

# Genocide Denial Light

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IN A SOBER, BALANCED SKETCH of the history and historiography of the 1915 Armenian genocide included in a two-part article on Turkey published in the *London Review of Books* in September 2008, Perry Anderson notes that the perpetrators' academic defenders have largely abandoned a discredited strategy of blanket denial for one of minimization or relativization, now increasingly discredited in its turn. He might have added that there has been a shift from genocide denial unabashed to genocide denial light in non-academic writing as well. The difference is that, outside the university, efforts at relativization or minimization continue to enjoy credit in the unlikeliest places. Verso, for example, has just released one: Ece Temelkuran's *Deep Mountain: Across the Turkish-Armenian Divide*, a translation of some lightly upgraded newspaper journalism that began life in the mainstream Turkish daily *Milliyet* in 2006 and appeared in book form in Turkey two years later. The cover blurb touts it as a "nuanced and moving exploration of the living history [of] and continuing dispute on the Armenian genocide." The reformers at the Turkish Foreign Ministry's Armenian Desk should sit up and take notice. If a radical left publisher in Britain finds genocide denial light nuanced and moving, are the politically more tolerant friends of Turkey's admission to the European Union not certain to gobble it up? And if it allows Turkey to duck its historical responsibilities quite as effectively as the cruder kind does, what harm does it do to let the bien-pensant Armenophiles at home flatter their sense that they are "pok[ing] a stick into the wheel of the world" (151) by restyling and repackaging the basic line?

Verso is one reason to take the time to denounce *Deep Mountain*. A publishing house that has long honored its commitment to promoting critical left thought should not be promoting critical variations on standing Turkish foreign policy. If its baffling endorsement of *Deep Mountain* stems from the ignorance of things Armenian betokened by the reference to "the Armenian community of Venice Beach" on prominent display in the first line of its blurb, it is not too late for it to say so, and back up. (There is no Armenian community to speak of in Venice Beach.) Ignorance, in this case, would be the best possible excuse. If it has knowingly put its imprimatur on relativization of genocide, it ought to be summoned to say why.

Temelkuran's association with the Turkish left's ongoing reassessment of the Armenian question is the other reason to notice *Deep Mountain*. The leaders of the nascent Kemalist Republic, many of whom had Armenian blood on their hands, undertook to blot the mass murder from the historical record; their post-Kemalist heirs are still at it. Many self-identified leftists in Turkey have long countenanced the cover-up or even half-justified the crime. Indications are that much of the fragmented left is now facing up to the task of exposing both. Temelkuran, a professed "democratic," "internationalist" "socialist" (90), plainly conceives *Deep Mountain* as part of its attempt to set things to rights. Yet much of what is to be found in her text — the remark is intended neither as provocation nor as insult, but as a demonstrable statement of fact — is akin to latter-day *national-socialist* treatments of the Holocaust. Whence the interest of calling attention to the contradiction: wider discussion of it may help spark a badly needed clarification of the ambiguities muddying the political and ideological movement that has spawned Temelkuran's book.

Those ambiguities haunt two recent manifestations of a shift in Turkish leftists' attitude toward the genocide. One is the ongoing protest against Hrant Dink's January 2007 assassination and the Turkish state's complicity in the crime. Dink was the Turkish-Armenian editor-in-chief of a bilingual weekly that he founded in Istanbul in 1996. Long persecuted by the right for helping to make the once unmentionable 1915 events a matter of guarded yet broad public discussion in Turkey, he was, for the same reason, convicted of violating a 2005 law (Article 301 of the Penal Code) against

"denigrating Turkishness," left without police protection despite his complaints about an intensifying barrage of threats on his life, and then executed in Istanbul by a teenager almost certainly acting at the behest of Turkey's "deep state," a nationalist network ensconced in the army, police, and administration. After his funeral, tens of thousands of people marched through Istanbul's streets to cries of "We are all Armenians, we are all Hrant Dink." The left-liberal Dink has since become something of a cult figure for the still fragile movement for democratization in Turkey; pressuring the Turkish judiciary to bring his murderers to justice has become one focus of a growing struggle against the state/deep state violence that has cost countless Turkish citizens their lives.

As surprising as the wave of solidarity with Dink was a public apology by individual Turks to Armenians for the "Great Catastrophe" of 1915, coupled with a condemnation of Turkey's continuing denial of it. Posted on the internet in December 2008, it was signed by some thirty thousand Turks over the next few weeks. Initiators and signatories were protected from prosecution under Article 301 because the term chosen to designate the crime, a common name for it in Armenian, patently avoided identifying it as a genocide. The statement was nevertheless iconoclastic enough, by Turkish standards, to prompt the Turkish Prime Minister publicly to distance himself from it.

Armenian reaction to the apology and the demonstrations of solidarity with Dink has been measured. It is often noted, to begin with, that these actions reflect the views of a small minority in Turkey. Express refusals to apologize or demands for an Armenian apology, posted on the internet early in 2009 and reportedly signed by 100,000 people, show where majority opinion lies, as does the climate of nationalist, anti-Armenian and anti-Kurdish hysteria that set in across Turkey after Dink's death. But even the critical minority's campaign to put paid to a one hundred year-old falsification, it is argued, has to be evaluated cautiously, because limits on freedom of speech in Turkey, with sanctions ranging from fines and imprisonment to torture and assassination, make it hard to discern moderation imposed by the state and its deep-state auxiliaries from voluntary approval of state policy. Thus the word the initiators of the internet apology chose to designate the destruction of the Western Armenians, "catastrophe," is not irreconcilable with official descriptions of the genocide as a terrible tragedy that befell the disloyal Armenians because the state had hastily to resettle them, not least for their own protection, and thus to conduct them through forbidding regions controlled by unruly Kurdish tribes, under the same adverse wartime conditions that cost many more Muslims their lives. Article 301, in other words, may have allowed many who signed the internet statement (and raged against Article 301) to marry an apology for the "Great Catastrophe" to an apologetics for it, while conveniently prohibiting them from saying what they preferred not to: that the deportation and mass killing was a genocide, and/or that it calls for concrete, not just verbal, redress.

Temelkuran put her name to the apology, and she puts her book under the sign of her admiration for her friend and mentor Hrant. The skeptics will be pointing to the consonance of her aims with those of her Foreign Ministry and shouting that they told us so. Thus Temelkuran 1) indirectly justifies, in Part I of *Deep Mountain*, Ankara's main policy objective vis-à-vis Armenia, a normalization of diplomatic and economic relations without prior recognition of the genocide; 2) firmly condemns, in Part II, a proposed French law, which Ankara is fighting tooth and nail, to make denial of the Armenian genocide a crime, as Holocaust denial already is; and 3) faithfully reproduces, in Part III, Turkish diplomacy's and the Turkish mass media's stock image of the mighty U.S. Armenian lobby and the fanaticized Diasporan masses at its beck and call. More generally, she downplays issues of responsibility and reparations, and banishes the very thought that redress might involve territorial adjustments.

As for her main positive prescription, Turkish-Armenian "dialogue" without preconditions, it is useful to know, when assessing it, that the arsenal of measures with which Ankara has long battled international recognition of the genocide, ranging from economic reprisals to suspension of military

agreements, has for the past five years been crowned by a standing offer to create an Armenian-Turkish historical commission charged with determining what *really* happened in 1915. Ankara's objective is to reinforce the false impression that the reality of the genocide is widely disputed by historians, while allowing the Turks to point to joint scholarly deliberations — or, failing that, their willingness and the Armenians' refusal to engage in them — as proof of the good faith and open mind they bring to resolving the "genocide" issue." Temelkuran's objective, she says, is to teach Armenians and Turks how to throw off the Mountain of Pain (the Turkish name for Mt. Ararat and the original title of her book) under which they both still labor because of whatever happened. The short form of her lesson is: let them talk about their "genocide" all they want, and listen sympathetically to their tales of woe until they finally get tired and stop. A certain family resemblance between that proposal and Ankara's is hard to miss. Her humanist justification for hers, to be sure, is her own: only dialogue will allow the two sides to dissolve their differences in their Common Humanity. The purity of her intentions is beyond doubt. That does not necessarily recommend them.

Before forgetting good intentions in order to concentrate on what they pave the way for, let us look at a passage that illustrates both. It is a plea for Armenian-Turkish reconciliation. Addressed by the author, *qua* "conciliatory Turk," to a representative — that is, not yet conciliatory — imaginary Diasporan Armenian, it is manifestly intended as a grand goodwill gesture: "I'd like, one day, to be able to sit and drink raki with you [in Turkey]... and talk about our history, whether it be 'glorious' or 'black,' with light hearts and light words. I want us to put it behind us, and I want us to have children who don't have to know about what we're going through now" (256).

If you aren't familiar enough with "our [Turks' and Armenians'] history" to grasp why this confession is unlikely to disarm the distrustful, take any mass murder you know better. Grandpa was gassed in Sobibor, Grandma was raped for four years running and therefore not gassed, and you've just received, courtesy of Verso, a friendly little invitation to enjoy a beer and a bit of light-hearted banter about the whole bothersome business back home in Berlin with the best-selling author of *Across the German-Jewish Divide*. "Traumatised by accusation" (162), she'd like you to help her get over "whatever happened" (238) for good and all. Fair-minded to a fault, she's willing, even eager, to help you to heal the trauma of "constant victimisation" (162) in exchange. More: she generously offers to let bygones be bygones, for the children's sake, in accents bespeaking her awareness of the fundamental human decency of her gesture. She even takes the trouble to assure you, in mid-peroration, that she keeps an open mind as to whether Germany's treatment of the Jews was, on balance, "'glorious' or 'black.'" Is that not, as the blurb gushes, "nuanced and moving"?

It is not, at any rate, a momentary lapse. The passage is showcased at the very end of *Deep Mountain*. Temelkuran means it, just the way it stands. The proof is that the style and substance of the coda are in perfect harmony with the rest.

The rest sounds like this: "This is our [Turks' and Armenians'] common history, something that happened to us all, whether or not you use the term genocide or blame a particular side. We have to recognize that, on a human level, there is still great pain over what happened — for all of us" (237).

THAT ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION of our common human suffering has its historiographic corollary. While it is an indubitable certitude, in *Deep Mountain*, that it happened to us all, it is equally certain that, a century later, we do not at all know what happened. In that sense, we have, not a common, but two distinct histories, represented on "two distinct historical timelines," Armenian and Turkish. "The highlights" on them are "completely different" (151). We must, then, *forge* a common history of our common suffering. How? "We can create a common history only if we appreciate the importance

of historical events on both sides" (238).

If the timelines involved are the usual two, this injunction is strictly comparable to a plea to evaluate Auschwitz with an eye to the Wannsee Conference on the one hand and, on the other, the Jews' perfidious betrayal of the Reich in collusion with the Bolsheviks and international finance capital. The formulation which has it that "what happened" happened to those who were murdered in the camps and to those who murdered them there is admissible, or not, in the case of the World War I genocide of the Armenians and Assyrians exactly as it is admissible or not in the case of the World War II genocide of the Jews and Roma. The same holds for the casual suspension of the ancillary question as to which "particular side," murdered or murdering, was to blame for the murder. As for the bid to dissolve the distinctions between genocide and the "great pain" of World War in the night in which all wartime horrors are gray, it has its analogue in accounts in which the fire-bombing of Dresden, the 1945 massacres of Sudeten Germans, German misery after the war, and life and death in the camps count as equivalent ordeals. In short, *Deep Mountain's* general conclusions about World War I and the Armenian genocide recall those of familiar revisionist histories of World War II and the Jewish genocide — with the difference that they are rather more extreme, and come, not from the nationalist right, but from the "internationalist socialist" left.

The informed will have concluded that Temelkuran makes the genocide a "general and mutual massacre of the peoples of the East" that led to the extirpation of one of the mutually massacring sides, to cite an apology for the ethnic cleansing of Van Province that appeared as *Deep Mountain* was taking shape. Her book certainly accommodates that kind of historical argument, proffered by Justin McCarthy and others. It does not, however, make this claim, or any other. It is not history or, in any rational sense of the word, argument; it literally reveals no more about 1915 events in Anatolia, microhistorical or macrohistorical, than *Hamlet* does. Rather, it presents itself as a report on interviews about Armenian-Turkish relations and therefore, inevitably, attitudes toward the genocide, interviews which Temelkuran conducted in 2006-07 with mainly prominent Armenians (and a few token Turks) in Armenia, France, and the United States. The aim, she affirms, is "to give the Turkish public as ... accurate a picture as possible of the varying views ... of Armenians in both Armenia itself and the Diaspora" (x) — an admirable project that would have been well served by letting the Armenians involved speak for themselves. Temelkuran prefers relentlessly to filter, paraphrase, and gloss whatever they might actually have said — a procedure she describes as "bringing to [her] task less objectivity but more insight than would be the case for a Western journalist" (x) — in pursuit of a different goal. It is to make her material illustrate a century of struggle between the friends and foes of Turkish-Armenian dialogue. She thus makes an argument about history after all, evaluating it with the help of a criterion applicable in the absence of all direct reference to actual historical events. It runs: a statement about history is true if it fosters dialogue. This leaves room for interpretation: how do we know whether it does? *Deep Mountain's* answer, the criterion of the criterion, runs: a statement about history fosters dialogue, and is therefore true, if it is proffered by one of the "Beautiful People," "people like Hrant, people like us who believe in dialogue" (180). It is even truer if it can somehow be attributed to Hrant himself.

An example will show how this validating principle is applied. It is not Temelkuran, but a rare Turkish interviewee who declares, on behalf of the Turks in her Turkish-Armenian discussion group, that "what happened" "happened to us all," so that we must jointly write a two-timeline "common history." Her membership in the group already strongly suggests that she is a person like Hrant and us. This is proven, as is the idea that it happened to us all, etc., when, immediately after citing her, Temelkuran points up a certain similarity between that idea and one she assigns Hrant: "that's what Hrant meant when he used to say that whatever happened had happened to us all, and that we shared the same history" (238). *Q.E.D.*

Let us leave aside the question as to whether that's what Hrant really meant and, if so, why the

people who had him shot did not, instead, hire him on. For present purposes, it suffices to note that not all Armenians are Ece Temelkuran's Hrant Dink. Many are, rather, "hardline sectarians" (180), also known as "shouters" (153, 248). These Armenian enemies of dialogue routinely identify themselves as such by rudely "thrusting" Turks such as Temelkuran "into the position of someone who has to 'deny' or 'recognize' genocide" (208). An interminable parade of them winds its way through *Deep Mountain*. It includes the Yerevan "rocker" who asks her to leave his bar unless she "recognizes the genocide" (25), although — paradoxically, for her — it is adorned with a huge Che Guevara poster; the children gathered at the Yerevan Genocide Memorial who scandalize her by asking, when they learn she is Turkish, whether she recognizes the genocide (29); and the "elderly couple" (151) disinclined even to put that question or any other to the young *Milliyet* reporter waiting expectantly outside their Paris bookstore, apparently because they have gathered that she does not quite recognize the genocide. Spanning the generations, the Armenian hardliners also span the political and social spectrum, from the little world of former members and sympathizers of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (one of whom, unbeknown to Temelkuran, owns that Yerevan bar) through the ranks of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, "the most hardline leftist organization in Armenian political history" (220; the ARF is in fact a social-democratic party that furnished the Second International with a vice-president last year) to a leader of the neo-liberal ruling party in France, Patrick Devedjian (who acted as defense counsel for a comrade of the Yerevan bar owner tried in France in 1986 for Secret Army activity, thus bringing us full circle). In a word, *Deep Mountain's* readers are invited to watch Temelkuran making the ostensibly shocking discovery, from Yerevan to Los Angeles, of something she surely knew before she set out: a majority of Armenians right, left, and center, of both sexes and all ages, in Armenia and the Diaspora, are, by *Deep Mountain* definition, hardline sectarian shouters and shriekers.

Temelkuran by no means denies that the Armenian fanatics who insist on genocide recognition have their opposite numbers on the other side of the Turkish-Armenian divide. One of her central theses, in fact, is that there are "hardline sectarians positioned on opposing sides of the same game" (180). The Turkish sectarians are the ultra-nationalists and fascists. Whence a fine distinction. "Those who assault writers as they're hauled into court," Temelkuran declares (perhaps thinking of the thugs who tried to attack Orhan Pamuk when he was brought to court under Article 301 in December 2005 for affirming in an interview that "we killed a million Armenians and 30,000 Kurds") "are no more representative of my people than those who chant 'Recognize the genocide or get lost!' are representative of *all* the Armenians living in distant lands" (99, emphasis added). The "all" is all-important: it indicates that the Armenian-Turkish divide runs between a representative majority of Armenian extremists and an atypical minority of ultra-nationalist Turks. That may explain why *Deep Mountain's* "illuminating look at the part nationalism plays in the way we see ourselves and others" (the blurb) is essentially a look at the blinding effects of Armenian nationalism on Armenians. The Turkish shouters are neither named nor described, let alone interviewed. Despite the subtitle (for which the author may bear no blame), *Deep Mountain* is thus about, not the Turkish-Armenian, but the Armenian-Armenian divide.

Better, it is about two Armenian-Armenian divides. For the hardline Armenian majority is itself divided. Most hardliners, as will appear, are at least a little "like us." The worst aren't. They are a race of calculators, a race apart. The reaction they elicit from Temelkuran's photographer, assigned the role of the sturdy Turkish yeoman in *Deep Mountain*, speaks volumes. After a brief glimpse of the species and "what makes it tick," the honest fellow cannot bear to hear his GPS pronounce the word "Recalculating!" (187). The calculators form a subset of a somewhat larger coterie of cosmopolitan Armenian Los Angelenos. They are "the very picture of the 'sitting pretty' Armenian Diaspora as painted in Turkey." This pack of "wealthy businessmen and lawyers" "live in luxury" in their adopted country, meet "poolside" in posh Los Angeles restaurants, smoke "long, thick cigars," and speak in "exaggerated American accents" about "figures and dollars" (213-4). The irredeemable

among them, true to their unnatural natures, insist on appearing anonymously in Temelkuran's book and "are not at all that interested in talking to" her (they do not care about Armenian-Turkish dialogue). She dubs them Mr. Smithian and Mr. Brownian. They are, respectively, an "extremely influential figure in Armenian lobbying circles" and his "powerful, wealthy friend," "prominent not only in Armenian circles but on the national political scene as well." Both boast that they "enjoy increasing influence over policy and politicians" in the United States (182-4). The reader will get the picture, even if he has never heard of Armenians.

What do Smithian and Brownian and their ilk want? Ask, first, what they do not want. They do not want to "go into any details about what happened in 1915." They do not want "to talk about dialogue, or mourning, or messy details" (185). They can rattle off the names of Anatolian towns, it is true, but they do not really care about the land, "the blood ... shed in the lands of Anatolia throughout history" (75) or "the people at one" with that "blood-soaked land" (5). The proof of this inhuman indifference to blood and soil? "They'd consider the [Armenian-Turkish] issue solved so long as they received reparations." These money-grubbers want greenbacks and nothing else: "millions of dollars." (Temelkuran, a down-home Anatolian sort for whom the logic of a Brownian's calculations is in any case "incomprehensible," may have missed a few zeros: the grasping Armenian-Americans who filed a lawsuit against the Turkish government and two Turkish banks in U.S. Federal Court in late July 2010 are talking billions.) Brownian doesn't beat around the bush: "We don't want land, we want money!" (185). "Buying peace," Temelkuran exclaims, appalled; "how removed the sentiment is from the Middle East, how foreign ... to Turkey" (185-6).

Over against the Armenian hardliners, who are legion in *Deep Mountain*, stand those on the other side of the Armenian-Armenian divide, those who, by "leav[ing] the shouting to others" (239), provide living proof that it can be crossed. These people believe in dialogue, like Hrant. How do we know? Simple: they do not demand that Turks "'recognize" the genocide before establishing relations with them.

This category of dialogue-minded Armenians has its poetic and prosaic subdivisions. Temelkuran encountered many of the prosaically reasonable when she travelled to Yerevan in 2006 to gather material for what has become *Deep Mountain*, Part I. The timing of her trip was not accidental. Turkey had sealed its border with Armenia in 1993, aggravating the newly independent country's already dire poverty. Now it was offering to lift its crushing economic blockade and establish normal relations, but only if Armenia dropped its insistence that Turkey first recognize the genocide. *Milliyet* sent Temelkuran east to reconnoiter. They "can't have forgotten," someone may well have told her before she boarded the plane, "that the dispute over the 'genocide issue' is the main reason the border remains sealed" (49). Her generally sympathetic report on the country indicated that they had indeed not forgotten. Focusing on its economic misery, and giving good play to an interview with an economist and TV personality who set great hopes on a resumption of good-neighborly relations, it also showed that the Armenians had drawn the right lessons from Turkey's economic warfare. "'It'll be great when the border's open!'" a representative tired, poor Armenian woman excitedly exclaims. "'For you and for us!'" "'Tell [the people in Turkey],'" she seems to be saying, 'tell them to open the border right away!'" (49).

Temelkuran told them, adding that this woman was hardly the only Armenian ready to "talk as though the border issue is completely unrelated to the 'genocide issue'" (49). It remains to be seen whether *Deep Mountain* qualifies as prophecy. In October 2009, with Washington's and Brussels' benediction, Yerevan signed protocols with Ankara supposed to pave the way for a resumption of normal relations, going so far as to accept the idea of the Turkish-Armenian historical commission. In April 2010, the Armenian parliament — probably grateful for Turkish foot-dragging — froze ratification of them. There the matter stands.

Overwhelmed by Temelkuran's convincing depictions of the ex-Soviet Armenians' desperate economic plight, the Armenophile Turks who are her ideal readers will be hoping, for these poor people's own good, that the ratification process comes unstuck. But they will also have noticed that the mainstay of *Deep Mountain's* defense of Republican Armenian reason is a Turkish economic blockade. Like the objection that Part II repeatedly raises against the pending French bill to criminalize denial of the genocide — "Hrant Dink has warned" that "the Armenian community in Istanbul ... could face grave consequences if the law passes" (107) — an economic blockade, albeit a powerfully persuasive argument, is morally uninspiring. *Deep Mountain* aims to inspire and uplift. It therefore provides this crass coercive logic with its ennobling humanistic supplement.

That spiritual icing on the economic cake consists in the demonstration that there exists a subcategory of dialogue-minded Diasporan Armenians who want to put the 'genocide issue' aside, not to 'avoid economic collapse' (107) or other punishment, but of their own free will; their goal, like Hrant's, is a dialogical, common-humanity relation with like-minded Turks. This brings us to *Deep Mountain's* subtlest contribution to the intellectual arsenal of genocide denial: a fuzzy-logical defense of refusing to "recognize" the genocide that simultaneously constitutes a rejection of Ankara's refusal not to "deny" it. Dry dialectics, you say? But they inspire Temelkuran's one outburst of rage: an impassioned plea against the bitter injustice of the law of the excluded middle. She is as staunchly opposed to it as she is to the proposed French law against genocide denial, and ultimately for the same reason. That reason is put in the mouth of a Beautiful Armenian, the psychoanalyst Hélène Piralian. When it comes to "denying" or "recognizing" the Armenian genocide, this "exquisite" (160) French-Armenian informs us on Temelkuran's behalf, *tertium datur* (there is a third possibility).

"IT IS, OF COURSE, AN INJUSTICE," Piralian is quoted as saying, "to divide a people into 'deniers' and 'non-deniers.' There are Turks whose reactions to the Armenian story fall into neither category" (162). It is of course an injustice for the same reason that it of course happened to us all: because saying so encourages Armenian-Turkish dialogue of the kind that people like Hrant, Hélène, and us are for. What kind of dialogue? "It isn't about genocide or reparations" (164). It isn't about territorial concessions, either — perish the thought: "land disputes are always resolved with blood" (217), and "'Western Armenia'... has been under Ottoman or Turkish control since about 1500 CE" (217n), and, as Hrant once "thundered," "moved to tears": "'Yes, we have our eyes on this land. But not to take it away — just to be buried deep within it!'" (223). About neither genocide nor reparations nor (for Armenians this side of the grave) land, the dialogue with conciliatory Turks like Temelkuran, to which any Armenian can gain admission by accepting the legitimacy of the non-denialist/non-non-denialist approach to "whatever happened," is about "wounds and healing" (164). Temelkuran would appear to concede, most of the time, that the wounds to be healed are mostly the Armenians'. From this it follows that the dialogue is of a special sort, so that it might be better "if we replaced 'dialogue' with a different word: listen. Listen in silence until they've said all they need to say" (235). This will "alleviate the burden of these conflicting versions of a shared past.... That's what they need" (208).

"We," however, know that most of "them" do not know that "that's what they need." Our fantasy therefore threatens to founder on the fact that the real supports of our imaginary relation are, on our own witness, mainly sectarian shouters, resistant to therapeutic dialogue with such as us. *Deep Mountain* proposes the classic humanist solution to this problem. It runs: 1) the basis on which we can "share [their] stories" is our "common humanity" (199); 2) de-Middle-Easternized Brownians and Smithians aside, even Armenian hardliners have a share in it; *ergo* 3) "people like us" can experience fleeting moments of communion even with hardliners. We may thus reasonably hope that they, too, will one day become willing partners in the all-embracing dialogue of reconciliation that will efface

the Armenian-Armenian and, simultaneously, Armenian-Turkish divides. Meanwhile, it isn't our fault if they haven't come round.

The crucial corollary runs: Just as, in much of the world, our Common Humanity is Northern European, so in Eastern Turkey — Anatolia — our Common Humanity is Anatolian. With that, we have arrived at the fantasy that sustains the fantasy of therapeutic reconciliation, the one on which *Deep Mountain* ultimately rests.

Temelkuran did not invent it. Anatolianism is currently in vogue on one Turkish leftish fringe. In its innocuous adolescent Armenophile variants, it has its votaries swooning over Anatolian-Armenian folk rock, sobbing over Fethiye Çetin's 2004 best-seller about her aged Anatolian-Turkish grandmother's confession that she had been an Anatolian-Armenian as a girl (*My Grandmother*, Verso, 2008) and, in advanced cases, scouring the family tree in quest of that (latterly) badge of Bohemian-Stamboliot distinction, an Armenian grandmother of one's own. In its deadly *Deep Mountain* strain, it is an elaboration of the conciliatory humanist's first article of faith: we can come to terms with them because they are (almost) like us.

"Us," to be sure, is us Anatolians, not us Turks. Anatolia, however, has been under Ottoman or Turkish rule since about 1500 CE. How, then, do even Armenian hardliners signal that they have not ceased to be Anatolians and are therefore capable of one day crossing the Armenian-Turkish divide? They do so "as though sending out a signal flare of some kind." In the middle of "unemotional discussion[s] of dry matters," "all of a sudden, unaware perhaps of what they're doing," they "recollect the 'old brotherhood' and launch into Turkish." This "happens to them all the time" (233). They continually and irrepressibly burst into Turkish song, or recite Turkish poetry, or pepper their conversation with phrases displaying an intimate, affectionate knowledge of things Turkish. Even when they don't know that universalizing tongue, they smile at Temelkuran "in the language of Anatolia [Turkish]" (166). They sooner or later drop their affected European or American manner to become more warm and sincere, that is, more Turkish (as is indicated by the fact that these striking shifts to the genuinely human plane are "even more striking" in the case of those who "have once lived in Turkey" [125]). And they dream of a mythical place called "Western Armenia" that Temelkuran plainly takes to be Turkey, because, troubled by their obsessive invocations of the former, she keeps asking them if they have ever visited the latter, and is repeatedly astounded to discover that many have not. For her, the conclusion is obvious: "the Diaspora is in love with the same country they fear" (163) — Turkey. Or, rather, Anatolia, and therefore also Turkey.

These imaginary relations with our imaginary relations form *Deep Mountain's* deepest ground. They attest that what happened happened to us all because it happened to the fraternal union we once formed, restoration of which is the object of the fantasy of reconciliation between Diasporan Anatolians and the stay-at-homes. Better: *Deep Mountain* lets the Anatolian shouters themselves show, like signal flares, that that brotherly union persists in and through the Anatolian-Anatolian divide. "Something shameful happened that summer" of 1915. Shameful, indeed: Anatolian raised his hand against fellow Anatolian. (The Turkish Foreign Ministry calls this "civil strife.") "Who was guilty, who was stronger — it's been talked over for ninety years." Yet, paradoxically, "we're still not talking." About what? About the whole family's "pain." "Would it not be better to talk about that," and "better to go slow"? After all, it's only been ninety years. Moreover — or on the other hand — "our enemies" [that is, the foreign foes of us Anatolians] are profiting from our silly little spat about what to call our fraternal quarrel (99). As Hrant once thundered, these meddlers are passing laws on "genocide" and "genocide denial" in order "to obstruct dialogue between our people" (if you're wondering whether the printer dropped an "s," you haven't understood a thing). "If the label we attach to our pain makes it impossible to discuss that pain" (100), should we not, as patriotic Anatolians, forget about "mere labels," remember that we are "a people bound together by tales of Anatolia," and get on to the real, the only serious business to hand: telling and listening to those



stories? It is a matter of some urgency: "our people have scattered, to Armenia, France, America, and who knows how many other places [our Anatolian people have scattered to Armenia?] — members of a Diaspora even in their own countries" (192).

It was necessary to reproduce this much of Temelkuran's vision in order to make that last sentence comprehensible. Many a reader will still not have understood it. Those who have will also have understood that it is, at the discursive level — her manifestly good, internationalist intentions notwithstanding, there is unfortunately no avoiding the word — genocidal. One hopes the movement she belongs to will notice the fact, and point that out, not last to her.

As for Verso — it is perhaps time to send it a signal flare of some kind.