

U.S. But she had no proper papers, so she sent her son Mahmud. However, characteristically, as a young Turkish citizen with a nationalistic upbringing, Mahmud could not face the truth about the Armenian past that was revealed to him when he joined his Armenian relatives in the U.S. He could not accept the stories of the past that were, whether he liked it or not, his own past. He quarreled with his relatives and severed his and his mother's relations with them. He tried and somehow succeeded in erasing these memories, as did many of the generation born to Armenian survivors. An acquaintance in the county registrar's office physically erased from his papers the mention of his mother being a convert. It would take the third generation, as we will see later, more distanced from the dreadful past and in a somewhat freer atmosphere, to face the past and deal with it.

Thousands of others, too, stayed where they were for the sake of their children and suffered in silence, never daring to disclose their past. From a distance of ninety years, we look back and try to fathom the motivation in this conscious decision, not only by young women with a child or children, but also by boys who had the chance to escape but did not. In the case of the women, was it only their motherly love and dedication? Was it fear of yet another uncertain fate awaiting these boys, girls, and women too in such a venture? Was it shame, the shame of having been subjected to rape and sexual violence—and this concerned girls and boys alike—that would burst into the open once they joined the free world and would accompany them for life?

Ester Minerajian Ahronian Ajemian was not afraid of her secret being known. She was one of the few who kept talking about the horrors she had lived, once she was safe in the