# Memorialization and Assimilation: Armenian Genocide Memorials in North America

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## MEMORIALIZATION AND ASSIMILATION: ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MEMORIALS IN NORTH AMERICA

**Abstract**

The Armenian National Institute lists forty-five Armenian genocide memorials in the United States and five more in Canada. Nearly all were built after 1980, with a significant majority appearing only after 2000. These memorials, which represent a considerable investment of time, energy, and money on the part of diasporic Armenian communities across the continent, followed quite deliberately on the pattern and rhetoric of the public Jewish American memorialization of the Holocaust that began in the 1970s. They tend to represent the Armenian diasporic story *in toto* as one of violent persecution, genocide, and rehabilitation within a white American immigrant sphere, with the purpose of projecting and promoting a fundamentally recognizable story about diaspora integration and accomplishment. This article argues that the decision publicly to represent the Armenian genocide as parallel to the Holocaust served as a mode of assimilation by attaching diaspora histories to an already-recognized narrative of European Jewish immigrant survival and assimilation, but also by disassociating Armenians from Middle Eastern diaspora communities facing considerable public backlash after the Iranian hostage crisis of 1980 and again after September 11, 2001.

INTRODUCTION

For decades after the Armenian genocide, memorialization of the event and its victims remained essentially private among the large Armenian diaspora communities in the United States. But in the 1970s and 1980s, Armenian Americans began to undertake campaigns to fund and build public memorial sites honoring the victims and bringing public attention to the genocide. By 2016 the Armenian National Institute had recorded forty-five Armenian genocide memorials in the United States and five more in Canada, most built since 1980.

Many of these memorials followed quite deliberately on the pattern and rhetoric of the public memorialization of the Holocaust that began in the 1970s. In the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War

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and the domestic upheavals of the Civil Rights Movement, American Jews actively recast the historical memory of the Holocaust in specifically American-inflected terms, creating a particular narrative of ethnic victimhood that both reflected and garnered new forms of political capital. In the subsequent decades, Armenian Americans—seeking similar collective recognition as a loyalist ethnic category within the American political sphere—made the decision to publicly represent the Armenian genocide as a historical parallel to the Holocaust. The memorials they constructed therefore represented the Armenian diasporic story as one of violent religious persecution and eventual rehabilitation within the American sphere, with the purpose of projecting and promoting a basically recognizable story about white immigrant integration and assimilation.

By attaching diaspora histories to an already-established, American- centered narrative of European Jewish immigrant survival and success, Armenian American activists hoped to bring attention, recognition, and political capital to Armenian American affairs, especially in the face of increasingly visible official Turkish denial of the genocide. But more fundamentally, such public memorializations of the Armenian genocide—spearheaded by diaspora communities with an extremely wide variety of family backgrounds, arrival histories, and geographical origin points—represented a considered reaction to domestic xenophobia. As immigrant communities associated (however tangentially) with Islam or the Middle East faced extreme public hostility following the Iranian hostage crisis of 1980 and again after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Armenian Americans actively sought to dissociate themselves from the Middle East and claim an essentially Western and white ethnic identity—an argument that Armenian diasporic activists had made since the early twentieth century, but that found renewed relevance in an era of heightened Islamophobia. Armenian genocide memorials modeled after American Holocaust memorialization thus served an essentially assimilative purpose, establishing the place of Armenian Americans in a long history of persecuted white immigrants finding eventual succor and success in the New World.

ARMENIAN DIASPORAS IN NORTH AMERICA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The first known Armenian immigrant to the United States enters the record very early: "Malcolm the Armenian" apparently settled in Jamestown in 1618 or 1619.[1] The early nineteenth century had already

seen some Armenian settlement in North America, mainly as a consequence of the early American missionary presence in the Ottoman sphere and these missions' focus on the empire's Christian communities. Some early American missionaries had tried to encourage their most promising students to study in the United States and occasionally succeeded, with something on the order of sixty Armenian men arriving via their mission connections by 1870.[2] Such immigration had little statistical impact on either the host country or the homeland, but it did indicate two more important phenomena: the establishment of a significant relationship between American Protestant mission organizations and Armenian communities in eastern Anatolia, and the rising phenomenon of Christian migration in and out of the Ottoman sphere, especially greater Syria, in the second half of the nineteenth century.[3] Though their rates of conversion to Protestantism were infinitesimal, the educational institutions established by American and British Protestant missions targeted and benefited Christians—including Armenians—in disproportionate numbers. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), in particular, established schools for Armenians and Greeks in what historian Ryan Gingeras has called the "South Marmura" region that substantially increased the social, economic, and political distance between Armenian/Greek communities and their Muslim neighbors, reduced Christian subjects' reliance on Ottoman state institutions for economic opportunity and social advancement, and introduced the concrete possibility of migration to the United States.[4] Economic hardships deriving from the increased absorption of the Eastern Mediterranean into a global economy also contributed to emigration from greater Syria, especially the Mount Lebanon region, to the United States and Europe in search of work—a phenomenon that expanded regional awareness of labor migration and created an industry of middlemen to negotiate the logistical and bureaucratic details of such journeys.[5] Migration to the Americas had become one imaginable response to economic hardship or political unrest in the Ottoman sphere.

In the late nineteenth century, these factors combined with increasing unrest in eastern Anatolia and the Russian/Ottoman borderlands to create a substantial wave of Armenian migration to the United States. In a belated postscript to an already well-established story of waves of ethnic cleansing and refugee flight (both Muslim and Christian) in and out of the erstwhile Ottoman Balkan territories,[6] the Hamidian government began to engage in violent campaigns against

Armenian communities as a mode of discouraging Armenian separatist campaigns and collusion with Russian interests.[7] In 1894, Armenian-Kurdish conflict in the region around Sasun afforded the Ottoman government the opportunity for violent intervention, intended to terrify the Armenian population into submission while also reaffirming local Kurdish loyalty to the Ottoman state. The massacres of Armenians that unfolded over the next three years killed somewhere between 80,000 and 300,000 people and forced more to submit to conversion.[8] As historian Selim Deringil has put it, following these years of extreme violence "there is no doubt that the majority of the Ottoman Armenians in Anatolia lived in a state of terror."[9] Now, the longstanding Armenian relationship with local American missions began to translate into active migration patterns. In the mid-1890s the United States was accepting 2,500 Armenian immigrants each year; by 1900 somewhere on the order of 15,000 Armenians had settled within its borders, alongside another 2,500 coming from Russian Armenian territory.

Such migration increased in the early years of the twentieth century. Further massacres in 1904 and again in 1909 added to the sense of threat, and the extreme violence, often along ethnic lines, of the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 raised the specter of Turkish nationalist violence against the empire's Christian populations and stoked Armenian fears.[10] Economic uncertainty stemmed from the state's military difficulties and the political turmoil following the constitutional revolution and counterrevolution of 1908 and 1909.[11] Legal migration out of Ottoman territory also became easier following the Young Turk assumption of power.[12] All this had the effect of substantially increasing emigration; by 1914, Armenian numbers in the United States and Canada had reached approximately 67,000.

During the First World War, the situation of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire went from difficult to desperate as Ottoman authorities began their murderous deportations. Scholars have variously estimated that between 600,000 and 1.5 million Ottoman Armenians perished in the genocide of 1915–1916.[13] Many of those who survived the death marches were still in refugee encampments across greater Syria by the mid-1920s; others remained in Cilicia; some were in Soviet Armenia; still others had left for Europe, especially France, where a major Armenian community was located in Marseille. The destitution of many of the survivors meant that post-genocide Armenian migration to the United States was quite limited; an

additional 23,000 Armenians came to the United States and Canada during the decade following the genocide, bringing the total number of Armenians in North America to about 100,000 before the American government essentially ended immigration from eastern Europe and the Middle East with the adoption of the Immigration Act of 1924.[14] The so-called "National Origins Formula" enshrined in this act introduced a quota system intended to ensure the maintenance of an earlier ethnic makeup of the country and sharply restricted Jewish and Armenian immigration from eastern and central Europe and the Middle East.[15] Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, despite his earlier support for Armenian causes during the First World War, now explicitly targeted Armenians as undesirables: "Our restriction on immigration should be so rigid that it would be impossible for most of these people to enter the United States. Reference is especially made to Armenians, Jews, Persians, and Russians, all of which have been so driven hither and thither that they cannot be regarded as desirable populations for any country."[16]

Although a few thousand Armenians were admitted to the United States after the Second World War under the protection of the Displaced Persons Act (1948), and another 8,500 arrived in the 1950s as refugees from the 1948 war for Palestine, migration did not resume in large numbers until the Immigration Act of 1965 lifted the racialized restrictions on entrance that had been in place for forty years.[17] At this point immigration exploded again, driven less by circumstances specific to Armenian communities than by general political turmoil across the Middle East: the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, civil war in Lebanon, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and various military coups in Turkey. Tens of thousands of Armenians from Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Turkey arrived in the United States, supported by an already-extant diasporic network; tens of thousands more began arriving from Soviet Armenia in the 1970s and 1980s as exit restrictions were lifted.[18] By the late 1980s it was estimated that there were between 600,000 and 800,000 Armenian Americans living in the United States, including many recent arrivals.[19]

ARMENIAN AND JEWISH "WHITENESS"
From an early date some of these Armenian Americans were interested in emulating the model of American Jewish assimilation as they sought political and cultural acceptance within their new milieu. From the early twentieth century, many American Jewish intellectuals and

activists reluctant to be identified (as African Americans were) as a racial category began to propose theories of ethnic difference that simultaneously assumed Jewish whiteness, Americanness, and cultural distinctiveness.[20] Even as leading political figures including Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt spoke in derogatory terms about "hyphenated Americans," such activists sought to reinvent precisely such plural identities as what one scholar has called "the distinctive mark of being American"[21]—an approach that Armenian Americans would find extremely useful as they charted their own course in an often xenophobic political atmosphere.[22]

In the increasingly hostile environment for immigrants following the First World War, Armenian American diaspora activists in the United States repeatedly sought to claim membership in the project of Western "civilization" by disassociating themselves from the old Ottoman sphere and, sometimes, drawing connections between the historical experiences (and national rights) of Armenians and Jews.[23] As early as 1919, an Armenian American lawyer in New York named Vahan Cardashian founded a new organization called the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia to advocate for an independent Armenian "homeland," overseen by an American mandate.[24] Cardashian's co-founder, a former ambassador to Germany named James Gerard, argued for Armenian nationalism in terms that precisely recalled Herzl's declaration two decades earlier that Zionists in Palestine would represent "part of a wall of defense for Europe in Asia, and outpost of civilization against barbarism"[25]:

> The Armenian, an Alpine Aryan like the Swiss, North Italian, and most Greeks, since his emigration to Asia Minor over 3,000 years ago, has been a stumbling block in the way of Asiatic invaders toward the West and has kept aflame in the New East the light of Western civilization and Christianity amidst hardships that would have ground to the dust a weaker nation. . . . If we take the Armenian mandate, Armenia will become the outpost of American civilization in the East.
>
> . . . [if not], we shall have thus lost a great opportunity for  the propagation of Anglo-Saxon civilization in the Near East.[26]

Such language, emphasizing Armenian (alongside Jewish) belonging in a project of Western "civilization," became fundamental

to the diasporic memorialization of a lost Armenian homeland during these years of intense hostility to immigrants in the United States. For decades Armenian American activists continued to present the Treaty of Lausanne, which suspended the earlier proposal for an independent Armenian state in favor of Turkish claims, as a victory for savagery over civilization—as the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* put it in 1945, "The Armenian people with their heroic service to the allies during two world wars, their heroic record in the struggles for the preservation of Christianity and Western civilization against the predatory and barbaric Turks, have long earned the admiration of the entire civilized world and have a just Cause."[27] Private sources reflected the same influences; as one diasporic memoir put it, "Had the Treaty of Sevres [with its promise of an independent Armenia] passed, it would have said: The civilized world cares about the most ancient Christian nation of the Near East. . . . We were left to the perverted barbarism of the Turks."[28]

Language like this, with its assertion of Armenian belonging in the "civilized" Western and American sphere, had clear resonances with contemporaneous Zionist claims about Jewish modernity, progress, and civilization vis-a-vis the Muslim world.[29] It also, of course, attached the idea of civilization to the American legal concept of whiteness. By 1925, when the *United States vs. Cartozian* case formally decided the question of whether Armenians could be considered white, the relevance of the Jewish comparison was well established: the chief attorney for defendant Tatos Cartozian prepared an expert witness to publicly state the case for Jewish whiteness as support for similar Armenian claims.[30]

## THE HOLOCAUST MODEL: MEMORIALIZATION AND AMERICANIZATION

Genocide memorials were not an obvious mode of claiming public space or dictating diaspora narratives for either the Armenian or the Jewish communities of North America. For more than two decades after the Holocaust there was very little public acknowledgment or discussion, from any quarter of American life, of the Nazi genocide and its Jewish victims. As many scholars have pointed out, American Jews in positions of authority or leadership during the war frequently understated Jewish suffering under the Nazi regime, for fear of provoking anti-Semitic reactions in the United States or inviting reluctance around the American contribution to the war effort.[31] After

the war things remained much the same. There was relatively little scholarship about the Holocaust in the 1950s and 1960s;[32] depictions of Nazi crimes tended to depict Jews as one group of victims among others; and political conversations about mass atrocity in the context of the war tended to revolve not around Germany but around Hiroshima.[33] As late as the mid-1960s, the language of victimhood, survival, and remembrance that would become such a central feature of Holocaust memorialization would have seemed quite foreign to most American Jews—and perhaps also dangerous to their interests. In the political context of the Cold War, in which West Germany had emerged as an important American ally against the Soviet Union, a too active consciousness of the recent German past could represent an impediment to the pursuit of American interests.[34]

The question of why the Holocaust rather suddenly emerged as an enormously central aspect of American historical consciousness in the late 1960s and 1970s remains a contentious one among scholars. In 1999 the influential historian Peter Novick advanced the argument that while there were some early influences moving the Holocaust into a more central position in American historical political discourse (for instance, the Eichmann trial in 1961–1962 and the public arguments surrounding Hannah Arendt's interpretations of it), the main impetus for the Holocaust's sudden prominence was Israel's stunning military victory over the combined armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in 1967—an outcome that, in the words of one of Novick's reviewers, "transformed Israel in the life of American Jews from a country about whose fate many of them cared into a country about whose survival they were obsessed."[35] Novick suggested that in the aftermath of the 1967 war, both Jews and non-Jews saw in Israel a potential military ally and a bulwark for American interests in the Middle East. Many also viewed Israel's victory as an erasure of longstanding tropes of Jewish weakness; as the literary critic Alan Mintz has pointed out, it offered American Jews a kind of "vicarious romantic fulfillment in the courageous image of the Israeli citizen soldier- farmer. . . that could be enjoyed with little risk or sacrifice."[36] At the same time, increased levels of Jewish assimilation into mainstream American life, measured particularly by rates of intermarriage and a decline in religious observation, caused concern within the American Jewish establishment about the diminution of American Jewish distinctiveness—a consequence, ironically, of a decline in anti-Semitism as well as Jewish immigration. At this point, many American Jewish leaders began to advocate for a renewed communal consciousness anchored by a

memory of the Holocaust as a mode both of supporting Israel and of resisting total Jewish assimilation into American life.[37] This communal narrative served American Jews effectively, Novick argued, partly because of the emergence of a "culture of victimization" in the 1970s United States in which claims of victim status became foundational to identity politics among many American minority communities.[38]

Beginning in the late 1960s, a number of memorial and museum projects began to emerge that claimed public space for a specific kind of memorialization of the Holocaust in North America. Unlike other sites of Holocaust memorials in Germany, Israel, and elsewhere, Holocaust memorialization in the United States tended to focus around issues of identity politics that reflected the particular anxieties of the American Jewish diaspora within a new and broader domestic ethnic consciousness. With the rise of the civil rights and Black Power movements, white communities in the United States sought to maintain their political primacy through what historian Matthew Jacobson has called a "white ethnic revival"—a celebration of narratives of white immigrant travails eventually leading to a well-deserved prosperity in the New World.[39] In this context, public narration of the Holocaust—far from marking Jewish immigrant difference—could actually serve an assimilative purpose, placing American Jews alongside other white groups claiming political power via a narrative of immigrant hardship and eventual earned success. (Jacobson makes the crucial point that this tactic was explicitly intended to challenge black political claims to power and belonging: "The pervasive conceit of the nation of immigrants, as [Martin Luther] King recognized, blunted the charges of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements and eased the conscience of a nation that had just barely begun to reckon with the harshest contours of its history forged in white supremacism.")[40]

It was in this context that claims of the Holocaust's "uniqueness," alongside a general exclusion of other, non-Jewish victims of the Nazis and a broad rejection of comparisons with other historical moments of exterminatory violence, rose to a new level of prominence in the American discussion and memorialization of Nazi crimes. Thus in 1978, when President Jimmy Carter formally appointed a commission to put together a plan for an American national Holocaust memorial (announced on Israel's thirtieth anniversary, highlighting the connection between Israel's new strategic importance for the United States and a heightened American consciousness of the

Holocaust), he inadvertently opened up a decade-long fight over the extent to which non-Jews could be memorialized as victims and whether the Holocaust might legitimately be analyzed alongside other instances of genocidal violence.[41] The eventual emergence at the museum of a dramatically decontextualized and narrowed narrative of ethnic prejudice leading to inhumanity represented a radical "Americanization" of the Holocaust. Its presentation of events valorized an American-style "tolerance" of (white) ethnic identifications as an antidote to exterminatory violence; emphasized the American rescue of Jewish survivors; and firmly insisted on the special place of European Jewish victims of the Holocaust in global histories of mass atrocity—all emphases that many scholars viewed as ahistorical at best and actively misleading at worst,[42] but that nevertheless now became consistent themes in Holocaust memorials and museums across North America.[43]

EARLY ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MEMORIALS, 1968–2000

It was precisely this type of Americanized narrative of genocide that the Armenian diaspora sought to reproduce in its own campaign for memorialization: one that emphasized a clearly differentiated *white* ethnic identity, while also highlighting the role of the United States as a space of succor and solace. Ironically, of course, this imitation of American Jewish ethnic politics had the effect of challenging one of the basic tenets of this kind of Holocaust memorialization: its supposed uniqueness. Some Armenian American scholars and public figures tried to get around this problem by representing the Armenian genocide as explicitly prefiguring and reflecting the specifics of the Holocaust, thus claiming special status for the Armenian and Jewish genocides together without extending that status to other mass atrocities.[44]

Prior to the 1960s, memorials to victims of the genocide tended to be small, private carvings or displays in Armenian churches, often emphasizing the idea of Christian suffering at the hands of Muslim Turks. Such a portrayal now began to meld with a different depiction of ethnic suffering drawn from the new politics of the white ethnic revival and the simultaneous rethinking of Holocaust memorialization. The first major Armenian genocide memorial in North America, the Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument in Montebello, California, was completed in 1968 with financial backing from the substantial Armenian diaspora community in the greater Los Angeles area.[45] As

an idea it originated with a march in 1965 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide, after which community leaders raised $125,000 to build a memorial to its "martyrs." The memorial, an open-air sculpture located in a park, consisted of an eight-sided columnar structure seventy-five feet high, intended to recall the cone-shaped steeple of many Armenian churches.[46] The inscription on the plaque read, "Armenian  Martyrs Memorial Monument: This Monument erected by Americans of Armenian descent, is dedicated to the 1,500,000 Armenian victims of the Genocide perpetrated by the Turkish Government, 1915–1921, and to men of all nations who have fallen victim to crimes against humanity."[47] This first genocide memorial, then, gestured at the specific type of Holocaust memorialization just beginning to be articulated in the American Jewish context, particularly in its public assignment of responsibility to the "Turkish Government" and its description of the diaspora community as "Americans of Armenian descent." But other aspects of the language suggested a somewhat different and less derivative type of memorialization: the use of the term "martyr," in particular, derived not from the comparison with the Holocaust but from Ottoman-era language describing mass atrocities and from a long-standing Armenian Orthodox church discourse.[48] The reference to other victims of "crimes against humanity" likewise indicated an inclusion of the Armenian genocide within a broader category of such mass killings, a position from which later Armenian genocide memorials would move away. The same year in Fresno, California, a plaque was erected in the Armenian Ararat Cemetery that featured a similar mix of older and emerging attitudes towards representing the genocide. It housed the remains of an Armenian killed in the Syrian desert during the deportations, brought to the United States in 1930 by an Armenian priest, with a plaque reading "Here lie the remains of an unknown Armenian martyred by the Turks with million and a half others 1915–1918 [sic]."[49] Here again, an older language of martyrdom was visible within a new ethnically inflected language of public memorialization.

The idea of Armenian genocide memorials took on a new life after 1980, with at least twenty new memorials built across the United States between 1980 and 2001. These tended to explicitly reference the Turkish government as the executor of the genocide and often gave a number of dead (most often the figure of one and a half million victims, though one such memorial cited two million). Many, though not all, abandoned the word "martyr" in favor of a language of survivorship, memorialization, and nationhood. A memorial in Providence, Rhode

Island, built in 1995, struck precisely this tone, reading "A tribute to our forefathers who searched for freedom and human dignity/ Heritage culture tradition/ Wherever Armenian is spoken or written Armenia lives." Many also explicitly highlighted the "Turks" or the "Turkish government" as the perpetrator of the genocide, dedicating monuments "in Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide. . . Where 1,500,000 Innocent Armenians were Massacred by the Ottoman Turks" (in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1990); "the victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 committed by the Ottoman Turkish government" (Binghamton, New York, 2001); or "in memory of the 2 million Christian Armenians massacred by the Turks" (Emerson, New Jersey, late 1960s). In 1998 the local Armenian American community organization bought the Mount Davidson Cross in San Francisco and turned it into a genocide memorial with an inscribed plaque reading, "If evil of this magnitude can be ignored, if our own children forget then we deserve oblivion and earn the world's scorn."[50] A narrative about the genocide intended for public American consumption was beginning to crystallize—though it continued to operate alongside church-derived narratives about Christian martyrdom, an approach that reached an apotheosis in 2015 with the Armenian Apostolic Church's controversial mass canonization of all the victims of the Armenian genocide.[51]

The question of why this new narrative about the genocide began to emerge precisely at this stage can be answered only tentatively, but three possible answers present themselves. One is that the Holocaust's movement towards the center of American life and historical memory offered an evidently successful new model for emphasizing Armenian belonging and assimilation into whiteness. Armenian American communities had long sought and sometimes received such privilege, as when the Cartozian ruling of 1925 assured their exemption from the Asian Exclusion Act on the basis of their identity as the "first Christian nation" and their frequent marriages into white communities.[52] These new forms of genocide memorialization offered another opportunity for such access to the privileges of political belonging; they rested, as Paul Williams has put it, on "the entrenchment and naturalization of the phenomenon known as 'identity politics.'"[53] Armenian genocide memorials in the United State sought to solidify a sense of ethnic affiliation, both to ensure continued community coherence and to claim a specifically American immigrant history—what one sociologist has called a "sidestream" identity[54]—

that might lead to the successful assimilation into whiteness they saw in American Jewish communities.[55]

Second, the period after 1979 saw a tremendous rise in hostility throughout the United States to immigrants from the Middle East, a consequence of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the hostage crisis of the following year. The intensive news focus on the hostages gave rise to a new explanatory device about violence in the Middle East: "militant Islam," contrasted with a newly religion-laden vision of American national identity as essentially Christian and a rising evangelical wing of the Republican party.[56] Middle Eastern diaspora communities in the United States had of course experienced discrimination before, but their immigration narratives did not differ fundamentally from those of other migrants.[57] Armenian immigrants, in particular, encountered little in the way of outright hostility; as one scholar of diaspora has noted, Armenians had to face little worse than "blankness or at the very least decided vagueness as to their origins or ethnic identity."[58] But in the post-1979 period, Islam was treated in newly hostile fashion in the American media and street protests and demonstrations against Iranian and, by extension, other Middle Eastern immigrants became a common phenomenon, at the same moment that a new wave of Armenian immigrants entered the United States from Lebanon and Iran (some, of course, fleeing the Iranian Revolution). Instances of racial violence against Armenian American communities became more common in this period; a Los Angeles commission tracking hate crimes noted a surge in anti-Armenian activity in the late 1980s, with a number of white supremacist crimes against Armenians recorded in other communities across the state as well.[59] In one California high school, 48 percent of American-born Armenian American boys reported having experienced some form of racial discrimination.[60] Particularly for Armenian Americans whose families had arrived in the last two decades from Lebanon, Iran, Syria, or Afghanistan, the question of asserting their distance from the Muslim world became critical.[61] In this new atmosphere, Armenian Americans became anxious to differentiate themselves from other Middle Eastern immigrants and, especially, once again to emphasize their Christianity and their long-claimed "white" ethnic identity. Genocide memorials served precisely this purpose by publicly reminding American audiences of the Christian origins of the community and its victimhood at the hands of Muslims.

Finally, of course, this public memorialization emerged in the context of an increasingly visible denialism emanating from the Turkish government.[62] During the 1970s and 1980s Cold War alignments strengthened the relationship between the United States and Turkey, which a series of American administrations viewed as a valuable political, economic, and military partner in the global power struggle against the Soviet Union.[63] The strength of this relationship meant that as Armenian Americans began to press for public recognition of the genocide they faced resistance not only from the Turkish state but from their own government, which remained reluctant to raise issues that might strain the valuable Turkish-American strategic relationship. In this context an attachment to an already-established Holocaust model of genocide memorialization—and an already-extant discussion of the perils of denialism—seemed an appropriate and potentially effective mode of pressing for recognition within the American context.[64] A few Armenian writers like Vartges Saroyan even explicitly suggested the use of the Holocaust restitution movement as a model for reclaiming lost Armenian property.[65]

Armenian Americans, though, remained divided over approaches to memorializing the genocide and establishing an American ethnic identity. From the 1920s onward, a major divide emerged in the community between Dashnak (also Tashnag, sometimes referred to as the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or ARF) and non-Dashnak affiliated groups. In the main, these were differentiated by a vocal condemnation of Soviet and Bolshevik rule over Armenian territory on the part of the Dashnaks, and a Ramgavar, Hunchak, and Armenian Progressive League alliance marked by a willingness to work with the Soviet authorities towards some recognition of Armenian national rights, approaches formalized by both coalitions at their respective meetings in Boston in 1922.[66] The disagreements that played out between these factions intensified during WWII and the early years of the Cold War, when they took on new relevance due to rising American hostility to the Soviet Union; some anti-Dashnak writers, notably the journalist Avedis Derounian, went so far as to accuse the Dashnak party of collaboration with the Nazis.[67] The Armenian press in the postwar years was consumed once again with the question of the territorial expansion of Armenia and with the question of the possible immigration of Armenians in postwar "DP" (displaced persons) camps to the United States, a cause that not all Armenian Americans supported (and an issue that paralleled

similar conversations about the larger-scale question of Jewish DP immigration).[68] Intergenerational conflict emerged as well, particularly as second- and third- generation Armenian Americans emerged who identified less strongly with their Armenian background.[69]

By the 1980s, divisions had also emerged over the presentation of the Armenian genocide as a parallel to the Holocaust. The two main Armenian lobbying groups in the United States—the Armenian National Committee of America, a descendant of the pro-Dashnak ACIA, and the Armenian Assembly of America, an anti-ARF coalition founded in 1972—took different approaches to the question of relations with Jewish organizations and the state of Israel, with ANCA taking an aggressively critical position on Israel's relations with Turkey and its reluctance to recognize the Armenian genocide.[70] Individual Armenian American activists from both factions, though, sometimes displayed a reluctance to draw this particular comparison on the grounds of friendship or shared interests with Jewish organizations in the United States—as, for instance, when members of both lobbying organizations were condemned for the weak language in an agreement they reached with the Anti-Defamation League.[71] At other moments Armenian Americans actively sought the comparison, as when the Armenian American writer Peter Balakian appeared on the CBS show *60 Minutes* in 2010 to declare Dayr Zor "the Armenian equivalent of Auschwitz" and depict the murder of Armenians in smoke-filled caves as "primitive gas chambers."[72] Even as divided Armenian American activists wavered over making use of the Holocaust as a specific point of comparison with the Armenian genocide, they were often active in pressing Jewish organizations to offer some form of acknowledgement—as, for instance, in a protest against the selection of lstanbul as the site for a Holocaust education conference in 2000 and ongoing conversations with Jewish American groups about the question of genocide recognition.[73]

POST–2001 GENOCIDE MEMORIALS

The assimilative purpose of genocide memorials became even clearer in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. As is well known, Middle Eastern diasporic communities of all backgrounds—including non-Muslims and non-Arabs—became targets for public anger in the aftermath of the attacks.[74] Armenian Americans had particular reason, in this newly hostile atmosphere, to differentiate themselves as clearly and publicly

as possible from Muslim Middle Eastern diaspora communities. Consequently, the many genocide memorials Armenian American communities erected after 2001 tended to focus further on the diaspora experience and emphasize Americanized narratives of survivorship, opportunity, and assimilation.

One of the first Armenian genocide memorials unveiled after 2001 made this connection explicit: an Armenian church in Scottsdale, Arizona, erected a monument dedicated simultaneously to "the victims of the 9-11 tragedy and the Armenian martyrs of April 24, 1915."[75] A number of others offered information about Armenian genocide survivors who constituted founding members of the Armenian American community in particular spaces. A memorial in Portland, Maine, dedicated in 2003, bore an inscription reading "This memorial is dedicated to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1923, who settled in Bayside. By the early twentieth century over 250 Armenian families lived in Portland where they established businesses and a vibrant social life." Another, built in Troy, New York, in 2012, noted, "The Heritage Monument is an expression  of gratitude to the citizens of Troy, New York for welcoming our parents and grandparents, making it possible for them to live, work, prosper and raise their families in peace." A Twin Falls memorial built in 2014 read, "In memory of the Armenian genocide and the contribution that the American Armenians have made to our community." In Las Vegas, a 2015 memorial declared that "The Las Vegas Valley has offered hope and opportunity to those seeking to begin new lives. . . a gift to the people of southern Nevada from the Armenian-American community." The Armenian Heritage Park opened in Boston in 2012 likewise laid stress on the narrative of diaspora opportunity: "Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have offered hope and refuge for immigrants seeking to begin new lives. The park is a gift to the people of the Commonwealth and the City of Boston from the Armenian American community of Massachusetts . . . . in honor of the one and one half million victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923. May it stand in remembrance of all genocides that have followed, and celebrate the diversity of the communities that have re-formed in the safety of these shores."

This reflected another theme of these post-2001 memorials, a tendency to explicitly place the Armenian genocide alongside other instances of mass violence and widen the comparison beyond the Holocaust. A second Armenian genocide memorial in Scottsdale, opened in 2015 on the Scottsdale Community College campus, was

inscribed with a forget-me-not flower and the words "Not On Our Watch"—intended, as the local paper reported, to "acknowledge victims of other holocausts as well as the need to prevent future genocides." It further noted that in a striking expansion of the Americanization of the genocide narrative, "Because it will also technically stand on Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community tribal land, the monument also incorporates numerous Native American symbols."[76] Another press source reported further specifics: "Traditional Armenian and Native American elements used as iconography include symbols for eternity; the 4 corners of the earth; the elements earth, fire, water and air; and five continents where genocide has occurred."[77] Here a history of ethnic persecution was deployed as a mode of assimilation, placing Armenian Americans alongside a number of other American ethnic communities—including non-whites—in a shared experience of violent oppression. This may represent another generational shift, from those for whom immigrant whiteness represented the definitive form of American assimilation to a new generation for whom the Civil Rights Movement has become the central paradigm for American social justice.[78]

After 2001, then, many Armenian American communities continued to make use of Holocaust models for the public memorialization of the Armenian genocide, particularly with regard to the depiction of the United States as a space of refuge and "tolerance" for persecuted minorities. And just as Holocaust memorialization had created the idea of a Judeo-Christian cultural character fundamental to American national identity, Armenian genocide memorials likewise continued to emphasize their community's civilizational belonging via Christianity and advertise a cultural and political distance from Turkish and other Middle Eastern Muslim communities. But some of the newest memorials suggest a move away from a singular comparison with the Holocaust toward a placement of the Armenian genocide within a broader and more comprehensive history of ethnic persecution and mass violence—a reflection, perhaps, of the rising academic fortunes of the field of comparative genocide and a concomitant public awareness of using the genocide label to describe historical atrocities beyond Europe.[79] The explosion of memorial sites for the Armenian genocide with this more inclusive understanding of genocide and ethnic violence also suggests a renewed commitment to the phenomenon identified by the museum scholar Paul Williams "wherein members of ethnic groups increasingly claim the memory of suffering as a sacred asset"[80]—in this case, an asset that can be put

towards the cause of assimilation and belonging within a subset of recognizably loyalist "hyphenated" American citizens and encourage pressure on the Turkish government to acknowledge Armenian narratives.

CONCLUSIONS

The proliferation of Armenian genocide memorials after 1980 and especially after 2001 reflected a decision on the part of Armenian American communities across the country to narrate a story of immigration, assimilation, ethnic coherence, and national loyalty in clearly recognizable terms. The kind of Americanized public memorials of the Holocaust that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, with their emphasis on the redemptive qualities of ethnic continuity within a pluralistic and tolerant American body politic, offered a clear path for Armenian Americans to stake their own claim to precisely the same kind of white "model minority" status that they had watched American Jewish communities construct—a status that seemed especially desirable in a political atmosphere of intense hostility to immigrant populations from the Middle East.

In the last few years, though, a few Armenian genocide memorials have moved away from simply paralleling Holocaust memorialization, instead presenting the genocide in the context of a modern history of global mass violence and placing Armenians alongside victims of other holocausts. This represents a fairly radical shift in its association of Armenian ethnic identity with the historical experiences of non-white, non-Christian ethnic groups; and it also reflects the impact of scholarly challenges mounted over the past twenty years to the idea of the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust. It remains to be seen whether the evolving diasporic effort to represent the Armenian genocide within the American context will eventually force alterations to the deeply problematic model of Holocaust memorialization that originally inspired it.[81]

NOTES

[1] Anny Bakalian, *Armenian Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 9. It must be noted that the literature on Armenian diasporic communities in the United States is quite limited and often rather parochial, without significant reference to either the

politics of ethnic community in twentieth-century North America or connections with the politics of the homeland.

2 Robert Mirak, "The Armenians in America," in Richard G. Hovanissian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 390; also Balakian, *Armenian Americans*, 9.

3 On this migration, see especially Akram Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Charles Issawi, "The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800–1914," in Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds., *The Lebanese in the World* (London: I.B. Taurus for the Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), 13–31; Salim Tamari, "A Miserable Year in Brooklyn: Khalil Sakakini in America, 1907–1908," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 17 (2003): 19–40; Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Andrew Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: The Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

4 Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23. This phenomenon was not limited to the emerging relationship between American missions and Armenian Christian communities; missions across the eastern parts of the Ottoman sphere were forging a path for the infusion of European interest, money, and ideas into Christian and Jewish communities in greater Syria and Egypt as well as Anatolia. On this point, see especially Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Heleen L. Murre-Van Den Berg, ed., *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Boston: Brill, 2005); and Inger Marie Okkenhaug, "Christian Missions in the Middle East and the Ottoman Balkans: Education, Reform, and Failed Conversions, 1819–1967," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, 3 (2015): 593–604.

5 On this point see especially Khater, *Inventing Home*.

6 There is an extensive recent literature on this, among which we might especially note Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), Benjamin Fortna et al., eds., *State-Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830–1945* (London: Routledge, 2013); Hannes Grandits et al., eds., *Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans: The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building* (London: Tauris, 2011); Keith Brown, *Loyal Unto Death: Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press,

2013); Ipek Yosmaoglu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); as well as Dimitris Livanios, "Beyond 'Ethnic Cleansing': Aspects of the Functioning of Violence in the Ottoman and Post- Ottoman Balkans," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 8, no. 3 (2008): 189–203.

[7] Dawn Chatty notes accurately that this Ottoman fear and targeting of Armenian nationalism as a potential threat to the state came quite late to the already well-established narrative of anti-Ottoman nationalisms. See her *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 76–79.

[8] Selim Deringil, in a recent article, notes the dearth of scholarship on the topic of the massacres in general and conversions in particular — a lacuna that is especially surprising given the importance of the campaign to late Ottoman politics and to the history of the later genocide. See his "'The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed': Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895-1897," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 2 (2009): 344. On the question of numbers killed, see especially Taner Akcam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 43.

[9] Deringil, "'The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed,'" 351.

[10] On the massacres that predated the genocide of 1915, the most recent exploration is Ronald Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert But Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). On the broader question of Armenian relations with the late Ottoman state, especially following the constitutional revolution, see particularly Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

[11] For a useful overview of this period, see Chapters 7 and 8 in Erik Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

[12] Robert Mirak, "The Armenians in America," in *The Armenian People*, 390.

[13] The question of precisely how many Armenians died in the genocide remains a contentious one. With his estimate of 600,000 Armenian casualties between 1912 and 1922, Justin McCarthy is on the low end of the spectrum of estimates and agrees with much earlier estimates of Arnold Toynbee; see his *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*, 193. (It should be noted that McCarthy has come under considerable criticism for his rather apologist approach to Ottoman violence against Armenians.) For recent alternative calculations and discussions of the numbers, see Ronald Suny et al, eds., *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), and Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). The latter argues that the Turkish government mapped out and executed a policy of reducing the Christian population of Anatolia to between 5 and 10 percent of

the population; he estimates 1.2 million Armenians were deported, of whom approximately 200,000 survived the war. Norman Naimark, in *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 40–41, notes that many Turkish historians who accept the Ottoman census figure of 1.3 million Armenians living in the pre-war empire have come to a figure of approximately 800,000 killed in the genocide.

[14] Anti-immigrant measures were starting to be implemented even before the war had ended. See Victoria Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 45-46.

[15] See especially Chapter 1 in Robert Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation: Immigration Policy and American Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

[16] *New York Times*, 20 April 1920; cited in Benjamin Alexander, "Armenian and American: The Changing Face of Ethnic Identity and Diasporic Nationalism, 1915–1955" (PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 2005), 111.

[17] Mirak, "The Armenians in America," 391.

[18] Bakalian, *Armenian Americans*, 11–13.

[19] Such numbers remain essentially guesses, since Armenians are not counted in the census and immigration numbers class them by their country of origin, not their ethnic identification.

[20] This idea is explored in Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race*, particularly chapter 2, "Fixing Race, Unfixing Ethnicity." See also Nadia Abu El-Haj, *The Genealogical Science: The Search for Jewish Origins and the Politics of Epistemology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 71.

[21] Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race*, 48. On this point see also Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[22] Another point of convergence between the American Jewish and Armenian experiences can be noted: the idea that a geographical "homeland" elsewhere could support their claims for this particularly American form of "hyphenated" ethnicity. See Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race,* 52.

[23] See especially Chapter 5 in Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

[24] The institutional history of ACIA is covered in detail in Robert George Koolakian, *Struggle for Justice: The Story of the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia, 1915–1920* (Dearborn, MI: Armenian Research Center, 2008). It is also discussed in Merrill Peterson, *"Starving Armenians":*

*America and the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1930 and After* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 77–81.

[25] Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, reprinted in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, ed. Arthur Hertzberg (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), 223.

[26] Gerard, "Why America Should Accept Mandate for Armenia," *New York Times*, 6 July 1919.

[27] *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, 21 April 1945; cited and discussed in Alexander, "Armenian and American," 229.

[28] Peter Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate: A Memoir*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 215.

[29] For more discussion on this point, see Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics, and Scholarship in Israel* (New York: Verso, 2008).

[30] Alexander, "Armenian and American," 115.

[31] The seminal work that first dealt in detail with the emergence of the Holocaust as a major event in American public and political consciousness is Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton and Mifflin, 1999). Wartime and postwar American Jewish approaches to the violence of the Holocaust are discussed particularly in chapters 7 and 8.

[32] The main exceptions being: Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1961); Ella Lingens-Reiner, *Prisoners of Fear* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1948); and Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Beacon Press, 1959).

[33] Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 111. This historical consciousness has now been neatly reversed, with studies demonstrating that considerably more Americans have a basic historical understanding of the Holocaust than of the use of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; see Norman Finklestein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London: Verso, 2000), 11.

[34] Finklestein suggests that many American Jewish organizations were also afraid of being labeled as communist during these years of McCarthyism if they adopted the Soviet line of actively remembering the Holocaust; he points out that both the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League assisted the government's anti-communist crusade by releasing files on leftist members accused of subversion. See *The Holocaust Industry*, 15.

[35] Joseph Massad, "Deconstructing Holocaust Consciousness," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, 1 (2002): 81.

[36] Alan Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Consciousness in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 14.

[37] Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 186.

[38] Ibid., 166. Note Novick's finding fault with the broad acceptance of this Holocaust fixation in the United States as an easy mode of escape from confronting the more extreme instances of mass violence in modern American  history.  Other scholars  have added  to this picture and also (unsurprisingly) taken issue with it, from a variety of political perspectives. In his expansion and critique of Novick, in *The Holocaust Industry*, Norman Finklestein took Novick's argument about the politics of victimhood a step further, writing that "identity politics and The Holocaust have taken hold among American Jews not because of victim status but because they are not victims. . . Just as many Jews kept Israel at arm's length when it constituted an asset, so they kept their ethnic identity at arm's length when it constituted a liability and became born-again Jews when it constituted an asset." See Finklestein, *The Holocaust Industry*, 33.

[39] Matthew Jacobson's important book *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2008) provides a detailed analysis of this movement.

[40] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 9.

[41] For an overview of the debates surrounding the Holocaust museum's approach, see Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Viking, 1995). The so-called "uniqueness" debate has of course long outlasted the arguments over the shape and content of the museum and continues to cast a shadow over the entire field of comparative genocide studies. For an especially trenchant look at the highly partisan scholarship surrounding this question see A. Dirk Moses, "Paranoia and Partisanship: Genocide Studies, Holocaust Historiography and the 'Apocalyptic Conjuncture'," *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 2 (2011): 615–45. The most comprehensive overview of the various positions within this debate remains Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Is The Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1995), which contains essays addressing the question from a number of contrary viewpoints.

[42] Thus, as many critics have pointed out, both overstating the role of American "liberators" of the camps in the final stages of the war and allowing for the relativization and trivialization of other mass atrocities in which the United States played a vastly more central role—in particular mass violence against indigenous communities in the colonial settlement of the country and the crimes of slavery. For three especially useful broad examinations of the wider context of genocide in the twentieth century, see Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State*, vols. 1 and 2 (London: Tauris, 2005); Eric Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); and A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2008).

43 One source counts more than 250 Holocaust  memorials and museums in the United States as of 2007; see Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 7. For a global and comparative look at Holocaust memorials worldwide, see James E. Young, ed., *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History* (New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1994), which includes an essay by Novick summarizing many of his conclusions. The precise argument over representing the Holocaust that played out in Washington in the 1980s seemed to be repeating itself in 2011, when the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg became the site for very similar quarrels over the representation of the Holocaust as unique and the place of other genocides in discussions of human rights and violations thereof. See A. Dirk Moses, "The Canadian Museum for Human Rights: The 'Uniqueness of the Holocaust' and the Question of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, no.  2 (2012): 21–38.

44 This is particularly the case in the work of the well-known Armenian genocide scholar Vahakhn Dadrian, who has sought to argue for a fairly direct line of influence from the Turkish perpetrators of the Armenian genocide to the Nazis and views the Armenian genocide as a "paradigm for a two of 'political' genocide likely to become the pattern of twentieth century genocide." See especially his *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), quote from 238–39.

45 There seem to have been a few other Armenian genocide memorials built before this one, mainly located in or on the grounds of Armenian churches. The Armenian National Institute lists one "Medz Yeghern" (the "great evil") memorial built in Arizona in 1944; other small monuments within Armenian church structures are often of uncertain date.

46 The Los Angeles-based Armenian architect Hrant Agbabian designed the structure.

47 "Monument at Bicknell Park in Montebello, California," *Armenian National Institute*, accessed 26 October 2016, http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.118/currentcategory.75/offset.IOf memorials detail.html.

48 For instance, Mugurdich Chojhauji Gabrielian, *Armenia: A Martyr Nation* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1918).

49 The cemetery provides information about the memorial at "Monument to the Unknown Martyr," Ararat Armenian Cememtery Association, accessed 27 October 2016, http://araratarmeniancemetery.com/about/monument-to-the-unknown-martyr.

50 The quote is from a poem by the Armenian writer and statesman Avetis Aharonian.

51 There are several memorials from this period that continued to use the term "martyrs" to describe the victims—for instance, a monument raised in

Providence in 1999 whose inscription  read "We Armenians dedicate this monument to the immortal memory of the 1,500,000 Armenian martyrs massacred by the Turkish government during the 1915 genocide."

[52] Melissa Ruth King, "Survivors: An Ethnographic Study of Armenian American Activism and Expression" (PhD dissertation, University of California Riverside, 2013), 81–82.

[53] In particular, the idea of the "memorial museum" was new, with no examples prior to the Second World War. On the genesis of this novel amalgam of forms, see chapter 1 of Williams, *Memorial Museums*.

[54] Joshua Fishman et al., *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival: Perspectives on Language and Ethnicity* (Berlin: Mouton, 1985), argues that such "sidestream" ethnic identifications had become an accepted and even expected part of American national identity by the 1970s, "part of an enriched and overarching American experience . . . [Hiding it] would be denying an aspect of American identity" (511).

[55] Historian David B. MacDonald discusses this effort and suggests that the attempt to Americanize the genocide narrative along the lines of the Holocaust will ultimately be unsuccessful because "neither the Armenians nor Armenia [unlike the Jews and Israel] has special religious, geopolitical, or cultural significance for Americans." See his *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation* (London: Routledge, 2008), 143.

[56] In an analysis of media coverage of the hostage crisis, Melani McAlister notes that "in no other political situation in the 1970s did the mainstream media and politicians so insistently present the United States as a 'Christian' nation. . . as 'Islam emerged as the category for understanding Iran, Christianity became remarkably prominent in the media accounts." See *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[57] On the early histories of Middle Eastern migrants in the United States, see especially Gualtiari, *Between Arab and White*, and Sally Howell, *Old Islam in Detroit: Rediscovering the Muslim American Past* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[58] Vered Talai, "Mobilization and Diffuse Ethnic Organization: The London Armenian Community," *Urban Anthropology* 13, no. 2 (1984): 203.

[59] Janice Okoomian, "Becoming White: Contested History, Armenian American Women, and Racialized Bodies," *MELUS* 27, no. 1 (2002): 216.

[60] King, "Survivors," 221.

[61] Anthropologist Melissa King reports a conversation in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 with a young Armenian American high schooler whose Armenian mother had emigrated from Afghanistan in which she declared that her family had been targeted by US government surveillance and feared

that "they're going to put me in a concentration camp." See "Survivors," 220–21.

62 On Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide, see especially Richard Hovannisian, *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), and *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003). For a longer-range view of the place of the genocide in Turkish historical memory, see Thomas De Waal, *The Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

63 For a useful overview of the place of Turkey in the Cold War, see especially Shahram Chubin, "Turkey," in *The Cold War and the Middle East*, eds. Yazid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

64 See, for instance, the explicit comparisons drawn in Richard Hovannisian, "The Armenian Genocide and Patterns of Denial," in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, ed. Richard Hovannisian (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1986), and Vahakn Dadrian, *The Key Elements in the Turkish Denial of the Armenian Genocide: A Case Study of Distortion and Falsification* (Toronto: Zoryan Institute, 1999).

65 Vartges Saroyan, "A Lesson from the Holocaust Restitution Movement for Armenians: Generate Momentum to Secure Restitution," *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* 13, no. 1 (2011): 285–311; see also *The Armenian Assembly of America Annual Report*, 2000, 24.

66 George Byron Kooshian, "The Armenian Immigrant Community of California: 1880–1935" (PhD dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 2002), 306–7.

67 Derounian wrote under the pen name John Roy Carlson, publishing his revelations in a book entitled *Under Cover: My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America* (New York: Dutton, 1943).

68 The main press organs for the Dashnak and non-Dashnak elements were, respectively, the Boston-based *Hairenik Weekly* and the Armenian *Mirror-Spectator*, both of which are still in operation. Alexander offers a useful overview of this press battle in "Armenian and American," 206ff.

69 Alexander, "Armenian and American," 206ff.

70 *Armenian Weekly Online*, May 2001, cited in Heather S. Gregg, "Divided They Conquer: The Success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the US," *MIT Inter-University Committee on International Migration Working Paper* 13 (2002), 30 (available at http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/97604).

71 See David Boyajian, "An Armenian American Group Caves in to the Anti-Defamation League," *Atour*, 23 June 2016,

http://www.atour.com/aahgn/news/20160623a.html.

72 King, "Survivors," 60.

73 *Armenian Reporter*, 19 August 2000. For a broader look at the relationship between Jewish communities, especially in Israel, and Armenian genocide recognition, see Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial: Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

74 Among the many works on this phenomenon, see especially Andrew Shyrock, *Islamophobia/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Nabeel Abraham et. al., eds., *Arab Detroit 9/11: Life in the Terror Decade* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011); Randa Kayyali, *The Arab Americans* (Greenwood, CT: Westport Press, 2006); Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Being and Belonging: Muslims in the United States since 9/11* (New York: Russell Sage, 2008); and Louise Cainkar, *Homeland Insecurity: the Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11* (New York: Russell Sage, 2009).

75 "Armenian Genocide Memorials–United States," Armenian National Institute, accessed 28 October 2016, http://www.armeniangenocide.org/currentcategory.75/memorialslist.html.

76 Amy B. Wang, "For Armenians, Genocide Stories Show Century of History," *Arizona Republic*, 27 April 2015,

http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/best-reads/2015/04/22/armenians-genocide-stories-reveal-century-history/26164123/.

77 "New Armenian Genocide Monument Unveiled at Scottsdale, Arizona College," *California Courier*, 19 May 2015,

http://www.thecaliforniacourier.com/new-armenian-genocide-monument-unveiled-at-scottsdale-arizona-college/.

78 King, for instance, cites a conversation with a young Armenian activist in California who explicitly viewed Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez as models for the kind of social action he hoped to spark among Armenians. See "Survivors," 224.

79 In particular, the rising use of the term "genocide" to describe atrocities enacted in settler colonial settings on indigenous populations. The literature on this is too extensive to cite in full, but for a recent much-discussed example see Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1973* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

80 Williams, *Memorial Museums*, 168.

81 One interesting manifestation of this collision is the planned Armenian genocide memorial museum on the mall in Washington, DC, which if built (it is currently tied up in legal arguments among the stakeholders) would stand less than a mile from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. See Stephen Kinzer, "Plans for Museum Buoy Armenians and Dismay Turks," *New York Times*, 22 April 2002,

http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/24/arts/arts-in-america-plans-for-museum-buoy-armenians-and-dismay-turks.html.