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Historical Memory Suppressed, Expressions Silenced

The first-generation survivor-writers in the Diaspora responded to their collective traumatic past mainly by trying to conceptualize and textualize the Catastrophe.¹ Their artistic rendering of the experience brings to light the colossal crime that was committed against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the indelible effects of that crime on the psyche of the survivors of that crime. In parallel with the literature, the *belles-lettres* that these writers produced was the proliferation of eyewitness accounts and memoirs permeated with blood, tears, destruction, hatred, and revenge. Diasporan Armenian newspapers and periodicals of the 1920s and the 1930s were filled with that type of literature. The survivor-authors of this

¹ For a detailed discussion of the responses of the first-generation survivors and the themes around which they articulated the textualization of their responses, see Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993).