

## Chapter I

### Understanding of Justice in the Turkish State Tradition

**T**he Kutadgu Bilig, a didactic work in verse which Yusuf Has Hacip completed in 1069/1070 and presented at Kashgar to the Karahanid sovereign Abd Ali Hasan bin Süleyman Arslan, is a historical source that provides philosophical and moral advices about state administration and describes an ideal social life. This work contains views and thoughts concerning the social life, morals, value standards and state administration of the Turks.

The Kutadgu Bilig defines the function of the protector of law and institution of justice as follows: "Folks obey customs and law in the same way as Lords behave in accordance with customs and law."

*"The Turkish custom is that the Sovereign administers justice at a high court which might be called the court of complaints or wrongdoings in his capacity as head of state and as the father of the nation bearing the titles of Yarfı, Yolak and Dar-ul-Adl.*

*The chief duty of the Turkish heads of state and government towards their subjects was to administer justice.*

*We learn from historical sources that in the Anatolian Seljuk state hearings were held twice a week at the High Court and complaints of people were looked into regardless of their religion. This practice was the continuation of a tradition of the Great Seljuk State. We also know that in the Ottoman state great importance was attached to justice as is testified to by the dictum Justice is the basis of the country."*<sup>(1)</sup>

Thanks to governing in justice, which is one of the most important principles of the Turkish state tradition, the Ottoman state was able to make its citizens live together in peace, tranquillity and prosperity for centuries in a manner which was never achieved by any other state throughout history.

<sup>(1)</sup> İsmet Binark: "Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Osmanlı'da Adâlet Anlayışı". [The Ottoman Concept of Justice in the light of Archive Documents]. *Osmanlı'da İnsan Hakları (November 25-26, 1999, Manisa): Uluslararası Sempozyum Bildirileri*. Manisa, 2000, pp. 162-163.

### Under the Ottomans

*"personal rights of those who believed in religions other than Islam were legally protected by the State. No ethnic group whatsoever was favoured before law and different ethnic groups were never oppressed."* <sup>(2)</sup>

*"It is a well known fact that believers in every religion such as Islam, Christianity and Judaism lived in the Ottoman lands. Had it not been for the freedom of religion in the Ottoman state, it would not have been possible. The Ottomans were obliged to preserve what in existence and to be watchful and diligent towards expansion."* <sup>(3)</sup>

*"The islamic law had already guaranteed human rights to all her subjects. Right to life, right to own, right to raise a family, right to inherit had their places in the legal system."*

*Ottomans outlook on life is a human centred one. Islam deals with Man by taking the World and hereafter as a whole.*

*It is essential in Islam that the concept of human rights has a divine character The Turks have understood Islam as submission to God, obedience to his orders, being kind to his creature. and fair conduct."* <sup>(4)</sup>

The Ottomans lasted for centuries as a sovereign state just because they governed non-Turkish and non-muslim minorities in justice with no oppression at all on their customs, beliefs and ways of life.

It has never been a State policy with the Ottomans to attempt to assimilate the minorities resorting to certain methods as was done by some great powers. This is the reason why they had been able to stamp some centuries in history as the Ottoman centuries.

The centuries old tolerance shown by the Ottomans towards other religions and ethnic groups is an undeniable historical fact. If it were otherwise, linguistic and religious geography of many countries would have been completely different today.

<sup>(2)</sup> Hatice Palaz Erdemir: "Tarihî Gelişim Sürecinde İnsan Hakları ve Osmanlı Modeli". [Human Rights and the Ottoman Model in the process of historical development]. *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>(3)</sup> Fahrettin Olguner: "İnsan Haklarında Ölçü ve Osmanlı". [The Standards of Human Rights and the Ottoman]. *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>(4)</sup> İsmet Binark: *op. cit.*, p. 165.

Here is the observation of a foreign writer, Felix Valyi, about the Turks' just government and tolerance:

*"The best proof as to the tolerance of muslim governments is the fact that great numbers of persecuted christians and members of other sects sought refuge with muslim territories so as to be able to practice their own religions. Great numbers of persecuted jews in Spain took refuge with Turkey towards the end of the 15th century.*

*The Calvinists in Hungary and Transylvania as well as the Unitarians in the latter preferred to go to Turkey instead of falling into the hands of the fanatic dynasty of the Habsburgs. The protestants of Silesia looked to Turkey with hopeful eyes in the 17th century. They would have migrated and submitted themselves to a muslim government so as to be able to enjoy freedom of religion. The Cossacks, members of the sect of Old Believers, persecuted by the Russian State Church, could find a tolerance in Turkey which their christian fellows refused to show them."*<sup>(5)</sup>

Another author, Alexander Powell, writes as follows in his book:

*"Whilst the Crusaders were slaying muslim prisoners in Palestine, the terror disseminated by the Inquisition in Spain was at its peak, Cromwell's soldiers were killing Irish catholics and the French protestants were being erased at the order of the King and all over Europe jews were subjected to immense cruelty and savagery, it would be proper to recall that muslims, christians and jews were living together as friends in Asia Minor."*<sup>(6)</sup>

In the opinion of yet another foreign writer, Talcott Williams,

*"The tolerance shown to foreign beliefs and hostile faiths by the Ottoman law and Ottoman officials which enabled them to establish their own religious institutions and to shape their own education was such that the thousand year old liberty reigning in France in the field of sects and beliefs, dating from the times of the ancient Gaul, could not be compared with it."*<sup>(7)</sup>

### **Armenians Under the Turkish Rule**

At the time when the Turks conquered Anatolia, there was not such a thing as an independent Armenian state on that soil. As for

<sup>(5)</sup> Felix Valyi: *Revolutions in Islam*. London, 1925. pp. 27-28.

<sup>(6)</sup> E. Alexander Powell: *The Struggle for Power in Moslem Asia*. New York, 1925, p. 120.

<sup>(7)</sup> Talcot Williams: *Turkey, A World Problem of Today*. New York, 1922, p. 194.

the period just preceding the Turkish conquest, Armenians had become the subject of long struggles first between the Byzantium (Eastern Roman Empire) and Iran, and afterwards between the Byzantium and muslim states. The Armenians were frequently exiled in great numbers for sectarian and political reasons.

As a sharp contrast to their previous pitiable state, Armenians became land owners under the Turkish rule and had the opportunity of enjoying a free life, free in speaking their own language and practising their own religion under the muslim law.

The Turks have always treated the non-muslims in the territories under their rule in benevolence and tolerance in such a degree that which was yet to be achieved in the future. They let them free in all their business among themselves, in their language, religion and beliefs.

Under the principles adopted by the Ottomans in the field of governing people, christian communities were granted such a great freedom that they could preserve their religious and national identities. This fact only proves that the tolerance shown by the Ottomans to the non-muslims was far beyond their times, this is especially true when the contemporary practices in other countries were taken into consideration .

As is known, muslims and jews were not able to stay any longer in Spain after 1492 and they had to take refuge with the Ottomans. In France, massacres took place in 1572 at Saint Barthelemy. Religious wars shook Europe until 1648, whereas non-muslims lived in peace, tranquillity and welfare under the just government of the Ottomans.

The Armenians were a trusted people in the Empire and could thus sometimes get themselves appointed to rather important posts in the course of centuries under the Ottoman rule and were called therefore "the loyal subjects". It was in this period, namely under the Ottoman rule that Armenians enjoyed the best and most stable years of their existence.

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Armenian historian Oscanyan observes that

*"The Armenian community constituted the essence of the daily life. For the Turks accustomed to governing rather than serving for long had left all the branches of industry to them. Therefore bankers, traders, engineers in Turkey were Armenians. On the other hand there was a similarity in feelings and common interests between them. The Armenians became the most influential subjects by easily adapting themselves to the Turks and earning their trust."* <sup>(8)</sup>

An Armenian priest, Y.G. Çark, describes the state of Armenians as follows:

*"I believe that it won't be a mistake to consider this Third Period that is the Tanzimat to be the golden age of Armenians. During this period, which we regard as the most bountiful and favourable one of all, Armenians advanced in every field and could reach higher positions by showing themselves and earning confidence and trust of the Government."* <sup>(9)</sup>

Whilst the Ottoman Armenians were being protected under the Ottoman rule, in Russia foundations, schools and religious institutions belonging to Armenians were seized forcibly, education in Armenian banned and Armenian clergymen and successful merchants exiled. <sup>(10)</sup>

Russian Armenians were far from enjoying even one tenth of the rights enjoyed by Ottoman Armenians. <sup>(11)</sup>

Galich, Russian Governor General for the Caucasus, says in the Report he submitted to the Czar in 1898 that

*"Armenian revolutionary ideas have been disseminated by clergymen, the press and revolutionary organisations established abroad. Every one who is occupied with such ideas must be immediately expelled from the Caucasus and drastic measures should be*

<sup>(8)</sup> D. Oscanyan: *The Sultan and his People*. London, 1957, p. 353.

<sup>(9)</sup> Y.G. Çark: *Türk Devleti Hizmetinde Ermeniler, 1453-1953*. [Armenians in the service of the Turkish State, 1453 - 1953]. Istanbul, 1953, p. 44.

<sup>(10)</sup> B.A. Boryan: *Armeniya mejdunarodnaya diplomatiya i SSSR, çast I*. Moskva, 1929, p. 217; S.M.Akopyan: *Zapodnaya Armeniya v planah imperialistiçeşkih derjav v period pervoy mirovoy voyni*. Yerevan, 1967, p. 162.

<sup>(11)</sup> Edgar, Granville : *Le Tsarisme en Asie Mineure*. *Revue Politique Internationale*, 1917, (Tranlated into Turkish : *Çarlık Rusyası'nın Türkiye'deki Oyunları*. Translated by Orhan Arıman. Ankara, 1967, p. 30.

*taken to prevent its spread to the people. Since ideas of independence have been strengthened in schools, Armenian schools must be brought under control by subjecting them to the Russian System of Education. Therefore, 320 Armenian schools were shut down and the school buildings were placed under the control of the Ministry of Education. I respectfully submit this measure for imperial endorsement. As the press and the associations for public benefit are all occupied with politics, I respectfully ask for the permission to shut down their printing- presses as well as their associations.*" <sup>(12)</sup>

From the second half of the 19th century, the Armenians, known to be the loyal subjects of the Ottoman state, were used especially by the Czarist Russia and Britain to break up the Ottoman state from within.

The uprising of the Armenians who were not called upon for military service at the beginning, their commercial interests were protected and consequently they could build up significant wealth and reached higher political positions thanks to the good education ensured for them by the state was prompted by the hypocritical reform demands of certain two-faced powers which used Armenians as an instrument and refused to grant the same interests in their own territory as they had demanded from the Ottomans on behalf of the Armenians .

### **An International Imperialist Strategy: The Question of Orient**

The Ottoman state has been betrayed so many times by the members of different nationalities under its rule as well as by the western powers to which it had granted political and economic privileges.

Armenians too appeared on this stage. They allowed themselves to be deceived by certain powers intending to employ them as a pair of tongs in braking up the Ottoman geography and thus betrayed the Ottoman state which had offered them the possibility of living in peace and prosperity under its own equitable government.

<sup>(12)</sup> Neşide Kerem Demir: *Bir Şehit Anasına Tarihin Söyledikleri: Türkiye'nin Ermeni Meselesi*. [The Armenian Question In Turkey: History's Revelations To The Mother of A Martyr]. 3d edition. Ankara, 1982, p. 62.

It is from the second half of the 19th century that people started talking about an Armenian question.

If so wished, one might find the beginning of this question in the Edict of Islahat (betterment) of 1856 or in the Turco-Russian War of 1877-78 and the subsequent Treaty of St. Stephanos of March 3, 1878 as well as in the Peace Conference of Berlin dated July 13, 1878. Some articles were first inserted into the Treaties of St. Stephanos and Berlin providing that conditions should be bettered in places inhabited by Armenians and then Great Powers interfered in the internal affairs of the Ottoman state on the basis of such articles and thus gave rise to the Armenian Question.

In fact, the Armenian Question was part of the larger Question of Orient. The imperialist European states called the Great Powers (Russia, Britain, France and Germany) vehemently supported the nationalist and secessionist movements originated amidst the non-muslim subjects with the aim of breaking up the Ottoman state in conformity with their interests and attempted to establish states in the Balkans under their influence.

It is known that the Armenian question did not stem from the social, cultural, economic, administrative and political status of those Armenians living in the territory of the Ottoman state and that its underlying cause was an artificially created international imperialistic strategy by the name of the Question of Orient namely a policy of balance of powers.

As a term of diplomatic history, the Question of Orient expresses the effort on the part of the western powers to break up the Ottoman state in the second half of the 19th century. The meaning of the Question of orient to non-muslims was in brief the breaking up of the Ottoman state and effecting of some reforms that would produce concessions and privileges in their favour bound to lead eventually to autonomy and independence.<sup>(13)</sup>

<sup>(13)</sup> Bayram Kodaman: "Şark Meselesi ve Tarihi Gelişimi". [The Question of Orient and its Historical Development]. *Tarihi Gelişmeler İçinde Türkiye'nin Sorunları Sempozyumu*, Ankara, March 8-9, 1990, pp. 59-63; Bayram Kodaman: "Ermeni Meselesinin Doğuş Sebepleri". [The Reasons giving rise to the Armenian Question]. *Türk Kültürü*, (219), March-April 1981, pp. 240-249; Yılmaz Öztuna: *XX. Yüzyılın Son Çeyreğinde Şark Meselesi*. [The Question of Orient in the Last Quarter of the 20th Century]. Ankara, 1989; Cevdet Küçük: "Şark Meselesi Hakkında Önemli Bir Vesika". [An Important Document concerning the Question of Orient]. *İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, (32), March 1979, pp. 607-638.

### **Emergence of Armenian Revolutionary Associations**

From 1870 on a number of associations and revolutionary organisations were established with a dream of founding an Armenian state in eastern Anatolia.

The first organisations are the "Black Cross" and "Armenakan" at Van and "The Protectors of Homeland" at Erzurum. Their activities failed to be effective and remained restricted, at least at the beginning, to their areas for great majority of Armenians who had been living in peace and prosperity, without any complaints, under the Ottoman rule did not pay much attention to them.

Between 1870 and 1880, "Araratlı" was founded at Van, "School Lovers" and "The East" at Mush and "Nationalist Women" at Erzurum. Later on Araratlı, School Lovers and the East were combined to create the "United Armenian Association." The Armenakan Party was the first revolutionary political party. The purpose of this party was to found an independent Armenian state through revolution. To achieve this end it endeavoured to bring all Armenians together, to disseminate revolutionary ideas, to raise money and get arms and organise armed bands. Information about how to use arms and lessons of military tactics were given by the Russian Consul Major Kamsaragan in the Armenian School at Van.<sup>(14)</sup>

Upon the failure to incite the Ottoman Armenians to rise up against the state by means of such associations established within the country, Russian Armenians were made to establish organisations abroad. Hinchak was founded in 1887 at Geneva, Tashnak in 1890 at Tblisi. They were told that their aim should be to liberate Anatolia and Ottoman Armenians.

Armenian historian Louise Nalbandian writes about the activities of the Armenakan Party as follows:

*"The known activities of the Party comprise the attack on Turkish security men of the band members Hovannes Agripasyan, Vardan Golashyan and Karabet Kulaksizyan who had put on them Kurdish clothes, various murders, assaults on tribes, murder of Nuri Effendi, a policeman at Van, participation together with members of Hinchak in the Van uprising in June 1896, skirmishes of an armed band of 200 people under the leadership of Avetisyan with*

<sup>(14)</sup> Louise Nalbandian: *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*. Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 97 –98.



*tribesmen and Assyrians in the vicinity of Karahisar Mountains aided by armed bands of Tashnagsagan and Homeland organisations...*"<sup>(15)</sup>

As for the activities of the Hinchak Committee, Nalbandian writes as follows:

*"Provocation and acts of violence were required in order to excite the people. It was necessary to provoke the people and thus compel the enemy to take retaliatory actions. Confidence of people towards the Hinchak Committee was to be secured through acts of violence. Consequently prestige of the Ottoman government would be weakened and every kind of effort was to be made for its total disintegration."*<sup>(16)</sup>

Another Armenian historian, Papazian, says about the Tashnag Committee that

*"The objectives of the Committee were the acquisition through rebellion of political and economic freedoms for the Ottoman Armenians, elimination of officials and traitors in the government, destruction and damaging of official buildings and plundering."*<sup>(17)</sup>

Captain Clayton, British Consul at Van, points out in his Report<sup>(18)</sup> dated October 12, 1880 that he received information to the effect that associations were set up in the Russian Armenia with the aim of shipping arms and ammunition to the Ottoman Armenians that agents were hired for the distribution of arms.

Clayton reports in November that Armenians were preparing themselves for an uprising and that an American missionary informed him that arms were continuously coming from Russia.<sup>(19)</sup>

Captain Everett, British Consul at Erzurum, asserts in his report dated November 24, that information to the effect that arms were collected in Russia was beyond doubt.<sup>(20)</sup>

<sup>(15)</sup> Louise Nalbandian : *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 97-98.

<sup>(16)</sup> Louise Nalbandian : *op. cit.*, pp. 110 – 111. See: Esat Uras: *Tarihçe Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*. [The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question]. 2nd printing. Istanbul, 1976, pp. 432 – 439 for the Program of the Revolutionary Hunchak Party prepared in 1886 and printed in London in 1887.

<sup>(17)</sup> K. S. Papazian: *Patriotism Perverted*. Boston, 1934, pp. 14-15; Esat Uras: *op. cit.*, p. 450.

<sup>(18)</sup> Foreign Office (FO), 424/107, No: 194, Annex –1.

<sup>(19)</sup> Foreign Office (FO), 424/107, No: 185 and 212.

<sup>(20)</sup> Foreign Office (FO), 424/107, No: 213.

**... the object of Armenian revolutionary organisations and the armed bands that they assembled was nothing but establishing an independent Armenian state by starting uprisings against the Ottoman state in various places of Anatolia and trying to bring about the collapse of it.**

One of the force focuses lying behind the curtain, which was related to the rise of the question of orient, and to the formation of Armenian revolutionary committees is Russia.

In a report submitted to his government in 1876, the British Ambassador Sir Elliot in İstanbul reports as follows:

*"A high positioned Armenian, not connected to the Ottoman Government, came and told me that all these events occurred at the instigation of Russians. This*

*news is in conformity with the information I have had from other sources."*

Lord Edgar Granville, one of the British foreign ministers of the period, said in brief that

*"Armenians' revolt against the Ottoman state did not happen spontaneously. For not a single Armenian act took place in Turkey until Russians laid hands upon Armenians."* <sup>(21)</sup>

As can be clearly seen from what has been written by Armenian authors and historians as well as by western diplomats, the object of Armenian revolutionary organisations and the armed bands that they assembled was nothing but establishing an independent Armenian state by starting uprisings against the Ottoman state in various places of Anatolia and trying to bring about the collapse of it.

The Armenian revolutionary associations and armed bands started implementing this program and staged various uprisings on different dates. First initiatives came from the Hinchaks, to be followed by the Tashnaks later on. The feature common to all attempts to revolt was that those who had come from abroad planned them all.

<sup>(21)</sup> Sadi Koçuş: *Tarih Boyunca Ermeniler ve Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri*. [Armenians and the Turkish-Armenian Relations in History]. Ankara, 1967, p. 79.

The report sent by the German Ambassador Saurma to his Ministry on October 6, testifies to the activities of Armenian revolutionaries:

*"All attempts to rise up have been organised by Armenian revolutionary organisations as foreseen in their programs."* <sup>(22)</sup>

The Armenian church was another factor exhorting Armenian organisations and bands to rise up against the Ottoman state.

The Armenian historian Pasdermadjian points out to the importance of the Armenian Church as follows:

*"The Armenian Church is the body housing the soul of the Armenian nation waiting for revival."* <sup>(23)</sup>

Yet another historian, Boyajian, asserts that

*"No history of Armenians, no matter how comprehensive it may be, can be considered a full history telling the true life of Armenians if it does not treat the Armenian Church in the same degree. The Armenian nation and the Armenian Church are so intertwined that it is not possible to discuss one of them without touching the other."* <sup>(24)</sup>

The Armenian Church was defined by the Armenian patriarch, M. Ormanyan, as

*"the visible soul of the lost country."* <sup>(25)</sup>

The close relationship of the Armenian Church and Armenian clergymen with the Armenian question, its involvement in the formation of Armenian revolutionary associations and armed bands and in their being armed have been explained by Gevand Turyan, an Armenian bishop and an Ottoman citizen, as follows:

*"Religious communities had long become revolutionary hearths of the Armenian revolutionary parties and most diabolical plans had been drawn up there. Religious spaces had become warehouses of arms and hearths of plots. Religious leaders had been exhorting the people to rise up against the state with their speeches and writings,*

<sup>(22)</sup> German Archives. Die Grosse Politik, Band: X, No: 2428 (mentioned in Kâmuran Gürün: *Ermeni Dosyası*. [The Armenian File]. 3d edition. Ankara, 1985, pp. 153-154.

<sup>(23)</sup> Hrand Pasdermadjian: *Histoire de l'Arménie*. Paris, 1949, p. 290.

<sup>(24)</sup> Dickran H. Boyajian: *Armenia: The Case For a Forgotten Genocide*. New Jersey, 1972, p. 84.

<sup>(25)</sup> Yves Ternon: *Les Arméniens : Histoire d'un génocide*. Paris, 1977, p. 34.

*people that had trusted them. They did not preach any more the teaching of the Gospel and utter noble words in their sermons. Rebellion had replaced loyalty and righteousness in their sermons, hatred and revenge had taken the place of humanity. Meanness and ignominy were preached in place of high morality. Religious leaders presided over festivities, meetings and ceremonies organised by revolutionary committees."*<sup>(26)</sup>

The Armenian Church had become the ground in which not only the animosity to Turks but also the Armenian nationalism flourished. The greatest support to the Church in the awakening of the Armenian nationalism

*"was provided by the Great powers. It was Russia in particular from among the Great Powers that first opened the Armenian file in diplomacy."*<sup>(27)</sup>

### **Uprisings of Armenian Revolutionary Associations and Armed Bands**

The first uprising took place at Erzurum on June 20, 1890. It was followed by the demonstration taking place at Kumkapı in the same year July 15, 1890 and the incidents of 1892 – 1893 of Kayseri, Yozgat, Çorum and Merzifon; the first Sassoun uprising in August 1894, the demonstration at the Sublime Porte on September 30, 1895, the Zeytun rebellion from October 24, 1895 to January 28, 1896, the rebellion at Van on June 3, 1896; occupation of the Ottoman Bank on August 14, 1896; the second Sassoun uprising in 1903; the attempt to kill Sultan Abdulhamid at Yıldız on July 21, 1905; the incidents at Adana on April 14, 1909.

It is well documented that all the risings were staged with the aim of forcing the Great Powers to effect an armed intervention towards the Ottoman state.

It is worth noting that the Armenian Patriarch told the British Ambassador Elliot on December 6, 1876 that

*"if it is required to start revolution or to rise up in order to secure the intervention of Europe in this matter or to draw its attention, that can be done quite easily."*<sup>(28)</sup>

<sup>(26)</sup> A Qui la Faute? *Aux Partis Revue Arménien*. (Publication de la Revue Dadiar). Constantinople, 1917, pp. 40-41.

<sup>(27)</sup> M. Kemal Öke: *Ermeni Meselesi*. [The Armenian Question]. Istanbul, 1986, p. 91.

<sup>(28)</sup> FO, 424/46, pp. 205-206, No: 336.

The British Ambassador Currie at İstanbul expressed the following view in his report he sent to the Foreign Office on March 28, 1894:

*"The Armenian revolutionaries stir up disorders with the aim of forcing the Ottomans to retaliate and thus pave the way for the intervention of foreign countries."* <sup>(29)</sup>

The British Consul Grave at Erzurum, in a message sent to the British Embassy at İstanbul on January 28, 1895, reports that

*"The purpose of Armenian revolutionaries is to compel the Turkish government and Turkish nation to take action against themselves because of the general discontent they create themselves and so draw the attention of foreign powers to the imaginary sufferings of the Armenian people and convince them of the necessity to improve the situation."* <sup>(30)</sup>

Upon the question of New York Herald correspondent Sydney Whitman as to whether such clashes would still have happened if Armenian revolutionaries had not come and had not instigated Armenians to rise up, the British Consul Graves replied *"of course not, I do not think that a single Armenian would have been killed."* <sup>(31)</sup>

General Mayewski who served as Russia's Consul General at Bitlis and at Van, reports as follows in a report of 1912:

*"Armenian revolutionaries created such a suspicion between Armenians and the local people in 1895 and 1896 that it became impossible to carry out any reforms in this area. Armenian clergymen were not busy with religious education at all. They endeavoured instead to disseminate nationalistic ideas. Such ideas were developed within the walls of the mysterious monasteries and enmity of christians towards muslims replaced religious duties. The reason of the rebellions taking place in many provinces of Anatolia in the years 1895 and 1896 was neither the poverty of Armenian villagers nor the supposed oppression on them. For these villagers were richer and more prosperous than their neighbours. Three causes may be mentioned for the Armenian uprisings:*

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<sup>(29)</sup> *Blue Book*, (Turkey), No: 6 (1894), p. 57.

<sup>(30)</sup> *Blue Book*, (Turkey), No: 6 (1894), pp. 222-223.

<sup>(31)</sup> Esat Uras : *op. cit.*, p. 426.

**... Armenian revolutionaries were responsible for whatever happened in Anatolia.**

*1) their development in political matters; 2) the development of the ideas of nationalism, liberation and independence in the Armenian public opinion and 3) support provided by western*

*governments to such ideas and the effort of clergymen to disseminate them.*" <sup>(32)</sup>

The British Vice-consul at Van, Mr. Williams, points out in his report dated March 4, 1896 that

*"Tashnaks and Hinchaks incited people in an excessive and wild manner and paralysed all the effort and activities undertaken to implement the reforms and that Armenian revolutionaries were responsible for whatever happened in Anatolia."* <sup>(33)</sup>

The British Consul General at Adana, Mr. Doughty Wily, says in his report dated 1909 that

*"Armenians have been striving to secure the intervention of foreign powers."* <sup>(34)</sup>

General Mayewski states in another Report of his dated 1912 that

*"The Tashnak militants have been trying to pave the way for Russian intervention by inciting troubles between Armenians and muslims."* <sup>(35)</sup>

The Armenian historian Papazian wrote that

*"The purpose of all the incidents and uprisings was to induce the European states to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Ottoman state."* <sup>(36)</sup>

Every time Armenian revolutionaries incited an uprising, they did so after a propaganda campaign that European powers would intervene immediately after the start of the rebellion.

As is quite clear, the reason for the uprisings staged by Armenian revolutionaries and armed bands was neither misery, need for

<sup>(32)</sup> General Mayewski: *Les Massacres d'Arménie : Statistiques des Provinces de Van et de Bitlis*. Petersburg, 1916, pp. 11-13.

<sup>(33)</sup> *Blue Book*, (Turkey), No: 8 (1896), p. 108.

<sup>(34)</sup> Schemsi Kara [Reşit Saffet Atabinen]: *Turcs et Arméniens Devant l'histoire*. Genève, 1919, p.11.

<sup>(35)</sup> Schemsi Kara: *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>(36)</sup> K.S. Papazian: *op. cit.*, p. 19.

reforms nor alleged oppression exerted on them. The real reason for uprisings was the desire on the part of the western great powers and Russia, to break up the Ottoman Empire, which had struck its stamp on history, in cooperation with Armenian revolutionaries and Armenian Church.

Faced with an uprising, the Ottoman state reacted in the same way as any other state would have reacted and sent troops to put it down. Yet the suppression of every incident was presented to the world as "a new massacre" by Armenians and their sympathisers.

Armenians formed numerous bands armed with the arms supplied from abroad, rose up against the Ottoman state and behaved as though they regarded it as a pleasant duty to shed the blood of Turks.

This reality has been confirmed once more in a report submitted to his government by the Austrian Consul, one of the impartial representatives as follows:

*"The outcry and clamour of Armenians that Turks have been persecuting Armenians are nothing but lies. The Turkish government has done nothing evil to Armenians. Perhaps Armenians have planned a revolution taking advantage of the indifference of the government, have armed bands and sent them to mountains, as for the Turks, perhaps they have been trying only to pursue them and put down the risings."*<sup>(37)</sup>

**The outcry and clamour of Armenians that Turks have been persecuting Armenians are nothing but lies.**

The outbreak of the First World War and the entry of the Ottoman state in it on November 1, 1914 as an ally of Germany against the Entente Powers was regarded by Armenians as a great historic opportunity for them.

As has been pointed out by the Armenian historian Louise Nalbandian

*"In the eyes of the Armenian revolutionaries, the most favourable time to start up a total insurrection to achieve their end was the time when the Ottoman state was at war."*<sup>(38)</sup>

<sup>(37)</sup> Nikerled Krayblis: *Rusya'nın Şark Siyaseti ve Vilâyet-i Şarkıyye Mes'elesi*. [Eastern Policy of Russia and the question of Eastern Provinces]. Translated by Habil Adem. İstanbul, 1932, p. 178 (mentioned Neşide Kerem Demir: *op. cit.*, p. 61.)

<sup>(38)</sup> Louise Nalbandian : *op. cit.*, p. 111.

Considering that Armenian associations might get into action in the war, some representatives of the Ottoman government held a meeting, before the war, with some leaders of the Tashnak association in August 1914 at Erzurum.

At this meeting, the Tashnak representatives promised solemnly that they would serve in the ranks of the Ottoman army as faithful citizens just in case the Ottoman state take part in the war. However, they did not stick to their pledge.

For, before this meeting, the Tashnak had held a congress at Erzurum in June and had resolved to go on with its struggle against the Ottoman state.<sup>(39)</sup>

As for the Russian Armenians, they had also begun preparing themselves to attack the Ottoman state in cooperation with the Russian Army and an agreement had already been reached between the Catholicos of Echmiazin and Worontsoff-Dachkof, Governor General for the Caucasus, to the effect that

*"the Russian Armenians would unconditionally support Russia, provided that Russia would, in return, have the Ottomans carry out some reforms in favour of Armenians"*<sup>(40)</sup>

and the Catholicos had been received later on by Czar at Tblisi where he expressed to the Czar the view that

*"the liberation of Armenians in Anatolia can come true only if they can, weakening the Ottoman rule, manage to establish an autonomous Armenia and if this Armenia is protected by Russia."*<sup>(41)</sup>

But Russia's policy was to annex Anatolia by using Armenians.

Upon the declaration of war by Russia to the Ottoman state, the Tashnak Committee published in Horizon, a Committee publication, the following statement:

*"Armenians took their place firmly, with no slightest hesitation, with the Entente Powers, placed all their forces at the disposal of Russia and also formed voluntary regiments."*<sup>(42)</sup>

<sup>(39)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi: İlan-ı Meşrutiyetten Evvel ve Sonra.* [Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties: Before and after the Proclamation of Constitutional Monarchy]. Published by the Ministry of Interior. İstanbul, 1916, pp. 144 -146.

<sup>(40)</sup> Gr. Tchalkouchian: *Le Livre Rouge.* Paris, 1919, p. 12.

<sup>(41)</sup> Gr. Tchalkouchian: *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>(42)</sup> Esat Uras: *op. cit.*, p. 594.



**... Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman Army deserted with their arms and having joined the Russian forces they formed voluntary units or armed bands.**

The Tashnak Committee also issued the following instructions to its organisation:

*"If and when Ottoman troops start retreat in front of the Russian Army crossing the border, riots and risings should be incited everywhere so that Ottoman forces would find themselves under double fire. If the Ottomans forces happen to advance, Armenian soldiers (in the Ottoman army) should desert with their rifles, form bands and join the Russians."*<sup>(43)</sup>

The Hinchak Committee too issued a circular to its organisation informing them that

*"The Committee, taking part in the struggle as an ally of the Entente Powers and Russia in particular, will assist the Entente Powers by every means possible for the victory of Armenia, Cilicia, the Caucasus and Azerbaijan."*<sup>(44)</sup>

With the entry of the Russian Army in the Turkish lands preceded by the voluntary regiments formed of Ottoman and Russian Armenians, Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman Army deserted with their arms and having joined the Russian forces they formed voluntary units or armed bands.

<sup>(43)</sup> Mehmet Hocoğlu: *Arşiv Vesikalarıyla Tarihte Ermeni Mezâlimi ve Ermeniler*. [Armenian Atrocities and Armenians in History based on Archive Documents]. İstanbul, 1976, pp. 570-571.

<sup>(44)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi*. [Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties]. pp. 151-153.



## Chapter II

### Written Documents Concerning the Atrocities and Genocide Inflicted upon the Turks by the Armenians

**T**he arms which had long been concealed in the Armenian and missionary schools and churches were taken out; offices of enlistment were raided and all their arms were seized; the bands which had armed themselves took to the street and, obeying such orders of the Committees as "*if you wish to be free, kill first your neighbour*" and attacking the undefended Turkish cities, towns and villages, undefended because all men were away on the frontline,

Started massacring and committing atrocities; the Armenians, who had been known as late as yesterday as "loyal subjects", stabbed the Turkish army in the back, hindered the operations of the Turkish troops, cut their roads of supplies, ambushed and brutally killed the wounded soldiers, raped defenceless women and virgins by torturing, did not refrain from killing elderly people and children by torturing; plundered goods, money, animals and produces of the people; profaned temples, destroyed bridges and roads; set fire to all official buildings, burned whole towns and villages together with their inhabitants; and facilitated the Russian occupation of the country by rising up. The Armenians who had still been citizens of the Ottoman state thus betrayed their own state.

Atrocities and brutalities committed by the voluntary regiments serving in the ranks of the Russian forces were so harsh that the Russian Command felt itself compelled to remove some Armenian units from the front and sent them to the rear. Memories written by some Russian officers serving in the Russian Army openly testifies to such atrocities.<sup>(45)</sup>

In the ranks of these voluntary regiments there were also a lot of Armenians banished by the Russian Government to Siberia for political reasons and Ottoman Armenians.

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<sup>(45)</sup> Twerdo Khlebof : *Journal de Guerre du 2<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Artillerie de forteresse Russe d'Erzérourm-Notes d'un officier Supérieur Russe sur les atrocités d'Erzérourm*, Traduit du manuscrit original russe, 1919.

Among the chiefs of these regiments and armed bands, who were the most brutal and merciless enemies of the Turks, one may mention Karakin Pastirmajian, former member of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies for Erzurum, who had run to Russia at the beginning of the War and used the assumed name of "Armen Garo"; Antranik (General); Shabash Orbelian from Zangezor; Captain Malik; Avan Han (General) from Karabagh; Tarananof brothers; Atabekof; the woman Monushak, archbishop Manucharian; Doctor Pashaian; Sarkis Minasian; Sarkis Parsehian; Shahrikian; Hajuk; Hrach; Zonrap; Murad (Hamparsum Boyacijan); V. Papazian, Ottoman Deputy for Van and one of the leaders of the Tashnaksutyian Committee.<sup>(46)</sup>

Whenever the activities of the Armenian revolutionary organisations and of the Armenian armed bands are in question

*"it is seen that efforts were not made within the framework of a national liberation, but efforts were made in order to eradicate a race namely the Turks. It was but a unilateral blood feud. Isn't it clear enough that Armenian activities in the Ottoman territories had been from the start terrorist acts and a striving staged for the purpose of massacring, and committing atrocities and genocide?"*

*The violent character of all incidents involving Armenians which had begun with the individual terrorist acts under the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid, attempts to kill, uprisings and raids was intensified gradually till the total resurrection and combats recorded during the war. What is still worse is that Armenian terrorists were to begin to perpetuate atrocities when the Ottoman army was forced to retreat from Eastern Anatolia following its defeat at Sarikamish in 1915. When the Russian forces that had occupied Eastern Anatolia were forced to abandon the area in order to go back home in 1917, Armenian bands systematically massacred the local people in Eastern Anatolia, as proven by historical documents, for almost a year from 1917 to 1918 when the Turkish armed forces entered Erzurum."*<sup>(47)</sup>

<sup>(46)</sup> *İttihad ve Terakki Kongresi, 1332 Senesi.* (The Congress of the Union and Progress, Year 1332). İstanbul, 1332, pp. 13-14.

<sup>(47)</sup> Mim Kemal Öke: *Ermeni Sorunu 1914-1923. (Devletin Dış Politika Araç Alternatifleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme).* (The Armenian Question 1914 - 1923. (A Study on the State's Alternative Instruments of Foreign Policy). Ankara, 1991, p. 109.

Armenians are in the habit of presenting all their uprisings and the massacres they committed consequently as an act of legal self-defence resorted to upon the Government's resolution to relocate them. Yet, in fact, uprisings were not the consequence of the operation of relocation, but the relocation was the consequence of uprisings, atrocities and genocide.

**Yet, in fact, uprisings were not the consequence of the operation of relocation, but the relocation was the consequence of uprisings, atrocities and genocide.**

It should be borne in mind that while all this was taking place the British and French fleets were forcing the Strait of Dardanelle and the Turkish troops were in battle against hostile forces on various fronts from Galicia to Eastern Anatolia and Iraq.

In the face of this situation, The Ottoman state held first a meeting with the Armenian Patriarch, deputies of Armenian origin and the notables of the Armenian community and made known to the participants that it would be forced to take necessary measures if the Armenian massacres and atrocities, which had assumed the proportion of a genocide, did not stop. As this warning failed to produce any changes, the Government closed all the Armenian associations on April 24, 1915 and arrested 2345 persons for activities against the state.

April 24th, which has been marked every year as the anniversary of the "genocide" by Armenians in various countries is this day when all the terrorists involved in anti-state subversive activities were arrested. Contrary to what was propagated, the claims have nothing to do with massacres. Those claims are unfounded and imaginary.

On account of internal and external dangers, the Ottoman state took some measures to defend itself, as any other country finding itself in a similar situation would have taken, and relocated the Armenians living in the areas close to war zones in safer areas. The law on sending and resettlement, passed in this respect, was dated May 27, 1915 and promulgated on the journal Takvim-i Vekayi of June 1, 1915.

As has been pointed out by the Armenian historian Leo (Arakel Babakhanian) in his work The Turkish Armenian Revolution

**has used its right to defend its existence against Armenian organisations that had fomented and incited disorders and rebellions at the instigation of the Russians by relying on Russian arms.**

published in Armenian in 1934 at Paris, the Ottoman state

*"has used its right to defend its existence against Armenian organisations that had fomented and incited disorders and rebellions at the instigation of the Russians by relying on Russian arms."*

Besides, the operation of sending and resettlement was not a punishment, it was the

resettlement of a minority group in a certain place.

The Ottoman government explained the reasons for this action in a White Book published in 1916 as follows;

*"Armenians betrayed. It is quite obvious. Besides they committed this treachery at a time when the government, thanks to the good will of which they had been able to keep their language and nationality and which had showed them respect and kindness all the time, was at a life or death war by stabbing in the back and maliciously striking at its vital points in an organised manner.*

*The government had always been respectful to their rights and national traits. It let them free in their religious and national affairs. Yet it received betrayal and ill will in return. During the World War they have betrayed the country, instead of defending it, the country which had provided them with prosperity and riches. Rightly expecting an allegiance stronger than ever from all its population, regardless of race and religion, the state which had sacrificed thousands of its children in the battle fields in order to ensure its life and permanence was only justified and obliged to take such a measure against those who had attempted to occupy the country from within and stab it in the back."*<sup>(48)</sup>

It is also true that the Ottoman government was careful to foresee measures for the protection of Armenians while they were being transferred. The orders and instructions issued for this purpose are to prove this point:

<sup>(48)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi.* p. 288

*"The Armenians to be displaced must set out for their new places of resettlement, their comfort must be ensured during their travel, their lives and goods must be protected. Their feeding must be provided from the refugees' allowances from the moment of their arrival until their final settlement in their new homes. They must be issued goods and fields in accordance with their previous financial state and the present needs. The government must construct houses to those who need them, and provide seeds, tools and equipment for needy farmers and craftsmen."* <sup>(49)</sup>

*"needy immigrants should be given credits. The camps established for those who travel should be regularly controlled, necessary measures should be taken for the well being of the immigrants and moreover security and order should be ensured. Needy immigrants should be given enough food and their health should be checked every day. The sick, women and children should be sent by train and the others by mule, cart or on foot according to their strength. If any attacks whatsoever take place against immigrants during the journey or during the stay at camps, such attacks must be driven back."* <sup>(50)</sup>

The archive documents prove that Armenian revolutionary associations and armed bands continued their efforts to establish an independent Armenia and went on with their massacres, atrocities and genocide even after the deportation.

Massacres, atrocities and genocide committed against innocent and defenceless Turks by Armenian organisations and armed bands can be grouped under the following headlines:

Inhuman atrocities and brutalities inflicted upon women, children and elderly people in the defenceless towns and villages which had sent their men to war; setting fire to houses, folds, farm animals and produces; violation of women and girls; cutting of noses, ears and chins of innocent people; cooking torn pieces of corpses and forcing the relatives to eat them; making dogs eat the corpses; taking out of already buried corpses; piercing the wombs of pregnant women by bayonet and taking the foetus out; destruction and insulting of mosques and mausoleums; setting fire to

<sup>(49)</sup> 1915 Mayıs tarihli Bakanlar Kurulu Talimatı. (Instructions of May 1915 by the Council of Ministers). BOA, Meclis-i Vükelâ Mazbataları, Vol. 198, Resolution No: 1331/163.

<sup>(50)</sup> FO, 371, 9158/5523.

official buildings; brutally killing of wounded soldiers returning from the front under torture.

The documents testifying to these inhuman savageries, atrocities and genocide are at the present kept in archives and libraries. Is it possible for the Turkish nation to forget all this savagery, atrocities and ignominious scenes full of shame for humanity? World public opinion can neither overlook all this. Acts and behaviour to the contrary infringes upon human law.

As one would readily agree, true historical information are to be drawn from original sources, namely archive documents. No history can be written without documents, and reality behind happenings cannot be brought to light.

Writing a hypothetical history without taking archive documents into account; passing a judgement about a certain period of time and attempting to exploit historical facts for political purposes is not compatible with the impartiality, scientific objectivity of history writing and scholarly honesty.

Owing to the failure to explain the social and political aspects of the Armenian question and the unfounded Armenian claims in the light of first hand original archive documents, the works that appeared so far have always been unilateral and antiturkish in character.

The Armenian researchers and the so-called scholars employed by Armenians who had been allowed to make researches in the Turkish Archives, in particular in the Ottoman Archives, now say that the documents that they have claimed to exist are kept close to them since they could not find any documents in the Turkish archives confirming the Armenian claims and try to create a public opinion in their favour in the scholarly circles. The Armenian claims for a genocide are unfounded and deprived of a documentary basis. What prompts the Armenians to put forth such claims is nothing but some political desires. The claims are all political.

"The Ottoman archives" are open today for the use of all researchers of every nationality as they were yesterday. As many as 4000 foreign scholars have been doing research in the Ottoman archives. In addition to the research work done by thousands of foreigners on original documents, those documents related to the sending and resettlement were also published in Turkish as well as



in English and were presented to the use of foreign researchers. As it is very well known by the true scholars doing archives researches, the archives do not produce documents on order to please Armenian researchers.

Among the Armenian historians there is not a historian of Ottoman Armenians. This is a major deficiency for the Armenian historians. Instead of learning Turkish and then studying the Ottoman archive documents and publications, they prefer offering historical interpretations on the basis of some unfounded claims.

In the present work, referring to the documents in the Russian and western archives, reports and works of western diplomats and writers, reports and writings of the members of the impartial Commission of Investigation composed of foreign journalists who had fixed on the spot the atrocities and genocide perpetrated by Armenians by means of photographs as well as to the original documents in the Ottoman archives, which the Armenian and pro-Armenian researchers deliberately overlooks<sup>(51)</sup>, I shall put forward the archive documents concerning the atrocities and genocide inflicted upon the Turkish people.

Setting out the atrocities and genocide perpetrated against the Turkish people by the Armenian organisations and armed bands in the light of archive documents is undoubtedly a most realistic way to put an end to the one-sidedness in this matter and to show

**Setting out the atrocities and genocide perpetrated against the Turkish people by the Armenian organisations and armed bands in the light of archive documents is undoubtedly a most realistic way to put an end to the one-sidedness in this matter and to show to the world opinion that the notorious Armenian claims are ungrounded.**

<sup>(51)</sup> See for the originals of the documents concerning this subject:

- Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920). (Armenians in Ottoman Documents (1915 - 1920)). Published by the Ottoman Section of Directorate General of State Archives. Ankara, 1994,1995.
- Hüseyin Nâzım Paşa: Ermeni Olayları Tarihi. (History of Armenian Incidents). 2 volumes. Published by the Ottoman Section of Directorate General of State Archives. Ankara, 1994.
- Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kafkaslar'da ve Anadolu'da Ermeni Mezâlimi (1906-1922) (Armenian violence and massacre in the Caucasus and Anatolia based on Archives, 1906-1922). Vol. I-IV. Published by the Ottoman Section of Directorate General of State Archives. Ankara, 1994-1998.

to the world opinion that the notorious Armenian claims are ungrounded.

It is of course impossible to mention thousands of documents concerned with the subject being kept in the Ottoman archives in the present work. Therefore I shall be content with providing some samples only. Summaries of the documents are first mentioned in the text and the footnotes related to them referred to the copies of the original documents attached to the text. Copies of the archive documents concerning the atrocities and genocide, which constitute the main source of the work, are included in order to show the scientific objectivity and truthfulness of the work. Transcriptions of certain documents are also added.

Photographs showing the inhuman atrocities and genocide inflicted on the defenceless Turkish people by the Armenian organisations and armed bands as well as the excavations of mass graves are also included.

Before proceeding to setting out the documents relating to the atrocities and genocide perpetrated against innocent and defenceless people in Anatolia and the Caucasus during the First World War by Armenians, let me mention the following news published in the number of the journal "Novoye Obozrenye" dated September 6, 1905:<sup>(52)</sup>

*"New skirmishes at Baku.*

*P.T. A. reports from Baku.*

*The Armenians attacked and slew all the muslims engaged in commerce and living in the Armenian quarter of the town Shusha on August 16. They set fire afterwards to a quarter of 40 houses. A muslims group of 100 people headed by a Han, entered the Armenian section in order to calm down the people and, attacking*

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All of these works, with the exception of the 3d and 4th volumes of the last mentioned, were published by the Directorate General of State Archives when it was in charge of the author Ismet Binark. In these works it is firmly established in the light of authentic documents that the Armenian claims of genocide are unfounded, that Armenians have not been subjected to genocide, on the contrary the Armenians carried out a systematic genocide to Turks. The documents reproduced in the present work have been taken from the first and second volumes of "*Armenian violence and massacre in the Caucasus and Anatolia based on archives 1906 -1922*".

<sup>(52)</sup> The news that appeared in the issue of 6 September 1905 of the Newspaper "*Novoye Obozrenye*" is being published in Turkish for the first time. (See: Annex -1)

*on Armenians, wounded many of them and took prisoner the remaining. Armenians wounded the governor Baranovsky who had come to help. Muslims took the wounded governor to the town, and, being aroused, began opposing Armenians' aggression. When muslims as many as half the Armenians arrived from neighbouring villages to help, the Armenian priests who had remained quiet till then got out to request that use of force should be stopped. Muslims stopped firing instantly but Armenians continued shooting. Thereupon muslims assailed. The parties continue to kill each other. Every part of the town is burning..."*

### **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Erzurum and Erzincan**

Erzurum had previously witnessed numerous rebellions, massacres, atrocities and genocide perpetrated by Armenians. It is very well known that not only the Armenians but the Russian and British Consuls also played a role in the disorders incited in the area.<sup>(53)</sup>

With the proclamation of the general mobilization, a large section of the Armenians took refuge in Russia along with deserters and formed voluntary regiments amid the Russian Army. They attacked the Ottoman Army in the ranks of the Russian Army later on. They inflicted unimaginable massacres and atrocities on the innocent and defenceless Turkish people in cooperation with the local Armenian armed bands.

The official report forwarded to the Commander of the Caucasian Army on March 3. 1918 by First Lieutenant Abgral, Commander of the Russian Forces at Erzurum while Erzurum was still under the Russian occupation during the First World War testifies to the atrocities and genocide perpetrated against the defenceless people at Erzurum by Armenians. I publish this report verbatim<sup>(54)</sup>:

<sup>(53)</sup> *Livre Bleu du Gouvernement Britannique concernant le traitement des Armeniens dans l'Empire Ottoman (1915 - 1916)*. Documents presentes au Vicomte Bryce. Paris, 1987, p. 233. It is stated in the Blue Book that the interpreters and other officials employed at the British, French, German and Russian consulates in the region were Armenians.

<sup>(54)</sup> This Russian official document was published in the issue of 18 March 1920, No. 22, of the Weekly Bulletin "*Muslim Outlook*" published in London. The Bulletin was provided from the University of California Los Angeles Library. (See: UCLA call No. BP/14976 Mar. 1920-Aug. 1920). This document is being published in Turkish for the first time. (See: Annex-2)

*"Massacre of Muslims By Armenians*

*Russian Official Document No. 31*

*Erzurum, March 3, 1918*

*To the Commander of the Caucasian Army*

*On February 26, 1918, at mid-day, a company of militia began to assemble the Turks in order to make them clean up the railways and the roads leading to the fortification. This order came from General Antranik. But it was carried out by the chief of the militia of the town, named M. Farachian.*



*People wounded by Armenian bands at Hasankale.*

*(Collection of Photographs, First World War, Album No. 4, Photo. No. 126, Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategical Studies, Turkish General Staff -ATASE-).*

*Borrowed from "I. Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Ermenilerin Türklere Yaptığı Katliam-Fotograflar" (The Genocide Perpetrated Against Turks by Armenians during the First World War- Photographs). Ankara, 2000.*

*The Turks complained and said that they were being gathered together without taking into consideration the prescribed formalities, according to which a written order should be issued by the*

*Commandant of the town... I at once communicated with M. Farachian who told me that the above-mentioned had been abolished in view of the circumstances... Thus three sections of workers were formed. One section was sent to the gate of Kars; second, towards the gate of Oltu; third toward the gate of Trebizond. At about three o'clock I was informed by one of my soldiers that the Turks of Kars, referred to above, were taken behind the fortification of Azizie. I realised the true signification of this expression, used by soldiers, only on February 27. While leaving Erzurum, I saw on the road of Kars more than 70 dead bodies (Turkish) riddled with bullets on the head, the neck and the chest as well as wounds from bayonets in the region of the heart and the abdomen. With the second section of the Turks the Armenians dealt in the following manner:*



*The Turkish woman, named Pakize, violated and killed by Armenians at Erzincan.  
Borrowed from "İslâm Âhâlinin Dûçar Olduklan Mezâlim Hakkında Vesâike Müstenid Malûmat"  
(Documented Information about the Atrocities Endured by Muslim People). İstanbul, 1919.*

*The Turks were enclosed in barracks, made of wood, where they were so crowded up that they could hardly sit down. On that night, according to the testimonies of the workers on the railway line, the Armenians began shooting the Turks one by one and at a given moment they began firing on the barracks.*

***I heard the cries of women. I opened the door and climbing up the stairs I entered a room.***

***Here I saw seven Armenian soldiers fully armed, one of them holding a candle in his hand, some searching for what they could find and some were massacring in a savage manner.***

The third section, according to my informants, was shot by machine-guns at the gate of Trebizond. Now I shall endeavour to draw a picture of February 26, the night of nightmare and blood. The Armenians entered, several times by force, the houses of the Turks and seized the male section from the age of 11 up to very aged, and formed them in columns and led them with blows of whips and rifles, outside the town, where they massacred them in the

most savage manner. Once I asked them where they were taking the Turks and if it was to make them work? "No" replied the soldiers with an air of satisfaction "we shall probably kill them."

When I told them: "It is insensate, come back to reason", they replied to me: "For the love of God, do not prevent us. We do not touch you at all and what we do with them it is not your business." There was a great excitement in the town; every one was running about. Cries of children and lamentations of Turkish women were heard everywhere in the town. The Armenian soldiers were walking about in groups in the town and were continually forcing open the doors of Turkish houses. Finally, came the terrible night that shook the spirit of desolation. The blood congeals at the thought of the horror of this night. The cries increased. One should like to go to the rescue of the unfortunate victims, but when one goes there, one receives everywhere the impertinent answer "do not interfere" which is accompanied with threats. I heard the cries of women. I opened the door and climbing up the stairs I entered a room. Here I saw seven Armenian soldiers fully armed, one of them holding a candle in his hand, some searching for what they could find and some were massacring in a savage manner. There were three unveiled Turkish women, down whose faces blood was trickling. Their blouses were torn showing their breasts covered with blood. On their sides, children were there so terrified that they appeared dead with fear. A child cried out in an extraordinary voice opening the eyes full of tears. One of the Armenians prevented it from crying, but the

*terrified child understood nothing and kept on crying. Then the Armenian delivered a blow on the head of the child with his rifle and the child stopped crying and fell on the floor. When the mother saw the child in this condition she began to sob. Then he slaughtered the child with his bayonet and landed a blow on the head of the mother and bayoneted her. The other women seeing this began to cry hands on the eyes. The children folded their arms, with bended heads the awaited their turn, but at once a dagger was aimed at my abdomen. I thought it advisable to retire. I came out of the house. I heard a carriage coming. I at once recognized that it was that of the commander of the militia, M. Farachian. I begged him to enter the house; he roughly answered me thus: "when Armenia boils one cannot think about individuals" and asked me at once why I did not enter myself to stop these fools. I replied that I was a Russian and*

Turkish children killed by Armenian bands in the Erzincan Harbiye Barracks.  
(Collection of Photographs, First World War, Album No. 4, Photo. No.47, Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategical Studies, Turkish General Staff).

Borrowed from 'I. Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Ermenilerin Türklere Yaptığı Katliam-Fotoğraflar' (The Genocide Perpetrated Against Turks by Armenians during the First World War- Photographs). Ankara, 2000.



*they would not listen to me. M. Farachian then told me "I am surprised that at such a moment you should find enough time to busy yourself with such silly things." I left him and walked for a long time in the streets. I also visited the Turkish quarters. Everywhere the same horrible picture that breaks one's heart was to be seen, the same cries, the same moaning of women and children. The victims of these crimes have been so numerous that I take the liberty of saying that only 250 Turks, who could hide themselves, have been left alive in the whole town. The Armenians, having learned of this, began to reclaim them from the Russian officers. They also called at my house where they searched for them everywhere, even in the cupboards and under beds. But they forgot to search the garret where I had hidden a Turkish family.*

*The following scene, which took place in the house of the former military cashier is characteristic. I happened to be there by chance. I found a few Armenians there. They were seated before a lamp and were picking out some articles in gold, rings, bracelets and other articles that they had robbed. One of them told me that he could not take a bracelet of the wrist of a woman as she would not open. I myself ascertained this fact. He had to cut the hand and the fingers of the woman (he himself said this) to take the bracelet, etc. off. The Armenians set the town on fire. They also burned non-military buildings and the house of the American Consul, M. Stempleten. Now and then we heard rifle reports; they completely massacred the remainder before the arrival of the Turkish Army. All the roads leading from the gate of Kars to Hasankale were covered with massacred Turkish bodies, despoiled of their dresses, and the noses and ears of a great number of them had been cut off. We came close to Hasankale and saw a group of Turkish prisoners along the railroad who were led by An Armenian soldier, who make them run. Those who happened to be behind were being whipped and hit on the heads. Their faces were covered with blood. Finally, we arrived at Hasankale. Among these prisoners was a blind old man, accompanied by a boy. The blind old man groping his way and the boy had no more strength left to help the old man. A soldier on horseback began to beat them. These poor persons were wiping the blood off their faces without uttering a word. They kept quiet thus hoping to be spared the martyrdom. But fate had it differently, as soon as they reached Hasankale, the crowd that awaited them massacred them at once by fusillade. We proceeded on to Keupry-Keuy. On arriving there I alighted from*



*the train. I suddenly heard cries from the direction of Hasankale and saw a crowd of Turks running. I counted them afterwards and found them to be 40.*

*In front of them there were two soldiers on horseback, who, from their uniform, seemed to be officers. But I am not certain of that (their ranks). The horsemen who were in front made their horses trot and gallop and the Turks had to imitate them. Those who were unable to do so were beaten. Sometimes the horsemen would stop suddenly then the human momentum caused by inertia brought the prisoners almost up to the horsemen, the horsemen landed blows of rifle on their heads, made them pass through a group of carts; at a given time they had to come down a slope; a Turk fell down and this did not please one of the horsemen who went up to him and drew his sword and delivered a blow cutting open his (Turkish) forehead and lips. The wounded Turk attempted to rise but the horseman shot him dead. At this time the Armenians began shooting the prisoners and within five minutes there lay 40 warm dead bodies of the Turks on the side of our wagon. A few Armenians not content with this went and examined the bodies and fired a few more shots at those who showed any sign of life. All along the railroad we saw the same thing. For example at Horasan the Armenians opened fire on the Turks working on the railway lines. Happily only two were killed there; Russian mechanics bandaged the wounds of the wounded and carried them to the barracks. When we arrived at Karaugan we learned that all the wounded had died.*

*First Lieutenant ABGRAL  
Military Commandant of the town of Erzurum.  
Erzurum, March 3, 1918."*

A foreword was contributed to the War Journal of the Russian Second Regiment of Fortress Artillery at Erzurum by the Commanding Officer of the said Regiment, Lt. Colonel Twerdo-Khlebof, who annexed to it his war memories as well. I wish to quote from his memories the passages concerned with the massacres and genocide perpetrated by the Armenians at Erzurum<sup>(55)</sup>:

<sup>(55)</sup> This document is in the Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategic Studies, General Staff (ATASE), Cupboard of the First World War No. 123, Division 5, File 5-A-1 16, D-1. (Twerdo Khlebof: *Journal de Guerre du 2e Régiment d'Artillerie de Forteresse Russe d'Erzèroum-Notes d'un officier Supérieur Russe sur les atrocités d'Erzèroum*. Translated from the Russian original, 1919).

*"News was reaching us that some occasional murders took place here and there. I have recently arrested myself an Armenian who had killed a Turk near the redoubt of Tafta and handed him over to the Central Command. There was a rumour circulating among people that many of the Turks, sent somewhere to be employed as workers, were lost without trace and killed collectively under torture in Yanıkdere to the northeast of the city. On February 25, two Russian officers, who had seen a number of Armenian bandits, fully armed from head to foot, shooting some ten to twelve Turks near the railroad station, attempted to rescue them. However being threatened by gun they could not help them and those poor people were shot to death with nobody helping them.*

*... They began committing murders in villages faraway from towns and in the absence of Russian officers.*

*... Again we have begun hearing, exactly as in the past days, voices of Armenians in the street, sounds of axes, of broken doors, cries of people taken away by force.*

*I was distressed to observe that many who were present on the scene did not pay attention to the happenings and overlooked the savagery and scandalous acts committed by the Armenians.*

*... A little while ago news reached us that Armenians massacred Turks at Erzincan. It was reported that more than 800 totally defenceless and unarmed Turks had been murdered. Poor Turks were slaughtered like animals at the head of large pits dug beforehand and tossed into those pits.*

*It is reported that an Armenian shot at one of the cart drivers. He did not die but fell on his back. The Armenian attempted to thrust a stick into the mouth of the poor victim in the throes of death, but could not do it as the mouth was locked, then killed him by kicking repeatedly to his abdomen.*

*Odishelidze told me personally that all of the Turks in the town of Ilica who could not escape were murdered and that he saw many child corpses decapitated with blunt axes. On March 11, 1918, namely 3 weeks later than the Ilica massacre, Lt. Colonel Griyaznof returning from there related what he had witnessed there in the following words:*

*- I saw so many bodies on the roads leading to villages, bodies with severed limbs. I was told that every Armenian passing by would*

*swear and spit on them contemptuously. In the courtyard of the mosque, which was 25.5 meter by 31.9 meter, corpses were heaped as high as 1.42 meter, corpses of women, men of every age, of children and elderly. The traces on the corpses of women showing that*

*they had been violated by force were obvious. Cartridges were trusted into the genital organs of many women and girls.*" <sup>(56)</sup>

**The traces on the corpses of women showing that they had been violated by force were obvious. Cartridges were trusted into the genital organs of many women and girls.**

After having made a tour to the towns of Trabzon, Erzincan, Kars and Batum and the neighbouring villages as a member of a delegation from April 17 to May 20, 1918, historian and writer Ahmet Refik (Altınay) recorded what he had witnessed in two works of his: "*Two Committees and Two Massacres*" and "*On the Roads of The Caucasus*". The German journalist-writer Veys and Dr. Stein, an Austrian, were also members of the delegation. Ahmet Refik tells what he has seen at Erzincan and its environs in his work "*Two Committees and Two Massacres*" in the following words:

*"..fresh corpses lying about in the streets and deep in the wells covered with blood not yet dried were those of the poor Turks killed by Armenians. When looked down into the narrow wells, a bad odour would strike the nose and one would feel faint. Hairs and pieces of clothes of the unfortunate Turks were still there stuck to the stones of the wells.*

*Places of ruins, places of burnt down houses, bottoms of the walls were filled with the corpses of the Turks, severed arms, skulls, fatty leg bones, bodies not yet decayed. People were grieved and wretched. Those wandering in the downtown were without shoes, with burnt faces and in tattered clothes. Only grass was on sale in the shops to feed the people. Wheat was not available anywhere but with the military command. Were it not for the kindness of the Commander, even the Subgovernor would no doubt starve to death.*" <sup>(57)</sup>

<sup>(56)</sup> Neşide Kerem Demir: *op. cit.*, pp. 112-117.

<sup>(57)</sup> Ahmet Refik (Altınay): *İki Komite ve İki Kıtıl*. (Two Parties and Two Massacres). İstanbul, 1919, pp. 71-72.

The author describes the savagery, brutalities and genocide that the Armenians committed at Erzurum in his work "On the Roads of the Caucasus" as follows:

*"I am in a place destroyed by fire. This historical and devoted land of the Turks lay in ruins. Streets, buildings, mosques, madrasas and entirely destroyed houses are filed up with bodies. When the rubbles of burnt down houses are slightly moved heads of men and children, arms, legs, parts and pieces of bodies and feet are revealed.*

*... While fighting against the Ottoman Army in the formation of armed bands outside the town, the Armenians were killing the people in the town by stuffing them into caserns and shutting in houses. Sometimes they chopped the heads on a log and threw the bodies into wells.*

*... There is nothing under the rubbles of walls but Turkish bodies. When the soil is slightly dug, a human arm would first*

*Human bones and skulls unearthed at the mass graveyard excavation carried out at Yeşilyayla, Erzurum-Dumlu.*

*Borrowed from "Yakın Tarihimizde Van Uluslararası Sempozyumu" (International Symposium on Van in Recent History), 2-5 April 1990. Ankara, 1990.*



*appear, then the head and the whole body displaying a tragic scene. Corpses were so rotten that brains would flow out at the slightest touch, grinning chins would disintegrate and fatty, burnt and crushed chests would appear naked and wretched in soiled clothes.*

*... The Armenian savagery had terribly devastated Erzurum. Streets were all filled with bodies of women and children. Women's breasts and even private organs were nailed to walls. Children's lungs were hanging from telegraph wires. Entirely naked woman bodies with pierced abdomens were put in rows on both sides of the road. When we had seen this state of my unfortunate nation, we became almost crazy. I wonder if civilized Europe will try to find out those who are guilty of these crimes. History has never recorded such brutalities before.*

*They caught innocent maidens, attacked them like wild animals and satisfied themselves on their innocent bodies and then ripped their abdomens with bayonets and threw them onto ruins. We were occupied for weeks to gather these corpses, take their photographs and bury them. While entering the town it was terrible to see the roadsides. On both sides were arranged woman corpses. The genital organs of women were torn and male genital organs were pushed into.*

*Tears were coming involuntarily from my eyes and I was feeling a bitter curse at the deepest point of my heart.*" <sup>(58)</sup>

The telegrams dated May 10 et 11, 1332 (1916) sent from various provinces about the Armenian genocide committed at Erzurum, Bitlis and Elazığ, which are kept in the Ottoman Archives, report

*"that Russians took with them as many as two thousand muslims when they, together with Armenian armed bands, were driven from*

**Entirely naked woman bodies with pierced abdomens were put in rows on both sides of the road. When we had seen this state of my unfortunate nation, we became almost crazy. I wonder if civilized Europe will try to find out those who are guilty of these crimes. History has never recorded such brutalities before.**

<sup>(58)</sup> Ahmet Refik (Altınay): *Kafkas Yollarında Hâtıralar ve Tahassüsler*. (On the Caucasian Roads: Memories and Feelings). İstanbul, 1919, pp. 27-28.

**... the corpses of those who were killed at the village of Balekan were thrown to dogs so that they eat them and that women and maids imprisoned at Chukur were violated, the elderly burnt, and children bayoneted, etc.**

*Hasankale to their original borders and killed some of those muslims and sent some of them to the interior and that Russians hanged nine persons at Erzurum and sent all the male population over the age of 14 to unknown places and that a court composed of Armenians at Pekrech hanged as many as some 300 to 400 people and that they did not leave any muslims at Ashkale,*

*Tercan, Ilica, Tavuskerd and Artvin and that Armenians killed some 200 women and children at Van and 8 to 10 thousand muslims along the Mahfuran stream and that all of the population of the village of Hot near the border Narman were machine gunned and that most of the emigrants of Morh-i Sufra at Chukur were put to the sword and that the villages of Ergani, Cinis, Pezentan and Semersheikh were set to fire with their inhabitants and that lots of villagers resettled near Bitlis starved to death because of the kurdish Bedirhani Kamil and that badly sick children hospitalised were brutally killed at the Bitlis Hospital and that the corpses of those who were killed at the village of Balekan were thrown to dogs so that they eat them and that women and maids imprisoned at Chukur were violated, the elderly burnt, and children bayoneted, etc."* <sup>(59)</sup>

Another document<sup>(60)</sup>, kept in the Ottoman Archives, as regards the measures to be taken for preventing the atrocities from taking place, atrocities similar to those which were committed by Armenians at Erzurum and its environs, Pasinler, Namervan, Norshin, Pernos and Isisor contains letters from Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), Inspector for the Troops of the Ninth Army, to the Ministry of War; from the War Minister Nazim Shevked Turgut Pasha to the Foreign Ministry; and from the Foreign Ministry to the Ministry of War.

Historian and writer Ahmet Refik (Altınay) relates the massacres and brutalities committed by Armenians at Erzincan and its environs in his work "*On the Roads of the Caucasus*" as follows:

<sup>(59)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-2, nr. 9-11, 17 (See: Annex-3)

<sup>(60)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. MÜ, 57/4, 1919 VI 17 (See: Annex-4)

*"One of the towns where Armenians carried out massacres is Erzincan. Formerly it had 20 thousand inhabitants, but at present its population does not count more than 3 to 4 thousand. Only the poor and the helpless remained in the town following its occupation by the Russians. Close to 700 of them were slain, killed, burnt and thrown into wells by Armenians. The Ottoman Army took the town back in February. The gathering of corpses is still under way.*

*I am amidst ruins. There are so many destroyed mausoleums. Even the tiles of the mosques were taken away. Pillars of suffocating smoke are still rising from the burnt poles of the houses. While at Istanbul the leaders of the Union were listening to speech and songs with cups of drinks in their hands, here Turks died helplessly amidst gasoline flames, suffocating smoke and hot fires at the hands of Armenians. Perished by the cruelty of Armenians, now they are lying under the burnt pillars. From Trebizond to Erzurum there is nothing but ruins. There is not a single living creature in any village, in any hut. Hunger has followed the Armenian savagery. Along the road from Aydosa to Erzincan, hungry and wretched Turks were encountered. The Turks who had filled once towns and villages now seemed to have been uprooted."* <sup>(61)</sup>

Now, we may quote some passages from the Report of the official Commission of Investigation, which inquired into the destruction, massacres and brutalities committed by Armenians in this region:

*"On May 28, 1332 (1916) we arrived at Mama Hatun which is the central settlement of the district of Tercan. We found out that four fifths of all the buildings in the town had been pulled down, the mosque had been transformed into a church by destructing the pulpit, a bell had been hung on the minaret. Armenians had plundered the houses and violated so many women and maids by use of force together with Russian Cossacks. Leaving Mama Hatun we went to the village of Sazavartik. Here Armenians destroyed a lot and committed so much brutalities, violated women and maids by use of force and killed seven persons trying to defend their families together with the members of their families. Even the aged women of this village could not escape from violation. Swearing on their*

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<sup>(61)</sup> Ahmet Refik (Altınay): *op. cit.*, pp. 65-69.

*honour they told themselves in tears and cries that each woman had been raped by at least 10 to 30 Armenians.*"<sup>(62)</sup>

**They demolished the graveyards and destroyed the mosques of villages.**

A document<sup>(63)</sup> dated October 3, 1916, kept in the Ottoman Archives, testifies to the inhuman brutalities and genocide perpetrated by Armenians in the villages of Tercan in cooperation with Russians.

*"Russians, Cossacks and Armenians destroyed every village they entered, and robbed them of their wealth, property, honours and sacred things and killed their inhabitants. They plundered every thing; they destroyed even farming tools and left only naked land. They killed all the men they had been able to catch, pierced their eyes with bayonets, slaughtered people like sheep, and threw the bodies into the wells and committed hair-raising brutalities and tortures. They took away two golden rings in the fingers of a one-year-old girl together with fingers. No girl or woman above the age of seven was left untouched. Many women were scared to death. Muslims hid their wives and daughters in chimneys, in the under ground grain pits, in caves in the mountains, in stream valleys and in wells.*

*They demolished the graveyards and destroyed the mosques of villages. After pulling down their pulpits they transformed mosques into stables and left them in dirt. They destroyed the graveyard at Mama Hatun, pulled down the pulpit of its mosque, turned it into a church and hung a bell to its minaret."*

A document<sup>(64)</sup> dated February 28, 1918, kept in the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, clearly testifies before the world public opinion to the large scale destruction and genocide perpetrated by Armenian bands at Erzincan.

The location number of this document, which is kept in the file No. 190 labelled "Turkey 41", is "R 22346." The document bearing

<sup>(62)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi*. (Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties). pp. 289-296.

<sup>(63)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-2, nr. 144-162 (See: Annex-5)

<sup>(64)</sup> Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Empire. "Türkei: Allgemeine Politik, Türkei Nr. 41, R 22346".



the title of "Turkey General Policy" reports the Armenian genocide committed from November 1917 to March 1918.

A German diplomat by the name of Bussche wrote a report on the basis of the information given by the German Consulate at Sivas. The following statement is from this report:

*"According to the telegram received from the Imperial Consulate at Sivas, Erzurum has been encircled as a half moon with the participation of the Second Army. Its surrender is expected shortly. The Armenian bands carried out overwhelming destruction at Erzincan. They literally eradicated the whole population living in villages."*

### **Armenian Atrocities in and around Oltu**

A sworn statement by Hanuszade Huneys and his brother Ramiz, refugees from Oltu, as to the savageries and atrocities committed by Armenian bands at Oltu and its environ who had guided the Russian Army:

*"We were living in the farms at a distance of three hours walking from Oltu. The Armenian bands attacking this area seized the property of the muslim population inhabiting the districts of Sivri and Navurman and violated infamously muslim women."*

*The Armenians attacking the villages of Yiniskerd, Ornek, Chevlagir, Oghdadab, Haydus and Kamis killed all men saying "You invited the Ottoman troops" and violated women and tore children into pieces in front of their parents.*

*After having put together all the men of the village of Penesgir in front of the mosque and planted around armed Armenians as sentries, they went into the interior of the village, plundered houses, violated women and killed children.*

*An armed band of 150 Armenians attacked the village of Keban, separated all the women from the rest and took them to an oak wood nearby, violated them by force and killed many of those helpless women.*

*In the village of Pernik in the district of Oltu, the muslim*

**In the village of Pernik in the district of Oltu, the muslim population were almost annihilated by Armenians, the corpses were thrown into ditches and little children were also buried alive together with the corpses.**

*population were almost annihilated by Armenians, the corpses were thrown into ditches and little children were also buried alive together with the corpses.*"<sup>(65)</sup>

**Armenians put fire to every part of Kars and did not refrain from committing such savagery as putting our poor prisoners to death at the railroad station.**

Another document<sup>(66)</sup> testifying to the atrocities and genocide perpetrated by Armenians against the people living in Karaurgan, Sarikamish, Kars and Oltu is also available in the Ottoman Archives.

A document dated July 26, 1919 kept in the Ottoman

Archives tells more about the atrocities and genocide committed by Armenians at Oltu:

*"The British Representative Rawlinson acknowledges, in his report that he prepared at the end of his inspection he carried out on both sides of the boundary, that the Armenians committed massacres on the frontline from Oltu to Bayezid and points out that the allies should immediately send troops to this region. With this report, Rawlinson strives to convince the British to send troops again to the Caucasus."*<sup>(67)</sup>

### **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Kars**

Brigadier General Kazim Karabekir, former Commander of the First Caucasian Corps and Commander of the 15th Corps, described the atrocities and genocide committed at Kars by Armenians in the Report delivered to the American Delegation as follows:

*"Armenians put fire to every part of Kars and did not refrain from committing such savagery as putting our poor prisoners to death at the railroad station. We occupied Kars in the evening of April 25, 1918. On April 26, I myself wandered about in Kars. Every part is burning. At the railroad station some one hundred Turkish soldiers taken prisoners were put to death after being tormented. Moreover,*

<sup>(65)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi.* (Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties). pp. 321-323.

<sup>(66)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VI 21 (See: Annex-6)

<sup>(67)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VII 25 (See: Annex-7)

*we have also found some fifty corpses belonging to muslim population thrown into the Kars stream in the vicinity of the waterfall, some 20 meters to the west of the Headquarters of the Fortified Place of Kars at Kaleensesi. " (68)*

Now let us make a quotation, in this respect, from the book published by the Eastern Command of the Government of the National Assembly which relates the atrocities committed by Armenians:

*"The Kars (National) Soviet Government fell on April 13, 1919 the Parliament house being unexpectedly raided and the members of the government caught and exiled to Malta by the British. Three days later, the Armenian General Osebyan entered Kars and General Korganof, one of the*

**The number of muslims  
massacred at Kars and  
Ardahan reaches  
30.000...**

*Tashnak Armenians, was placed in the office of government as governor. Within a week Armenians resumed atrocities again. " (69)*

The document<sup>(70)</sup> dated March 6, 1915, kept in the Ottoman Archives, is concerned with the atrocities and genocide committed by Armenians at Kars and its environs:

*"The number of muslims massacred at Kars and Ardahan reaches 30.000; the Ottoman prisoners of war entrusted to Armenians for being kept have been treated roughly and cruelly and*

<sup>(68)</sup> Kâzım Karabekir: *Birinci Kafkas Kolordusu'nun 1918 Yılındaki Hareketleri ve Gördükleri*. (General Harbord Başkanlığındaki Amerikan Heyetine Verilen Rapor Suretidir). (The Operations of the First Caucasian Corps and my Observations). (Copy of the Report given to the American Mission headed by General Harbord), Erzurum, 1355 (1919); Fahrettin Kırzioğlu: *Kars İli ve Çevresinde Ermeni Mezâlimi* (1918-1920). (Armenian Atrocities in the Province of Kars and in its neighbourhood (1918-1920)). Ankara, 1970, pp. 82-94; General Harbord was commissioned by President Wilson on August 1, 1919, to examine the subject of Armenian mandate. He says in the Report he submitted to the President upon his return "We thought at the outset that we were going to see an Armenian majority in the region and Turks had not committed genocide. See: Seçil Akgün: *General Harbord'un Anadolu Gezisi ve Ermeni Meselesine Dâir Raporu*. (General Harbord's Report on the Trip to Anatolia and the Armenian Question). İstanbul, 1981; See for the Report itself: *American Military Mission to Armenia*, Conditions in the Near East, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Document No. 266 (Washington, 1920); *Mandatory Over Armenia, report made to Major General Harbord* by Brigadier General G. Van H. Moseley, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate document No. 281 (Washington, 1920).

<sup>(69)</sup> *1355 ve 1356 (1919-1920) Seneleri Kafkasya'da İslâmlara Karşı İcrâ Olunduğu Tebeyyün Eden Ermeni Mezâlimi*. (Armenian Atrocities proven to have been perpetrated against the Muslims in the Caucasus in the years 1355 and 1356). Published by the Command of Eastern Front of the National Assembly Government. February 10, 1357 (1921).

<sup>(70)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-1, nr. 2 (See: Annex-8)



Turkish soldiers savagely killed under torture at Kars by Armenians.  
(Collection of Photographs, First World War, Album No. 4, Photo. No.105, Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategical Studies, Turkish General Staff).

Borrowed from "I. Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Ermenilerin Türklere Yaptığı Katliam-Fotoğraflar" (The Genocide Perpetrated Against Turks by Armenians during the First World War- Photographs), Ankara, 2000.

*killed with rifle butts; Armenian and Greek soldiers in the Ottoman Army let themselves be taken prisoners by Russians so that they might leak information to them; as for the Caucasian Armenians, they first surrendered themselves to the Ottomans deliberately and then escaped back so as to inform Russians."*

Another document<sup>(71)</sup> dated July 4, 1919 about the atrocities committed at Kars and its environs by Armenians:

*"Armenians committed atrocities against the muslims living in Kars, Kaghizman and Nahjivan; and the frightened muslims, getting ready to emigrate from Kars and Ighdir, were not in safety owing to hunger and possible Armenian attacks; being informed of the situation, the British representative has confirmed it and would go to the neighbourhood of Kars and Kaghizman to see the situation on the spot."*

<sup>(71)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VII 4 (See: Annex-9)

Yet another archive document<sup>(72)</sup> testifies to the fact that Armenians massacred muslims and plundered their goods at Kars and its environs:

*"Armenians killed muslims living at Kars on various pretexts and gathered the youth at Kars and Sarikamish and massacred them and annihilated a number of notables and forced people to hand over their horses, oxen and sheep as a wartime contribution and killed those who opposed and used force to seize the weapons of the people in the neighbourhood of Zengezur and Nahjivan."*

Another document<sup>(73)</sup> tells that

*"The Armenian Commandant at Kaghizman wrote a letter to Mahmut Bey, chief of the Zilan tribe, informing him that he should either surrender or be ready for war; the 12th Division asked Mahmut Bey to assure itself that measures were taken against the assault and perseverance would be shown; Armenian bands raided the villages of Pozat, Mescidli, Gulyantepe, Kurudere as well as the four villages attached to Akchakale and killed the people plundering their money, goods, household goods and animals."*

Upon the genocide perpetrated at Erzurum, Erzincan and Bayazit by Armenians, the newspaper "Kaspi" reported the events in its issue dated March 20, 1918 and demanded that massacres should be stopped:<sup>(74)</sup>

*"About the occupied areas of Turkey:*

*"Last January, The Muslim Committee at Tblisi complained to the National Armenian Soviet that they recently received alarming news from Turkish occupied regions saying that local muslims were being terribly oppressed by armed Armenian forces. Delegates from Erzurum, Erzincan and Bayezit who took part in the last session of the Committee submitted a detailed report that with the departure of the Russian forces from the said region Armenian detachments took their place and, with it, local muslim population began living in extremely hard conditions."*

<sup>(72)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VII 7 (See: Annex-10)

<sup>(73)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VII 8 (See: Annex-11)

<sup>(74)</sup> News appeared in the issue of 20 March 1918 of the Newspaper "Kaspi" (Hazar). It is being published in Turkish for the first time. (See: Annex-12)



Two captive Turkish soldiers brutally killed by Armenians who strangled them by wire and repeatedly wounded with bayonet at Sankamış.

(Collection of Photographs, First World War, Album No. 4, Photo. No.116, Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategic Studies, Turkish General Staff).

Borrowed from 'I. Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Ermenilerin Türklere Yaptığı Katliam-Fotoğraflar' (The Genocide Perpetrated Against Turks by Armenians during the First World War- Photographs). Ankara, 2000.

*The delegates told that it had become a daily routine work for Armenians to kill the local muslim population, to plunder their goods and to oppress them. The terrorised, impoverished and starving people, unable to raise any objection, were being robbed of their last portion of food under the pretext that soldiers need them. Unfortunately, the said abnormal conditions have been confirmed by the official Muslim organisations on the front as well as by the impartial persons coming from the war zone. It is only natural that the Muslims living in the Caucasus the Muslim Committee at Tblisi representing them are anxious for the fate of the unprotected muslim people who have lived for four years under Russian occupation and suffered so much injustice inflicted upon by the Russian. Thinking that such mean acts had been perpetrated so far by a number of individual groups only encouraged by the tolerance shown occasionally by the Russians, the Muslims living in the Caucasus have put up with them. But now, following the establishment of the national military units, incidents have assumed a totally different character and became unbearable. Nowadays, regarding even individual incidents as national problems, people*

*make them inextricable. Having taken all this into consideration, the Muslim Committee at Tblisi has asked the Armenian National Soviet to take necessary measures so that Armenian military units may not oppress the muslim population living in the areas of Turkey occupied by Russia.*

*The Muslim Committee at Tblisi is confident that, now that a peace treaty is about to be concluded with Turkey, the Armenian National Soviet will put an end to all the unusual conditions which might harm, when a new foundation is laid down, a foundation that would bring peace to all the nations endeavouring for mutual interests and preparing to live a new and free life, the dialogue between the two nations taking place in the occupied zones of Turkey."*

#### **Armenian Atrocities And Genocide in and around Trabzon**

Following the October 1917 Revolution, Russians evacuated Trabzon and its environs. Before and after the evacuation, armed Armenian bands massacred innocent and defenceless people, corpses were thrown into wells, corpses with mutilated arms, hands and feet were thrown onto abandoned houses and gardens,

Some arms seized from Armenians at Trabzon.

Borrowed from 'Ermeni Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi; Tesâvir ve Vesâik. The Armenian aspirations and revolutionary movements'-Albums No. 1 and 2. 1919.



mosques were filled with dirt with the intention of insulting holy places, even the fruit trees were cut down so as to prevent people from benefiting from them.<sup>(75)</sup>

The Armenian atrocities and genocide were well documented by the official investigation conducted by the Kaimakam of the district of Vakfikebir as follows:

*"Numerous women and children who, following the entry of Armenians in Viche, had taken refuge in the house of the tax collector Osman Effendi were savagely killed; an armed band comprising some 30 Armenians blockaded several houses, chose women and children, took them to a stream and slaughtered them all; the two women who survived this disaster with wounds that healed afterwards told the disaster in deep grief; a group of five Armenians from the village of Gül Ali, district of Of, attempted to rape a woman in front of gendarmes and killed one of the gendarmes who attempted to defend the woman and bit savagely a*

<sup>(75)</sup> The atrocities were reported in detail by Captain Ahmet Refik, Officer in the Second Section, General Headquarters in the message dated 1 May 1918. See the Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategrical Studies, General Staff (ATASE), No. 1/2, carton 359, File 1023, Index 3-36.

An innocent and defenceless Turk strangled by Armenian bands at Trabzon.  
Borrowed from 'İslâm Âhâlinin Dûçar Oldukları Mezâlim Hakkında Vesâike Müstenid Malûmat' (Documented Information about the Atrocities Endured by Muslim People). İstanbul, 1919.





*piece from her cheek after trampling the honour of the poor woman; the barbarous band killed a number of scholars under various insults and torture and plundered all their goods and foods and took them away and committed lots of atrocities and meanness, the story of which would fill many volumes of books.*

**... and brutally killed a new born baby, daughter of her sister, Hatice, by throwing her into the air and holding a bayonet under her while falling.**

*According to sworn statements given by various eyewitnesses on the brutalities committed by Armenian bands who guided Russian soldiers, the Armenians entering the village of Kalfaka rounded up many women and children, including the wife, Ulviye, and daughter in law, Hüsniye, of Kulakoglu Hüseyin and the wife, Züleyha, of Kulakoglu Ali, who had hid together in several houses and waited anxiously for what to happen, and took them away to a brook at the foot of a nearby hill and slaughtered them all like sheep. They violated and then killed the 18 year old daughter, Emine, of Paslioglu Ali who had remained in the village and brutally killed a new born baby, daughter of her sister, Hatice, by throwing her into the air and holding a bayonet under her while falling."*<sup>(76)</sup>

Another document<sup>(77)</sup> recounting the atrocities perpetrated against the people living in the regions of Trabzon and Van by Armenians in company with Russians

*"is an official letter written and forwarded by the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the reports received from the provinces of Trabzon, Van and Diyarbakir relating the atrocities and evil deeds committed by Armenians, in company with Russians, against muslim population and muslim women in particular."*

Yet another document<sup>(78)</sup>

embodying the sworn testimonies of Fatima (daughter of Ali Osman), wife of Salimoglu Mehmet from the village of Kalafka, and that of Besim bin Mehmet from the village of İpsil shows that

<sup>(76)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi*. (Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties). pp. 319-321.

<sup>(77)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-3, nr. 12-14, 16, 18-26, 28-39, 41-44 (See: Annex-13)

<sup>(78)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-4, nr. 125-126 (See: Annex-14)

*"Armenians and Russians rounded up muslims from their houses living in the village of Kalafka, district of Yomra, Trabzon, separated men from women, sent men to an unknown place, violated little girls and women and killed a new born baby by throwing it into the air and holding a bayonet under it while falling and they committed similar crimes in the villages of Ipsil, Hachavra and Soldoy in the district of Machka, violated women and maids, killed many people and burnt their corpses and Russians encouraged Armenians to do so. The testimonies also include the names of victims."*

### **Armenian Atrocities in and around Bitlis**

*"It is understood from the testimony of Osman Bey (son of Kalfatchi) from the quarter of Kizilmescid, that fifty year old mother of Mehmet (son of Reshid), the woman by the name of Nigar, from the quarter of Hersan, was wounded by dagger and killed afterwards by Armenians and an innocent little girl who was in the house of the above-mentioned was also killed and her body was thrown to dogs in the street and that this grievous scene was witnessed by many others.*

*... the ninety year old father of Mehmed (son of Hasan) from the quarter of Tash was martyred and his house was plundered by Armenians.*

*... Faris from the quarter of Tash was taken away from his house and nothing was heard of him since then. Armenians also killed the ten year old son of Faris, Kadir, as well as two other sons, Tevfik and Sherif, by crushing their heads with blows of rifle butts and trampling the heads with their boots. The wives of Dursun (son of Tahir), who is the uncle of Faris, the women by the names of Mentan, Kishmish and Ziyet, were repeatedly violated and his cousin, Esat, was cut into pieces by sword."<sup>(79)</sup>*

The document<sup>(80)</sup> dated July 1, 1916, kept in the Ottoman Archives says that

*"The subgovernor of Mardin conducted an investigation into the brutalities inflicted upon the muslim population by Armenians*

<sup>(79)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi.* (Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties). pp. 309-318.

<sup>(80)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-2, nr. 117-123 (See: Annex-15)

*during the occupation of Van and Bitlis and found out on the basis of the testimonies of those who had been saved from the massacres that Russians and Armenian bands savagely slain and cut into pieces everybody even though they were willing to*

**... killed the inhabitants of villages already surrendered and burned everybody, children included, in furnaces used to bake bread ...**

*surrender, killed the inhabitants of villages already surrendered and burned everybody, children included, in furnaces used to bake bread and that the band attacked to Aramek, an Armenian from Van, put to death all the inhabitants of a village of 70 to 80 houses even though they had surrendered."*

Another document<sup>(81)</sup> "...testifying to the atrocities and destruction inflicted upon muslims by Armenians in Bitlis and its environs embodies the sworn statements of those who failing to escape remained in Bitlis and were victimized by Russians and Armenian bands, lists the names of those muslims who were killed under torture or violated by Russian and Armenian bands, muslims whose money, goods and houses were plundered, muslims whose houses were burnt down as well as the names of destroyed mosques, schools, tekkes, places of visit, official buildings, bridges and warehouses in the quarters of Kizilmescid, Zeydan, Hersan, Tash, Aynulbard, Avih, the quarters of Erkuzan, K m s, Mahallebasi, Adilcevaz of Ahlat, the district of Karchikan, in the villages of Yako, Tatargazi, Patnos, in the quarters of Hamtos, Marmutlu, Kurubulak. Nahoshnud, Mabekor, in the villages of Azad, Kerekoglan, in the village of ŐirvanŐeyh of Malazgirt."

As for the savagery, atrocities and genocide carried out by Armenians in Mush:

*"The following is the sworn statement of Mehmed Resul, from Mush:*

*'I was a soldier engaged in war. Because of my wound, I failed to follow the detachment retreating towards Bitlis. I stayed behind together with three other soldiers wounded or disabled like me.*

<sup>(81)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-2, nr. 34-55 (See: Annex-16)

**An Armenian from among them, ... brought six muslim girls together with his seven friends. Taking off their clothes, they told them to bow and in this position violated them.**

*Shortly afterwards, Armenian bands, guiding Russian Cossacks, reached us. They first gouged out the eyes of Hüseyin from Harput, one of our comrades and then asked him "Get up and try to see if Ottoman troops are coming?" and then killed the poor one by shooting. They removed some skin from the right hand side of*

*the other soldier and fashioned some sort of pocket and then asked him "Put in your hand and see if there is any money of your Padishah in there?" and martyred him under torture. They laid down the third soldier on ground, cut off his genital organ and put it into his mouth and told him "blow this pipe so that assistance may come to you from the Ottoman troops." After insulting him badly, they martyred him as well.*

*Then they took me to a brook. Making a fire they heated the spits of their rifles and with them they branded me 24 times. They did not pay any attention to my cries and entreating. Just at that moment, several Russian soldiers arrived. One of them saved me from death. He secretly whispered to my ear that he was of Russian muslims. Russian Cossacks, Armenians and I set out altogether for Bitlis. We encountered convoys of fugitives on the road. Armenians savagely attacked these defenceless women, children and elderly people and pitilessly killed all of them. An Armenian from among them, whom I knew that he was from the village of Ziyaret of Mush, brought six muslim girls together with his seven friends. Taking off their clothes, they told them to bow and in this position violated them. While committing such wickedness on the one hand, they said "from now on we shall make muslims pray in this manner" on the other." <sup>(82)</sup>*

### **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Van**

The massacres and atrocities perpetrated in Van and its environs by Armenians constitute a painting of shame in front of history like other atrocities committed in other towns of Anatolia.

<sup>(82)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi.* (Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties), pp. 319–321.

Let us make some quotations from the report by the Commander of Gendarmerie Regiment at Van concerning the savagery and atrocities of Armenians:

*"When Russians attacked the Ottoman borders, the Armenians living at Van, convinced that the opportunity that they had been waiting for had come, rising up here and there, started a movement of rebellion. Putting into effect a program prepared long*

*before, they quickly began attacking defenceless muslim villages, travellers and post carriages and plundering the provisions sent for the Army by waiting in ambush at certain points of the itinerary. The Armenian bands guiding Russians slaughtered the headman of the village of Mirgehi, Molla Hasan, and other villagers all their entreaties being in vain. Out of the 58 inhabitants of the village, 8 men, 12 women and 18 children were martyred and the remaining virgins and brides were taken away by Armenians.*

**Many told that at the village of Charikser a child was roasted on fire like a lamb and the incident has been confirmed ...**

*Many told that at the village of Charikser a child was roasted on fire like a lamb and the incident has been confirmed as I observed the remaining of the corpse myself. At a place between the villages of Ahurik and Avazerlik corpses of four villagers were found, their hands having been trusted into their abdomens and genital organs into their mouths.*

*When, at the village of Kavli, a seven-year-old girl, Fatma, and a nine-year-old girl, Gülnaz, were carried in, they were in a state of infirmity since they had been violated in both ways. These two innocent girls are living evidences of the savagery and violence of Armenians.*

*... At the village of Ahtucu, while the wife of a person named Kemo, Zeliha, was busy baking bread at the furnace, her six-month-old baby was cooked before her eyes and she was told to eat it. As she refused to do so, they trusted one of her legs into the furnace and burnt it pitilessly.*

*It is understood from the corpses that in the same village innocent children were burnt in dung fires.*



A group of armed Armenian band members taking part in the Van uprising.  
Borrowed from 'I. Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Ermenilerin Türklere Yaptığı Katliam-Fotoğraflar' (The Genocide Perpetrated Against Turks by Armenians during the First World War- Photographs). Ankara, 2000.

*At the village of Herite, after they killed someone called Han Osman under torture, they violated his three young daughters and two daughters in law in a manner which cannot be described neither in words nor in writing and the victims committed suicide afterwards out of deep sorrow.*

*... It is understood from the still fresh corpses in the village of Bozdoğan that Armenians committed every kind of wickedness, that they first forced the villagers to abandon their homes and then massacred them all.*

*... Some three hundred jews trying to escape from Akaridan were captured at the village of Sil and cut into pieces. Then they stacked the corpses.*

*All of the mosques in Van were destroyed, the muslim quarter burnt down. Van and its environs are in ruins.*

*The whole story of the savagery and atrocities committed by Armenians in and around Van would fill volumes of book. The foregoing is based on the statements of those victims who were rescued somehow.* <sup>(83)</sup>

<sup>(83)</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 298-309.

A foreigner, Rafael de Nogales, recorded the atrocities and genocide of Armenians at Van as follows:

*"As soon as the combats started, the Deputy for Erzurum in the Assembly, Garo Pastirmacıyan, went to Russia together with almost all of the Armenian officers and soldiers in the Third Army. Soon after coming back with them, he began putting fire to villages and pitilessly killing every innocent muslim he could get in hand.*

*We learned that, after the Governor for Van, Cevdet Bey, abandoned Van, the Armenians became master of the town and slaughtered every muslim, regardless of whether they are men, women, children, or aged people. Such savagery has not been seen anywhere."*<sup>(84)</sup>

**... after the Governor for Van, Cevdet Bey, abandoned Van, the Armenians became master of the town and slaughtered every muslim, regardless of whether they are men, women, children, or aged people. Such savagery has not been seen anywhere.**

This is the observation made by Clair Price in connection with the Armenian massacres:

*"The Armenian bands occupied Van at the end of April and, after subjecting the Turkish people to massacres, handed over to Russians the remainder in June."*<sup>(85)</sup>

Yet another foreign writer, Felix Valyi records that

*"Armenian revolutionaries took control of the town of Van in April. They established an Armenian General Staff under the command of Aram and Vardan and on May handed over the province of Van to Russian forces, cleaned of all muslims."*<sup>(86)</sup>

Following the capture of Van, the Russian Czar Nicola II sent a telegram to the Armenian Committee at Van on April 21, 1915 to thank them for the services they rendered to Russia.

<sup>(84)</sup> Rafael de Nogales: *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*: New York, 1926, p. 45. (Translated into Turkish: *Hilâl Altında Dört Sene ve Buna Ait bir Cevap*. Tranlated by Kaymakam Hakkı. İstanbul, 1931).

<sup>(85)</sup> Clair Price: *The Rebirth of Turkey*. New York , 1923, pp. 86-87.

<sup>(86)</sup> Felix Valyi: *op. cit.*, pp. 233-234.



Human skeletons unearthed at the mass grave excavation carried out at the village of Zeve, Van.

Borrowed from "Yakın Tarihimizde Van Uluslararası Sempozyumu" (International Symposium on Van in Recent History), 2-5 April 1990. Ankara, 1990.

The Armenian newspaper "Gochnak", published in America, reported, in its issue of May 24, 1915, with great pride that "only 1500 Turks remained at Van" after the Armenian atrocities and genocide.

The document<sup>(87)</sup> kept in the Ottoman Archives testifies before history to the atrocities and genocide committed by Armenians in Van

*"that Armenians and Russians treated very cruelly the muslim inhabitants of Van and its environs, that according to the testimony of Firdevs, from the Abbas Agha quarter of Van, the occupants savagely massacred the muslim population regardless of whether they are men or women, young or aged, that they opened up the womb of a pregnant woman and took out the foetus and cut off its head, that they tortured the people in the houses they had entered by force for hours and then killed, that they undressed a lad of*

<sup>(87)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-2, nr. 114-116 (See: Annex-17)



*16 years and cut off his genital organ; that the women and girls taken to the American institution were violated, that they opened the graves and took out corpses already buried and dug holy places and filled them with dirt."*

Another document<sup>(88)</sup> concerning the Armenian atrocities committed in the village of Ashnak in the district of Reshadiye, Van underlines that

*"The Armenians and Russians attacking the village of Ashnak treated people cruelly, burnt women and children alive, gouged the eyes of young and old people and savagely violated the young women, separated some 15 muslim women and girls and shut them in a room and, while entertaining themselves on the evening, forced them to undress and said to them "Come on pray, let us see how you pray" and at length killed them after violation."*

**... separated some 15 muslim women and girls and shut them in a room and, while entertaining themselves on the evening, forced them to undress and said to them "Come on pray, let us see how you pray ..."**

### **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Diyarbakir**

Let me quote some passages from the conclusions of the investigation conducted by the provincial authority regarding the massacres and atrocities committed by Armenians in Diyarbakir and its environs:

*"1. An armed band headed by a villain by the name of Doryon Dono, from the Armenian village of Bashnak in the district of Silvan,*

*suddenly attacked on June 28, 1915 a convoy of more than 500 mules carrying goods under the command of Militia Officer Haci Hamid Effendi, protected by a sufficient number of gendarmes and militiamen, at a place called Şeytan Kaya, while fording a brook, and cruelly martyred most of them.*

*2. When a number of soldiers discharged from the Army with a leave for changing climate arrived at the neighbourhood of the Armenian villages of Kum and Chum in the district of Lice, they*

<sup>(88)</sup> BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos. 12-2, nr. 101-102 (See: Annex-18)

*were attacked by the band members living in these villages and were killed with daggers, some of them with heads cut off, others with arms and feet tied up.*



A number of wounded Turkish soldiers travelling on home leave were ambushed and brutally killed by Armenian bands in the vicinity of Kum and Çum, in the district of Lice, Diyarbakır, on July 25, 1915.

Borrowed from "Ermeni Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi; Tesâvir ve Vesâik. The Armenian aspirations and revolutionary movements.- Albums No: 1 and 2. 1919.

3. Those Armenians, who can use arms, from the inhabitants of the villages of Arzuoglu and Shaniköy, in the district of Shark, formed a band headed by the notorious Hono from Hotan and, taking advantage of the absence of most men, faraway in the Army, attacked the muslim village of Hızir İlyas and gathered all the women and children that they met in the village or in the fields and dragged them all to a brook called Mersinderesi and tragically killed them there by shooting or by dagger. They cut some of them into pieces like a wicked butcher. Before putting to death they violated women.

4. *The Armenian workers working on the road Siverek-Urfa revolted and killed the gendarmes, then beginning to act as bandits in the neighbourhood prevented the old men and women from visiting a holy place at a site called Karatash that they had encountered there and planted them all as targets at a distance of 300 meters, aimed their guns at them and killed them all. As is to be understood from such incidents, which are rather numerous, Armenians have sworn to treat muslims badly and pitilessly.*"<sup>(89)</sup>

#### **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Elâzığ**

The Armenians living in the province of Elazığ who had started activities long before the world war at the incitement of revolutionary organisations, foreign consulates, Armenian schools and missionaries intensified those activities from the first months of the war. The locally organized bands, in company with the volunteers coming from the Caucasus, committed acts of sabotage in town and in neighbourhood, murdered many gendarmes and policemen on duty. They attempted to incite the tribes in Dersim against the Ottoman government. At Eğin and Arapkir churches were transformed into arsenals. With the outbreak of war the Armenians began to commit massacres and atrocities.<sup>(90)</sup>

#### **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Sivas**

The uprisings seen in the neighbouring provinces after the declaration of war were equally seen in Sivas and its environs. An Armenian priest by the name of Seponil from the village of Yayı in the district of Karahisar visited villages on the pretext of collecting aid for the Church, gathered Armenians and said to them

*"The Ottomans entered the war in which they will be defeated. Russian will soon enter Erzurum, and come up to here. Russians will beat the Army in front, we in the rear. The hour has come to use the arms that we had distributed to you in time."*

Such was his propaganda. Large scale incidents were prevented in the region thanks to the necessary measures taken by the

<sup>(89)</sup> *Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi.* (Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties). pp. 318-319. Photographs showing this savagery and atrocities are included in the book.

<sup>(90)</sup> Azmi Süslü: *Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı.* (The Armenians and the 1915 Deportation). Ankara, 1990, p. 84.

government in time, yet Armenians still committed massacres and atrocities in the region.

The telegram sent to the Ministry of the Interior on April 22, 1915, by the Governor of Sivas summarizes the events in Sivas and its environs as follows:

*"The places in the province where Armenians are numerous are Şebinkarahisar, Suşehri, Hafik, Divriği, Gürün, Gemerek, Amasya, Tokat and Menzifon. At the end of searches that have been carried out so far in the Turkish villages of Suşehri and in the district of Olataş, lots of illegal arms and dynamite have been found. It has been certainly established on the basis of the statements of the arrested culprits that Armenians had armed 30.000 persons in this province, 15.000 of them had already joined the Russian Army and that the remaining 15.000 persons would threaten the Turkish Army from the rear in case of its failure. Skirmishes have taken place between the Armenians and the security forces sent to the village of Tuzhisar in which the Armenian band leader Murad (Hamparsum Boyajian), member of Tashnak Organisation, had taken refuge."*<sup>(91)</sup>

<sup>(91)</sup> Azmi Süslü: *op. cit.*, p. 88. (See also the Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategical Studies, General Staff (ATASE), No. 4/3671, kls. 2820, dos. 69, fih. 3-45.

In Sivas, Armenian bands tied the hands and legs of a gendarme by the name of Mustafa, then strangled him and ripped his abdomen with bayonet.

Dedicated to the statesmen in positions of responsibility, intellectuals and public opinion of those countries and states, which upheld the Armenian claims.

Borrowed from "Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmal ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi; İlân-ı Meşrutiyetten Evvel ve Sonra" (The Aspirations and Revolutionary Movements of the Armenian Committees: Before and After the Declaration of Constitutional Monarchy). İstanbul, 1916.



### **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in Other Towns of Anatolia**

Apart from the above-mentioned places, the Armenians arming themselves organized armed bands, transformed schools and churches into arsenals, betrayed the Ottoman state under the tolerant and equitable rule of which they lived in peace and prosperity, massacred the innocent and defenceless Turkish people and committed unimaginable atrocities in such places as Ankara, Adana, Urfa, Izmit, Adapazari, Bursa, Hatay, Izmir, İstanbul, Maraş, Antep and Halep. Their atrocities and genocide will remain in history as a permanent painting of disgrace.

Bodies of innocent and defenceless Turks savagely killed by Armenians in the district of Kular, Izmit, with arms and other organs cut off with axe.

Presented to the attention and humanly feelings of the public opinion of those countries which upheld the unfounded Armenian claims.

Borrowed from "Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi; İlân-ı Meşrutiyetten Evvel ve Sonra" (The Aspirations and Revolutionary Movements of the Armenian Committees: Before and After the Declaration of Constitutional Monarchy). İstanbul, 1916.



### **Ungrounded Armenian Claims for Genocide**

This is the true face of the events that the Armenian propaganda and the focuses of terrorism attempt to distort and proclaim as the first genocide of the 20th century. Armenians were not subjected to genocide, On the contrary, as will be seen from the archive documents, photographs, and the evidences from the excavations of mass graves carried out in 1986 at Oba, Iğdır and in Alaca,

**... then the Armenian revolutionary organisations and armed bands who, believing in vain promises, shed blood everywhere in Anatolia, committed savagery and atrocities against the Turks, subjected them to genocide and caused them to suffer immensely.**

Erzurum; in 1988 at Dumlu Yeşil Yayla, Erzurum, in 1990 at Zeve, Van; In 1991 at Subatan, Kars and in 1993 in the Timar villages of Pasiniler, Erzurum Armenians massacred Turks and committed atrocities against them, they carried out genocide systematically.

It is true that there have been Armenian losses during the clashes in Anatolia as well as in the course of resettlement. Nobody denies it. But one must bear in mind that there was a world war going on, war conditions were prevailing, there was

an uprising against the State and a deplorable treachery, cooperation with the enemies of the Ottoman state, attempts to pull down the state and break the Empire into pieces and as a natural consequence of such activities an emerging absolute necessity of resettlement. Nowhere in the world, flowers have been presented to those who betrayed their state and used arms.

Hardships of wartime, heavy conditions of climate, epidemics, insufficiency of fuel, food, medicine and other means, and loss of lives occurring as a result of such conditions were applicable not only to Armenians but to Turks as well, perhaps more to Turks than to Armenians.

If those who are responsible for all this tragedy are to be looked for as demanded by Armenians, they are first of all those who cheated and used Armenians for their own imperialistic ends and then the Armenian revolutionary organisations and armed bands who, believing in vain promises, shed blood everywhere in Anatolia,

committed savagery and atrocities against the Turks, subjected them to genocide and caused them to suffer immensely.

We do not intend to denigrate the Armenian nation, to blacken a nation with feelings of hatred and grudge and to attribute today the savagery, atrocities and genocide committed by the Armenian bands rising up against the State during the events in question and the Armenian voluntary regiments taking their place in the ranks of the Russian Army to the whole Armenian nation.

To cherish a vendetta, to commit crimes, and to take revenge is not compatible with our faith, with the historical honour and nobility of the Turkish nation. However, it should not be forgotten that it is a scholarly, historical, national responsibility for us to show the truth, to eliminate the one-sidedness on this matter, which is equally a moral obligation of ours toward our dear martyrs.

The powers and countries that provide support to the unfounded and imaginary Armenian claims of genocide should not forget that overlooking the inhuman atrocities, genocide and injustice suffered by Turks, as witnessed by history, amounts to becoming a supporter of the Armenian grudge and hostility.

The states upholding the unfounded Armenian claims must realize that by doing so they get themselves convicted before history for exploiting history for political reasons.

**... overlooking  
the inhuman atrocities,  
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a supporter of the  
Armenian grudge and  
hostility.**





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