

'Truth' that Is Far from Being True

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Abstract The article is devoted to the critical analysis of the book *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* by Guenter Lewy who aims to deny the undeniable fact of the horrendous genocidal events in Western Armenia at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century. The textological study of the work against the background of the cultural-historical facts characteristic of the period reveals Lewy's policy of language use and his strategy of affecting the perception of the readers unaware of the essence of the events instigated by the Ottoman authorities. Implementing his long-range persuasion tactics, Lewy tries to expand the Turkish viewpoints by introducing his 'truth' about the Armenian Genocide into the work. The examination of the linguistic facts in Guenter Lewy's book brings out his intention of distorting the historical reality.

Summary 1. Introduction. – 2. Textological Study of Interpretations of the Armenian Genocide: Gunter Lewy. – 3. Interpretation or Misinterpretation?. – 4. Lewy's Strategy of Persuasion. – 5. Conclusion.

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1 Introduction

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.¹

In the scientific elaboration of the problems, connected with this all-important issue, the Armenian historical and journalistic thought has undoubtedly recorded great results. At the same time a broad range of work has also been done in different languages.

Steps taken by different international organizations towards the worldwide recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide, although

1 Cf. Gellner 1983; Hovhannisian 1986; Dadrian 1994, 1995, 1999; Nersisyan 1998; Ayvazyan 2004; Sassounian 2005.

not persistent at times, in a wider sense do have some political and legal value from the perspective of the promotion of the international process of its condemnation; they try to have a positive impact on the Armenian-Turkish reconciliation. However, as we try to assess the situation rationally we may see that these developments sometimes take the wrong path and appear as occasionally pronounced untrue statements, comments and even detrimental stereotypes. It should be mentioned that such statements and comments, printed or broadcast, willingly or not, distort the historical truth and disorientate the world community. For instance, on an occasion of the Genocide recognition act one may hear: «What shall we do with the six million Kurds there once the land is returned?». Or the repeatedly pronounced «the recognition of the Genocide cannot be in a day or in a year [...], first Turkey should change [...], Turkey must admit the Genocide». These and other erroneous comments (Anon. 2014) may form a wrong view among the public that once Turkey fails to admit the Genocide then the whole issue comes to an impasse, or that Turkey should change before the problem is solved.

It is no wonder that Turkey does everything to hinder the extension of the matter, in particular the recognition of it by a vast direct or indirect anti-Armenian propaganda having the denial of the Armenian Genocide as a top priority for the Turkish government.² It is interesting to note that Kamuran Gururn (1985) – a Turkish political figure and historian, a vigorous proponent of the anti-Armenian propaganda – avoids the term ‘genocide’ and titles his book *The Armenian File* on a reason that in the Turkish diplomacy the concept ‘Armenian cause’ does not exist at all. Another vivid example is H.B. Danisman’s (2005) interpretation of the issue. With the use of a rhetorical question in the title of his book (*An Armenian Question...?*) immediately followed by a speech act of suggestion (*Let’s Consider...!*) the author reveals his distinct communicative goal: to cast doubt on the fact of the Armenian Genocide which, according to him, is still apt to be challenged, as well as gets the reader involved in the investigation of the facts intentionally distorted by himself.

It is no secret that with the ups and downs of the Turkish-American relations the world media restrain or unleash anti-Armenian publications aimed at defending the Turkish denial of the Armenian question and tend to please the Turks. In this respect, particularly noteworthy are *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *The Times* and other papers and media agencies which by dint of various linguistic means and stylistic tricks of journalistic and research narrative, by applying various principles and methods, present the historical events in their own preferable light and deny the undeniable truth (Scheffer 2012).

2 The Turkish *Ermeni Arastırmaları Enstitüsü* agency’s website suffices to prove this: <http://www.eraren.org> (2014-03-07).

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 given to the study of linguistic facts which are key elements of the textual mechanisms of perversion and distortion of the historical events. And although the legitimate cause of the Armenian Genocide issue is one of the most significant goals of the Armenian historical and diplomatic thought, and the historical, political and diplomatic outlooks of Armenian scholars have attracted no less attention, the study of the textual mechanisms (words, expressions, syntagmatic units and syntactic constructions, terms and toponyms, as well as all kinds of stylistic devices) is quite timely and ardent.

In the present study, the units of language are examined both from linguistic and pragmatic viewpoints with the aim of improving the process of the interlingual communication and promoting its efficiency which in a broader sense will hopefully pave the way to mutual understanding.

2 Textological Study of Interpretations of the Armenian Genocide: Gunter Lewy

In the world media and different publications, as well as in diplomatic correspondence, the perception of the implied meaning obtained by an uncommon combination of linguistic signs is largely enhanced by the perspective research spheres of speech acts and implication theories of communication, so common in linguistics for the last few decades (Levinson 1983; Griffiths 2006; Widdowson 2007, etc.). An attempt is made within an interpretive approach to view the text from the positions of the speaker's/author's (i.e. one who reproduces lingual signs) persuasive impact and the listener's/reader's (i.e. one who interprets lingual signs) perception. The textual analysis of perverted facts in various interpretations and commentaries needs a thorough, comprehensive and systematic approach which also implies a reference to the historical outlook of the problem as to a corresponding element of the vertical context of the given text (Akhmanova, Gubbenet 1977; Gasparyan 2013).

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. This will give an opportunity to bring the truthfulness of the assessments to light, as well as identify the linguistic means and textual methods of distorting the real facts.³

3 Attempts have already been made along these lines, though unfortunately not in a systematic way. Cf. Aivazyan 1998; Hovhannisian et al. 2001, pp. 11-34.

The focus of our investigation in the present article is Guenter Lewy's 'opus' *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (2005), which has the denial of the Genocide in its core. Although Lewy claims his position as being completely unbiased and his aim as disclosing the *truth, his truth*, is obviously far from being true.

As is the case with various books on the same issue, this work by Lewy catches the reader's attention with its very title.⁴ Apparently, any written work in its entirety is rendered as a unified text, and the title itself, as the heading of that text, reflects the main quest of the book and the author's own stand towards the problem in dispute. And as any title suggests the conceptual contents of the text, as well as the author's intention and is also meant to bring together and unite its various parts, the appropriate perception and rendering of the title can rightly be considered the first step along the process of the adequate perception and understanding of the conceptual and cognitive entirety of the work. If in some cases the issue in question and the author's evaluative approach may by various linguistic means be encoded, hence implicitly expressed in the title, in Lewy's work they are almost explicitly manifest. It might seem, at first sight, that by using the expression «a disputed Genocide» the author merely records the confronting approaches to the fact of the Genocide available in the scope of the discussion of the issue. But, viewing the title from the 'whole', the correlation between the 'parts' reveals the author's negative point and its intrinsic tendency to plant seeds of mistrust against the historical reality.

Lewy makes absolutely groundless efforts to support his observations with a statement that «no authentic documentary evidence exists to prove the culpability of the central government of Turkey for the massacre of 1915-16» (p. 250): whereas there are numerous documents pertaining to the issue. They are mostly being kept in the archives of the former embassies of the European countries to Turkey and in other files.⁵ Among the immense collection of diplomatic correspondence relating to the fact of the Genocide, the three volumes entitled *The Armenian Genocide; Turkey's*

4 In our studies we have had the opportunity to highlight the significance of a heading of any text, including various surveys on the Armenian Genocide. Cf. Gasparyan S. et al. 2011; Gasparyan, Gasparyan 2010, pp. 40-47; Gasparyan G. 2011.

5 Not long ago the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide published a great number of documents from the historical-diplomatic archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the Armenian issue in the period from 1913 to 1923. Italy turned out to be one of the superpowers of the time in whose archives a notable amount of documents related to the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian issue at large have been preserved. Unfortunately, they have so far been unknown to the Armenian readers and professional circles, with just a few exceptions. Investigations showed that these documents are gathered and presented there under the general title of *Armenia* - an interesting fact speaking for itself, especially from the view that Western Armenia, though having lost its statehood in the Ottoman Empire, is however perceived as Armenia (<http://www.genocide-museum.am/arm/italy-document.php> [2014-03-07]).

Responsibility and the Liability of the World; Documents and Comments, edited by Y. Barseghov (2002, 2003, 2005) – a professor of International Law, PhD in Law – are especially prominent. They include documentary evidence which shed light on both the facts of planning-preparing and executing the Armenian Genocide. These documents, from the embassies of the world powers, provide proof, irrefutable from political and diplomatic viewpoints, about the Turkish government being undoubtedly responsible for the policy of extermination of Armenians from Western Armenia in 1915-1923 and for the consequent events thereof.

Document no. 634 (Barseghov 2003), for example, represents the report (dated 20 December 1915) of Germany's Consul to Aleppo to the Reichskanzler von Bethmann Hollweg. It includes the overt statement of the Commissar of Home Affairs in charge of the deportations: «We need Armenia without Armenians». According to the Consul, the Turkish Government has consistently pursued that very principle.

According to another document (no. 655), A. Mikoyan, a member of the Caucasian Regional Committee, reports to Lenin that the Turkish Government follows a policy of extermination of Armenians as a result of which «Turkish Armenia is devoid of Armenians» (Moscow, December 1919). In yet another document (no. 642; Tiflis, 26 July 1918) General Kress von Kressenstein, the Head of the German military mission in the Caucasus, reports to the Foreign Ministry about Germany's complicity in the massacres of Armenians and states that Germany must take measures to prevent the extermination of one and a half million of Christians by the Turkish authorities, otherwise the public opinion, as well as history will hold Germany partly responsible for sharing the guilt in the atrocities perpetrated against Armenians in 1915.

Was, then, Lewy entitled to «open up new perspectives», as he claims, and convey «reliable» information to the reader about the Armenian problem if he was unaware of or even inadequately familiar with, willingly or not, the preceding and many other available sources and documents (both Turkish and Western)? The answer is an unequivocal «No». The best proof for this 'No' is the survey 'endeavoured' by Lewy himself and the falsehood of his statements.

3 Interpretation or Misinterpretation?

Interestingly, portraying the conditions the Armenians in Western Armenia were in until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Lewy records details of their economic, legal, moral and pshychological state. Although, in the mentioned period:

Armenians had not suffered from any systematic oppression. They were

second-class citizens who had to pay special taxes and wear a distinctive hat, they were not allowed to bear or possess arms, their testimony was often rejected in the courts, and they were barred from the highest administrative or military posts. The term *gavur* or *kafir* (meaning unbeliever or infidel) used for Christians had definite pejorative overtones and summed up the Muslim outlook. (Lewy 2005, p. 4)

As can easily be seen from the passage, the social state of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire towards the beginning of the nineteenth century was in fact unbearable. So was the attitude Turks showed to the 'unbelievers'. Introducing the synonymous units of the word *gavur* (*kafir*)⁶ (unbeliever or infidel) into the text, thus stressing its negative value,⁷ the author reaffirms that it really was a humiliating and vilifying atmosphere the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire lived in. The word *gavur* having obvious pejorative overtones sums up the Muslim outlook on Christians as it also referred to other minorities of the Ottoman Empire like ethnic Greeks, Syrians, Bulgarians, Serbs, etc.

However Lewy does not seem to worry about these facts. He chooses to rely on Ronald Suny's (1993) words according to which:

despite all discriminations and abuses, for several centuries the Armenians had derived considerable benefit from the limited autonomy made possible by the *millet* system. (Lewy 2005, p. 4)

He ignores the fact that Armenians, who had been living in the land of their ancestors for thousands of years, who had created a rich civilization and, being endowed with creative talents, were the preeminent regional power, were disqualified as second-class citizens whose rights could be violated at every step, and who were not even a nation but an 'ethnic minority' from a Turkish perspective. Does Lewy really fail to understand that as a result of the seeds of hostility planted by the authorities, a sense of 'aliens deprived of any rights' was sure to be rooted in the public perception with regard to minorities;⁸ that the government's pre-planned activities would

6 The Arabic *kāfir* is interpreted as «unbeliever, infidel». Cf. *Encarta World English Dictionary* 2007.

7 This Arabic borrowing *kafir* entered into the Turkish language and spread as *gavur* still back in the second half of the sixteenth century. It is used in contemporary Turkish in the same meaning as *infidel* «an offensive way of referring to smb. who does not believe in what the speaker considers to be the true religion» (*Oxford Dictionary* 2001, s.v., p. 665) and has several orthographic variances (*giaour*, *gawur* or *ghiaour*).

8 The presence of expressions like 'Armenian bastard', 'Armenian sham' in the colloquial Turkish speech testify to that. Cf. Dink 2009, p. 58. The unveiled contempt and animosity towards the *gavurs* have even penetrated into Turkish sayings, proverbs and songs. Cf. Gordlevskiy 1909, p. 116.

reach their goal, and Armenians would change from their status of ethnic minority to a common public enemy, as the Turks qualified them; and finally alongside with other ethnic minorities would be viewed as a threat to the security of the Empire? Moreover, the Empire suffering from the syndrome of land-losing had already adopted the conviction that ethnic minorities like Armenians who were a constant threat to the State should not, to put it mildly, exist and grow in number. Such a policy was sure to bear in Armenian souls a longing for independence from the Empire. It is no wonder H. Dink (2009, p. 59) wrote that «Armenians were the last of the peoples of the region to wake up and the one to suffer the grossest loss [...] Armenians seem to have paid by their national tragedy for all nations broken from the Ottoman Empire».

Lewy, apparently, could not evade the negative side of the matter; nevertheless, by quoting R. Suny's point, he tries to persuade the unsophisticated reader that the *millet* system had been rather beneficial for Armenians and that black clouds darkened the clear sky of the Empire by Russia's intrusion and with the liberation movement in Bulgaria.

Matters came to a head in the wake of the Bulgarian revolt against Ottoman rule in 1876. Reports reaching the West about the ferocious manner in which the rebellion had been suppressed helped solidify **the image of the 'terrible Turk'**. Russian public opinion clamored for help to the Southern Slavs, and in April 1877 Russia declared war upon Turkey. The commander of the Russian army invading eastern Anatolia was a Russian Armenian, Mikayel Loris-Melikov (his original name was Melikian). The Russian troops included many Russian Armenians; Armenians from Ottoman Anatolia were said to have acted as guides. The spread of pro-Russian sentiments among the Armenians of Anatolia, who hoped that Russia would liberate them from the Turkish yoke, was well known. All this **alarmed** the Ottoman government and **raised doubts about the reliability of the Armenians**. The transition from 'the most loyal *millet*' to a people **suspected to be in league with foreign enemies** was complete. (Lewy 2005, p. 7)

As the context of the passage shows, it is by the Bulgarian revolt itself, the Armenian-Russian relations and the Armenians' desire for liberation that Lewy tends to explain the gradual disappearance of the image of the 'tolerant Turk' and the birth of the notion of the 'terrible Turk'. From his position he reckons this situation intolerable for Turkey. He is convinced that it was the foreign intrusion that made the Turkish government mistrust Armenians. This idea is particularly emphasized in the author's utterances of doubt and concern («alarmed», «raised doubts about the reliability of the Armenians», «suspected to be in league with foreign enemies»). In fact, the author indirectly cajoles the crime of the Ottoman Empire; he

does not take into account that crimes against humanity never have (and in no case can have) extenuating circumstances.

There is an emphasis on the Armenian desire to cast aside the Turkish yoke in Lewy's further judgments as well. Thus:

The **new friendly relations** between the *Dashnaks* and the CUP survived even a new massacre of Armenians in Adana and other parts of Cilicia that took place in the wake of a conservative countercoup in April 1909. (Lewy 2005, p. 33)

Lewy tries to present the matter as if the good relationship of the Dashnak Armenians and the Young Turks remained stable even after the massacres of Adana and elsewhere in Cilicia in May 1909. Albeit he is sure that Armenians led by the Bishop of Adana were seeding animosity towards the Muslims and called for actions against *them*. Lewy's 'conviction' that from 1909 Armenians had launched military actions against the Young Turk government is revealed by the quote:

For some time, it appears, the leader of the Armenian community of Adana, **Archbishop Musheg, had urged his people to acquire arms, had voiced chauvinistic ideas, and had engaged in what was perceived as contemptuous behavior toward the Muslim.** (Lewy 2005, p. 33)

However this idea of Lewy can be argued, for the true history of Armenians, documented in various sources and proved by testimonies of witnesses, manifests that landslide atrocities in Cilicia had already unveiled the actual nature of the Constitutional government of the Young Turks: they had already proved to be the devoted followers of the former Sultan-ruled Turkey. Consequently, after the massacres of April 1909 there could be no way for good relationship (Simonyan 2012).

At the same time, he overlooks the other side of the issue: Armenians were growing more and more distrustful for future as they sensed the effects of the mistreatment on their own back. They found themselves in a situation where they deeply sensed they could face a real threat at any moment of time. The discouraging official policy towards Armenians, the unhealthy psychological condition of being deprived of their rights in their own land, humiliation and the authorities' bias to see an Armenian trail behind any threat could, of course, reinforce the desire for freedom and dignity in Armenians and push them to self-defense.⁹

⁹ Thus General Andranik's characterization of Turks comes of no surprise: «I cannot trust any Turk ever; even if they descend from heaven you have to make them understand, with the sword in your hand, that they have no right to ravage your property, trample the fair rights of individuals and of an entire people». Cf. Kalayjian 2008.

Reflecting on the correlation of the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, Lewy denies that Hitler undertook the extermination of the Jews following the example of the Ottoman strategy. The key argument for this denial by Lewy is that there exist no facts or proofs of Hitler ever saying: «Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?». Thus:

In the context of outlining Germany's need for *Lebensraum* (vital space) and the destruction of people standing in the way of this expansion Hitler is supposed to have said: «Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?». **This statement is frequently quoted to suggest** that Hitler felt encouraged to pursue his plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe because the world did not punish the Ottoman Turks for their annihilation of the Armenians. (Lewy 2005, pp. 264-265)

Lewy, who denies any relation between the first Genocide of the twentieth century and the Jewish Holocaust, is certainly not unaware of Hitler's statement where the latter confesses his longing to secure a *Lebensraum* for Germany by way of exterminating the Polish speaking Jews and hopes it will eventually fall into oblivion tomorrow just like the Armenian Genocide which is hardly recalled today. Lewy does not seem to consider George Olivia Forbes' (a British official in Berlin) telegram to the Foreign Office of Britain where he quotes Hitler's words.¹⁰ Nor does he consider the fact that the same message from a General of the German Staff had also been received by M. Lawner, the American representative of the Associated Press. Lewy does not even care for the publication of it in *The New York Times* on 24 November 1945,¹¹ or for the fact that in 1945 the Nuremberg Trial admitted the protocol as L-3 Exhibit USA-28 and the German original of the document is kept in Baden-Baden.¹²

This denial by Lewy undoubtedly has its reasons: he either tries to win

10 On 22 August 1939, introducing his plan of neutralization of the Polish Jews Hitler said he had instructed his mortal combatant squadrons to kill Jewish men, women and children of Poland implacably and unhesitatingly because it is the only way to secure the 'vital space' - the *Lebensraum* they need. And in this very context has he uttered the following words: «Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?». Cf. Lochner 1942.

11 Joseph Godman, an American historian, has referred to this expression by Hitler after the World War II in his book *The Armenian Genocide in the World War I* emphasizing and drawing parallels between the Nazi and Turanian crimes (Kalayjian 2008, p. 274).

12 *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Sr. D, Bd. 7 (Baden-Baden 1956), pp. 171-172. Cf. also Kalayjian 2008, p. 273.

the compliments¹³ of Turks or, due to «the call of the blood»,¹⁴ adheres to the exceptional view adopted by the Israeli officials.¹⁵ He is 'convinced' of the truthfulness of his conclusions and for that very reason he states further in his writing:

Other scholars have lined up on one side or the other of this controversy which **must be regarded as irresolvable**. The Armenian **attempt** to see in this purported remark by Hitler a link between the Armenian massacres and the Jewish Holocaust therefore **stands on a shaky factual foundation**. (Lewy 2005, p. 265)

Here too Lewy tries to impose his opinion on the reader. By emphasizing that the idea of finding any relations between the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust is baseless, he introduces his own negating attitude into the context with the help of the modal verb «must» and adds negative flavour to his words by concluding that any attempt by Armenians to «link» the two phenomena «stands on a shaky factual foundation». As the larger verbal context of the passage shows Lewy thus tries to make his readers believe that his highlight of the facts put forward by Armenian historians has revealed their inconsistent and unreliable nature.

A question is naturally bound to arise here: is the acceptance or the denial of the correlation itself that matters most? Isn't it more important for an 'honest' and 'truthful' scholar like Lewy to condemn **any genocidal crime** committed against humanity?

13 In this respect words of praise for Lewy's book by F. Balci and A. Akgul are notably interesting. For them it is unbiased, falsehood-free, based on historical facts, embodiment of truth. Cf. Balci, Akgul 2007. However, as A. Kechichian informs, Lewy has been lavishly rewarded by Turkish authorities and, which is more paradoxical, received an award for «Fighting crimes against humanity» (<http://www.turkishweekly.net/article/186/book-review-the-armenian-massacres-in-ottoman-turkey-a-disputed-genocide.html> [2014-03-07]).

14 The expression «the call of the blood» has been literally translated from Armenian by the author of the present article in association with the idiomatic title of Jack London's *Story The Call of the Wild*.

15 On 10 April 2001, *The Turkish Daily News* published a statement by Shimon Peres - then Israel's Foreign Secretary - confirming that he sees no relation between the presented evidences for the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide: «Nothing similar to the Holocaust occurred. It is a tragedy what the Armenians went through but not a genocide» (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/israeli-foreign-minister-shimon-peres-statement-on-so-called-armenian-genocide.en.mfa> [2014-03-07]).

4 Lewy's Strategy of Persuasion

I start with the assumption that the various decrees issued by the government in Constantinople dealing with the deportation and its implementation are **genuine** and were issued in **good faith**. The Ottoman Government, **I am inclined to believe, wanted to arrange** an orderly process but did not have the means to do so. (Lewy 2005, p. 252)

The author is consistent in implementing his strategy of persuasion. He tries in every possible way to seem to be standing on neutral grounds but the biased presupposition has already formed a firm conviction in him which, he believes, rests on the information in official documents, in particular the decrees issued by the government in Constantinople.

Lewy employs his strategy of persuasion by using the personal pronoun 'I' which is a key element of pragmalinguistic value in his utterance. Although the use of the first person singular in utterances like «I start with the assumption» and «I am inclined to believe» is meant to express the author's subjective attitude, nevertheless, its combination with the noun «assumption» in the first case and the verbal form «to be inclined» in the second considerably smoothens the sharp corners of the author's subjectivity and makes an attempt to persuade the reader of his 'neutrality'. It is the official documents that 'convince' him that the Government of Constantinople was aptly inclined to improve the unstable conditions Armenians were in but, alas, turned out to be unable to carry out his project of reforms because of lack of means. In Lewy's opinion, it was a pity that the Turkish Government was not farsighted enough to see and understand the impossibility of realizing its «good will». What a euphemistic manner of interpreting the unpardonable behavior of the Ottoman authorities! It even sounds absurd in the global historical-social-political-religious-psychological and, after all, attitudinal context of the period in the Ottoman Empire. But Lewy ignores all these circumstances and enhances his strategy of persuasion further by using the word «want» in its direct, nominative meaning in the free word-combination «wanted to arrange», by adding positive connotational gloss into the text with the help of the units «genuine» and «good faith», thus trying to make the reader believe that the goal of the Ottoman government was to help the Armenians.

In another passage of the book, the author tries to balance the horrendous sufferings of the massacred Armenian population and the Turkish civilians who suffered from epidemics and hunger, the loss of the Turkish servicemen due to inadequate medical care. He is 'convinced' that the Turkish government could by no means deliberately horrify its own civilians. Thus, Lewy writes:

Large numbers of Turkish civilians died as a result of severe shortages

of food and epidemics; **large numbers of Turkish soldiers**, especially the wounded in battle, perished for lack of adequate medical care and as a result of neglect and incompetence on the part of their own officers; and **large numbers of British prisoners** of war lost their lives as a consequence of inattention and the kind of gross mismanagement rampant in the Ottoman regime. Yet these results surely do not prove that the Ottoman government – ultimately responsible for all of these conditions – **sought and intentionally caused the death of its own civilian population, of its own soldiers and of its prisoners of war.** (Lewy 2005, p. 54)

The passage suggests that the Ottoman government could not be held responsible for carrying out the Armenian massacres because Turkish nationals – soldiers, civilians – were also among the suffering. This is where the persuasive nature of the wording reveals itself by the double use of the unit ‘**own**’ (very much theirs; cf. *Longman Dictionary* 1998, s.v., p. 966.) in the word combinations «**own** civilian population», «**own** soldiers». Note also the repetitions («large numbers of Turkish civilians», «large numbers of Turkish soldiers», «large numbers of British prisoners»), which aside from being a stylistic device are also meant to highlight the situation the crisis-stricken Empire was in.

In another passage of the book Lewy states:

While the Armenians were victims, not all of them were innocent victims; and the disaster that overtook them therefore was not entirely unprovoked. Most importantly, while the Ottoman government bears responsibility for the deportations that got badly out of hand, the blame for the massacres that took place must be primarily on those who did the actual killing. (Lewy 2005, p. 257)

Thus, Lewy’s vicious position to look for the guilt in Armenians themselves is summarized in the passage by the statement, «while the Armenians were victims, not all of them were innocent victims». As the larger verbal context of the passage discloses, the guilt of the Armenians was their pursuit of ways to save their lives looking both to the West and to Russia. And the Young Turk regime, according to Lewy, had merely overestimated their foresight and disclosed their ineptness of timely and mature decisions. The author’s endeavours to cover up the brutal objectives of the Turkish regime are again euphemistic. Unsophisticated readers can hardly help a sense of compassion in their hearts towards the Turks who, ‘unfortunately’, just failed to carry out their ‘merciful’ plan of displacing Armenians to a ‘safer habitat’. Even the fact that some of the Young Turk fanatic leaders had welcomed and encouraged the extermination of so many Armenians does not tell anything to Lewy of their prior intention to annihilate Armenians.

Persistently following his strategy of obfuscating the reader, Lewy does not shy away from drawing parallels between millions of victims of a pre-planned slaughter on the one hand, and injured servicemen, refugees and war prisoners whom the authorities were unable to render adequate care to («**badly mishandled its wounded soldiers, refugees and prisoners of war**») on the other, thus emphasizing that while it is impossible to ignore the horrors to which the Armenians were subjected, he in fact insists on the importance of seeing and evaluating these terrible events in their proper historical context. Lewy tries to persuade his reader that he is the scholar who is after the historical truth and that the order for the deportation of the Armenian community was issued at a time of great insecurity, not to say panic, when safer displacement of Armenians could prove impossible because it was hard to reckon the precise consequences. He is certainly sure that the Ottoman government bears some responsibility for deportations as they failed to monitor the process, albeit not the government but the actual murderers should be held culpable.

Thus, it is no mere chance that the author categorically refuses to use the term 'genocide'.

Finding a man with a smoking gun standing next to a corpse tells us nothing about the motive for the killing - it may have been murder or a case of self-defense. Indeed, we cannot even be sure that this man is the killer. Similarly, the fact that large numbers of Armenians died or were killed during the course of the deportations can give us no reliable knowledge of who is to be held responsible for these losses of life. **The high death toll** certainly does not prove in and of itself the guilt of the Young Turk regime; nor can we infer from it that the deaths were part of a genocidal plan to destroy the Turkish Armenian community. (Lewy 2005, p. 54)

In this passage the author contends that the presence of someone with a smoking gun standing by a dead body cannot prove that the person is a murderer. Then he emphasizes all over again that the Ottoman government did not and could not have any connection with the Armenian massacres in so far as Armenians had died as a result of mass deportations. Moreover, avoiding the term 'genocide', the author uses the expression «the high death toll».¹⁶ Our comparative analysis of the semantic structures of the units «death toll» and «genocide» reveals Lewy's intention of presenting the well-known events of the 1915-1916s as a 'tragic accident' which had nothing to do with the political endeavours

16 «*Toll*: the amount of damage or the number of deaths and injuries that are caused in a particular war, disaster, etc.» (*Oxford Dictionary* 2001, s.v., p. 1368).

of the Ottoman government. The attributive word-combination «death toll» refers to an occasion caused by war or other disaster and, what is even more important, it rules out the factor of deliberateness.¹⁷ However, amongst a multitude of testimonies, German writer and publicist A. Wegner's open letter (dated 23 February 1919) to the President of the USA Woodrow Wilson is noteworthy. In this letter, Dr. Wegner tries to convey to the President the desperate cry of the Armenians' sufferings.¹⁸ The genocidal nature of the crime is confirmed by many other archived documents.¹⁹ As far as Lewy's evaluations of the events are concerned, they cannot be rendered valid because the story invented by him is full of historical distortions.

5 Conclusion

Our examination of linguistic facts against the background of historical events manifests the author's main intention and clear goal in this book, aimed at affecting the perception of readers unaware of the essence of Armenian-Turkish relations, as well as expanding the Turkish viewpoints which he tries to do by implementing his strategy of persuasion. Thus, true are the words by Taner Akcam (an ethnic Turk, a historian and a sociologist) who rightly states that Lewy's professional qualification in terms of the survey undertaken, raises doubts (Akcam 2008, pp. 111-145).

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17 Cf. *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article II*, 9 December 1948, UN; also Gasparyan 2010.

18 <http://www.vhec.org/images/pdfs/armenian%20teachers%20guide.pdf> (2014-03-07).

19 Cf. e.g. AVPR (1985); DZA (s.d.); Poghosyan 2011; Wegner 1992.

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