the Armenian Genocide**. Genocide is a crime against humanity and there is nothing more horrible and odious than Genocide. <...> We, Jews, as **principal** victims (emphasis - S.G.) of murderous hatred are doubly obligated to be sensitive, to identify with other victims. We have to evoke among the young generation natural and deep indignation against manifestations of genocide in the past, in the present and in future. Genocide is the root of all evil and we have to make upreme political and educational efforts to uproot and extirpate it. Whoever stands indifferent in front of it, or ignores it, whoever makes calculation, whoever is silent always helps the perpetrator of the crime and not the murdered.

In 1918, Shmuel Talkowsky, the secretary of Chaim Weizmann wrote with the approval of Weizmann, an important article entitled "The Armenian Question from a Zionist Standpoint." Among other things, he said. "We, Zionists, have deep and candid sympathy for **the fate of the Armenian people**. We do this as human beings, as Jews and as Zionists. As human beings our motto is: I am a human being. Whatever affects another human being affects me." "As Jews, as an ancient exiled people we suffered in all parts of the world. I dare say they made us experts of martyrdom. <...> Among the nations who suffer in our neighborhood there is no nation, whose **martyrdom** is more similar than the Armenian people. As Zionists we have several reasons to sympathize with **the Armenian Question**." <...>

I would like to see a central chapter on genocide, on this huge and inhuman atrocity. **The Armenian Genocide** should occupy a prominent place in this program which does justice to the national and personal memory of every one of you, to the memory of all the members of your nation. This is our obligation to you, this is our obligation to ourselves.

(<http://www.armeniangenocide.org/sarid.html>)

In every passage of the Israeli Education Minister's address to the Armenian community one can obviously sense the full understanding and assessment by him of the fact of the Armenian Genocide, the willingness to share the irreparable loss and grief of the Armenian people. He himself as a Jew,

as a citizen of a country where two nations of common fate live side-by-side, as the son of a people that has survived a genocide, cannot lack sensitivity towards the fair claim of Armenians ignored for years. With this very sense does the Education Minister, along with his fellow Jews, stand by Armenians on this sacred day of commemoration, for it is his country's duty, his fellow countrymen's and his own moral duty to support them.

The annual commemoration rallies of the representatives of the Armenian community, in his opinion, are extremely important because they draw the attention of the world to the Armenian Genocide — this shameful and horrendous event in the beginning of the 20th century, they force everyone to look inside their souls, and understand their attitudes towards *the pain of others*.

In the broader context of Sarid's speech, the ten salient appearances of the term *genocide* both in relation to the Armenian Genocide in particular and as a detestable and condemnable fact for humanity in general emphasize the whole structural and semantic scope, the capacity of the word meaning and the speaker's comprehension of the problem. Thus, between the lines one can sense the Minister's honest confession that it is very difficult at least to live side by side with the representatives of a people whose just cause is being ignored. He believes that first and foremost it is the Jewish state and its people, as a nation who have survived a Holocaust themselves, that can share the thoughts and reflections of the Armenian people, their experiences and expectations. This idea is especially crystallized in expressions like *the Armenian Genocide, your Genocide*, and in the use of the possessive pronoun *your* in various parts of his speech (*your Memorial Day, your genocide*) which allows one to conclude that in this context the implicit meaning is: *the pain is yours, and no one can feel it better than you do*. However, the speaker does not imagine himself as a detached onlooker who sees the problem in perspective. On the contrary, having inherited from his elder generations the painful experience of the Holocaust, he cannot but feel with the same bitterness the pain caused by the horrible disaster of the Armenian Genocide, and sense the importance of standing by the Armenians (*I am aware of the special significance of my presence here today; ... we as Jews, victims of the Shoah, should examine our relationship to the pain of others*). And although in this case the pain is not directly his own nation's, he is well aware of its incredible weight.

In the first part of the speech the rhetorical device of the fourstep repetition (*I ... as a human being, as a Jew, as an Israeli, and as Education Minister of the State of Israel*) plays an important role in terms of meaning and style by which the speaker fulfills a certain verbal tactics moving from a more common, universal measurement towards the national one, which in this case involves more than a mere

statement of nationality and implies that he is also a representative of a nation which shares a common fate. Then he transcends to the level of political and public identity and ultimately to the official state level which is a narrower but more sensitive perspective in this particular situational context.

In the broad horizontal (verbal) context of the speech the frequently used term *genocide* is paralleled with expressions like *terrible disaster, massacre, one of the most horrible acts to occur in modern times*. However, both these words and word combinations and quotes from other people's speeches, such as: *the greatest crime in modern history* (Henry Morgenthau), *the cruel fate of the Armenian people* (Franz Werfel), *the Armenian Question, the fate of the Armenian people, martyrdom* (Shmuel Talkowsky and their recontextualizations in Yossi Sarid's speech are aimed at making clear for the reader / listener that his understanding of the phenomenon of genocide is rather thorough and comprehensive.

By applying such units the speaker is trying to draw attention to another important mission of his: to revive the moral characteristics of the Jewish nation by restoring in the memory of his audience the positive image of ethnic Jews, such as Henry Morgenthau, Franz Werfel, Shmuel Talkowsky. They are the true incarnations of his nation's morality. In this way he is trying to counteract, to compensate for the immoral behaviour of the Israeli authorities, while, as it would turn out, they would go even farther along the path of their moral aberration. The speaker believes that all those who treat the phenomenon of genocide with silence or indifference [3] or operate on a profitable political basis, always help the criminals. The pragmatic evaluation of this notion of Yossi Sarid allows us to see that the charge here is not only general and targeted against all sorts of deniers and denying but has also a particular focus on reckoning his country's position of denial as unacceptable. This tendency of the author is borne out by the use of the pronominal form *whoever* which occurs thrice in the context (*whoever stands indifferent in front of it — (genocide — S.G.), whoever makes calculation, whoever is silent always helps the perpetrator*, and enhances the idea of generalization. The speaker is fully aware of how important for Armenians worldwide the official Israeli position on the issue is. He assures that he will employ all his rights and opportunities as Minister of Education, so that the younger generation of his nation knows the background of this terrible crime against Armenians. He has no doubts that only those who are well informed, who sense the abhorrence of all kinds of genocides perpetrated against humanity, are able to truly recognize and condemn them.

However, it is not impossible to understand from the context of the Minister's speech that while the Jewish official deeply shares

the grief of the Armenian people and presses for its recognition, nevertheless, he fails to throw off the consistently overwhelming idea of the Holocaust being the primary one of its kind. Note the use of such expressions as: *the most terrible of all, we Jews, as principal victims*, which are indicators of the Jewish *exclusivity syndrome*.

Obviously, both individual statesmen and scholars who accept the Armenian Genocide particularly emphasize that this issue has a deep moral significance for the Jewish people — survivors of the Holocaust — and for the State of Israel, as their representative; that is why the advanced Jewish public are determined to fight up to the end. They wonder if the authorities of the Jewish state, who tend to leave the solution of the problem to experts, will

eventually hearken to the voice of the public, giving thought to the fact that the political reputation of any government is the result of its moral image, reflected in its behaviour. Maybe they will at long last come to the understanding and accept that there cannot and must not be an insurmountable gap between politics and morality, and maybe they will stop petty political manipulations of moral principles, and we can hope that Israel will at long last get rid of its hyperpragmatic principles of Realpolitik, as well as the exclusivity syndrome and take a just stand on the matter of the Armenian Genocide.

It should be borne in our minds that the Armenian Genocide is not only the problem of the Armenian people but also of the whole mankind for it can never be severed from the historical memory of humanity.

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