

There was a time when Armenian issues were not treated in any Turkish textbook or cultural setting whatsoever, and most of the time the Turkish people had no idea what the Armenians were talking about. Their identity was built upon the history they had learned in school: the history of modern Turkey with nationalism as the main ingredient, including the sanctification of the war of independence and the creation of the Republic (the *raison d'être* of the Turkish people), and a prescribed amnesia concerning the criminal past of the late Ottoman leaders, who became the founders of modern Turkey, and the bloodshed upon which the Republic was built. The Turkish identity, as discussed before, was prescribed by the state, and the basis of that identity was the “textually mediated” collective memory.

After decades of ignorance about the Armenian Question, Turkish society suddenly came face to face with the Armenian armed struggle in the 1970s, as Turkish diplomats were gunned down and Turkish institutions worldwide were attacked in order to draw international attention to the unresolved injustice against the Armenians.⁵ The Turkish government was compelled to provide an explanation to its citizens and “educate” them about the Armenian issue, and more importantly, to rebut reports in foreign media that sided with the Armenian cause and demanded that the Turkish government recognize the Genocide. A proliferation of denial

⁵ The Armenian armed struggle of this period was carried out by three guerrilla organizations: ASALA (1973-1985), Justice Commandos Against Armenian Genocide (1975-1983), and the Armenian Revolutionary Army (1983). For more information on these organizations, see Wikipedia.org.