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HISTORY

THE US AMBASSADOR HENRY MORGENTHAU AND THE PUBLIC-POLITICAL EFFORTS OF THE ARMENIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY DURING THE YEARS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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Henry Morgenthau

The US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and the American Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire

Henry Morgenthau (November, 1913 - Spring, 1916) was the Ambassador of the United States of America in the Ottoman Empire during the most tragic period of the Armenian history, in the years of World War I. As a diplomat and lawyer, he has devoted his professional and human abilities in favor of the Christians' elementary rights for life, the defense of their interests and for the mitigation of their sufferings. H. Morgenthau never betrayed the humanistic principles of philanthropy and compassion; continuing the educational and enlightening task of the American Protestant Missionaries started a century before in the Ottoman Empire, he made his valuable contribution by converting it, under the new historico-political circumstances, into a tutorial pro-Armenian Mission.

As early as 1819, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which had the object of "spreading the Bible throughout the world,"¹ had found in the Armenians a reliable stronghold amid the centuries' old obscure backwardness of the Ottoman Empire for realizing their Christian-reformatory ideas and developing their enlightening activities. As far back as 1831, with the help of the Armenian Mission established in the quarter of Bebek in Constantinople, several Evangelical churches, schools and colleges had been founded, where teaching courses and sermons on European and American educational levels were organized. These institutions, which have been characterized by H. Morgenthau as "means of peaceful penetration"² of American ideas, have greatly favored also the spiritual and mental awakening of the Armenians and the formation of the pro-western outlook, giving rise to the temporary emigration of the Armenians to the USA, in the beginning for educational purposes and afterwards for economic ones. Many of these Armenian emigrants, finding economic, political, cultural and religious freedom and prosperity in the USA, have settled in the New World, reducing the number of people returning to the Motherland and preparing

¹ Jizmejian 1955: 103.

² American Ambassador 1990: 55

conditions for the material and moral assistance to thousands of compatriots who emigrated in the following decades owing to pressing historico-political circumstances, as well as for assembling and organizing them as a community.³

By 1914, the following institutions were functioning thanks to the humanitarian efforts of the American Board and under the patronage of the USA Embassy almost in every Armenian-inhabited locality of the Ottoman Empire:

- ❖ 369 elementary schools with 22.700 pupils and 850 teachers,
- ❖ 137 churches with 50.900 adherents, 13.891 communicant members, and 179 native ministers,
- ❖ 46 boarding schools and secondary schools with 4.090 pupils,
- ❖ 19 hospitals with 39.503 patients,
- ❖ 15 missionary centers with 146 ministers,
- ❖ 10 colleges with 1.748 students,
- ❖ 8 industrial schools,
- ❖ 5 nurse-training schools,
- ❖ 5 orphanages,
- ❖ 4 theological seminaries with 24 students,
- ❖ 3 schools for defective (blind, deaf, and dumb) children,
- ❖ 2 old people's homes and others.⁴

During already 100 years of its existence in the Ottoman Empire, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, had invested about 20 million dollars, had endured indescribable moral hardships and had suffered numerous human losses. In the years of First World War, the American missionaries (about 400 in number), faithful to their mission, stayed till the end at their institutions in the Ottoman Empire, served Christianity and testified the whole world to the sufferings of the Armenians.⁵

"The Missionary Review of the World" (November, 1915) in its article "The American Missionary Interests" has substantiated the centennial interests of Americans towards Armenians as follows: "America has more interests in Turkey than any other country, or possibility than all Europe together. That interest is not political, but humanitarian. In 1819 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions began work in the Ottoman Empire, and has now for nearly a century prosecuted that work with vigor and statesman-like foresight and breadth. The missionaries have introduced into the country the printing press and a periodical, literature, modern medicine and sanitation, the modern hospital, new industries and commercial enterprises, and western education, culminating in the well-organized colleges and graduate schools. ...The Armenians as a people have been the most responsive to the appeals of modern education. The majority of the 25.000 students in the schools north

³ Avakian 2000: 17-46.

⁴ Chopourian 1962: 100, 101. Armenian Evangelical Church 1986: 39. Tootikian 1982: 27-28, 272-273. Papajian 1985: 89.

⁵ Kloian 1985: "The Independent," September 27, 1915, p. 40; "The Outlook," September 29, 1915, p. 44.

of Syria have been from this historic and virile race. Thousands have taken graduate courses in the United States. It can be said that America discovered the Armenian race and introduced it to the Western World. It is therefore, eminently fitting that at this time of death-struggle America should be the first to lift its voice in protest, and the most ready to offer its help to save this nation from annihilation.”⁶

Although the American Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau was called for “...merely to represent his government as worthily as possible, to protect American interests and particularly to watch over the American educational institutions which had accomplished such great things for the Christian populations,”⁷ nevertheless he wholly devoted all his diplomatic skills for somehow extenuating the sufferings of Christian populations, especially of the Armenians, and for checking the extermination plans of Young-Turk leaders.

Here is what H. Morgenthau has told Tala’at, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Ottoman Empire, to stop the persecutions against Armenians and in favor of the American missionaries’ interests: “...Americans are outraged by your persecutions of the Armenians. You must base your principles on humanitarianism, not racial discrimination, or the United States will not regard you as a friend and an equal. And you should understand the great changes that are taking place among Christians all over the world. They are forgetting their differences and all sects are coming together as one. You look down on American missionaries, but don’t forget that it is the best element in America that supports their work, especially their educational institutions. Americans are not mere materialists, always chasing money - they are broadly humanitarian, and interested in the spreading of the justice and civilization throughout the world. After this war is over you will face a new situation. You say that, if victorious, you can defy the world, but you are wrong. You will have to meet public opinion everywhere, especially in the United States. Our people will never forget these massacres. They will always resent the wholesale destruction of Christians in Turkey. They will look upon it as nothing but willful murder and will seriously condemn all the men who are responsible for it. You will not be able to protect yourself under your political status and say that you acted as Minister of Interior and not as Talaat. You are defying all ideas of justice as we understand the term in our country.”⁸

Being born at Mannheim (Baden), Germany, of Jewish origin, H. Morgenthau’s (1856-1946) humanitarian views were exceeding to narrow, nationalistic or local limitations. Opposing to Turkish racist mentality, he admonished to the Turk leaders, that “...above all considerations of race and religion, there are such things as humanity and civilization....”⁹ Then he added about his origin and his political views: “...I am not here as a Jew but as American Ambassador. My country contains something more than

⁶ Ibid, “The Missionary Review of the World,” November, 1915, pp. 102, 103.

⁷ Ibid, “The World’s Work,” November, 1918, p. 232.

⁸ Ibid, p. 266.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 232, 266.

97.000.000 Christians and something less than 3.000.000 Jews. So, at least in my ambassadorial capacity, I am 97 per cent Christian. But after all that is not the point. I do not appeal to you in the name of any race or any religion, but merely as a human being. You have told me many times that you want to make Turkey a part of the modern progressive world. The way you are treating the Armenians will not help you to realize that ambition; it puts you in the class of backward, reactionary people.”¹⁰ Backwardness, about which H. Morgenthau has expressed himself in his historical memoirs as follows: “I have no intention of describing the terrible vassalage and oppression that went on for a five centuries; my purpose is merely to emphasize this innate attitude of the Muslim Turk to people not of his own race and religion _ that they are not human beings with rights, but merely chattels, which may be permitted to live when they promote the interest of their masters, but which may be pitilessly destroyed when they have ceased to be useful. This attitude is intensified by a total disregard for human life and an intense delight in physical human suffering, which are the not unusual qualities of primitive peoples.”¹¹

During the years of war in the Ottoman Empire and under strengthened censorship conditions, H. Morgenthau received detailed information about the deportations, massacres and slaughters occurring in the eastern provinces through the American missionaries, who overcoming road difficulties and risking their lives came to the Embassy to witness to what they had seen and heard. H. Morgenthau has written in his memoirs: “For hours they (missionaries - K. A.) would sit in my office and, with tears streaming down their faces, they would tell me of the horrors through which they had passed. Many of these, both men and women, were almost broken in health from the scenes, which they had witnessed. In many cases they brought me letters from American consuls, confirming the most dreadful of their narrations and adding many unprintable details. The general purport of all these first-hand reports was that the utter depravity and fiendishness of the Turkish nature, already sufficiently celebrated through the centuries, had now surpassed themselves. There was only one hope of saving nearly 2.000.000 people from massacre, starvation, and even worse, I was told that was the moral power of the United States. These spokesmen of a condemned nation declared that, unless the American Ambassador could persuade the Turk to stay his destroying arm, the whole Armenian nation would disappear.”¹² The European powers were also of this opinion.

The American Embassy in the Ottoman Empire used all its diplomatic potential to stop the mad plans of the Young Turk leaders, “...for which civilization will hold the Turks responsible.”¹³ H. Morgenthau demanded from the Young Turk leaders a guarantee of safety and security for the Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen and for the Armenians. But the Ottoman Empire did not give a guarantee for the security of

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 266.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 242.

¹² Ibid, p. 263.

¹³ Ibid, p. 260.

Armenians and had no intention to give up its plans of extermination of a whole nation. On the contrary, the Young Turk leaders announced that the case of their attitude towards Armenians was of no concern to the USA and that the Armenians would mostly gain, if they were freed from the tutorial assistance of the USA, something, which would urge them to rely only upon the good nature of the Turkish government.¹⁴

Nevertheless, H. Morgenthau did not miss the opportunity to use his authority in favor of the Armenians. Thus, on the occasion of the greatest religious holiday, Bayram, he interceded with Enver and obtained the liberation of seven Armenians condemned to death by the Ismir military tribunal. The Ambassador H. Morgenthau, realistically evaluating the situation created in the Ottoman Empire for the Armenians and persuaded that it was necessary to take measure "to rescue permanently the remnants of these fine, old, civilized, Christian people from the fangs of the Turks," he applied to the American Government for moving to the USA 550.000 Armenians miraculously saved from the Genocide and succeeded in charging the Young Turk leaders 1.000.000 dollars as part of the transportation expenses. With the help of its councils and missionaries, the American Embassy organized the distribution of foodstuff, clothing, medicines and other important aids supplied by the humanitarian institutions of USA to the rescued Armenians of Anatolia.¹⁵

In the hardest years of First World War, the American Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire, H. Morgenthau, not satisfied with the efficiency of his activities, resigned from that post, and has written about it in his memoirs: "My failure to stop the destruction of the Armenians had made Turkey for me a place of horror, and I found intolerable my further daily association with men, who, however gracious and accommodating and good-natured they might have been to the American Ambassador, were still reeking with the blood of nearly a million human beings. Could I have done anything more, either for Americans, enemy aliens, or the persecuted peoples of the empire, I would willingly have stayed. The position of Americans and Europeans, however, had now become secure and, so far as the subject peoples were concerned, I had reached the end of my resources."¹⁶

H. Morgenthau, who after his resignation, had the intention to make the people of the USA know about the sufferings of the Armenians, and to engage them as much as possible in supporting the Armenians in need, has expressed himself as follows: "If I dared repeat the tales I have heard, shown to and signed, they would make men and women weep and every one would see the need of sympathy and help. I wish I had the power to picture an Armenian refugee encampment and to tell how an American missionary hospital fed from its back door a thousand starving persons a day on an average of 3 cents a person with the \$30 a day we gave it.... What this great country should do to show its appreciation of the wonderful blessings that have been showered upon us is for each one of us to make up his mind to do his share. Picture that you are

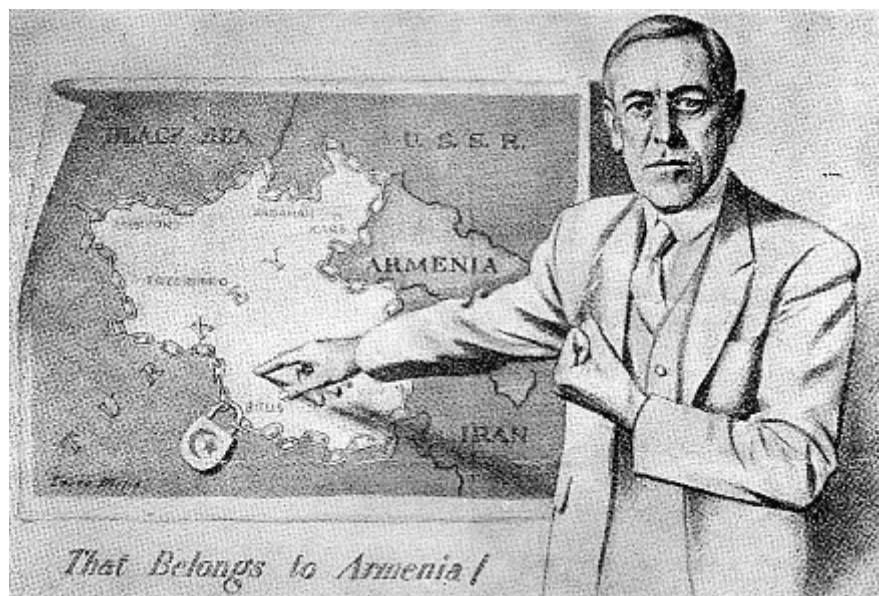
¹⁴ American Ambassador 1990: 119, 275, 281, 291.

¹⁵ Morgenthau 1918: 16. Kloian 1985: "The New York Times," October 2, 1915, p. 50; "The Literary Digest," October 2, 1915, p. 52.

¹⁶ Kloian 1985: "The World's Work," November, 1918, p. 244.

personally responsible for the starvation of one or two persons if you do not give funds to save them. Twenty-five dollars will enable an Armenian family to be established in comparative comfort. I believe every person would be happier to sacrifice something and give \$25 for the Armenians. ...We have been hearing of the brotherhood of men. If we are all brothers, and we are, have we a right to live on in comfort and luxury and allow these people to starve? I do not think we have. I believe that it is our duty, it is our privilege, for each of us to assume the guardianship of as many of the Armenian people as we can. ...I believe the moral force of America will be doubled and trebled, if the rest of the world understands that we are ready and willing and anxious to help the suffering masses.”¹⁷

Meanwhile, in the USA H. Morgenthau resumed his humanitarian mission with a new impetus. He had an active participation in the re-election of President Woodrow Wilson, considering it an important enterprise both for the USA and for the whole world. Together with President W. Wilson, H. Morgenthau has taken part in post-war peace negotiations, in military missions and in other important international enterprises.¹⁸



US President Woodrow Wilson with the Map of Armenia

The Public-Political Efforts of the Armenian-American Community and the American Assistance

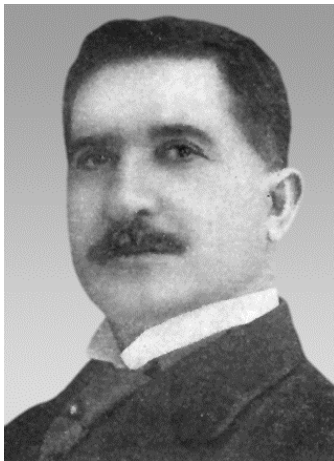
From the very beginning of the First World War, the Armenians, who had increased in number in the USA due to various historical circumstances, assembled the entire intercommunal public, intellectual, material, party and other resources to succor the native land and its people in distress for defensive and reconstructive purposes in collaboration with the American diplomatic, political, military, benevolent and other organizations.

¹⁷ Ibid, "The Literary Digest," June 17, 1916, p. 149.

¹⁸ Ibid, "The World's Work," November, 1918, p. 244. Hovannisian 1974: 338.

The Armenian-Americans have participated both in volunteer movements in the native land in helping the enormous number of needy compatriots and emigrants and in the various political, diplomatic and military enterprises in Europe and the USA suing the Armenian Action. Among such kind of Armenian-American nation-supporting institutions were initially the pro-educational organizations, then, during the First World War and in the period following it, the widow-helping, orphan-helping, poor-helping and rehabilitation organizations, the compatriotic unions, the political parties (the Hnchakian Party in 1890, the Dashnaktsakan Party in 1895, the Ramgavar-Azatakan Party in 1921), the American headquarter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (in 1908, Boston), the Armenian Red Cross of America (in 1910, New York), the Armenian Missionary Association of America (in 1918, Worcester) and other similar organizations.¹⁹

Among the active political Armenian-American institutions were the Interparty Council (in November, 1914, Boston), subsequently renamed the National Defense Armenian-American Council (NDAC) and the Society for the Defense of National Interests (SDNI) (in 1915, New York) these two being later amalgamated into the Society for National Defense, the Armenian National Union of America (ANUA) (in March, 1917, Boston), the plenipotentiary representative of the National Paris Delegation in the USA, which had established the Armenian National Union Publicity Office (in 1918, New York), subsequently renamed Press Office and still later, Publicity Committee.²⁰



**Founder of the Armenian
National Union of America
Mihran Svazlian**

Owing to the high consciousness manifested by the Armenian-Americans with regard to the unity, it had become possible to hold in Boston, from 16-26 March, 1917, seven sessions of solidarity negotiations, during which the Armenian National Union of America (ANUA, founder - Mihran Svazlian) had been organized. The Union was composed of the representatives of the four parties (Social-Democratic Hunchak, Reorganized Hunchak, Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnak, Armenian Constitutional Democrats), of the two national churches (Apostolic, Evangelical) and of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. A central body for the Union consisting of 18 members had been elected (Chairman: Mihran Svazlian).²¹ After a short time 187 branches of the Union had already been created. The Union was recognized by the American official circles as the representative of the Armenian-American Community, becoming thus the first Armenian lobbyist organization in USA. The object of the Armenian National Union of America was to unite the material

¹⁹ Avakian 2000: 89-111.

²⁰ Herald of Armenian National Union of America 1922: 8-12, 30, 31.

²¹ Ibid: pp. 11-12. Constitution and Regulations 1917: 2, 19, 20. Teodik 1922: 286.

and moral forces of the Armenian-Americans and to put them in the service of the liberation and reconstruction of Cilicia and the immediate assistance of the needy people, as well as to realize Armenian-supporting propaganda and diplomatic enterprises in USA.²² The ANUA has had its active participation, together with the entire Armenian community, in nation-supporting enterprises aimed at presenting Armenia and the Armenian Action to the American and European communities, in printing and diffusing political, historical and literary publications.²³

Thanks to the pro-Armenian lobbying activity developed by the Armenian National Union in America among the US political leaders and the Congressmen, as well as by the proposal of H. Morgenthau, the USA President W. Wilson sent an investigatory commission to the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) under the leadership of General James Harbord, with the purpose of inquiring on the spot into the deportations and the massacres of the Armenians and of discussing the most important problems for providing economical aid to the newly-created state; moreover, the sub-commission of the Foreign Relations Commission (Chairman - Warren Harding) put to hearing in the Congress the reports of the Armenian representatives and of the pro-Armenian Americans concerning the Armenian Question on the 29th of September, on the 2nd and the 10th of October, 1918.²⁴

Through the efforts of the Armenian-American community and the Armenian National Union, the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (Chairman - James Gerard) was created in January, 1919, by the union of 60 pro-Armenian Americans, having the object of forming an atmosphere of sympathy toward Armenians in the public and political circles of the country and inducing the USA to recognize the right of Armenia for complete independence. In March, 1919, 15.300 representatives of the American progressive circles (clergymen, statesmen, presidents of colleges and universities) presented a petition to the USA President to accelerate his enterprises in the Paris Peace Conference for the establishment of a free Armenian State, and to transform them into active steps.²⁵ In this matter, H. Morgenthau was of the opinion that a mandate under foreign protection should be established in Armenia and that "the Armenians should be freed from the yoke of Turkish domination." He believed in the installation of a tripartite joint mandate over Constantinople, Anatolia and Armenia for a period of 30 years as a guarantee for the separate national existence of the Armenians, though this project met with opposition both in foreign and in some Armenian political circles.²⁶

Besides that, the Chairman of the USA Central Committee of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Mihran Karageuzian, has realized a pro-Armenian

²² Avakian 2003: 98-104. Jizmejian 1955: 353.

²³ Avakian 2000: 115-120.

²⁴ Ibid: 119. Hovannisian 1982: 334.

²⁵ Avakian 2000: 119.

²⁶ Morgenthau 1918: 15. Hovannisian 1982: 392-396.

cooperation with the General Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Rev. Dr. James Barton. The latter, in reply to Ambassador H. Morgenthau's telegram from Constantinople in September, 1915, informing that "the destruction of the Armenian race in Turkey is rapidly progressing," therefore it is important to save the rest, founded the American Committee for the Examination of Armenian Persecutions with the help of the Armenian Home of Cleveland. This committee, consisting of American missionaries, humanists, industrialists and professors gave birth to the American Committee for Armenian Relief. Its chairman, Rev. Dr. James Barton has said on the occasion of its creation: "The Armenians have no one to speak for them and it is without question a time when the voice of Christianity should be raised." The American Committee for Armenian Relief collected 100.000 dollars and sent it to the USA Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire H. Morgenthau for the needs of Armenians.²⁷



"They Shall Not Perish"

The Contribution Poster of the American Committee for Relief in the Near East (1918)

Soon, when it became obvious that the Armenian tragedy had acquired enormous dimensions and when H. Morgenthau announced in November, 1915, that "the shocking reports of the eye-witnesses pointed out that a genocidal course was in progress," the American Committee for Armenian Relief spread its activities and became incorporated with the corresponding groups from Syria and Palestine, and was renamed the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief. This organization has continued its benevolent mission even in 1917, when the diplomatic relations between the USA and the Ottoman Empire were deteriorated.²⁸ The American press of that time had written on this occasion: "The settling of the "Armenian Question" is a task for statesmen, but the feeding and rehabilitation of Armenia, which is being carried on by the American Committee for Armenian

and Syrian Relief, is a task for every man and woman in America."²⁹

Starting from April 24, 1919, the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief was named the American Committee for the Relief of Near East and by the decision of the Congress, it was renamed in August Near East Relief (Chairman - Rev. Dr. James Barton; Vice-Chairman, member of the Board of Trustees - H. Morgenthau).

²⁷ Memoriam of the Great Genocide 1965: 934. Barton 1930: 4-6.

²⁸ Memoriam of the Great Genocide 1965: 935. Barton 1930: 4-5. Hovannisian 1974: 133.

²⁹ Kloian 1985: "The Independent," June 23, 1917, p. 205.

The mentioned Relief Committee was a national structure, since it got approval from the whole American people, the Congress and the President of the country; it collaborated with the national benevolent organizations, the American Red Cross and the other charitable institutions. The Near East Relief supplied 116 million dollars, including 25 million dollars' worth of food and clothing of the US government, as well as 1 million dollars collected by the Armenian-Americans. The Near East Relief with its hospitals, orphanages, schools and workshops established in 11 countries of three continents, has cured, sheltered, fed and inspired new hope to tens of thousands needy people, without distinction of religion, has educated 132.000 orphans becoming "...the symbol of humanity and compassion ... on the bloodstained land of the Middle East."³⁰

As a responsible person in the Near East Relief, in 1920, H. Morgenthau called to save, at any price, the survivors of the Armenian Genocide: 1.200.000 naked and hungry adults, 250.000 orphans, 250.000 women enslaved in Turkish harems, 100.000 of which had already been saved by the efforts of the Committee. "If they were good enough to fight and die for us when we needed their help so sorely, are they not good enough to be given some crumbs from our plenty? ...Let the American slogan now become - Serve Armenians for a little while longer with life's necessities that they may be preserved for the day of national freedom and rebirth, which no people more truly and greatly deserves." As an eye-witness H. Morgenthau has given his arguments: "The deportations and massacres during the war were not spontaneous uprising of unorganized mobs, but were the working out of a well-plotted plan of wholesale extermination, in which regular Turkish officers and troops took part as if in a campaign against an enemy in the field." Hence, he has concluded: "If America is going to condone these offenses, if she is going to permit to continue conditions that threaten and permit their repetition, she is party to the crime. These peoples must be freed from the agony and danger of such horrors. They must not only be saved for the present, but either through governmental action or protection under the League of Nations they must be given assurance that they will be free in peace and that no harm can come to them."³¹

On the 7th of December, 1924, the Near East Relief, in collaboration with the Armenian General Benevolent Union, had organized the International Golden Rule Sunday enterprise. In their joint declaration there was written: "INTERNATIONAL GOLDEN RULE SUNDAY will be observed in twenty or more countries by those who have not forgotten that the Golden Rule is the only principle by which people may dwell in amity together. The observance of the day will test our sincerity. It will prove a spiritual exercise for the prosperous. It will provide a vital food supply for the homeless and the starving. It will be an expression of international fellowship and good will.

The Golden Rule is a universal creed, the common denominator of all religions. International Golden Rule Sunday, December 7, is intended to be a day of plain living

³⁰ Memoriam of the Great Genocide 1965: 935, 944. Kloian 1985: "The Independent," February 28, 1920, p. 341. Hovannisian 1982: 398. Barton 1930: 6, VIII, X, XI.

³¹ Kloian 1985: "The Independent," February 28, 1920, p. 341.

and high thinking; a day for personal stock-taking, for comparison of our deeds with our creeds, for measurement of our lives by a universally accepted standard to ascertain how nearly we have attained an ideal...

Why observe International Golden Rule Sunday?

For the sake of our own souls and our own children. Luxurious living may be as injurious to the prosperous as is starvation to the less fortunate.

For the sake of the children of the Near East. They perish if we fail.

For the sake of international brotherhood and world peace. There will be no permanent world peace until the Near East question is settled. What greater influence for peace could be set free in the world than a generation of children given life through international generosity and taught love by international example...



"Lest We Perish"

The Contribution Poster of the American Committee for Relief in the Near East (1918)

Tens of thousands of innocent children in the Near East are without father, mother or country. They have no responsible relative to provide support. They are practically all under sixteen years of age. ...There are 95.000 children in refugee camps who should have the benefit of at least a brief period of orphanage training. They have no legal claim upon the over-populated, over-burdened, refugee-ridden territories to which they have been exiled.

These children are wholly dependent upon outside philanthropy...

These orphan children, deprived of homes, parents and country, are, if properly trained, the hope of the Near East. The fulfillment of this hope is within our power and within our purses, and it is within our hearts if we believe in the Golden Rule.

Enlarge, enrich your family circle. Invite one of these little children as an invisible guest to your family table for the coming year...

"Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you (or unto your children left desolate), do ye even so unto them".³²

The essence of the project was the following: "...All persons who believe in the Golden Rule are asked to provide for their Sunday dinner approximately the same simple menu provided for the tens of thousands of children in Near East Relief orphanages, and then make a substantial contribution to the Near East Relief for the purchase of food for one or more orphan child for the coming year." The Armenian-Americans were called to collect 100.000 dollars. The total collected amount was to be equally shared between two organizations. At least 32.000 Armenian orphans would be

³² International Golden Rule 1924: 1-4.

saved thanks to this benevolent measure. The Armenian Committee in the International Golden Rule Sunday enterprise was represented by 90 notables from the Armenian-American community, including ministers of the Armenian Evangelical and Apostolic Churches, intellectuals, military-men, etc.³³

According to the estimation of the Chairman of the Near East Relief, Rev. Dr. James Barton, "the work of the Committee has demonstrated practical Christianity without sectarianism, and without ecclesiastical form, recognizing the rights of each and all to their ancestral faith while expressing religion in terms of sacrifice and service that others might live and be benefited. Its creed was the Golden Rule and its ritual the devotion of life and treasure to the healing of wounds caused by war. ...It is the story of the ideals of America translated into disinterested service. ...This is a narrative of American philanthropy."³⁴

American philanthropy towards the Armenians has also been manifested in the person of the President of the USA of that time, Woodrow Wilson, who was well informed about the Armenian massacres and torments from the reports of H. Morgenthau. The political policy of the President of the USA towards the Armenians was based on his principle, expressed in 1918: "We will not put our arms down until the nations oppressed by Turkey find their freedom. ...The systematic slaughters accomplished against Armenian population compel us to sweep off this ignorant and sick gang from Europe. Armenia must be given its historical right."³⁵

By the active efforts of the Armenian-Americans and by decision of the USA President and the Congress, the "Armenian Day" was declared throughout the country on October 21-22, 1916; meetings, protest demonstrations and speeches were organized in about 400 American towns condemning the violence perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians, special pro-Armenian ceremonies and contribution programs were arranged. The American people have expressed its cordiality to the Christian nations pursued and persecuted under Turkish tyranny and has donated more than 30 million dollars. The Armenia-America Society of American Friends of Armenia was soon organized (Chairman - the pro-Armenian lawyer Walter George Smith), which, in consultation with the Armenian Commission, undertook enterprises in favor of the Armenian Action in American public and governmental circles until the Lausanne Congress.³⁶

Thus, within the most tragic years of the First World War, Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire, where the land was soaked in Armenian blood and sufferings, not only expressed and defended the governmental-diplomatic interests of his country, but also, as an eye-witness, he impartially estimated and condemned the historical facts.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Barton 1930: IX, XI.

³⁵ Kloian 1985: "The New York Times," March 10, 1916, p. 146. Lazian 1946: 284.

³⁶ Avakian 2000: 115-120.

During the years of the First World War and the following years, which were disastrous for the Armenian people, the Armenian community of the US, assembling its entire intra-communal intellectual, financial, public and political resources, has assisted the Motherland and its people by all the possible diplomatic, political, military and human means and has taken part in the enterprises aiming at the defense of the Armenian Case, particularly in the USA.

The calamitous political situation created in the Ottoman Empire following the First World War and in Czarist Russia, as well as the loss of confidence in the Allied States destroyed in the soul of thousands of emigrants the sacred dream of returning to their Homeland and they definitively established in the New Land of their adoption.

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Translated from the Armenian by Tigran Tsoulikian

THE PROBLEM OF ESTABLISHING TERRITORIAL NEW POWER AND FORMATION OF THE SEIM

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In the mid-December of 1917, after signing the Yerznka ceasefire, a recurrent ruling crisis occurred in the Transcaucasus. It was the logical consequence of the stormy events, following the Bolshevik coup, the starting point of which was the confrontation between the provincial government and the Bolshevik central and local forces on the one hand and the establishment of a more stable government on the other.

The first thing that was raised by political parties was to criticize the Commissariat, to make mention of its "temporary" character, to strengthen it and, which was appearing more relevant, to provide it with the circumstance of being endowed with the legislative power.

The Western Armenians were deeply disappointed in the context of Armenian issues, so the conclusions of the newspaper "Armenia" were more genuine and radical. The newspaper of the chief editor Vahan Totovents and the pantentee Garegin Levonyan was pointing out on December 14 that "the Caucasian Commissariat has not yet provided any proof of both practical mind and a staff, having a reputation of a real governance, since its formation; on the contrary, we see unbaked and inexperienced steps in its decisions, decrees and practice from the viewpoint of governing the country".¹

The said organ, being the interpreter of the Western-Armenians' interests, was explicitly stating that the hasty formation of Transcaucasian government was a result of the Bolshevik coup, which, in its turn, was pushing the territory to the separation from Russia and putting the end of anarchy in Transcaucasia in such a way, of course. It is noteworthy that the national, non-partisan newspaper also agreed with the prevailing approach in the political field, namely, the establishment of "credible, authoritative and uniformly sovereign Socialist authority".²

Comparing Ozakom (Special Transcaucasian Committee, in Russian) with Zakom (Transcaucasian Commissariat, in Russian), Arakelyan was convinced in behalf of the People's Party of Armenia (HZhK) that Zakom "not only did not ease the hardships of the people, but it can be said that the situation of the country has deteriorated tenfold ... Zakom has no authority or influence, it is not felt that the country is ruled".³ "Mshak" particularly emphasized the issue of ceasefire, which was signed in the Caucasian Front, accusing the Commissariat of following blindly the Bolshevik government's approach to destroying and demoralizing the army.⁴

¹ Hayastan, December 14, 1917, n.174.

² Ibid.

³ Mshak, December 29, 1917, n.274.

⁴ Ibid.

The unstable status of the Transcaucasian Commissariat was disturbing the Dashnaktsutyun, first of all, because of Bolsheviks' consistent policy aimed at overthrowing the Commissariat and handing over the power to the People's Commissars. The newspaper "Ashkhataavor" ("Worker", in Armenian), the organ of Tiflis central and local committees of the party, was also stating in its editorial of January 1, 1918, "Our work in 1918: the Political Situation in the Caucasus", that the Commissariat does not have a fixed pedestal under its feet and was not able to hold the power so far "despite a number of successful steps".⁵ H. Kajaznuni, too, saw the necessity of forming a new government. He was pointing out that the "Commissariat, which continued to govern the country on behalf of the" Temporary Government "of Kerensky, had lost the ground under the feet after the collapse of that government. It was necessary to create a new government, having been more authoritative in the eyes of nation and competent for the conduct of state affairs independently (emphasis mine - V.M.)".⁶

On January 12, 1918, the report of the Commissariat's Chairman on the Political Situation of the Transcaucasian Commissariat and the problem of forming a new body of government became a matter of special consideration at the Commissariat meeting.⁷ The substantiations of the chairman, Ye. Gegechkori, were as follows: he reminded the audience that the Commissariat had obtained its power from the regional center of workers and soldiers (hereinafter RCWS), stating that the end of this power was connected with the actual opening of the Constituent Assembly.

As he stated, although the Commissariat had received a vote of confidence from the regional center at that moment, it was not enjoying the credence of organizations and national councils at all. According to Gegechkori, the situation was more complicated because of controversy between the Commissariat and the Executive Committee of Tiflis RCWS. Then, the Chairman suggested to put the following questions into consideration: 1) does the Transcaucasian Commissariat consider it politically moral to preserve its powers and continue to transfer its authority to the body, created by the Transcaucasian Seim?, 2) does the Transcaucasian Commissariat plan to raise the issue of power today in the regional center? At the end, Gegechkori argued that in the created atmosphere the Commissariat can no longer work; so, the delay in resolving the issue is not relevant due to the difficulty of convening the Seim and should be removed from the agenda.⁸

G. Rtskhiladze, Kh. Karchikyan, G. Ter-Ghazaryan, Kh. Melik-Aslanov, Sh. Alexeiev- Meskhiyev made speeches after the report of the Commissariat's president, A.Chkhenkeli. Their views and attitudes were as follows: A. Chkhenkeli found that the issue of power must be raised for the body to be formed and only that body can solve the problem of authority. "Now there is no separation of authorizations between the

⁵ Ashkhataavor, January 1, 1918, n.1.

⁶ Kajaznuni 1923: 22.

⁷ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 25-26 rev.

⁸ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 25.

provincial government and the revolutionary organizations", he said, "merging the two means disagreements and contradictions. We forget that self-governing is the basis of the revolutionary order and although we are fighting the Bolsheviks, we stand on their point of view. It is unacceptable to put aside revolutionary and party organizations".⁹ A. Chkhenkeli suggested escaping issue of the power and the Transcaucasian Commissariat when being in the Regional Center. C. Rtskhiladze emphasized the role of revolutionary organizations "until the new power has been formed."¹⁰ His approach was justified by the fact that the Commissariat received its powers from a regional center, i.e. from revolutionary organizations, and could not enter the center with its statement on the necessity of creating a new government. He offered to appeal to the "National Councils with tremendous moral power, except revolutionary organizations."¹¹ The member of ARF party, Kh. Karchikyan, made a brave proposal, who was convinced that the present state of affairs required, first of all, more than a month to transform the government. "It is impossible to carry out planned work now", he said, "probably, the Commissariat Staff does not have moral support".¹² According to Kh. Karchikyan's statement, the "multiple power" is extremely urgent, as the life of Tiflis, the political center of the region, is governed by the Executive Committee of the Workers and Soldiers' Council. "Now it is necessary to make a separation between the two authorities and if that fails, said Kh. Karchikyan, we have to put down our powers".¹³ G. Ter-Ghazaryan was worried about Bolshevik moods in all revolutionary organizations. As for the role of national councils when discussing the issue of power, Menshevik G. Ter-Ghazaryan, assessing their irreplaceable role especially when weighing up the national armed forces, stated that the national separation is the destruction of all the peoples of the region, so national councils should be restricted only with moral support and never become governing bodies. He saw danger that National Councils would not leave the newly formed government alone, they would try to eliminate it.¹⁴ That real anxiety was derived from the tactics of the political parties that have taken the path of national separation, and the Armenian Mensheviks also opposed it. Melik-Aslanov believed that the Commissariat had no moral right to put an end to its powers "at the time when the dangerous events in the region and their consequences can lead to insubordination and scandal". At the same time, later, he expressed his disagreement with Ter-Ghazaryan's opinion, noting that the issue of the future Seim is a national one.¹⁵

Then, it was A. Chkhenkeli who interfered in the quarrel and noted that the new government will solve the national issue, first of all. Obviously, the Georgian

⁹ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p.25 rev.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p.26.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 26 rev.

Mensheviks had high expectations for the full power in the "new government", and so they were looking for a solution of national issue within the region in favor of the Georgians. The new interpretation of A. Chkhenkeli became decisive in the matter of authority. Considering the principle that the source of Commissariat's authority is the regional center, he insisted that their statement itself, made at the current session, meant termination of authorizations. "If we are unable to form a government in a short time, we should invite the Regional Council to this end", Chkhenkeli said.¹⁶

Summing up the point, E. Gegechkori informed that in the context of the collapse of the Constituent Assembly, it is necessary to raise the issue of the new government, and the issue of summoning a regional Seim. "And, if the regional center finds it impossible to do it in a few days," Gegechkori said, "then we have to raise the question about the impossibility of the existence of the Transcaucasian Commissariat in the current situation and the termination of its powers as we do not feel the support of both the councils and the political parties."¹⁷

The Commissariat Session decided to ask Gegechkori, as a chairman of the Transcaucasian Commissariat, for making an appropriate statement at the meeting of the regional center.¹⁸

Thus, the collapse of the Constituent Assembly and the real alarm of the alternative Bolshevik government in the region raised the imperative of forming a more stable and strong government. It was striking to note that the idea of the coalition underlying the first conventional stage of the regional government formation could no longer justify itself.

The "Worker" wrote, "We are very afraid that this second attempt to establish power in our country will not go well. We are afraid that this cannot be the uniform rule of the parliamentary majority in the Caucasus, but should have a new coalition based on the national authorities".¹⁹ "If Dashnaktsutyun meant national councils (what was boldly voiced at the January 12 sitting of the regional center of the All-Transcaucasian Council of the Deputies of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants' Councils), it actually proves that the collapse of the Constituent Assembly became the main opportunity and watershed, when the Transcaucasian national forces decisively chose the path of national separation and sovereignty. At the same time, as an announcement, the following was recorded in the editorial of the "Ashkhatavor", "The Issue of Authority", "The Constituent Assembly and the All-Russian Federal Republic - this should be the case", "Ashkhatavor" assured its reader, "especially our Caucasians' political beliefs toward the near future".²⁰

¹⁶ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 25-26.

¹⁷ CSHAG orgia, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 26 rev.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ashkhatavor, January 17, 1918, n.7.

²⁰ Ibid.

Certainly, it can be stated that such formulations are the first references to the Transcaucasian Parliamentary Seim.

On January 12, the joint session of the regional centers of workers, soldiers and peasants was held in Tbilisi under the presidency of N.Jordania.

The question of dispersing the General Assembly by the Bolsheviks and organizing protests against it is indirectly transformed into the issue of organizing the Transcaucasian power. Menshevik Guverceladze announced that "his party has decided to insist on the convening of the Caucasian Seim of Deputies elected for the Constituent Assembly, which should organize the power."²¹ Gegechkori tactfully advised the audience how the Communist Party had formulated the Constituent Assembly, so the revolutionary center should have been told to think about creating a new government. Finally, the Mensheviks offered "to invite deputies of the Constituent Assembly elected from the Transcaucasus and the Front in the near future, which will form the Transcaucasian Seim". The proposal was adopted with the ARF members' amendment, according to which the phrase "Seim" was removed from the resolution.²²

The formation process of the Seim, which lasted about a month, started under the conditions of the political and fully evident leadership of the Georgian Mensheviks at this session. The Shamkhor and Yelizavetpol events, the acceleration of the plan to seize power in the region, headed by Stephan Shahumyan, and the anti-governmental behavior and determination of the last Bolshevik Caucasian military units, moving to Tbilisi, pushed mainly the Georgian Mensheviks to the formation of a more stable and strong authority, the ultimate goal of which was the separation of Transcaucasia from Russia and the creation of a national state. We can firmly state that the next phase of the idea of independence (1/ February Revolutionary Period, 2/ Post October Revolutionary Period - V.M.) was entirely owned by the Georgian Mensheviks and was consistent. Otherwise, why the ARF again played the role of a second violinist in the "Horizon" editorial, but opposed simultaneously and correctly to the partners of the united government.

"The demander for the Seim (the Mensheviks- V.M.)", the "Horizon" wrote, "should consistently require logical conditions that lead to the factual isolation of Transcaucasia from Russia; but the Mensheviks themselves were against the doctrine and unauthorized shutdowns most of all, insisting on the state until now"²³. The main organ of the ARF noted that they did not reject the idea of the Seim as a pattern of a certain form of the Transcaucasian state organization and always supported the broader decentralization and federal principle. Nevertheless, the ARF found it inexpedient to connect the idea of the Seim to a random assembly of deputies elected for a specific purpose and in such political conditions. The ARF formulated its approach, "The assembly, which should be convened by the members of the congressional assembly,

²¹ Horizon, January 17, 1918, n.10.

²² Ibid.

²³ Horizon, January 18, 1918, n. 11.

will have one goal - to create a new provisional authority in place of the Transcaucasian Commissariat"²⁴.

It is also clear that if the political perspective of their people was linked to the national sovereignty in the case of the Georgian Mensheviks that same matter was rather vague and alarming when considering the case of the ARF.

During the same days, the Mensheviks started to take actions; a circular was received from the Commissar of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Chkhenkeli, addressed to the state, provincial commissars, the mayor of Baku and the Tiflis city militia, stating that all the reforms developed by the Commissariat cannot be realized under the conditions of the present-day anarchy. Instead, it was called upon "to establish a strong organic authority by creating provincial and rural reliable, disciplined and organized militia"²⁵.

The 15 January session of the Commissariat heard the report of the Central Electoral Commission on the Elections to the Constituent Assembly and the results of elections within the Transcaucasus election district. It was decided to convene a congress of Deputies from Transcaucasus and the Caucasian Front on 22 January. This conference would turn into a competent and authoritative body for the issues of forming government in Transcaucasia²⁶.

On 16 January, circulars with the signature of Gegechkori were sent to Baku, the Central Muslim Committee²⁷ and the District Committees of Menshevik²⁸, Socialist-Revolutionary²⁹ and Bolshevik Parties³⁰.

The issue of jurisdiction of that congress was closely related to the problem of the Transcaucasia's attitude towards the All-Russian Constituent Assembly; thus, it found wide resonance in the party press.

The ARF's newspaper "Molot" was particularly concerned about the fact that certain political forces were claiming that the said congress should proclaim itself a constituent assembly of Transcaucasia. The Armenian National Party was referring to the Georgian Mensheviks. "The words, the terms have some sense, with which it is not worthy to play. The concept of the constitutional assembly is linked to the idea of absolute independence, full autonomy and unlimited power", the "Molot" wrote. "Every other comment is considered an open or secret game against the political slogan"³¹. The ground that the ARF stood on was justified, since the Transcaucasian Constituent Assembly did not have the prior consent and sanction of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ CSHAG, f. 1, inv. 2, f. 7, p. 35, f.12, pp. 37-40.

²⁷ CSHAG, f. 1, inv. 2, f. 7, p. 35, f. 223, p. 1.

²⁸ CSHAG, f. 1, inv. 2, f. 7, p. 35, f. 223, p. 4.

²⁹ CSHAG, f. 1, inv. 2, f. 7, p. 35, f. 223, p. 8.

³⁰ CSHAG, f. 1, inv. 2, f. 7, p. 35, f. 223, p. 9.

³¹ Molot, January 20, 1918, n. 12.

Moreover, if the local constituent Seims were to solve the problem of the content and scope of the seimic power on their own, it would mean that the Transcaucasus rejected the All-Russian Constituent Assembly and the principle of solidarity with All-Russian Democracy. "Molot" revealed that "For that reason the socio-political elements that were alien to the Russian revolutionary orientation admitted the fact of dissolving the Congregational Assembly in Petrograd with sincere heart; they think that now there is no hindrance for organizing their own congresses"³². The reference was about Georgian and Tatar political figures and deputies. By fully sharing the Armenian National Party's concern and understanding it, we think that this position, which, unfortunately, was in vain, has objectively driven the ARF party and the Armenian population of the Transcaucasia to self-isolation.

Yes, it was quite clear that not only the collapse of the Constituent Assembly, but also its prelude to the Bolshevik Revolution became the major opportunity and the watershed where the strategy of the Georgian and then Tatar national-political forces changed radically, that is, a sovereign and national statehood was created without Russia. The controversy exists also in the fact that the oppositional and separatist ARF's attitude towards its partners was unstable and indecisive, as the congressional debate and many articles in the party press show; the ARF accepted quickly the dictated conditions and came into the Seim. And no matter how the party attempted to involve the inner problems of Transcaucasia into the legality and legal field, the issue of the number and powers of the Transcaucasian congressional delegates (the members of the Constituent Assembly were elected on the basis of all-Russian and not Transcaucasian legislative basis), the process of separation and independence was in decisive stage.

At the same time, it should be also pointed out that the party had consistently and decisively expressed its solidarity with the All-Russian Democrats, the great and common ideals of the political supremacy of the Constituent Assembly. "The local authorities should also serve the interests of the Russian Federation, besides local interests and problems", the newspaper wrote.³³

The Dashnaktsutyun was rightly concerned with the fact that the idea of establishing a permanent parliament in the Transcaucasia, such as the "Seim" or the "Parliament", in other words, a permanent legislative body, was baselessly accelerated. The idea was not discussed by regional democratic-revolutionary organizations, parties and National Councils. "The transition from the Congress of Deputies to the Transcaucasian Seim must be implemented after substantive discussions; in any case, turning congress to a regional Seim in such a simple way is unacceptable", the "Molot" stated.³⁴

³² Ibid.

³³ Molot, January 20, 1918, n. 12.

³⁴ Ibid.

And finally, on 22 January, 1918 a conference of the Transcaucasian Deputies of the Constituent Assembly was convened in Tiflis.³⁵ There were 10 members from Mensheviks (2 absentees), 7 from Dashnaktsutyun (1 absentee), 5 from Socialist-Revolutionaries (1 absentee), 3 from Tatars (11 absentees),³⁶ totaling 25 from 40 deputies.³⁷

Opening the conference, Gegechkori issued a statement noting that "he left his post today" and informed on behalf of the Commissioner that it is necessary to create a new government, which will have the power to put an end to internal inequality, the financial crisis, and the decline in food supply. Also, he informed that the members of the Commissariat will now operate within the framework of parties. Chkheidze was elected as president of the congress, and Kantemirov³⁸, secretary, from a group of Muslim-socialists.

According to N.Jordania, the first issue on the agenda of the Congress was that of competence and power of the conference under discussion. The chief architect of the Transcaucasia's separation and independence, Jordania, clarified the fact that the Transcaucasian deputies of the All-Russian Congress are summoned in Tiflis instead of working in Tauride Palace of Petrograd; so, all the power of revolutionary forces and people's electorate should be engaged only with local problems before establishing connections with Russia. He also found that 25-30 deputies would have been unable to conduct the country due to local problems, so the number of deputies should be increased to 120, and 20,000 people should elect one deputy, instead of 60,000³⁹.

It is necessary to thoroughly and essentially consider the speeches and opinions voiced at the congress, as the new Transcaucasian authority was finally formed in those discussions and laid the groundwork for the further events.

The ARF faction was the first, in the face of Tigranyan, to deliver a speech at the congress. The latter objected to the proposal of Jordania on the creation of Seim, which came to the following provisions: 1) according to Tigranyan, the members of the Constituent Assembly, created by the All-Russian Revolutionary Democracy had not laid down their authority and "wanted to believe" that the Assembly would complement its historical mission, namely, "to re-establish Russia as a federative state based on principles of integrity and organized on the ground of largeness and solid union of the autonomous units".⁴⁰

"There are two types of responsibilities for us as members of the Constituent Assembly", Tigranyan said, "First of all, we have responsibility before the constituent assembly, as a new, integral Russian symbol, as well as before the Transcaucasia,

³⁵ At the residence of the Transcaucasian Commissariat, in the building of the former Viceroy of the South Caucasus.

³⁶ Horizon, January 27, 1918, n.18.

³⁷ The newspaper "Arev", published in Baku, mentions 22 persons; see Arev, January 28, 1918, n. 21.

³⁸ Horizon, January 22, 1918, n. 15.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Horizon, January 27, 1918, n.18., also Molot, January 26, 1918, n. 17.

where the people entrusted us the title and responsibility of members of the Constituent Assembly. And we will not betray our debt to either the Constituent Assembly or the Transcaucasia".⁴¹

2) He was convinced that if they were members of the All-Russian Congressional assembly elected from the Transcaucasus and authorized by the electorate on the basis of the All-Russian electoral law, then it would be wrong to conclude that they can act as the Constituent Assembly of the Transcaucasia; "Some people (he meant Gegechkori and Georgian Mensheviks - V.M.) diminish our jurisdiction, while others are exaggerating it".⁴²

3) Accusing the Georgian Mensheviks, Tigranyan concluded that an attempt was artificially made to strengthen the staff through improving deputies' reputation as the Transcaucasian deputies lacked the constitutional and legislative powers. And it was supposed to lower the electoral meter and thus invite new groups to the aforementioned assembly, which, in the opinion of the speaker, was beyond the competence of these deputies.⁴³ "Their participation in the assembly," Tigranyan accented, "will cause dubiety among the permanent and consultative members that will hardly add strength and authority to our assembly. The triplication of the number of Assembly's members will not concentrate the main forces; furthermore, it will deploy these forces because of lack of authority by the population".⁴⁴ In his opinion, the reduction of the electoral frontier could allow the representatives of right-wing elements and currents to enter and direct the congress in that direction.⁴⁵

The general conclusion was: The ARF not only accepted, but also insisted on the necessity of the Constituent Assembly of the Transcaucasus, but "simply, in the real order and not accidentally". "And we propose to the present assembly to take on this important task - to convene the Constituent Assembly of Transcaucasia".⁴⁶

Chemodanov made a speech on behalf of the Socialist-Revolutionary Faction. He acknowledged that the revolutionary state of Russia should be based on the Federal Principles, and in this regard welcomed the "former opponents" of the Mensheviks, who stood on the same point of view at that time, but stressed that the republican Russia should have a common center. Chemodanov believed that the members of the Constituent Assembly were elected not for local affairs, but for general ones, and having accented that the Constituent Assembly was existing, he opposed to the offer of separation and establishment of the Seim.⁴⁷

In support of the proposal by Jordania, Smirnov made a speech on behalf of the Menshevik faction, who thought it was necessary to create local authorities first "to build

⁴¹ Horizon, January 27, 1918, n.18.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

on the power of the central order". He considered the Seim as a necessary body and stated that "the congress can be obtained here by establishing a local body". Arguing to Tigranyan, he thought that "the central power of the Transcaucasus, the Seim, should be created to establish a lively connection with the whole South Caucasus".⁴⁸ The social revolutionist Chemodanov objected to Menshevik Smirnov, adding that the government of the country can be temporarily transferred to the united center of soldiers, workers and peasants' councils. "The Seim may never have reputation of a central authority. Smirnov's statement that the people of Transcaucasia attack each other may be in the days of Seim. It is necessary to restore the idea of the Constituent Assembly and the very Constituent Assembly".⁴⁹ Sultanov, who had made a speech on behalf of the Muslim faction, joined the proposal of Jordania. Menshevik Ter-Ghazaryan shared fully the opinion of his faction and thought that the Seim to be convened would function also as a Transcaucasian Constituent Assembly.⁵⁰

Chkhenkeli's speech was more radical. "As a commissar of internal affairs I insist," he said, "that there is no power in Transcaucasia ... The Commissariat is forceless enough to fight the anarchy in the country. If the authority to be set up will have no legal jurisdiction, it cannot govern our country".⁵¹ In the speeches of Chkhenkeli and Gegechkori, the role of national councils was also mentioned, which clearly revealed the isolation of the Armenians and the hostility towards the ARF.

Gegechkori, for example, found that Dashnaktsutyun was against Seim because "there is an Armenian National Council that acts as a government". Chkhenkeli emphasized that "the national councils play a role of power, but without the central government it is impossible to rule a country like the Transcaucasia. If the Seim does not put an end to the confrontation between our nations, then nothing else can be done to make that happen".⁵² Navasardyan criticized fervently the nationalist politics of the Georgian Social-Democrat Mensheviks, "by which they isolate the Armenian democrats. He remembers the cooperation of the Social Democrats with the Begs (Elizavetpol, Shamkhor, etc. - V.M.) and considers the true, genuine solidarity of democracy".⁵³

Unfortunately, this genuine solidarity was no longer possible. And the meaning of the Georgian Mensheviks, particularly Jordania's program was that it would have been possible to gain a decisive political dominance in the region through strengthening local power and establishment of the Seim; if doing so, they could dictate the Georgian national policy. Chkhenkeli was threatening the congress and especially ARF that a supernatural force should be used to save the railroad, solve food, economic and financial crisis, for which there was a need for a "solid power." Jordania was clearly

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

using political blackmail, never hiding his anti-Armenian image. "If the Dashnaktsutyun refuses the Seim, the situation of Armenians may deteriorate".⁵⁴ The sad fact is that the ARF, as it was at this point, did not manage to resist the Georgian tactics until May 1918, the stage of the independences; the struggle was limited by rhetoric.

At the end of the conference, Jordania's dictating and programmed conclusion followed. "Only after this the Seim can be opened with the burden of forming the government, and before that the Transcaucasian Commissariat will continue its existence".⁵⁵

After lunch Jordania stood for modified proposals; 1) to convene a Seim before the All-Russian Congress is convened, 2) to triple the number of members and 3) to convene the Transcaucasian Seim on February 10.⁵⁶

Then, the resolutions of the factions were published. The resolution of the Socialist-Revolutionaries was suggested by Chemodanov, who formulated it as follows: "Recognizing that the founder of the fate of the Russian Federal Democratic Republic is the Constituent Assembly and considering it only temporarily deferred, the members of the Transcaucasian Constituent Assembly and the Assembly of the Caucasian Army recognize that the main task of the current situation is the preservation of achievements of the All-Russian Congress and Revolution (February - V.M.), so the congress decides that 1) the members of the local Constituent Assembly of the Transcaucasian authorities should go to Petrograd for "Public Service", that is, to take part in the central Constituent Assembly, 2) the current government is responsible for the provincial center of council of workers and soldiers until the Transcaucasian Seim is convened. At the same time, the congress instructed the authorities created by itself to convene the Seim in the near future on the basis of the four-dimensional principle".⁵⁷

After reading the resolution, Gobechia, a member of the District Committee of the Socialist- Revolutionaries, said that his party had decided to vote against the Seim, but he personally, taking into account tactical principles, opposed his party's decision and abstained. Moreover, he pronounced a long and loud applause to the Mensheviks and Jordania, who, in his opinion, were carrying out the idea of Socialist-Revolutionaries.⁵⁸ It is possible to draw parallels with the tactics of the Georgian Bolsheviks on the occupation of Tiflis, which opposed the Baku Council and Stephan Shahumyan; and now, Georgian Gobechia, betraying the native Socialist-Revolutionary party, consolidated with the Georgian Mensheviks, giving preference to the national factor.

The Dashnaktsutyun faction proposed the following formula: "Accepting Russia as a federal democratic republic and finding the transformation of Transcaucasia on the federal basis, the Assembly of the Transcaucasian Deputies of the Constituent

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., January 22, 1918, n. 15.

⁵⁶ Ibid., January 27, 1918, n. 18.

⁵⁷ Molot, January 25, 1918, N. 16.

⁵⁸ Horizon, January 27, 1918, n.18.

Assembly temporarily takes the functions of the Transcaucasian Seim as a legislative authority on local issues".⁵⁹

The Menshevik faction's resolution stated: "The assembly of the members of the Constituent Assembly, having examined the situation of the country, considers it necessary to temporarily convene a Transcaucasian Seim with legislative functions on all local issues until the convention of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce the electoral size three times to create a Seim, ordering the parties to convene the Seim on February 10".⁶⁰

Before the vote for resolution, Jordania added that only the number of members of the political parties whose deputies have been selected will be tripled.⁶¹

During the vote, the Resolution of the Socialist-Revolutionaries received 4 votes, Dashnaktsutyun - 7, and Mensheviks - 12, versus 10. The Muslim faction, as expected, voted for the Menshevik faction.⁶² Georgian Mensheviks won.

To convene the Seim a bureau was elected, which included A. Babalyan (Dashnaktsutyun), A. Lomtadze (Menshevik), S. Chikalin (Socialist-Revolutionary Party) and M. Jafarov (Muslim).⁶³

Following the closure of the session, the statement of the Bolshevik Regional Committee was also read, which stated that the convention of the Seim is a factual separation of Transcaucasia from Russia and a continuation of the policy of the Transcaucasian Commissariat against the power of the councils; hence, the Bolsheviks refused to participate.⁶⁴

Apart from its immediate aim and significance, this conference revealed another important detail. From Jordania's questions it becomes clear that many Mensheviks and even Gegechkori were unaware of individual turns, and did not imagine what to do. In his latest speech, Jordania clarified the tactics of not only the Mensheviks, but also of other Transcaucasian political forces. We do not need to underestimate the fact that Jordania supplemented skillfully the Pharisee formula once again as a factor of extreme passion "to establish relations with Russia," which was merely a word for him and a faith for the majority of the Dashnaktsutyun and Socialist- Revolutionaries.

However, in the editorial "The Transcaucasian Seim", published on January 24, the ARF, which did not accept the use of the term "Seim" two days ago, was now looking for excuses. Recognizing that the Commissariat was not only an executive but also a legislative body, the party found that it linked its legislative work with the All-Russian Congress, which, in its turn, had the laws and decrees of the Commissariat and the right to accept and deny it. In the case of the Seim, the Dashnaktsutyun hoped

⁵⁹ Molot, January 25, 1918, N. 16.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Horizon, January 27, 1918, n.18.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Arev, February 6, 1918, n. 28.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

again that if Russia had a destabilizing Constituent Assembly, its jurisdiction should extend to the Transcaucasus, and the principles of the democratic federal Russia should be mandatory for the Transcaucasian Seim.⁶⁵ The conclusion of the party, as we think, was cut off not only from the whole Russian but also the Transcaucasian reality.

"Transcaucasia must be admitted," Horizon wrote, "as a part of the divided Russia, which sincerely does its best to restore the idea of Russian statehood. And from this point of view, one has to make every effort to ensure that the convention of the Seim was not getting the color of separation. The Seim would widely use the popular organs of life - the revolutionary-democratic councils on the one hand, and the National Councils on the other".⁶⁶

The attack by Gegechkori against the Armenian National Council at the congress was not remained unanswered. The January 25 edition of the "Horizon" was clarifying the problem.⁶⁷ These thoughts were reflected simultaneously with the fierce confrontation between the Dashnaktsutyun and the Georgian Mensheviks, which was deepening over the creation of the Seim. The characteristic matter was that the leader of the Transcaucasian supreme government, in the presence of a large crowd, found it appropriate to attack an institution with which he and his colleagues were in daily business relations and had repeatedly used the authoritative voice, opinion and means of the Armenian National Council in various explosive situations. During the course of its work, the Commissariat had recognized the National Councils as official bodies and implemented many decisions and continued to do so later. Secondly, the National Councils were already real bodies in Transcaucasia; moreover, they were not created by the Commissariat, but by the problems of the February Revolution and the provisional government.

It should also be noted that the Georgian National Council was formed at the end of November 1917 as a result of the Bolshevik coup and immediately embarked on the national separation strategy and splitting from Russia as well. Some of the members of the Transcaucasian Commissariat, like Jordania and many other Georgian politicians were at the same time members and heads of the Georgian National Council.

"One of them," the "Horizon" emphasized, "probably S. Vratsyan or National Councils, are harmful, first of all you, Gegechkori, Chkhenkeli, Jordania and friends, to be dissatisfied with the Georgian National Council or to narrow the borders of its activities - is it not clear that the Georgian National Council is in fact a Georgian national government today - Or if you do not leave and you do not spare your efforts so that your National Council will live and prosper, then you should have sincerity and civic courage to go to the National Councils of others with a little more respect ... The Armenian National Council can always be freely attacked. And after all this, how foolish Jordania's

⁶⁵ Horizon, January 24, 1918, n.16.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Horizon, January 25, 1918, n.18.

words sound on a democratic frontline and the solidarity between Armenian and Georgian democracies⁶⁸".

Its declinatory position on national councils was also expressed by the Transcaucasian branch of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party on January 31 at the Tbilisi City Committee. They found that in the current political situation, the national councils had become instruments of nationalistic and bourgeois factions that made "Russian class revolution" national and nationalist "that the political role of National Councils should be transferred to the Transcaucasian Regional Center. Based on the adopted resolution, it was decided to recall all Socialist-Revolutionary members from all national councils.⁶⁹

The Armenian parties and political streams expressed their attitude towards the congressional developments, the Seim's content, and deepening of inter-party conflicts and other issues.

Dashnaktsutiun was particularly active, whose position was mainly expressed during the congress through the speech of Sirakan Tigranyan. At the same time, the opinions and concerns, expressed in the party press, were significantly complemented by a relatively complete strategy of the National Party.

In some ways following the attitude of Socialist-Revolutionary party, the ARF thought that the power in the Caucasus had been formed by those revolutionary organizations whose desire was to summon a Constituent Assembly. They saw that the sole problem of the "local branches" of the All-Russian Congressional Council was the establishment of a local, central, and authoritative power, which would "save the region from the final destruction".⁷⁰ Dashnaktsutyun considered it necessary to make public disagreements between the three socialist factions of the congress. Everyone who saw the necessity of the Seim in general, namely the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Dashnaks, who accepted the principles of federalism and decentralization, as well as the social-democratic Mensheviks proceeded from the conditions of political conjuncture in Russia and Transcaucasia.

So, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the members of the ARF were in agreement with the main issue, namely, to authorize the said congress to constitute the fundamental laws of the Seim as soon as possible. However, Dashnaktsutyun considered it possible to announce this congress as "Seim", until the establishment of the "Real Seim".

The Social-Democratic Mensheviks offered another option; they insisted that there was no need to invite a new Seim, but "simply to arrange the number of deputies, already elected to the All-Russian Congress, in such a way that it would be possible to turn it into a Transcaucasian Seim".⁷¹ All parties agreed also that the Transcaucasian

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Molot, January 23, 1918, n.14.

⁷¹ Molot, January 25, 1918, n.16.

Seim, as well as all provisional authorities of the state, would put down their powers as soon as the Central Constituent Assembly was convened. Socialist-Revolutionaries, for example, as mentioned above, did not consistently accept its dissolution, but demanded a postponement, proceeding from the statement by Chernov. It should be noted that the disagreements among the parties were "mitigated" after the Mensheviks stated that the Transcaucasian Seim was not the Transcaucasian Constituent Assembly and could play a legislative role only on current and local issues.

The article "Our Position and Role" by V. Khoreni can be considered as an attempt to solve the problem. He was convinced that every government was strong and stable to the extent that it corresponds to the real relationship between the socio-political forces of the society and the Transcaucasian power, which was deprived of such preconditions as of that day. V. Khoreni explained this by the considerable presence of the dominant anti-revolutionary element among the "third people", Turks, but at the same time, even after the confrontation in the congress under discussion, he made an attempt to draw new lines of solidarity between the Georgian and Armenian revolutionary democracies. He found that "from the very beginning they were confronted by the anti-revolutionary Turkish landlords".⁷² Nevertheless, the author struck his ultimate blow to the Georgian Mensheviks. "However, the most dangerous and inaccurate perpetrators of the revolution in Russia and Transcaucasia are revolutionary and democratic elements that are harming their common cause by their wrong-doing and inconsistent policies. We must eventually admit", Khoreni wrote, that "it is clear and certain that the Bolsheviks in Russia have played so negative role as Menshevism among us - in Transcaucasia (emphasis mine - V.M.). Furthermore, usually, Menshevism triggered often, consciously or unconsciously, the anti-revolutionary change whatever the motive was".⁷³

After the Bolshevik coup V.Khoreni once more states with sorrow that «in spite of its 'international' label the Menshevik part of the "Russian (!?) workers (!?) social-democracy which predominantly held Georgian national orientation and policy due to its character, membership and governance, adopted the national path"⁷⁴. Qualifying the Georgian Mensheviks as the «third element», V.Khoreni blame them in regard to the main issue – that in Transcaucasia was not established strong revolutionary power from the outset, that the revolutionary wave did not spread over the Eastern Transcaucasia, that is "after the Congress of Transcaucasian peasants (June 1917 – V.M.) until today the Georgian Menshevism or the Menshevik Georgians, directly or indirectly – aided, gave strength and authority to the Turkish-Tatar antirevolutionary feudals. facts - 1. their bloc in Congress of Transcaucasian peasants, 2. Their desire to turn Transcaucasia into one electoral district, 3. their attitude in the municipal дума of Tiflis, 4. their position

⁷² Ashkhataavor, January 24, 1918, n.10.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

regarding the Zemstvo and the change of the borders, 5. their attitude towards the defence of the front and mobilization, etc, etc. "⁷⁵

To the list of V.Khoreni we can add some essential facts, like, for example, the pro-Turkish context of the armistice of Erzinka, the organization of anti-Russian riots in the Transcaucasian railway, cooperation connected with the defence of Baku, apparent anti-Armenian position in regard to the establishment of the general-commissary of the Western Armenia after the February revolution, etc. Moreover, as V.Khoreni wrote: "anyhow, regarding the ARF as insufficiently socialist and revolutionary, even claiming them as "slaughterers" and "anti-revolutionary", they were responsible for the political isolation of Armenian democracy".⁷⁶

The theoretician of the Dashnaktsutyun also made the most important confession, admitting that "we were given the position and role of the" unfortunate third party". Accepting, of course, the objective reality and the established Georgian-Tatar alliance, he raised nevertheless the main issue before the author and the party - what should the ARF do, what tactics should it adopt to avoid the "thoughtful and patient position?"⁷⁷ Khoreni was convinced that the policy of Dashnaktsutyun was "the smallest of the worst" in the current situation, and "we endured," he said, "tolerated the Menshevik - Bek Dictatorship, and in fact, made tactical large and long-term concessions. And if we did not do what we were supposed to do, to fly alone, we would not be able to run with one foot. We wanted to keep up with solidarity and companionship. Unfortunately, the Caucasian democracy was a "square wheel"; it had three incompatible legs and could not walk in harmony, harmoniously, uncompromisingly and unwieldy"⁷⁸. Then follows the author's main confession, "We endured the dominance of Georgian" national-democracy "in all lines of the Transcaucasian policy, and we accepted the Transcaucasian" coalitionary "power created by it, and, unwilling to do so, we would have to incite the anti-revolution among us. This should be acknowledged. That was our position and role"⁷⁹. Nevertheless, Khoreni as well as most of the Armenian historians and practitioners, found that "it is not our fault." It was the easiest and irresponsible position that could be chosen for a crucial historical era. The strange thing was that the article was published on the very next day of the above-mentioned session, when Dashnaktsutyun failed for some reason to cooperate with "unwillingness" in the united power. The strange thing is that the article was published on the next day after the above-mentioned session of the Seim, when Dashnaktsutyun once again failed to cooperate in a unified government.

Let's just go ahead and say that the said party would then make concessions in many and fateful issues ... and it was so until May, 1918. Unfortunately, this remarkable

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

publication does not try to clarify again the reasons for our position and role, the situation and the isolation, the problem of weakness or lack of its own policy, the cause of the problem of not becoming a political factor and a subject.

Instead of looking at his own kitchen, looking at the mirror, Khoreni concludes his thoughts with the anticipated and defeatist conclusion, "We hope that at this moment of the crisis of the revolution, when the freedom and physical existence of our common people are endangered, the Georgian "Social-Democracy" will at least stand on a genuine internationalist and national standpoint, will abandon its traditional Armenophobia and Turkish oriented politics and contribute the creation of a strong power for the salvation of the Caucasian democracy and the revolution together with us. There is no other salvation. And with that consciousness, our social-political position and role, along with the Caucasian peoples, have always been and will always be the strengthening of the achievements of the revolution in the Federative and Democratic Republic of Russia"⁸⁰.

The problem is that this "strong power" which has been repeatedly circulated by the three main political forces of Transcaucasia was differently interpreted and accepted. The Georgian-Tatar bloc needed a "strong power" primarily for stabilizing its position and the anti-Armenian line as well, which eventually aimed at leaving Russia and getting closer to Turkey. Well, let's say that this was a clear, understandable policy which, in our opinion, was visible and tangible for the ARF. If we admit that this coherent policy was legitimized and put in the joint court of the United Government, in other words, if the Georgians and Tatars were not hiding their goals, then questions are arising: where was the Armenian program? Was its purpose to wait and serve the neighbors? Was it to serve the state interests, cut off from the reality in 1918? Was it aimed at unnecessary speculation on the phrase "revolution", "socialism" and "Caucasian democracy". After all, these same words were used by Georgian Mensheviks and Tatars to lead their narrow national affairs. Yes, their interest was, to put it mildly, to isolate the Armenians and the ARF starting from the February Revolution in 1917 and especially the Bolshevik one, and to annihilate them if possible. "A strong government" for Dashnaktsutyun meant a united Armenian-Turkish-Georgian government, a dreamy idea, mainly found in textbooks, which had to defend the interests of Armenians for some reason, those interests being, in particular, in protection of the frontline from the Turkish invasion.

One more fact; in the post-October period, Dashnaktsutyun announced periodically that the party did not raise an issue of independent statehood and saw the solution of the national issue within the federal Democratic All-Russian United States. In this sense, the ARF organ "Azatamart" acted in a strange way. It published an article titled as "The Governmental Federal Staff in Armenia". The author, Amatouni, was thoroughly discussing the problem of autonomy of national minorities in future Armenia as a proven fact and concludes that "Armenia should have a federal staff".⁸¹ Taking into account the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Azatamart, January 11, 1918, n. 6.

fact that the article was published in January 11, i.e. after the Constituent Assembly was dissolved by the Bolsheviks, as well as the circumstance that the publication was the editorial of a reputable party newspaper, it can only be stated that this was not a casual journalistic occurrence, but a serious claim about Armenia's independence.

A question arises as to what kind of borders and what Armenia were being discussed. What is more disturbing is the appropriateness of discussing the question of Armenian state by the ARF when the Turkish troops had invaded Western Armenia in 1917-1918 and the new disasters of wars were evident in the most critical and fateful stage for Armenian people.

The ARF Yerevan-based newspaper "Ashkhatanq" which was the organ of A.Manukyan and Western Armenian politicians as well, expressed the conviction on the occasion of convening the local congressional assembly that "the Caucasus is an inseparable part of Russia and should not be the idea of separation at all. All revolutionary parties, those who realize the true interest of their nation and their homeland, could not have any motto other than that. At the same time, it is necessary to believe in the revival of mental and spiritual renaissance of Russian people. "It was somehow a response to some members of its own party in Tiflis, which proves that there were contradictory opinions about this historical issue inside the party. The Socialist-Revolutionary Levon Atabekian's assessment can be considered as characteristic given at the March 4 session of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party's council. "It is not me," he said, "who is going to stop on the Dashnaktsutyun with delicacy. **My attitude towards the Turkish-Armenian activity of that organization, its "socialism" towards the party's border changes, the very national doctrinarianism and social opportunism that are very close to each other are known to you long ago. However, that party had a feature that no one can deny. He closely followed the hearts of the Armenian people, never missed the blood of the nation and always walked the path that was desirable to the popular majority. This majority, unconscious and vulgar, was very often crowded, but it was the majority** (emphasis mine-V.M.)."⁸²

The Armenian People's Party welcomed the idea of setting up a Transcaucasian parliament, even temporarily, before convening the All-Russian Founder Assembly, "because it is a healthy, clever and state-based principle."⁸³ The Armenian People's Party, in the face of Arakelyan, hopes, like Dashnaktsutyun, that Transcaucasia, as part of Russia, had problem of final political reorganization and the Transcaucasian Seim must have a temporary nature, since its solution belongs to the All-Russian Congress. "The aspiration now is to create an autonomous union, independent from Russia," Arakelyan wrote, "or to create three separate autonomous governments, and we consider it a catastrophic consequence for all ethnicities of the Transcaucasus and

⁸² Ashkhatanqi droshak, March 18, 1918, n. 8.

⁸³ Mshak, January 24, 1918, n.16.

especially for Armenians".⁸⁴ The Armenian cadet party was convinced that "the salvation of the Armenian people is in the state principle. If we do not have a strong state in Transcaucasia, all-Russian rule or power, organized by the state principle, but not local or national, our existence will be greatly threatened".⁸⁵ There is also a contradiction in this approach. Would the government be formed on the "state" principle in Transcaucasia, having been based not on theoretical, but on a practical principle, and organized from national, even nationalist parties and the people who do not recognize each other? And what were the common national interests that should be brought together at the very moment by the Shamkhor syndrome-fed national forces, the main purpose of which was the national separation. In this case, such approaches of the Dashnaktsutyun and the Armenian People's Party can be explained by the fact that the two political forces, at least for the time being, were holding pro-Russian orientation, hoping that the Bolshevik government would be collapsed soon, the country's owner would become the lawful and the only authorized body - the Constituent Assembly, which would regulate interethnic relations, would confirm the pledges of the Provisional Government of the Russian Federation on national and Armenian issues. It was still the main thing; would the party that dissolved the congressional assembly cede the power not in November 1917 but at the end of January 1918?

In our deepest conviction, the Georgian Menshevism's farsightedness and political flexibility were that Mensheviks, besides being the opponents of the Bolsheviks, were also Georgian nationalists, who were greatly tempted by the hope of restoring national sovereignty. They were well aware of the Bolsheviks and were consistent in their anti-Russian views and practice. And since the Armenian national political field was mostly immersed in the burden of the Armenian Question, Self-Defense and Refugee Issues, it was an alternative to follow the Georgian political line. An alternative challenge can be considered Stephan Shahumyan's program and the ARF-Shahumian rapprochement, which could seriously interfere with the Georgian-Tatar long-distance programs.

The Armenian Social-Democratic Party's organ, "Paykar", considered the "Horizon" and the Dashnaks in public and political affairs as "profane" and argued that "if they see separatism in the protection of the idea of the Seim, then they are, in fact and first of all, separatists, declaring themselves as warm supporters of Seim as a form of political decentralization".⁸⁶ The Armenian Mensheviks found that "the aspiration of the Dashnaktsutyun and its leaders to establish a state has always existed" and is perceived as a Menshevik solidarity in the sense of refuting the National Councils and substantiating their "state of the local national broad autonomy".⁸⁷ The Armenian Mensheviks did not deny that all their efforts should be directed to the re-opening of the Central Constituent Assembly, but since it is not yet consolidated and it has "not

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Paykar, January 23, 1918, n.16.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

survived," "the state of emergency in our country forces us to take extraordinary steps and measures".⁸⁸ We are convinced once again that the Armenian Mensheviks were also seeing the danger of dismantling the Commissariat by Shahumyan, in the context of defending "the Leninist encroachments", as well as the appointment of Shahumyan as an extraordinary commissar in the Caucasus, in short, the real threat of Sovietization of Transcaucasia. In this regard, we find that by saying "strong power" and establishing it, the desire of the Mensheviks was, first of all, to prevent the Bolshevik penetration; the Seim was needed to withstand the Bolshevism. It is even possible to conclude that the social, economic, financial and food crises referred to by the Georgian "Mensheviks" in the inner kitchen repeatedly were understood as a political crisis and the fact of seizure of power by Shahumyan led to the idea of creating a "united and strong power" - the Seim.

This is evidenced by the January 28 plenary sessions of the Tiflis Council of the Deputies of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants, where two respective resolutions were discussed based on the speeches by the Bolsheviks (Romanov, Tropaidze, Gakhokia) and Menshevik (Khartishvili, Petrosyan, Gabunia, Jugheli). The Bolshevik resolution, which received 17 votes, said: "Taking into account the fact that summoning the Transcaucasian Seim, consisting of anti-revolutionary elements, is the repetition of the coalition government, the Bolsheviks' faction considers it urgent to summon an extraordinary congress of the Deputies of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants to organize the central Soviet power in the Caucasus."⁸⁹ Let's just add that the Bolsheviks' famous ultimatum to the Transcaucasian Commissariat was also published in the same issue of the newspaper. With 7 votes in favor, the session adopted the following formula by its majority: "1. the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the Government of the People's Commissars cut the last tie connecting the Transcaucasus with the Russian republic. 2. It further aggravated the anarchy and the civil war that were widespread in the country. 3. The consolidation of revolutionary forces will promote the revival of Russia's entire revolutionary democracy; the Tiflis council of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants considers it necessary to temporarily summon a Constituent Assembly of the All-Russian Congress to create Transcaucasian Seim with constitutional functions. The revolutionary organizations had to support all the steps of the Seim aimed at the final consolidation and development of all the achievements of revolutionary democracy against the centrifugal, chauvinistic and irrational aspirations of nationalist and anti-revolutionary circles".⁹⁰ The publication of the "Paykar" revealed that in the first days of February an extraordinary congress of the Social Democrats of Russia and Transcaucasian organizations took place in Tbilisi, which approved and adopted the resolution on the plenary session of the Seim. It was also decided that national councils should not play any role in government.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Molot, January 31, 1918, n.21.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Paykar, February 8, 1918, n.28.

The 1918 **congress of social-democratic Menshevik organizations, held in Tbilisi on February 1-4**, was dedicated to various issues of the military-political acute crisis in Transcaucasia, occurred in January-February.⁹² It is noteworthy that the discussions on the defense of the front and the Bolshevik military units of the Caucasian army, moving towards Tbilisi, were skillfully held in the context of the necessity of establishing the Seim.

For example, at the February 2 session, presided over by Azatyan, Gegechkori informed that as the Commissioner's appeal to Petrograd and the North Caucasus governments to reconcile the issue remained unanswered, we had to solve this issue by ourselves, but such a serious problem cannot get some progress without an authoritative intervention of the Transcaucasian Seim; we are preparing a material for the Seim and, in this sense, I will send an answer to Enver Pasha tomorrow (emphasis mine – V.M.).⁹³

We want to consider a thought expressed by Gegechkori at the February 4 session, which is profound, perspective, and is a solid contradiction in our opinion.

"If Transcaucasian Commissariat did not succeed, it was because of its various reactionary elements. The current Seim should have a homogeneous, democratically elected body."⁹⁴ The "reactionary elements" for Gegechkori meant, of course, first of all, Tatar-bek commissars and their supporters, who, as we have seen, defended again the "strong power" of the Seim, besides the Georgian Mensheviks. How and why (and more importantly) these "reactionary elements" should not have appeared in the staff of the new government? Moreover, let's note that just a few days later, when the Seim was open, it turned out that it was again involved in non-Democrat and the same "reactionary elements". In addition, at this session, the Menshevik President of the Commissariat also expressed concern that "at present there are many authorities that do not operate within their rights, such as national councils, which should be called to the order (emphasis mine – V.M.)."⁹⁵

In fact, Ye.Gegechkori continue to hide his hatred and fear towards Armenian National council; to that date he regards this influential and mighty Armenian organization, besides St.Shahumyan, the political opponent of Georgian nation. Let us remind once more that the triumvirate of N.Zhordania, Ye.Gegechkori and N.Ramishvili and many leading Georgian Mensheviks were members of the Georgian National Council.

The Armenian party's official view about the Seim was announced by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun Party on February 4 at its general assembly. Atabekyan reported on the Transcaucasian congress of the Congressional Assembly, keeping informed about the position of the parties. An important detail of his

⁹² Horizon, February 7, 1918, n.28.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Horizon, February 8, 1918, n.29.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

report becomes known - "the leftist Dashnaks accept the power of the people's commissars, totally denying the existence of the Seim."⁹⁶ Three attitudes occurred during the exchange of thoughts; (a) the minority believed that it was necessary to participate and to carry out legislative work; (b) the majority believed that it was necessary to participate with an ambitious purpose; and (c) the third one was totally against the participation of the regime in general.⁹⁷ The final decision was made by the influential and powerful reputation of the Baku branch. The 12-point resolution on joining the Seim was adopted by the Armenian branch of the Socialist-Revolutionary Organization of Baku.⁹⁸

The view of the **Social-Democrat Armenian Workers' Association** (SPS) is briefly presented by D. Ananun, which indirectly justifies our position.

"The isolation of the Armenians becomes definite," he wrote, "in the formation of Seim. It was a decision that put the Russians in the state of the incomer and, in spite of the Georgian Mensheviks' speeches that they were with the Russian democracy, proved that their weight depended on the goodness of nobility".⁹⁹ These days, by the way, the "Banvor" weekly of the Specifics began to be published again (which was ceased in July 1917), which was fully supporting the idea of All-Russian Congress against the Seim. At the same time, the Armenian Socialist-Revolutionaries criticized Anonymous's "military-patriotic feast" when the Armenian intellectual was trying to justify that "the Armenian people are surrounded by enemies. We are orphans without Russians", published in his article of "100 years later".¹⁰⁰

It is necessary to emphasize the fact that the organization of the Seim lasted until the eve of its opening. In addition, an unprecedented political alliance was testifying the tense political situation. At the beginning of January, a joint conference of the Socialist-Revolutionary Armenian organization and the Armenian Social-Democrat Working Group (Specifics) was held in Baku. The adopted resolution was defining the following matter a major problem: "The protection of the Armenian people's physical existence, who was and still is the bearer of a culture, capable of high development".¹⁰¹ The problems of the front defense with other peoples of the region, the factor of the national military units in that process, the necessity of decisions of the National Council, the creation of a local militia for ensuring the life and property of the Armenian population, residing in Western Armenia, were raised¹⁰². The national political handwriting of the Specifics is an evident fact in the decisions that were made, which was supported even by the anti-national Armenian Socialist-Revolutionary Organization.

⁹⁶ Ashkhatanqi droshak, February 11, 1918, n.4.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ashkhatanqi droshak, February 18, 1918, n.5.

⁹⁹ Ananun 1916: 610.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ashkhatanqi droshak, February 14, 1918, n.2.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Following each other, the sessions of the Council of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party's Baku Organization (presided by Atabekyan; Sahakyan's report on the Congress of Transcaucasian Labor Councils was heard) and the Socialist-Revolutionaries and their supporters (reporter Atabekyan) were held on January 8¹⁰³ and January 21, accordingly.¹⁰⁴ On February 18, the party reported to its supporters that Socialist-Revolutionaries entered into the Seim.¹⁰⁵

On February 9, 1918, the Transcaucasian Commissariat heard the questions about its political report submitted to the Seim.¹⁰⁶

First, the Bureau of the Commissariat reported on the draft on granting the White Hall (the palace of viceroy - V. M.) to the Seim for its sessions on the occasion of summoning the Seim. Before organizing the Seim, its affairs would be administered by the Commissariat's Office¹⁰⁷.

Then, Rtskhiladze, Ghazaryan, Chkhenkeli, Gegechkori and Khas-Mamedov made speeches on the report. Let's discuss the formulations of their thoughts.

Rtskhiladze and Ghazaryan advised to emphasize the barriers that blocked the work of the Commissariat and only then to declare that the Commissariat was handing the entire power to Seim. Chkhenkeli found that the government had to express its opinion on the issue of the agenda in the Seim. And he himself, Chkhenkeli, for some reasons, presents the list of issues in the Caucasus. Those were the formation of power and its nature, the war and peace, the domestic issues - financial, food, national separation, etc. According to Chkhenkeli, after these questions only "the Seim should consider the Declaration of the Commissariat and when it is formed majority, then that majority will separate itself from a responsible government"¹⁰⁸. He insisted that the entire power of the region should belong to the Seim and the uncertainty of splitting the power and the spheres of operation that complicated the Commissariat functioning¹⁰⁹. This was not an endless motive and was directed against revolutionary organizations, especially against the Socialist-Revolutionary, Bolshevik and National Councils.

This idea was also well developed by Gegechkori, who emphasized the factor of "multiple power". He believed that the competition between National Councils and revolutionary organizations was aimed at the struggle for power in the Transcaucasus, which, in our deepest conviction, does not correspond to the reality. At least with the example of the Armenian and Muslim National Councils we have repeatedly substantiated it. He also took care morbidly of the power of the Seim government, finding that strengthening the Seim, there was a need to give levers to the revolutionary organizations, namely to the regional center, which was also a leap. "The organs of the

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ashkhatanqi droshak, January 28, 1918, n.6.

¹⁰⁵ Ashkhatanqi droshak, January 18, 1918, n. 5.

¹⁰⁶ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 86.

¹⁰⁷ Horizon, February 14, 1918, n.33.

¹⁰⁸ CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 86.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

government would be united," Gegechkori said, "the revolutionary organizations and National Councils will have their own special problems"¹¹⁰. Khas-Mamedov stated that "the Constituent Assembly and the Seim are the culmination of the revolution." Rzkhiladze further stated that "if revolutionary organizations interfered with the orders of the authorities, the latter should either bow down before them or declare them anti-revolutionary. It's impossible to reconcile these sides; either the revolution or the government will govern"¹¹¹. For some reason, another Menshevik suddenly remembered the February Revolution of 1917 and its values in February 1918.

Finally it was decided that the authority should be united, drawing the attention of the Seim¹¹². Regardless of the content of the speeches and the absence of both the Armenian and Tatar commissars of the Commissariat, it was quite clear that the problems were being solved by the Georgian Mensheviks and it was they who formed new government of the Caucasus.

Summing up thoughts, some reference should be made about the staff of the Transcaucasian Seim. The fate was sealed. The opening of the Seim was inevitable and Dashnaktsutjun expressed its satisfaction with establishing the Seim. "Horizon" wrote: "The overwhelming majority of members belong to the Socialist parties. The bourgeois element is insignificant, and the fragmentary-partial part is represented a little bit more"¹¹³. Actually, nothing was changed in the political tactics of the Armenian National Party. The same intolerance was manifested in the "bourgeois element", i.e. the Armenian People's Party and the same painful timeserving when considering the Georgian-Tatar alliance. A powerful wave of criticism against the hegemony of Georgian Mensheviks and "reactionary forces" is now yielding its place when weighing up the fact that the "bek-landowners' part is represented a little bit more" in the defeatist manner. It's difficult to say how the ARF analyzed its condition, but it was clear that the fact of obedience to almost the same coalition could, in our opinion, be interpreted as the beginning of a defeat or a great defeat. Of course, one can argue and say that in reality this coalition led to independence. In our opinion, this approach cannot be considered as scientific for the simple reason that in 1918, under the Turkish invasion that began in February, it was impossible to guess the May battles and even think about restoring the statehood.

For some reason Dashnaktsutyun was optimistically convinced that "the problem of homogeneous or coalitionary government should be considered as solved bearing in mind the fact of the staff gotten together at the Seim to be convened. A legislative body, whose three quarters of the members is socialists, must naturally have a socialist ministry"¹¹⁴. Having fully accepted the former danger, the party itself responded to the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² CSHAG, f. 1818, inv. 2, f. 12, p. 86.

¹¹³ Horizon, February 8, 1918, n. 29.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

contemporary question, "The whole problem is whether socialist parties, who are now wandering and often neutralizing each other, will be able to create a harmonious and solid socialist union, which could govern the country's political life"¹¹⁵.

The editorial of the "Horizon" ends with conclusions that, in our deepest conviction, most of the ARF figures could not believe. **"It seems to us,"** the newspaper wrote, **"that this possibility has long been created. The real possibility is to create psychological possibilities which will not be difficult, if the Armenian, Russian, Georgian and Turkish socialists really try to come close to each other, to understand and to open the ground on which one can stand together with others** (emphasis mine - V.M.). The situation is facilitated by the fact that the Turkish Democracy will also be represented in the Seim, which, of course, is a more real force and compatible with the lives of Muslim workers than the people who had monopolized the Turkish people's political representation so far. The issue of the composition of the Transcaucasian government is, therefore, entirely dependent on the layout of the party factions in the Seim. Therefore, before defining the government, it is necessary to know the body that will create it"¹¹⁶.

By administrative and official results of the congressional elections, according to the "Horizon", 11 deputies were elected from the N1 list in the Transcaucasia, from the list N3-1, N 4 (ARF) - 9, N 5 - 1, N10-10, N 11 - 1, N 12 - 2 and N 14 - 1; 36 deputies in total. The election meter was counted with 62,044 votes, for which 32 were elected to the Seim from N 1, 1 from N 2, 5 from N 3, 27 from N4, 4 from N5, 1 from N6, 1 from N8, 30 from N10, 4 from N 11, 7 from N12 and 3 from N14, totaling 115. The ARF received 558,400 votes. The Seim election meter was calculated 20,681¹¹⁷.

It is noteworthy that the newspapers "Arev" and "Ashkhatavor" of the ARF presented the votes of Dashnaktsutyun in small numbers - 552,000¹¹⁸. According to the votes received by the parties, the picture was as follows:

Mensheviks - 660,000 votes - 33 deputies

ARF - 552,000 - 27

Musavat - 574,000 - 28

Bolsheviks - 93,000 + voices of the front - 7

Socialist Revolutionaries - 112,000 + Frontstones - 20

The Turkish Socialist Bloc - 156,000 - 7

"Turks in Russia" - 66,000 - 3

Cadets and PPA - 40,000 - 2

Socialists - federalists - 22,000 - 1

Georgian National Democrats - 25,000 - 1¹¹⁹:

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Arev, February 6, 1918, n.28.

Thus, after the January 1918, it took about a month to form a new regional coalition government in the Transcaucasus - the Seim.

At the plenary session of the Social-Democratic Menshevist organizations held in Tbilisi, the central issue in the party press was solved, it was decided to create a seim and appoint it on the day it was opened.

The said issue was solved at the joint session of the Transcaucasian Commissariat and Territorial Center of the Workers and Soldiers' Deputies on January 22, held in Tbilisi, and at the congress of the Transcaucasian deputies of the Constituent Assembly on 28 January as well as at the plenary meeting of the Tiflis Council of the Workers and Soldiers' Deputies and at the congress of Social-Democratic Menchevik organizations, held at the beginning of February in Tiflis, in party press; it was decided to establish a Seim and the day of its opening was fixed.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), despite its objectionable and sharp criticism, retreated because of the organized tactics of the Social-Democratic Mensheviks' Georgian wing, and agreed to join the Seim.

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THE COURSE OF THE RESTORATION OF INTERSTATE RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND GEORGIA AFTER THE DECEMBER 1918 WAR

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After the declaration of independence of the Republic of Armenia and Republic of Georgia in May 1918 the establishment of good-neighborly relations was not an easy task, which was due to the consequences of unsolved territorial-border disputes. Although at the beginning of June 1918 the two states undertook attempts to solve existing controversies by means of negotiations, their dialogue was never obtained. The problem was hampered due to the mistrust towards each other which exists among Armenian and Georgian leaders. The Georgians complain demanding to withdraw the Armenian government from Tbilisi, the Georgian capital. The tension temporarily faded after the departure of Armenian parliament and government to Yerevan in 17 July, 1918.

In autumn 1918 (on the eve of the defeat of the Quadruple alliance in World War I) the Ottoman government began to withdraw its military contingents from the Borchalu district of the Tbilisi province. This was followed by the entrance of Armenian forces to the Southern Lori district leaded by Drastamat Kanayan in October 1918. The Georgians were surprised which culminated in the diplomatic confrontation between Armenia and Georgia for about a month and a half, culminating in the war in December 13.¹ According to Hovhannes Kajaznuni, the first Armenian Prime minister, the main cause of the war was the blocking of Armenia by means of the capture of Lori and the closing of the railway.²

The representatives of Entente in Transcaucasia undertook measures in order to stop the military operations. Captain Edward Green of the staff of General William Thomson, commander of the Allies in Transcaucasia, while visiting Gharakilisa on his trip from Baku to Tiflis, suggested the confronting sides to become a mediator. In December 15 he submitted to Dro, the commander of Armenian forces in Lori his suggestions to be sent to the government of Armenia. According to them, it was offered to announce a 14 days ceasefire, the confronting sides are obliged to withdraw their forces from the disputed Lori and Akhalkalak, whose population should continue to live their, the railway communication restored and the representatives of both states to be sent to Sanahin in order to find solution to the problems, etc.³ Judging from the suggestions, for the British officer the restoration of communication and first of all that of railway, was of utmost importance.

¹ On the Georgian-Armenian diplomatic confrontation in Autumn 1918 and the December war see in detail Vracyan 1993: 230-242; Hovhannisyan 2005: 99-127; Sardaryan 2002: 69-89; Melkonyan 2003: 295-303; Virabyan 2003: 137-191; Virabyan 2016: 142-510.

² Kajaznuni 1923: 39-40.

³ National Archive of Armenia (NAA), f. 200, l. 1, f. 16, p. 17 and rev.; Sardaryan 2002: 81-82.

Dro immediately sent the suggestions of E.Green to the government of Armenia. The parliament and government of Armenia accepted them with some reservations.⁴ After that, in December 17 E.Green submitted his suggestions also to the Georgian government.

For the discussion of conditions with E.Green and Georgian representatives regarding the ceasefire in December 19 the Armenian government sent its delegation to Gharakilisa. The delegation was headed by the well-known member of Dashnakcutyun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation, henceforth ARF) Martiros Harutyunyan, the members were - Smbat Khachatryan (ARF), Grigor Ter-Khachatryan (Armenian People's party), Arsham Khondkaryan (Social-revolutionary party), Stepan Mamikonyan (non-party), and the military advisor, general Gabriel Ghorghanyan (Korganov). All five delegates were members of Armenian parliament. Their main goal was to reach the ceasefire, to smooth the Armenian-Georgian confrontation and restore the railway communication; they were authorized to sign all necessary treaties on behalf of the Armenian government.⁵

Actually Martiros Harutyunyan was the leader of the ARF fraction of the parliament. Besides that, he was renowned in the Transcaucasian political circles as a balanced and peaceful politician. That is why exactly he was appointed as the leader of the Armenian delegation to Gharakilisa to deal with the war and restoration of railway communication. His knowledge of languages also was of some importance.

In December 22, 1918, the Armenian delegation arrived in Gharakilisa where took place a meeting with E.Green. But the Georgian government did not send a delegation although, as E.Green told, he had sent his suggestion also to the Georgian government in December 17.⁶ Actually, the mission of E.Green ended with fiasco; after that he left for Baku. Anyway, M. Harutyunyan and his colleagues decided to wait the Georgians. And this in the situation when the military operations were favorable for Armenia. In the December 22 telegram addressed to V. Thomson M.Harutyunyan tells that the Armenian delegation is waiting for the arrival of Georgian delegation, according to the preliminary decision reached between Armenia and Georgia in regard to the regulation of the conflict.⁷ The mentioned above testifies in favor of the goodwill of Armenian government to regulate the existing problems between two states by means of negotiations.

Successful operations of Armenian army in the war gave rise to panic and anti-Armenian sentiments in Tiflis. The Georgian government applied to the command of the Allies in order to interfere.⁸ In his letter addressed to H.Kajaznuni from Tiflis in January 28, 1919, M.Harutyunyan, the leader of the Armenian conciliatory delegation informs. «...

⁴ Protocols of the sessions of the parliament of the Republic of Armenia. 1918-1920, Yerevan, 2009, p.128-136; Protocols of the sessions of the parliament of the Republic of Armenia. 1918-1920, Yerevan, 2014, p. 72-75.

⁵ NAA, f. 200, I. 1, f. 150, p. 24; Sukiassyan 2009: 186-187.

⁶ NAA, f. 200, I. 1, f. 16, p. 368.

⁷ Idem, f. 150, p. 93.

⁸ Hovhannisyan 2005: 119-124, 130-131; Virabyan 2016: 392-393.

some gentleman who talk to [W.] Thomson told that the Georgians had asked Englishmen to interfere and quit with the war».⁹ The representatives of the Allies in Tiflis, English general William Henry Rycroft, colonel Pierre-Auguste Chardigny, the head of the French military mission and the Georgian prime-minister Noy Zhordania, with the participation of Arshak Jamalyan, the representative of RA in Georgia (despite his opposition) in December 25, 1918, signed an agreement on ceasefire which considers to stop military operations immediately. Armenian forces in the province of Borchalu should be pulled out to the so-called Turkish line (until the borderline of October 1918, occupied by the Ottoman army), and the district of Akhalkalak should be put under the authority of Georgian administration. It was expected that the territorial-border conflicts between Armenia and Georgia had to be finally solved by the great powers in the conciliatory summit which was expected to hold in Paris, with the participation of the representatives of two states. H.Kajaznuni, the Armenian prime-minister was informed about this decision by telegram in December 26.¹⁰

In December 28 an international commission arrived in Gharakilisa consisting of English captain Herbert Henry Douglas-Withers, French captain Nicolas Gasfield, Georgian colonel Ivan Japaridze and English translator. A. Jamalyan was also with them. The commission brought the decision of W.-H. Rycroft and P.-A. Chardigny concerning the ceasefire. The conditions suggested to Armenians were unjust and one-sided. Therefore, until the opening of official session Armenian side had separate meeting with the European members of the commission. The members of the Armenian conciliatory delegation complained in regard to the suggested principles but agreed with the demand of the Allies to stop the war. The delegation informed the Armenian government about the situation. Taking into account the existing blockade of the country and difficult social-economic situation, the government suggested to sign the agreement but to demand to later revise some points in Tiflis with the participation of Armenian delegation.¹¹ The agreement was signed by M. Harutyunyan in December 29 on behalf of the Republic of Armenia. H.H. Douglas-Withers expressed his pleasure. He took with him to Tiflis M.Harutyunyan and general G.Ghorghanyan. Other members of the delegation had to leave for Tiflis when possible. Military operations between Armenia and Georgia stopped in December 31.

M.Harutyunyan, the head of the Armenian conciliatory delegation and general G.Ghorghanyan, military advisor, arrived in Tiflis in December 30, 1918, in December 31. Other members of Armenian delegation reached Tiflis in January 3. It should be mentioned that one of the delegates, namely Grigor Khachatryan returned to Yerevan in January 22. After that the delegation acted with four members. Since general G.Ghorghanyan had to go to Paris, he was released from his duties and was replaced by General Mikael Areshyan in January 28.¹²

⁹ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 16, p. 80 and rev. 81.

¹⁰ Ibid., f. 19 and rev., l. 2, f. 33, p. 1.

¹¹ Sukiassyan 2009: 188-189.

¹² NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 150, p. 30.

Until the arrival of other members of the delegation M. Harutyunyan paid a visit to the Georgian foreign minister Evgeniy Gegechkori, and G. Ghorghanyan – the military minister Grigol Gorgadze, in order to inform about their arrival and address. Then they initiated some preliminary organizational work in the case of the possible Armenian-Georgian conference. To the meeting called by that purpose, besides the members of the conciliatory delegation, participated also the members of the delegation which was going to leave for Paris - Avetis Aharonyan, Mikael Papajanyan, Levon Ghulyan (minister of supplies of RA), Rostom (Stepan Zoryan), one of the founders of ARF. During the meeting it was decided to compile and submit to the Allies a project regarding the administration of Lori, then to ask them to withdraw Georgian forces from all Armenian-populated localities, since they irritate people by their actions, thus frustrating them and becoming source for insurrection. It was decided also to ask to garrison English troops in the Turkish-speaking settlements of Sadakhlo district. Pursuing these goals in January 3, 1919, a letter including some necessary documents was sent to the command of the Allies¹³.

During the meetings with the military representatives of the Allies in Tiflis M. Harutyunyan and other delegates raised the next question: besides the signature of the agreement on ceasefire, in order to secure the long-termed peace between Armenia and Georgia pivotal problems should be solved. In response the Armenian delegation was requested to inform about such problems in order to organize Armenian-Georgian conference. In January 6 the Armenian delegation submitted to the Allies, besides the border problems, the list of Armenian-Georgian issues which remain unsolved – the use of the railway (railway was the only means of contact with the outer world), the division of the common Transcaucasian property (both military and civil), persecution of Armenians in Tiflis and other Armenian-populated regions of Georgia, expropriation of their belongings, obstacles regarding the activities of Armenian press in Georgia. These problems should have been solved as soon as possible since without their solution the Armenian-Georgian relations would «lack stable grounds».¹⁴

The sessions of Armenian-Georgian conference with the participation of the Allies began in January 9; English colonel Robert Stuart was the chairman. He was aided by translator (negotiations were held in Russian, which was translated into English, the French representative knows Russian) and English, and an English secretary. On behalf of the French mission captain Nicolas Gasfield participated in the sessions of the conference, sometimes also the French consul Duroy and Antoine Poidebard, the French military representative in the Republic of Armenia. The entire Armenian delegation took part in the conference. The translator of the Armenian delegation was Yervand Mirzoyants, and Vardges Aharonyan as a secretary. The Georgian side was represented by the Foreign minister Evgeniy Gegechkori, his assistant Constantin Sabakhtarashvili, Interior minister Noy Ramishvili, Minister of Finances Georgi Zhuruli, his assistant

¹³ Sukiassyan 2009: 190-191; NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 150, p. 98-101 and rev.

¹⁴ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 16, p. 55, f. 150, p. 350 and rev.

Constantin Kandelaki, general Alexander Gedevanov, the assistant of the Military minister, colonel Ivan Japaridze, etc.

The next sessions of the conference took place in January, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 16. During the conference work in parallel the military (from the Armenian side - general G.Ghorghanyan), administrative (from the Armenian side - M.Harutyunyan and A. Khondkaryan) and financial (from the Armenian side - S. Mamikonyan) commissions. The decisions of the conference were prepared and signed in three languages – Russian, French and English. After the conference was concluded every side had received the Russian and French copies.¹⁵

At the opening of the conference R.Stuart, according to the agreement with Y. Gegechkori, denied the economic part of the agenda suggested by the Armenian delegation. The main discussions were focused on the status of Borchalu and Akhalkalak. Stuart turned down also the suggestion made by general Ghorghanyan to leave the problem of the border to the military commission. Also was rejected another Armenian initiative which requires to solve the borders of the neutral zone as to the December 25, 1918 ceasefire.¹⁶ The military commission (A.Gedevanov, G.Ghorghanyan and I.Japaridze), in January 10 submitted to the conference a project regarding the northern and southern borders of the Lori neutral zone, borderlines of Armenian and Georgian troops to be held and their numbers.

The Armenian-Georgian peace conference was completed in January 16; under the pressure of the Allies it temporarily «arranged» the territorial disputes between Armenia and Georgia in regard to Borchalu and Akhalkalak. It was decided to move Akhalkalak into the Georgian jurisdiction, and the town Lori liberated by Armenian forces into the neutral section, under control of the Allies, despite the fact that Armenia was successful in the war. Over 40 villages in the liberated Lori were included in the Neutral zone which was divided into three sections – Alaverdi, Uzunlar (modern Odzun), and Voroncovka (modern Tashir). As the northern border of Borchalu neutral zone was decided to be the line occupied by Georgian forces at 24⁰⁰ of December 31, 1918 Armenian-Georgian ceasefire. As to the southern border, as such was established the line which until their defeat at the end of World War I was occupied by the Ottoman army.¹⁷ The resolution of the conference was signed in January 22.

Although after the conclusion of the January 1919 conference it would seem that the relations between Armenia and Georgia were regulated, in reality the disputed problems remain unsolved for several weeks. The Armenian delegation stayed in Tiflis in order to discuss with the Georgian representatives all current issues. Their regulation (including the restoration of diplomatic relations) lasted until March 1919.

During the January 1919 conference and after it for the Armenian delegation among the interstate problems diplomatic relations between Armenia and Georgia were of utmost priority. From the letters of M.Harutyunyan sent to Yerevan becomes clear that the efforts

¹⁵ Sukiassyan 2009: 191-192.

¹⁶ Kharatyan 2001: 100; Melkonyan 2003: 305-307.

¹⁷ Galoyan and Ghazakhetsyan 2000: 82-83, Melkonyan 2003: 308.

of his delegation were not successful. The problem is that the representatives of the Georgian government use different motivations to delaying the solution of the issue.

In the January 17, 1919 letter sent to Yerevan M. Harutyunyan stresses the next circumstance: during the conference and in the course of private meetings Armenian delegates state that the war is over and in order to show the two peoples that the peace is final, it is necessary to restore normal diplomatic relations. The arguments of Georgians mostly are based on their position regarding the war; for Georgians war was not over yet but only a ceasefire was established. They think that at first the initiator of the war should be revealed and only then one might speak of the restoration of diplomatic relations.¹⁸ During the Georgian-Armenian diplomatic confrontation and especially the war the Menshevik government had succeeded to propagate anti-Armenian attitude among the Georgian population, thus it was not easy to change its policy abruptly. Especially if one takes into account that in the upcoming February 14-16 elections of the Constitutional assembly (it was summoned in March 12, 1919) this action could have been used by the opposing national-democratic party. In his February 2 report addressed to the Armenian government M. Harutyunyan concludes figuratively: «to that chauvinism s[ocial]-d-[emocrac]y had helped considerably [in] the process during the conflict. Now S[ocial]-d-[emocrac]y could not deal with evil spirits released by himself». ¹⁹ Georgian foreign minister Y. Gegechkori and other Georgian officials brought similar arguments during the conference. In his letters M. Harutyunyan on many occasions testify that Georgians were opposing the opening of Armenian diplomatic mission in Tiflis, with the same motivation. In the January 21 letter he wrote that Y. Gegechkori had suggested him to hand over the defence of rights of Armenian citizens on the territory of Georgia to the Persian consul in Tiflis, like during the Georgian-Armenian war.²⁰

After the arrival of the Armenian conciliatory delegation in Tiflis local Armenians were addressing to it their problems. The latter send them to the Georgian government or to the British mission in Tiflis.²¹ In their turn, the British mission accepts the applications concerning Armenians only through the Armenian delegation. In fact, the delegation exercises diplomatic functions.

This situation was not favorable also for the English mission. In a letter dated with January 23 addressed to the prime-minister H. Kajaznuni, M. Harutyunyan conditions the will of the British command to open Armenian diplomatic mission in Tiflis due to the facts mentioned above and numerous applications from Armenian citizens in Georgia. During the January 22 meeting with the members of Armenian delegation George Forestier-Walker, the commander-in-chief of British forces in Western Transcaucasia, says that diplomatic relations between Armenia and Georgia should be restored, and that a peace

¹⁸ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, l. 16, p. 66 and rev.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 90 and rev.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 70 and rev.

²¹ Examples of such documents see in The Losses of the Armenian People in the Years of the First World War (collection of documents and materials of the "Bureau of Establishing the Losses of the Armenians during the World War")(compiled by A. Zakaryan), Yerevan, 2005: 98-99, 103-104, 106.

but not ceasefire was established.²² Besides that, in February 15 Walker asserts to the members of the Georgian government that it is not authorized to block the activities of Armenian mission. These actions had positive impact.²³

For M. Harutyunyan the presence of his delegation in Tiflis was necessary until the re-opening of Armenian diplomatic mission in Georgia. In the February 17 letter addressed to Sirakan Tigranyan, Armenian foreign minister he wrote: «We think that if the mission is going to be re-opened, Mik. Tumanyan could deal with it for a while until the appointment of the representative. Then perhaps the delegation will be free and return back»²⁴ It should be mentioned that the delegation reached the solution of such an important goal.

In order to discuss the problems which remain unsolved during the conference, in January 29 a special Armenian-Georgian meeting was held where the sides reached a consensus regarding the restoration of railway communication between the two republics.²⁵ After a prolonged non-official debates the next sessions of the meeting took place in February 28 and March 3, where the remaining issues of the Armenian-Georgian relations were discussed. Armenian politicians call these negotiations also second Armenian-Georgian conference (as distinct from the January joint sessions where also participate the Allies).

The Georgian side agreed to re-open the Armenian diplomatic mission in Tiflis and was ready to receive the Armenian diplomatic representative, return the Republic of Armenia the confiscated equipment belonging to Armenian corpus (except weaponry), and the documents related to the state institutions on the territory of Armenia as well. An agreement has been reached to implement the convention regarding postal and telegraph service, elimination of laissez-passer free transit, and mutual recognition of the independence as well. The decisions were signed by the Armenian delegates in March 11, and by Georgians in March 17.²⁶

After the conclusion of the work M. Harutyunyan informed by separate letters in March 14 and 15 Levon Evanguyan, the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia in Georgia, about the solved and unsolved issues of Armenian-Georgian negotiations. And already in March 19 M. Harutyunyan handed over the current affairs of the delegation to the mission including copies of reports and applications²⁷ In March 26 he returned to Yerevan.

The restoration of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Georgia was not an easy task. During the following months the governments of Armenia and Georgia express their readiness to solve the existing problems by means of negotiations, not by force, which was an important achievement for two peoples. Anyway, in regard to existing

²² NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 16, p. 77.

²³ Sukiassyan 2009: 199; Sardaryan 2002: 103.

²⁴ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 16, p. 84.

²⁵ Sukiassyan 2009: 192.

²⁶ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 16, p. 115-120 and rev., 125-126 and rev.; Sukiassyan 2009: 193.

²⁷ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 150, p. 515-516 and rev.; Sukiassyan 2009: 204.

disputes, mostly territorial, between Armenian and Georgian politicians was never achieved visible progress.

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*Translated from the Armenian by **Aram Kosyan***

THE ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION IN SOVIET ARMENIA (1923-1937)

Eduard L. Melkonian

This monograph by Dr. Eduard Melkonian was published first in Armenian (Էդուարդ Լ. Մելքոնյան. Հայկական Բարեգործական Ընդհանուր Միությունը Խորհրդային Հայաստանում, 1923-1937թթ., Երեւան: Նոյյան Տապան, 1999, 202 էջ). It has drawn on the so far unpublished materials from different archives within Armenia as well as from the archive of the Central Board of Directors of AGBU.

Later as separate chapters it became part of Ed. Melkonian's two other monographs on the comprehensive history of the AGBU, published in Armenian (Էդուարդ Լ. Մելքոնյան. Հայկական Բարեգործական Ընդհանուր Միության պատմություն, Երեւան: Սուղնի, 2005, 582 p.

<http://www.armeniandiaspora.am/images/menus/267/Melkonian.pdf>

and in Russian (Эдуард Л. Мелконян, Армянский Всеобщий Благотворительный Союз. Неоконченная история, Ереван: Тигран Мец, 2010, 487 с.

<http://www.armeniandiaspora.am/images/menus/320/Melkonian.pdf>

The book has been revised for the current edition but without any significant changes in the content. At one time, the book initiated by then the President of the AGBU Louse Manoogian Simon was translated into English by Artashes Emin, and this translation with the relevant changes is used in this edition.

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INTRODUCTION

The oldest and largest Armenian charitable organization - Armenian General Benevolent Union (Baregortsakan in Armenian, hereinafter referred to as AGBU, Benevolent Union, Union) was founded in 1906 in accordance with the document that has since become one of the important records in the contemporary history of the Armenian people, and especially the Armenian Diaspora.

"Today, April 15, 1906, on the first day of Holy Easter, the undersigned, gathered in Cairo at the mansion of His Excellency Boghos Pasha, organized a society under the name of Armenian General Benevolent Union, as per the condition and provisions of the above By-Laws bearing the present date and our signatures.

The first Board of Directors of the society is formed of the ten members stated in Article 10 of the By-Laws, and as of today the association is declared established.

Cairo, April 15, 1906

Boghos Nubar, Yacoub Artin Pasha, Yervand Aghathon, Megerdich Andranigian, Megerdich Margosoff, Garabed Sheridjian, Arakel Nubar, Nazaret DagHAVarian, Grigor Yeghiayan, Hovhannes Hagopian"

The purposes of the newly established organization were:

- a. «to assist in the intellectual and moral development of the Armenian people in the homeland;
- b. to strive to improve its economic standing;
- c. to promote any initiative or publication serving the above ends.»

«For the benefit of the Armenian people in the homeland the Armenian General Benevolent Union shall establish or subsidize schools, workshops, hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages and other institutions of the kind. It shall provide assistance to needy Armenians in the homeland without any prejudice, including religious faith. It shall assist the peasantry, providing them with land, seeds, animals and implements. It shall encourage the development of local crafts, disseminate knowledge in modern agriculture, create new jobs and establish industries. It shall extend immediate help to victims of famine, fire and any other disaster».¹

Who were these people, living far away from their homeland, who founded an organization that has been continuously operating for over a hundred years, faithful to its purposes and principles?

One of the Armenians holding high posts in the public administration of Egypt in the middle of the 19th century was Boghos Bey Youssofian (1768-1844), who by the end of his life became the Minister of Foreign affairs and Trade. In 1843 he invited his sister's son, Nubar Nubarian, to become the secretary of staff of the ministry. He later became one of the foremost statesmen of the country and went down in history under the name of Nubar Pasha (1825-1899). Nubar Pasha "served as the Premier of Egypt for three terms and for a period acted as regent. Egypt owes him a great deal, among

¹ Haykakan Baregortsakan Endhanur Miutian Voskematian, 1906-1913 [AGBU's Golden Book, 1906-1913], 1913: 30.

other things, for its irrigation system and the establishment of mixed tribunals, which put an end to the practice of trying non-Muslims according to the Islamic law."²

His son, Boghos Nubar (1851-1930), was the founder and first President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. Like his father he attended schools in France and Switzerland, and continued his education in the Ecole Centrale of Paris, receiving the qualification of an engineer. "Some years later he invented an automatic plough capable of breaking the hardest soil, which won the first prize at the Paris Exposition of 1900 and brought him the highest French order of Merit, the Grand Cross of the Legion d'Honneur, and the gold medal of the Milan Exposition of 1906, as well as the coveted "Oliver de Serres" medal, awarded by the Agricultural Society of France to the foremost agricultural inventor."³ Upon his return to Egypt he entered civil service and was the general director of the Railway Company of Egypt for seven years (1891-1899). During these years Egypt has effectively become a British colony and almost every sector of the economy was under the control of the English. Boghos Nubar did not want to succumb to and revolted against all forms of interference by them and submitted a letter of resignation. Even the request of Abbas pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, to withdraw the letter, did not shake his resolve, moreover, after that he never worked with a public agency again. Through the subsequent years Boghos Nubar successfully applied his skills of a financial expert, entrepreneur and organizer. For example he founded the Alexandria Streetcar Company and the Mengeleh land utilization company, was for many years the director and the biggest shareholder of the Cairo Water Company that was founded by his father and was of utmost importance for a country like Egypt. Together with the famous Belgian entrepreneur and industrialist Edouard Empain he founded the city of Heliopolis,⁴ as well as a number of major enterprises, he was also a board member of the biggest Egyptian banks and companies.

Although Boghos Nubar had pledged not to accept a civil service post ever again, his contribution to the progress of Egypt was so great and preponderant that he enjoyed the respect and trust of the Egyptian authorities till the end of his life. As with his father, he was also granted the title of "Pasha" by the Egyptian government, while Sultan Hussein the First in 1914 in Cairo and King Fuad the First in 1926 in Paris were his house guests, contrary to Oriental tradition, which is an exceptional honor for a host that holds no a state post.⁵

It is known that among ethnic minorities such characteristics (high position, wealth, public post etc) do not always imply service to the benefit of the compatriots. Armenian history is full of such examples, beginning with the Byzantine emperors of Armenian descent through members of the ruling elite of the Soviet Union, and it seemed to be so and Boghos Nubar. He received his schooling in Europe, did business with foreigners

² Norehad 1966: 4.

³ Ibid.

⁴ General baron Edouard Empain, the Belgian who built the Paris metro - <http://bit.ly/2RXw3RC>

⁵ Gartashian 1987: 176-187; Zertusht 1920: 29-35.

and pursued a purely European lifestyle. "He (Boghos Nubar - Ed. M.) is not in the least Oriental and even less Armenian. Perhaps this is not convenient from our national perspective, since the Pasha may sometimes be unable to penetrate a particular twist of our psyche, but, and this is unquestionably a bonus for the individual character, Boghos Pasha is the quintessential European, that is a Frenchman."⁶

The following fact that relates to his father, Nubar Pasha, is quite remarkable. In June and July, 1878, the Berlin Congress was called upon to review the San-Stefano treaty concluded in March of the same year between Russia and Turkey, since the European powers held that the treaty favoured the strengthening of Russian influence in the Balkans and in Asia Minor. As Article 16 of the San-Stefano treaty pertained to Armenia, this issue was also to be discussed in Berlin. For this reason an Armenian national delegation arrived in Berlin, headed by Megerdich Khrimian. The delegation met with Nubar Pasha in Paris and acquainted itself with the memorandum prepared for the summit. Nubar Pasha in his turn discusses it with the Chancellor of the First German Reich Otto Von Bismark and the famous Russian general and statesman Mikael Loris-Melikoff. "When the redoubtable diplomats Bismark, Loris-Melikoff and Nubar Pasha saw the loser plan prepared by the delegation, all three stated that the plan is simply illusory and that they would like to see a different plan..."⁷

The subsequent course of events is remembered by Megerdich Khrimian (by then already Catholicos of all Armenians Megerdich the First) in his letter to Nubar Pasha:

"May I remind you, honourable Sir, that 17 years ago I was in Paris with our interpreter Mr. Cheraz and, in the capacity of an Armenian delegate representing Patriarch Nerses, I submitted to the judgement of Your Honour a Memorandum that contained a new Armenian issue and was to be presented to the Berlin Congress... You kindly accepted the issue and agreed to consider it. Having read and analyzed the Memorandum, You found it unsuitable and excessive. Hence You drew up a new Memorandum, presenting the issue, with Your far-sighted wisdom, in a moderate and realistic manner... I forwarded the new temperate Memorandum to Patriarch Nerses in Constantinople. But, alas, he as well as his closest advisors insisted with all recalcitrance that the Memorandum remain intact and be presented to the Congress the way it was. When I received the cable with these instructions in Berlin, I felt profound sorrow and could not help but retreat to a secluded corner and weep like a boy, since I could clearly foresee the demise of the initiative... I can not forget the event. Had Your Honour been in Berlin at the time and submitted the Memorandum drafted by yourself to the Congress, I believe that the language of Article 61 would not be so weak and obscure but, rather, strong, resolute and practical."⁸

Nubar Pasha himself writes: "In 1878 I was in Paris. The four envoys sent by Patriarch Nerses had come to see me to seek advice and assistance. I told them to

⁶ Haykakan Baregortsakan Endhanur Miutian Voskematian 1913: 27.

⁷ Zardarian 1934: 26/64.

⁸ Gevorkian 1976; Theodik 1930: 308.

delegate the representation to me, and I would underwrite all the expenses and would undertake even more. Let me try, I said, get my moderate administrative programme accepted and implemented. The English delegates Lord Beaconsfield and Salisbury, Bismark and even the Russian delegates are my friends. I have dealt with them, they know me and like me, and I can have my moderate programme of judiciary reforms in six Armenian provinces approved, that is ensure equity before the law of Armenians and Muslims. I also undertake to implement those reforms. This will satisfy all our demands... The Armenian delegates were convinced, they liked the programme and left for Berlin, wherefrom they had to wire me without delay for me to join them. I waited for five days, then eight days. Two weeks later, instead of a cable, I received a letter signed by Minas Cheraz, the secretary to the delegation. It was laconic: The nation does not recognize you as its representative, we are its only delegates to the Berlin Congress."⁹

The states that organized the Berlin Congress did not admit the Armenian delegation to the sessions. The programme submitted by the latter was not discussed and Article 16 of the San-Stefano treaty was replaced by Article 61, with a vague reference to "improvements and reforms" in the Armenian-populated provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Church that, through historical developments, has become the conduit for and a protector of the national-political interests of the Armenian people, lacked the knowledge and the experience necessary to implement such reforms. The participation in the Berlin Congress of a person of Nubar Pasha's calibre, a skilled diplomat enjoying the respect and friendship of top European statesmen could only have improved the Armenian chances at the Congress. But the Armenian patriarch of Constantinople turned down his services, perhaps on the basis of Nubar Pasha's prior non-involvement in Armenian national and political affairs. This position exemplifies saliently the way national and political expectations and obligations are perceived among ethnic minorities. It would at least not be realistic to expect from the high ranking Egyptian official to get directly and continuously involved in a programme that lacked clear planning or a recognized line of command. Whereas an international summit was something different, its participants were endowed with the necessary powers to effect changes in the standing of nations, this was a forum where Nubar Pasha could, or at least would try to make the best of his diplomatic experience, take advantage of his contacts to the benefit of the Armenian interests. This was an overwhelming objective that, given a positive resolution, would count towards the finest hour of Nubar Pasha as an Armenian. As for the esteem that Nubar Pasha enjoyed in those days, it is attested to by the fact that three months after the opening of the Berlin Congress he became the head of the Egyptian cabinet. Anyway, Nubar Pasha did not go to Berlin and until the last days of his life he "kept lingering deep in his soul the bitterness of that denial."

This event, quite interesting in itself, is characteristic of the prevailing style in Armenian politics of the time, and gains more significance in view of the fact that in 1878 Nubar Pasha's 27 year old son, Boghos Nubar, was hardly likely to feel happy

⁹ Gevorkian 1976.

with such a lack of trust towards his father. Nonetheless he did not identify individual compatriots or national organizations, however renowned these may have been, with the entire nation, the service to which has become the purpose of the foundation of the AGBU.

"The most respectable person in the AGBU's Central Board of Directors, if not the most dominant, is His Excellency Yacoub Artin Pasha, who, from the very first day of its inception, has followed with great ardour and care the progress of the Union, and with the doubled excellence and meticulousness of a lawyer and a scholar has ensured that the Union impeccably and unfailingly complies with its objectives and principal premises as laid out in the bylaws."¹⁰ According to Vahan Malezian he "was the quintessential Armenian nobleman... who generated reverence all around him."¹¹

Yacoub Artin (Hagop Artin Pasha Chrakian, the son of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt Artin Bey Chrakian, 1842-1919) having received his Armenian education and upbringing in the Samuel-Murad school of the Mekhitarist brotherhood in Paris, continued his studies in European universities (France, Germany, England), specializing in history, literature and linguistics. In 1873 Yacoub Artin received an invitation to Egypt from Ismail Pasha and became the mentor of his sons (prince Mahmoud Fuad later to become the King of Egypt). This was followed by an appointment as the personal aide to Ismail Pasha. Since 1880s he held the highest posts in the public administration of the country (advisor to state, general manager of Egyptian Rail etc.), and in 1883 he became deputy minister of Education, holding this office for 23 years.

This post best suited his preferences and therefore it is no wonder that his work was most prolific in this area. In particular he "organizes the Egyptian elementary and secondary schools, he improves the educational level of high schools, he founds the State Pedagogical College of Cairo and reorganizes the Arts and Crafts Colleges of Cairo."¹² Along with all these his biggest passion remained science, which he spent all his free hours on. "His life was that of a sage, a devout and tireless scholar, spent mostly within his magnificent library, immersed in books and manuscripts..."¹³ The publications of Yacoub Artin, his communications at international academic conferences, as well as the fact that he had founded and directed several societies of oriental studies, earned him European recognition, in particular he received degrees of honorary doctor from the universities of Aberdeen and Saint Andrew (Scotland).

Yacoub Artin played an important role in the life of the Armenian community of Egypt. He organised the local Armenian Catholic community and drafted its constitution. He "was for the Armenian Catholic community what Boghos Nubar Pasha was for us (the Armenian Apostolic community - Ed. M.), a silently accepted and endorsed national

¹⁰ Haykakan Baregortsakan Endhanur Miutian Voskematian 1913: 40.

¹¹ Malezian 1954: 304.

¹² Gartashian 1986: 244.

¹³ Haykakan Baregortsakan Endhanur Miutian Voskematian 1913: 41.

leader."¹⁴ The inclusion of Yacoub Artin among the founders of the Union embodied the fundamental principle of the Union Bylaws, that stipulated: any Armenian may participate without prejudice, including that to his or her faith.

Yervant Aghaton was not only one of the founding fathers of the Union, participating in the development of the Bylaws, but also committed the rest of his life to serve the Union. Vahan Malezian, who was generally rather reserved in his opinions about colleagues, characterized Aghaton as follows: "Nobody, even Boghos Nubar, had so much 'blessed fire' inside, it ignited and flamed all the time with love towards the Baregortsakan. Truly he not only believed in it, he worshipped the Union, and it may be said without exaggeration it that he sometimes even favoured the Baregortsakan over his family."¹⁵

Yervant Aghaton's father, Grigor Aghaton, whom he lost at the age of eight, was a peasant's son, who nevertheless became the first Christian minister in the Ottoman Empire and one of the authors of the Armenian National Constitution of 1860. It is remarkable that Yervant Aghaton attended the Nubar-Shahnazarian school that was founded by Boghos Nubar's father. This was his first, so far indirect exposure to the Nubar family. After graduating from the Paris Grignon High School of agriculture he worked in France for one year before returning to Constantinople, where he assumed different posts: Inspector of Imperial Estates, member of the Board of the Agricultural Bank etc. In 1896, during the perpetration of massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Yervant Aghaton left for Paris, where he made the acquaintance of Boghos Nubar. Upon the latter's invitation he moved to Cairo in 1897, where for many years he acted as the Inspector Manager of the estates of Boghos Nubar and other wealthy Egyptian Armenians and Egyptian princes. This is what Yervant Aghaton himself writes about those years: "I was the only Armenian among the many foreign land experts in Egypt, that succeeded in establishing an association called the "Union of Egyptian Land Users"... Until my resettlement in Egypt the use of chemical pesticides was not practiced there, the concept itself was not known in the country. After performing a number of different experiments there, following a process of long and detailed research into the subject I was reassured about the usefulness of applying chemical agents and promoted their proliferation, and thus greatly contributed to the increase of the wealth of the nation..."¹⁶

During this period in his life Yervant Aghaton was so preoccupied with his profession that he essentially remained outside of the scope of national activities. A biography published to commemorate his 75th anniversary mentions: "His involvement with national affairs commences mostly in Egypt, in the capacity of a national representative and deputy alongside Boghos Nubar."¹⁷ It was through his efforts that a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Malezian 1954: 307.

¹⁶ Aghaton 1934b: 197-298.

¹⁷ Aghaton 1934a: 3.

number of chapters of the Union were established in European countries and his fundraising efforts resulted in a number of substantial estates being bequeathed to the Union. Numerous books and pamphlets authored by Yervant Aghaton served the same purpose, where he highlighted in laymen's terms the purposes, aims, problems and accomplishments of the Union. He "confounded his patriotism, his love for the nation with the AGBU, he merged into it and was willing to see his nation and his homeland only through its prism. Of course he passionately loved his nation and his native land and he saw in the Union the best means, the most practical vehicle to be of use to them."¹⁸

Grigor Yeghiayan (1833-1911) was the most senior among the founders. His predominant occupation was diplomacy. He started out as an interpreter and in 1880 became the Vice-Consul of the Russian mission to Egypt. He was one of the most consummate diplomats of the time, which is attested to, among other things, by the state decorations he received from many countries, including Russia, Italy, Persia, Egypt and others. His authority contributed greatly to the successful operation of the Union, especially in channelling aid from the AGBU to the population of Western Armenia through the consulates of a number of countries.

After the death of Yeghiayan it became known that he bequeathed most of his significant estate to the Armenian Prelacy of Cairo, to the graduates of the Galustian school to pursue further studies in European universities, and a special endowment was allocated to build an Armenian church in Cairo - the St. Gregory the Illuminator Church was consecrated in 1927. After his death many people wondered why, being one of the founders of the AGBU, he did not leave anything to the Union. The famous Union activist Vahan Kurkjian had answered that question back in 1911, shedding light on a particular aspect of the Egyptian Armenian identity of Grigor Yeghiayan: "He was convinced that an Egyptian Armenian should not be generous for Armenians in other countries and that every city should take care of its own poor and orphans... His perception of charity was rather divergent from ours. He was an Egyptian, almost alien to Armenian language and press (although he enjoyed displaying the books he had acquired from the Armenian monastery in Venice), so he wanted the Armenian students in Egypt to benefit from his will, he had inherited his "Armenianness" from the church and so he wanted that church to live bright with his memory and to receive most of his estate."¹⁹

Garabed Sheridjian also had forty years of experience in the diplomatic service, he was consummate in official communications and contacts, their written and unwritten rules, and he added a refined touch and quality to the operation of the Union. This quality was in perfect harmony with the personality of Sheridjian: "He was predominantly a man of this world and, in the noble sense of the word, he liked to live in it, that is he pursued the art of living like the artists do, the grace of whose emotions

¹⁸ Malezian 1954: 308.

¹⁹ Kurkjian 1911: 770.

never falters or yields to selfish vulgarity, who cultivate "le culte du moi" loftily, seeking and spreading beauty and brightness around them."²⁰ It was quite logical that the lover of "letters and arts" Garabed Sheridjian voluntarily assumed the post of the librarian of the AGBU, donating to the library his precious and vast personal collection of books.

The character of lustrous individualities (that include the above founders of the Union) generally shuns administrative chores that always remain in the shade. It is nonetheless common knowledge that the existence of any institution implies the operation of an administrative section, the performance of which determines the efficiency of the institution. Boghos Nubar, as proven by subsequent developments, made a very good choice by entrusting the administrative management of the newly founded organization to Megerdich Antranigian, later succeeded by Vahan Malezian.

Megerdich Antranigian moved to Cairo from Constantinople in 1878, upon the invitation of Boghos Nubar, to assume the responsibilities of the financial and commercial manager of the latter. Through the years of service his professional aptitude was so remarkable, that Boghos Nubar found it necessary not only to involve him in the drafting of the Union Bylaws, but made him a founding member. "Every person, to this or that extent, has this coquetry, the striving to make himself more palatable, agreeable for the others who come into contact with him. The coquetry of Antranigian seems to have a negative twist. There is a way of saying "no" that softens the pain of refusal for the interlocutor, makes it somehow more bearable and acceptable. Empty words like "I am sorry, dear, very sorry, but I simply can not" make it easy to see off an applicant. But Antranigian's character shuns such conventional pretence. His "impossible" puts an abrupt and final period that leaves no room for ambiguity, and closes off all doors and horizons of hope for the favour seeker."²¹ The duties of Antranigian during the meetings of the Board of Directors were wide and diverse. Let us consult the "Vosgematian" one more time: "Without any exaggeration we may say that the role he has conscientiously played in the AGBU headquarters for the last seven years was of vital importance for this institution. Mr. Megerdich Antranigian is one member of the Board of Directors of the Baregortsakan who spends 365 days a year on its administrative matters. His name does not appear often in the acknowledgements of the Union's great deeds, he is not a man of gestures or tribute. But outside of the sumptuous atmosphere of meetings, receptions and galas, in the quiet isolation of the office, day after day, he is the one to make the wheels of the Union's intricate machinery turn."²²

Dr. Nazaret DagHAVarian was equally dedicated to serving his people, but he preferred a different approach. He was the only founding member of the Union whose candidacy was proposed not by Boghos Nubar, but by Yervant Aghaton, and he was also the only one well versed in the Western Armenian national scene; DagHAVarian was the first Director General of the Board of Directors. When the Ottoman Constitution

²⁰ Haykakan Baregortsakan Endhanur Miutian Voskematian 1913: 65.

²¹ Ibid, p. 55.

²² Ibid.

was proclaimed in 1908 and the ethnic minorities in the empire aspired to become equal members to the society, Daghavarian resigned from office and left for Constantinople, where he made important contributions to national and public affairs. During his field trips to Western Armenia, Cilicia and other Armenian-populated areas of the country he founded many new chapters of the Union, ensuring their cooperation with the Board of Directors. In 1915 he became one of the first victims of the Armenian Genocide master-minded by the Turkish government.

Megerdich Margosoff Bey (1849-1919) was Boghos Nubar's cousin. Having received university education in France with a qualification of an architect/surveyor, he moved to Cairo and found employment with the Ministry of Public Buildings as an architect/inspector. He was a member to the Board since the foundation of the Union and was among the first to become an Honorary Member of the AGBU. Between 1907-1912 Margosoff was also the chairman of the Cairo Association Care for the Poor.

The Union's youngest founding member was Boghos Nubar's 25 year-old son Arakel Nubar Bey, the first Treasurer of the Board of Directors. Hovhannes Hagopian was a high ranking official in the Staff of the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Egypt. He was also a member of the National Council of the Armenian community of Cairo. He was the only founding member who shortly thereafter resigned from the Board and never cooperated with the Union again.

These were the individuals that, under the leadership of Boghos Nubar, founded the Armenian General Benevolent Union. They were quite different in terms of age, their life experience, ideology and many other aspects. But certain important similarities may also be observed among them. First, they were all highly qualified professionals: financial and business managers, diplomats and scholars, medical doctors and experts in agriculture, these were professions that could earn one a good and safe living in any country and society. Then, having lived and studied in different European countries they were exposed to the history, culture and the current standing of better advanced countries, and this helped them clarify and perform a reality check on their perception of the developments desirable for the Armenian nation. At the time of its establishment none of the founders of the AGBU were members to any Armenian political organization (after a while some of them: Agaton, Antranigian and Daghavarian became members to the Constitutional Democratic Party). This ensured that their work was impartial and unbiased, thus to the benefit of the entire Armenian people

It is worth mentioning that some founders, for example, Yacoub Artin, Boghos Nubar, Grigor Yeghiayan, spoke little Armenian. But this embarrassing contemporaries (and not only them) circumstance served as yet another argument in favour of a situation, which in the case of ethnic minorities, knowledge of the mother tongue and national/ethnic identity and activity are not interdependent phenomena.

Before World War I the Armenian General Benevolent Union operated in Western Armenia, Cilicia and other Armenian-populated areas of the Ottoman Empire. It

maintained 41 educational institutions: the secondary school in Van, the Kelekian orphanage-school in Deort-Yol, the Central Upper Elementary school in Moufarzin, as well as 38 elementary schools, of which 27 were in Western Armenia and 11 in Cilicia. From 1912 onwards the AGBU commenced the publication of its official "Miutyun" (Union) monthly. By 1914 the AGBU had 142 chapters, of which 59 were on the territory of the Ottoman Empire (mostly in Western Armenia and Cilicia), 54 were in the USA and Argentina, 25 in Europe (France, England, Germany, Italy etc), 4 were in Africa and the total number of members was 8,533.²³

Since the beginning of the World War I, when the Ottoman authorities started the systematic implementation of the genocide and deportation of Armenians, and until the mid-1930s, the main task of the Union was to help exiles, especially orphans.

A tent settlement of refugees who escaped from Musaler was founded in the desert not far from Port Said (Egypt), where In October of 1915 the AGBU opened an elementary school called "Sisvan", that had 25 classes with the total of 1,222 students. The organization "Boy scouts of Sisvan", founded in 1917, later formed the nucleus of the Eastern (Armenian) Legion, which on September 19, 1918, defeated the Turkish regular troops at the battle of Arara. The AGBU also founded an orphanage and an asylum for widows in Port Said. Following the defeat of Turkey in World War I the AGBU transferred its institutions from Port Said to Cilicia, the orphanage settled in Mersin (there were 404 children in it in 1921), an asylum for widows was established in Adana (with 350 widows and girls), the Kelekian orphanage-school reopened in Deort-Yol, and a school was founded in each of six villages of Suetia (Cilicia), under the collective name of "Sisvan schools". Another orphanage opened in Hajin, all of the students of which, along with the rest of the town's population were slain in 1920 by the Turkish troops. By the end of 1921, when the withdrawing French troops handed Cilicia over to Turkey, the AGBU transferred its institutions to Beirut. The orphanages of Mersin and Deort-Yol were merged into the Kelekian (for boys) and Sisvan (for girls) orphanages/elementary schools. These were the biggest orphanages of the Union (with an annual capacity to care for around 350 children) and they operated until the end of 1932. In 1922 the AGBU assumed the responsibility for 800 orphans from the refugee settlement in Nahr El-Ummar (Mesopotamia, current territory of Iraq), closed down by the British administration. For this purpose two orphanages were established on the premises of St. John Church in Jerusalem, the Araratian (for boys) and the Vaspouragan (for girls). The students in all of the AGBU's orphanages not only received education, but were also taught specific crafts. During those years the AGBU also founded the Cilician orphanage/workshop, a women's asylum and refugee centre in Aleppo, women's workshops and clinics in Thessaloniki, Athens, Piraeus and Mitilini

²³ Voskematian Haykakan Baregortsakan Endhanur Miutian, Artsatia hobelian, 1906-1931 [Golden Book of AGBU, Silver Jubilee, 1906-1931], vol. I: 65-71.

(Greece), stations for adult orphan girls in Cairo and Alexandria, an asylum/workshop in Beirut etc.²⁴

During World War I, when, as a result of military action between Turkey and Russia, hundreds of thousands of Armenians fled in panic to Russia (i.e. Eastern Armenia), the AGBU, upon the initiative of Boghos Nubar and Yacoub Artin, organised a "General Fundraising to the Benefit of Caucasian Refugees", the first in the history of the Union. However, in the following years, due to the difficult military and political situation in the region, assistance to Armenian refugees became impossible. Only after the restoration of Armenian statehood and establishment of the First Republic of Armenia in 1918, and then the stabilization of the situation in Soviet Armenia AGBU took steps to start its activity in Armenia.

²⁴ Armenian General Benevolent Union. Historic outline, 1906-1946: 5-31; Melkonian 2005: 81-165.

CHAPTER 1

AGBU PROGRAMS IN SOVIET ARMENIA

The Armenians abroad and especially those in Europe were well aware of the situation in Russia after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Hundreds of thousands from among Russian nobility, intellectuals and officers have fled to Paris, Berlin, Prague and other European cities. They had witnessed the red terror, the policy of extermination of the so-called "counter-revolutionary elements." The Armenians abroad also knew of the fatal consequences of Bolshevik-ordered hasty withdrawal of the Russian troops from the Caucasian front. They were aware of the close partnership forged between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey, they knew that the military and financial assistance of the former had greatly contributed towards the victory of the latter in the Greco-Turkish war, that for its own political gain Soviet Russia was prepared to accommodate many more requirements of Turkey, which was attested by the transfer of Kars under Turkish jurisdiction and handing over of Nakhijevan and Karabagh to the nascent Azerbaijani Republic. Along with all this it was nevertheless known that all attempts by foreign powers as well as by domestic opposition to overthrow the Bolshevik regime had failed and that Soviet power was gradually establishing itself throughout almost all of the former Russian Empire including, as of November, 1920, Armenia. Western powers refused to acknowledge and resented the ideology and policies of the Bolsheviks, but they nonetheless had to not only come to terms with the existence of the Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union, but also to recognize it and establish relations with it. All of the Diaspora organizations and their supporters were facing a similar dilemma: whether they should or should not recognize the new Bolshevik authorities of Armenia. This issue came to the forefront and had determined the relationships between the Armenian Diaspora and Soviet Armenia for the seven subsequent decades.²⁵ The AGBU also faced this inexorable challenge.

Permission to operate in Soviet Armenia, resettlement of orphans

The new order established in Armenia was undoubtedly alien to Boghos Nubar and his colleagues but, pragmatic people as they were, they well realized that in the situation that had emerged, especially following the 1923 Lausanne Conference, the only Armenian-populated parcel that remained of the homeland was Soviet Armenia, and that its existence was secured only within the framework of the Soviet Union. However, the acceptance of this fact and the consequent disposition to deal with Soviet Armenia were not enough, and the agreement of the Armenian authorities was asked for. From the very onset the Armenian communists, in line with the principles of class struggle already at work in Russia, not only banned the activity of Armenian national

²⁵ Dallakian 1994: 33-83.

parties within the country, but also embarked on a campaign against them and their affiliate organizations in the Diaspora. From the point of view of Armenian authorities the AGBU, however, somewhat stood aside from and was less objectionable than the other well-known major organizations operating abroad. First of all the Union possessed the "advantage" of essentially not having co-operated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsoutiun) that governed during the brief existence of the First Armenian Republic. And although the governing bodies of the Union included, since 1921, several members of the Liberal-Democratic (Ramkavar) party, it nevertheless presented itself as an independent charity of a purely non-political nature. The fact that the AGBU was one of the most authoritative and financially sound organizations of the Diaspora was also quite important. In any case the first move in establishing relations with Soviet Armenia was left to the AGBU.

On August 30, 1921, the Board of Directors of the AGBU published a special statement entitled "The AGBU in Armenia":

"The Board of Directors of the AGBU, in response to calls addressed to it from official and other circles and in order to organize assistance also within the territory of the Armenian Republic, has agreed to expand the operations of the AGBU also into Armenia, where, as it is known, the people are subjected to starvation and misery.

"With this respect the Board of Directors has embarked on negotiations, upon the outcome of which it shall commence its efforts and promote the noble objectives of the Union in Armenia.

"At this point the Union is obliged to inform that it has adopted this important decision in spite of the fact that the current funds of the Union do not allow for new assignments, since it has already assumed the burden, especially in Cilicia, of a number of various institutions. Nevertheless it believes that the nation, in appreciation of the exceptional importance of this decision, shall in turn proceed to support it."²⁶

The implementation of this decision was impeded by the lack of relations between the parties as well as by the limited financial capacity of the Union. For this reason the Board of Directors had to mention: "Unfortunately the circumstances preclude an organized effort, it was just possible to arrange once through the Constantinople chapter and the Near East Relief a shipment of aid to the hungry in Armenia at the total value of 1,270 Egyptian Pounds..., 14 bales of capotes (227 packs), 28 bales and boxes of new clothing (woolen shirts, socks, shoes etc.) and 350 bags of flour. Needless to mention, we shall use any favorable opportunity to further expand our assistance to the unfortunate people of Armenia."²⁷ Several months later, in the Spring of 1922, the AGBU allocates its second aid package to Armenia to the amount of 1,000 pounds sterling to purchase and ship to Armenia seeds and medication.²⁸

²⁶ AGBU - 1920-1921: 95.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Miutyun, March-April, no. 86, 1922: 17.

In those days it still remained to be seen whether the AGBU could get clearance to unfold its operations in Soviet Armenia and to what extent it would be granted. Provided such clearance was received, the issues of what terms and conditions would be attached, as well as the positions of its members and supporters towards such co-operation, were also quite unclear. A renowned politician of the time Avedis Terzibashian recalls a conversation with Boghos Nubar in Paris in 1923 as follows:

"...the Pasha immediately steered the conversation to the memorandum I had submitted to the Central Board of the Baregortsakan upon my return to Constantinople from Armenia in the beginning of 1923. I had suggested in the memorandum to resettle the orphans from Syria, Palestine and Greece to Armenia. Along with the willingness of the Government of Armenia to receive them, I had listed a number of other advantages in the memorandum: the price of food and the exchange rate differential, that would almost halve the appropriations for orphans from the Baregortsakan budget. When I further added in conversation that the orphans in Armenia shall grow up under better discipline, the Pasha retorted:

"Under this discipline of yours Armenian orphans shall all turn into Bolsheviks, won't they?"

"I can not exclude that."

"Will the Bolsheviks allow the Armenian orphans to learn their language, their history, religion?" carried on the Pasha.

"Language and history - yes, but not religion, and history at that not in the way we see it. This, of course, shall be an inconvenience."

"And you still insist on proposing it."

"As the lesser of two evils."

The Pasha held his chin in one hand, pressing the index finger against his forehead, pondered for a while and then, suddenly:

"I have to agree that compared to the desperate condition of the orphans this would be the least of evils."

Then added with a smile:

"Provided you have not been converted to Bolshevism."

And he laughed heartily over the joke."²⁹

Boghos Nubar quickly overcame his concerns over Armenian orphans turning into Bolsheviks, maybe he genuinely regarded this alternative as "the least of evils", since in the same year of 1923 in Spring the issue of resettling the orphans was discussed with the representative of Soviet Armenia at the Lyons Fair A. Piralov, who wrote in a report to the Council of the People's Commissars (the government) of Armenia:

"The issue of resettling orphanages from Syria has been put forth by the Benevolent Union of Egypt (this refers to the AGBU, since its headquarters then were still in Cairo - Ed. M.) in view of the deterioration of Franco-Turkish relations... Aghaton Bey (Yervant Aghaton - Ed. M.) maintains that the resettlement of orphans should

²⁹ Terzibashian 1939: 360-361.

commence immediately, so I had to explain to him that in view of the acute housing crisis it would be absolutely impossible at this point, unless the Union underwrites the construction of units to house the 1,300 orphans and remits to Armenia the funds necessary for their ongoing upkeep, since I find that in the present circumstances the possibility of encumbering the Armenian government with such expenditure is highly unlikely."³⁰

In the Summer of 1923 the envoys of the Union L. Bashalian and G. Assadour discussed with the government of Armenia issues pertaining to the transportation and accommodation of orphans, and in the Fall, when the Union was invited to Yerevan to participate in the 3rd Congress of the HOK (Relief Committee for Armenia), the negotiations were carried on by the representative of the Union Yessayee Garigian. Garigian was convinced that all of the Diaspora and the AGBU in particular should submit their entire financial potential to resolve the many vital issues of Armenia, and he conducted the negotiations in the same spirit.

On October 30, 1923, in a letter addressed to the People's Commissar (Minister) for Education of Armenia Askanaz Mravian, Garigian suggested that the government allocate the AGBU a land plot around Yeghvard and Dalma, to cultivate it and to settle the orphans in. Mravian replied that the government of Armenia, "in response to your proposal that aims at supporting a segment of our miserable army of orphans and ensuring a sustainable economic basis for their future, allows the AGBU to carry out its operations within the borders of Armenian SSR, pursuant to provisions outlined in the 22 Articles attached hereto."³¹ The "provisions outlined in 22 Articles" was signed in October, 1923, by A. Mravian and the People's Commissar for Agriculture Aramayis Yerznkian. They pertained to the activities expected from the AGBU: cultivation of land, construction and rehabilitation of canals, construction of orphanages, education and employment for orphans etc. The most important among these was Article 1:

"The Council of People's Commissars of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic permits charitable activities of the Armenian General Benevolent Union in the territory of Soviet Armenia for the purpose of supporting the reconstruction of the country and the economic, physical, and cultural development of the people."³²

By virtue of this article, the AGBU became the only organization of the Diaspora that was granted permission to operate in Soviet Armenia during the next fourteen years. The Union's activity in Armenia were characterized by the fact that it did not establish a single chapter there. There were essentially two reasons for this. According to the Union's Bylaws the members of a chapter had to pay membership dues and part of the funds was to be put under the disposal of the Board of Directors. Understandably in the case of Armenia, in view of the extremely low standard of living this condition became senseless and impracticable. There was also another reason of a more political

³⁰ NAA, 113/ 43/ 150, p. 111.

³¹ Ibid. p. 56.

³² Ibid. p. 57.

nature. It was beyond doubt that the Armenian authorities would never tolerate for the citizens of the Soviet Union to enroll in a foreign, albeit Armenian, but still a "bourgeois" organization, as they would put it. On the other hand, even if it were possible, the very chapters thus established would have become levers in the hands of the ruling communist party, the bearers and conduits of its ideology. This was already something that the Union could hardly agree to.

In December, 1923, the issue of resettlement of orphans was raised by the Chairman of Council of People's Commissars of Armenia Sarkis Loukashin (Srapionian). In an address at the Third Congress of Workers, Peasants and Red Army Deputies he stated, with all certainty, the conditions that had to be met by all Diaspora organizations, including the AGBU, that wished to co-operate with Armenia. "For all foreign Armenian organizations that wish to practically contribute to the construction of the country there is no problem, the road is open provided, however, that no attempts are made to get involved in politics, since we have no concessions to make to them in the political domain and there is nothing to talk about here. We shall not talk not only about political issues, but also with any political organization since we do not know of such organizations. We do not know of any national delegation, its head or deputy head: they may deal with us and expect reciprocity only provided they come up as foreign benevolent organizations or individual representatives of such organizations." Subsequently, the head of the government mentions the AGBU as a possible partner. "Our country has an immense number of orphans, up to 30,000, of which about 25,000 are cared for by foreign benevolent organizations. We do want to accept and bring up in the spirit of our ideas all our orphans who are abroad, but we do not have financial means to do so. We have made it clear that if the Diasporan communities decide to temporarily ensure subsistence of these orphans within the country, we would take care of their lodging, land, etc. We have already reached a certain agreement over the issue with the Egyptian Benevolent Union (the head of the government refers to the AGBU - Ed. M.)".³³

Such warnings were redundant in the case of AGBU: Boghos Nubar had no intention to engage in political activity in Soviet Armenia. His main preoccupation was the future of Armenian refugees and especially the youth sheltered in many countries of the world. By the end of December, 1923, at the next annual general meeting of the AGBU, Boghos Nubar made a special reference to the issue of orphans.

"Of course, it is impossible to remove from our orphanages all the children that came of age. By doing so, we would expose them to numerous moral and financial challenges. On the other hand, it is unacceptable to go on keeping them beyond a certain age, since they would thus get used to leisurely and irresponsible life. In these circumstances, it would be extremely difficult for us to maintain the operation of our orphanages and keep them there for an unlimited time. The primary objective of our orphanages is the general and vocational education of young boys and girls, ... so that

³³ Loukashin (Srapionian) 1996: 163-164.

they are able to sustain their living after they leave us. ... the important issue is to find a job for the youth leaving the orphanage, and this becomes increasingly difficult, since the supply much exceeds the demand, especially in the areas where our orphanages are located and where preference is given to local youth over ours. At the same time, the Union cannot encourage them to move to other countries where difficulties are abundant, and where they would eventually have to surrender their national identity." After such sober and realistic assessment of the situation, Boghos Nubar proposed a solution that had a crucial impact on the relations between the AGBU and Soviet Armenia. "The Board of Directors proposed a solution that best answers our national aspirations and is consonant with our patriotic feelings: they suggest to resettle all 17 year-old orphans in Armenia, where they are sure to find a job in farming and crafts. They would earn their living and serve their country. Thus their dispersion over the world would diminish and the number of Armenians in the homeland would increase accordingly, something that is a great benefit in terms of our national future."³⁴

In January, 1924, the chairman of the Central Board of the HOK Aramays Yerznkian signed a document that was circulated to all communities of the Armenian Diaspora and that clarified the decisions previously taken by the HOK. Mentioning that "the HOK should only be involved in the rehabilitation of Armenia," that "...all the issues raised would be duly addressed by HOK as they emerge and certainly with the support of the Armenian communities," the circular note states in conclusion that "the Board appeals to you to exert all your efforts in helping us to resolve all pending issues in the most expeditious manner and thus contribute to operations aiming at taking the Armenian peasants out of the present dire economic straits."³⁵ (for an overview of relationships between the HOK and the AGBU, refer to chapter three).

In response to this appeal, the AGBU issued a "Circular of Hon. Boghos Nubar Pasha on aid to Armenia addressed to all chapters of the AGBU." Mentioning that the Union is extremely supportive of national undertakings by the government of Armenia, the President of AGBU qualified it as "...the utmost patriotic and humanitarian activity, ... to which we should render our immediate support." This circular was extremely important in that it clearly upheld the issue of immigration of all refugees to Armenia. "Indeed, all our efforts should target bringing and uniting the biggest possible number of Armenians scattered all over the world to this region which is Armenia, but it is also important," reads the circular, "that we help prepare and enable this country to receive them all, ensure that all measures are taken in advance to protect them from epidemics and other perils. This is really an important point since the increased number of people in Armenia to whom we contribute should live there in adequate health conditions, in a friendly environment for their activities, and should be able to obtain jobs to sustain their living, thus contributing to the overall prosperity of the country."³⁶ The proposal of the

³⁴ AGBU - 1922: 26-27.

³⁵ Miutyun, March-April, no. 98, 1924: 24.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 23.

Armenian authorities on supporting agricultural development of the country was in accord with the idea of Boghos Nubar that "...agricultural development should be an area where we may succeed most in ensuring the livelihood for our orphans so that they do not become a burden for the government of Armenia. This is exactly why we will try to find lands in Armenia suitable for cultivation, so that our orphans who establish residence there are able to earn their daily bread. This way, we anticipate the cooperation of the Yerevan authorities that undoubtedly will gladly accept our orphans."³⁷ The President of the AGBU was faithful to his principle "Not in word, but in deed." In his letter to Aramayis Yerznkian of December, 1923, he wrote: "In my cable of the last day of November I confirm the transfer of one thousand (1,000) British pounds from Lloyds & National Provincial Foreign Bank Limited (London) to the benefit of the agricultural development fund."³⁸

Such high appraisal of the operations of the government of Armenia and the willingness to co-operate did not prevent, however, the leaders of the AGBU from maintaining a reserved and practical approach towards the proposals of the government. On March 3, 1924, Boghos Nubar wrote two letters in reference to the exchange of correspondence between Yessayee Garigian and the People's Commissar for Education Askanaz Mravian. The first letter referred to the issue of allocation of a land parcel. "By this letter, you kindly inform us that the government agrees to allocate to the General Benevolent Union 10,000 *desyatinas* (one *desyatina* = 1.1 hectares - Ed. M.) of land so that parts of it are distributed to the orphans who can establish residence and families there. ...The Board of Directors would accept these ("conditions" - Ed. M.) provisionally. The final conditions should be endorsed unanimously after a technical mission is deployed to Armenia and an on-site assessment and a budget (*devis*) are prepared for the formulation of the final program. ...Indeed, it is necessary that the Union is confident that the cost of cultivation of the land provided does not exceed the allocated amounts and that we are able to meet our obligations..."³⁹

Boghos Nubar's second letter of March 3 refers to the issue of resettlement of orphans. "Mr. Yessayee Garigian shared with us the contents of your letter of November 3, 1923, where you inform that the Government of Armenian SSR is willing to accept 2,000 Armenian orphans 16 and more years of age, provided that the amount of 100 (hundred) dollars is paid for each of them to procure 1 year's food. The Board of Directors of the AGBU gratefully accepts your suggestion since we wholeheartedly wish that these Armenians are not forever lost for the motherland and would be able, under the auspices of the government of the Armenian SSR, establish residence, employment, and families and preserve their national identity. We are preparing to send over 150-200 orphans, the most senior ones, and would pay, as per our agreement, one hundred dollars for each of them."⁴⁰

³⁷ AGBU - 1922: 27-28.

³⁸ NAA, 113/ 43/ 150, p. 60.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 87.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 86.

The members of the AGBU and its leaders clearly perceived the responsibility they assumed by taking the decision to resettle their orphans in Armenia. The famine and epidemics that overwhelmed the country, tens of thousands of homeless refugees and unemployed were enough to put a big question mark over this decision.

As mentioned earlier, hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees had to flee their homes during World War I and resettled in Eastern Armenia. By approximate estimates, during the existence of the First Armenian Republic there were more than 50,000 orphaned or homeless children registered, and the government had to establish a "National Department on Orphanages" to address their issues. The establishment of the Soviet regime did not have any significant impact on the general conditions of these children. The buildings of most public orphanages were dilapidated and not fit for dwelling; in most of them children had to share cots and plates. Due to lack of heaters hundreds of children fell sick and starvation drove many away. In 1925 one of the official bulletins of the Commissariat for Education mentioned that about 6% of the country's population were orphans and further described the conditions prevailing in the orphanages. "The conditions in the orphanages are deplorable. The majority of the buildings do not correspond to the requirements. Only 50% of the children have beds, and the rest sleep on the floor. The bed comprises a straw-filled mattress and a pillow. There are no bedclothes whatsoever. The heaters in the rooms are defunct, children often fall sick, at nights four to five children have to share beds to keep warm. It is not even worth discussing clothes and underwear... only 25% of the children are healthy..."⁴¹ A report by the orphanage department of the Commissariat for Education reads that 2,091 orphans from the Yerevan, Ashtarak, Nor Bayazet and Echmiadzin orphanages "during January - February, were deprived of 78.9% of their meagre food allocation. Obviously, there will be no colour on the orphans' cheeks, no sparkle in their eyes, the educational process has to slow down, and morbidity prevails."⁴² The future of the children was of great concern since they were not prepared for an independent life.

In Boghos Nubar's words, "We do realise the problems that hinder the comfortable accommodation of hundreds of orphans in Armenia and we share the preoccupation of the Board of Directors in relation to the future well-being of their children for whom they had cared for years."⁴³ Therefore, a lengthy process of negotiation commenced between the leaders of the Union and the authorities of Soviet Armenia with a purpose of finding the best options for transportation, accommodation and employment of the orphans. It is worth mentioning that the Armenian authorities, in spite of all problems, displayed great interest towards most expeditious transfer of the children to Armenia. At its October 20, 1924, session the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) established a special commission in charge of transportation, receipt and accommodation of the AGBU's orphans, headed by the secretary of the Central

⁴¹ NAA, 122 /1/ 333, p 44.

⁴² Ibid., p. 104.

⁴³ AGBU - 1923: 26.

Committee of the Armenian Union of Communist Youth (Komsomol) Garegin Goumedin (Melik-Dadayan). Such an attitude on the part of the authorities could and should be explained by their perception of the importance of the issue for the national interests and by the fact that co-operation with one of the largest and most important organizations of the diaspora, the AGBU, in the matter of transfer to Armenia of orphan children, was an important propaganda coup contributing to the increased credibility of the Bolshevik regime. It can be said that this was the first manifestation of a unique phenomenon in Armenia, the intersection of national, political and ideological interests, something that the Armenian authorities would successfully revert to in the years to come.

On October 26, 1924, 250 children from the AGBU's orphanages boarded the Soviet steamer "Kerch" in the Palestinian port of Jaffa and sailed to Batumi, Georgia, where they took a train to Armenia. Of these 250 orphans, 158 were from the Jerusalem Araratian orphanage, 81 from the Aleppo Kilikian orphanage and 11 from the Beirut Kelekian-Sisvan orphanage. One hundred and ninety four orphans were between 15-17, and 56 between 18-20 years of age. In the orphanages they learned crafts (shoe-making, woodworking, tailoring, blacksmithing, typesetting, etc.) that became the safeguard of their independent life in Armenia. Apart from underwriting all transportation charges, the Union paid to the Government of Armenia one hundred US dollars per each orphan "as a compensation for their first year's subsistence expenses."⁴⁴ Moreover, "these orphaned craftsmen shall also carry on them to Armenia the small sums they had saved from their weekly wages and deposited with the Union." The Union seemed to have provided for everything to ensure the successful resettlement and placement of its protégés: "apart from the two officials who will monitor the transfer of the orphans, the latter shall be accompanied by a doctor... to this end an adequate supply of medications has been allocated as of today. The clothing needs of the orphans have been fully covered. They shall carry with them bedding, blankets, everyday winter clothing with spares, shoes, underwear etc. The food shall be prepared on board of the ship, for which the necessary supplies have been provided."⁴⁵ As a gift to Armenia the orphans also were taking with them 69 volumes of academic and architectural publications donated by architects G. Assadour, L. Ourakhian and H. Taffa.

Upon arrival in Armenia the boys should have recalled the message of the General Secretary of Near East Relief Charles Vickrey, delivered to them in the Union's Jerusalem orphanage during his visit there in 1923: "I have been visiting Armenia for four successive years now and I am glad to inform you that every time I find it improved over the preceding year... Armenia has everything it needs to progress, the natural resources are abundant, all it needs is hard work and peace, and with these two in place it will become a happy country. Therefore, from now on, instead of looking for employment in America, you should go to your own land, to work and build a country

⁴⁴ AGBU – 1924: 28.

⁴⁵ Miutyun, September-October, no. 101, 1924:66.

there. Maybe it would be premature to take you to Armenia right now, but you should work on your character and one day you will be able to return to your motherland with a sound character."⁴⁶

The first reference to orphans transported to the homeland is to be found in the 1925 information bulletin of the Orphanages Department, Commissariat for Education. "On the 15th of last November 250 orphan students aged between 15-20 have reached Yerevan from Jaffa through the port of Batumi. They had been living abroad in Jerusalem, Aleppo and Beirut. Most of these are craftsmen or apprentices. 60 of them were sent to learn crafts at the Central workshop/school..., 4 have assumed the post of drivers in the Sardarapat region, 24 were sent to the Vagharshapat Children's Commune to engage in agriculture. The placement of the remaining is underway."⁴⁷

Such a resettlement of children from the Union's orphanages to Soviet Armenia had no precedents. And the undertaking did not carry on into the subsequent years. This position of the Union can hardly be explained by the danger of the children being brought up in Armenia in the spirit of Bolshevism, since there were more serious considerations involved. Even assuming that Boghos Nubar, along with the leaders of the Union, was not aware of the numerous eyewitness accounts of the situation that prevailed in Soviet Armenia, they could not help learning of it following the resettlement of the orphans, after which subsequent transports of orphans to Armenia became impossible.

Nor Eudokia

Following the resettlement of the orphans, cooperation between the Union and Armenia steadily picked up momentum. Already the next year, in January, 1925, following lengthy negotiations, three agreements were signed between the representative of Soviet Armenia Aramayis Yerznkian, who came to Paris for that purpose, and the President of the AGBU Boghos Nubar, the Treasurer, Levon Gumushguerdan and the Director General Grigor Sinapian. One of these agreements, which provided for establishing an orphanage in Armenia, was not implemented for a number of reasons.

"An agreement on founding a village of Nor Eudokia (New Eudokia) in Armenia under the Meotemetian will" - this was the title of the second agreement between Soviet Armenia and the AGBU, that contained 8 articles.

"Article 1. The Benevolent Union allocates under the disposition of the Armenian Government the amount of 2,600 Egyptian pounds, with the purpose of founding a village in Armenia. The new village shall bear the name "New Eudokia", in accordance with the will of the heirs of the benefactor"

⁴⁶ Ibid., July-August, no. 94, 1923: 52-53.

⁴⁷ NAA, 122/1/333, p. 98.

"Article 2. The village shall be found in Evgilar where land parcels shall be disbursed out of the public land reserve to refugees from Eudokia that have come to Armenia.

"Article 3. Initially as many families shall settle in these lands as the amount of 2,600 Egyptian pounds may accommodate, provided a little house is built for each family, and each is appropriated a draft animal, agricultural implements, seeds, etc.

"Article 4. The annual proceeds from the Meotemetian trust following a 10% deduction for the Union's administrative expenses shall be used each year towards the expansion and improvement of the village of New Eudokia. First of all a school shall be built in New Eudokia with these funds that shall bear the name of the Meotemetian school...

"Article 5. Each household or individual settled in the village of New Eudokia shall return the funds given to them or spent on them. These payments shall be made annually in equal installments, free of interest for 10 years, beginning with the fifth year following the hand-over or expenditure of funds.

"Article 6. ... the amounts returned by the villagers shall be used towards the development of the village of New Eudokia.

"Article 7. The implementation of this Agreement, that is the selection of the villagers and their settlement, the appropriation of land parcels, the planning of the village, the allocation of funds to each homeowner for the construction of the house, the amount of implements to be given to each household, the procedure for paying back the funds received or spent has been delegated by the AGBU to the Relief Committee for Armenia (HOK), that shall coordinate the above issues with the Government of Armenia and the Supreme Technical Division..."⁴⁸

By the end of 1925 there were already 20 families of exiles from Tokat (Eudokia) living in the village of Nor Eudokia. Shortly thereafter, though, it became clear that the location of the village, from the point of view of the climate as well as that of the quantity of the lands posed almost insurmountable difficulties and inconveniences for the villagers. For this reason, they had to use the good offices of the Union to apply to the Armenian authorities with a request to relocate the village. Finally, by the middle of 1929, it was decided to relocate the village of Nor Eudokia to a place 4 km away from Echmiadzin, "a most convenient location on the road leaving from Echmiadzin to Mount Ararat, with 100-150 hectares of already cultivated fertile land. The preliminary works and the preparation of master plans have already commenced. Under present conditions the economic prosperity of Nor Eudokia may be deemed assured if the wealthy individuals of Tokat origin display interest in the fate of this village."⁴⁹ Naturally the relocation of Nor Eudokia was asking for additional unforeseen expenses, especially in view of the population growth, ever increasing with the influx of exiles from Tokat. The revenue from the Meotemetian trust that the Union was administering was no longer sufficient and the Union was rightfully expecting financial assistance from the wealthy Tokatsis living throughout the Diaspora. The assistance, though, was not hurried.

⁴⁸ Miutyun, January-February, no. 103, 1925:11-12.

⁴⁹ Ibid, June-July, no 132, 1929:178.

"Although it is lamentable that our brethren from Tokat and the Tokat Compatriotic Union remain deaf to the heartbreaking calls with respect to Nor Eudokia, we shall nevertheless spare no effort in ensuring the welfare of the population of the first settlement sponsored by the Union..."⁵⁰ These efforts yielded palpable results. In a 1934 memorandum addressed to the Union, the building committee of the village wrote: "We hereby have the honour to inform that Nor Eudokia is developed as planned, that is there are 11 beautiful houses, wide streets, electrical lighting, irrigation canals, beautiful gardens, there are parks and orchards next to the houses, wells have been dug with pumps for pure cold water. In other words, although with difficulty, but a beautiful settlement has been built for the inhabitants of Nor Eudokia with all cultured amenities, and a current population of 130 immigrants..."⁵¹

The last piece of information on Nor Eudokia, the first settlement founded in Soviet Armenia by the AGBU, which, incidentally, was also the first ever settlement of Armenian repatriates, pertains to the year of 1937. Only a few days were remaining until the decision by Soviet authorities to ban the operation of the Union in the country, whereas the latter was developing new programmes and was proudly reporting of its accomplishments: "Presently there are 135 people of Tokat origin living in 35 dwellings in the village of Nor Eudokia built by the Union in Armenia. The economic standing of the population of Nor Eudokia has improved significantly, it disposes of 11 hectares of gardens and 6 hectares of fruit trees, as well as 40 hectares of cultivable land. The allocation of additional 69 English pounds out of the proceeds from the Union's Meotemetian Fund shall be used towards the construction of another big cattle-shed. There is an immediate need for more housing in Nor Eudokia, especially in view of the forthcoming wave of fugitives, and in this connection it is expected that assistance from the Tokatsis abroad shall not be delinquent. We have also completed the construction of a kindergarten and a day nursery, which was paid for by the 1,000 dollars provided by the New York Tokat Educational Society and the generous grant (5,000 roubles) by the Government. The same Society has recently donated 600 dollars, which shall be used to build a shared community barn."⁵²

Hospitals

The second agreement concluded between Soviet Armenia and the AGBU in January, 1925, was called the "Agreement on establishing a Maternity Hospital in Armenia under the Tarouhi Hagopian testament", and it contained the following principal provisions:

"Article 1. The Benevolent Union...undertakes to allocate from the above fund (Tarouhi Hagopian Fund - Ed. M.) the amount of 7,110 pounds sterling towards the

⁵⁰ Ibid, November-December, no. 170, 1934:83.

⁵¹ Ibid, July-August, no. 168, 1934: 59.

⁵² Ibid, May-June, no. 185, 1937: 35.

construction in Yerevan of a Maternity Hospital and the organization therein of training courses to prepare obstetricians. The land necessary for the construction of such building shall be allotted free of charge and for eternity by the Government of the Armenian SSR.

"Article 2. The Armenian Government agrees to assume responsibility for the construction of the Maternity Hospital and the Obstetrics Training Centre...

"Article 3. If the construction expenses of the said Maternity Hospital exceed the amount of 7,110 pounds sterling, the balance shall be covered by the Armenian Government.

"Article 5. All upkeep and maintenance expenses of the Maternity Hospital, including furnishing, equipment, medications, food, laundry, power, heating, the faculty, administration and staff shall be borne by the Armenian Government. The Tarouhi Hagopian Fund shall only cover the expenses of the training of obstetricians, determined at the annual level of 800 pounds sterling..."⁵³

The opening ceremony of the Tarouhi Hagopian Maternity Hospital (Architect Alexander Tamanian, member of the Academy) took place on March 10, 1929, with the participation of the Deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars Askanaz Mravian, the People's Commissar for Health M. Kartashian and other officials, including the representative of the AGBU in Armenia since 1928 Haikaz Karageusian. From the very first day of its existence the Tarouhi Hagopian Maternity Hospital became one of the major and most important medical institutions of Armenia. It comprised three main departments: of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Postnatal care, that together on the average received annually 5,000 in-patients and there were even more people who visited for consultations. The hospital also had an "obstetrics vocational school" whose graduates (approximately 40 every year) went on to work in the Tarouhi Hagopian Maternity Hospital as well as in other clinics of Armenia. Another very important undertaking was the training course offered in the hospital 6 times a month on "...pregnancy, childbirth, postnatal medical care... infant conditions and care, consequences of abortion, the use of contraceptives..."⁵⁴ and other issues. On the background of the general development level of the population at large through those years the importance of the course cannot be overestimated.

The first director of the clinic was Professor Grigor Areshian, who had received professional education at the University of Kiev (the Ukraine) and had worked as an obstetrician-gynecologist in the hospitals of Kiev and Tbilisi. In 1923 he founded a chair of gynecology and obstetrics at the medical department of Yerevan State University (which later splintered into the Medical Institute), and headed it until 1957. Professor Areshian gathered around him at the Tarouhi Hagopian Maternity Hospital a group of talented specialists, including his assistants Ashot Aharonov (Aharonian) and Partev Markarian. Professor Aharonov was also a graduate of the University of Kiev, and he

⁵³ Ibid, January-February, no. 103, 1925: 10-11.

⁵⁴ Ibid, July-August, no. 162, 1933:59.

subsequently became one of the most renowned specialists in the field not only of Armenia, but of the entire Soviet Union. As for Professor Margarian, in 1937 he organised the municipal maternity Hospital of Yerevan and headed it until 1950; later he was the director of the Research Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology between 1949-1973. Thus the formative period of Armenia's three most authoritative and outstanding obstetrician-gynecologists ties directly to the Tarouhi Hagopian Maternity Hospital. As of 1937 the clinic was no longer named after Tarouhi Hagopian.

Up Abovian street from this complex (today at 60/1 Abovian str.) there is another structure that still catches the eye today, the Marie Nubar Ophthalmological Clinic, built through a donation of Boghos Nubar in memory of his lamented wife. The construction of the Clinic (architect Leon Nafilian from Paris) was completed and it was officially transferred to the Government of Armenia on November 20, 1929. On this occasion the President of the Union Boghos Nubar addressed a special message to the Chairman of the Government of Armenia: "I request your forgiveness for my failure to attend the opening ceremony of the Eye Clinic in view of my advanced age and health condition. I would have considered myself privileged to hand it over to the Government in person, as my modest contribution towards rebuilding the motherland, an issue that you dauntlessly pursue."⁵⁵ The response of the Armenian Government, mentioned, among others, that: "The Government appreciates not only the assistance that You, through the construction of the Eye Clinic, render to the task of rebuilding Soviet Armenia, but also the fact that You are closely interested in the future fate of the country."⁵⁶

The Marie Nubar Clinic was also reserved an important role in the system of health care institutions of Armenia. On one hand a diversity of eye conditions proliferated in the country, especially trachoma and, on the other, there were no specialised clinics to treat them. During its first year of operation, 1930, the clinic "...treated 11,090 cases (of which trachoma accounted for 4,559), and performed 983 eye surgeries. 306 in-patients were treated, of which 250 were Armenian (only 16 were children under 15 years of age), which fact illustrates that children are far less susceptible to eye conditions."⁵⁷ In the 1930s the Marie Nubar Eye Clinic, concurrent with purely therapeutic applications, launched successful academic research programs, which brought it to the foreground of medical research and made it one of the leading centres in the Soviet Union. In this respect the endeavors of professor Babken Melik-Moussian were most noteworthy, he was one of the leading specialists of the clinic beginning with the 1930s and subsequently became its director. In 1937 the Eye Clinic too ceased to be named after Marie Nubar and only more than half a century later its initial name was reestablished.

Back in 1924 the leadership of the Union had reached an agreement with Aramayis Yerznkian in Paris about founding a village in Armenia with the donation by Vergineh Sarkiss of one thousand pounds sterling. Nevertheless it became obvious in

⁵⁵ Ibid, December, no. 135, 1929:232.

⁵⁶ AGBU – 1930:77.

⁵⁷ AGBU – 1931:59.

Yerevan that the stated amount was by no means sufficient for the purpose. Finally, upon the agreement of the parties, it was decided to build the Aved Sarkiss Pasteurization (Antirabic) Center in Yerevan, in memory of the late husband of the donor. It opened its doors in 1930. Despite the proliferation of rabies in Armenia in those years, transmitted by the thousands of stray dogs, the country lacked a dedicated specialized medical service to take care of it. In the initial stage of the operation of Aved Sarkiss Center the vaccine for rabies was imported from Tbilisi. In 1931 the Center, while preserving the name of Avet Sarkiss, was transferred to the new building of the Sanitary-hygienic Institute, where almost all conditions were in place for its full-scale operation. In November of the same year the Center, for the first time ever in Armenia, began to produce its own vaccine in the necessary quantities. Branches of the Aved Sarkis Antirabic Center were opened in Gharakilis and Leninakan (presently Vanadzor and Gyumri).

The AGBU, having founded the above medical institutions, was taking ongoing care of their diverse needs, in particular, it was providing most up-to-date equipment, medications etc. This is how the People's Commissariat for Health assessed the activities of the Benevolent Union in Armenia in 1933: "We received with gratitude the implements and equipment donated to the Tarouhi Hagopian Maternity Hospital. This is not the first time that the Paris Armenian Benevolent Society is displaying sensitive and regardful attitude towards the cultural undertakings of Soviet Armenia... you pay special attention to and spare no efforts to contribute with your means to equipping and ensuring the welfare of our medical institutions... The academic standing and the modern equipment of the Marie Nubar Clinic are the best safeguards of successful treatment of eye conditions, for which you never falter to do whatever may be necessary."⁵⁸

Scientific and Educational Programs, "AGBU House"

In one of his articles of 1928 Arshag Tchopanian emphasizes the exceptional importance of the Yerevan State University for the spiritual and intellectual development of the Armenian people, and states that: "It is unforgivable though, for the patriotic Armenians abroad, having rejoiced at recognizing this exhilarating reality, to consider their dues thus paid, or even to indulge in revealing and criticizing the shortcomings of this institution, some of which may be determined by the regime, but most are a result of downright poverty. We should contribute to the development and strengthening of this institution, we should take notice of its handicaps with an intention to try and help rectify them." This call by Arshag Tchopanian was by no way addressed to the Union, conversely, what the Union had already done to benefit the University "...should be highlighted so that our patriots abroad are urged to follow its example."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Miutyun, September-October, no. 163, 1933: 67.

⁵⁹ Tchopanian 1928: 9.

The first major undertaking of the AGBU in the scientific and educational domain was immediately related to the unprecedented donation by Garabed and Grigor Melkonians, which was transferred to the AGBU in December, 1925, by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. The condition set forth by Garabed Melkonian, that is to sell the donated works and set up a trust fund was successfully fulfilled only by the end of 1927. The proceeds from the Melkonian Endowment Fund were used to establish the Melkonian Educational Institution in Nicosia, Cyprus, that functions until 2005. As well certain sums were allocated (and continue to be allocated) to the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem, etc. Apart from all these, through the efforts of the AGBU, it was decided to annually allocate 3,000 Egyptian pounds to the Yerevan State University on the condition, that the funds be "...only and exclusively used for the establishment and operation of chairs of Armenian literature and history, or for the general purpose of Armenian studies."⁶⁰

Beginning with the 1930s the Executive Committee of the Melkonian Fund embarked on the publication of Armenological studies. The eight volumes of the "Etymological Dictionary of the Armenian Language" by Hrachia Ajarian, the "Weights and Measures in Ancient Armenian Sources" and "Casual Studies" by Hakop Manandian, "The Theory of the Armenian Language" by Manouk Abeghian, "Old Yerevan" and "Mikael Nalbandian's works" by Yervand Shahaziz, "Building Materials and their Use in Ancient Armenia" by Toros Toramanian, "The Analysis of Komitas' Works" by Spiridon Melikian, "The Culture of Ancient Armenia" by Khachik Samuelian, the two volumes of "Georgian Sources on Armenia and Armenians" by Levon Melikset-Bek, and others, adding up to approximately 30 valuable academic monographs that were published on the expense of the Melkonian Fund. The publication of these works played a very important role in promoting Armenological studies in the country, developing Armenian science in general and preparing young scholars in history, archaeology, linguistics, etc. The chairs of Armenian studies at the State University and the Pedagogical Institute also received funding, including that for the preparation of post-graduate students. In 1933 the Melkonian Fund provided post-graduate scholarships for, among others, Megerdich Mkrian (Armenian Literature), Hmayak Haroutiounian and Serob Poghossian (History of Armenia), who years later became renowned scholars.

Along with all this the Executive Committee of the Melkonian Fund had undertaken, with the assistance of the Government, to build the "Matenadaran" - the Public Library and the printhouse (architect Alexander Tamanian). The AGBU paid for the importation of typographic, bookbinding and other equipment, as well as of typefaces in different languages that were extremely necessary especially for academic publications. The printhouse opened in May, 1936, but "...for want of experienced and skilled management it was unable to operate at its full capacity."⁶¹ As for the

⁶⁰ Miutyun, February, no. 128, 1929:118.

⁶¹ AGBU-1936: 57.

construction of the library building, by the same year of 1936 "...the progress in construction is relatively satisfactory. The right wing of the Matenadaran building, that houses the printshop, has all three floors completed up to the roof. Concurrently a number of other works have been implemented, that is the sewage and plumbing, the heating pipes, reinforced concrete ceilings etc."⁶² In February, 1937, when a resolution of the Government transfers from the Executive Committee to the State University the administration of amounts received from the Melkonian Fund, a memorandum prepared with this respect mentions that the building of the library is completed by 60%, and that within the preceding four years the Melkonian Endowment Fund has allocated 1,369,650, while the Government 1,219,873 roubles towards its construction.⁶³ By the resolution of December 8, 1937, of the Armenian authorities (I shall reflect on this later) the operation of the Melkonian Endowment Fund in the country was banned.

Throughout its activities in Armenia the AGBU offered ongoing support to Yerevan State University and especially important were its contributions of most modern equipment, materials etc. One of the numerous examples follows. Between 1925-1928 the head of the physics laboratory of the University Haroutioun Anjour (Chebotarian) was sent to Paris, where he worked at the Marie Curie laboratory. The Board of Directors of the AGBU, having learnt from Anjour about the needs of the laboratory he was heading, allocated 45,000 French francs for the acquisition of modern instruments and equipment.⁶⁴ Back in Yerevan, H. Anjour wrote in his letter of gratitude:

"I have the honour to inform you that the electrical and radio equipment generously donated by you to the physics laboratory of the Yerevan State University have been most useful and instrumental in our present work. The radio apparatus that you donated allows us to tune in and to sometimes allow the masses of our students to listen to broadcasts from Paris, Toulouse, Vienna, Berlin and other European radio stations. We try to assemble various receivers from the radio components that you donated, and the students thus receive an opportunity to gain experience in making radios."⁶⁵ To put the content of this letter in proper context it should be noted that in Soviet Armenia "...in 1927 there were 65 radio receivers (21 in urban settlements) ... in order to expand the circle of listeners the radio station has been moved to the theatre, the conservatory, workers' clubs, houses of culture, the army club, loudspeakers have been installed in public areas. ... In 1929 the "RV-21" transmitter was inaugurated, named after Atarbekian, thanks to which the broadcasts from Tbilissi and Baku have also become accessible."⁶⁶

It was mentioned above that the allocations from the Melkonian Endowment Fund to Yerevan State University were made possible through the efforts of the AGBU. This

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ NAA, 113/3/1698, p. 3, 27.

⁶⁴ Miutyun, September-October, no. 119, 1927:78.

⁶⁵ Ibid., May, no. 140, 1930:312.

⁶⁶ Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran [Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia], vol. 9: 569-570.

position of the Union and its President Boghos Nubar on the issue of preparing qualified specialists in Armenia was well-grounded. As early as December, 1924, in a letter addressed to the Government of Armenia, Boghos Nubar informed: "I have decided to donate 12,500 golden roubles to our Benevolent Union, instructing to allocate the annual income from this amount to Yerevan University for the exclusive purpose of awarding scholarships to the most deserving students, to encourage good learning." Boghos Nubar also stated that one of the recipients shall be sent to Europe each year to advance his knowledge for a year in one of the universities.⁶⁷ An attachment to the letter contained the "Bylaws for the Boghos Nubar University Awards", where all issues pertaining to studies in Europe were meticulously laid out, including the financial details.

The first income from this fund of Boghos Nubar, 120 pounds sterling, was generated in 1926 and was duly handed over to the State University. But the first granting of Nubarian Awards took place only in 1933, through the "Nubarian Awards Executive Committee" set up by the government specifically for that purpose. The AGBU can be proud even today of having granted the awards to such scholars, who later became famous, as members of the Soviet Union and Armenian Academies physiologist Ezras Hasratian, historian Abgar Hovhannissian, agrochemist Gagik Davtian.

It looked as though the successful implementation of the initiative of the Union's President was beyond questioning. Nevertheless here is what we learn from a letter addressed in March of 1937 to the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia Abraham Gouloyan by the Director General of the Union Vahan Malezian: "...in 1924 our lamented Founding President Boghos Nubar handed over to the Union a private fund, the annual proceeds from which were meant to be granted as the Nubarian award to the successful graduates of the Yerevan University with a purpose of covering their travel expenses, since the winner of the award should also have received a scholarship from the Nubarian Students Institution in Brussels to pursue one year's advanced studies in Europe in his field.

It is truly unfortunate that to this day it has not been possible to execute the will of the Founder and that the funds (217.16 pounds sterling) transferred within the first two years were not fully utilized to serve their intended purpose, while the proceeds from subsequent years have accrued here with us. [...] In view of these circumstances the Board of Directors has no other choice than to amend the bylaws of the fund in question with the following clause, so as to make this fund over time immediately available for respective causes..." The proposed amendment read: "Every year, provided the Yerevan State University or the Institution appointed by the latter fail to declare the winners of the university award by the 31st day of July or propose another appropriation not compatible with the Founder's will, the net annual income disposable for the period shall be transferred to the Nubarian Students Institution..."⁶⁸ Two months later an

⁶⁷ NAA, 40//113/3/1745, p. 15.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 11.

answer is received in Paris, signed by the deputy chief of staff of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia: "...on instructions from comrade A. Gouloyan I have to inform you of the following: education offered nowadays in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is on an extremely high level, therefore we find it expedient to allocate the entire amount of the Nubarian award to the Yerevan State University to grant, upon the latter's discretion, to students of excellence, as well as, if needed, to send them abroad. Based on the above we may not deem the amendment proposed by your Board acceptable."⁶⁹ As to how the parties were about to resolve this knot shall remain anybody's guesswork, since very little time was remaining until the month of December.

All these major undertakings by the AGBU were implemented in the capital city of Yerevan. At the same time, in line with its tradition of founding schools in Western Armenia and Armenian Cilicia prior to World War I, the AGBU embarked upon a similar initiative in the rural areas of Soviet Armenia. The Commissariat of Education wrote in its letter addressed to the Yerevan representative of the AGBU Haikaz Karageusian in July, 1928: "The Yervant Hagopian Fund (419 pounds sterling) and the Gayane Nishkian Fund (219 pounds sterling), allocated by the Benevolent Union for school construction... were used as assigned. School building in the Agarak, Blkher and Shirazala villages of the Echmiadzin province have already been built." Two years later, in February of 1930, the Kherian School of Apiculture officially opened, built with the funds of the AGBU.⁷⁰

A few years later on the most beautiful and busy street of Yerevan, Abovian, apart from the two clinics already mentioned, a residential building (today at 32 Abovian str.) was erected under the name of "Baregortsakani Toun" – "AGBU House" (architect Samvel Safarian), it became one of the best examples of modern architecture in the city. Its origin dates back to October of 1930, when a letter was addressed to the Director General of AGBU Vahan Malezian by the Chairman of the Armenian Red Cross Spandarat Kamsarakan and the representative of the Executive Committee of the Red Cross societies of the Soviet Union Karen Mikaelian, where they expressed their regret that "...the contribution of the Diaspora Armenians to the restoration of the homeland does not measure up to what could have been expected from them...", and concluded with the following proposal: "This circumstance prompted us to approach a number of foreign institutions so that the latter, to mark the occasion of the 10th anniversary of sovietization of Armenia [...] and the 10th anniversary of the Red Cross [...] perpetuate these dates with a major undertaking and thus attest their commitment to the restoration of the country. Among these institutions, Mr. Malezian, we have decided to use your good offices to approach the Armenian General Benevolent Union, for it to underwrite the construction of a building of its choice. We think that this could be a house along the

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁰ Miutyun, no. 124, 1928:56; AGBU -1930:78.

same lines as the "HOK building," intended for our intellectuals that are in great need of housing."⁷¹

This letter reached Paris after the death of Boghos Nubar, when his sons had allocated a certain sum to honour his memory with an undertaking beneficial for Armenians. The Board of Directors of the Union, chaired by the newly elected Calouste Gulbenkian, decided to take this opportunity and, following the example of the "Students' Home" built in Paris with a donation by Boghos Nubar, built a similar structure in Yerevan. As a result of rapidly progressing negotiations with the Government of Armenia a document was born called the "Agreement on the construction of the Yerevan Baregortsakani Toun". It was signed first in Paris in March, 1931, by the President of the Union Calouste Gulbenkian, the Treasurer Levon Gumushguerdan and the Director General Vahan Malezian and then in April of the same year in Yerevan by the People's Commissar for Education Artavazd Yeghiazarian. The following were the principal provisions of the agreement:

"Article 1. The heirs of the late Boghos Nubar Pasha have donated 4,000 pounds sterling to the AGBU with a view of this sum being used towards a publicly beneficial Armenian undertaking. One of the heirs, Zareh Bey Nubar, has added on his own behalf another 3,000 pounds sterling to be used for the same end...

"Article 2. The Board of Directors of the Union [...] upon deliberation over the best use of these funds and having reached an agreement with the heirs of Boghos Nubar and with Zareh Bey Nubar personally, has decided, on the occasion of the twenty fifth anniversary of the AGBU and as a tribute to Armenia, to allocate the funds towards building a house that shall comprise a part of the Yerevan University and shall house the Armenian professors of the University, as well as, within practicable limits, other Armenian scholars...

"Article 3. The Government [...] shall accept the donation and, in accordance with the mutually endorsed plan, shall build a house to serve the purpose mentioned above. The house shall bear the name "Baregortsakani Doun, Nubar Fund"...

"Article 4. Neither the Union, nor the donors and the creditor shall be under any obligation to ensure the subsequent upkeep and maintenance of the house. The Government shall be solely responsible for the administration of the house.

"Article 5. The Government shall allocate free of charge premises in the house for the Union's office and living quarters for the representatives of the Union...

"The Government agrees in advance that the Union shall withhold each year the amount of 150 pounds sterling as interest from the amounts sent in cash or transferred to the Government or any of its officials, in particular, from the annual allowance to the Yerevan University from the Melkonian donation."⁷²

In a letter dated January 30, 1936, and addressed to Vahan Malezian the representative of the Union in Yerevan Haikaz Karageusian informs that "the

⁷¹ AGBU CBDA.

⁷² Ibid.

construction of the AGBU House is almost finished and a few minor glitches only remain to be fixed. Apart from the basement, the building has five storeys and contains 20 apartments ... as well as four studios for painters."⁷³ By a special resolution of the Government the first residents of this most modern residential structure in Yerevan became authors Stepan Zorian, Zabel Yessayan, Vahan Totovents, painters Panos Terlemezian, Sedrak Arakelian, architect Mikael Mazmanian, the founder and director of the National Art Gallery of Armenia Rouben Drampian, composer Haro Stepanian, professors Grigor Ghapantsian, Arsen Terterian, Hambartsoum Kechek and others. An apartment was also allocated to Haikaz Karageusian, but the issue of an office for the Union remained unresolved. In November, 1936, Vahan Malezian, having learnt from Haikaz Karageusian that the Union has been assigned an office in the HOK building, wrote: "...we would like Article 5 of the Agreement to be respected, since it is of no great pleasure for us to pay rent and to submit in a way to the HOK, as grateful as we may feel to you for allocating us an office."⁷⁴ During almost two years Vahan Malezian continued to voice his disagreement with the decision of the authorities, although to no avail. His request to honour the agreement and affix a plaque on the building that would read "Baregortsakani Doun, Nubar Fund" also had no consequences.

Nubarashen

During a consultative meeting of the US chapters of the AGBU held in Philadelphia at the end of 1926 a decision was made to launch a special fundraising campaign to raise the amount of 250 thousand dollars within the next five years in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Union and as a tribute to President Boghos Nubar. Informing Boghos Nubar of the decision, the participants of the congress requested him to express his opinion on the possible use of the funds. The answer may have been apparent for many: the funds should be infused into the existing institutions of the Union (schools, orphanages, refugee asylums etc.) or used to establish new ones. But Boghos Nubar already then saw the only realistic and radical solution for the future of the refugees in their resettlement in Armenia. Nevertheless repatriation en masse gave birth to a host of different problems, not the least of which was the lack of housing, which is what the Armenian authorities have pointed out more than once. The experience of the past years proved that the Armenian Diaspora, for a number of economic and political reasons, was either unable or unwilling to finance housing construction in Armenia, maintaining that the existing funds had to be put at the service of community structures in different countries and cater to the Diaspora needs first. On the other hand, the AGBU's own means did not suffice to single-handedly pull off such a major project. On this background, having learnt of the "jubilee" fundraising effort, Boghos Nubar decided to steer all of the proceeds from it towards building a special town in Armenia, that was

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

to be populated by the exiles who were repatriated. At the same time, well aware of the many problems hindering such fundraising campaigns and wishing to encourage potential donors, Boghos Nubar made a pledge of personally matching another 100 thousand dollars, provided the funds collected by April 30, 1931, equalled or exceeded 250 thousand dollars. The members and friends of the Union acknowledged the offer of the President with great enthusiasm and decided to perpetuate his name and deeds by calling the future town "Nubarashen".

The launching of the campaign was very impressive and promising. The "Miutyun" journal, in one of its first issues of 1928, was recounting the ceremony of the official opening of the Nubarashen fundraising at the New York's Ambassador hotel. "...The enthusiastic audience gave keenly and 102,000 dollars were raised on the first night. The major donors were the Karageusians and the Gulbenkians, 20,000 each... Dickran Khan Kelekian, 6,250 and Mr. Levon Babayan 2,500 dollars."⁷⁵ A similar gathering in Chicago raised 25,000 dollars.

This initiative of the American Armenians generated wide response not only in the Diaspora, but among foreigners as well. In his address of April 15, 1929, Fridtjof Nansen wrote: "It gives me great pleasure to learn that there is a movement on foot among Armenians of American to build a town in Armenia for housing the refugees and to name it Nubarashen in honour of that eminent Armenian patriot and philanthropist, Boghos Nubar.

"Needless to say that I endorse the enterprise heartily. I have been endeavoring for the past four years to interest the League of Nations in a scheme of land improvement for Armenia as the best solution for the refugee problem. Whatever the outcome of my efforts may be I am sure that the devotion of the Armenians to their historic home, their courage, determination, and sacrifice in promoting the welfare of their suffering people and of the reconstruction of the brave little Republic of Erivan will command the admiration of the civilized world."⁷⁶

Despite its successful launch, the fundraising campaign did not carry on with the same momentum, the target sum was approached slowly and with difficulty. The principal reason for this was the Great Depression that plagued the USA around the same time, and many Armenian Americans were gravely affected by it. According to the information of the "Miutyun," the sums collected by the end of 1929 amounted to just 153 thousand dollars. This course of the campaign raised questions about the feasibility of the whole project.

Boghos Nubar neither wanted nor had the time to "whitewash" himself in front of the Soviet authorities, he felt the close arrival of the end and was trying to do everything in his power to expedite the building of Nubarashen. Which explains his profound disappointment with the slow progress and moderate success of the fundraising effort. Avedis Terzibashian recounts an incident that took place in May, 1930, about one

⁷⁵ Miutyun, March-April, no.122, 1928: 19.

⁷⁶ Ibid., May-June, no. 131, 1929: 166.

month before Boghos Nubar's death. "In the presence of Malezian and Hekimian (his personal aide - Ed. M.) the Pasha announced that since the Armenians of the Diaspora failed to meet the target of 300,000 dollars (should be 250,000 - Ed. M.), he has decided to withdraw his pledge... Malezian earnestly and stubbornly used his rhetoric skills to address the Pasha's reason, while Hekimian, with his intimate disarming smile, attacked his feelings. Both's labours were lost. The Pasha remained unshaken and informed the Baregortsakan of his decision in writing on the same day. Nevertheless it looked as though the words of Malezian and the smile of Hekimian had left a dent in Pasha's resolve, since on the next morning he suddenly summoned Hekimian and instructed him to draft two letters, one to the Swiss Lombard Odier bank requesting to remit 208,000 dollars from his account to that of the AGBU, and another to the AGBU, instructing to forward 100,000 dollars out of the Lombard Odier transfer of 208,000 to the Nubarashen Fund."⁷⁷

In April and May of the same year of 1930 the "Agreement on the Construction of the Model Town of Nubarashen"⁷⁸ was finally signed in Yerevan and in Paris between the Government of Soviet Armenia and the Board of Directors of the AGBU. This was followed by the first installment of 50,000 dollars by the Union. Already in the summer development began on the southern outskirts of Yerevan, the works were overseen by a special committee established for that purpose under the renowned architect, designer of the master plan Alexander Tamanian.

During the next six years the leaders as well as the rank and file of the Union especially closely monitored all issues that pertained to the construction of the town. Moreover, after the compatriotic unions were offered to participate in the construction of individual quarters in the town, where refugees from respective regions of Western Armenia could then settle, Nubarashen became the focal point of a much larger constituency. Beginning with 1930 the annual reports and other publications of the Union set aside substantial space to a diversity of issues dealing with Nubarashen. Browsing through these materials one may almost feel how the enthusiasm and hopes for a speedy completion of the project were gradually replaced by sober and reserved assessment of the situation.

The annual General Meeting of July, 1931, stated: "The preparatory works, the procurement and stockpiling of building materials, and especially the designs and blueprints are all done, and the construction, season allowing, has commenced with great ardor. Therefore this summer 100-120 dwellings will already be in place to receive working-class refugees probably from Greece and some other locations, who will proceed immediately to work there."⁷⁹ One year after, though, a report of the Union dated September, 1932, outlined the following picture: "Unfortunately our expectations of the preceding construction season fell short, despite our frequent appeals... The

⁷⁷ Terzipashian 1939: 371.

⁷⁸ NAA, 178/1/534, p. 7-8.

⁷⁹ AGBU - 1930: 74.

reorganized committee had hardly proceeded to build Nubarashen with renewed commitment when the disastrous consequences of the earthquake in Zangezour unexpectedly set new priorities for the Government. Shelter had to be ensured for the thousands of disaster victims and all attention was diverted in this direction." As a result instead of the 120-150 dwellings as planned there were "...twenty completed and eight more built halfway through, foundations were laid for many more structures, nevertheless there is not much palpable progress."⁸⁰

Nubarashen was being built slowly not only for the reasons mentioned. The development of a number of major industrial sites and wide-scale residential construction in Soviet Armenia on one hand, and, on the other, the shortage of skilled labour and building materials, along with several other circumstances substantially impeded with the construction of the town. There were also other factors involved, that I shall dwell upon below, in the last part of this book.

Since 1924 the Union was building hospitals, settlements, housing in Armenia, it embarked on the unprecedented project of the village of Nubarashen, it assisted the repatriation effort and, along with all this work, it carried on its operations in various other countries. Dozens of orphanages, asylums, workshops, hospitals and other institutions that it had founded especially for the exiles continued to operate in Aleppo, Beirut, Athens, Thessaloniki, Jerusalem, Cairo and other cities. It could be safely maintained that the operations of the Union in the 20s and the 30s in Armenia and throughout the Armenian Diaspora were unparalleled by their scope as well as significance. Despite all this during the same years, as was the case within the preceding period, the Union was constantly criticized by a variety of circles, organizations and individuals. In one of his articles of 1932 Yervant Aghathon writes: "Instead of encouraging in the spirit of forgiveness those who do work, instead of empowering the Baregortsakan, is it really better to snipe and to blemish it, to the extent of making the most innocent and useful of national services look unacceptable? It does not take much to destroy an institution, do we have many still standing? Are we, Armenians, going to follow the Turks and the Kurds in razing overnight what has taken years to build, just like the alien demolition men in Constantinople? [...] you think it is easy to build a new, more powerful and competent Baregortsakan, where is the Armenian that shall pay a broken penny to it once he sees its predecessor destroyed by those very Armenian hands? I dare you to find new Nubars, Yacoub Pashas, Melkonians, Karageusians, Gulbenkians, Hagopians, Kelekians etc. Before you proceed to break, be kind enough to establish a more powerful and adequate Union than the Baregortsakan, so that we may witness your deeds once you are done with the talking."⁸¹

⁸⁰ AGBU - 1931: 54.

⁸¹ Aghathon 1925: 7

These words of Aghathon rang especially true with respect to the Armenian operation of the Union, where there simply was no other alternative. It is therefore noteworthy that the ranks of the most ardent critics of the Union's activities included not only its traditional opponents and foes headed by the Dashnagsoutiun but also friendly organizations such as the Ramkavar party⁸², as well as individuals, including Yessayee Garigian whom we referred to earlier. The criticism of the Union addressed several issues. It was demanded that the Union use all of the trusts and donations under its disposal for the needs of Armenia.

The official "Miutyun" monthly wrote in this relation: "A will or a donation is made through a legal contract, in which the testator or the donor is the one dictating his terms, the recipient or the trustee is charged with the execution of those terms, whereas the beneficiary or the rightholder is left out of the picture, but may at any time assert his rights, demand his share or his benefit, as the contract may provide. Let us ask then, is there an administrator who, in violation of the Union's function and responsibility, may dare to trump the inexorable will of the testator or the benefactor and deny the inalienable right to the rightholding beneficiary?"

"We should finally accept that an association such as the Union, being a law-abiding entity and enjoying unreserved trust for that very reason, may not allow itself under whatever pressure to revert to illicit means and misappropriate a fund entrusted to it under the condition of inviolability or steer the income therefrom to an unspecified end. Such a deviation would constitute fraud that is severely punishable in any civilized society."⁸³

The Union was also blamed for not using the trusts earmarked for Armenia for their initial purpose. In reality the opposite was true. Soviet Armenia was not initially the target of the above-mentioned Tarouhi Hagopian, Grigor Meotemetian or Yervant Hagopian funds. Only through the efforts of the AGBU, after ironing out certain legal impediments, was it possible to redirect them to Armenia.

Another accusation thrown at the Union was that it did not use its principal to buy into the shares of the Agricultural Bank established in Armenia and in any other matter as well remained faithful to the principle of inviolability of its principal. The justification offered by the critics was that, similar to the situation with wills and donations, such a deviation would have been excused by the compelling need to assist Armenia. The articles published to this effect by Yessayee Garigian, as opposed to other such criticism, have earned a response from Boghos Nubar. It should be noted that the President of the Union, be it before or after that, as a rule ignored all types of accusations, and the exception was apparently made in view of the past service record of Garigian. Here is an excerpt from a letter addressed to the latter by Boghos Nubar on March 4, 1925:

⁸² Dallakian 1999: 205-211.

⁸³ Miutyun, March-April, no.154, 1932: 26.

"...As for what you wrote on the principal of the Union, it is obvious that your perception of its financial administration is quite divergent from ours. These funds are not only inviolable, but the Board of Directors may use them only to buy securities that are classified, have a record of paying out dividends, are listed in the exchanges and possess a high degree of liquidity. From this perspective it is incontestable that the shares of the Armenian Agricultural Bank, for failure to subscribe to which you blame us, while by all means being respectable paper, nevertheless fail to meet the said requirements.

"...Had the Union's Directors, from the very onset and until now, failed to zealously guard the integrity of the principal by faithfully implementing the provisions of the bylaws and guided by purely fiscal considerations, as it befits the Board of Directors of any reputable financial institution, the Union would never have attained its current level of affluence and maybe even would not be in existence by now. It would have failed to gain the trust of our compatriots to the extent of raising considerable funds over its 19 years in existence, funds that have accounted for over 300,000 pounds sterling's worth of all types of aid and benefits distributed so far. It would have failed, since the war, to take care of the thousands of orphans, ... it would not be in a position today as the only Armenian association that operates wherever Armenians are present and where, hopefully, it may still be of service for the Armenian nation."⁸⁴

Despite all criticism and fault-finding, the AGBU carried on with its operations in Soviet Armenia. In summarizing the impact of these activities it is easy to notice that they mainly focused on or around two principal areas: health and scientific/educational. The broad assistance of the Union in the organization of repatriation was also extremely important.

⁸⁴ Hayastani Gochmag, April, no. 15, 1925: 467-468.

CHAPTER 2

IMMIGRATION IN 1920s AND 1930s

Here we need to make a digression on the term "repatriation", often used in the following statement. For the vast majority of Armenians-exiles - ordinary people and intellectual and political elite - the concept of homeland was naturally associated with Western Armenia and Armenian Cilicia and other regions of the Ottoman Empire. The definition of resettlement in Soviet, former Eastern Armenia as "repatriation" would be for them a recognition of the final loss of the homeland, a kind of betrayal of their ancestors, their past life. So they used to have an Armenian counterparts neutral term "immigration", "immigrant" - "nergaghd", "nergaghdogh". The same is observed in various official documents, adopted in Soviet Armenia. Even in 1945, the well-known decree of the Soviet government on the permission of new repatriation, said the creation of the Committee "... on the reception of Armenian immigrants." Only since the mid-1960s, first in Armenia and then in the Diaspora, the term "repatriation" comes to replace "immigration". This question, which goes beyond our topic, is discussed in my last monograph.⁸⁵

Immigration until 1934

The resettlement of 250 orphans undertaken by AGBU in 1924 caused significant excitement in the Diaspora. A considerable number of Armenians that had previously settled in Syria, Palestine, Greece and some other countries, despaired with their grave conditions, were ready to leave for Soviet Armenia immediately. This willingness, confirmed by numerous requests, including those addressed to the Union, was hardly commensurate with both the real capacity of the Armenian authorities and its policy of repatriation based on class ideology.

In January-February 1924, many Diaspora media published excerpts from the speech of Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Transcaucasian Federation, former Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Armenia Alexander Miasnikian, where he clearly formulated the main prerequisite for repatriation to Armenia.

"... Soviet Armenia tells the exiles: if you want to be happy and tie your destiny with this country, you should first change your political orientation, alienate yourselves from the Dashnaktsoutiun and join the working masses of Soviet Armenia. We will help you, we will give you education, and if you adhere to the communist ideology, you will succeed."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Melkonian 2017.

⁸⁶ Hayastani Gochmag, February 2, no.5, 1924: 151.

About one year after, in an interview given in Paris, the People's Commissar of Agriculture Aramays Yerznkian also noted that the main precondition for repatriation was political and ideological integrity. "The doors of Armenia are open to all those Armenians who want to go to Armenia to work but not to do politics. The Armenian people and Soviet Armenia require absolute peace and not political confrontation and clandestine interior political wars. For such people, the doors of Armenia are closed, and if any of them sneak in to disturb the internal peace of the country, we... will send them somewhere else."⁸⁷

This position of the Soviet authorities could be considered natural: the Dashnaktsoutiun, their main political rival, continued to enjoy popularity in Armenia, which was enhanced by the Bolshevik authorities themselves through their policy of unbridled red terror. This is confirmed by the fact that during the popular upheaval of February 18, 1921, it took an intervention by the Red Army to restore Bolsheviks back to power in April. In trying to fully establish their rule in the country they, banning the activities of the national political parties and persecuting their members and affiliates, at the same time were not inclined at all to let into Armenia the repatriates who were in this or that way associated with the party in Armenia as well as in the Diaspora. It is remarkable that those willing to return to Armenia had to fill in advance special questionnaires that contained questions like "What is your political affiliation?," "Where were you and what did you do between 1913 and 1931?" and others.

Apart from political and ideological vetting, there was one more, economic obstacle for repatriation to Armenia. In his interview mentioned above, A.Yerznkian remarks in relation to this issue that "the conditions in Armenia are mostly not conducive for accept exiles. The country, small and poor, cannot accept caravans of exiles without providing the newcomers with land, shelter and basic means of survival. Therefore, one of the first and most important requirements of Armenia will be the draining of marshlands so that these lands are given to the newcomers. In case the newcomers have some subsistence of their own, in order to avoid internal economic turmoil, the Government will accept and settle them as possible." In view of the difficult economic situation of the country, A. Miasnikian proposed: "There are so many foreign funds, let them provide for the resettlement costs."⁸⁸

After the Union resettled 250 children from its orphanages, the Armenian authorities adopted a policy of organizing the repatriation whereby the Diaspora had to take care of all costs associated with the resettlement. This way, the Diaspora was becoming one of the two organizing parties and its financial support was viewed as an important prerequisite for repatriation. Obviously, this was an extremely serious responsibility for the Diaspora that was still in its nascent stage. At the same time, this responsibility could be assumed only by those national organizations that, with the support of their members and allies, could secure the required resources. The

⁸⁷ Ibid., February 21, no. 8, 1925: 232.

⁸⁸ Ibid., February 2, no. 5, 1924:151.

Hnchakian, the Dashnaktsoutiun and the Ramkavar parties, whose influence and role in the Diaspora in those years was significant, may have participated both in the organization and funding of repatriation, but they could not even if they wanted to. For the Armenian authorities any relations or cooperation with them were unacceptable in principle. The Armenian Apostolic Church was also an undesirable partner for the Soviet authorities, especially in view of their anti-religious and anti-church policy in Armenia. Under these circumstances, the Armenian authorities had no other alternative but to cooperate with the AGBU.

Since the Armenian exiles who had settled in Greece appeared in most difficult conditions during these years, the Union decided first to allocate funds for their resettlement in Armenia. Already in 1925, with the resources provided by the Union (5,000 English pounds) it became possible to organise the resettlement of some Armenians from Greece, as well as from Istanbul and Mesopotamia (3,119, 700 and 371 people respectively). "Most of these people, predominantly workers and craftsmen, at their own will moved to provinces and cities and started working, whereas 1,086 people (361 families), who were farmers, settled in the Arazdayan region, between four villages - Arazdayan, Armash, Arvash and Amo. These exiles had among them 80 tobacco growers and silkworm breeders who turned out to be so useful for Armenia, that in 1926 the Government decided to accept even more exiles."⁸⁹

In terms of organizing remittances for the repatriation, the role of the Union's USA chapter was particularly important, since this is where most of the necessary funds were raised. Even before World War I, about 60,000 Armenians lived in this country, and quite a few among the best-established were supporters and members of the AGBU. Just one action in "Support to Immigration to Armenia", organised in New York in 1926 resulted in raising almost 12 thousand English pounds, that in the same year were transferred to the Immigration Envoy of the Council of People's Commissars of Armenia in Paris Danoush Shahverdian and Secretary of the Plenipotentiary Mission of the Soviet Union in Paris Simonik Piroumian (Piroumov). Upon mutual agreement, this amount was to be provided to about 300 exiles resettling to Armenia from Greece, as well as Syria. However, in the same year of 1926 the Shirak earthquake struck Armenia and it not only rendered the repatriation of this group impossible, but also necessitated the organization of relief aid to the earthquake victims.

"... in the face of the new and terrible disaster that befell our people, I am confident," said Boghos Nubar at the annual general meeting of the Union, "that more than anything, you will wish to join me in expressing our condolences for the immense suffering of the victims of the earthquake that destroyed the barely restored and still blood-drained Armenia. I suggest that we send a telegram to the Yerevan Government on behalf of this assembly. Upon learning of the disaster, the Union found it necessary to extend its help to the victims. First, we provide all the funds available, and then undertake another fundraising effort in America, Egypt and Europe to transfer the

⁸⁹ AGBU - 1926: 16.

proceeds to the Government."⁹⁰ Such fundraising was organised in all communities of the Diaspora by all kinds of organizations. And, nonetheless, the contribution of the Union was the most significant and the 1926 report mentioned with fair pride that "According to the reports submitted by the Parliament of Armenia, "the total of about half a million roubles was raised abroad." Of this amount, more than 200,000 roubles came through the Union channels, and if we take into account that the contribution of Near East Relief was the largest among foreign donations, we see that the bulk of the assistance from the Armenians abroad was provided by the Benevolent Union."⁹¹

The repatriation, delayed as the consequence of Shirak earthquake, re-started by the end of 1927, when a new group of about 1,600 exiles from Greece and Istanbul moved to Armenia. These exiles, born in Atabazar, Pursa and Sebastia regions, were mostly craftsmen, silkworm breeders, etc., and from the very first day they engaged in their respective professions. However, the initial agreement did not fully come through. "It is lamentable that, against our intentions, it was impossible to move the exiles from Syria... For this group of immigrants, we had 7,427 dollars provided from America, a part of which we had to return."⁹²

On August 10, 1931, the Armenian authorities adopted a decision "On Permission of Mass Immigration of Working Armenians of Abroad to the Territory of Armenian SSR," where upon the repatriation received a new impetus. According to this decision, a special Commission on immigration headed by Aramayis Yerznkian was established under the auspices of the Council of People's Commissars, which was charged with addressing all kinds of issues related to the repatriation, i.e. the number of repatriates, time-frames for repatriation, settlement areas, etc.⁹³ During the same days, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Sahak Ter-Gabrielian specifically mentioned in his interview: "The class policy of Soviet authorities will definitely be applied in the course of the repatriation. Only truly working elements can come to Armenia, who in all honesty aspire to join the whole working class of the country, accept and apply the principle of socialist mode of production that dynamically proliferates throughout the country." And, on the contrary, "...there is no room in the homeland of the international working class for the enemies of the Armenian working class and the army of the international proletariat, for the mercenaries of bloodthirsty imperialism - the Dashnak scam."⁹⁴

It is noteworthy that, when speaking about the Diaspora organizations and the financial support expected from them, the chairman of the Armenian government mentions only the compatriotic unions and the HOK, but not the AGBU. Such an approach towards an organization that since 1924 provided all types of diverse

⁹⁰ AGBU - 1925: 12.

⁹¹ AGBU - 1926: 17.

⁹² AGBU - 1927: 34.

⁹³ Khorhrdayin Hayastan, August 20, 1931.

⁹⁴ Ibid., July 2, 1931.

assistance to the country was not accidental. From the viewpoint of the Armenian authorities, the Union did not fully justify their expectations related to the national and political stance and, moreover, it persistently tried to maintain its independence and repudiated any obtrusion of its activities. The AGBU and its management clearly saw the inadequate position of the Armenian authorities, but did not allow it to affect its activities aiming at the rehabilitation of the country.

One month after the adoption of the above decision by the Armenian authorities, S. Ter-Gabrielian paid a visit to Paris, that provided a positive impetus in terms of expediting the repatriation process. While the prime-minister did not even mention the name of the Benevolent Union in his Yerevan interview, upon arrival in Paris he immediately met with its President Calouste Gulbenkian, thus nominally accepting the supremacy of the Union over all other organizations. Besides, during the subsequent days Ter-Gabrielian visited the Union headquarters several times and held detailed discussions on issues related to the preparation of a new wave of repatriation. Assuring that the Government decided to accept 6,000 exiles from Greece and Bulgaria, for whom shelter and jobs were already secured, Ter-Gabrielian at the same time gave his consent to receive another 4,000 exiles, provided the Diaspora Armenians finance the construction of dwellings in Armenia. On his way home he sent a telegram from Berlin to Yerevan: "Undertake immediate measures for the receipt of 6,000 returnees and their settlement in Ghrer, Artik-Touff, Ani-Pemza and Dzorages. Also, send two persons for expediting and management of the repatriation efforts in Athens."⁹⁵

After these meetings, the Union adopted the repatriation to Armenia as the priority of the day and undertook active preparations. On September 30, 1931, Calouste Gulbenkian appealed to the Diaspora, saying:

"At this point in time when the world economic crisis heavily affects the subsistence of the Diaspora, the Government of Armenia with its benevolent decision opens wide the doors of the homeland for the destitute and bereft exiles. 10,000 poor and jobless exiles should move to Armenia in a matter of several months: the first caravan will be followed by other groups as the financial means allow. This is a historical event the importance of which should be realised by every Armenian. Needless to say, the AGBU is there to immediately address the issue of salvation of the thousands of exiled and uprooted compatriots from misery and neglect."

"Recently, an agreement was reached with Nansen's International Office for Refugees, functioning under the auspices of the League of Nations, to provide, until 1933, shelter to 15,000 Armenian refugees that remain homeless after the collapse of the dilapidated camps in Beirut and Aleppo, the AGBU pledging 10,000 pounds."

"These two large-scale emergency projects, called upon to save 25,000 exiles, will require considerable sacrifice... To rescue the 25,000 exiles, we are envisaging an amount of at least 75,000 dollars, of which we have managed to collect only one third, for the remainder we rely on the support of every Armenian: let everyone realise that it

⁹⁵ Ibid., September 26, 1931.

is their duty to make a sacrifice, no matter how small, to contribute to this important cause..."⁹⁶

In view of the fact that the main problem of repatriation was in the transportation - the Director General of the Union Vahan Malezian, accompanied by the secretary-general of the Central Committee for the refugees Levon Bashalian, who at the same time was the Union's envoy to international organizations in Geneva, went to Geneva to meet with the Prime Ministers of Bulgaria and Greece Alexander Malinov and Elefterios Venizelos, who pledged the support of their respective governments in providing steamboats free of charge. Negotiations were also held with Nansen's International Office, International League of the Red Cross and other benevolent organizations and, as a result, it became possible to solve several problems connected with the transportation of thousands of refugees.

In November, 1931, the plenipotentiary representative of the Government of Armenia Danoush Shahverdian arrived in Athens and, based on three types of questionnaires, started preparing new lists of prospective repatriates. This, as well as his negotiations with the Government of Greece and the embassy of the Soviet Union, resulted in the first caravan leaving Piraeus on December 30. According to the agreement the steamer, provided free of charge by the Greek government, took 1,923 exiles aboard, including 135 orphans who were former students in the Beirut, Nicosia and Jerusalem orphanages of the AGBU, as well as the exiles from Hapous, whose transportation costs were fully covered by the Union. "All funds for the transportation and feeding of the exiles were provided in advance," mentioned the AGBU report in 1932, "through the cooperation of the representative of Nansen's office M. Kotelnikoff and our representative Onnig Tadeossian, these two organizations covered all the costs."⁹⁷ Speaking of the logistics of the repatriation of this group, the "Miutyun" monthly specifically mentioned the kind cooperation of the Greek authorities. "The International League of the Red Cross, and especially the Hellenic Red Cross rendered invaluable cooperation by providing 6,239 items of used clothes for the children, 200 items of new clothes, 9 barrels of milk, and for the poorest exiles, 100 new coats and 500 blankets. The Soviet Ambassador Vladimir Potemkin and his wife, as well as the plenipotentiary representative of Armenia Shahverdian and assistant Kartashian, the representative of the Union Onnig Tadeossian, representatives of the Greek and foreign media, government and police authorities and numerous citizens came to bid farewell to the steamer."⁹⁸

The second group of immigrants, comprising 1,250 people, left on the same boat on February 23, 1932. "Like the first time, this caravan received all support in Piraeus. The International Red Cross distributed blankets and cans of condensed milk for the children. The exiles set off with great enthusiasm and cried out "Long live Greece, long

⁹⁶ Miutyun, November-December, no. 152, 1931: 164.

⁹⁷ AGBU - 1931: 55.

⁹⁸ Miutyun, March-April, no. 154, 1932: 21-22.

live Armenia!" from the gangway... Needless to say, from the first days of repatriation our Union did everything in its power and spared no moral or material effort," wrote the "Miutyun."⁹⁹

During 1932 two caravans left for Armenia, on April 25 with 1,662 and on April 17 with 1,550 exiles. The fifth and the last caravan of this first group left Piraeus on January 12, 1933, on the steamboat "Empress Heleni", this time rented by the AGBU for 600 English pounds. This boat, that also passed by Thessaloniki and Burgas, took 1,423 exiles to Armenia, including 96 from France, 350 from Greece and 967 from Bulgaria.¹⁰⁰ The "Miutyun" monthly, mentioning that the Armenians from Bulgaria took with them as a gift to Armenia "... twelve containers of timber, 150 boxes of nails and 6 automobiles..." wrote: "The modest community of Bulgaria taught a striking lesson to the more fortunate communities that continue to remain completely inert."¹⁰¹

Against all expectations, the financial support of the Diaspora to the repatriation of 1931-1933 was not big, mainly due to the economic crisis that was underway in Western countries. "Unfortunately, in material terms our Union remained the only national organization providing funds to ensure the success of this endeavor, although we expected contributions from other organizations as well."¹⁰²

Immigration of 1936

The repatriation started successfully, and from December, 1931, to January, 1933, it resulted in the return of about 8,000 repatriants, then it came to a halt. In response to the Union's appeals, the authorities of Armenia justified the cessation of the repatriation by the lack of required shelters and reminded one more time that "Only emergency foreign aid in the construction of shelters can enable the continuation of the immigration, otherwise it is not likely to continue this year."¹⁰³ Such a position of the Armenian authorities, though quite anticipated, was of great concern to the Diaspora. Tens of thousands of jobless, poor and homeless exiles were ready to immediately leave for Armenia, but alas...

Under the circumstances the Union, not relying on other national organizations and new fundraising campaigns, sent to the Government of Armenia 5,000 English pounds in 1933. "For the construction of apartments, to ensure repatriation of another 2,500 immigrants within the next six months... The AGBU took this step in confidence that the Government of Armenia will make a new and strong demonstration of its good

⁹⁹ Ibid, May-June, no. 155, 1932: 39-40.

¹⁰⁰ AGBU – 1932: 55-56.

¹⁰¹ Miutyun, January-February, no.159, 1933: 3.

¹⁰² AGBU – 1932: 56.

¹⁰³ AGBU – 1933: 53.

will by accepting several thousand exiles who have no other way to survive."¹⁰⁴ This move by the Union was followed by yet another letter of explanation by the Armenian Government, then another request by the Union to expedite the repatriation, and these exchanges carried on for months.

The fact that the government of Armenia approached the AGBU in particular with relation to the repatriation indicated that, in spite of all their reservations, the Soviet authorities nonetheless considered the Union as the only reputable Diaspora organization that, within its powers, contributed to the organization of the repatriation. The Union was perceived likewise in the Diaspora: thousands appealed to it with requests for repatriation, and addressed to it all their grievances, distressing as they were. One such case was registered in 1932 when "Overwhelmed with unemployment and poverty, the exiles and especially orphans rushed from Macedonia to Thessaloniki, against numerous published announcements that they should not move, and with their endless appeals made the situation of the National Board and the Union's chapter unbearable. Of these, a group of 140 "adult orphans" went to Athens to continue presenting their appeals in a more rigid manner, so that the national representatives in Thessaloniki and Athens, disgusted by the attacks, resigned from their posts. We hurried to send a telegram to our representatives in Athens recommending to extend temporary accommodation for the orphans on behalf of the Union."¹⁰⁵

Of more concern, however, were the events in Armenia, of which the Union was informed by Sahak Ter-Gabrielian's letter of September 4, 1933. "...certain elements from among the immigrants of 1932-33, who... have not yet managed or do not wish to settle down and adapt to the jobs offered to them, prefer to frequently change their work places and move from one settlement to another. These elements mostly represent the groups that were alienated from productive labour during the preceding years and engaged in retail trade... people that have fully embraced a dependant mentality." And, most importantly, "...several attempts to escape from Armenia abroad... made by similar people."¹⁰⁶ However, the real reasons behind these cases were different. In a monograph dedicated to the history of repatriation, historian H. Meliksetian specifically mentions the poor material and living conditions of the repatriates, the "careless, bureaucratic" attitude of the state institutions towards their needs, etc. The prevalence of such attitudes is confirmed by the fact that on September 21 of the same year of 1933 (i.e. about two weeks after Sahak Ter-Gabrielian's letter), the Secretariat of the Central Committee of CPA made the issue of "Conditions of Immigrants" a special item of its discussion agenda. The decisions adopted strongly criticized several republican and local government agencies for non-compliance with the decisions taken previously. A decision was made to establish a special committee to deal with the issues of repatriates, and the government was requested to "... expedite the construction of

¹⁰⁴ Miutyun, May-June, no. 161, 1933: 41.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., May-June, no. 155, 1933: 40.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., November-December, no. 164, 1933: 84.

residential areas for immigrants, to improve their medical service, support with clothing and footwear, enroll all children in schools...."¹⁰⁷

The authorities of Soviet Armenia were faced with an unexpected and rather inexplicable phenomenon. The people that voluntarily and with great enthusiasm repatriated, started after some time to voice their discontent with the living conditions. It was expected that the extremely difficult conditions in the host countries would impel them to at least conform with the situation in Armenia. However, the opposite was happening. A considerable part of the repatriates did not wish to comply with the system of social injustice, limitations on individual initiative, numerous obligations, restrictions and other similar constraints, that became if not natural then at least inevitable for the local population after about 10 years of the Soviet rule. Such moods and attitudes of the repatriates or the "newcomers" were undesirable for the authorities per se, but even more dangerous was their proliferation among the resident population that was fraught with political and social tension in the society. The authorities of Soviet Armenia obviously saw the danger, and the above-mentioned resolution and other similar decisions attest to that, however, they only pursued the objective of satisfying the most basic needs of the repatriates and nothing more. But even such trivial issues became unresolvable in view of the difficult economic situation of the country. Under the circumstances the Armenian authorities thought it reasonable to simply postpone the next influx of repatriates and limit their number.

The appeals of the Union to the government of Armenia on the resumption of repatriation did not cease, moreover, for this very purpose the Union established direct links with the members of the Soviet Delegation in Geneva. The report presented at the annual General Meeting of the Union in 1934 mentioned that "... it was informed that the Soviet delegation in Geneva announced that the central government of the Soviet Union agrees in principle to the immigration of Armenians to Soviet Armenia, but cannot provide them with adequate material support."¹⁰⁸ In December of the same year, the newly elected president of the AGBU, the son of the late Boghos Nubar, Zareh Nubar appealed to the Chairman of the Armenian government Sahak Ter-Gabrielian.

"I have the honour, he wrote, to comment with this letter on the lamentable conditions of the exile Armenian workers who, by virtue of their desperate labour, until recently managed to withstand the hardships of the international economic crisis, but the xenophobic laws of many countries and even France pose an additional and even heavier burden, and those without proper documents are expelled, and some of those with work permits are deprived of even basic labour rights." Then, highly estimating the good will of the government of Armenia in relation to the repatriation and mentioning that only the motherland can offer adequate conditions to the destitute, Zareh Nubar writes: "therefore, we earnestly request, dear Chairman, that in the first days of spring already, the doors of Soviet Armenia open for several thousand workers, and a

¹⁰⁷ Meliksetian 1985: 118.

¹⁰⁸ AGBU – 1934: 44.

corresponding positive decision of the Council of the People's Commissars is communicated to us, so that we undertake the preparatory activities and make corresponding appropriations." And then: "Noting that the issue of immigration is of national and even international importance, since the General Assembly of the League of Nations votes every year for a resolution in relation to the immigration of Armenians, upon our instructions our delegate in Geneva has held a meeting over this issue with the delegates of the Soviet Union, who promised to bring it to the attention of the authorities in Moscow and seek a definite solution therefrom."¹⁰⁹ At the beginning of 1935, Zareh Nubar applied with the same issue to the new chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia Abraham Gouloyan, for the purpose of arranging the repatriation of French Armenians.

The Armenian authorities officially declared that they were ready to receive 1,200 unemployed Armenians from France, while the number of those interested was about 7,000. In these circumstances, Shahverdian decided to personally make the selection which resulted in preparation, with a considerable delay, of a list of 1,800 repatriates. Like in the previous repatriation cases, the Union also financially supported the repatriates, providing 2,000 English pounds. In addition, due to its high esteem, it secured high-level official support. Specifically, upon its request the president of Nansen's Geneva office Michael Hansson made two visits to Paris and discussed repatriation issues with Prime Minister Albert Sarraut. Thanks to the efforts of the Union, on April 17, upon the initiative of the French authorities, an agreement was signed between the Foreign Ministry of France, Nansen's Office and the AGBU. "On this day, in response to the question of the Chairman addressed to our Union, our Director General declared that the AGBU will underwrite the rental costs of a steamboat to take the unemployed immigrants to Marseilles, transportation of all the immigrants and their belongings to the steamboat, feeding and food supplies for all the immigrants during ten days aboard (including full subsistence for the children and the sick) ... We also took care of the costs of the transportation of Komitas vardapet's coffin, having decided to send the remains of the great composer to Armenia... In view of the poverty of some of the immigrants, the Union will provide personal subsidies, primarily to the intellectuals."¹¹⁰ On May 9, 1936, the "Sinaya" steamboat took off from Marseilles to Armenia with 1,801 repatriates from France.

The reception and accommodation of the repatriates of 1936 proceeded with the same difficulties as in the preceding years. In October the chairman of the HOK Arsen Yessayan wrote in his letter addressed to the new head of the Communist Party of Armenia Amatouni Amatouni: "Although a special government committee is set up for the employment of the 1,800 immigrants from France, the entire burden still falls on the HOK. Almost all immigrants have received jobs in various institutions. At present, some of them lost their jobs due to a variety of reasons and they appeal to the HOK again

¹⁰⁹ AGBU CBDA.

¹¹⁰ AGBU - 1936: 45-47.

requesting, sometimes even demanding, that jobs be provided to them ... In view of the prevalence of unemployment among immigrants and their unfamiliarity with our conditions, it is desirable that... some state agency or a professional organization provide its assistance for 3 to 4 months for them to find jobs."¹¹¹

When organizing the transportation of the remains of composer Komitas, the leaders of the AGBU could hardly imagine that this issue may become a subject of discussion among party and state bodies of the Soviet Union. The catch was that, in order to organise this transportation, the Armenian authorities had to receive approval by the Transcaucasian Regional Committee of the Party, especially that of its First Secretary Lavrentiy Beria. The leader of the Communist Party of Armenia Aghassi Khanjian, most likely anticipating a negative reaction of Beria, appealed to him only on May 10. Informing Beria that the steamboat with the repatriates had already left Marseilles with the coffin of Komitas aboard, Khanjian wrote, in order to avert a possible negative reaction: "... on the eve of the departure of the ship, we sent him (Danoush Shahverdian - Ed. M.) through HOK a telegram asking to postpone the issue for the time being. The ship will arrive in Batum between 17-19 May. Under the circumstances, the only feasible solution is to allow the organization of Komitas's funeral in Yerevan under the auspices of the Union of Soviet Composers of Armenia."¹¹² In these circumstances, Beria was forced to consent.

AGBU and HOK

The repatriation of the 1930s, apart from being an event of national significance, was also important for all the organizing parties both in terms of highlighting their true capacity, and in terms of clarification of their relations. In this context, the relations of the AGBU with the HOK (Relief Committee for Armenia) are of interest. The HOK was founded by the Soviet authorities of Armenia at the end of 1921 with the initial objective to ensure and organise the support of Armenians abroad to the starving population of Armenia and promote its general development. Very soon, however, the branches of the HOK abroad became the main leverage of the Communist Party of Armenia in implementing its policy in the Armenian Diaspora. Upon instructions received from Yerevan, they tried at all costs to spread communist ideas among the Diaspora and launched an uncompromising struggle against all important national organizations of the Diaspora. Enjoying the trust and support of the Armenian authorities and aspiring to maintain its privileged position, the HOK leaders were extremely intolerant towards contacts of these same authorities with other organizations and even individuals. Naturally, they took an especially intolerant stance towards the cooperation of the Armenian authorities with the AGBU which they called an "Armenian bourgeois"

¹¹¹ NAA, 1/16/77, p. 43.

¹¹² Ibid. 1/16/71, p. 39.

organization, tired to discredit through in their public statements and in the media, as well as in their discussions in Yerevan.

An interesting method of the HOK's campaign against the AGBU was the appropriation of programmes that the latter implemented in Armenia (and the overall support to Armenia). In one of its 1927 issues, the "Miutyun" monthly wrote, "The New York-based "Banvor", which is a publication of the Executive Board of HOK, published an article in its first issue, claiming that the Nor Eudokia community in Armenia is founded with HOK support." This statement is of surprise to us and we feel obliged to speak up. Out of mere sense of justice and gratitude, we cannot help mentioning the estate of the late Grigor Meotemetian bequeathed to the General Benevolent Union to enable the establishment of the village in Armenia... In the same issue, "Banvor" writes that "the HOK provided more than 25,000 dollars to the Government of Armenia to help in the draining of marshlands that cause malaria among the population," and that "several wills are administered by the HOK to the benefit of Armenia." We consider ourselves obliged to mention that 15,000 of these 25,000 dollars are the proceeds of a fundraising effort by the Benevolent Union, and the above wills were bequeathed to the Union and the Union transferred them to Armenia."¹¹³ It is worth mentioning that such appropriations by the HOK were subsequently legitimized in Soviet Armenian history. Thus, H. Meliksetian in his aforementioned book ascribes to the HOK, apart from the above mentioned village of Nor Eudokia, the construction of the Marie Nubar Eye Clinic, naturally without commenting on its name.¹¹⁴

The HOK pursued this *modus operandi* especially during the repatriation of the 30's when, on one hand, it accused the AGBU of not supporting and not assisting the repatriation, and on the other hand either ignored the activities of the Union or tried to ascribe them to itself. In December, 1932, Vahan Malezian wrote in his letter addressed to the Marseilles chapter of the Union, "It is our hope that all those immigrants for whom the AGBU pays the passport, visa, railway, and steamboat tickets and food costs, properly understand the fact that the HOK always tries to appropriate the contributions of the Union, therefore the immigrants upon departure are under the impression that the Union is not a financial support and it is the HOK that will take care of their costs, while it is an absolute fact that the HOK is not able to contribute anything and is only engaged in registration, examination and issuance of passes for the immigrants."¹¹⁵ This attitude of the HOK during the repatriation years, aiming at enhancing its credibility in the Diaspora at all costs, reached the point when the the AGBU leaders were forced to appeal to Yerevan. It is noteworthy that such dissatisfaction and complaints were mainly addressed to the Yerevan representative of the Union Haikaz Karageusian, and not directly to the Central Board of the HOK. As a rule the management of the Union seldom addressed the Armenian authorities directly, preferring to do it through its

¹¹³ Miutyun, November-December, no. 120, 1927: 84.

¹¹⁴ Meliksetian 1985: 160-161.

¹¹⁵ AGBU CBDA.

representative. In this case, however, this is probably explained by the position of the HOK leaders.

On June 4, 1934, in a letter addressed to Haikaz Karageusian, Vahan Malezian writes:

"It is high time that the Central Board of the HOK in Yerevan issue a serious warning to the heads of the HOK branches about the unbridled populism aimed against the AGBU, and about often nasty attacks by its outlets and newspapers (with the New York based "Banvor" magazine in the vanguard). They consider that by hitting left and right, and casting heavy blows on the AGBU, they will become pleasing to the ruling circles of Yerevan.

"In relation to this issue, we had several opportunities to visit citizen Vardanian (Chairman of the Central Board of the HOK - Ed. M) who kindly assured us that such incidents were over and an appropriate reprimand has already been sent to such a windbag, the language and course of which do not differ from a style and spirit of our and whole of Armenia enemies (a reference to the Dashnaktsoutiun - Ed. M.)... they sow disappointment in our organization (HOK - Ed.M.) and among friends of Armenia in general."¹¹⁶ However, in reality the position of the Chairman of HOK towards the AGBU was completely different, and in the words of the the AGBU's representative in Armenia he "...did not do anything in relation to the Union... and as far as I know he was against the Union and aspired to turn the HOK into a leading organization abroad."¹¹⁷

In July, 1933, the Union accepted the proposal of the same Grigor Vardanian and jointly with the HOK founded "The Central Body of the Immigration Fund". The objective of the newly created body was to organise fundraising in the Diaspora to support residential construction in Soviet Armenia and thus expedite mass repatriation. Upon the receipt of this proposal, the AGBU faced a heavy dilemma. During the preceding years the HOK had become an organization conducting obviously pro-Communist and pro-Soviet propaganda and as such it was politically questionable for the authorities of almost all countries. The operation of the HOK branches was banned in Egypt, Greece, Syria, Argentina and several other countries. In Bulgaria, the former administrator/secretary of the HOK office Martiros Khachikian in one of his letters informing of the closure of the office, referred to the position of the Bulgarian government, according to which the HOK activity, "being a form of the communist movement, was not desirable for Bulgaria."¹¹⁸ The final discrediting of the HOK branches was due to the internal frictions that were caused by "a desire to be more red than the most sworn communist." It was not therefore accidental that as a consequence of its cooperation with the HOK in some countries, particularly in Syria and France, the Union appeared in the focus of unwelcome attention of the authorities. Another consequence was that, taking advantage of the opportunity, some national

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ NAA, 1191/4/174, p. 10.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 1/17/76, p. 22.

organizations, first of all the Dashnaksoutiun, accused the Union of cooperation with the Soviet authorities, and catering to the political orders of the latter. It is also known that for the majority of the Armenian Diaspora, and especially for its economically better-off segments that were mostly members and supporters of AGBU, the HOK was an alien and anti-national organization. For them, the agreement of the leadership of the Union on Vardanian's proposal for cooperation was particularly strange and unacceptable. At the same time, however, the Union had to take into account the fact that Vardanian represented not only the Central Board of the HOK, but rather the top officials of Soviet Armenia. Under these circumstances, by rejecting the latter's proposal for cooperation, the Union would jeopardize both its active involvement in the organization of repatriation, and successful implementation of its programs in Armenia, as well as the speedy resumption of the repatriation process. Placating itself about the temporary nature of cooperation with the HOK, the Union hoped that this way it would put an end to accusations of rivalry and that the HOK would at least be forced to put an end to antagonism towards the AGBU.

These hopes of the Union, however, did not come true. First, as it foresaw, the results of the fundraising were hardly satisfactory. The position of the HOK did not change either, on which Malezian wrote bitterly in several letters addressed to Yerevan. In a letter dated June 7, 1935, addressed to Haikaz Karageusian, he mentioned: "... they assure that in repatriation preference will be given to the HOK members. On this occasion, it is with pain we note that citizen Shahverdian made his selection in Greece and Bulgaria based on the nominations by the HOK, but it is not always the best elements that make the HOK ranks, and many join them just for the sake of using the name. This probably explains the disappointment that Government experienced seeing among the immigrants many unworthy people who were recommended as HOK members and friends of Armenia."¹¹⁹ In a letter dated May 15, 1936, addressed to Shahverdian, Malezian mentioned: "...There are quite a few justified complaints that requests for immigration remain unanswered, that the attitude of the local officials of the HOK is ungracious just because the applicants are not HOK members, and even when they enroll, they complain or withdraw, not being able, like others, to make a donation to HOK in order to repatriate. The prevailing impression is that the repatriation is arranged in such a way as if it were an HOK undertaking... many join the HOK hoping to obtain the right to repatriate, or are prompted to bring gifts to get a positive consideration... Undoubtedly such complaints would not have taken place if the immigration were organised as a national task...".¹²⁰

In another letter addressed to the newly appointed president of the Central Board of the HOK Arsen Yessayan, Malezian is more specific on the position of the Union: "... we shall never agree to view the immigration as an HOK undertaking rather than a national task, since we cannot accept that the immigration becomes propaganda

¹¹⁹ AGBU CBDA.

¹²⁰ NAA, 178/1/580, p. 46.

leverage for this or that organization, whereas it is a matter of justified pride for our beloved motherland, its people and its leaders. We have witnessed another painful manifestation of this sad state of affairs in a strange rally that took place upon the departure of "Sinaya" steamboat, when, along with the initially agreed and formulated messages, a message of gratitude was addressed exclusively to the French Executive Board of the HOK on behalf of the repatriates, signed by citizen Shahverdian, which at least could be interpreted as a public display of ungratefulness of the immigrants and insensitivity of the officials." At the end of the letter, speaking about the need to organise a new wave of repatriation, Malezian requests that the Union no more "...come up as the cashbox happy to pay for any costs."¹²¹

Arsen Yessayan, who assumed the presidency of the HOK Central Board in September of 1935, tried to somehow mend the relationship with the AGBU. More will be said about Yessayan further in the book, but his innovative approach to the stance of the foreign branches of the HOK to the AGBU is worth mentioning. In his letter of December 21, addressed to Malezian, Haikaz Karageusian wrote: "Comrade Yessayan did stress one more time that relevant instructions were provided to the delegates visiting Armenia and to all head offices of the HOK, so that once and for all an end be put to inappropriate expressions and statements exchanged between the HOK and the Union."¹²² Such position of the HOK chairman and his decisive steps in this direction were unanimously rejected by the heads of the foreign branches of HOK. While some considered these to be indications of invigorating the organization, rendering a new impetus to its patriotic activities, the majority voiced explicit disagreement, claiming that "Yessayan is not familiar with the conditions abroad, and hence his instructions cannot be followed."

Aghassi Khanjian and resignation of Calouste Gulbenkian

The repatriation of 1931-1933 was accompanied by dramatic events in the relationship of the AGBU with Armenia. Shortly after a publication by Sahak Ter-Gabrielian in a September, 1931 issue of "Khorhrdayin Hayastan" official daily, where he informed about the government decision on organizing the repatriation and his Paris meetings with the AGBU president Calouste Gulbenkian and its other leaders, the same newspaper published a statement by the first Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia Aghassi Khanjian on October 16, 1931, where he specifically mentions: "The practical steps taken by the dashnaks on the establishment of a "national home" that, by the way, are directly supported by the Gulbenkians, affiliated with the Anglo-French imperialist clique, hinder our projects on immigration of workers to Soviet Armenia, and pursue an objective or creating a "counter-influence leverage " at the disposal of the French imperialism aiming at colonial exploitation of Syria and suppression of national

¹²¹ AGBU CBDA.

¹²² Ibid.

liberation movements, as well as to provide cheap labor to Gulbenkian's oil fields and oil pipelines. The main purpose of creating this "national home" is to supply cannon fodder for an imperialist intervention...."¹²³

The leaders of the AGBU, puzzled by this accusation, immediately contacted the Armenian authorities. On November 9 Vahan Malezian addressed a letter to Sahak Ter-Gabrielian where he writes, in particular, "It is with great pain that we take the serious accusation that is insulting and unfair towards Hon. Calouste Gulbenkian, connecting his name with the Dashnaktsoutiun and charging him with deeds he has never done." Subsequently, substantiating the absurdity and irrelevance of the accusations of the president of the Union (see further), Malezian concludes, that "... I do not think that it is right on the part of the Armenian ideologists, so dedicated to the cause of revival of Armenia, attack equally to their opponents and earnest and dedicated friends of same Armenia. This undesirable position has had and will continue to have grave consequences. And is it lamentable that a patriot and dedicated Armenian like Mr. Gulbenkian, at the moment when he spares no effort to be of assistance to Armenia, is insulted in his dearest feelings and witnesses irreconcilable contradictions between the previous encouragement and such relentless accusations made by a responsible and authoritative civil servant through your official newspaper."¹²⁴

According to established procedure, Malezian's letter had to be forwarded to the recipient, Sahak Ter-Gabrielian, by the Union's representative in Yerevan Haikaz Karageusian, but days, weeks, and even months passed and there was no response. From the messages sent by the latter to Paris it became clear that he handed the letter to Ter-Gabrielian only in February, 1932 in Tbilisi. Yerevan continued to maintain silence. On March 10, in a letter addressed to Karageusian, Malezian wrote:

"This painful issue that remains unaddressed for months, creates a truly depressing situation, and witnessing the distressed condition of our respectable president, I myself am completely demoralized. Bitterly disappointed after immigration-related initial enthusiasm, Mr. Gulbenkian is even considering resignation from the presidency of the Union, and we should spare no effort to prevent it.

"The Board of Directors and the whole AGBU cannot leave their beloved President alone in the face of the grave accusation that groundlessly and pointlessly presents him as an accomplice or an ally of the Dashnaktsoutiun in the creation of "national home" in Syria and as an enemy of Armenian workers who intends to exploit them in the oil fields. We should immediately refute these accusations in front of the whole world, if the words of truth find no response in Yerevan. We request, no matter how inconvenient this may be, that you convey these considerations personally and in writing to the distinguished Prime minister or his deputy."¹²⁵

¹²³ Khorhrdayin Hayastan, October 16, 1931.

¹²⁴ AGBU CBDA.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Calouste Gulbenkian, once he became certain that the Communist leader of Armenia does not intend to amend his position, writes a letter of resignation to the Board of Directors of the Union on April 22, 1922, three days before the departure of the new group of repatriants:

"As you well remember, upon accepting the honour of the post of the president of the AGBU, my only condition was that I will resign the day I feel that I cannot be useful any more.

You also know how close to my heart, in spite of the limited personal time, I took this job and performed my duties, naturally with numerous difficulties, battling against useless complaints and demands, since there are those who consider the Benevolent Union a state, ready and able to address any issue, while the Union is a private institution established upon the initiative of lamented Boghos Nubar and very limited in its resources, especially of late.

On top of all the problems, the peace of the Union was unexpectedly disturbed: the official representative of the Yerevan Government Mr. Khanjian made absurd allegations against my person, we waited in vain for the Armenian government to repudiate this absolutely groundless attack; hence I, as the President of AGBU, am ready to resign in view of the fact that the Union maintains relations with the Yerevan Government necessary for the implementation of our numerous benevolent programmes, and I cannot, with my name and signature and in my capacity of the President, have any relations with them under the current circumstances.

Therefore, in submitting my unconditional resignation, I retain my affection towards Armenia that is the sole consolation of the Nation, and maintain my sense of duty towards its prosperity."

Assuring my everlasting respect and consideration to the Benevolent Union,
22 April, 1932

"resigned President Calouste S. Gulbenkian."¹²⁶

The Board of Directors of the Union, discussing the crisis at its meetings of May 2 and 6, appealed to Calouste Gulbenkian with a request to stand back from the decision:

"... The Board of Directors has always been in agreement with you, and for the sake of this agreement, it first of all decided to address a complaint to the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia citizen Sahak Ter-Gabrielian, in view of the groundless allegations made by the citizen Khanjian several months ago, and the appeals against which by our Director General have unfortunately remained unanswered...

"The meeting of the Board of Directors noted with satisfaction that there is no evidence whatsoever to confirm the doubts in relation to the Union or its Meeting as suggested in our letter. Furthermore, these insinuations are not to cast a shadow on your personality and feelings, and hence their significance for your resignation is not justified, and regardless of the unworthiness of accusations and claims continuously

¹²⁶ Miutyun, July-August, 1932, no. 156: 49-50.

made against the Union, your motion will not only be a blow to the Union and a loss for our nation, but would inevitably give room for faulty and disagreeable interpretations...

"In these circumstances, the Board of Directors is convinced that it is necessary to consider the complicated situation that prompted your resignation and the harmful consequences it will have for the Union, so that the choice made in accordance with the will of the Diaspora is not reversed as a result of a speech or a newspaper publication and the heavy impression it left on you, to the detriment of ultimate interests of the Union and the nation...."¹²⁷

But the decision of the President of the Union was final. On May 11 he sent a telegram from Algeria:

"I am immensely grateful for your letter of May 7. Please do not insist because my resignation is irreversible. Regardless of all personal considerations, I am convinced that this decision is in accordance with the interests of the AGBU. I made a final decision upon serious consideration, and there is no point in turning back to it again. With warmest regards, C. Gulbenkian."¹²⁸

However, on June 12, the leaders of the Union had a meeting with Gulbenkian upon his return to Paris. But the failure of this meeting was foreordained: in another article published in "Khorhrdayin Hayastan" on May 24, the authorities of Armenia reiterated their accusations against Gulbenkian and the AGBU. Finally, the Board of Directors at its session of June 15, 1932, accepted the resignation of Calouste Gulbenkian from the post of the President of the AGBU.

Calouste Gulbenkian assumed the post of the President of the AGBU in October, 1930, after the death of the founder and the first President of the Union Boghos Nubar. This fact was symbolic in view of the role of the Nubar family in Gulbenkian's life. Calouste Gulbenkian was born in Constantinople (Skutar) in 1869. After finishing the famous Robert college of Istanbul, Calouste Gulbenkian left for Marseilles to improve his French, and in 1884 he entered the famous King's College of London. "...In 1887, when he was still only nineteen and a half, he graduated as an Associate of King's College with a First Class in Civil Engineering and won medals in Science and Engineering. In 1952 he was elected an Honorary Fellow because he was the oldest surviving graduate of the Civil Engineering School - this was the only honour which he ever accepted."¹²⁹ Calouste Gulbenkian became known in the world in 1914, at the eve of World War I when, thanks to his mediation, the two largest oil companies of the time - the "Anglo-Persian Oil Company" and the "Royal Dutch-Shell" created a consortium that, with the consent of the government of Turkey, had to exploit oil fields in the Middle East. After lengthy discussions between the newly created company and Calouste Gulbenkian it was decided that "the companies each provide a 2 1/2 per cent share in

¹²⁷ Ibid.: 51-52.

¹²⁸ Ibid.: 54.

¹²⁹ Hewins 1957: 14

the company for the Gulbenkian interest,"¹³⁰ in other words, 5% of the oil produced in the Middle East. After this most profitable transaction in the world, Calouste Gulbenkian, one of the most famous and richest men of the world, became known as "Mr. Five Percent."

The life and work of Calouste Gulbenkian were always in the focus of general attention. In this case, however, of special relevance is the following event in his life. In 1896, during the massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the 27 year-old Gulbenkian, with his wife and the new-born baby, leave Turkey and travel to Europe, spending some months in Cairo on the way, where their friends and relatives lived. Among the latter was Nubar Pasha, the father of Boghos Nubar, who had resigned from the post of the prime minister the year before. He was the one who hosted the young couple. The son of Calouste Gulbenkian, Nubar Gulbenkian, quotes the memoirs of his mother, Nvard Essayan: "When my mother went driving with Nubar Pasha in a carriage and pair through the streets of Cairo the fellahin used to bow deeply and some even prostrated themselves as the Pasha's carriage passed. The horses were preceded by a runner, called a *saïs*, who carried a stick with five horse's tails; the number of tails, one, three or five, was determined by the rank of Pasha; the Khedive himself warranted seven tails."¹³¹ Gulbenkian was very proud about his relationship with such a prominent man after whom he named his first son. In a book about Calouste Gulbenkian Ralph Hewins writes: "Through the family connection with Nubar Pasha, Gulbenkian obtained a new status... He was the friend, protege, and "nephew" of the world-famous statesman. When he needed introduction to Prince of Wales's multi-millionaire financial adviser, Sir Ernest Cassel, Calouste found Nubar Pasha a name to conjure with--the Prince and the Pasha had been friends since the Royal visit to Cairo... Through Sir Evelyn Baring, Nubar Pasha had long-standing links with Baring Brothers, the famous City of London merchant bankers. They were to play a vital role in the rise of Mr. Five Percent... Since the Pasha had been educated in France and French was his first language, he was able to introduce Calouste to the most influential people in Paris, including the Rothschilds... Long talks with the Pasha also seem to have matured Gulbenkian's precocious diplomatic talents."¹³² The same author mentions that in Cairo Calouste Gulbenkian "... met another prominent Armenian of the future-the Pasha's son, Boghos Nubar Pasha-then a well-known architect, busy developing Heliopolis for his father and uncle, Abraham Pasha."¹³³ Thirty-four years after these meetings, Calouste Gulbenkian succeeded Boghos Nubar in the post of the president of the AGBU, founded by the latter, and only a year and a half after he submitted his resignation.

¹³⁰ Ibid.: IX.

¹³¹ Gulbenkian 1965: 12.

¹³² Hewins 1957: 52-53.

¹³³ Ibid: 53.

As expected, this resignation had considerable reverberations in the Diaspora (as equally expected, there was no mention of it in Soviet Armenia): various organizations and prominent individuals expressed their views and assessments of the case. Both for his contemporaries as well as today, Gulbenkian's resignation raises two key questions. First, what was the cause and how justified was the accusation of Gulbenkian by Khanjian and, second, was Khanjian's accusation the true reason or the pretext for Gulbenkian's resignation from the post of the Union's President? In our days, the first of these issues became a matter of special consideration by historian Karlen Dallakian, whose monograph "On the Resignation of the President of the AGBU Calouste Gulbenkian" is of the few scholarly works on the history of the AGBU.

Analysing Khanjian's speech of October 14, 1932 in the broader context of the political events in the Soviet Union and abroad, Dallakian provides the following explanation. In the 1920's, the Turkish propaganda, wishing at any cost to prevent the concentration of refugee Armenians in Syria, i.e. along its southern territories, started skillfully exploiting the myth of an "Armenian home" in the region. In the interpretation of Turkey, the authors and perpetrators of this project were the imperialist countries of the West, first of all France, as well as its clients, Armenian political parties, and primarily the Dahsnaktsoutiun. At the same time the authorities of the Soviet Union, in the frenzy of the search for outside enemies, ceaselessly professed the forthcoming imperialistic intervention. The Armenian version of this propaganda ascribed an important role to the same "home." "The Dashnaks, with the "high" support of the French government", wrote "Khorhrdayin Hayastan" in one of its June issues, "tried at all costs to consolidate the required human material in the North-East of Syria. This "home," besides being a base of the French imperialism in its suppression of the national liberation movement in Syria, is at the same time a link between the "Kurdish theatre of operations" and the Mediterranean that could be used by the French imperialists at their discretion. This "home" will become one of the centres of preparation for the anti-Soviet war."¹³⁴ The Turkish and Soviet Armenian propaganda about the "Armenian home" in Syria reached its climax in 1931 when the League of Nations and Nansen's Office, in cooperation with AGBU, planned the transportation of unemployed and homeless Armenian exiles to Syria. In this situation, the Armenian authorities reverted to decisive measures. Dallakian writes: "The concoction of the "Armenian home" was perceived as an ultimate fact that caused immense anxiety, the Turkish propaganda and perhaps other services as well propped up the tension, possibly, instructions were received from the Soviet centre as well, and ultimately, a hasty decision was taken to organise the repatriation, as a counterbalance to "Armenian home", thus aborting the "imperialistic programe." In summary, the repatriation organised in 1931 served a clearly political purpose."¹³⁵ It is also worth mentioning that voluntary repatriation to the Soviet Union from a capitalist or any other country always had a clear political and ideological purpose and significance.

¹³⁴ Dallakian 1996: 78-79.

¹³⁵ Ibid.: 83.

It may be safely claimed that the political goals of the Soviet Union in the issue of repatriation unintentionally coincided with the ultimate interests of the Armenian people, and it remained for the authorities of Soviet Armenia to make the best of the opportunity, putting the Diaspora money to good use, and ensuring adequate living and working conditions for the repatriates.

However, continues Dallakian, it was not enough to satisfy the anxiety of Turkey: "the "Armenian home" had to be destroyed, since though it was a fiction from beginning to end, it nonetheless existed as an idea. The implementation of this idea was possible only upon the availability of financial resources, and the money was at the disposal of the President of the AGBU Calouste Gulbenkian. Gulbenkian's person was selected as the main target, hitting which the whole structure could be destroyed. Calouste Gulbenkian was also a convenient target especially in view of the fact that he was known as a big capitalist, and in the eyes of the Soviet propaganda he was also someone "with close ties with the international imperialist circles."¹³⁶

Dallakian's viewpoint appears convincing in its part pertaining to the repatriation, and the author brings up several facts to support it. However, the statement that beginning with 1931 the repatriation pursued exclusively political ends, since Armenia was not in a position to organise it for years itself, "and was especially unable to do it following the earthquake of April 27, 1931" requires some clarification. The reality is that Soviet Armenia was at the same level of its socio-economic development in 1931 as it was in 1925, 1927 and later in 1936 or 1946 - 48, therefore it was never really prepared for repatriation, hence the repatriation of 1931 was no different in these terms. On the other hand, it was already mentioned that following 1927 the AGBU and the authorities of Armenia continuously discussed the issue of the next wave of repatriation and Armenia, and for a number of different reasons, suspended but did not reject the implementation. Another factor is that this time, in determining the time-frames, the fact of the "Syrian home" was taken into account.

As for the explanation of the accusations brought against Gulbenkian, these require additional factual substantiation. First, what was the guarantee that following the speech of Khanjian Calouste Gulbenkian would refuse to support the transportation of exiles to Syria? If he really had such intentions, even without willing to openly confront the leader of Armenia, he could easily do that indirectly, not as the President of the Union and without having his name mentioned. The following fact is important from this perspective--this issue was no longer on the agenda anyway: in the first days of September, 1931, after a meeting between Ter-Gabrielian and Gulbenkian it was decided that the Armenian exiles in Greece should repatriate to Armenia. The fact of the change in the AGBU programmes was referred to in correspondence more than once, including that with Yerevan. "Naturally, the Syrian undertaking will now be dropped, since the doors of homeland are open for the exiles in Greece and indeed, within one

¹³⁶ Ibid.: 87.

year 27 persons only went to Syria, and did so by mistake."¹³⁷ There was no mention of transportation to Syria contained in Gulbenkian's above-mentioned appeal of September 30. Khanjian delivered his speech two weeks after the appeal, i.e. he was either unaware of it, which is not very likely, or for some reasons chose to ignore it.

In all this the visit of Ter-Gabrielian to Paris appears to be of utmost interest. Dallakian states that even before this visit the negotiations of the President of the AGBU with the High Commissioner of France in Syria and Nansen's Office were already common knowledge, and that "Khorhrdayin Hayastan" had already published its material against Calouste Gulbenkian, and follows up with a legitimate question: "... why, however, did Sahak Ter-Gabrielian go to Paris, risking and jeopardizing his position and undermining his credibility?"¹³⁸ The question, however, remains unanswered. Obviously, he did not go to make a statement on repatriation, neither did he go to meet with the French authorities on the issue, since the repatriation was from Greece and Bulgaria. It may be stated with a degree of certainty that the purpose of the meeting with the leaders of the Union was two-fold: first, to receive the advance consent of the Union to support the repatriation of the Armenian exiles from Greece and thus abort the programme of their transportation to Syria, and then to secure the necessary funding to implement repatriation to Armenia. The first problem was successfully resolved: repatriation to Armenia was in full conformity with the Union's original perception of national consolidation, and at the same time it had fewer complications than the preceding "Syrian" project.

It is worth mentioning that together with the problem of the Armenian exiles in Greece, the issue of numerous Armenians put up in the camps of Beirut and Aleppo was also pending. In view of the anti-hygienic conditions prevalent in the camps, the complaints of the owners of land where the camps were located, and several other reasons, the local authorities decided to demolish them without delay, which could result in about 15,000 Armenian exiles remaining completely homeless. The AGBU, in response to applications from the Nansen's Office, determined to finance within possible limits the construction of residential areas for the Armenians of Beirut and Aleppo. And while the Union readily let go of the project "From Greece to Syria," and substituted it with a project "From Greece to Armenia," it simply had to continue supporting it. In this connection, the Board of Directors of the AGBU wrote, "... the baseless accusation against Mr. Gulbenkian in a speech by citizen Aghassi Khanjian left a most bitter impression and caused immense grief to the Board of Directors. We have never even considered establishing a "national home" outside of the homeland, since any community, including the one in Syria, is merely a temporary settlement for the exiles. The brotherly support extended to the exiles abroad, without which these destitute splinters of our much suffered nation would be doomed to terrible perils and poverty, has no motivation other than indubitable humanitarian obligations.

¹³⁷ Miutyun, July-August, 1932, no. 156: 58, see also Ibid, October 1931, no. 151: 148.

¹³⁸ Dallakian 1996: 85.

Consequently, it is reprehensible that the support of the AGBU is denied until such time when our compatriots, uprooted from their motherland and deprived of any protection, are settled in their home locations, which will surely take a long time."¹³⁹ But even in these circumstances, according to the agreement with Nansen's Office, the Union had to "... provide only half of the previously pledged 10,000 pounds for the homeless exiles in Syria, so that the rest of the amount could be remitted to the immigration fund."¹⁴⁰ Thus, if the components of the imaginary plan of the "Armenian Home" were on one hand, the transportation of exiles from Greece to Syria and, on the other, the construction of shelters for homeless refugees in Beirut and Aleppo, then in September 1931, especially after Ter-Gabrielian's visit to Paris, the Union decided to support only the second component. And if the Turkish propaganda still considered it a threat to its national security then, even in view of possible political repercussions, it would be hard to imagine that the Armenian authorities, independently or upon instructions from Moscow, could demand that the AGBU hold back the already pledged support to the Armenian exiles in Beirut and Aleppo.

The second purpose of Ter-Gabrielian's visit to Paris, i.e. the issue of financing repatriation to Armenia, followed another development. This is what Malezian, the only leader of the Union to maintain close working and personal relations with Gulbenkian after his resignation, writes: "Since last month (Malezian refers to Khanjian's speech - Ed. M.) the prime minister of Armenia Sahak Ter-Gabrielian visited Paris, brought an official proposal on repatriation and requested that the president of the Union organise a fundraising to finance the transportation of the repatriates to Armenia. But Gulbenkian, duly receiving the distinguished guest, preferred, against my advice, to mention that he would rather wait for the results of the fundraising before making his contribution. Needless to say, the prime minister left in a very displeased mood, which was confirmed to me by Tahmizian and Avetik Issahakian (representatives of the HOK - Ed. M.)."¹⁴¹

Ter-Gabrielian's "displeased mood" was natural and understandable, however, judging from the subsequent events it may seem that he continued to cherish certain hopes with relation to the financial support of Gulbenkian. It is noteworthy that in an interview upon his return he specifically refers to his meeting with Gulbenkian without expressing any negative opinion about the AGBU. Later, in an article of October 10, discussing the idea of the "Armenian home", he does not say a word about the Union and its president. He continued to adhere to this position in the future as well. If we assume that Khanjian's accusations against Gulbenkian were inspired from the centre, whether from Moscow or Tbilisi (the headquarter of the Transcaucasian Federation), then such a behaviour of the prime minister of Armenia becomes extremely surprising if not unlikely.

¹³⁹ Miutyun, July-August, 1932, no. 156: 58-59.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.: 58.

¹⁴¹ Malezian 1960.

The behaviour of Ter-Gabrielian becomes explainable if we assume that Khanjian's accusations against the President of the Union were the result of his personal initiative. It is beyond doubt that the visit of the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars to Paris and his negotiations with millionaire Gulbenkian were possible only in the case of permission or at least consent by the first person of Armenia, Aghasshi Khanjian himself. It is most likely that Ter-Gabrielian was almost sure of his success. But what about Khanjian? The answer to this difficult question can be found in the testimonies of Khanjian's wife, Rosa Vindzberg:

"... from 1930 until recently (1936) there has been almost no full accord or true joint action within the Central Committee of the CPA. After the appointment of Khanjian as the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, during the period of problems with the collectivization, Khanjian was accused of nationalism by H. Kostanian-Bannayan, M. Chalian, Mandalian, Atanes Akopov, Gourgen Kalashian and other groups. Amatouni, who at that time was the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was very close to the group. On the other hand, he (Khanjian) was also confronted by the nationalistic group of the former chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Armenia Kassian.

"One of the specific features of Khanjian's character was his extraordinary trust in people, and I should say that for quite a while he could not believe that there was any resistance against him, even when he was presented with hard facts. With Kirov's participation, all members of the first group were removed from Armenia, Kassian was also dismissed and Amatouni was unveiled as a supporter of Lominadze and dismissed from his post.

"Until the beginning of 1933 there was no indication of serious opposition (at that time, it was called unscrupulous-group confrontation, and now it is clear that all this had a political bias). During this period the performance of Ter-Gabrielian was rather concerning. He (Khanjian) thought that Ter-Gabrielian adhered to a very strong nationalistic position... but since he was the chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars, Khanjian mentioned more than once that he could not ignore him, but make concessions to him, especially when it came to nominations for Soviet administration posts... In 1935 the tension in relations with Ter-Gabrielian escalated, and he was removed from Armenia..."¹⁴²

Such altercations at the top of the power pyramid, based on direct and implicit accusations of nationalism may explain the position of Khanjian. In the event of the successful outcome of negotiations between Gulbenkian and Ter-Gabrielian, the latter could present it as his political feat. It seems that Khanjian may not simply have doubted the successful outcome, but rather did not want it to take place. Upon learning of the details of Ter-Gabrielian's visit, he chose to ignore the agreements concluded and immediately came up with his notorious speech. While the accusations were targeting Gulbenkian, they ricocheted off to the prime minister who only a month prior enjoyed the

¹⁴² NAA., 1191/4/1666, p. 98-101.

hospitality of the same Gulbenkian, a person with "close ties to the international imperialist circles". In fact, with this speech Khanjian condemned, without mentioning the name, the visit of Ter-Gabrielian, questioning, in the words of Dallakian, "his position and credibility" and hence strengthened his own position at the top of the power. The reaction of Gulbenkian seemed to interest Khanjian least of all: any reaction beginning with financing the repatriation and through to the latter's resignation, could be presented as the victory of communist Khanjian over capitalist Gulbenkian.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that in this as well as in other cases, in attempting to explain Khanjian's behaviour in the capacity of the first person in Armenia, one tends to forget about his individual character, shaped in specific circumstances of his life. Aghassi Khanjian was born in 1901 in Van, his childhood coincided with World War I, the genocide, the exile, irretrievable loss of the paternal home, the next of kin, all of which inevitably left a negative impact on the Armenian people as a whole, and on the mental state of every Armenian who witnessed or participated in these events. Since 1917 he joined in the revolutionary activities and was since arrested twice. Following the establishment of the Soviet power in Armenia and until the anti-Bolshevik rebellion of 1921, Khanjian was the secretary of the Yerevan Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia. Thus, between 17 and 21 years of age, during formative years for a young individual, Khanjian lived in the midst of revolutionary times when, in the words of Talleyrand, "impudence was the sole asset and extremism was the sole virtue."¹⁴³ Many of his peers followed this path—it was natural for a country undergoing a revolution and in this aspect Khanjian's early biography is similar to that of his colleagues.

In 1921, upon a decision of the party, he goes to Moscow to study at the Communist University, and a year after to Leningrad (St. Petersburg) where six years he was a party worker. "In 1925, when Zinoviev was the boss of Leningrad," writes Mary Kilbourne Matossian, "Khanjian was one of the communists in that city who opposed Zinoviev and sided with Stalin. With the downfall of the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Trotsky opposition, Khanjian rose fast in the party. He became an intimate of Sergey Kirov, Stalin's right-hand man, who took over the Leningrad party organization on 1926. About this time he became personally known to Stalin. Entrenched in Stalin's confidence, he was transferred to Armenia in April, 1928."¹⁴⁴ During these seven consecutive years, Aghassi Khanjian was detached from the Armenian reality both by the nature of his work and in terms of his personal life, especially after the marriage to Rosa Vindzberg. At the same time, living and working in a foreign ethnic and cultural environment, he, like any other representative of a minority was continuously under pressure of self-assertion as a professional, an individual, and as an Armenian.

In 1928 Khanjian returned to Armenia to work for two years as the second secretary and, from 1930 till the end of his life, as the First Secretary of the Central

¹⁴³ *Mémoires complets et authentiques de Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand* 1967: 237.

¹⁴⁴ Kilbourne Matossian 1962: 119.

Committee of the Communist party of Armenia. Here again he is challenged with the problem of self-assertion, though this time as the leader of the smallest, but still a constituent republic of the Soviet Union. And while in this case he could somehow benefit from his connections in Moscow and Leningrad, the domestic situation in Armenia was totally different. Here he had to prove his abilities in a rather unfamiliar environment side by side with experienced, authoritative and respected figures such as Sarkis Kassian, Askanaz Mravian, Sahak Ter-Gabrielian, and Aramays Yerznkian. He had to find his way in the power struggle, to take important decisions not only on purely party issues, but also in relation to the social and economic development of Armenia. However, there was one more, probably the most difficult, issue--his relations with the immediate supervisors in the Transcaucasus, represented by Lavrentiy Beria, that evolved around the protection of the independent interests and rights of Armenia. A speedy and adequate solution of this and several other priority issues was a daunting task for Khanjian who, at 30-35 years of age, lacked the life experience and relevant professional skills to ensure easy success. In fact, he always acted single-handedly, not trusting Beria's protégés and at the same time having no stable allies in the traditional, "old" power elite of Armenia. It can be maintained that, especially during the last 5 to 6 years of his life, Khanjian was in a permanent state of nervous and physical (he suffered from tuberculosis) stress, which probably explains his sometimes inadequate and inconsistent behaviour.

As was mentioned earlier, the second issue connected with Gulbenkian was his abrupt reaction to Khanjian's speech. He explained his resignation by "absurd and ungrounded...accusations" and a "completely irrelevant attack" against his person by Khanjian and the government of Armenia, which made it impossible for him to cooperate, in the capacity of the president of the AGBU, with the authorities of Soviet Armenia. Admitting that there were other reasons as well (see below), it seems, however, that these points represented sufficient grounds for resignation. Khanjian and his colleagues were so different from Gulbenkian in their upbringing and education, level of intellectual development, life experience and professional capacities that, following the offending accusations Calouste Gulbenkian indeed could consider it undignified to continue however indirect, correspondent or purely official contacts with these people. In trying to reverse Gulbenkian's decision, his contemporaries often cited Boghos Nubar's example who used to ignore the occasional and equally groundless attacks from Yerevan. Gulbenkian was, however, quite different from Boghos Nubar. Being an extreme individualist in his professional as well as personal life, Gulbenkian could not and would not compromise his ego for any cause or lofty purpose.

With all these considerations, Khanjian's accusations were both the reason and the pretext for Gulbenkian's resignation. Assuming the post of the president of the AGBU after Boghos Nubar, a person of Calouste Gulbenkian's calibre could not be content with simply continuing the job he took over, and hence tackled two mega-issues. In Vahan Malezian's words, "His first job was to bring together all the trusts of

the Union and make one consolidated "National Trust" or a "Holding" where each contributor would have his share and the funds and revenues were identified for each share. He was excited about the idea and hoped that everyone, even the last Armenian, would try to have a share in this big Trust."¹⁴⁵ This project, however, failed in view of the impossibility at the time of the relevant financial transactions. "This upset him even more than it appeared because being used to success, he was extremely sensitive towards any kind of failure or surrender."¹⁴⁶

Calouste Gulbenkian's second priority was stated in his inaugural speech: the consolidation of the entire Diaspora and especially the Dashnaksoutiun around the Union. Vahan Malezian who was, incidentally, one of the founders of Ramkavar Party, wrote:

"He hoped to bring everyone together around the idea of the Union, and especially the Dashnaksoutiun, which until then had always tried to discredit and destroy him through its propaganda, although he did not view it as a serious impediment. He started making advances in this direction, if not personally, then through other people. But his call for consolidation was misinterpreted. He was relying mostly on Aharonian, Khatissian and Jamalian, to whom he had extended financial support. By way of moral compensation, he expected them to be willing to accept his idea and contribute to the success of his program. We did not comment to him about it, and were very cautious in our remarks so as not to create an impression that we were against this idea or did not believe in its success, although this was what we believed. In the course of the negotiations Gulbenkian understood that it was impossible to come to terms with the Dashnaksoutiun, and that they will set forth disproportional demands and unacceptable conditions against several minor concessions. One day when he visited my office as usual, he put an envelope on my desk and spoke bitterly. His disappointment increased further when he saw that the Dashnaksoutiun media intensified its attacks against the Union and even came up with serious accusations against his person, claiming that he did not implement the fundamental reformation of the Union he had promised, that he did not perform the necessary, in their opinion, cleansing of the membership, and when was he finally going to carry through the ambitions charity undertakings that had been announced in the past. I remember how upset he was, and I vainly tried to console him by referring to the example of Boghos Nubar. Pasha, I said, knew how to ignore such empty talk and retaliate with deeds. But he was very sensitive and would not tolerate such blows on part of his compatriots."¹⁴⁷

Calouste Gulbenkian's mental state is apparent in his statement of December, 1930: "Since the onset of my Presidency with the Armenian General Benevolent Union I directed all my moral and material capacity towards strengthening it, and it caused me immense pain to see that a part of our media is immersed in feuds and questions my

¹⁴⁵ AGBU CBDA.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

intentions with respect to the Union. I thought that this would end after my sincere and resolute statements where I explained that, being independent from any political party, I will try to make the Union a Home for all Armenians irrespective of their political or religious affiliation. In order for our Union to accomplish the tasks set forth by its founders, Armenians of all political convictions have to dedicate themselves to the Union... I consider it necessary to make this new statement, and if it does not reach its purpose, I will be grieved once and for all."¹⁴⁸

Another circumstance is also worth mentioning. During these same years, the devaluation of the English, American and other currencies in the context of the global financial crisis was accompanied by a fall in stocks that could have grave consequences for the overall financial situation of the AGBU. The bankruptcy of the Union, that was financially stable during the twenty-five years under Boghos Nubar's leadership, was naturally a highly undesirable prospect for Calouste Gulbenkian.

The combination of these factors has lead to Gulbenkian's decision. For the world renowned financier and businessman who was used to success, it was difficult to accept failure in such a seemingly plain national area. And he hurried to take advantage of the situation that he had created himself. The last paragraph of his inaugural speech as the President of the AGBU read, "I will be very happy if I succeed, and should this be impossible, I will not hesitate to resign from this high post."¹⁴⁹

Unrealized donations

Three years after almost nothing had changed in the national-political arena, Aghassi Khanjian was still alive and on the scene, and there seemed to be no reason for the re-appearance of Calouste Gulbenkian in the focus of events. But in 1936 a letter by Malezian addressed to the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia Abraham Gouloyan arrived in Yerevan:

"I am pleased to inform you of the good intentions that were recently expressed by the former President of the AGBU Calouste Gulbenkian, around which he had two personal meetings with the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey citizen Karakhan.

"Calouste Gulbenkian, formerly a Turkish citizen, left Turkey about 40 years ago and received British citizenship. Therefore the Turkish authorities recently declared that he finally relinquished Turkish citizenship.

"Our respected benefactor has valuable assets in Constantinople that are not subject to confiscation as abandoned property, since he is not a refugee of war, but had left the country earlier. The proceeds from his assets were received by his representative in Constantinople and gradually remitted as donations to benevolent institutions.

¹⁴⁸ Miutyun, December 1930, no. 145: 404.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., November 1930, no. 144: 391.

"According to this statement, Mr. Calouste Gulbenkian is obliged by law within a period of one year, i.e. until coming April, to settle all pending issues and dispose of the property. His main assets are the Selamet Caravan-saray in Istanbul, purchased at the time for 20,000 pounds sterling, with the proceeds decreased from 2000 to 700 pounds sterling as a result of the economic crisis, then first-class land in Pera, in the neighborhood of the German Embassy, that at the time was worth 8-10 thousand pounds sterling.

"Thus, Mr. Calouste Gulbenkian is in a position and is allowed to sell these assets, but he prefers to donate them to the Yerevan State University, reserving the right to further determine the details of the donation. However, as I said, the matter is extremely urgent since very little time is left, and the formalities for the transfer of the property should commence in one month at the latest so that the transaction is completed by April.

"In presenting this proposal for the consideration of the government of Soviet Armenia, we request you to inform us on your views at your earliest convenience, so that the matter is expedited. We also request to inform the Central Government in Moscow whose representative citizen Karakhan already wrote to Moscow and promised to undertake the issue upon his return to Ankara in 8 to 10 days. "¹⁵⁰

From Malezian's letter to Gouloyan of March 18 it becomes clear that thanks to the efforts of the Plenipotentiary Representative (Ambassador) of the Soviet Union in Turkey Lev Karakhan (Karakhanian), the issue of legal settlement with the Turkish authorities was resolved, and upon receiving the news, Gulbenkian sent to the ambassador his power of attorney and all documents on the title deeds. The same day, on March 18, in a letter addressed to Karakhan Gulbenkian wrote:

"... as I had the honour to inform you during your last visit to Paris, I donate to the Armenian government finally and irrevocably, our (his and his wife Nvard Essayan's - Ed. M) property that is presently in Turkey, consisting of land in Salamet Khan located in Bakhche Kapou... , and in Ayaz Pasha, Pera locality, all without exception, as real estate. It is my desire that the revenue from the assets or the proceeds from the sale thereof be put at the disposal of the Government of Armenia for the construction any University building... I have the honour to transmit herewith a power of attorney whereby I give you complete freedom of action for registration of documents and transfers. The documents confirming ownership will be sent to you in a couple of days... I have no words to express my gratitude for your immense service... by which you facilitate the fulfillment of my cherished dream of being of help to the Armenian people whose revival brings honour to the central authorities of the Soviet Union and the Yerevan government. "¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ NAA, 178/1/518, p. 5-6. The official Russian translation of the letter is kept in the Armenian National Archives.

¹⁵¹ NAA, 113/3/1759, p. 44. A non-precise Russian translation of the letter done in Paris is kept in the Armenian National Archives. Vahan Malezian had forwarded it to Yerevan some time later.

The power of attorney mentioned in the letter is a meticulously formulated document that after the description of the property of Calouste Gulbenkian and his wife located in Istanbul and Smyrna regions, minutely lists all the rights and powers that are entrusted to Lev Karakhan. It seems that the success of the undertaking is ensured: there is the consent of Moscow, willingness of Karakhan's agreement with the Turkish authorities, as well as all the necessary documents. In this spirit of confidence, Vahan Malezian wrote to Haikaz Karageusian on April 27, expressing a hope that Karakhan had already successfully completed paperwork for Gulbenkian's property, and enthusiastically presenting the latter's proposal on the construction, with the proceeds generated from the sale, of a museum-library to which, according to Malezian, he would possibly donate a part of his famous collection.

But after another fourteen months, in May, 1937, Malezian again has to appeal to Gouloyan: "Months passed, and we have no information about this case, neither from Ankara nor from the Embassy there... Until today all the requests made both by the Benefactor and our Union to Constantinople and Yerevan remained unanswered, and we do not know what is the status of affairs... Our renowned friend personally wrote to Karakhan. It would seem to us that if he was unable to do the job, he should return the documents since it is not right to suspend such an important job in this uncertain condition."¹⁵²

This and subsequent letters of Vahan Malezian remained unanswered. In the history of the Soviet Union, the year of 1937 was a notorious period of mass political repressions, whose first victims were state and party leaders. In Armenia, all the officials that dealt with the Diaspora were declared enemies of the people, anti-revolutionaries and nationalists. In these circumstances, when any contact abroad, regardless of its form and nature, was indeed lethal for Soviet Armenians, contacts with Vahan Malezian were officially maintained by Haikaz Karageusian. Malezian, anxiously sharing his "assumption that there was no positive development, and therefore no hopes should be cherished about the successful outcome of the issue," wrote in one of his last letters to the Chairman of the government Abraham Gouloyan:

"We should sincerely admit that it is beyond our comprehension: Karakhan's silence and indifference result in our dear University losing an important contribution, and probably in the confiscation of the property of our benefactor as that of a foreign citizen. So I have to once again turn to You as a person with great authority, deign to raise this question again before Moscow and Ankara and sharing with us any definitive information so that we are at least aware of what is the current status of affairs."¹⁵³

And Gouloyan really applied to Moscow: the Armenian Government, as an interested party, wanted to know the reason why the issue had not been resolved for so long. On August 19, 1937, he wrote to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union Maxim Litvinov:

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 43.

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 42.

"In response to your query ...in March of last year in relation to the possibility of acceptance of a donation by citizen Gulbenkian consisting of buildings located in Turkey and other assets, we gave our agreement in principle. We are not aware of further developments on the issue.

"Recently, we received several letters from the Armenian General Benevolent Union in Paris where they informed us that the power of attorney of Gulbenkian on the right of acceptance and sale of the property was transferred, as an attachment to Gulbenkian's letter of March 18, 1936, to the former Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR in Ankara L. Karakhan. In its letter of July 8, 1937, the Armenian General Benevolent Union writes that neither the Union, nor Gulbenkian have no information on the progress of this case. However, according to the data they have, a Plenipotentiary Representative of USSR in Ankara allegedly did nothing.

"The documents at our disposal and particularly the power of attorney sent by Gulbenkian to Karakhan which is attached, indicate that the property is of considerable amount and therefore I would consider it feasible to undertake necessary measures in the direction of receipt and disposal of Gulbenkian's property.

"The Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia requests your corresponding instruction to the Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR in Ankara in relation to the acceptance and sale of Gulbenkian's property in favour of the State University of Armenia. We request that you keep us informed of your further instructions."¹⁵⁴

This unrealized donation by Calouste Gulbenkian raises many questions. How realistic was it for a senior official of the Soviet Union, and its ambassador in Turkey, to personally represent the interests of an Armenian millionaire and English citizen in relation to the sale of his assets in Turkey and the use of the proceeds to the benefit of the University of Yerevan? The question becomes even more relevant in view of Calouste Gulbenkian's qualification as "the direct sponsor" of "anti-Soviet imperialist intervention", that was made only 3 to 4 years before that. For anyone familiar with the history of the Soviet Union the answer to the question would be negative. But in this case, what was the purpose of the leadership of the Soviet Union in granting its unprecedented permission for Lev Karakhan to defend Calouste Gulbenkian's interests? And wasn't the unlimited trust of Gulbenkian towards Lev Karakhan explained by his desire to not only pull the donation through, but also to restore his relations with the Soviet authorities?

Anyway, Gouloyan's letter to Litvinov, as it could be expected, remained unanswered. And Lev Karakhan himself was summoned to Moscow earlier and, like other well-know diplomats, shot in 1938.

At the end of World War II, the Soviet Union restored ties with Armenian Diaspora to achieve its geopolitical goals. Among the elements in this new policy were, for example, the organization of a new wave of repatriation of 1946-1948. The majority of the Armenian Diaspora, inspired in its turn with the perspective opened up in view of the

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 38.

new policy of the Soviet Union, tried to support it within the limits of its capacity and at the same time take an advantage of the new opportunities. Specifically, the AGBU's leaders found it feasible to return to the issue of Calouste Gulbenkian's donation, most likely referring to his 16,000 dollar worth contribution to the repatriation fundraising. The "Miutyun" magazine, reminding that ten years ago Gulbenkian "... provided his valuable assets in Turkey (with the current value of 200,000 English pounds) to the Yerevan State University", informed that "For the accomplishment of this important contribution, new appeals were made by the AGBU, in order to present this issue to the attention of the Central Government in Moscow and the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia, the deputy President of the Union Mr. Levon Guerdan and Director General Mr. Vahan Malezian personally visited Washington to meet with the Soviet Ambassador M. Novikov and present a memorandum to His Excellency and requesting the strengthening of relations between Soviet Armenia and the AGBU."¹⁵⁵ And again, uncertain, but basically negative reactions, this time from a different authority. "Upon return of the documents related to the donation of Mr. Calouste Gulbenkian's property in Turkey", wrote Chief of Staff of the Council of Ministers of Armenia in his letter of December, 1947, addressed to Vahan Malezian, "as we informed you in our letter of 21 April of this year, the relevant instructions were duly issued at the time. However, since these documents, as indicated in your letter, were not yet returned to Mr. Gulbenkian, we once more sent a reminder to the corresponding bodies requesting to expedite the dispatch of the documents to the AGBU or to Mr. Gulbenkian's address in Lisbon."¹⁵⁶

However, the main issue discussed in this letter was different and referred to the funding of restoration of the Echmiadzin Cathedral by the same Calouste Gulbenkian. The negotiations between Gulbenkian and the Government of Armenia were mediated by the AGBU and stumbled on Gulbenkian's proposal to conclude an agreement with the government. The Government of Armenia rejected it on the following grounds: "...signing of an agreement for the restoration of the Cathedral by the government would mean violation of the sovereignty of the Armenian Church."¹⁵⁷ The essence of the issue becomes clear from Calouste Gulbenkian's letter to Catholicos Gevorg VI:

"Driven by a spontaneous feeling, I proposed to contribute to the restoration of the Holy See with a donation of 100,000 dollars, with a condition however that my name should not be mentioned until the project materializes. Then, realizing that this amount may not suffice, I gladly added another 50,000 dollars so that all the work planned by the architects is completed without the need for additional resources.

"Subsequently, I realised that these 150,000 dollars that I put at the immediate disposal of Your Holiness, would not suffice for the planned fundamental restoration unless the Government of Armenia kindly agrees to offer its public authority in undertaking the management of this daunting and costly task. Fortunately, during the

¹⁵⁵ Miutyun, February, 1947, no. 204: 17.

¹⁵⁶ AGBU CBDA.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

last year, the Yerevan Government officially informed New York that the conditions proposed are fully acceptable, and immediately thereafter, after discussions with my friends A. Karageusian (Arshak Karageusian, the President of the AGBU between 1942-1953 - Ed. M.) and Vahan Malezian, I signed an agreement that stipulates the important points to which the Government kindly consented. Further, however, the latter considered it inconvenient to sign the agreement on its behalf, thus leaving the issue uncertain... and as Your Holiness stated, "in the present situation, 150,000 dollars cannot be considered sufficient" if, in my understanding, not complemented by the government resources, that is if the dollars are not exchanged at a convenient rate." In conclusion, the letter reads: "I am concerned that the current troubled state of the world as such does not create favourable conditions for the successful accomplishment of such a gigantic task, and that probably it may be feasible to postpone it for a while and wait for better times when the circumstances become more enabling."¹⁵⁸

Gulbenkian's prophesy came true: the "iron curtain" had already begun to fall. Anyway, in 1955 after Gulbenkian's death it became known that he bequeathed about half a million dollars for the restoration of the Cathedral of St.Echmiadzin.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

AGBU IN THE MAELSTROM OF INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUGGLE

In the mid-1930s the Soviet Union passed a new stage of the struggle for the power. Stalin, who had previously successfully coped with many of his real and imaginary political opponents, began their final elimination. This brutal repressive campaign, later called the Great Purge or Great Terror of 1936-1938, ended in the death of most of the state's leading elite. Starting in Moscow, the repressions continued in all republics of the country, already under banner of the struggle against nationalism. In Soviet Armenia, the victims of political terror were not only practically all the leaders of the Republic, but also the relations with the Armenian Diaspora themselves.

Yessayan accuses

The agenda of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) for August 26, 1935, included the activities of the Immigration Committee. This agenda item, seemingly of little significance (no. 22 of the agenda), provoked a general debate, during which Arsen Yessayan, People's Commissar of Local Industry, strongly criticized the activities of the Immigration Committee chaired by Abraham Gouloyan, Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars. Since then, A. Yessayan became one of the key players in the subsequent events. Taken by surprise, the members of the Bureau decided to "Invite comrade Yessayan to offer written clarifications with regard to his statement made during the session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPA."¹⁵⁹ The contents of the statement are reiterated in Yessayan's letter dated September 2, 1935, addressed to Stepan Akopov, Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia and to Lavrentiy Beria, First Secretary of the Transcaucasian regional committee of the Communist Party of the USSR (Zakkraykom, with headquarters in Tbilisi).

The letter, inter alia, stated: "The Immigration Committee was established three years ago in order to coordinate the activities related to the admission and accommodation of Armenian immigrants. However, the activities of the Committee had little to do with the immigrants' problems. The Immigration Committee is just another commercial organization, headed by the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars. The Committee abuses the USSR's favorable attitude towards immigrants to receive scarce and highly critical commodities, in particular construction materials, beyond the limits imposed by the state plan, imports them to Armenia and sells to different enterprises, while the immigrants get next to nothing... They act only as a curtain for the commercial activities of the Committee... The Committee is not a part of the Soviet administrative structure. The activities of the Committee and its rather large

¹⁵⁹ NAA, 1/15/11, p. 104.

(by the Armenian scale) transactions are not included in the national-economic plan of Armenia or its import quotas... No audit has been carried out during the 3-year activity of the Committee. The Committee does not report to anyone except its Chairman. Thanks to such profiteering, the Committee has generated significant revenues - about 3 million roubles in 1934, on an overall transactions value of 6 millions, and about the same amount this year - which the Council of the People's Commissars spends over and beyond the budget and the state plan..."

Arsen Yessayan concluded his letter with the following: "The Immigration Committee is apparently a profiteering organization. The Committee ignores and violates Soviet legislation regulating the operation of Soviet enterprises. All its activities are based on the evasion of legislation, and fraud against the Soviet Government. The policy adopted by the leadership of the Committee (I am not referring to most of the staff of the Committee, who most probably are unaware of the activities within the Committee) is not the policy adopted by our party. This policy does not lead to the consolidation of the foundations of the Socialist State, it leads to bourgeois deformations."¹⁶⁰

Yessayan was, of course, fully cognizant of the responsibility he was assuming when making such political allegations against not only the Prime Minister of Armenia in his capacity of the Chairman of the Immigration Committee, but, through him, against the Armenian party leader Aghassi Khanjian. Yessayan's actions – both the statement at the Bureau and the letter addressed to Beria and Akopov – can be explained by the following extract from the testimony of Aghassi Khanjian's wife, Rosa Vindzberg: "In late 1933 Stepan Akopov and Georgi Tsaturov were transferred from Tiflis to Yerevan, to assume the positions of, accordingly, Second Secretary of the Central Committee of CPA and the head of the organizational department... In the fall of 1933 (Aghassi Khanjian) was seriously ill and until June, 1934, was recovering from pulmonar surgery. During his absence, Akopov, without informing Khanjian (just before his return) performed a major personnel reshuffle, under the pretext of the difficulties in the mountain regions. Besides, Arsen Yessayan, Moushegh Danielian, and some others were appointed to various party posts. He was especially dissatisfied by the appointment of Arsen Yessayan, removed from work in Armenia in 1930..."¹⁶¹ In Tbilisi Yessayan, who was then the Deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of the Transcaucasian Federation, had worked under the immediate supervision of Beria and most probably still had certain illusions about him. He was aware that Khanjian had informed the Transcaucasian regional committee that he considered Yessayan's appointment inexpedient, but to no avail.

Yessayan's letter was a very good pretext for the Transcaucasian committee, and Beria himself, to focus their attention not only on the activities of the Immigration Committee or repatriation issues but also the Armenia-Diaspora relations. Subsequent

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 178/1/535, p. 32-35.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 1191/4/1661, p.100-101.

developments were speedy. On September 18, a commission from Tbilisi headed by the Secretary of Transcaucasian committee Sergey Kudryavtsev participated in the session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia. The only item on the agenda was deliberations over the statements made by Aramayis Yerznkian and Arsen Yessayan. The point was that before Yessayan's statement, the First deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia A. Yerznkian had also appealed to Stalin and Beria and, in Kudryavtsev's words: "made serious allegations against the leadership of the Communist party of Armenia, namely, Khanjian and Gouloyan."¹⁶² Kudryavtsev also informed that apart from that statement, Yessayan had also sent a letter to Beria, raising a wider range of issues related not only to the activities of the Immigration Committee. After hearing the strictly negative views of the members of the Bureau regarding the two appeals and investigating the issue, the commission returned to Tbilisi. Five days later, the Transcaucasian committee heard Kudryavtsev's report and adopted a resolution "On the activities of the party organization in Armenia." Five more days later, on September 28, 1935, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, acting upon instructions received from the Transcaucasian committee, released Yerznkian from his position of Deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia and appointed Yessayan Chairman of the Central Board of HOK and Chairman of the Immigration Committee.

The big stir, if not to tell the shock caused by Yerznkian's and Yessayan's appeals ended on October 4-5, at the joint session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia and Yerevan City Committee of the Communist Party. The delegates at the session, who spared no efforts to criticize Yerznkian and express their loyalty to Khanjian, were taken aback by the latter's proposal to elect Yerznkian a candidate for membership to the Bureau of the Central Committee of CPA. It turned out that it was not Khanjian's but Beria's initiative, another way of keeping Yerznkian under permanent control. "We are not going to throw you out of Armenia," quotes Beria's words Khanjian, "moreover, we will keep you in the Bureau and will force you to implement the decision of the Transcaucasian committee, and if you fail to do so, we will remove you from the Bureau and expel from the Party itself. But today we will not touch you."¹⁶³

The case with Yessayan seemed different. His new appointment was well-known, but different allegations were also made against him. In his latest statement, Yessayan criticized Yerznkian's appeal, and assured that he will be guided by Beria's instructions and described his own statement as a "politically hazardous step." However, the absence of debate on issues related to immigrants probably means that Yessayan's criticism was to the point and convincing enough. Khanjian had to point out that: "...we were wrong to view this portion of our work as something not related to us, our party activity... We were not dealing with the issue of immigration in the way we dealt with the

¹⁶² Ibid., 1/15/3, p. 25.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 1/15/4, p. 62.

Soviet construction, the kolkhozes... Comrades, the commission visited the immigrant settlements. And what did they see? That some of those settlements are in very bad shape... But those living in such settlements are not underdeveloped, with regard to culture and other aspects. They have brought some new crops to Armenia, like tobacco. By adopting correct approaches, we can achieve a situation whereupon the immigrant settlements will become models for the others and we will be proud of them, and will show both our friends and enemies what Armenia does for the victims of the ignoble policy of imperialists and their agents, the Dashnaks and nationalists. We have spent significant amounts but it appears that we do not have much to demonstrate..."¹⁶⁴

Very remarkable are the words of Kahanjian about Yerznkian, "He was planning a real conspiracy and, wearing a different mask, to act as a fighter against nationalism, to find nationalism in the activities of the Central Committee in order to fulfil the main social order of our enemies, the social order of the Dashnaks, to discredit the activities of the CPA and the party leadership."¹⁶⁵ This and similar statements and characteristics prove that the contradictions and divergence within the Armenian leadership were entering a stage of political, inter-partite struggle. In fact, the developments in Yerevan were following, albeit somewhat late, those which had commenced earlier and were underway in the centre of the Soviet Union, in Moscow. Probably with the only major difference being that the winners of such struggle in Armenia (and in all other republics) were not the participants themselves. The winners were the all-Union or the Transcaucasian leadership in Moscow and Tbilisi, while the only thing the immediate participants, whether individuals or groups, could do was to join the winning side. This behaviour would eventually have a boomerang effect on them. Khanjian, making statements about the "conspiracy" and "dashnak orders," would very soon face such allegations himself, and those making the allegations against him (even after his death), were the people who were his "loyal allies", and these, in their turn, would shortly join the ranks of the "enemies of the people." As long as the main goal was the neutralization (though not yet physical) of party's old elite -- Sarkis Kassian, Sahak Ter-Gabrielian, Aramayis Yerznkian, Beria was using and protecting Khanjian. At the same time Yessayan, whom Beria needed for the next stage of his struggle, against Khanjian himself, not only was not punished but was appointed to a new post.

On October 19 the Central Committee adopted a resolution on the future activities of the HOK and the Immigration Committee. The resolution contained instructions for the admission and allocation of immigrants, construction of their settlements, and other matters. There were special provisions referring to Nubarashen. The resolution contained a paragraph on recommencing the construction of the Nubarashen-Yerevan highway, acceleration of the power supply for Nubarashen, construction of the public bath and other facilities, baking and sale of bread. The most important however, was the fact that, quoting a delay in the construction of a water supply system, the resolution

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

did not recommend to begin any new construction in Nubarashen within the coming two years.¹⁶⁶

The Government had on different occasions referred to the construction of Nubarashen earlier, but this was the first case when they were admitting, although not publicly and rather indirectly, the lack of basic living facilities in the settlements. But this was just the beginning, since Yessayan also intended to disclose the amounts of money received from the organizations and individuals in the Diaspora, and the way these were spent. He was assisted in this investigation by the AGBU's Armenian representative Haikaz Karageusian, who submitted all the documentation on the Union's activities in Armenia. It should be noted here that Yessayan met with Boghos Nubar and the members of the Board of Directors of AGBU back in 1928, during a business trip to Paris.¹⁶⁷

In January, 1936, A. Yessayan, already as a Chairman of HOK, in his letter to Vahan Malezian, informing about his own program for the development of Nubarashen, which he was sure would facilitate the construction of the settlements and its infrastructure. Malezian, who was probably already tired and desperate of the endless and vain promises, responded to Yessayan's communication and while restricting his comments to Yessayan's program with cautious optimism, openly stated the views of the AGBU regarding the issue itself.

"We do not know," he wrote, "is there's a a one-piece story of six-year construction of Nubarashen before you, story full of obstacles and confusion, when, because of contradictory actions, constantly changing construction commissions, architects and managers, day after day were subjected to endless changes in building plans, preliminary calculations and programs..."

"Of course, you know that this settlement was not viable and will remain as such until the highway provides the necessary link with Yerevan, until the drinking water is supplied to the centre of the district, and especially until the irrigation infrastructure is brought to its fields, which are otherwise doomed to remain empty and deserted. If from very beginning there were no guarantee of using the canal waters...we, of course, would not agreed to this piece of land, although it is fertile and picturesque. But since it remains untreated due to lack of water, its population is doomed to miserable conditions and material constaint..."

With regard to the issue of the additional 400 thousand dollars' financing for the construction, which was referred to in Yessayan's communication, Malezian wrote, "Donations for Nubarashen would not stop had efficiency and accuracy been witnessed. ... Unfortunately, it is too late now to believe the beautiful words and promises, because the program has generated a lot of skepticism, and people want to see things done..."

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 1/15/12, p. 44.

¹⁶⁷ Miutyun, January, 1929, no. 127: 99-100.

Under such conditions, let me be frank, it is unfair to demand from us any monetary obligation, regardless of their size, for the construction of new houses...”¹⁶⁸

In January of the same year, 1936, Yessayan took active part in the drafting of three papers. Since the contents of the three papers are almost identical, below is one of them which gives a comprehensive introduction to the issue.

"Classified, personally

"Comrade Amatouni

"Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of the Armenian SSR

"Memorandum

"In addition to the detailed oral report regarding the spending of the funds received from abroad, I report the following:

"1. Within the recent years a number of different organizations, namely, the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia, the HOK, some compatriotic organizations and others, have received financial or in-kind donations in foreign currency or foreign goods, for this or that special purpose. These contributions and assistance have never been consolidated within a single state institution, and similarly there were no centralised inventory or reporting practices, which makes it difficult to estimate the real amount of the assistance received.

"The information at my disposal allows to calculate that the foreign currency received during the last 5 years amounts to about 2,100,000 golden roubles, of which about 1,500,000 was transferred directly to the Council of the People's Commissars.

"Financially this assistance is not of much interest (? – Ed. M.), more important is its moral and political significance, since those amounts, with the exception of several major donations received from individual capitalists, were raised among the wide masses of the people, and demonstrate their sympathy towards the Soviet state.

"Almost all donations are earmarked for the construction of immigrant settlements, dwellings and facilities in their settlements, namely, hospitals, schools, kindergartens, nurseries, theaters, clubs, etc.

"Below are some examples of the targeted donations:

400 thousand dollars for the construction of Nubarashen,

100 thousand dollars for the construction of Nor Arabkir,

50 thousand dollars for the construction of Nor Malatia,

5,000 for the "Soviet Armenia" air squadron fund,

17,000 pounds sterling for the construction of a hospital through the Tarouhi Hagopian fund,

10,000 pounds sterling for the construction of an Eye Clinic through the Marie Nubar fund,

7,000 pounds sterling for the construction of the house for scientists through the Zareh Nubar fund,

¹⁶⁸ NAA, 1/16/77, p. 7-10.

4,500 pounds sterling for the construction of a school in Talin,

5,000 pounds sterling for the construction of an electro-mechanical college through the Raphael Margossian fund,

30,000 pounds sterling through the Melkonian Endowment fund.

"2. These amount were, as a rule, received following negotiations between the Board of Directors of the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia and the Council had submitted a resolution or special communication of commitment - to perform relevant work, and for each object projects were drawn up and sent abroad

"Most of the promises that the Council of the People's Commissars had made to the Benevolent Union or individuals and organizations were never fulfilled. The construction of the sites mentioned in those commitments either was not completed (frozen) or even had never begun, for example:

- a. 702 pounds sterling for a crafts school in Nubarashen through the Minas Cheraz fund;
- b. 533 pounds sterling for a hospital in Nubarashen through the Tirair Margarian Fund;
- c. 390 pounds sterling for a kindergarten in Nubarashen through the Samvelian fund;
- d. 150 pounds sterling for a nursery in Nubarashen through the Setian fund;
- e. 560 pounds sterling for a kindergarten in Nor Caesaria through the Sarian fund;
- f. 460 pounds sterling for a kindergarten in Nor Sebastia through the Palian fund;
- g. 2,000 pounds sterling for a theater in Nubarashen through the Sarkissian fund;
- h. 366 pound sterling for a school in Tigranakert from the Tigranakert Compatriotic Union (USA);
- i. 342 pounds sterling for a school in Martuni through the Hagopian fund;
- j. 296 pounds sterling for a nursery in Nor Eudokia from the Eudokians
- k. 3000 pounds sterling for school in Nor Kharperd from the former Kharperd residents.

"Formal commitments have been made for all the above sites, layouts designed and sent abroad and the funds received. However, construction had begun only in Kharperd, stopped after the completion of a portion of one of the blocks. The appropriations received from the Hagopian fund have been used to build a one-storied school, while the layout sent abroad was for a two-storied building.

"Now, the Benevolent Union is demanding the photos of the sites as promised, and, for apparent reasons, I am not in a position to satisfy that demand. The Benevolent Union has even sent 3,000 meters of film for those pictures. The film has been duly received but used for other purposes.

'3. A total of USD 400,000 was received for the constructions in Nubarashen. The Armenian Benevolent Union has completed its side of the agreement signed with the Council of the People's Commissars, while the latter has failed to fulfil most of its commitments under that agreement. Now the Benevolent Union, in a letter addressed to

me and its representative, demands a concrete information about the contracts and their performance, which we are unable to provide.

"The Council of the People's Commissars has received and expensed most of the mentioned amounts as well as other funds. In reality the balance remaining at the time of transfer from the Council was 12,000 golden roubles. Since there are no complete financial reports for the amounts spent by the Council, the report on expenditures is hard to obtain...

"...If during this year we fail to fulfil our promises to foreign organizations, particularly the Benevolent Union, we will inevitably end up with an enormous scandal. Even if the Benevolent Union does not wish to sue us, individuals and organization which have trusted the Benevolent Union with their money will not keep silent and will sue the AGBU. In one of its communications the Benevolent Union informs us that several compatriotic organizations are demanding their money back, since the Benevolent Union has failed to fulfil its commitments.

"Apparently, the Dashnaks are already skilfully using all this against us and in the future, if we repudiate our commitments and worsen the relations with the Benevolent Union, the Dashnaks and other anti-Soviet forces will grasp this opportunity to fiercely campaign against us and to discredit the Soviet government...

"In order to avoid such a scandal, I recommend to fully approve the draft presented by the Commission of the Central Committee Chaired by comrade Shakhsovvarov, to allocate (for that purpose) all the revenues which the Immigration Committee has used for purposes other than the donation had specified, and the revenues from the sale of the goods received from abroad, taking those amounts from the state budget of Armenia, or to allocate for that purpose additional revenues from the state budget. In the event when those amounts cannot be withdrawn from the state budget or if they are insufficient, the issue should be raised before the Transcaucasian Regional Committee, since the emerging scandal is disgraceful not only for the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia but for the all-Soviet government.

Arsen Yessayan

Chairman of the Relief Committee for Armenia - HOK."¹⁶⁹

The significance of this document can hardly be overestimated. For many years numerous communications signed by various, sometimes very high-ranking, officials, were sent to Paris to assure the AGBU that the construction of all sites was approaching a successful end. For many years the Government and the Communist Party of Armenia were adopting various resolutions related to the construction. But this was for the first time that a state institution in Yerevan, particularly the HOK, prepared a document that clearly and distinctly exposed the real picture. It was not the case that in Paris they were not aware of the real state of affairs. As seen from Malezian's letter, the leadership of the AGBU, though perhaps not in full detail, was nonetheless aware that

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 178/1/284, p. 7-12.

the actions of the Armenian authorities were divergent with their promises. Yessayan's report contained nothing that would make big news for the latter. Yet, for the first time, the facts known to everybody were stated in an official document, and to ignore this would be next to impossible.

Beria's appearance

The content of those documents clearly demonstrate that their preparation was closely related to Beria's enhanced attention towards Armenia's relations with the Diaspora. Concurrent with the drafting of those papers Vahan Yeremian, the People's Commissar for Finance of the Transcaucasian Council of the People's Commissars was carrying out an independent audit in Yerevan. The report on the results of the audit, dated January 13, 1936, was addressed to Beria, the Chairman of the Transcaucasian Council of the People's Commissars Gazanfar Musabekov, and Aghassi Khanjian.

"The results of the audit prove that as early as in 1933, the Immigration Committee was involved in commercial contracts through the Supply and Sale administration of Armenia. Beginning with January 1, 1934, by the resolution of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia, the Immigration Committee acted independently, although it is not registered either with the state or with the fiscal authorities and has no corresponding statute. Its balance sheet was submitted directly to the Council of the People's Commissars and discussed in violation of the existing legislation... I consider it proven that:

"1. The Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia has sold, through the Immigration Committee, timber and construction materials at extremely high prices, which raised the price of construction in Armenia although the instructions of the all-Union Government and the Communist Party demanded the reduction of construction prices;

"2. The Council of the People's Commissars fixed a special price for the sale of timber through the supply and trade authority and has thus unlawfully accrued significant funds, which it disposed of at its own discretion, whereas these by definition were trade markups and should have been remitted to the USSR budget. I would like to request you to consider the issue of holding them responsible for such actions pursuant to Soviet legislation, and to demand that the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia transfer the illegally held amounts to the USSR budget for 1936--at the expense of the budget of Armenia."¹⁷⁰ Both A. Yessayan and V. Yeremian suggested that the "illegally" accrued funds be refunded from the Armenian budget, but while Yessayan thought that these amounts should be used to fulfil the commitments before the Diaspora, Yeremian held that they should be paid to the USSR budget, totally ignoring the previous issue.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 113/3/1672, p. 8.

Under these circumstances the Armenian authorities were deprived of room for independent action and had to follow the decisions of the superior, the Transcaucasian bodies. The latter acted with remarkable speed. On January 15, only two days after Yeremian submitted his report, the Transcaucasian Council of the People's Commissars held a session chaired by P. Agniashvili, and having considered the illegal activities of the Immigration Committee, resolved to refer to the Government of Armenia the issue of bringing those responsible to justice.¹⁷¹ In accordance with that decision, by its resolution of February 1, 1936, the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia expressed its concord with the facts stated in Yeremian's report and, listing the officials liable to administrative penalties, pointed out in a separate paragraph that "Taking into consideration the fact that most of the funds accrued through years by the Immigration Committee have been used to accommodate the immigrants, provide them with basic and cultural services, as well as for construction, hereby order the Transcaucasian Council of the People's Commissars to forbid the Transcaucasian People's Commissariat of Finance to withdraw funds from the budget of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic in connection with the activities of the Immigration Committee."¹⁷²

But while the Armenian authorities were trying to ease the financial sanctions, the Transcaucasian Committee of the Party, under Beria's leadership, initiated more serious political sanctions. On April 26, 1936, the Bureau of the Transcaucasian Committee heard Khanjian's report on the HOK. Given the list of participants--Lavrentiy Beria, Philip Makharadze, Useyn Rahmanov, Grigoriy Aroutinov (candidate for membership at the Bureau of the Transcaucasian Committee of the Party, since 1937, the leader of the Communist Party of Armenia), Amatouni Amatouni, and Arsen Yessayan, the outcome of the session was easy to foresee. In paragraph one of the resolution, signed by Beria, requested the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR to consider the future activities of the HOK. In paragraph two the resolution dissolved the Committee on Immigration of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia and entitled the HOK to coordinate all the activities related to the construction of the settlements for immigrants, their admission and accommodation.¹⁷³

By dissolving the Immigration Committee, the leadership of the Transcaucasian Federation seemed to express their non-confidence in both the state and the party leadership of Armenia. At the same time, all the activities related to Diaspora and the immigrants were transferred to the HOK, which was not even a government structure and whose future was also vague. As subsequent events demonstrated, the Transcaucasian authorities through such actions were preparing the grounds for their future decisions.

Upon their return to Yerevan, at the May 4 session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPA, the Armenian leaders, in accordance with existing tradition,

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 178/1/254, p. 31.

were forced to approve the above resolution of the Transcaucasian Committee of the Party. However, the Armenian authorities could not agree with the decisions on financial issues, which were most probably discussed and made in Tbilisi. The proof is the letter of May 26, which Khanjian and Gouloyan sent to Vyacheslav Molotov, the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of the Soviet Union.

The aim of this smartly phrased letter was to ensure that the opportunities for continuing immigration were maintained. That was the reason for the deliberate exaggeration of the role of the HOK, which, following the dissolution of the Immigration Committee, was coordinating all activities related to the accommodation of the immigrants and the prospects of the very existence of which remained unclear. The most significant fact here is that for the first and probably the last time, the Armenian authorities were admitting in writing (albeit with the "classified" stamp) that the central authorities of the Soviet Union were not financing Armenian repatriation:

"Taking into consideration that the admission and accommodation of the immigrants, construction of settlements, cultivation and irrigation of their lands have not and are not being financed from the state budget (! - Ed. M.) but are only made possible with foreign donations, to allow the HOK to use the donated amounts to purchase equipment and other commodities, to partially sell them to state institutions, under the condition that the revenues will be used only for construction for the immigrants."¹⁷⁴

Being itself of great interest, this fact explains some of the above mentioned points. The authors of the communication clearly stated that the Armenian government had only been able to admission and accomodation of the repatriants thanks to the financial assistance of the Diaspora. In this respect it is significant that Khanjian and Gouloyan mentioned that the resources were generated from Diaspora donations, "partly from the annual income of the moneys bequeathed for the purpose of cultural development of Soviet Armenia." In other words, the Armenian authorities were using the funds (or portions thereof) provided by the Diaspora for the construction of living quarters, cultural, social and other facilities for the repatriants in Armenia, for the purpose of organizing and promoting repatriation itself. The funds being used as described above, the planned construction was either delayed or even frozen, which, in turn, created new difficulties for the authorities both with regard to their relations with the Diaspora organizations as well as with the immigrants. On the other hand, the government, when signing agreements with these organizations, had most probably made certain commitments which were hard to fulfil under the existing financial and economic conditions. At its session of April 27, 1934, the Armenian Government, having considered the issue of construction in Nubarashen, decided: "Taking into consideration that the funds raised by the AGBU are not sufficient to finish the construction of the buildings in accordance with the layouts, and following the requests of the benefactors, it would be necessary to allocate from the funds of the Council of the People's Commissars additional 541,000 roubles to finish the construction."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 113/3/1672, p.13.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 1/16/77, p. 11.

In order to fund the construction beyond the state budget, the Armenian Government was forced to identify additional sources of financing. This explained the above-mentioned commercial transactions of the Immigration Committee which, if desired, could have been presented as profiteering. This also explained why the Armenian Government remained so calm when it came to the dissolution of the Immigration Committee, since its operations, and first of all economic functions, were also transferred to the HOK. However, when the next step taken by the Transcaucasian authorities banned the economic activity of the latter, thus endangering the completion of immigration programs, the Armenian leadership was forced to appeal to the Chairman of the Soviet Union Government.

Thus, the situation in 1936 was as follows: the Transcaucasian committee of the Party and Beria personally directly supervised Armenia's relations with the Diaspora and consistently strived, on one hand, to discredit the Armenian authorities and gain more leverage to suppress them and, on the other hand, their resolutions, which were binding for the Armenian leadership, were questioning the relationship with the Diaspora as a whole. The most notable results of such policy were the dissolution of the Immigration Committee, the discussion of the need for further activities of HOK, the proposals to impose financial sanctions, and allegations against high level officials.

One more factor should not be ignored when examining Beria's position: the leaders of the neighbouring republics, Soviet Georgia and Soviet Azerbaijan, were naturally jealous towards Armenia for its ties, unprecedented under the Soviet regime, with the Diaspora Armenians. And no matter how limited these connections were, their positive impact was obvious-- the mechanical increase of the Armenian population, financial assistance to development programs in Armenia, etc. Georgian and Azerbaijani leaders could not easily put up with such "unplanned" advantage, especially in view of the old and new ethno-political and territorial wrinkles between the three republics. In this respect the Transcaucasian state and party institutions under Beria's leadership offered a very convenient means to eliminate Armenia's advantage.

The situation within the Armenian political leadership, the lack of internal consolidation, the constant underground struggle between the various coalitions, including Beria's cadre sent over from Tbilisi and other factors made any joint effort to defend and promote Armenia's interests impossible. In this respect Rosa Vindzberg's testimony about Aghassi Khanjian is remarkable: "he was very concerned and kept saying that he is probably unable to be a leader, since not a single year passes without internal bickering, that he may be the reason for it and he has to leave Armenia, that he feels isolated, that he cannot have anything resolved, that the "Troika" (Amatouni, Akopov, Gouloyan) has everything decided in advance and presents him with it post factum."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 1191/4/1661, p. 101.

The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Soviet Government of July 21, 1936

This was the situation in the middle of 1936, when an event took place that was, in fact, contradictory to the logic of the developments. On July 21, 1936, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, through its Secretary Joseph Stalin, and the Soviet Government, through its Chairman Vyacheslav Molotov, adopted an unprecedented resolution "On measures to accommodate the Armenian immigrants in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic." The document began by assessing the Armenian Government's "established practice of...not fulfilling the obligations assumed before foreign organizations and individual benefactors" as "wrongful and unacceptable."¹⁷⁷ Further it listed the measures which the Soviet Union leaders deemed appropriate in order to correct the "grave mistakes" of the Armenian Government and the CPA: 50 per cent of the construction had to be completed by January 1, 1937, and the remaining 50 per cent by July 1 of the same year, the Soviet Union and republic institutions received precise instructions on the financing and supply for the construction, the immigrant artisan co-operatives were to be supplied with raw materials, the rural immigrants were exempted either of all or 50 per cent of their taxes for 3 to 4 years and, finally, it determined the procedures for the receipt and disposition of the equipment and goods received from foreign Armenians.

A special point was made on the issue of financing: the total spending for the construction was estimated at 3,200 thousand roubles, of which the USSR People's Commissariat for Finance was instructed to allocate 1.5 million in 1936, to be returned from the Armenian budget to the Soviet Union, while the remaining 1.7 million was to be appropriated by the Armenian Council of the People's Commissars from its budget of 1937, and the Soviet Union Commissariat for Finance would include that amount in the 1937 budget for the capital construction in Armenia. A special annex to the resolution contained a list of 12 sites--seven of them in Nubarashen--which the Armenian Government had committed to construct. This document is impressive both in its contents and its significance, especially taking into consideration the signatures by Stalin and Molotov. It was the first resolution of the Soviet authorities on the Armenian repatriants, although different numbers of Armenians had begun to repatriate to Armenia as early as in 1921.

The tradition in the Soviet Union was such that even the resolutions of its leaders were hard to implement, particularly because the lower levels of administration interpreted the decisions in their own way. This was also the case with the resolution on Armenian immigrants. Already in late 1936, upon the receipt from Moscow of the draft budget for the next year, the Armenian government was forced to once again appeal to Molotov.¹⁷⁸ Another problem issue, aside from the construction, was that of the water

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 178/1/263, p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 1/16/70, p. 72.

supply system, to be commissioned on July 1, 1937. However, at its session of July 13, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPA had to point that "The construction of the water supply system has not been completed as scheduled." The Bureau then requested the Chairman of the Armenian government Gouloyan "to once more raise before the Soviet Union authorities the issue of the insufficient supply of pipes for the construction."¹⁷⁹ It should be stressed that, despite these and other difficulties and shortcomings, the resolution of July 21 had a significant impact since it greatly accelerated the construction and development of Nubarashen as well as of other repatriant settlements and contributed to the improvement of the living conditions for their residents. "...The Nubarashen construction plan for 1937 is almost completed. The school, the nursery, the kindergarten, the theater, the public bath and apartment buildings are all completed... Only the construction of the hospital is still underway."¹⁸⁰ By the middle of 1937 about 1,000 Armenian repatriants were accommodated in the more than one hundred new apartments in Nubarashen.

The adoption of the resolution can be explained by the logic of previous events:

1. The authorities of Soviet Union, while striving to promote Armenian repatriation, at the same time, did not finance the repatriation, construction of settlements, etc;
2. In order to find necessary finances, the leadership of Armenia was forced to use part of funds received from Diaspora, not for its intended purpose, but for commercial operations, and to direct the profits to the mentioned goals. As a result, the commitments made by the government to repatriation persons were not fulfilled in time for years;
3. This, in turn, strengthened in the Armenian diaspora and among the repatriants a negative opinion not only about the leadership of Armenia, but also - which was especially unacceptable for Moscow - about the Soviet Union, about the Soviet power in general;
4. With this a mind, the top leadership of Soviet Union went to drastic measures and adopted a special resolution.

However, with similar and essentially correct conclusions and explanations, the important role of other factors, including individuals, remains in the shadow.

About ten months prior to the adoption of the resolution, at the meeting of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPA, A. Yessayan had accused the Armenian authorities of failure to complete the construction in immigrant settlements, mainly, Nubarashen. Disappointed with the local authorities he hurried to appeal to Beria, under whose supervision he had worked in Tbilisi and whom he considered, or wanted to consider, as someone acting exclusively in the best state interests. However, after he assumed the position of the Chairman of the HOK and the Immigration Committee, Yessayan very soon realized that Beria had very little, if any, concern for the solution of numerous problems of repatriants, and he only viewed them as a means to discredit

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 1/17/46, p. 110.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 178/1/653, p. 4.

and suppress the leadership of Armenia. One of his contemporaries states that "...Yessayan was asking his associates (supposedly Hakop Taronatsi, Tigran Zaven, the representative of the Benevolent Union in Armenia Karageusian, the representative of the Melkonian Fund in Armenia professor Hakopian) and the delegations and individual members of the HOK, coming to Armenia as tourists, to tell the Armenian communities abroad to directly apply to Joseph Stalin, to all-Union bodies with this and other issues relevant for Armenia, since the problems of Armenian communities abroad were "lost" in the Transcaucasian Committee of the Communist Party..."¹⁸¹

The disappointment in the Transcaucasian committee and in Beria did not change Yessayan's negative opinion about his Armenian colleagues, especially Aghassi Khanjian, whom he considered a weak and even cowardly leader, without sufficient background, unable to promote Armenia's interests in Tbilisi and Moscow.¹⁸² If Yessayan was going to press for the solution of the problem he himself had raised and thus was his responsibility, the only remaining option was to apply directly to the central authorities in Moscow. The question was--how? According to indelible hierarchic tradition any issue had to be raised first before the authorities of Armenia, then the Transcaucasus and only after that, under certain circumstances, would he have the right to apply to Moscow. It was, however, obvious, that if he followed this arrangement he would never achieve his goal. With this and other factors considered, Yessayan took an unusual step.

On January 11, 1937, the Armenian People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) summoned for questioning, so far as a witness, the representative of the AGBU in Armenia Haikaz Karageusian. After a few questions about his background and activities, the investigator asked a question that, as the subsequent questions demonstrate, was the core one. Below is an excerpt from the transcript of the interrogation.

Q. When was the last time you travelled to Moscow?

A. In June-July 1936. The former Chairman of the HOK Arsen Yessayan invited me to take the trip, the formal reason for which was the need to transport 7 cars brought from the US through the Melkonian Fund and detained at the Leningrad customs. The cars had been ordered by the former Commissar for Education Arto Yegiazarian, I do not know for who...

Q. Arsen Yessayan had no affiliation to the Melkonian Fund, so why did he interfere?

A. Right, Arsen Yessayan had no affiliation with the Melkonian Fund, but he interfered upon the request from A. Yegiazarian.

Q. Who else travelled with you and Yessayan to Moscow on the issue of cars?

A. Prof. Hakopian and Tigran Zaven,

Q. Was it necessary for four people to travel for such a trivial issue and what did you, the representative of the Benevolent Union, have to do with the cars?

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 1191/4/174/ p.37; Manoukian 1996.

¹⁸² NAA., 1191/4/174/, p. 125.

- A. Tigran Zaven, Arsen Yessayan, and myself had nothing to do with the cars. Prof. Hakopian was the only one concerned. Yessayan invited me with him to make the delegation more impressive, since I am the representative of the Benevolent Union, and en route he told me that he was going to raise the issue of construction and improvement of the Nubarashen settlement before the Central authorities in Moscow... On the second day of arrival in Moscow Arsen Yessayan suggested to discuss the ways to the appeal to the USSR Council of the People's Commissars on the issue of Nubarashen and proposed to draft an appeal addressed to Mezhlauk, the Deputy Chairman of the Council. A member of the delegation Prof. Hakopian drafted the appeal in English. I presume the only issue raised in the appeal was that of the Nubarashen construction. At least, that is what I was explained, since I was unable to read the English draft. The appeal was signed by Prof. Hakopian on behalf of the Melkonian Fund and myself on behalf of the Benevolent Union.
- Q. Why was the appeal written in English?
- A. Before we drafted the appeal, we consulted an official of the State Planning Committee Gagik Parzian, who recommended that we draft the appeal in English since comrade Mezhlauk knew the language... Prof. Hakopian is an expert of English and he volunteered to draft it, to avoid distortions during translation... Two days after we submitted the appeal, Hakopian, Tigran Zaven, and myself had a meeting with Mezhlauk. When we entered his office Arsen Yessayan and the member of the Soviet State Control Commission Veinbaum were already sitting there...
- Q. Had the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia approved the trip of the delegation?
- A. I am not sure. But we received passes from the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia to enable us to stay at a hotel...
- Q. How did Yessayan explain the fact of his direct appeal to the Soviet Union authorities over the issue of immigrant settlements, bypassing the Transcaucasian organizations?
- A. He never explained it. We were informed about his intention on our way to Moscow."¹⁸³

Eleven days earlier, on December 31, 1936, another member of the delegation, Hovhannes Hakopian, was also summoned for questioning as a witness. Back in 1910, on behalf of the United Armenian Society Hakopian agreed with Poghos Nubar to establish schools in Western Armenia and Cilicia. After the World War I, he published in Cairo newspaper "Arev". In 1927, he repatriated to Armenia, engaged to historical research, taught English and was Secretary to the Executive Commission of the Melkonian fund. In this case the investigator's attention was also focused on the

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 11-13.

meeting with Mezhlauk, particularly on the fact that the appeal had been submitted in English.

A. Yessayan told me to draft an appeal to the Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of the People's Commissars, Chairman of the State Planning Committee comrade Mezhlauk, requesting his assistance in the issue of Nubarashen and asserting that the Armenian government is wrongfully spending the funds donated for that purpose. Yessayan, Karageusian, and Tigran Zaven drafted the appeal in Armenian... I translated and edited it...

Q. Why exactly were you addressing a Soviet official in English?

A. To make him believe that, being the representatives of foreign organizations, we ourselves were foreigners.

Q. What did you discuss during the meeting with Mezhlauk?

A. On July 8, Karageusian, Tigran Zaven and myself had a meeting with Mezhlauk... I spoke English and, following Arsen Yessayan's instructions, asked the Soviet Government to assist the immigrant settlements, stressing that the Armenian Government was not using the funds received from foreign organizations for the direct purposes of the donation. I also raised the issue of new immigration, pointing out that between 600 to 700 thousand foreign Armenians, mostly workers, are willing to move to Soviet Armenia. In my discussion with Mezhlauk, I strictly followed Yessayan's instructions, with the only exception that he wanted it to sound as a complaint, in particular against the government of the Soviet Armenia... while I presented a wider picture, linking the issue with the history of the Armenian emigration, describing them as victims of an imperialist war, and asked him to support their desire to immigrate to Armenia."¹⁸⁴

Arsen Yessayan himself was arrested in November, 1936, and Karageusian and Hakopian were summoned to the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs for questioning in relation to the investigation of his case. When asked about his appeal to Vladimir Mezhlauk during an interrogation, Yessayan had testified: "The appeal submitted to the USSR Council of the People's Commissars described the grave situation of the Nubarashen settlement, the lack of water supply, which was the result of the Armenian Government's failure to fulfill the commitments assumed before the Baregortsakan to build a canal. The aim of the appeal was to request that funds be allocated for the construction of the water pipeline and the allocation be included in the target indicators for 1937 (in other words, the construction had to be completed in 1937 - Ed. M.)." In response to the investigator's next question he said: "...I plead guilty for having submitted an appeal that contained allegations against the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia without notifying the Central Committee of the CPA and against its will..."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 43-44.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 50, 51.

In fact, Yessayan had used the transportation of the American cars as a pretext to form a delegation and travel to Moscow. The basic purpose of the trip was to inform the Government of the USSR about the grave situation with regard to the construction of immigrant settlements, Nubarashen in particular, and try to obtain a resolution by the Soviet authorities for the solution of all issues related to immigration. However, we should first examine one more issue: was it only due to Arsen Yessayan's delegation that the Communist Party of the USSR and the Soviet Government adopted the resolution on Nubarashen? An affirmative response would stretch the truth. In July 1936 in Moscow was not reason to curtail relations with Armenian Diaspora. It will appear very soon and while the country's leadership has not showed down their concern for the immigrants, correctly hoping to make a good impression on the Armenians of the Diaspora. But not only that. Following his acquittal in 1954 Artavazd Yeghiazarian delivered the following testimony: "On one occasion, among a circle of the Bureau members, the then Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars Sahak Ter-Gabrielian told us that Moscow had approved the receipt of rails for Yerevan streetcars through the AGBU, and transmitted Stalin's response to those who were questioning the possibility of accepting assistance from the Armenian bourgeoisie loyal to Soviet Armenia: "If the Armenian capitalists are stupid enough to help the Armenian communists build socialism, the Armenian communists will be even more stupid if they refuse such assistance."¹⁸⁶

In discussing Yessayan's trip to Moscow we as well should keep in mind the traditional reverence of the Russian establishment towards everything Western or European that Soviet authorities inherited despite ideological contradictions. Arsen Yessayan, most probably took this factor into consideration, when he masterfully formed a delegation from the representatives of foreign organizations, insisted on appeal in English as well as English conversation with Mezhlauk. In the Soviet context this was the most efficient way to solve many problems even in those years, but especially later, and Yessayan was probably one of the first to implement it. All these factors combined into favourable conditions already in place in Moscow, and Yessayan's delegation played the role of a catalyst without which the opportunity at hand would have been lost.

The leadership of the AGBU was one of the first to learn about the resolution of the Communist Party and the Government of the Soviet Union. On July 25, four days after the adoption of the resolution, Yessayan, who had stayed in Moscow to wait for the results of his meeting with Mezhlauk, sent an urgent telegram to Paris which was published in the "Miutyun" magazine, entitled "The state adopts a resolution on Nubarashen. Moscow will provide wide support." Yessayan wrote, "I have the pleasure to inform you that the Central Committee of the Communist party and the Government of the Soviet Union have given a thorough consideration to all the problems pertaining to Armenian immigration, including the pending construction at Nubarashen... I received the building materials and the loans necessary to continue construction... You may rest

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 1191/4/174, p. 84.

assured that all measures are taken to secure the implementation of the decisions, which means that in 1937 Nubarashen will have both drinking and irrigation water and will be ready to accommodate another 100 Armenian families..."¹⁸⁷

Some time later, the Director General of the AGBU sent a letter of gratitude to Vyacheslav Molotov: "It is with deep gratitude that we received the news of the support and assistance that your Council is extending to the Armenian immigrants, as well as the Nubarashen settlement at the outskirts of Yerevan which is allocated for the immigrant settlements constructed with the donations from our Union.

"The latest fraternal gesture of your Government--the allocation of 3,200,000 roubles for the construction of the water supply system in Nubarashen is yet more proof of our friendly disposition towards Soviet Armenia as a whole and the immigrants in particular." Taking this unique opportunity to address the Soviet Premier, Vahan Malezian once again raised the issue of further immigration: "Thanks to your exceptional care Soviet Armenia has embarked on the route of prosperity well-being which allows us to hope that, with you noble support, it will be able to accommodate larger numbers of Armenian refugees."¹⁸⁸

However, Yessayan's initiative, its purpose notwithstanding, was circumventing the authorities in Armenia and Transcaucasus, and as such could not go unpunished. The leadership of Armenia, first of all Khanjian and Gouloyan, and before, but especially since the Autumn of 1935, for obvious reasons, did not hide its, to put it mildly, hostility to Yessayan.

In accordance with the new procedure approved at the session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPA, the HOK and the Melkonian fund were allowed to spend their funds abroad only upon the approval of the Central Committee. On July 5, when Yessayan was already in Moscow, the Bureau adopted a decision that was potentially dangerous for him -- the State and Party Control Commission of the Central Committee was requested to carry out an audit of the expenditures made by the Central Board of the HOK (payroll spending, cost estimates, etc.) and to submit proposals on better organization of the work. Possibly that was one of the last Bureau resolutions bearing Khanjian's signature, because three days later, on July 8, he left for Tbilisi.

Death of Khanjian, repressions in Armenia

At the July 9 meeting of the Transcaucasian Committee of the Party Bureau Khanjian was strictly criticized for nationalism, tolerance towards rightist Trotskism, for protection of the former director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism Nersik Stepanian, accused of links with the latter, and for other similar "crimes". At the same day, according to the official version, he committed suicide. Was it suicide or he was shot by Beria or his henchman - this question still has no definite answer. According to Amatuni

¹⁸⁷ Miutyun, July-August, no. 180, 1936: 53.

¹⁸⁸ NAA, 178/1/580, p. 1.

Virabyan, Director of National Archives of Armenia: "...it is too early to put an end to this matter. There are many more closed archives in Russia."¹⁸⁹

On July 12, 1936, the day of Khanjian's funeral, a meeting of the CPA activists was held in Yerevan to unilaterally condemn Khanjian's "suicide". "Who but the comrades present here see the real reasons that forced Khanjian to revert to that shameful act. And today, in the light of that treacherous shot, do we not see that Khanjian's numerous mistakes, well known to the activists of the Communist Party of Armenia, were not accidental, that they reflected the influence of the hostile nationalist elements on Khanjian, that he was hypocritical with the party, abusing its high trust. Eventually, stuck to the ears in his mistakes... Khanjian realized that he had to be held responsible before the party and to confess. And, true to himself, he committed suicide, giving a hand to our most vigorous enemies."¹⁹⁰

All speakers at the meeting eagerly repeated the allegations against their late leader, made by Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia Amatouni Amatouni. One of the most zealous statements was, as expected, by the Secretary of the Transcaucasian committee of the Party Sergey Kudryavtsev who, obviously striving to impress Armenian communists with the scope of his knowledge, made a rather specific comparison: "There is an ancient way of vengeance in China: a hara-kiri on the doorstep of the offender. Khanjian, to put it figuratively, committed hara-kiri at the doorstep of the Bureau of the Transcaucasian Committee. The only question is who and what he was avenging."¹⁹¹ A very impressive comparison indeed. Especially considering that the tradition of hara-kiri belongs to the Japanese samurai and not the Chinese.

As for nationalism, such allegations against "certain elements" and the leadership of Armenia sounded like political derision. During the 16 years of Soviet rule, Armenia and Armenians were the ones to suffer most from the nationalist policy of the authorities both in Moscow as well as in Georgia and Azerbaijan. The most salient and fatal manifestation of such policy was the transfer of Nagorno Karabagh and Nakhijevan to Azerbaijan against the will of the Armenians, who make up the majority of the population in these regions. The nationalism of the Georgian authorities was of a different type. Nersik Stepanian, who was arrested at the beginning of 1936, wrote in his notes that: "The rotten party bureaucracy of the Communist Party of Georgia is engaged in a dual feverish activity, on one hand it consolidates the national position, albeit through falsifications of history and, on the other, hinders any attempt of enquiry into their criminal activity... In the near future we can anticipate an open offensive against the Armenians, Russians and others, aiming to suppress ethnic minorities... The erratic national policy in Georgia has resulted in a situation where all the "dirty" work is done by non-Georgians (tailors, shoemakers, cleaners...), so is half of the

¹⁸⁹ Virabian 1988; see also <https://zaveng.livejournal.com/11198.html>

¹⁹⁰ NAA, 1/16/60, p.3.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 10.

industrial proletariat, while the bureaucrats are all Georgian. What are the arguments used to prove the necessity of such criminal national policy? Why is the non-Georgian proletariat ...taking care of the bureaucracy? ...All Armenians are forced out from Tiflis, they are fired from administrative positions, keeping only the most wretched and the most corrupt Armenians."¹⁹²

Arsen Yessayan was not present at that meeting and we can only guess if he would join those who condemned the "self-shot" enemy of the people Khanjian. On that day, many probably remembered the irreconcilable animosity of the two, which under the new circumstances could positively affect Yessayan's fate. Beria, though, adhered to the opposite view. While holding the post of the political leader of the Transcaucasian Federation, comprising Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, Beria conducted a policy which, both with regard to its aims and its means was a carbon copy of the policy implemented by Stalin all over the Soviet Union. In striving to secure unrestrained autocratic rule, and following the example of the central authorities in Moscow, he never missed a chance to discredit and physically annihilate unwanted party and state leaders in the three Transcaucasian republics. At the same time, in order to consolidate his influence in Armenia and to establish permanent control over the local leaders, Beria skillfully manipulated all Armenians available at different positions within the Transcaucasian administration. As mentioned above, from time to time he transferred small teams of such officials to Yerevan and had them appointed to various positions in administration where he would thus have loyal people in place. The most famous among Beria's "Tiflis" team were the Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia Amatouni Amatouni and Stepan Akopov, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Khachik Moughdousi, his deputy Ivan Kevorkov, Georgiy Tsaturov and others. In 1934 Arsen Yessayan was posted back to Yerevan in the same manner.

While in Moscow the eminent state and party figures were convicted as the "enemies of the people, anti-revolutionaries, Trotskists," in the republics these allegations were aggravated by the "nationalist" label. In the case of Armenia, particularly, Beria was planning to also exploit the relationship with the Diaspora and, on one hand, the contacts and the co-operation of the authorities with the Armenian residents of "bourgeois" and "imperialist" states, while on the other hand, their failure to fulfil the commitments before the latter, the discontent of the immigrants, etc. Yessayan was, willingly or not, to become the key player in Beria's game. In the beginning he seemed to fulfil Beria's expectations: his statement regarding the Immigration Committee, made at the session of the Bureau of the Communist Party of Armenia, his appeal to Beria, followed by the audit of the Immigration Committee and the operation of the Armenian Government as a whole. However, Yessayan's sudden shift which culminated in his meeting with Mezhlauk was a true challenge to Beria, and it had to be answered.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 5.

On July 28, a week after the resolution was adopted by Stalin and Molotov, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union distributed a document among the republican and other major party organizations entitled "Closed letter regarding the terrorist activities of the Trotskyist-Zinoviev anti-Soviet block," which, after enumerating the "crimes" committed by the block, demanded to consolidate the local struggle against all anti-Soviet elements, reveal the enemies still disguised among the state and party institutions.¹⁹³ The Armenian authorities were quick to react. In an "Information memorandum" addressed to Moscow and Tbilisi contained a detailed description of the measures taken in Armenia to reveal the "enemies of the nation" and listed those already discovered.¹⁹⁴ The memo, though, was not impressive enough-only three among the arrested enemies were high level officials: Nersik Stepanian (Director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism), Drastamat Ter-Simonian (Director of the Arts Department of the Council of the People's Commissars), and Aghassi Galoyan (Secretary of the Central Control Commission of the Central Committee of the CPA). But the greatest failure was in the fact that not a single hostile group, block, center or any other entity has been revealed in Armenia.

Therefore the Armenian authorities, guided by their Transcaucasian counterparts, initiated the creation of a mythical organization. They acted in a rather considerate manner, first of all turning to those already arrested and forcing them to testify about the activities and membership of a non-existent organization. Simultaneously, repressions were launched against different layers of society, especially the state and party officials and intellectuals. Subjected to inhuman tortures they would testify, against their will and conscience, incriminating themselves as well as others in "Anti-revolutionary, Trotskyist, nationalist, terrorist spying" and other actions. This mechanism of self-reproduction of the "enemies of the people" enabled the creation in a very short period of a "Trotskyist-nationalist" group, which included Nersik Stepanian, Sahak Ter-Gabrielian, Aramayis Yernznian, Arsen Yessayan, Danoush Shahverdian, Artavazd Yeghiazarian and others. The choice of these people was thought out. Being devoted communists, prominent state and party figures, they, at the same time, enthusiastically pursued Armenia's national and state interests, each in his field of activity, and within his authority and powers. Individuals of such mentality and actions could not tolerate the principles and the enforcement of Stalin's policy in the Soviet Union, and Beria's in the Transcaucasus. And they naturally became the first target of party terrorism.

The fabrication of the group and the arrest of its "members" were carried out in phases. The first to go were Arsen Yessayan and Artavazd Yeghiazarian. Lavrentiy Beria and his puppets in Yerevan seized the chance to punish the recalcitrant. By the resolution of Bureau of the Communist Party of Armenia of November 17, 1936, the Chairman of the HOK Yessayan and the Director of the Arts Administration of the Council of the People's Commissars, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the

¹⁹³ Ibid., 1/16/68, p. 1-7.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

Melkonian fund at the Yerevan State University Yeghiazarian were charged with anti-revolutionary, nationalist activities, relieved from their posts and arrested.

Only a year and two months had passed after Yessayan's famous letter to Beria and his appointment as the Chairman of the HOK and the Immigration Committee. Remarkably, his first interrogation, unlike those of the others, took place only seven months later, in June 1937. And he was never interrogated again until his execution more than a year later: his fate seemed to be decided from the very beginning. But during that time something was happening that was later highlighted in his acquittal hearings: "...The incarcerated Armenian leaders were severely beaten and exposed to other means of coercion by the officers of the Commissariat of Interior. The torture resulted in the death or mutilation of some of the inmates... in particular, that torture had driven Arsen Yessayan mad."¹⁹⁵

Ten days after the arrest of Yessayan and Yeghiazarian, one of the founders of Armenia's relationship with Diaspora Aramays Yerznkian was arrested on the same charges. A former official of the Commissariat for Interior testified that the People's Commissar for Interior Moughdousi had ordered to put Yerznkian in such conditions in which he would not survive, "Yerznkian was laced in the worst cell, although they knew that he was already unwell. Yerznkian could not survive such conditions and died a few days after detention."¹⁹⁶

The position of the Chairman of the HOK had become really deadly. Arsen Yessayan was replaced by Danoush Shahverdian, one of the immediate organizers of repatriation of the preceding years. The authorities were quick to fix their "blunder". Very soon he was arrested and shot. After him, his successor, the last Chairman of the HOK, Aram Manoucharian was also shot.

These successive arrests of the Chairmen of the HOK, combined with the general atmosphere of political repression had paralyzed the operation of the organization. Even maintaining relations with the local offices of the HOK abroad had become dangerous. In its correspondence of April and May 1937, the Consulate General of the Soviet Union in New York, while stressing the importance of the activities of the HOK branch in the USA, recommended that the Armenian HOK restored its link with the branch and urgently responded to all business correspondence.¹⁹⁷ But these appeals were in vain: national interests were once more to be sacrificed to the consolidation of Stalin's authoritarian rule.

In the meantime, the formation of the "Trotskyist-nationalist" center/group in Armenia entered its final stage. All its "members" residing in Armenia were already under arrest, but one of the key players, Sahak Ter-Gabrielian, was still in Moscow. In his memo of June 1937, addressed to the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia A. Amatouni, the People's Commissar for Interior Khachik Moughdousi wrote:

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 1191/4/174, p. 128.

¹⁹⁶ Manoukian 1996.

¹⁹⁷ NAA, 1/17/76, p. 32.

"In 1931, S. M. Ter-Gabrielian, together with Yerznkian, Yessayan, Ter-Simonian and others established a Trotskyist-nationalist Armenian centre. The core members and key leaders were 14 persons, 10 of them former members of the Central Committee of the CPA." According to Moughdousi the main directions of the activities of the anti-Soviet center were "...anti-Soviet, nationalist activities among the Armenian communities abroad, as well as ties with the Armenian capitalists, bourgeois Ramkavar and Dashnak parties. Systematically and consistently conceding from political positions, they raised funds for Armenia ... By suppressing the struggle against the Dashnaks inside the country and by putting an end to the struggle against Ramgakars both inside and outside the country, they declared them friends of the Armenian people."¹⁹⁸

In the meantime the developments in Ter-Gabrielian's case were proceeding in such a direction that neither its authors Amatouni or Moughdousi, nor their "godfather" in Tiflis could ever have predicted. Ter-Gabrielian, who was arrested in Moscow and transported to Yerevan, jumped out or was thrown out of the window on the third floor of the Commissariat of Interior during an interrogation session. The leadership of Soviet Armenia decided "...not to inform Moscow about the incident, but Stalin soon about out, and on September 8 member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Anastas Mikoyan and the head of the department of party bodies of the Central Committee Georgiy Malenkov delivered Stalin's letter addressed to the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia."¹⁹⁹

Stalin's letter opened with strict criticism of the Armenian leadership: "Recent events in connection with Ter-Gabrielian "suicide" reflect us the facing of the whole maximum of decay and decomposition, which sum up the state of Party and Soviet organizations in Armenia. It is hard to imagine that Ter-Gabrielian jumped out the window, it is completely incompatible with his timid and prudent kind. Most likely - they threw him out and close his throat so that he could not expose the enemies of the Soviet authority. It is rather strange that leadership of Armenia did not consider it necessary to inform the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party and the Council of the People's Commissars of the Soviet Union about it." And most importantly - "Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party and the Council of the People's Commissars of the Soviet Union cannot allow the patrons of the enemies of the Armenian people to hide from people the ulcers of the leadership and to hide these ulcers – to give the murder of enemy of the people, who undertook to expose the remaining enemies of the people, for "suicide."²⁰⁰

Through this skillful presentation of the incident not only Ter-Gabrielian, but also the current leaders of Armenia were declared enemies of the people, and they of course

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 1/17/83, p. 1, 2.

¹⁹⁹ Mravian, Virabian 1988.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. The letter of Joseph Stalin was for the first time published in Armenian translation in this article by Youri Mravian and Amatouni Virabian, for the first publication of the Russian language original see Mravian 1991.

had to be punished. Stalin himself named the first two, informing in his letter about the arrest of the Commissar for Interior Moughdousi and Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars Gouloyan. At the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia with Mikoyan's and Malenkov's participation, after discussing Stalin's letter, Amatouni and Akopov, Secretaries of the Communist Party of Armenia, along with a number of other party and state leaders were expelled from the party. These individuals immediately appeared in the prison of the Commissariat for Interior.

In Yerevan, as one would expect, they acted according to Moscow scenarios when the party and state leaders were accused of collaboration with certain foreign powers, and the agents of special services of bourgeois states. In the Armenian version, these latter were usually replaced by political organizations of the Diaspora. This was the reason why the People's Commissariat for Interior came up with the myth of a Dashnak-Ramkavar center, acting in cooperation with Trotskist-nationalist groups in Armenia. The only thing to be done was to forge testimony and eyewitness evidence from the arrested. The latter, unable to endure physical violence, psychological pressure and other means of coercion, were inventing new "facts" about the center itself, the anti-Soviet activities of different Diaspora organizations, claiming that their prominent leaders were the agents of special services, and that eminent Armenian intellectuals, state and party leaders acted in collaboration with those agents. But in addition, it was necessary to find out who and how maintained ties between these two centers - in Armenia and the Diaspora. In the context of the topic under study, the answer to this question was a particular importance.

Prohibition of the AGBU's activity

On November 13, the Bureau of the Central Committee passed the following resolution:

"The Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia notes that the Relief Committee for Armenia (HOK) established by the 1921 decision of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia to "bring relief to the starving population of Armenia" (quotation from the resolution of the Council of the People's Commissars) is, in essence, an anti-revolutionary Dashnak provocation against the Soviet power and the workers of Armenia.

"The unveiled enemies of the people - Khanjian, Ter-Gabrielian, Amatouni and Gouloyan, who held the highest offices in the Communist Party and the Soviet Government of Armenia, have transferred huge funds to the HOK. These amounts were provided by the Soviet Union Government for the accommodation of immigrant Armenians. On behalf of the HOK constructed settlements, schools, water pipelines and other facilities, which were named after anti-revolutionary Dashnak leaders and Armenian capitalists (Nubar pasha, Melkonian, Garabed Sarian, and others).

"The HOK and its foreign branches have become the organization of the Dashnak and Ramkavar anti-revolutionary parties, though which a connection was maintained with the Dashnak and other nationalist elements within Soviet Armenia, foreign emissaries and agents were sent to Armenia under the guise of the representatives of the HOK and of compatriotic associations to carry out anti-revolutionary activities.

"Taking the above into account, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPA resolves:

1. To recommend to the Council of the People's Commissars of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic to dissolve the HOK and the representations of all compatriotic associations, as well as the "Baregortsakan" (AGBU- Ed.M.) and Melkonian fund.

2. To instruct the Central Executive Committee of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic to rename the settlements, schools, hospitals, and other institutions which bear the names of the leaders of anti-revolutionary parties and Armenian capitalists.

3. To request the Council of the People's Commissars of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic to allow the local residents to occupy the vacant apartments as well as apartments under construction in the immigrant settlements.

4. To expel Aram Manoucharian, Chairman of the HOK from the Communist (Bolshevik) Party and submit the documentation on his anti-revolutionary connections to the Commissariat for Interior.

5. To submit the proposal to dissolve the HOK for the approval of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."²⁰¹

Strangely enough, this document contains no political or any other allegations against the AGBU. Neither is there any mention of its activities in Armenia, to be more precise the operations of the AGBU are in fact ascribed to the HOK. This is explained by the fact that shortly after Arsen Yessayan's appointment as Chairman of the HOK and the dissolution of the Immigration Committee, all relations with the Diaspora were regulated by the Central Board of the HOK, which was the superior for both the representative of the AGBU in Armenia and the Executive Commission of the Melkonian Fund. Naturally, he was accountable before the government for the activities of those two organizations.

We should note here that, like the preceding and the following ones, this resolution of the Party was never published, thus the general public in Armenia and especially in the Diaspora was never exposed to the developments. One can only imagine what a surprise it was for the public to read the brief official statement published in the "Khorhrdayin Hayastan" daily on December 8, 1937: "The Council of the People's Commissars of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic resolved to dissolve the Relief Committee for Armenia (HOK), the Baregortsakan" and "The Melkonian fund."

A special government Commission has been established to regulate the formalities of dissolution."

²⁰¹ NAA, 1/17/53, p. 89-90.

But that was not the end. On the same day another commission, to investigate the financial and commercial operations of the HOK, finished its work. In a memorandum submitted to the newly appointed First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia Grigor Haroutiounian (it was already noted that earlier, while working in Tbilisi, he bore the name Grigoriy Aroutinov), the commission which, by the way, was chaired by a representative of the Commissariat for Interior, reiterated the same allegations against the HOK and concluded: "The commission holds that the following individuals from the HOK administration have to be criminally prosecuted for the actions stated above, Grigor Vardanian, Danush Shahverdian, Arsen Yessayan, Aram Manoucharian, Vardoush Tarakhchian, Tigran Zaven, Haikaz Karageusian, Tsolak Parzian... The commission also deems necessary to hold to criminal responsibility Moughdusi, Amatouni, Shahsouvarian, Gouloyan, Kevorkov for the abuse of power, manifested in arbitrary withdrawal of imported goods from the HOK warehouses..."²⁰²

All these people were already in prison. Gouloyan and Yessayan were even cell-mates. Those two had been opponents for many months, are now like-minded people. Another inmate in the same cell (a former officer of the Commissariat for Interior) testified during an interrogation that Gouloyan, Yessayan and Shahsouvarov pursued fervent anti-revolutionary activity in the prison, that Yessayan said that Beria imprisoned and annihilated all his comrades and the best Bolsheviks in Georgia and that under the Musavatists in Baku he had served in secret police, whereas Gouloyan in his turn, insisted that the Trotskyist-nationalist center was contrived by the officers of the Commissariat for Interior from Moscow. When asked by a cell-mate what did the Moscow officers have to do with it "...since the organization had already existed under the enemy of the people Khanjian, which you, Gouloyan, have claimed yourself more than once when still free", his response was negative and he tried to assure that there never has been an anti-revolutionary centre in Armenia..."²⁰³ Other former accusers: Amatouni, Moughdusi, and others, could claim the same, but it was too late.

As soon as the resolution of the Soviet leadership became known abroad, the Armenian governmental institutions received numerous letters of protest from, first of all, HOK branches and compatriotic associations affiliated with it. The decision seemed especially strange and unfair to the members of the HOK who had for years, despite numerous difficulties and obstacles, been among the few loyal friends of the Soviet Union, the advocates of its ideology and policies. As one could presume, shortly after the dissolution of the Central Board of the HOK in Yerevan, all its foreign branches disintegrated or were dissolved.

In March, 1938, the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia received a letter from the Director General of the AGBU Vahan Malezian:

"We were informed from the December 8 issue of "Khorhrdayin Hayastan" that, pursuant to a resolution of the Council of the People's Commissars, our Union and the

²⁰² Ibid., 1/17/76, p. 131.

²⁰³ Ibid., 1191/8/4029, p. 140.

Melkonian Endowment Fund were dissolved alongside the HOK and that a special commission was established to regulate the dissolution formalities.

"Since we had not been officially informed of such intention and had not received any information about the substance of the issue and its consequences, we have now the honour to kindly request you to inform us about the conditions of the dissolution and any future regulations...

"We have sent numerous communications to the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars, the Vice President of the University, the Central Board of the HOK and particularly to our representative-administrator Haikaz Karageusian, but never received any response to those urgent inquiries. We, therefore, request to process those inquiries regarding the projects and loans of the Union. We would be grateful if you could point us to a department or an individual whom we could contact on issues related to the Union."²⁰⁴

This communication was left unanswered and the Union sent new letters: in April to the Ambassador of the Soviet Union in France, in June to the Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, in August again to the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars. The latter stated in particular:

"We are confident that, in view of our accountability, you will fully appreciate the goal of our repeated appeal and will kindly follow up on our requests. Otherwise, our Board of Directors will be obliged to decide on how most appropriately utilize the remaining loans and projects designed for Armenia, for the philanthropic organizations and institutions abroad."²⁰⁵ All these communications were in vain: they were never answered.

Under these circumstances the Board of Directors of the AGBU, after long deliberations, unanimously adopted a resolution, which however, was to be implemented only 60 days after it was sent to the Council of the People's Commissars and the Soviet Embassy in Paris. The resolution stressed "the ... deplorable situation of more than a year, which was a result of the termination of any relationships with Soviet Armenia", listed all the unanswered communications and the contracts signed and implemented. The Board of Directors maintained:

"...taking into consideration that the Government in Yerevan has failed to answer the repeated appeals of the Union, we consider such attitude to be a denial of our requests, and this undoubtedly constitutes a violation of the agreement between the two parties, one of which is the benefactor who makes donations in accordance with the provisions of the contract and the other refuses to accept such donations following the signed contract and mutual agreements." The Board of Directors then announced its decision:

"Desiring to fulfill its obligation not to abort the execution of the will of testators and donors, and fully aware of the ultimate responsibility which befell it as the consequence

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 113/3/1808, p. 35.

²⁰⁵ AGBU - 1938: 39.

of this unanticipated default, the Board of Directors considers its duty to adopt the following decision:

“- The Board of Directors has decided unanimously that, as a result of the suspension of our activities in Armenia and the termination of relations with Yerevan, the amounts payable to Soviet Armenia, including annual proceeds, the utilization of which has become impossible since last year, should temporarily-until such time when the Government of Armenia is willing to implement the existing agreements or conclude new ones-be used for similar projects aimed at assisting the Armenian exiles dispersed in different countries, on the condition that such projects are in conformity with the initial goal of each fund and the funds will be spend in accordance with the will of the benefactors.”²⁰⁶

This communication also remained unanswered. Under such circumstances the AGBU could no longer afford to freeze the funds established for Armenia, especially in view of the many needs of the Diaspora itself. And beginning with 1939, the AGBU started to use the funds donated for Soviet Armenia to finance its projects in the Diaspora. The implementation of the decision during the first year went as follows:

1. 1,000 pounds sterling from the balance of the Yerevan University account were used to publish national, historical and literary works of value through the Melkonian Publishing House;
2. 1,103 pounds sterling from the same account were donated to the Melkonian School in Nicosia;
3. 125 pounds sterling from the same account were used for the purchase of the Zardarian library and "Commemoration Book" collection;
4. 800 pounds sterling from the Nubarean Awards fund of Yerevan University were donated to the Nubarean Scholarship Fund...
5. 150 pounds sterling from the same fund were used for the establishment of an award fund for gifted authors and students;
6. 170 pounds sterling from the same fund were donated to the Nubarean School in Heliopolis;
7. 800 pounds sterling from the account of the Yerevan Tarouhi Hakopian Maternity Hospital were donated for the construction of Tarouhi Hakopian Girls school in Beirut;
8. 400 pounds sterling from the same fund were donated to the orphaned girls and the purpose of education of gifted Armenian girls;
9. 868 pounds sterling from different funds were used for the Union sponsored schools and another 350 for youth organizations under the auspices of the Union;
10. 50 pounds sterling from the education funds were allocated to the Mekhitarian School in Beirut and 100 pounds to the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople;

²⁰⁶ Ibid.: 40-41.

11. 3,000 pounds sterling from the balance of amounts earmarked for Nubarashen were used in two even installments for the accommodation of the homeless impoverished refugees in Athens, Beirut and Aleppo;
12. 1,000 pounds sterling from the same fund were used for the establishment of an agricultural enterprise in Antioch-Suetia region or an appropriate area in Lebanon. The 450 pounds sterling donated by the Honorary Member Megerdich Palian were also used for this purpose;
13. 20,000 francs from the same fund were transferred to the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople for the accommodation of the refugees and orphans from the provinces and another 5,000 francs for the accommodation needs of the farmer immigrants from Turkey to Aleppo."²⁰⁷

Such a long list could be perceived in different ways: on one side, it provided a clear picture of what the people of Armenia have lost within the many coming years because of the policy of the Soviet Armenia and, on the other hand, what important projects went on and were initiated with the same amounts in different Diaspora communities. One thing is certain: the AGBU continued to serve the Armenian people, though only one part of it - the Armenian Diaspora.

Representative of the AGBU - victim of the repression

One of the persons to be indicted under criminal charges pursuant to the December 8, 1937 report of the audit commission, established to investigate the financial and commercial operations of the HOK, was the representative of the Union in Armenia Haikaz Karageusian. During the events described above he, like all the others mentioned in the report, had been in prison for several months already. In those years, when eminent state and party leaders, intellectuals were jailed, exiled or executed one after another, the fate of Haikaz Karageusian was somewhat left out from the focus of interest of his contemporaries, not to speak of the coming generations. Yet he has his rightful place in the history of the AGBU because of his activities as well as his personality. By the irony of fate, the main resource for the story of the Haikaz Karageusian's life and deeds is his 1937 file in the Commissariat for Interior.

Haikaz Karageusian was born in 1882 in Trapezund to the family of a wealthy merchant Ignatius Karageusian, and, like his father, was engaged in the tobacco trade. Before World War I, Karageusian settled in Odessa (Russia), where in 1917 he was elected a member of the board of the newly established AGBU branch. There he met and married Sofia Yeghiazarian, who had come there from Yerevan to study. In 1923 Karageusian, his wife and two children moved to Armenia. Years later, in response to a question by an investigator, he would say that he decided to move to Armenia "... to be among Armenians, in my motherland... I did not speak Russian and was having a hard

²⁰⁷ AGBU - 1939: 16-17.

time living there."²⁰⁸ He also said that an important factor in his decision to move to Yerevan had been his wife's desire to return home to her family and friends.

In 1926 he frequently met with a prominent member of the AGBU Yessayee Garigian and Dr. Khosrov Hekimian, whom he had known from Trapezund. Two years later, in 1928, when the Union decided to have a permanent representative in Armenia, those two recommended Haikaz Karageusian's candidacy. In 1928 Karageusian assumed the post of the representative of the AGBU to Armenia and held it throughout the period of the Union's operations in the country. The activities of the Union, as a Diaspora organization in Soviet Armenia, were unique and unprecedented and so was Karageusian's job. Given the mentality and the political environment of those years, one can easily imagine how tough the position of a person like Karageusian would be: a Western Armenian coming from a well-off family, a merchant who had immigrated to Armenia in 1923, not a member of the Communist party and, on top of all this, a representative of an bourgeois foreign Armenian organization in Soviet Armenia. And a man with such a dubitable, in Soviet terms, curriculum vitae, was authorized to "... be a mediator between them (the AGBU - Ed. M.) and the Armenian Government on issues related to the economic and construction operations of the Union. I also had to coordinate the initiatives of the Union with the Armenian Government, receive the financing and transfer it for the needs of construction, monitor the implementation of the projects."²⁰⁹ One does not need too vivid an imagination to grasp the various challenges he had to face while carrying out his duties in the social, political, and economic environment of the time. Despite all the impediments he had to secure the solution to all the problems--that was the demand of the AGBU leadership.

Karageusian was, of course, aware of the danger he was facing as the representative of a foreign organization in a country that was hunting the "enemies of the people." His suspicions were affirmed in November, 1936, after the arrest of Arsen Yessayan and Artavazd Yeghiazarian. Karageusian's turn came just two month later: on January 11, 1937, he was invited to the Commissariat for Interior and interrogated, so far as a witness. The extract from a verbatim record of the interrogation regarding the details of the Moscow trip of Arsen Yessayan's delegation, which included, among others, Haikaz Karageusian, has already been quoted above. His responses to questions on the leaders of the HOK are very significant to make us better understand his personality. When asked about Aramayis Yerznkian, he answered: "I maintained business contacts on issues pertaining to the Benevolent Union with Aramayis Yerznkian in his capacity as the Deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars. Besides, we were also friends over a card table. We often played cards, mostly at his place, sometimes at mine." About Arsen Yessayan: "My only contacts with him were of business nature, and started after the Benevolent Union was transferred under the supervision of the HOK. Yessayan treated me very well, supported the Union

²⁰⁸ NAA, 1191/4/174, p. 9.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

in its construction works in Armenia."²¹⁰ To fully appreciate these responses one has to bear in mind that both Yessayan and Yerznkian had been arrested already in November 1936. And despite that, Karageusian honestly described his friendly relations with them, their good disposition towards himself. What was that - courage, naivety, or trust in the fairness of the authorities?

Even after his January interrogation, Karageusian continued to work with the same enthusiasm and diligence, as if ignoring the threat. In this context the following incident is remarkable. Just two weeks after the interrogation, on January 25, 1937, he sent a letter to the First Secretary of the CPA Amatouni to inform him that "The Paris Board of Directors of the Armenian General Benevolent Union informs in its letter of November 9, 1936, that in view of the forthcoming conclusion of the construction of the Yerevan-Nubarashen highway and to facilitate the commuting of the Nubarashen residents, the Union has decided to make an exclusive donation (outside of the funds raised for Armenia) of a bus with 20-25 seats." Pointing to the existing legal restrictions, Karageusian asked Amatouni to request the Soviet Government to lift those restrictions, extending special privileges for the transportation of the bus. Amatouni forwarded the letter to Moughdousi, People's Commissar for Interior with an inscription in Russian: "Arrest the author and throw him out." Moughdousi, in his turn, added an instruction in Armenian, "The resolution of the Government should be implemented without contesting." There could be no other reaction: as already mentioned Amatouni and Mughdusi were the organizers of the new wave of repressions of the Armenian state and party leadership. Nationalism, cooperation with the Armenian bourgeois organizations abroad, particularly the AGBU, have become the most important accusations. Under these circumstances it would be at least naive to think that the topmost leader of Armenia would address the Central Government in Moscow with such a request, especially that the name of the author of the letter was already included in the list of the "enemies of the people."

On June 25, 1937, a lieutenant of the National Security Kirakozov submitted a report on Haikaz Karageusian to his supervisor captain Vahram Chitouni. The report concluded: "Karageusian was engaged in systematic anti-revolutionary propaganda and should be indicted by Article 67 of the Penal Code of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic." The report was approved the same day by the People's Commissar for Interior Major Moughdousi and thus the decision to arrest Haikaz Karageusian and incarcerate him in the Interior Commissariat prison was endorsed by the signatures of the three mentioned individuals. This was the beginning of the final and most tragic stage of Haikaz Karageusian's life. On the following day his apartment in the AGBU House (Baregortsakani Doun) was searched and two typewriters, a radio, a fountain pen, his personal correspondence and other items were confiscated. Here is a quote from a letter by the People's Artiste of Armenia, sculptor Ara Sarkissian, addressed to the Committee for State Security (KGB) in 1955: "Haikaz Karageusian led a very

²¹⁰ Ibid.

modest life. I have been at his place several times and I have seen the modest furnishing and the simple lifestyle of the family. And it was the time when a representative of the Benevolent Union, had he not been an honest and straightforward person, was in a position to abuse the fortune of the Union for his personal needs. In the case of Karageusian it was the other way around. The routine life of his family proved how simple, straightforward and honest Haikaz Karageusian was."²¹¹

Karageusian was interrogated only twice, on June 29 and October 13, 1937, and those two interrogations were very different from the one in January when he had to testify as a witness. On June 29, three days after his arrest, he makes a "confession" in his letter addressed to People's Commissar Moughdousi: "When, after my arrest, investigator comrade Kirakossian (a.k.a. Kirakozov – Ed. M.) asked what were my crimes against the Soviet government I decided to be frank and tell him the truth. I testify that beginning with 1932, I have been a French spy and was involved in operations against the Soviet authorities..."²¹² We can only imagine what questions and in which manner the "investigator comrade Kirakossian" had asked, however, judging from the style of the letter and his correspondence before the arrest, we can say with a great deal of confidence that Karageusian was writing under the dictation of Kirakossian-Kirakozov (this was the only sheet in the investigation file written in Armenian, and only because Karageusian himself did not know Russian). During a brief interrogation on the same day he repeated his testimony and added that he was recruited as a spy by Levon Gumushguerdan (member of the Board of Directors of the AGBU - Ed. M.) who had arrived in Yerevan to participate in the election of the Catholicos, and that during those days he had given Gumushguerdan and Arshag Chopanian detailed information about the economic and political situation in Armenia. Karageusian was not the only "spy", he had some prominent accomplices. The torture techniques used by the investigators of the Commissariat for Interior had forced similar testimony from writers Zabel Yessayan and Vahan Totovents, translator and literary critic Petros Makintsian and others, who were recruited by French "agents" Hrach Yervant and Arshag Tchopanian.²¹³

The second and final interrogation, on October 19, started with the investigator's threat: "During the whole process of investigation you have been stubbornly concealing your anti-revolutionary activities as a missionary (? - the investigator probably did not know the difference between "missionary" and "emissary" - Ed. M.) of the Dashnak-Ramkavar center in Armenia. We would suggest you to stop refusing to testify and give a comprehensive account of your anti-revolutionary activities."²¹⁴ The investigator's statement demonstrated the scenario for Karageusian's case and the role ascribed to him. As opposed to the January interrogation, the investigator did not ask a single

²¹¹ Ibid. p. 203.

²¹² Ibid. p. 20.

²¹³ Gasparian 1994: 84, 90, 106, 107, 129.

²¹⁴ NAA, 1191/4/174, p. 23.

question about Arsen Yessayan's trip to Moscow, it obviously could not serve a basis for a serious political indictment. The false allegations on the existence of a Dashnak-Ramkavar center and a Trotskyist-nationalist group in Armenia and their collaboration could, however, become a basis for an indictment on attempted dissolution of the Soviet Union and Armenia's secession from the Union. Karageusian's post did not merit his inclusion in the group, but even the modest role assigned to him was fatal.

The logic of the investigation was clear and simple: given the existence of two anti-Soviet centers, one in Armenia and another abroad, and given their common aims and cooperation, there should be a person who acted as a liaison between the two and that person had to be found. The easy answer was--the AGBU and Karageusian, its representative in Armenia. Now it was not difficult all those who came to Armenia through the AGBU - namely, Mikael Papajanian, Arshag Chopanian, Levon Gumushguerdan, Hrach Yervant, Maksoud Mhrdatian-- to make representatives of the Dashnak-Ramkavar center, and their meetings with Sahak Ter-Gabrielian, Aghassi Khanjian, Aramayis Yerznkian, Arsen Yessayan, arranged by Haikaz Karageusian, as the collaboration of the two centers. It becomes easy also to expose the AGBU itself as a political organization, established by Ramkavars to inject loyalty towards Armenian bourgeoisie among the Diaspora Armenians, expose Nubarashen, the hospitals and other construction sites of the AGBU as means of popularization of the bourgeoisie and promoting its positive image among the Soviet Armenians. How useful was Haikaz Karageusian's testimony for all that? We have to admit that the investigators were masterly abusing Haikaz Karageusian's nature. Most probably, having promised a favourable outcome of the trial, they got a handwritten Armenian confession about being a French spy. According to established practice, the verbatim record of the testimony was made in Russian, but since Haikaz Karageusian did not know the language they translated the protocol for him and asked him to sign it (the same procedure was used for the interrogation of writer, repatriate Zabel Yessayan, who also did not know Russian). Even if his replies were not distorted they could always be placed in a different, even exactly opposite context. For example, Karageusian had told the investigator that according to Papajanian, Ter-Gabrielian had promised full support to the construction of Nubarashen, and had especially stressed the importance of increased financial assistance from the bourgeoisie to Armenia, pointing that "The Armenian bourgeoisie has to realize that its Motherland is Armenia and not Syria." It is easy to imagine the anti-Soviet slant that could be given to Ter-Gabrielian's words, in order to present him an agent of the Armenian bourgeoisie.

In any case, Karageusian's temper and lack of knowledge of Russian had facilitated the work of the investigator and we may assume that he was not subjected to physical abuse. Mikael Mazmanian, a prominent architect who had shared the cell with Karageusian for 4 months - September 27, 1937, through January 20, 1938 -- did not mention any signs of physical abuse towards Karageusian. The following is an extract from Mazmanian's testimony of 1955: "He gave me general overview of his case, told

that the investigator knows the entire truth and fully understands his personality and knows he is not guilty... He was modest, waited patiently for a positive outcome of his trial, certain that he was not guilty and was to be released."²¹⁵

By that time the investigation of Karageusian's case was already over, and on November 20, 1937, investigator Kirakozov charged him under 3 additional articles of the Penal Code. It was not until seven months later, on June 17, 1938, that the Deputy People's Commissar for Interior Nikolay Kondakov and assistant to the Military Prosecutor General Mikhail Schultz-Ann approved the indictment which stated in particular that, "the Dashnak-Ramkavar centre and the big Armenian bourgeoisie carried out their work through their representatives sent to Armenia under the guise of representatives of the HOK and the Benevolent Union. The accused Karageusian supplied them with espionage information, as well as connected them with members of the right-Trotskyist organization in Armenia."²¹⁶

Given the charges, Karageusian's case was submitted to the Military Panel of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union. A month later, on July 17, the latter in a preliminary hearing decided "To hear the case in camera, in the absence of a defense counsel or prosecutor and without summoning witnesses, pursuant to the resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR of December 1, 1934."²¹⁷

A day later, on July 18, the Military Panel of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union held an in camera session in Yerevan. The members of the court were: Division military lawyer Orlov (Chairman), military lawyers Kolpakov and Stelmakhovich, military lawyer of the 3rd rank Kozlov (Secretary of the Court). Also participating was Schultz-Ann.

"The meeting was called to order at 17.25... The Chairman briefed the defendant on the essence of the charges against him and asked if he pleaded guilty. The defendant pleaded guilty partially. He had not been a member of the Dashnak center. He had moved to Russia in 1914. He met Yerznkian in the USSR. Since 1928 has been affiliated with the "Mutual Assistance Committee" (? - this was probably how the Russian members of the tribunal translated the "Benevolent Union" - Ed. M.) and had held negotiations with the Soviet Government. He has never been an agent of the British Intelligence. His written statement about his crimes was untruthful. He knew Ter-Simonian.

Ter-Simonian's statement was then introduced.

Defendant: he has never held political discussions with Ter-Simonian, and cannot explain why he does the latter testify on this matter. His own views were nationalist because he had been brought up in Turkey.

Court is adjourned.

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 200.

²¹⁶ Ibid. p. 61.

²¹⁷ Ibid. p. 64.

In his last word, the defendant asks the court for leniency, since he had worked honestly for ten years and his only guilt was in adhering to nationalist views.

Court retires to meeting.

Upon returning from the meeting, the chairman reads the verdict.

The session was closed at 17:45."

Court verdict, July 18, 1938.

The preliminary investigation and the court inquest proved that since 1928 Haikaz Karageusian has been a representative of the Dashnak-Ramkavar center in Armenia and acted as a liaison between the center and counter-revolutionary nationalist terrorist organization operating in Armenia in a bloc with the anti-Soviet right-Trotskyist terrorist organization aimed at the armed overthrow of the Soviet power, Armenia's secession from the Soviet Union, and creation of the so-called "independent" Armenian state under the protectorate of one of the capitalist countries. Besides, Karageusian was a spy of a foreign intelligence and transferred state secrets of the Soviet Union to them.

The above facts prove Karageusian's guilt under Articles 59, 63, 65, 68 of the Penal Code of the Armenian SSR.

Pursuant to Articles 297 and 298 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Armenian SSR, the Military Panel of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union sentences Haikaz Karageusian to capital punishment through a firing squad with a confiscation of his personal assets.

The verdict was final and was executed immediately, in accordance with resolution of December 1, 1934, of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR."²¹⁸

The last document in the file stated: "The verdict of capital punishment for Haikaz Karageusian was executed on July 18, 1938."²¹⁹

Arsen Yessayan and Hovhannes Hakopian were also executed on the same day, and the last member of the delegation, Tigran Zaven, was executed on October 4. Almost all state and party leaders mentioned in this book were executed during 1938, including Viktor Mezhlauk and Lev Karakhan in Moscow.

Years later, after the death of Stalin and the execution of Beria, the Soviet Union began to gradually shed the nightmares of the past. The most important manifestation of this was the acquittal of tens of thousands of the repressed. In November, 1954, Haikaz Karageusian's son Levon (who was then already member of the Writers Union of the USSR) appealed to Georgiy Badamiants, Chairman of the State Security Committee (KGB) of the Council of Ministers of Armenia, to reconsider his father's case.

The acquittal of those repressed under the Stalin regime was a time consuming exercise that took a lot of efforts, it was not and could not be done through a single decree or resolution, since there were actually guilty persons among the numerous innocent ones. In fact, a new file had to be opened for each case and the innocence of

²¹⁸ Ibid. p. 66-67.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 68.

every person had to be legally proved beyond reasonable doubt. But the witnesses of those years were also annihilated, they were no longer available to renounce their testimony delivered under physical coercion. The initiators and perpetrators of unprecedented violence were annihilated or gone into hiding, moreover, some of them continued to occupy high public and party posts and, most importantly, the new leaders of the Soviet Union had not publicly condemned the policies of the Stalin regime against its own people. Khrushchev's statement at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 was still pending.

Those were also the challenges facing Haikaz Karageusian's acquittal. However, it became gradually apparent and proven that a right-Trotskyist center has never existed in Armenia. Neither did a Dashnak-Ramkavar centre exist abroad, it was proven that the AGBU members Gumushguerdan, Chopanian, Papajanian, Hrach Yervant and others were neither representatives of such a centre nor agents of foreign intelligence services, and that Haikaz Karageusian and others had testified under physical and moral coercion. Artavazd Yeghiazarian, the former Chief Administrator of the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia Armenak Tokmajian, the former Chair of the Armenian and later Transcaucasian Central Executive Committee Sergey (Sergo) Martikian, sculptor Ara Sarkissian, and architect Mikael Mazmanian upon their return from exile also confirmed Karageusian's innocence.

Finally, on March 7, 1956, the Captain of National security Kostandian closed Karageusian's acquittal case: "... Haikaz Karageusian was arrested and charged in 1937 without basis for prosecution." Several months later the Military Panel of the Supreme Court of the USSR resolved: "To reverse the decision of the Military Panel of the Supreme Court of July 18, 1937, on Karageusian..., and to drop the case in the absence of corpus delicti."²²⁰

But before that there was a point when the activities of the AGBU and Karageusian himself in Soviet Armenia seemed nothing but a mystification. In July, 1955, in connection with Karageusian's acquittal, the Deputy Chairman of the KGB requested the Chief Administrator of the Council of Ministers to provide the following information on the AGBU, "1. When did it exist, what were its aims, what assistance has been provided; 2. What information is available on Haikaz Karageusian, representative of the organization in Armenia, who and when had appointed him, what was his activity and the purpose of such activity?"²²¹ One month later, the head of the Archives department of the Interior Ministry forwarded to the Head of the investigation department of the KGB a communication received from the Director of State Archives, regarding... the "Caucasian Benevolent Union." The communication revealed that the Union had existed in 1881-1924 and that "Haikaz Karageusian was not found among its personnel."²²² This astonishing information, however, did not set back the officers of

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 251.

²²¹ Ibid. p. 172.

²²² Ibid. p. 176.

National Security, and they addressed a query to the Head of the Archives of the Ministry of Interior one more time. The language of this request was different: "...provide information as to which governmental institution had authorized the operation of the "Armenian Benevolent Union"/"The Baregortsakan" in Armenia between the years of 1935-1937." The response was received on September 9, 1955, "The Department of Archives of the Ministry of Interior informs that the "Armenian Benevolent Union"/"the Baregortsakan" has not existed in Armenia during the Soviet period. The most recent information pertaining to the Union dates back to February-March, 1921, the period of the Dashnak vagary."²²³

This reminds us of Lord Bolingbroke's words: "We have been long coming to this point of depravation: and the progress from confirmed habits of evil is much more slow than the progress to them."²²⁴

EPILOGUE

The Soviet authorities remembered about the AGBU right after World War II. As was the case in the 20s and 30s, the Union became the main Diaspora source of funding for the repatriation of the 1946-1948, donating more than 1, 5 million dollars through a special fundraising effort. Later the Union was ranked among the Diaspora organizations with which contacts and, in some cases, even cooperation was allowed. But nothing more: like all other Diaspora organizations that the Soviet authorities considered "progressive and patriotic," the Union was never allowed to function in Armenia. This made the operation of the Union in 1923-1937 a unique and exceptional phenomenon in the history of relations of Soviet Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora.

The devastating earthquake of 1988, and the concurrent political developments in the Soviet Union which lead to its rapid collapse, brought about a new phase in the activity of the Union in Armenia, which became especially salient after the proclamation of the Third Armenian Republic in 1991.

²²³ Ibid. p. 177-178.

²²⁴ Henry St. John Bolingbroke. The Idea of a Patriot King. Introduction. <http://bit.ly/2LEc1dU>

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*At the time of writing, in the late 1990s, the documents cited by me were stored in the Central National Archives of Modern History and the Central National Archives of the documents of non-governmental and political organizations of the Republic of Armenia. Subsequently, these two archives were included in the unified National Archives of Armenia. Personal files of the repressed in 1930s were also transferred to the National Archives from the archives of the Ministry of National Security. The first digit indicates the fund number, the second the list number, and the third the file number.

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

FOLK RELIGION AND POPULAR PIETY AMONG ARMENIANS

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Brief introduction

Folk religion or popular piety is a term used to express the religious expression experienced by people in their daily lives. Folk religion is in other words a living religion of the people. Popular piety also refers to religious practices that have arisen and occur outside of official religious institutions. Folk religion or popular piety is sometimes termed as popular belief and describes various forms and expressions of religion that are deemed distinct from the official doctrines and practices of organized religion or of the Church. This distinct phenomenon exists in all major religions; in the case of the Armenian faith, it is taught side by side with the theology and liturgical disciplines of the Armenian Church.

Popular piety is mostly based on people's religious experiences, on their fear of death, on their awe of the supernatural, and their desire for eternal life.

Folk religion also finds among Armenians its expression through the celebration of Feast Days of the church, the symbols of the Holy Cross, stone-carved crosses, Icons, relics, and Holy Sanctuaries as places of pilgrimage. Other manifestations are the lighting of candles, burning of incense, offering of prayers, sacred music, and the recitation of the Psalms and other pious traditions.

The aforementioned list shows, indeed, that this is too vast a field to be summarized in one presentation. That is why I will try to focus primarily on those ecclesiological-religious realities that are particularly respected and common among Armenians and through which the Armenian faith is best expressed.

The development of Christian Popular Piety among Armenians: The early stages

In spite of the fact that Agat'angeghos¹, in his work "*History of the Conversion of Armenians*"² presents Armenia as being a thoroughly pagan country, it is worth considering that before the proclamation of Christianity as a state religion by Trdat III (*Tiridates*), this new religion had already progressed and existed among large groups of the population, mainly via the preachings of St. Thaddeus and Bartholomew, through

* The article of Rev. Dr. Abel Manoukian is already published recently in the Canadian Armenian theological journal *Luys* XV/4, 2017 (77), p.22-40. Since the topic of the study and materials discussed by the author are of particular interest for readers not familiar with Armenian, the Editorial board found its publication useful.

¹ In general, the present article adopts the academically recognised transcription system of the Library of Congress for Armenian names and terms. See the following link: <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/armenian.pdf>

² Agat'angeghos 1983: 716-900 ("*Darts' P'rkut'ean Ashkharhis Hayastan*").

the martyrdom of Sts. *Voskiank'* and Sts. *Suk'iasiank'*, as well as via the Apostolic See of Artaz and the Bishopric of Siunik'.³

The continued line of bishops, martyrology, and the history of religious persecution bear witness to the fact that Christianity, during its early pre-state era (before 301 A.D.), had already counted among its fellowship a substantial amount of the population.⁴

One of the first testimonies of popular piety is the celebration of the Holy Baptism followed by a glorious procession led by Trdat III and St. Gregory the Illuminator.

"And when the fasting days were over, the blessed Gregory took the troops, the King, the King's wife Ashkhēn, the King's sister⁵ Khosrovidukht, all the nobles⁶ and the army to the bank of the Euphrates River and there he baptized them all in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Then they left with great joy, clad in white garments, singing psalms and benedictions, with lighted lanterns, candles and lamps, and in angelic spirits. Having become God's adopted children, they accepted the inheritance of Holy Evangelium, and having participated in the Saints' heritage, flourished with Christ's scent, and returned to the House of God. There, St. Gregory performed Divine Liturgy and ministered communion to everybody and shared with them the Redeemer Christ's Holy Flesh and Blood."⁷

Closely related to the "History of Conversion of Armenians", the testimony of martyrdom of St. Hrip'simē and St. Gayianē is uniquely placed in the original text of Agat'angeghos. Nine days after the martyrdom of these virgins, immediately after being released from the *Khor Virap* pit⁸, St. Gregory collected their remains and, according to his vision, built Christian testimonies over the places of their martyrdom.

"One, they built on the North-East of the city (Vagharshapat), where Hrip'simē was martyred together with her 32 companions, the other on the South where her friend the Abbess Gayianē was martyred with two companions, and another one was built near the vineyard, where their shelter was situated."⁹

It is natural that Hrip'simean martyrdom - one of the main motivations of Armenian conversion - would become a source of popular piety for all Armenians. Both during the days of St. Gregory, and in later periods, it manifested spiritually through mass pilgrimages and popular festivities.

It is worth noting that throughout the process of conversion, the old popular piety for pagan temples, faith symbols, and celebrations did not falter or disappear, but rather was enhanced by the conception, culture and liturgical order of the new religion - Christianity.

³ Ormanian 1912: 22-70.

⁴ See Agat'angeghos 1983: 67-68. As King Trdat III imprisoned St. Gregory in the *Khor Virap* pit, he proclaimed a decree to persecute the Christians. See Agat'angeghos 1983: 82.

⁵ In the original text: "mets oriord".

⁶ In the original text: "nakharark'".

⁷ See Agat'angeghos 1983: 464.

⁸ Cf. Agat'angeghos 1983: 126.

⁹ See Agat'angeghos 1983: 428.

St. Gregory, along with his troops, was pursuing the demolition of the eight main Armenian pagan temples. Two of them were in Eastern Armenia, five in the West — in *Bardzr Hayk'*, and one in the South — in Taron. Hence, the official establishment of Christianity was marked by the destruction of these eight “major” temples and worship places of the ancestors. The process began in the East with the temples of Anahit and Tir (Artemis and Apollon). After some time, the destruction of the five main temples in the West followed.¹⁰ St. Gregory proceeded to establish new testimonies of Christian faith in the place of each destroyed temple, thus replacing the old faith with the new one. In the South, in Taron and Ashtishat, after the demolition of the temples of Vahagn and of Astghik¹¹ St. Gregory built altars of Christian faith and ordered that:

“At the same place let them gather to celebrate the Saint's' commemoration, the memorial day of the seventh day of the month of Sahemi (October – A.M.), in order to gather with joy and have a feast. After all, it was here that St. Gregory first embarked on the construction of churches. He appointed priests in those different places and made sure that these places were filled with churches and priests.”¹²

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways popular piety finds its best expression is in collective pilgrimages, where pilgrims ride or walk from far off places to Holy ones bringing with them their offerings for a particular feast day, in order to fulfill their vows. Among these thousands of Holy places that exist, I will reflect on three of them; St. Karapet of Mshoy Sult'an, the Avag Monastery of Yerznka and Mother See Holy Etchmiatsin, all of which, for centuries, have fertilized the popular piety of Armenians.

As pointed out in the last quote by Agat'angeghos, St. Gregory the Illuminator was building living testimonies over the pagan temples. He placed Holy relics inside these newly recognized Christian places of worship in order to give them a specific sacredness. Thus, St. Karapet of Mush, established by the Illuminator, was one of the most sacred and honoured places of pilgrimage for Armenians.

“And Gregory ordered them to set a day for great celebration to commemorate the martyrs, replacing the previously celebrated day of Amanor, associated with the Host Vanatour; and the day of Navasard. This was done in order for the people to gather on the commemoration day of the blessed John and God's Holy martyr At'anagines and to celebrate it in the same province.”¹³

In addition to the information we have been provided by Agat'angeghos, Hovhan Mamikonian in his book, “History of Taron”¹⁴, states that on his way back to Armenia from Ceasarea, immediately after his consecration by Bishop Leontius of Caesarea, St. Gregory took with him the relics of St. Karapet (John the Baptist, the Forerunner) and another martyr St. At'anagines.¹⁵ As previously mentioned, he destroyed Demeter's and

¹⁰ Cf. Agat'angeghos 1983: 436-454.

¹¹ Cf. Agat'angeghos 1983: 452.

¹² See Agat'angeghos 1983: 457.

¹³ See Agat'angeghos 1983: 466.

¹⁴ See Hovhan Mamikonyan 1989.

¹⁵ Cf. Agat'angeghos 1983: 454.

Gissane's pagan temples of the Stone Mountain situated in the place called *Innaknean*¹⁶ and established the Monastery of St. Karapet, also known as "St. Karapet of Mshoy Sult'an",¹⁷ the "Sites of *Innaknean*" and the "Church of Glak."¹⁸

Veneration of Saints and holy relics by the Armenian Faithful

In the Armenian Church, St. John the Baptist is recognized as the second greatest Saint after the Virgin Mary. St. John also has a primary place in the Armenian Liturgical calendar. According to the Church Liturgy, the commemoration of St. John in the Armenian Church is celebrated four times a year corresponding to each of the four seasons; one celebration is fixed and the other three are movable. These days are: (1) January 14 (fixed) - celebration of St. John the Baptist's birthday - eight days after Christmas; (2) "Commemoration day of the Beheading of John the Baptist (moveable) - the Saturday following Easter; (3) "Celebration of John the Baptist and Bishop At'anagines" (moveable) - the Thursday of the day of Holy Etchmiatsin - to commemorate the day of receiving the relics of St. John and Bishop At'anagines; (4) "St. John the Baptist and St. Job the Just" (moveable) - the Thursday of the third week of Assumption. In addition, St. John also has a pre-feast day, prior to the January 14th feast. This day takes place on January 6th, following the Christmas celebrations.

It should be noted that during these repeated festivities throughout the year, especially the ones during the summer, thousands of Armenian pilgrims would come to the monastery of St. Karapet of Mush from different regions, with various wishes and desires, but especially with a hope for healing.

Through these pilgrimages people sought the fulfillment of a variety of wishes and objectives, including the healing of diseases and requests for the protection of St. Karapet. The fulfillment of various wishes by St. Karapet was so prominent that he came to be known as "*mourazatour*" or "*mouratatour*" — one who makes wishes true. This is reflected perfectly in the songs of pilgrimage sung by the people. For example, the lines, "many pilgrims are all over, both on horseback and on foot", or "a saint, who fulfills the wishes of both the rider and the walker, and does not ignore anyone". Here, "going on foot" or "walking" often meant that people were barefooted, while "going on horseback" or "riding" usually signified that people were coming from far away.¹⁹

With deep sorrow, we must mention the fact that this richness of popular piety and spirituality, kept and transmitted by the Armenians from generation to generation, throughout the centuries, was completely destroyed by the Turkish people and Kurds during the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

¹⁶ Innaknean translates from Armenian as "having nine water sources." It was located in Western Armenia in the Taron Province and was known as a region of extensive water springs.

¹⁷ See <http://www.houshamadyan.org/arm/mapottomanempire/bitlispagheshvilayet.html>

¹⁸ St. Karapet monastery was also known as Glag Monastery (Arm.: Glagay Vank') referring to its first Bishop named Glag.

¹⁹ Harutyunyan 2001: 21-28; See Baghdassaryan A., Dilanyan Y., K.Khudabashyan 2001: 29-38.

Sacred places of pilgrimage

For the occasion of the 1700th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Christianity in Armenia as a State Religion in 2001, a number of pilgrimages were organized. One was led by His late Eminence Archbishop Mesrop Ashjian to Western Armenia and Cilicia. There are six volumes of video cassettes based on this pilgrimage, one of which contains footage of the Taron region. It was with deep regret that while watching this footage, we came to realize that the sacred stones and *Khach'kars* of St. Karapet of Mush had become construction material for the stables and houses of the Turkish and Kurdish population living in the surrounding area. Was this the destiny of the many sacred places; Churches and Monasteries? To become victims of destruction and cultural genocide along with the more than 1.5 million Armenian victims.

Another Holy place of pilgrimage — the Avag Monastery of Yerznka — shared the same destiny as St. Karapet of Mush.



St Karapet monastery of Mush, in Taron Region, before its destruction

After the conversion of Armenians, St. Gregory the Illuminator spent the last years of his life in isolation, fully devoting himself to solitude in the Monastery of *Maneay* — the *Maneay Cave*²⁰ of the mountain Sepuh (Sepul). Towards the end of 325 AD, or the beginning²¹ of 326 AD, he died in total solitude. Historian Movsēs Khorenat'si writes that the shepherds found his breathless body by chance, and buried him at that very place without even recognizing him. It was only later on that a monk named Garnik discovered his grave and took it to Tordan.²²

This sacred place on the face of Mountain Sepuh — the Avag Monastery — was

²⁰ *Maneay ayrk'*

²¹ Cf., Ormanian 1912: 115-118.

²² Movsēs Khorenat'si 1913: 244.

also known among Armenians as “*Hankist Lousavorch’i Vank*” or “*Maneay Cave*”. In the XII century, an important Clergy School was developed here which served as a significant cultural and theological centre in the Western part of Eastern Armenia. The famous Vardapets of the Armenian Church — *Hovhannēs Pluz of Yerznka*, *Movsēs of Yerznka*, *Kirakos and Gēvorg of Yerznka*, *Hovhannēs of Hamesh* and many others, all lived and worked here. The famous “*Mshoy Charēntir*” — the Homiliary of Mush — written in the Avag Monastery in 1200-1202, can now be found at the Mesrop Mashtots’ Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) in Yerevan. The remarkable story of “*Mshoy Charēntir*” is a true example of the extent to which Armenians are bound to their spiritual and cultural values. During the 1915 Genocide, a courageous woman, after losing her husband, children, and all her relatives, put herself aside and devoted what energy she had left to save half of the “*Mshoy Charēntir*”. With God-given strength, she carried this heavy homiliary hundreds of miles, all the way to Etchmiatsin. Miraculously, the second part of this homiliary was found in 1927 and was also brought to Armenia to be reunited with its other half.²³

The Armenian Church devoted three main Holy Days for the great St. Gregory the Illuminator — St. Gregory the Illuminator’s Commitment of the Pit; Discovery of the Relics of St. Gregory the Illuminator; and St. Gregory the Illuminator’s Deliverance from the Pit. Hence, on these days, pilgrimages were organized to the Avag Monastery where sacrificial animals were offered by the faithful in honour of the Illuminator’s memory. The existing photograph²⁴ of this traditional folk pilgrimage was taken in 1907 and can be found in “*Amēnoun Tarets’uyts’ē*” (Everybody’s Almanach) of T’eodik printed in 1923. There is a great sense of national and ethnic tradition evident in this collective photograph — clergymen and women in traditional Armenian dresses. All would become victims of the exiles, deportations and massacres of 1915.

Yet, it can be considered a fortune, that after the great loss of people and land, spiritual and cultural values, and the overcoming of terrible century-long nightmares, a small part of Eastern Armenia has been preserved and remains today, existing as the current Republic of Armenia, and within it, the Holy See of Etchmiatsin — the spiritual centre of all Armenians. By international standards, Holy Etchmiatsin is a unique place; for 17 long centuries, almost uninterruptedly, it has inspired Armenians and has been the centre of their national spirit.

The Mother See of Holy Etchmiatsin

Holy Etchmiatsin is the embodiment of St. Gregory’s vision, the vision he had at the time of the conversion of Armenians. Historian Agat’angeghos asserts that in this vision²⁵ of the Illuminator, Jesus Christ descended to Vagharshapat from Heaven and

²³ See Acharian K., *Hrach’ya Acharian* — 125, in: “*Harach*”, 76e Année, Nr. 20.188, Paris, 15 juin 2001, p.2.

²⁴ Cf., T’eodik 1923: 350.

²⁵ See Agat’angeghos 1983: 414-242.

pounded on the pagan *Sandaramet* temple with a golden hammer. The Illuminator, with the help of King Trdat III, the *Nakharars*, and the faithful, following Divine directions, destroyed the temple and established in its place the Mother See, named Etchmiatsin, which means the place of “the Descent of the Only-Begotten”.

Ever since the 4th century, Holy Etchmiatsin has been, and still is, the most sacred place in Armenian Christendom, thus making it the main pilgrimage site for Armenians. It has played a unique role in inspiring and motivating Armenians. Being well aware of the vital and spiritual importance of Etchmiatsin, foreign invaders tried to “move” the cathedral of Holy Etchmiatsin and deprive Armenians from their divine spiritual ground. In the beginning of the XVII century, the Persian Safavid King Shah Abbas I deported thousands of Armenians from the Ararat valley. In 1614, he moved 15 stones displaced from the cathedral, its candlesticks, the Right Arm of St. Gregory and other relics to Isfahan, with an intention of building a new Etchmiatsin there,²⁶ in order to eradicate the nostalgia of the Armenians deported to Persia. It did not happen - and could not happen of course - as Holy Etchmiatsin is sacred and Holy only on her Mother land, where the “Only-Begotten descended” and where the first Catholicos of all Armenians continues to invite the children of the Armenian Church to come together and build the “Holy Altar of Light.”²⁷

The Armenian Catholicossate of the Great House of Cilicia

As political power changed hands during the course of history, the central location of the Armenian Church shifted accordingly. By the end of the 5th century the Catholicossate had already moved away from Etchmiatsin; first of all to Dvin (484-931), then under Catholicos Hovhannēs Draskhanakerts'i to Dzoravank' and to Aght'amar (931-944), thereafter to Argina (944-992), Ani (992-1065), Tsamndav (1062-1105), Shughri (1105-1125) and Tsovk' (1125-1149). Since more favourable political conditions had by then been created in Cilicia, the Armenian Catholicossate subsequently relocated as a result, initially to Hromkla (1149-1292), and later to the new capital of Sis (in 1293).

When the Armenians lost their last Christian state in Cilicia to the Mamelukes in 1375, the Eastern Armenian monks, together with their leading Vardapets, who were the most vehement opponents of a union with the Roman Catholic Church, wanted to relocate the seat of the Catholicos from Sis to Etchmiatsin, which had been the original home of the Catholicossate.²⁸ Gregory IX Musabegiants, who resided in Sis as Catholicos, did not wish to leave his place of residence on account of his age and because of the responsibility he felt towards his people in Cilicia. The Synod of Etchmiatsin subsequently elected Vardapet Kirakos Virapets'i as the new Catholicos in 1441.

²⁶ See Ōrmanian 1914: 2325, 2328-2329.

²⁷ Cf. Hymn of Holy Etchmiatsin.

²⁸ Ōrmanian 1914: 2100-2116; Kirakosyan 2014: 588.

Nevertheless, a new Catholicos, Karapet of Eudocia, was appointed in Cilicia in 1446.²⁹ Tracing its descent to him by succession, the Catholicossate of the Great House of Cilicia still exists today as a second Armenian Catholicossate, with its respective jurisdiction. After the massacres in Cilicia of 1920 and 1921 onwards, and a subsequent period of uncertainty, its seat of residence was established in Antelias, a suburb of Beirut, in 1930.

As in many cities and towns in Eastern and Western Armenia, the Armenians of Cilicia celebrated their holidays and feasts with rich traditions and customs. They have always maintained and nurtured their own local customs, and because of this, Cilicia has been a country with an enormous wealth of cultural activity and living tradition. The most popular feasts among the Cilician Armenians were: New Year's Eve, Holy Nativity and Epiphany followed by the blessing of water, during which the cross is immersed in the water, symbolizing Jesus' descent into Jordan river, and holy Myron (chrism) is poured in, symbolic of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, Presentation of our Lord to the Temple (Tearñendařaj), Feast Day of Vardan and His Companions (Vardanank'), Feast of Carnival (Boun Barekendan) and the Great Lent, the Mid-Lent (Mijink'), Palm Sunday and the Holy Week, Holy Easter, Green and Red Sunday, the Feast of Ascension of our Lord (Hambardzum), the Feast of Pentecost (Hogegaloust), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary followed by the blessing of grapes (Astvatsatsnay Verap'okhoum – Khahoghōrhñēk'), Feast of the Holy Translators (Srbots' T'argmanch'ats') and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.³⁰

In addition to the national and religious festivities mentioned above, the Armenians in Cilicia celebrated other feasts, including the commemoration days of the Saints of the Armenian and the Universal Church. These occasions were not secular, as each event had a divine blessing. During the year, in churches and homes, especially in households having the saints' namesakes as members, special remembrance holidays would be held to venerate and honour the saints through prayers, pilgrimages and various sacrifices of blessed animals in order to fulfill their solemn promises or personal vows through charitable works.

Among many the most popular saints of the Armenians in Cilicia were: St. John the Baptist as the Forerunner (Sourb Karapet), Saint Gregory the Illuminator, St. George the Warrior (Sourb *Gēorg Zōravar*), St. Sargis the Warrior and his son Martiros, the Sts. Sahak and Mesrop, St. Step'anos, Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew, St. Jacob of Nisibis, the Sts. Apostles Peter and Paul, etc. On the occasion of the feasts of the above-mentioned saints' days, and many others, thousands of pilgrims and clergy would go to the churches and monasteries to mark the day of the corresponding saint by praying and participating in the Divine Liturgy, enthusiastically celebrating popular festivities as well.

²⁹ Ōrmanian 1914: 2142–2144.

³⁰ For more about churches and places of pilgrimage, festivals, religious traditions and customs in Cilicia see www.houshamadyan.org

Armenians in Cilicia preserved the original spirit and meaning of the holiday traditions almost fully intact from one generation to another. Losing their great kingdom in the late Middle Ages, they were able to maintain their national identity by preserving and living their unique national and ecclesiastical heritage and outstanding national achievements.

As the Catholicossate of the Great House of Cilicia has been headquartered in Antelias after the Genocide, Catholicos Sahak II Khapayian and his Coadjutor Catholicos Babgēn I Giulesserian decreed some yearly celebrations that slowly became popular traditions and part of the Armenian Church calendar. One of the major celebrations was the Antelias pilgrimage day which coincided with the celebration of the day St Gregory the Illuminator was thrown in the pit. Taking into consideration that the Catholicossate's main church was named after Saint Gregory the Illuminator and that in the old days every monastery or holy site had a pilgrimage day, it was deemed convenient to honour the first Armenian Catholicos and thus Antelias also had its own pilgrimage day. Therefore, it can be seen as a revival of one of Armenia's traditions to express popular piety and devout faith.

On the Saturday evening before the celebration, devout pilgrims gather in the church to spend the whole night praying in the church and the monastery. On Sunday morning, thousands of pilgrims gather to take part in the Holy Mass. The Holy Mass is followed by a procession honouring St. Gregory the Illuminator, Saint Nicholas, Saint Sylvester and Saint Barsam. Finally, the current Catholicos of Cilicia blesses all the pilgrims with the right hand of Saint Gregory the Illuminator.

From 1954, another fervent pilgrimage date was fixed for the Sunday closest to August 15, Assumption Day, named the Bikfaya pilgrimage. On 12 September 1953, there was the consecration of the chapel named after the Mother of God. It was built in the summer residence of the Catholicossate, on one of the beautiful hills of Bekfaya. Year after year, thousands of Armenian pilgrims celebrate the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God, attending the Holy Mass, the blessing of grapes and the blessing of the meat-offering.

It is from here and many other sacred places that popular piety emerges: faithful pilgrims journey and stay overnight in the lodges and courtyards of the monasteries, they ask the priests to bless their offerings, burn their incense and light their covenant candles, participate in the Lauds and Vespers prayers and the Divine Liturgy, and go back to their homes having fulfilled their vow and with a joy and satisfaction in their hearts. Usually on these occasions music, popular games, festivities and folk dances are also organized, which reveal the whole beauty and richness of the traditional Armenian culture. It is worth saying that Komitas Vardaped, the great Armenian composer, often used these types of events as sources for collecting Armenian folk songs.

On the topic of pilgrimages, it is valuable to note that church celebrations and Saints remain dear to the hearts of all Armenians. It is in the commemoration of Saints

and the celebration of festivities that popular piety feels all the more real and tangible.

Going on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

From the early centuries of the Christian Church, prayerful Armenian pilgrims made their way to the sacred places where Jesus lived and died and appeared after his Resurrection. Armenians, like many Christians from different nations, came to walk in the footsteps of Jesus as an act of devotion, penance or thanksgiving, or to seek blessings or miracles. Many travelled on foot. Their journeys involved enormous effort and self-sacrifice, and they faced great hardship and perils. The pilgrims who had come back from the Holy Land were named among the Armenian “*Mahtes*”. This wording was frequently used among Armenians to refer to pilgrims to Jerusalem and means ‘He who has seen death’. This may be derived from the fact that a journey to Jerusalem involved a great many dangers.

The most popular celebrations for Armenians

According to recent statistics,³¹ the most popular celebrations for Armenians are the following: The New Year, Christmas, Presentation at the Temple (*Teaṛnēndaṛaj*), Saints Vardanank’, Holy Easter, Ascension, Transfiguration (*Vardavar*), Assumption of Mother of God, Exaltation of the Holy Cross, April 24th, St. Sargis, St. James of Nisibis,³² St. George,³³ Carnival of Great Lent,³⁴ Great Lent,³⁵ Palm Sunday, Annunciation and Holy Translators.³⁶

Some of these have national character, such as the Sts. Vardanank’, Transfiguration, Holy Translators and April 24th. While some aspects of the celebrations are of pagan origin, such as the lighting of bonfires at the feast of the Presentation or the sprinkling of water on Transfiguration, they have been adapted to a Christian feast.

The most popular Saints are: St. Gregory the Illuminator, St. Hrip’simē, St. Gayanē, St. Sargis, St. James, St. George, St. Sahak, St. Mesrop, St. Grigor of Narek, and St. Nersēs the Gracious. The popular Saint Translators comprise — Yeznik, Yeghishē, Koriun, Ghazar of P’arpi, and Movsēs of Khorēn. Also significant, from the new period, is Komitas Vardaped, who, with millions of Armenian Martyrs, was not just individually but collectively canonized on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide by the Armenian Church on April 23, 2015. It should be noted that even before this event, Komitas Vardaped was already regarded as a Saint and enjoyed the unconditional admiration of all Armenians.

³¹ See Mkrtch’yan 2001: 395-404.

³² *Surb Hakob Mtsbnay Hayrapet*.

³³ *Sourb Gēorg Zōravar*.

³⁴ *Barekendan*.

³⁵ *Medz Pahk’*.

³⁶ *Targmanich’ Vardapetk’*.

It is interesting to note that the names of almost all the Saints mentioned above, to this day, continue to be common names given to Armenian children by their parents, which again is a sign of reverence and belief.

April 24th is not a Church Holy Day in a classical sense, but after the collective canonization of millions of Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide — as mentioned above — from this day on in the Liturgical calendars of the Armenian Church April 24 has been referred to as a Feast of the Armenian Genocide Holy Martyrs. It is still a day of prayer and meditation, and a day of special worship and requiems for the blessed memories of more than 1.5 million Armenian martyrs and victims of the year 1915.

Not one of the religious pilgrimages has resulted in such an immense participation of all age groups, as April 24th in *Tsitsernakaberd* in Yerevan, *Genocide Memorial Church* in Deir ez-Zor in Syria and *Genocide memorial* in Bikfaya, Lebanon.

Armenian folk and church traditions

There are national traditions and corresponding pagan celebrations related to almost all of the Church Festivities. For example, during the Presentation at the Temple, parallel with the Church Liturgy, people have preserved the pre-Christian tradition of purification by fire. In fact, immediately after the pre-feast of the Presentation at the Temple, people participate in bonfire celebrations. Newly married couples and the young gather around a fire and jump over the flames, for the purpose of purification and fertility. Afterwards, grandmothers collect the ashes and spread them over the yards and fields expecting to fertilize the land, or take the ashes to the roofs of their houses to ward off evil.³⁷

Even the song Ascension “*Jangiulum*”, the collection of water from seven different sources, the flower bouquets, and finally the “lot” — “*Vijak*” of Ascension — do not have a direct Christian context.

The feast of Transfiguration, as mentioned, was the combining of the religious commemoration of Christ's Transfiguration and the Armenian pagan feast of Amanor (Armenian New Year or Navasard) by St. Gregory. This feast was devoted to Astghik (Greek Aphrodite) — the goddess of love, beauty and waters. The old Armenian Transfiguration — *Vardavar* — coincided with the harvest; hence, people expressed their appreciation to the goddess for all the crops and harvest they gathered. The same tradition has been adopted by the Armenian Church, and the believers continue to express their feelings via the new religion. They give husks, flowers and roses not only to the Church but also to each other. The water games, the sprinkling of water on each other and the releasing of pigeons are well known,³⁸ popular and favoured traditions among Armenians.

The blessing of grapes is related to the Day of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

³⁷ Petrossian 1993: 82-83.

³⁸ Cf. Petrossian 1993: 222-224.

Mary. Armenians have a wonderful ancient custom of offering the best parts of the first fruits to God. During the pre-Christian period, the gift was presented to non-gods. Now, consecrated by the Church, this tradition is reserved for the Virgin Mary.³⁹

It is natural that people throughout the centuries have created many religious symbols and traditions. For example, St. Sargis,⁴⁰ whose stories and legends relating to his life and times have been passed down through history. Here, with reference to popular piety, we can observe that St. Sargis has become a symbol of the fulfillment of wishes of love, as people attribute to him a legend where he carries away a young girl whom he loved. Young girls or loving couples make "*Pokhints*" (a mixture of flour and grains) and place this on the roofs of their houses. St. Sargis rides his horse during the night and leaves marks of his horse-shoe on the *Pokhints*. The next morning, the young people eat that *Pokhints* and wait for the fulfillment of their desires. For this occasion, young girls often fast for three days and then break their fast only the night before the St. Sargis feast day by eating a very salty pastry — *ga'a*. Afterwards, they go to bed without drinking water in the hope that in their dreams, their beloved will bring them the water. If this happens, they can expect their wish to come true.⁴¹

Thus, from these descriptions one can see the religious culture of simple people, the brilliant expressions of their faith and their dreams, and the spiritual origin of these expressions. This includes the festivities of pre-Christian folk traditions, which came to adopt Christian forms.

Veneration of "*Khachk'ars*" (Cross Stones)

Before concluding, I would like to reflect on two more aspects of popular piety, which have particular significance in the religious life of Armenians. One is the exceptional respect towards the Cross Stones (*Khachk'ars*) and the other is the sacrifice of animals (*Matagh*) for the pilgrimages.

Armenians venerate Cross Stones (*Khachk'ars*), which is to say, they pay respects to them because they are sacred and holy objects, and because they have reverence for what the *Khachk'ars* depict.

Armenians do not worship Cross Stones in the sense that the word "worship" is commonly used in modern English or other languages. In older translations, one finds the word "worship" used to translate the Greek word *proskyneo* (literally, "to bow"). Nevertheless, one must understand that the older use of "worship" in English was much broader than it is generally used today, and was often used to refer simply to the act of honouring, venerating, or reverencing.

Armenians have always had a very special respect and admiration for Holy Crosses. While for the Eastern Orthodox churches there exists the exceptional

³⁹ Cf. Petrossian 1993:238-239.

⁴⁰ "*Gandzasar*", I, Yerevan, 1992, p.294-314.

⁴¹ See Petrossian 1993: 88.

devoutness for Icons, it is the *Khachk'ars* that play the same role among Armenians, because for them these are a symbol of life, not of Jesus mortal, but of Jesus Alive, born from the Alive. A Cross Stone symbolizes the Victory over Death achieved by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Some scholars assume that the heritage of the Urartian monuments served as a foundation for the formation of *Khachk'ars*. Others look at them as being derived from simple Christian tombstones. However, in the Church, a strong opinion is upheld: the initiator and the creator of the *Khachk'ars* was St. Gregory, although, throughout history, they have undergone a process of perfection. Historian, Agat'angeghos, states that when St. Gregory was released from *Khor Virap* pit, he embarked on his mission of spreading Christianity:

"He was showing the locations of where to build churches in all of the cities, villages and fields of Armenia. But he was not establishing foundations publicly nor was he installing altars in God's name, as he was not yet consecrated, but only was fortifying the places and thus, was erecting the symbol of the divine Cross. At the roads, on the streets, in the squares and at the crossroads, he was erecting this same Sign worshipped by everyone and there to guard and protect."⁴²

Thus, St. Gregory was giving a fully Christian look to the pagan country. Surprisingly enough, the spreading of *Khachk'ars* in Armenia has exactly the same character as stated by Agat'angeghos. Armenians enjoy having pilgrimages to *Khachk'ars*, in front of which they light their candles, worship and pray.

Sacrifice of animals (*Matagh*)

The sacrifice of animals - *Matagh* - is closely linked with pilgrimages. Evidently, the origins of *Matagh* have pagan, or pre-Christian background, however, this religious tradition was practiced both by pagans and by Jews. The Armenian Church inherited this old custom, consecrated it and gave it a charitable character.

Assyrians criticized Armenians as following the Jewish law of engaging in the sacrificing of animals. St. Nersēs Shnorhali (Nersēs the Gracious) explains, in a short but important document,⁴³ the nature of this custom ordered by St. Gregory the Illuminator. After accepting Christianity, pagan priests were complaining about their livelihood. The Catholicos consecrated this custom of the sacrificing of animals, so that the newly converted priests could make a living by accepting 10% of the sacrifice made by the faithful.

Thus, the Catholicos St. Nersēs Shnorhali advised that the believers should make the sacrifice on the day of Holy Easter and on memorial days for the dead. They had to sanctify their offering, by first feeding the animals salt that was blessed by a priest. After the sacrifice, one tenth was presented to the Church and the rest distributed charitably:

⁴² See Agat'angeghos 1983: 438-440.

⁴³ See Nerses Shnorhali 1871: 252-264.

“they should first feed the hungry and needy, and then, if anything is left, feed their relatives and loved ones.”⁴⁴

We can see that this popular Armenian custom of sacrifice has first and foremost a charitable purpose, so that through the Church, a living for socially marginalized people is provided.

Conclusion

The popular piety of Armenians has always been encouraged by the Church and clergy. Even today, in the framework of celebrations of the Church, this phenomenon is highly supported and developed.

With her limited number of clergy, the Church does not have the necessary strength to fight previous and newly emerging sects and their preachers, not in Armenia nor the Diaspora. The strength of our Church lies in the unity with her believers and is based on their strong sense of belonging, which they express, by their living faith in the Holy Church. The complicated Church Doctrines, and even the Liturgy, though beautiful and mysterious, sometimes use outdated formulations or languages which are not for simple people. The people, without opposing the Church Doctrine, and in harmony and faith with the general spirit of the Church, through natural impulse have their own way of living and expressing their faith. These expressions are in the form of prayers created by people in modern languages or local dialects, songs, psalms, etc.

The opportunity of expressing popular piety with all its pluralism in daily life through various methods can only motivate popular piety and strengthen the Church. Popular piety in its forms of expression may seem a bit simple and sometimes naïve, but that simplicity very often has a deep spiritual base. As we have shown in this presentation, the source and inspiration of such popular piety is always the Church by its living spirituality, historic mysticism and realizations through Church sacraments.

The centre and at the same time the purpose of people's spiritual life, in the past, today and in the future, was and will always be, the revealing God, for He is the Carrier of everything, and He is the Creator of life and the meaning of all of our existence.

Popular piety will always be closely connected with Jesus Christ, with the crucified and truly resurrected Creator, who is the proof of God's promise. The highest criteria of a believer's life and the inner dynamism of their faith is following the life of Christ and His teachings.

The popular piety, being simple and naïve in its manifestations, is nevertheless aimed towards the highest Truth of the Christian faith and revelation. The fact that there is a God, Whom we can address, Whom we can talk to, Whom we can pray to, the very fact that He is an — *“Khorhurd khorin anhas ev anskizb'n”* — an unspeakable “Mysterious Sacrament”, a “Mysterium tremendum et fascinosum” — is the essence of the existence and the center of the spiritual life of the faithful.

The popular piety of Armenians sprung from the sacred sources of the Holy Church and the Christian Faith. It has never been merely a theoretical or sentimental

⁴⁴ See Nerses Shnorhali 1871: 252-264.

phenomenon, but rather a religious reality with flesh and blood. It has an existential value, a national and cultural identity, a spiritual-ethical firm principle, for the defense of which, people in the past and present have always been ready to meet the most severe conditions, including individual and collective martyrdom. The Armenian people, who share their faith with their sister churches, by the Grace of God being baptized as Christians more than 1700 years ago, will definitely continue to build the "Holy Altar of Light", which the only-begotten Son of God has established in the land of Armenia. The Armenian people in the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Artsakh (Karabagh) and in the Armenian diaspora, spread all over the world, must keep alive the lantern of faith, which is above the altar of Holy Decent, and is lit by the tears of the Great and Holy St. Gregory the Illuminator.

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THE ADANA MASSACRE AND THE PEOPLE'S HISTORICAL MEMORY

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*Dedicated to the Memory of the
Innocent Victims of the Adana Massacre*

Beginning from as early as 1955, during more than 60 years, I have written down, tape- and video-recorded (remaining faithful to the popular speech), academically studied and published the testimonies (700 units: memoirs, Armenian and Turkish-language songs) communicated by eyewitness survivors, who were miraculously saved from the Adana massacre (1909) and the Armenian Genocide (1915-1923), were forcibly deported from about 100 localities of Western Armenia, Cilicia, Anatolia and resettled in Armenia and the Diaspora (Greece, France, Italy, Germany, USA, Canada, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, the Balkan countries, Turkey, etc.). The originals of these testimonies are kept at the archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

The popular testimonies, narrated by the eyewitness survivors, saturated with expressive depth and descriptiveness has been created under the immediate impressions of those historico-political events. The representatives of the senior generation even remembered the establishment of the Turkish Constitution in 1908, which had the motto: “Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasın Millet” (Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People – Turk.). A nationwide exultation prevailed in the country, since equal rights were to be secured by law to all the nations living in the Ottoman Empire.



Sargis Khachatryan
(1903, Harpoot)

A survivor from Harpoot, **Sargis Khachatryan** (b. 1903), has told me about this unprecedented event: “*I remember in 1908 when the Sultan’s reign was overthrown, people were singing in the streets*”.¹

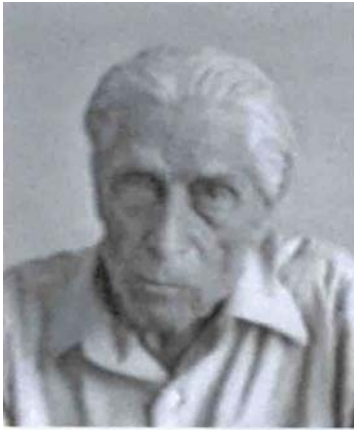
*“Kalkın, hey vatandaşlar!”²
Sevinelim yoldaşlar!
İşte size Hürriyet:
Yaşasın Osmanlılar!”³*

*“Get up, compatriots!²
Let us rejoice, friends!
Liberty has come to you:
Long live the Ottomans!”³*

¹ Svazlian 2011: Testimony 116, p. 264.

² In the various Turkish-language original songs I have recorded, it is possible to observe deviations from the grammatical and phonetic rules of the Turkish language or to encounter Armenian words and morphemes in them. With a view to keeping unaltered the information communicated by the survivors, I have remained faithful to their oral speech.

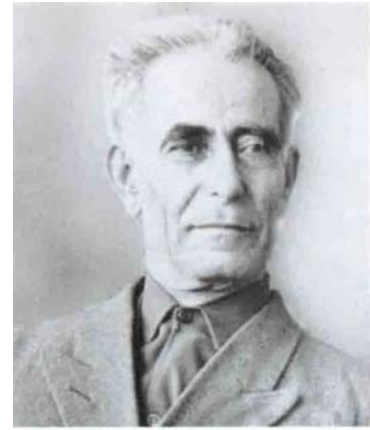
³ Svazlian 2011: Testimony 431, p. 561.



Hmayak Boyadjian
(1902, Bitlis)



Hovhannes Gasparian
(1902, Eskishehir)



Yeghiazar Karapetian
(1886, Sassoun)

While a survivor from Bitlis, **Hmayak Boyadjian** (b. 1902), has testified in his memoir: *"...When Hurriyet was declared in 1908, everybody, in the beginning, was of the opinion that Armenians and Turks would live like brothers. There were even festivities in our village and fusillades were performed."*⁴

A survivor from Eskishehir, **Hovhannes Gasparian** (b. 1902), has added: *"...In 1908, when the new constitution was proclaimed, the party of the Young Turks was headed by Talaat, Enver, Djemal, Dr. Nazim, Behaeddin Shakir and thousands of young Turks became government members in 1908. They organized a Parliament. Sultan Reshad was the ruler, but he was deprived of any royal rights..."*⁵

An eyewitness survivor born in Sassoun as far back as in the 19th century, **Yeghiazar Karapetian** (b. 1886), remembering the historical events of the past, has noted: *"...The Hurriyet of 1908 offered freedom to all the political prisoners, after which the Armenians, Turks and Kurds would have equal rights. Everywhere cries of joy were heard. The law of Hurriyet put an end to the humiliation, beating, blasphemy, robbery, plunder and contempt of the Armenians. Anyone involved in a similar behavior would be subject to the severest punishment; he would even be liable to be sent to the gallows. The two nations were put in a state of complete reliance. The Armenians would have the right of free voting, were allowed to elect and propose their delegate. This was a new renaissance in the life of the Western Armenians..."*⁶

That was the awakening from the obscurity of the Orient. However, the Turkish reactionary forces, dissatisfied with the constitutional orders, began to accuse the Armenians for bringing the "Hürriyet" (the Constitutional orders), which allegedly pursued the object of seizing the power from the Turks and of reestablishing "the Armenian Kingdom." Taking that circumstance into account the Armenians have woven the following Turkish-language song:

⁴ Ibid: Testimony 19, p. 114.

⁵ Ibid: Testimony 206, p. 394.

⁶ Ibid: Testimony 1, p. 79.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Padişah oturmuş tahtından bakar,</i> | <i>The king seated is watching from his throne,</i> |
| <i>Tahtının altında al kanlar akar,</i> | <i>Red blood is flowing under his throne,</i> |
| <i>Baltayı vurunca yattı ölüler,</i> | <i>Struck by axes, corpses are falling,</i> |
| <i>Acayip hallere düştü Ermeni.</i> | <i>The Armenians' condition is lamentable.</i> |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Şefketlim oturmuş tahtından bakar,</i> | <i>The kind ruler is watching from his throne,</i> |
| <i>Gâvurun kanları sel gibi akar,</i> | <i>The gâvurs' blood is flowing like a torrent,</i> |
| <i>Hürriyet isteyenler derede kokar,</i> | <i>The freedom-wishers are stinking in the valley,</i> |
| <i>Acayip hallere düştü Ermeni.⁷</i> | <i>The Armenians' condition is lamentable.⁷</i> |

In the environs of Sis, a Mullah even sermonized: "We can not be brothers with the gâvurs; to get united with them is not possible. The Sharia strictly forbids that. We can not cherish snakes in our bosom, whose biting we have no doubt about."⁸

On the 31st of March, 1909, a session of the Provincial Council took place under the chairmanship of the valy (governor) of Adana, where a decision to exterminate the Armenians was made. Special secret orders to start the massacre were sent to the provinces. On the eve of the massacre the authorities distributed large quantities of arms and ammunition to the Mohammedan population. Hundreds of criminals were released from the prisons.

Nevertheless, a year had not elapsed since the declaration of the Turkish Constitution, when the town of Adana and the neighboring Armenian-inhabited villages, which had been saved from Abdul Hamid's massacres (1894-1896), became the target of the hatred of the Ittihat officials.

During the Holy Week of 1909, from the 1st to the 3rd and the 12th to the 14th of April, Adana and its environs were on fire. The blood-thirsty crowd attacked the Armenian-inhabited quarters of Adana and the neighboring villages, plundered all the shops, slaughtered the unarmed and unprotected Armenians, not sparing even the women and the children.

The massacre of Adana was premeditated. This fact is testified by the telegram sent by the councilor of Internal Affairs of Turkey, Adil bey, to all the Turkish officials of the region of Cilicia, where it was written: "Great care should be taken that no damage is caused to the foreign religious institutions and consulates."⁹

The Turkish government commissioned the Ottoman Armenian deputy of Edirné, Hakob Papikian, to go to Adana, to investigate the situation on the spot and to prepare an official Turkish-language report for the Legislative Assembly. H. Papikian left for Adana, scrupulously investigated the events and noted in his detailed "Report" in Turkish, that "...not only did the number of victims exceed 30,000 Armenians, but it was an evident fact that the massacres had been organized with the knowledge and by order of the local authorities."¹⁰

⁷ Ibid: Testimony 433, p. 562.

⁸ Keleshian 1949: 544.

⁹ Jizmejian 1930: 174.

¹⁰ Papikian 1919: 28. H. Papikian had just completed his historical "Report," when the Young Turks managed to poison and kill him, and thus the report was not published. After the author's death, the rough copy was translated into Armenian and published in 1919 in Constantinople.

The eyewitness of that turmoil historian-novelist, Smbat Byurat, has, under the immediate impressions of those sad events, created the following poem of great popularity as a truthful reproduction of the event, which has been communicated to me by the eyewitness survivor from Zeytoun, **Karapet Tozlian** (b. 1903):



Karapet Tozlian
(1903, Zeytoun)

*“Let the Armenians cry, the cruel massacre
Turned magnificent Adana into a desert,
The fire and the sword and the merciless plunder
Ruined, alas, the House of Roubinians!*

*Unarmed Armenians, in a moment
Fell before the mob under the swords,
Churches and schools were lost in flames,
Thousands of Armenians ruthlessly died.*

*The merciless Turks deprived
The child of his mother, the bride of her groom,
Smashed everything on their way,
Swallowed and got repleted with Armenian blood.*

*Three days and nights the fire from inside,
The enemy’s sword and bullet from outside,
Wiped out the Armenians from the face of the earth
Blood ran down the Armenian streets...”¹¹*

The Cilician Armenians in distress have formulated the following malediction under these historical events:

*“May you lose your sight, Satan,
You came and entered Adana.”*

I have succeeded in writing down from the survivors, rescued from the Adana massacre, and thus saving from total loss also other Armenian- and Turkish-language popular songs, which artistically reproduce those historic events:

*“In the morning at dawn
They encircled us on four sides,
Thousands of bullets
Scattered like hail.*

*Poor Adana was stained
Red with blood,*

¹¹ Svazlian 2011: Testimony 342, pp. 413-414.

*And the corpses of Armenians
Were sprawled here and there.*

*They broke doors and windows,
Striking with axes,
They didn't leave a resplendent house
And burned them all down.”¹²*

Or else, were woven other short notes, depicting scenes of the tragic massacre of Adana, which have been transformed into mournful songs:

*“Seven girls fled and went away,
Ah, alas!
They shot three of them and caught the other four,
Ah, alas!
They burned little Tigranouhi's house,
Ah, alas!
A rich girl like her was given to the mullah,
Ah, alas!
Three mullahs dug the ground,
Ah, alas!
They buried the Armenian young man all alive,
Ah, alas!
They took away the boy's sister and crucified her,
Ah, alas!
They brought her down the cross and threw her into the sea,
Ah, alas!
They entered the school and caught the school-mistress,
Ah, alas!
They opened her mouth and cut her tongue,
Ah, alas!”¹³*

Those historical-political events have remained in the memory of the Cilician Armenians as “*Kıyma* (Slaughtered – Turk.) *Adana*,” and they have composed the following Turkish-language song:

*“Hey, çamlar, çamlar, alını-açık çamlar!
Her güneş vurunca sakız damlar,
Sakız damlarsa: yüreğim ağlar:
Adana ırmağı sel gibi akar,
İşte geldim sana, kıyma Adana!
Of, of, işte gördüm sizi, kıyma çocuklar!*

“Hey, cedars, cedars, variegated cedars!
The resin drips whenever the sun strikes,
When the resin drips, my heart sheds tears,
The Adana River flows like a torrent,
I've come to see you, slaughtered Adana!
Alas! I've seen you, massacred children!

¹² Ibid: Testimony 435, p. 562.

¹³ Ibid: Testimony 442-446, pp. 564-565.

*Adana köprüsü tahtadır, tahta,
Ermeni muhaciri gelir bu hafta,
Adana ırmağı leş ilen kanlar,
Kaldırın leşleri, Adana kokar,
İşte geldim sana, kıyma Adana!
Of, of, işte gördüm sizi, kıyma çocuklar!”¹⁴*

The bridge over Adana is wooden,
The Armenian refugees will arrive this week,
The Adana River is full of blood and corpses,
Take the corpses away, Adana will stink,
I've come to see you, slaughtered Adana!
Alas! I've seen you, massacred children!”¹⁴



Mikayel Keshishian
(1904, Adana)

An eyewitness survivor from Adana, **Mikayel Keshishian** (b. 1904), has told me with emotion about that fact: *“In 1909, at the time of the massacre of Adana, I was five years old. That horrible night was named in Turkish ‘Camuz dellendi’ (The buffalo went mad). And indeed, the Sultan had gone mad. According to his order, people were slain, about thirty thousand Armenians were killed, their houses were demolished and burnt to ashes. ...They gathered all the remaining people and took them to the bank of the Adana River, they sent a message to Sultan Hamid, saying that they had gathered all the Armenians and had brought them to the riverbank and were waiting for his orders. There was water on one side and fire on the*

other. My father was clasping me in his arms. I remember, I was looking over his shoulder. My mother was also with us. We were all gathered on the riverbank. Then an order of pardon came from the Sultan. They compelled us to shout ‘Padişahım çok yaşa!’ (Long live the King! - Turk.). We returned home, but it was too late for those who had already been killed.”¹⁵

The following popular song also tells about miserable condition of the victims of the Adana massacre:

*“Şimdi Adana’ya gitmeli değil,
Gidip de o halları görmeli değil,
Çorekşaptı* günü koçnak** çekildi,
Bütün Ermeniler jama*** döküldü.*

*“We shouldn’t go to Adana now,
We shouldn’t go and see that condition,
On Wednesday* they rang the bell,**
And gathered all the Armenians in the church.****

*Beni öldüren doydu mu ola?
Liralarımı saydı mı ola?
Benim burda vurulduğumu
Anam, babam duydu mu ola?*

*I wonder whether my killer was sated,
Whether he counted my gold coins,
Whether my mother and father
Heard that I was shot here.*

¹⁴ Ibid: Testimony 434, p. 562.

¹⁵ Ibid: Testimony 241, p. 421.

* The Armenian word “çorekşapti/chorekshabpti” (Wednesday) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

** The Armenian word “koçnak/kochnak” (bell) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

*** The Armenian word “jama/zham” (church) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

*Adana'nın yolları taşlık,
Cebimizde kalmadı beş para harçlık,
Aman, Adanalı, canım Adanalı,
Cebimizde kalmadı, beş para harçlık.*¹⁶

The roads of Adana are stony,
We all became stony-broke,
Alas, citizen of Adana, my dear,
We all became stony-broke.”¹⁶



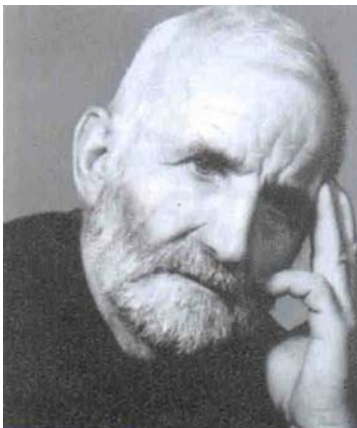
Tonik Tonikian
(1898, Moussa Dagħ)

During the massacres of Adana, dozens of Armenian towns and villages were ravaged and burnt down, while Moussa Dagħ, Deurtyol, Hadjn, Sis, Zeytoun, Sheikh Mourad, Fendedjak and a number of other localities stopped the attack of tens of thousands of Turks with their heroic self-defense and were saved from the slaughter.

A survivor from Moussa Dagħ, **Tonik Tonikian** (b. 1898) has also referred to the Adana calamity: *“Respect and honor are the highest values in the world. We, the people of Moussa Dagħ, love to live our lives with respect and honor.*

The massacre of Adana started in 1909. The Turks attacked the Armenians’ houses, shops. They plundered, killed, slaughtered, and raped. They did such things! One could not think of them!

We, the Armenians of the seven villages of Moussa Dagħ, took precautions; we assigned guards at night. In many places in Cilicia, the Turks attacked, broke-in, and plundered. People escaped with their lives. The Armenians fled and took refuge in churches, but the Turks entered their houses and plundered. They saw that the Armenians had entered their churches, so they attacked the churches and slaughtered them there. First, they slaughtered babies, right before their parents’ eyes, and then killed the parents: men and women. They were slaughtering whole families. Blood



Hovhannes Abelian
(1903, Kessab)

*flowed like water from the thresholds of the houses. I was in our village when we heard all about it. Until now, Arabs and Turks remember these massacres...*¹⁷

Hovhannes Abelian (b. 1903), a survivor from Kessab, has also testified: *“In 1909, when the massacres in Adana took place, Shaghban agha gathered a mob of forty thousand people and came to pillage Kessab. They reached Ordu. We started to resist. In the village of Lower Esgyuran a battle waged that lasted four to five hours. At the end, our side said: “It’s impossible to resist any further. There is no ammunition: let’s escape.”*

We went to the Kessab seashore. I was six years old.

¹⁶ Svazlian: Testimony 552, pp. 581-582.

¹⁷ Ibid: Testimony 285, pp. 468-469.

“Father, the killers are coming,” I said. And they really came. They captured my father in the bushes, pulled him out, lay him on the ground. I cried out, “Oh, dad, dad,” fell on him and started crying.

*The men stopped and said: “We also have children: if we kill you, the wild beasts will devour you. We grant your life for this child, you will find your death from someone else. Go, live.”...*¹⁸

In actual fact, that was the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, when the Young Turks, following the decisions of the secret meeting, organized in 1911, in Salonica, by the party “İttihat ve Terakki,” feverishly prepared the total extermination of the Armenian nation, waiting for a propitious occasion. That occasion presented itself when the First World War broke out. Turkey entered into the war, having expansionistic objectives and a monstrous scheme of realizing the annihilation of the Armenians.

Thus, the popular testimonies: memoirs and songs of historical character, communicated by the eyewitness survivors, saved, in this manner, from a total loss and entrusted to the coming generations, become, owing to their historical-cognitive value, authentic, objective and documental evidences, which are not only attestations of the past, but are also a warning for the future.

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Translated from the Armenian by Tigran Tsoulikian

¹⁸ Ibid: Testimony 298, p. 493.

DEMOGRAPHY AND GOVERNANCE

THE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EFFICIENCY

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The almost axiomatic truth in the economy is that the efficiency of economic activity can be assessed by comparing the results and costs involved. However, there are always problems and cost estimates for methodological issues, as costs are not homogeneous (current and long-term expenditures, livelihood and material costs), and the results are also varied (including social orientation) and are often difficult to measure.

In terms of effectiveness of the public administration efficiency, these issues are more complicated, especially because of the results of the governing bodies' activities, being rigorous and difficult to measure.

By the way, taking into account the peculiarities of the governing bodies of all levels, the Western partners consider that only the outcome-expenditure coordination is not sufficient to assess the effectiveness of governance. Both public administration and business management bodies are required to operate in the legal field (often to be involved in its creation), to sustain an organization's development strategy for current and long-term purposes, to calculate the necessary resources, to accurately assess the internal and external environment, especially scientific and technological capabilities, competitive threats, possible challenges, various risks, etc., and to ensure the implementation of the goals. The degree of scientific justification of management is assessed as qualitative effectiveness or productivity of managerial activities.¹

The necessity of assessing the effectiveness of efficiency is also evident from how the objectives of public governance efficiency assessment have been formulated in international programs.²

- a) To improve the effectiveness and productivity of public governance through rationalization of public expenditure and reduction of time, spent on administrative processes to provide better service to citizens and businesses.
- b) To implement regulatory reform through Regulatory Impact Assessment and Better Regulations.
- c) To reduce administrative burden with businesses and citizens in the workplace to improve the working and business environment.

¹ See, for example, Koontz, O'Donnell 1981: 40; Mescon, Albert, Hedouri 2000: 48-50, Daft 2006 810-812

² Evaluation of public administrations added value to the Lisbon strategy goals (UPDATE 2010).

- d) To strengthen the competitiveness, which is one of the causes of the economic crisis in Europe.
- e) To make institutional changes in the public sector reconstruction to eliminate / merger (the number of administrative units or departments targeted at finding synergies and creating a new and more efficient structure by removing the corresponding functions).
- f) To promote innovation and enable it as a key asset to increase productivity in all economic sectors.
- g) To increase transparency and accountability by opening information to citizens for public accountability and public performance to stakeholders.

The UN uses at least three types of public governance outcomes indicators:³

- Situation (impact) indicators that provide an indication of whether the developments of crucial importance to the UN are taking place (impact indicators and situational indicators are essentially the same, although the first may be more specific and the latter may be more general). The situation indicators are essentially characterized by the dynamic development of evolutionary situation. Such indicators are used to assess the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations and reflect the long-term outcome or impact. The available figures provide an enlarged picture of the state of macroeconomic development in the country. These indicators are more useful for the evaluation of the country's governance performance, showing how these or that development strategies are implemented. A concrete example of such an indicator is the Human Development Index, which is used as part of the UN Development Program Implementation Assessment.
- Outcome indicators that evaluate progress in terms of specific outcomes. These figures mainly help to implement strategies in the organization or in the macro level, with key performance outcomes, and are useful for emphasizing positive changes in development. Similar indicators in the public administration system can be used to assess the effectiveness of the legal framework, as well as the allocation of financial resources as a result of parliamentary activities.
- Output indicators that evaluate the progress of specific operational activities. These indicators help to measure and verify outputs that can be measurable and can clearly show the degree of efficiency. The evaluations obtained are useful for project managers who are responsible for the results. These indices are mostly quantitative. For example, how many public schools have been renovated, how many teachers have been trained, how many jobs have been created, and more?

Recently, UN-led research has focused on qualitative assessments. Methodological approaches to the selection of effective cohorts have been developed for this or that program. The selection and application of indicators are important and meaningful work that requires a serious research potential. The use of large numbers of

³ Ruby Sandhu-Rojon Selecting Indicators for impact evaluation, UNDP.

indicators is often ineffective. The reliability of the indicator is highly important for a reliable result. In fact, the quantitative indicators are more objective than the qualitative observations that are subjective and largely relied on inaccurate and accurate information, but their perception is gaining momentum.

For example, as the outcome or output indicators can be used either qualitative or category, as well as quantitative or numeric indicators. Qualitative indicators can indicate a bidirectional value ("yes" or "no") and to identify a particular category in several categories (A, B, C, or D). Quantitative indicators can show an absolute or relative value (eg part or%).

Evaluation of the effectiveness of governance is the basis for formulating governance strategies. If the economic efficiency assessment system is determinate and already formed as it relies on quantitative assessments, the effectiveness of public governance can not only be quantified, as social and political impulses are also crucial and the quality indicators of management efficiency are highlighted. There are many different and often contradictory approaches in the scientific literature. It is useful to study the current experience and practical approaches to formulate more acceptable approaches to the effectiveness of public administration in Armenia.

As was mentioned above, the effectiveness of governance activities can be characterized by quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitative indicators typically characterize economic impacts, and qualitative indicators are mostly in the field of social and political influences.⁴

Of course, besides quantitative indicators, social factors can also be estimated from the viewpoint of economic effects. If the objective is to evaluate the success of the governance, using performance indicators, first of all it is necessary to define the concept of "executive" of public administration, as the effectiveness assessment is essentially the performance evaluation. As Neely mentions, "performance measurement is a problem that is often discussed but rarely defined."⁵

The same author presents the definition of how to understand the effectiveness of public management and its measurement. "Measuring effectiveness can be defined as a quantitative assessment of effectiveness and quality."

The performance of systems in technical sciences is relatively distributed with performance variability (unit number of work done over time). It is difficult to formulate such a clear definition of public administration. This is largely due to the fact that the public administration system is a very complex system, the investment and outcome of which are both measurable (for example, financial nature) and not directly measurable (for example, the quality of staff work, the quality of non-commercial services, and so on). There is a principle that says that one cannot measure the intrinsic limit, and even cannot control the scarcity. So, first of all, the indicators that affect the performance make it possible to make it as accurate as possible. The assessment and evaluation of

⁴ <https://studfiles.net/preview/3847102/page:7/>.

⁵ Neely, Mills, Gregory, Platts 1995: 80-116.

the performance of public administration bodies can be answered by the extent to which the public services are offered efficiently and effectively.⁶

Performance in public administration is generally a very extensive term, especially if you consider the work of stakeholders (all individuals and institutions linked to public governance) as their interests may vary from first glance. This is especially reflected in the synergic consequences of the duality of financial relationships and the resulting public budget. Each participant of the public selection accepts different goals and actions according to his interests.

Nevertheless, if the public administration system works properly, the need to consolidate and satisfy the different interests of all stakeholders will consist of compromise solutions, or mathematically speaking, the creation of an optimal management system that also receives external signals. If we take into consideration that the benefits of public governance efficiency for certain stakeholders are defined by system inputs (i.e., investments), it is possible to define the performance of each beneficiary as a ratio of outflows or inputs or as difference between outflows and receipts.

It is widely believed that non-profit organizations that include all state-owned institutions cannot generally profit from their activities. This is wrong because the non-profit organizations are really organizations that do not generate profits for their owners, managers or beneficiaries to redistribute, but under certain circumstances they can generate profits that they need to re-invest in the same organization's development to achieve its goals.

Public organizations are currently facing the challenge of developing a clear performance measurement system that will adequately reflect the quality and effectiveness of the performance.⁷ There is no universal model of public management performance measurement and the approaches are different in different organizations.

There are also approaches to the substantial similarities between public and private systems. As noted by David Holly and Emanuel Lobina,⁸ one cannot say that there is considerable difference between the effectiveness of public and private organizations. As a result of the research, both in developed countries and in developing and transition ones, it has been revealed that the governance status of public and private sectors is not important in terms of governance, and the ineffectiveness of any organization is not entirely linked to its ownership. Analyzing privatization processes in the United Kingdom, Massimo Florio concluded that privatization processes had no visible impact on the operations of the entity's operations management, and net earnings were zero, taking into account the transfer of value to workers from their employees.⁹

⁶ Greiling 2005: 551-567.

⁷ Wright, Nemec 2003.

⁸ Hall, Lobina 2005: 3.

⁹ Florio 2004.

As was noted above, the efficiency is an indicator that is obtained through a report on the outcome or consequences. Public expenditure efficiency implies a link between the economic and social consequences of the project implementation and the efforts to finance the project.

Qualitative effectiveness is the rate that is given to the result achieved to the situation to which it is programmed to achieve.

Peter Dracer believes there is no effectiveness without qualitative effectiveness, because it is more important to reach the situation that is formulated as a goal than to do something good, which is not all.¹⁰ The relationship between productivity and qualitative effectiveness is that between the part and whole, and quality is a necessary condition for productivity.

The fact that the analysis of effectiveness and quality productivity is based on the relationships between investments (inputs), results (outputs) and product (consequences) is touched in the work of "Qualitative productivity and efficiency of public expenditure" by Ulrich Mandl Adrian Dierx and Fabien Ilzkovitz.¹¹

Effectiveness affects the actual outcome and environmental factors. Environmental factors (such as lifestyle and various socio-economic effects) have a great impact on quality.

According to M. Profiroiu, *performance* in the public domain implies relationships between goals, means and outcomes, and consequently, performance is the *result of productivity, quality effectiveness and simultaneous pursuit of appropriate budget*.¹²

Recently, innovation activities have been linked to public administration. The activities of the public administration system can also be viewed as innovative activities at different levels of governance, and innovation activities can be viewed as an assessment of governance efficiency.

One of the main guidelines for public administration is to promote economic development and, of course, is one of the most important values of public governance. In this regard, it is also possible to consider the result of public administration as well as contribute to the innovative environment. With a favorable business environment, the public administration institute can also have a great impact on the economic and innovative activities of companies. Effective and high-quality public services also act as business incentives. Some authors have assessed the impact of public services on the activation of innovation sector and tried to answer the question of public sector's innovative impact on the firm's activities. The overall analysis that the Innobarometer 2011 Company conducted in 33 European countries brings to light the importance of public sector governance activities for business.¹³ The effectiveness of public sector productivity has a positive impact on the recent developments in existing firms by 8.3%,

¹⁰ Drucker 2001.

¹¹ Mandl, Dierx, Ilzkovitz 2008: 3-4.

¹² Profiroiu, Profiroiu 2007: 44-47.

¹³ Bianca Buligescu UNU-MERIT Maastricht University Hugo Hollanders UNU-MERIT Maastricht University.

but this does not have an impact on economic indicators and sales growth. Public innovation is a factor that positively affects the economic growth and welfare of the citizens, but the assessment and measurement of these impacts are seen as a rather complex problem.¹⁴

The public administration system also has a regulatory function as it forms rules and regulations for public policy implementation. A number of studies on public administration are primarily concerned with organizational types and models, the nature of the bureaucracy and their consequences, state governance reforms, and the types of state governance systems. Quantitative assessments of the above functions are related to complexes. Economic research on public governance is focused first and foremost on the evaluation of effectiveness and qualitative effectiveness of the policy implemented or to be implemented through the use of classical assessment methods and cost-benefit models. The main difficulty in measuring public sector innovation impacts is the diversity of public sector services and policies, as well as the diversity of agencies and agencies responsible for implementing stakeholders and outcomes. The diversity of government policies and services that have different outcomes create difficulties for a single assessment¹⁵.

Innovations in public sector management can take place at different levels and with different manifestations; those are processes within public administration and public sector institutions, in policy and regulation, in public disclosure, in revenue generation (tax system, public enterprises), in public services and commodity delivery (such as education), in infrastructure and financial support (introduction of new projects, such as innovative fiscal investments), in systemic innovations¹⁶.

At present, a wide range of economic research has been undertaken in the field of public innovation evaluation that analyzes the procurement of goods, regulations, knowledge, research and experimental development, as well as innovation, employment, sales growth, export, business innovation and impact of productivity analysis.¹⁷

Economic research is supplemented by political science studies that also affect the effects of the e-government.¹⁸ The main provisions of economic studies come in particular to comparative analyzes. Implementation of public policy and state programs can lead to both positive and negative economic implications, for example, state support can promote or hamper private funding.¹⁹

¹⁴ Windrum 2008.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Andersen, Henriksen, Medaglia, Danzinger, Sannarnes and Enemærke, 2010: 549-576.

¹⁷ Aschhoff and Sofka 2009: 1235-1247; Crespi, Maffioli, Mohnen and Vásquez 2011: 1-88. Paraskevopoulou 2012: 1058-1071.

¹⁸ Andersen, Henriksen, Medaglia, Danzinger, Sannarnes and Enemærke, 2010: 549-576.

¹⁹ Crespi, Maffioli, Mohnen and Vásquez 2011: 1-88.

The Institute for Franchising Systems and Innovative Research²⁰ (2004) analyzed the regulatory impact of innovation, based on a survey of 250 European companies. The survey found that the most effective programs of public service innovation are related to health and safety.

The government is both the main provider of public services and consumer spending in areas such as defense, education, or healthcare. As consumers, governments can act as consumers of innovations that enable companies to learn and improve their products and quickly reduce costs.²¹ Public demand can also lead to private demand.

Thus, it is possible to summarize that the economic (quantitative) effectiveness of public administration in international practice is suggested to be evaluated by the total labor productivity ratio, comparing output results to access resources.²²

And the full performance or factor productivity indicator (A) is recommended to measure the following formula.²³

$$A = \frac{GDP}{PW + ME + AMR + I \cdot DF}$$

Where

GDP - the gross domestic product in the given period expressed in the form of money,

PW - the main and additional payment of workers in the public governance system,

ME – all material expenditures which took place in the process of public, governance,

AMR - Amortization of main resources, including the annual depreciation of administrative buildings, technical facilities of the governance,

I – the volume of unfinished investments necessary for the construction of buildings and technical facilities,

DF – discount factor.

The proposed version of the quantitative performance indicator is also applicable to microcirculation. In that case, the outcome may be estimated by the volume of sales (services), and the costs can be calculated for the same entities as organizations.

Qualitative effectiveness of public management can be assessed by different approaches. The literature describes assessment models based on different indicators.

²⁰ <https://www.fraunhofer.de>.

²¹ Aschhoff and Sofka 2009: 1235-1247.

²² See, for example, Mescon, Albert, Hedouri 2004: 48-50.

²³ For Justification of the measurement of full labor productivity see Suvaryan 1987: 41-60. In terms of public administration, the resolution has been amended to clarify the necessary changes (See Suvaryan 2016: 307-309).

In the article "Public sector efficiency: an international comparison",²⁴ the authors propose a measure of the overall effectiveness of public sector, which is derived from seven indicators, each of which has been developed from the combination of separate indicators.²⁵

Three indicators that describe the potential performance, four performance indicators (education, health care, public infrastructure, administration) and actions that reflect the objectives of public administration bodies (sustainability, distribution, and economic performance) were proposed.

The so-called "assessment" function developed at the level of EU member states can be considered as a practical tool. We have to disclose this function, which defines the public sector performance based on the proposed indicators. The evaluation function contains seven indicators, indicators for four capabilities, and three benchmarks. However, each indicator consists of a variable number of indicators that are equally weighted in the structure of integral indicator. The main methodology is represented by the following formula:

$$PAI^{26} = A1 * X1 + A2 * X2 + A3 * X3 + A4 * X4 + A5 * X5 + A6 * X6 + A7 * X7,$$

where

A_i = weight or significance factors,

x_i = the indicators of the public administration body's harassment are:

This assessment can be applied to comparisons of public administration bodies in different countries or regions, as well as the effectiveness of public governance dynamics based on these indicators.

Describe performance indicators.

$X1$ = Administration consisting of 4 criteria: corruption (The Corruption Perceptions Index used for the quantitative assessment of this indicator, calculated by the International Transparency Agency); red ribbon (the following indicators used for the quantitative measurement of this subcategory: Starting a Business, Ownership and Construction Permits that were built and calculated in the Doing Business Annual Report); the quality of the judicial system (the measure of efficiency of the judicial system used in the measurement of this indicator published in the annual Doing Business report); shadow economy (this subcategory shows the percentage of GDP in the shadow economy and is based on OECD reports).

$X2$ = Education, consisting of 2 indicators, involvement of secondary schools taken from UNESCO statistics and educational achievement, which was built by EU member states in 2006; PISA's Science, Mathematics and Reading Tests, based on the results obtained. The PISA test evaluates the results of the 15-year-olds in three domains.

$X3$ = healthcare, consisting of 2 indicators, child mortality and life expectancy, both counted and integrated by the World Health Organization.

²⁴ Afonso, Schuknecht, Tanzi 2003.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Public Administration Index.

X4 = Public Infrastructure, which has one subdivision for quality communications and transport infrastructure and its quantitative use, we have used the results published by the World Economic Forum.

X5 = Distribution, based on one indicator, the inequality of income distribution, the ratio of 20% of the highest income to the total income of 20% of the nation's lowest income, using the data published by Eurostat.

X6 = stability, indicator based on equal weights of the following two indicators: GDP growth and inflation.

X7 = economic performance, based on three indicators, GDP, GDP growth and unemployment for the last 10 years,

As mentioned, X1, X2, X3 and X4 are potential indicators, whereas X5, X6 and X7 represent the Musgravian Indicators.

The average EU value for public management index is 7.8628, and the maximum value is 12.2015, by any non-published Member State. The maximum value of the evaluation function was obtained in Luxembourg (9.8729), followed by Sweden and Finland with the values of 9.4834 and 9.1840 respectively, and these states are leaders in terms of public sector performance. On the opposite side were Bulgaria with 5,5382 points, Romania (5,57211) and Poland (6,3844).²⁷

Decision makers should create effective economic programs to look forward to future socio-economic changes. In addition, the public sector decision makers should find the final outcomes and measurable impacts on the public sector performance. From a different point of view, policymakers should find ways to increase public sector performance by referring to the following priorities:

1. Ensuring economic stability,
2. Improvement of public infrastructure quality;
3. Increased managerial performance through anti-corruption, reduction of state bureaucracy, raising the quality of justice and sharp reduction of shadow economy,
4. Improving the quality of education;
5. Expansion of income distribution and reducing inequalities in income between different populations.

The methodology described above is, of course, comprehensive, but it has complications of information security, besides, it is not practicable to evaluate qualitative productivity in separate units of public administration. The logic of the methodology does not fully address the important issues of performance of predetermined criteria and indicators, their justification, as well as the management quality indicators.

That is why there are other methodological principles for assessing qualitative effectiveness that will try to supplement the above gaps.

In terms of public administration, it is essential that a legislative framework has been created to ensure the effectiveness of public administration and local self-

²⁷ Afonso, Schuknecht, Tanzi 2003: 10-12.

government, the establishment and functioning of civil society institutions, and the free development of business. The answer to the questions mentioned above may be reached through the examination (comparative) expertise of the legal field and other regulatory arrangements, or, as mentioned above, by means of evaluation of binary classifier. For this purpose, a coordinated list of key indicators is proposed (Table 1).

In addition, the issue of deviations from strategic targets and current targets is highlighted. The relevance of the country's development strategy and oversight of the results, the living standards of the population and the development of social services are crucial (Table 1).

According to the above, deviations can be assessed as "ineffectiveness" of public administration. Management effectiveness can be described by means of an integral deviation index, for which the following approach is proposed: First and foremost, the relative deviation of the absolute value of the performance is calculated for each indicator²⁸.

$$K_i = \frac{|N_i - R_i|}{N_i},$$

where N_i is the target indicator, R_i is performance.

It is proposed to estimate the general relative deviation by the weighted average arithmetic mean of the absolute values of deviations by the following formula:

$$K_{com} = \frac{\sum_{i=0}^n K_i A_i}{\sum A_i}$$

where,

K_i is the deviation of i in the index,

A_i 's i indicator is significant in the public management system, which can be calculated with different approaches. The experimental method commonly used is often used in the absence of information or incompleteness of the information. The greater accuracy can be achieved by using the methods based on mathematical statistics tools techniques.

According to this approach, the cumulative correlation coefficients between the X indicators and the GDP or the individual general economic indices are calculated. The latter will evaluate the significance of the X values based on which the coefficients will be calculated. Elasticity coefficients can also be taken as the basis. The coefficients can be determined by the correlation coefficient or the ratio of elasticity coefficients.

²⁸ In the described method, the indicators of Groups 3 and 4 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Key Performance Indicators for Public Administration Quality Assessment:

| Public Administration System Components and Outcomes | Quality Assessment Indicators |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Legislative bases of public administration (with expert score) | 1.1. The relevance of the Constitution 1.2. The existence of a law on local self-governance 1.3. The independence of the judiciary |
| 2. Legislative prerequisites for the establishment of civil society institutions and their enforcement; | 2.1. Availability of the legislative field (score of expertise) 2.2. Freedom of Speech Factor: 2.3. Freedom of Press Freedom: |
| 3. Justification of Country Development Strategy and Outcome Control | 3.1. The actual and planned GDP growth rates 3.2. The relevance of the state budget revenues and expenditure inventory and program indicators |
| 4. Living standards and social services of the population | 4.1. Dividend per capita income of the population 4.2. Population employment 4.3. Poverty level: 4.4. The volume of social expenditure per capita (trade, health, education) |

So we will have a qualitative and quantitative assessment. In addition, it is necessary to adjust the allowable amount of deviations by expert assessment, for example,

$$0.03 \leq K_{com} \leq 0.1$$

By the way, the deviation beyond the range is negative because it proves the baseless forecasts, inaccurate evaluations of external and internal environment, and insufficient organizational efforts.

The methodologically described principles are applicable to evaluating the quality of public administration and management of organizations. For the micro level, there will be some adjustments in the indicators.

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POLITICAL SCIENCES AND INFORMATIONAL SECURITY

SOUTHERN CAUCASUS. THE PROJECTION OF HARMONY AND REGIONAL SECURITY

(a view on the complex security of the Southern Caucasus)

Levon Shirinyan

Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan

“... prediction of future – is a projection of present”.

Hanna Arendt

After the bipolar world disappeared, much was changed on the planet Earth in its global sense. Were changed the system of international relations, the role of superpowers in the world structure, the logics of the behavior of international organizations etc. One thing became clear: the extremely armed nuclear states, aware of the perspective of assured destruction leaned toward the search for consensus, and it is possible to suppose that such a strategy would become more flexible and concise. In this aspect the international security significantly encourages and makes us feel confident for the peace on the earth. Still in 1983 M. Mandelbaum, describing the “nuclear wall” between the super powers, wrote that the difference between the past wars and the global nuclear conflicts is the difference between the destruction and disappearance, between the end of the period and the end of the human civilization.¹

But the course of events after the Cold War showed also that the current and future confrontation between the superpowers had “entered” into the traditionally conflicting regions. On the strategic map of the world were registered “wandering” sparkles of antagonism, sometimes showing strong outbursts (Balkans, Near East, Afganistan etc.). This practice became a “special feature” of the establishment of new world order. So, while the security in the world was victorious from the international point of view, in territorial sense it became more fragile. Here the lower part of the security had descended essentially and with the effect of boomerang hit the international security.

The crux of the problem found out its special manifestation in the zone of influence of the disintegrated USSR and its former territory which mostly comprises that of the vast Russian empire. Such peculiarity was conditioned mostly by the unobjective and “strange” approach of the West; in the system of traditionally practiced values the West regards the right of self-determination of nations as a priority (thus, legitimate), which it applied to the former federal *republics* (but not to the nations), including the dwarf-like empires who created ethnocracy under the mask of “national states” (Azerbaijan, Georgia etc.), therefore fully refusing to support the indigenous peoples in their struggle for survival (Armenians of Artsakh, Lesgins, Talish, Abkhazians, Ossetians etc.), which could be regarded as a witness to the colonialism and classical imperialism like in “the

¹ Mandelbaum 1983: 3.

old good days". In this sense it should be mentioned with sorrow that Russia himself did no step forward.

The great disappointment of the mentioned and other nations in the West and its declared values was natural since the West itself was perforced to took the bait of the despised country which it used to unjustly regard as the "evil empire" for decades. From the West nothing was expected. Therefore it was not surprising that from the former empire were inherited "hot spots" which comprise vast territories. Among them (most protruding) was Aysr-Caucasus (viewed from Yerevan and Teheran), Transcaucasia (viewed from Moscow), Southern Caucasus (viewed from Paris and Beijing).

Again was established the fact that the "security of the world" is a testimony of increased confrontation between the state and its regional components. In this case was changed not only the presentation but also the format of suggested solutions, traditionally the same as in former imperial period, since the chattering of great nations in regard to self-determination continues until today and, at the same time they speak of the territorial integrity of multiethnic states headed by titular nations, and thereby opening doors for the intervention of internal forces of such states in the settlement of conflicts.

However, the true security of the world oversaturated with the weapons of mass destruction and ethnic antagonism demands other solutions – the harmonious synthesis of national interests of peoples (countries), which in our case means denial of *imperiomania*. And sometimes also the adjustment of historical injustice which secures from the repetition of similar injustice in the future.

As a mini model could be taken Aysr-Caucasus (in Armenian, henceforth Southern Caucasus) which is generally accepted as an integrated whole with the Northern Caucasus.² This stereotype being one-sided, does not reflect the deepness of strategic realities since this region comprises a single unit including several components – Northern and Southern Caucasus inhabited by Kurdish (Turkish) ethnic elements, Central Armenia on the territory of modern Turkey, and Northern Iran (Iranian Azerbaijan). Here the Southern Caucasus has a *linking-separating* functions. Hence, a true diagnostics of the situation in the Southern Caucasus is necessary, and in order to secure the long-lasting stability here the *synthesis* of interests of countries and peoples included in this structure is expected to be done, the development of the existing culture (elements of civilization), by which the stability of the Northern Caucasus (the Russian Khazar triangle), as well as the neighboring territories of Iran and Turkey depends.

So, for the stability and security of the Southern Caucasus is necessary:

a) To recognize the "geopolitical fact" of the region, that is the independence of "self-declared" states which were splitted from the dwarf empires and which are endowed with all features of independent state.

Thus, in the petition of the People's Assembly of Abkhazia addressed to Russia (October 18, 2006), regarding the decision to recognize the independence is said: "Abkhazia possesses with all necessary and integral attributes of independent state

² See, for example, Gajiev 2001: 292.

accepted by international community. Its establishment and functioning corresponds to all provisions of democratic, legal and social state on the basis of separation of representative democracy and power". If in the quoted passage the unbiased expert changes "Abkhazia" into "Southern Ossetia", "Artsakh – Mountainous Karabagh", then the same text would more convincingly express political realities in the "self-proclaimed" young state formations than in the dwarf empires. Facts are evident!... In this situation it is not even important (from the point of view of the state formation) what kind of decisive role had fall on the Russian "humanitarian intervention" in order to save Ossetian people from the "humanitarian catastrophe" organized by Georgia and, as an immediate result – the recognition of Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia by Russian federation.

b) Comprehension of historical aspect of instability of multiethnic Southern Caucasus. Arkadiy Volskij, one of the "viceroys" of Transcaucasia correctly states that after the disintegration of the USSR the geopolitical realities in Transcaucasia "basically remained the same as in the XIX century".³ But be Volskij more consistent, he could admit that at the time of the disintegration of the USSR the region was already a tangled mess of "frozen" antagonism which essentially originated as a result of mutual agreement of *self-proclaimed Kemalist and Bolshevik governments* and their wide cooperation.

As a prototype of the "Ribbentrop-Molotov pact" this unprecedented deal was carried out through the "businesslike" letter of Mustafa Kemal addressed to Vladimir Lenin (April 26 1920) in regard to the treaty of Alexandropol in the frames of the preliminary agreement of Karabekir with the Bolsheviks.⁴ This personage who was regarded as a "Europeanized" one in the Young Turkish circles, wrote in particular: "If the Soviet forces are determined to begin military operations against Georgia, or by means of diplomatic measures, due to their influence to compel Georgia to enter the Union and expel Englishmen from the Caucasus, then the Turkish government shall undertake military actions against imperialistic Armenia and is obliged to force the Republic of Azerbaijan to enter into the Union of Soviet republics".⁵ The development of these events were finalized by the Russian-Turkish treaty of "Friendship and brotherhood" in March 16, 1921, which took its strategic and final form at the end of 1921 and remained unchanged until the disintegration of the USSR.⁶

After the genocide of April 24, 1915, the deal was done with regard to the amputation of Eastern Armenia and at the expense of territories and culture of other indigenous peoples of Southern Caucasus, sell-off the shrines of their civilizations in favor of Azeri-Turks (Turks-Tatars) and Georgians.

The disintegration of the USSR, naturally, according to Andrey Sakharov, played a role of detonator for the liberatory movement of peoples being under the heels of "small

³ Volskij 1992.

⁴ Mango 1999: 357.

⁵ Archive of the Foreign policy of the USSR, f.132 – section of Turkey, f.3, inv.2, file.1, pp. 11; see also Mango 1999: 278.

⁶ Feygin 1998: 134-155.

empires" (Armenians of Artsakh, Lesgins, Talish, Abkhazians). Exercising their natural right on self-determination and strictly adhering to the corresponding legislature of the USSR, also following the experience of the former Soviet republics, as well as invigorated by the values of western democracy, these peoples declared their independence on their own territory (mostly truncated during the Soviet period). It is essential that they defended their sacred rights through armed struggle against colonizers. But, to their surprise, they lacked sympathy both from "older" and "young" democracies, thus deprived of any assist.

c) To rethink and evaluate cultural-civilizational uniqueness of the region and secure its safe development on equal conditions. In such circumstances it is necessary to take into account the ethnic identity of these nations – Armenians of Artsakh, Abkhazians, Ossetians, and the originality of the culture of "self-proclaimed" but only partially recognized or completely unrecognized states, historical traditions of the national-liberatory struggle and statehood, existing and former superiority in relation to their colonizers, their will expressed during the liberatory struggle and high national self-consciousness, etc.

In the context of the abovementioned two circumstances should be in place.

a) The apparent ethnocultural, ethnopsychological incompatibility of "unrecognized", "partially recognized", "self-proclaimed" states with the titular nations of dwarf empires. The Altaic people – the *shia*-Muslim Turkish newcomers who until today are trying to determine their ethnogenesis, and indigenous Indo-European Christian Armenians and Armenians of Artsakh as well, the followers of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox church, Orthodox Caucasian Georgians who are close to the Northern Caucasian Adyghe linguistic group, Abkhazians with the developed ethnic psychology and ethnic culture but who possess with different political culture, Ossetians of Indo-European origins (the descendants the well-known Alans) as well.

b) The experience of centuries-old struggle, particularly during the first decades of the Soviet period, for their identity and independence.

In March 31, 1921 was proclaimed the *independent* Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia, which had kept its status until December 1930 when the Abkhazian SSR was incorporated into the Georgian SSR on the *contractual* basis. From that time until 1950s took place Kartvelization of Abkhazia and its indigenous population. But the pressure of historical circumstances could not reconcile Abkhazian people with its colonial status. Aware of the danger to be permanently expelled from the homeland (according to experts, the total number of Abkhazians had decreased to about 17% of the former population), Abkhazian intellectuals and the communist party elite applied to the central government in Moscow pleading to secede Abkhazia from Georgia and attach it to Russia (in 1931, 1957, 1965, 1978 and 1989). In order to reach full independence from Georgia during "perestroyka" and "glasnost" they had tried to restore the status which existed

before 1931 – contractual relations with Georgia. These attempts had culminated in the war initiated by Georgian nationalists, the results of which are well-known.⁷

The Georgian-Ossetian confrontation goes back to 1917-1921 when the Menshevik government of the Georgian People's Republic made an attempt to oppress the rebellious Ossetians. This event was preserved in the historical memory of Ossetians as a failed attempt of genocide. The resistance of south Ossetians against Georgia continued until 1921, and in April 1922 Southern Ossetia was included into Soviet Georgia as Southern-Ossetian autonomous region. Ossetians were also inspired by the reforms of M.Gorbachev and in November 10, 1989, they made an attempt to create autonomous republic within Georgia but were refused. The Georgian parliament canceled the autonomous region of Southern Ossetia in December 11, 1990. With this act the titular nation of Georgia demonstrated that it had made use of the "Perestroika" but is eager to deprive of the same its centuries-old neighbor. In the Southern Ossetian policy Georgia recalled the policy of the Menshevik Georgia and declared Dvaletia in Shida-Kartli, restoring the territory of Samachablo.⁸

The Georgian "Blitzkrieg" of August 8, 2008 seriously endangered the very existence of Ossetians in Southern Ossetia. The Russian "humanitarian invasion" and the recognition of the independence of Southern Ossetia demonstrated the extreme danger connected with the ambitions of empires, even dwarf ones.

The so-called "disputed question" of Artsakh originated at the beginning of 1918, hand in hand with the Ottoman-Turkish desire to create an "*Eastern-Caucasian Turkish*" state of "Caucasian Tatars", "Azeri-Turks", "Transcaucasian Turks" in Azerbaijan, and was exacerbated after the Treaty of Batumi (June 4, 1918) when Artsakh along with the Armenians of Baku suffered heavy blow in the course of the Ottoman army proceeding towards the oil deposits.⁹

However, the durative struggle of Artsakh, the eagle's nest of Armenian revolution, the birthplace of prominent Soviet marshals, generals, and statesmen culminated in the results which we have today.

Due to intolerance, imperialistic chauvinism of the "elite" of dwarf empires which declared themselves as fanatical adepts of European values, along with their imperial ambitions, today the region is divided and disintegrated and had turned into the source of instability, the poisonous bows of which are oriented towards all directions.

If the targets formulated during the existence of the USSR would survive intact and the "self-proclaimed" states thus are going to return to their former owners (colonizers) then:

⁷ Zverev 1996: 41-43.

⁸ Kabisov 1997: 156.

⁹ Like in the independent Republic of Armenia, during the Soviet period much was written about the struggle of Armenians of Karabagh, and it is familiar to scholars. It is also known about the oil factor and ominous role of Bolsheviks, the gravediggers of Russian empire regarding the problem of Artsakh; among the numerous studies dealing with this question we shall highlight the article written by A.Zverev (1996: 10-14). See also Shirinyan 2010.

1. Dwarf empires should try to carry out ethnic cleansing and destroy all traces of the independence of liberated nations which ultimately should lead to genocide or "humanitarian catastrophe", which could be prevented only through "humanitarian invasion" (like the Georgian Blitzkrieg and Russian countermeasures in 2008).

2. This should lead to the increasing of the role of Turkey in Southern Caucasus and final ousting of Russia from the region; the western policy might suffer a devastating and irreversible blow on the European south-east. Another comeback of Russia, even at the expense of peoples relying on him (mostly Armenians, like in 1920-1921) is excluded. The Turkish practice of demographic explosion, assimilation and genocide should fix unprecedented success.

Therefore, it is necessary to:

1. Come to terms and recognize the current but natural geopolitical realities in the Southern Caucasus.

2. Recognize the independence of "self-proclaimed", "unrecognized", "partly recognized", but de-facto existing states – Artsakh, Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia; and envisage the same status for Adjara.

3. Restore the status of the independent protectorate of Nakhijevan – the ancient Armenian county of the Russian empire during the first years of the Soviet period was transformed into pan-Turanian bridge which connects the Ottoman and Azerbaijani Turks, claims upon which first appeared at the Batumi conference of May 20, 1918, when Usubbekov, the member of the Muslim National Council demanded to hand over Nakhijevan to Azerbaijan in order to "establish direct eternal contacts with Turkey".¹⁰ After that, with the consistency which is typical for Turkish military-political traditions (the Alexandropol treaty of December 3, 1920, Article 2, Moscow treaty of March 16, 1921, Article 3, Treaty of Kars of October 13, 1921, Article 5), the region of Nakhijevan, a part of the Republic of Armenia was seceded and put under the Azerbaijani protectorate, due to the active assistance of Bolsheviks. [See Moscow treaty of March 16, 1921, Article 3: – "Both contracting parties agree that the region of Nakhijevan ... become an autonomous territory under the protectorate of Azerbaijan, provided that Azerbaijan should not cede this protectorate to any third country". Treaty of Kars of October 13, 1921, Article 5: – "The government of Turkey and the governments of Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan agree that ... the region of Nakhijevan should become an autonomous region under the protectorate of Azerbaijan"]. But Soviet Russia canceled the Article 3 of the Dro-Legrán treaty of December 2, 1920 (Yerevan agreement), also dealing with Nakhijevan. During the Soviet period the *protectorate* already cleansed from the indigenous population became an integral *part* of Azerbaijan, thus the imperative demand of the Moscow and Kars treaties were violated.

Azerbaijan, representing itself as a unitary state, regards that the protectorate handed to him is a final decision. Azerbaijan should be compelled to perform the requirements of international law.

¹⁰ Avetisyan 1994: 116.

1. In order to prevent the expulsion of indigenous peoples of dwarf empires living in their national habitat – Armenians, Lesgins, Talish and others, or their cultural assimilation, and for the preservation of cultural diversity in the region it is necessary to grant them *cultural autonomy*. Here it would be in place to recall the suggestion of Austrian Marxist Otto Bauer, namely the principle of “exterritorial development”: should be installed such structures “which could secure autonomy for different cultures without new territorial borders”¹¹. [By the way, the idea of cultural autonomy once was popular among Georgian intellectuals, particularly the Mensheviks].

2. The fair solution to the problem could be opened through the installation of consociative model of democratism which should combat the final entrenchment of ethnocracies in the dwarf empires hidden under the curtain of democracy. Such tactics can pave the way to security, stability, true integration and economic prosperity in Southern Caucasus.

Thus, the “*united states in the Southern Caucasus*” could become reproduction of the “*united states of Europe*”, “*South-Caucasian union*” – a replica to the “*European union*”. In order to implement this idea the harmony of political interests is needed.

In this conditions in the dustbin of history should be thrown dwarf empires created by Soviet period and the military-political tradition of Turkification as well.

After all, today nobody thinks of expulsion or assimilation of the “small” principalities of Lichtenstein, Monaco, or San-Marino.

It is highly probable that Southern Caucasus is able to adopt the principles of European structure and European values. Russia, in its turn, could possess with cemented zone of security, pulsation of peace on its southern gateways.

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Translated from the Armenian by Aram Kosyan

FOREIGN SOURCES AND AUTHORS ABOUT ARMENIA AND ARMENIANS

ARMENIANS, KOORDS, AND TURKS

James Creagh

**Late Captain of 1st Royals,
Author of “Over the Borders of Christendom and Eslamiah”, etc.**

**A man is killed in Paris it is a murder. The throats of fifty thousand people are cut
in the East, and it is a question.” – Victor Hugo**

**In two Volumes.
Vol. I.
London: Samuel Tinsley & Co., 1880.**

INTRODUCTION.

Having frequently visited Asia Minor, and having resided in Armenia for nearly a year, the condition of their inhabitants is to my mind a subject of the most interesting contemplation.

In this opinion I have considered that it was worth while publishing the following volumes, as perhaps they may assist in throwing some light on a question each day attracting more and more attention; and in the future likely to become a problem of vital importance.

Anyone is capable of forming notions about subjects the discussion of which he is constantly listening to; and as I have eyes and ears and no prejudices; and as -resulting from a residence among them of many years - I have some knowledge of Orientals: of their religions: of their prejudices; and of their peculiar modes of thought so different from ours: I am induced to offer these pages to the public.

The Armenians are a high-bred race of the purest Caucasian type; and as blood always tells in men as well as in animals, they still survive, and not only survive, but display symptoms of a steadily-increasing vitality, which is altogether marvelous when we consider the frightful vicissitudes through which they have passed; the long-continued oppression under which they have groaned for centuries; and the cruel persecutions by which they have been driven to the most distant parts of the earth.

The fables of remote antiquity, as well as both ancient and modern history, point to Armenia as the battlefield of the world. Never has a country been more often or more completely devastated; and the names of all the great conquerors or scourges of mankind are associated with it.

Most of the mongrel tribes - who, at different periods, annihilated ancient forms of government and civilisation in these fertile provinces have merged with other races,

become improved, or been lost; but the melancholy and hook-nosed Armenian is unaltered and uncontaminated.

The fine breed - like that of the patient and intellectual Jew - is, perhaps by the direct interposition of an all-seeing Providence, miraculously preserved; and this ancient and classical people, inhabiting a beloved fatherland, toward which the eyes of their countrymen from every part of the world are turned with a hopefulness, generosity, and sympathy equally sublime and touching, at length believe that a crisis in their misfortunes has arrived.

Although much has been written about the Armenians, till quite recently at least they were altogether unknown to the great majority of Englishmen. For that reason, and in the hope that my labours may not be found altogether uninteresting, I have been induced to attempt an historical sketch of those people.

Some knowledge of their antiquity, well as of their connection with the Romans and other conquering races, will add, I believe, to the interest at present growing up with regard to their actual condition; and in this opinion I have consulted all the works treating of Armenia (whether by native authors or not) on which I could lay hands.

Sometimes in support of an opinion, and sometimes with a view to give a clear idea to the reader, I have made quotations from books not always very easily procurable.

The rapidly-declining power of the Ottoman Turks is at the present hour causing alarm and uneasiness on the one hand, and encouraging ambition and fostering intrigues on the other. Both Turkey and Persia are doomed to fall; and neither of them, except as vassal or protected states, can last much longer.

Only three hundred years ago, the Ottoman Turks appeared on the point of becoming altogether irresistible; for Europe at that period was not in a condition to 'have defended itself against such a naval and military power as would most probably have been possessed by the Ottomans, had the adventurous and extensive plans of Soliman the Magnificent been carried into execution.

Few people have either time or inclination to read through Von Hammer's seventeen volumes of the "History of the Ottoman Turks." Their career, however, is closely bound up with the Armenian question; and as to understand the one, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the other - I have briefly traced the policy of the Ottoman Turks from the time of their first appearance when they seem to have closely resembled a horde of Koords at the present day, till their mature growth into a great military power, so sagaciously founded as in a comparatively short time to grind all its subjects under one of the most fanatical and illiberal despotisms that was ever invented.

Their military institutions were so perfect, and contrast so favourably with the tactics and discipline of European armies, that this undoubted superiority was acknowledged and lamented by every military writer of that period acquainted with Turkish troops.

All the maxims of Turkish policy inculcated a blind and implicit obedience to authority; and as everything bowed before it, individuality was completely crushed out of the nation. The effects of this cruel discipline formed the national character, which even now presents the good as well as the evil qualities of such severity.

It makes the Turks, when properly dealt with and fairly treated, the finest soldiers in the world. Docile, good-tempered, sober, and heroic, there are no officers who have commanded them who do not love them.

General Jomini, in his "Art of War," recommends the commander to use as much as he can the religious enthusiasm of his men. The Turkish Government know as well as General Jomini that it is a powerful agent, and they accordingly seldom fail to work upon it. When his fanaticism is raised, the Turk is as barbarous as his ancestors under Timour the Tartar; and there is no atrocity, of which he is not capable.

He freely massacres the wounded. Even the death of the misbeliever does not satisfy him; and he loves to hack up his corpse or to chop the head off. On the other hand, when held in proper control, the Turk in the hour of victory can be as quiet as an Irishman after a faction fight.

If in the army everything depends upon the disposition of its commanders, the temper and strength of the Turkish Government entirely influences the conduct of its Mahommedan subjects, whose fanaticism can be either allayed, or, if necessary, worked into blind and ferocious enthusiasm.

If the Turk is intolerant and fanatical, he is certainly not more so than his Christian neighbours; and both one and the other have been equally unrelenting and cruel.

In the following volumes I have not thought it misplaced to give a sketch of the history of the Crusaders, their folly, bigotry, and deceit. The ignorant and unthinking masses were worked into religious fury; but diplomacy, while encouraging this fanaticism, equally ridiculous and criminal, cared not so much about the Holy Sepulchre as about territorial aggrandisement.

Are there still among us men as fanatical as the Crusaders? If purely philanthropical sentiments animated the wrath with which so many right-reverend and wrong-reverend gentlemen railed against the Turks, where, oh! where was their humanity when the unhappy Mussulmans were being slaughtered without mercy, and their women outraged, under the supervision of reverend gentlemen of the Bulgarian nationality?

Since the time of the Crusaders down to the present hour, the Turks have every reason to hate the Christians, who, whether by force or intrigue, have always tried to injure them. In the middle ages, the Christians have been better treated by the Turks than ever the latter were by the former when they were strong enough to ill-use them; and the Mussulman religion, in practice, has often been more tolerant than ours.

The animosities of centuries cannot be cooled in a day; but the Turks, and it is quite natural that they should do so, both detest and fear their Christian neighbours. All Christian interference in their affairs, no matter how well-intentioned, is hated and suspected.

The Turks loathe the Christians by tradition, and, so to say, by nature; but they are well aware that these hostile sentiments are returned; and that the pretended protection of Christians is the cause of all Russian interference in the affairs of their country.

To soften, or at least to take the sting out of this rancour, would be the solution of the Eastern Question; for such a settlement of the difficulty would put a stop to Russian intrigues.

The Turkish Government being weak and corrupt, contains all the necessary ingredients for its final and irretrievable ruin. It fears the Christians; and consequently its maxim has ever been, for the sake of its own preservation, to keep them down.

Nothing, except actual compulsion, will ever force the Turks to change this illiberal policy; and whenever they appear to make alterations in it, by such reforms as have been promised at the time of Baker Pasha's recent appointment for instance, we may be quite sure that they have no meaning, and that if any ameliorations are made in the condition of the Armenians, that they will only be carried out in a half-hearted manner, almost tantamount to leaving things as they are.

Whether the new states on the Lower Danube can stand alone or not is very doubtful; but as they have been finally cut loose from both Turkish rule and Russian intrigue, they must, if incapable of governing themselves, fall into the grasp of Austria.

The creation of Armenia into an independent kingdom is an Eutopia which even the Armenians themselves would not be foolish enough to propose.

The Armenian Question must nevertheless be considered; and that important problem consists in whether the Turks are to be forced by England - for unless forced by England they will never do it - to place their Armenian and Mussulman subjects on a footing of perfect equality, or whether the territories inhabited by those people are to fall into the hands of Russia.

Before long the question must be solved in one way or the other.

It is a question, notwithstanding the apathy with which it is generally regarded, of great importance to England; for these countries lie on the road to India, and if allowed to fall under the rule of Russia, will exercise a powerful influence on the inevitable collision sooner or later to take place between the Cossack and the Sepoy.

Having travelled in Bulgaria, as well as in Armenia, I am of opinion that no comparison can be made between the inhabitants of those countries. The Bulgarians, a stupid and heavy race, *had nothing much* to complain of; while on the contrary, the devastation of the plains of Alishkird, mentioned in the following volumes, is no more than an episode in Armenian life.

Although far removed from the seat of war, similar horrors were being enacted both at Moush and at Van, as well as in other parts of Armenia, at the same time.

The reports of missionaries; of consuls; as well as those of travellers who have passed any time in the country; all show even up to the most recent reports sent home to us from those provinces, that the condition of the Armenians is absolutely intolerable;

and that all progress, well-being, or security is perfectly out of the question, until a check is put upon the license, rapacity, and violence of the lawless and brutal Koords.

In Armenia there is neither security for life nor property. Whole districts of excellent land lie completely uncultivated; and so great is the tyranny exercised upon the inhabitant, that they long for any kind of government under which they may hope for security and peace.

Who is to bring them these blessings? It is a question which must be answered.

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB,
February, 1880.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT ARMENIA.

Purity and Antiquity of the Armenian Race.- The Ancient Language.- Its Difference from the Modern Tongue.- Armenian Mythology.-Literature.-Ancient Worship.- Its Extent in Ancient Times.- Armenian Kings.- Pompey.-Mark Antony.- Armenia the Battlefield of the World.- Moses of Khorene.- Greek and Syrian Histories.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT ARMENIA.

The Armenians pretend to be the oldest type of the human species; and their large eyes and mouths, long noses and dark olive complexions - peculiarities which, like the Jews, they have retained with stubborn constancy, and in spite of the terrible vicissitudes, dispersions, or persecutions they have undergone - stamp them as a distinct and high-bred race.

Their country was once powerful and glorious. Solitary ruins, silent and deserted, speak of past greatness; and the wonderful remains of the dead city of Ani, in the plain of Kars, is an imperishable monument of the wealth, address, and enterprise of fallen grandeur, as well as of the instability of human institutions.

They have two languages: the ancient and modern Armenian tongues, which differ so completely that, a person well versed in the one would be entirely ignorant of the other; and perhaps it may be taken as some proof of the great antiquity of the race that the language of no other people in the world - not even that of the Greeks - is equally dissimilar from that of their ancestors.

The ancient Armenian is richer than the Greek of the same period; and it is so pliable and applicable to every kind of translation, that if, for instance, the "Anabasis" of Xenophon was lost, it might be almost exactly restored again to the Greek from the Armenian rendering.

Armenia is connected with the primeval history of man, and the legends of mythology, as well as the Bible, declare it to be the spot from which the great modern nations originally wandered. Like all ancient histories, those of the Armenians are hardly worthy of serious attention. They declare that the present inhabitants of the country are descended from a certain Haik, who was a grandson of Japhet, the son of Noah, and that for that reason the country was called the land of Haik. The modern name of Armenia was given to it by foreigners, from that of a certain King Aram, who was of course, according to these fairy tales, the terror of the world.

No people in the East have given so much attention to history as the Armenians; and although on the introduction into the country of Christianity all Armenian books were burned, the monastery of Echmiadzin was found to contain a series of documents dating from the very earliest times. Here had been buried for centuries upwards of fifty chronicles and histories; and although the greater part of them have never been translated, the labours of Messrs. Langlois and St. Martin give very succinct accounts of the Persian and Mogul invasions, and throw a new light on the state of the East during the middle ages.

Mar Apas Catina, a Syrian by birth, was, under instructions received from the Armenian kings, sent to Nineveh, in order to search for records of the Armenian race. So successful were his endeavours that he at last found a very ancient work bearing the inscription: "This book was, by order of Alexander the Macedonian, translated from Chaldean into Greek, and contains the history of the first ancestors." From this celebrated manuscript, Mar Apas Catina only extracted the records of Armenia; but, says he, "the history of our satraps is prolonged in the book as far back as Sardanapalus of the Chaldeans, and even longer".

As this historian mentions the tyranny exercised by the Couchans in Armenia, it shows the great age of the composition from which he gleaned the sources of his information, because, according to the Biblical account, as well as according to the statements of the most ancient Parsee writings, there existed on the 'banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, and in a prehistoric time, a non-Semitic people called Coushans or Coushites.

Mar Apas Catina gives a very circumstantial account of the building of the remarkable town of Van, as well as of those marvellous works in its neighbourhood, which, although carried out by the orders of Semiramis, are still, in their ruined condition, an object of wonder and curiosity to the modern traveller. The celebrated Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned, and the account given of the fate of the sons of Senacherib corroborates not only the Bible, but also the fragments of Berosus as they have been preserved in Eusebius.

Previous to the introduction of Christianity the Armenians adored - in common with the Medes and the Persians - some of those vile gods so often alluded to in the books of the Old Testament. Every abomination that the depraved appetites and enervated passions of the priesthood could suggest was practised at these shrines, and even the blushing virgin, terrified at her imaginary sins, sacrificed her virtue for the propitiation of these beastly divinities.

With his usual anxiety to doubt everything which appears contrary to our ideas of the laws of nature, Voltaire refuses to credit the possibility of the existence of such turpitudes, and in that lively vein of humour with which he knew so well how to throw ridicule on still graver subjects, wittily declares that the *valet de place* of Herodotus brought him round disorderly houses, and assured him that their occupants had come from the most distant parts of the empire, to be initiated in the mysteries of the goddess

Tanais, Anaitis, or Melita, as she was called at Babylon.

In ancient times Armenia was washed by the waters of the Mediterranean, of the Caspian, and of the Black Seas; but the last really independent king of that extensive and powerful country having formed an alliance with Darius against Alexander the Great, perished upwards of three hundred years before Christ, fighting against that conqueror.

Armenia was reduced to servitude. At Alexander's death the Armenians aimed at regaining their independence; but the Seleucidae obliged them to accept governors appointed by the Greeks. During the reign of Antiochus the Great, whose kingdom extended to the Hindoo Koosh, two men, whom he had appointed governors of Armenia, proclaimed themselves kings of the provinces to which they had been sent as satraps. The success of their rebellion was so unexpected, that these vassals were encouraged to extend their conquests, and invading with a large army the countries of the Medes, of the Iberians, and of the Chalybians, they added so many new provinces to their dominions that Justin considers Armenia, as it existed during his time, second only to Parthia in wealth, power, and extent.

These successful rebels divided their conquests into two kingdoms, called, respectively, Armenia the Greater and the Minor.

The endeavour of Antiochus to recover his lost provinces ended in so complete a failure, that he was compelled to make peace with his revolted subjects, who, to secure themselves and their posterity in the provinces they had won, entered into an alliance with the Romans.

Previous to the reign of Tigranes the Great, there is a chasm of about seventy years in the history of Armenia. Tigranes, however, about one hundred years before Christ, was induced to enter into an alliance with Mithridates Eupator against the Romans, whose power gave great jealousy to all the Asiatic princes.

In the meantime the Syrians, tired of the eternal intestine quarrels of the Seleucidae, induced Tigranes to take possession of that country, to drive out Antiochus Pius, and thus to extend his dominion from the Euphrates to the sea. For eighteen years Tigranes governed Syria, till it was reduced to a Roman province by the arms of Pompey. The former reduced Armenia Minor, led his victorious army against the Asiatic Greeks, and compelled all the neighbouring provinces and tribes to acknowledge him as their sovereign.

Assuming the title of King of Kings, he believed himself invincible; employed crowned heads to wait upon him as menial servants; and never rode out unless accompanied by four kings running after him in the garb of footmen.

With only two legions and three thousand horse, Lucullus, having previously boasted at Ephesus of the victory which he was about to gain, 'marched boldly into Armenia. "If these men," said Tigranes, on first seeing the Romans, "come as ambassadors, their number is sufficient; but if they come as enemies, they make but a very indifferent appearance." This day was marked in the calendar as unlucky, "it is

therefore," remarked Lucullus, "more incumbent upon us to behave ourselves with more gallantry, that so dismal a day may henceforth become a day of joy and mirth for the people of Rome."

The superiority of the European over the Asiatic was never so wonderfully displayed as on this occasion. The army of Tigranes was utterly routed, a hundred thousand of the infantry were slaughtered, none of the cavalry escaped, and the Romans lamented only five men killed and a hundred wounded.

"Instead of standing to receive the Romans," says Plutarch, "they set up a cry of fear and most despicably fled without striking a blow." Antiochus the philosopher declares, that the sun never saw such a battle; Livy, that with such inferior numbers the Romans never engaged such a multitude; and Strabo, that the Romans laughed at the notion of using weapons against such vile slaves.

It was in vain that Tigranes endeavoured to incite the Parthians and neighbouring princes against Lucullus. "The Romans," says he, (according to the fragment of the Fourth Book of Sallust's History)," are at war with all mankind. They pillage kingdoms, sell their inhabitants for slaves, plunder the temples of the gods, acknowledging no other law than their own arbitrary will and pleasure." A mutiny among the soldiers of Lucullus caused the latter to be succeeded in his command by Pompey, to whom Tigranes surrendered himself as a prisoner, but was allowed to retain his kingdom as a tributary of Rome.

Mark Antony plundered Armenia about forty years before Christ, and returning to Alexandria laden; with booty, placed the son whom he had by Cleopatra on its throne. During the reign of Nero the Romans were shamefully driven out of Armenia by Vologeses, the King of Parthia, but the former drawing together all their forces, reduced the whole country to subjection. Tiradates was crowned King of Armenia at Rome, where, falling at the feet of Nero, the latter placed the crown upon his head. He was succeeded by several kings, who held their authority as mere vassals of the Roman Empire, till Trajan, adding Mesopotamia to his dominions, reduced the ancient state to the condition of a mere province.

Armenia has ever been the battlefield on which the greatest conquerors of antiquity struggled for the sovereignty of the world. Bel, Nimrod, Semiramis, and Sesostris forced their way through it. The Assyrians and the Medes, the Medes and the Persians, Darius, Xerxes, and Alexander the Great, as well as the Romans and the Parthians, fought in Armenia for the dominion of Asia.

The fall of Mithridates the Great removed the barrier against Rome, but as Armenia lay on the direct road to Parthia, it was devastated and laid waste by cruel and bloody wars. When the Roman army occupied the kingdom of Bosphorus, it was brought so close to the Persians that Armenia suffered from the almost continual wars waged between those rival powers, and the whole country was plundered alternately by the soldiers of Theodosius or of the Shah Shapar.

Its ephemeral independence trembled under the authority of Byzantium or of Iran;

and although it was ruled by kings, or satraps, or governors of Armenian birth, they existed only as the slaves of foreign masters. The long-continued state of anarchy under which they lived had a marked effect on the character of the people; and twelve hundred years ago the Armenians are thus described by their own great historian, Moses of Khorene: "Doctors, ignorant and pretentious; monks, hypocritical and vain; ecclesiastics, full of presumption, enemies of science, and performers of buffooneries; people, insolent and idle; soldiers, brutal and boasters; princes, associates of thieves; judges, false and anxious for presents; all sentiment of shame or charity disappeared."

Although many historians of the earliest Armenian periods were either Greeks or Syrians whose works have been preserved in Armenian translations, Moses of Khorene was an Armenian by birth, and his history is of the deepest interest, not only on account of his picture of the state of society in which he lived, but also on account of his quotations from Berosus, Abydenus, Manethon, Cephalion, and several other ancient writers whose works perished in the Alexandrian Library.

CHAPTER II

THE VICISSITUDES OF ARMENIA.

Armenians the First Christiana among the Gentilea.- Theology.-The Kalifs.- The Roupenian Dynasty in Annenia.- The Crusaders.- Visit of Leon, the Last King of Armenia, to London.- Timour the Tartar in Armenia.- His Cruelties.- The Armenian Historian Thomas of Medzoph.- His Pathetic Account of what he saw.- The Armenian Historian Chamchian.- His Love of Russia.

CHAPTER II.

THE VICISSITUDES OF ARMENIA.

The Armenians are celebrated in ecclesiastical history as the first people, outside the limits of the Roman Empire, who embraced Christianity. In the year 302, King Tiradates was baptised by St. Gregory the illuminator, and this circumstance being in the eyes of his subjects incontrovertible proof of the truth and sanctity of the new doctrine, they all became Christians in a mass.

To this day they are the pure disciples of Eutyches, and still believe that the body of Christ existed of a divine and incorruptible substance. Centuries of cruelty, of oppression, and of the most odious tyranny, have failed to shake the faith of the poor Armenians; and, although their country has been depopulated by the most ruthless massacres of which history makes mention, and although by the infamous policy of their conquerors they have been driven like hunted animals to seek refuge in the most distant parts of the earth, they have always "preferred the crown of martyrdom to the white turban of Mahommed."

The rise of the religion of Mahommed caused Armenia to cling for safety to the Greek Emperor Heraclius, who gave her native-born governors called Curopalates; but the Kalifs or successors of the Prophet, by the force of their irresistible arms, brought the whole country under the dominion of Mussulman rulers called Osdigans. Till the middle of the ninth century the country was a prey to constant revolutions caused by the fanaticism of the Mussulmans, as well as, it is said, by the pride of the ancient Armenian nobility.

The Kalif acknowledged Ashod, an Armenian, together with his successors, as governors of the country; yet, although this dynasty arrogated to itself the pompous title of King of Kings, and attempted to resist the growing power of the Seljukian Turks, they were trampled beneath the hoofs of the invading hordes.

The extirpation, in the thirteenth century, of the Seljukian Turks by the Moguls of Genghis Khan was followed by the complete servitude of the Armenians; for although

within the ancient limits of the kingdom of Haïstan, or Armenia, a remnant of that nation still formed a kind of independent kingdom, sheltered among the valleys and fastnesses of Mount Taurus, the vast majority of the race groaned in Persian or Tartar slavery.

The contemptible dynasty of the Roupenians lasted for about three centuries; and King Leo, who established very friendly relations with the Lusignans, was styled royal by the crusaders. As he adopted the Catholic religion, he separated, himself by an impassable barrier from his orthodox countrymen; but the titles of barons affected by his nobility, as well as the number of French words used in the Armenian manuscript of his contemporary historian Sempad, are proofs of his close connection with Europeans.

The Roupenian Armenians fought bravely and successfully against both the Greeks and the Turks; but, notwithstanding their alliance with the Moguls, they were totally extirpated by the Egyptian Mamelukes.

Leon VI., the last King of Armenia, was redeemed from his captivity in Egypt by John of Castille; and after wandering about Europe as a mendicant, and even visiting London in the reign of Richard II., died in Paris during the year 1391. The name of Armenia was thus blotted out of history. For five hundred years the annals of a people broken under the Persian yoke or the Turkish sabre contain no memorable events; for "the history of Christians submitted to Mussulman laws," says Von Hammer, "is only an uninterrupted scene of violence and tyranny."

In every war which has desolated Armenia, the wretched inhabitants, without having any interest in the quarrel, have been ruthlessly put to the sword. When Timour the Tartar, at the head of his fiendish hordes, swept over Asia Minor, destroyed, like a flight of locusts the fairest regions of the earth, conquered the Turks at the celebrated battle of Angora, and massacred the last remnant of the crusaders at Smyrna, his historian Sherrefeddin celebrates as pious works the indiscriminate slaughter of the Armenian Christians; but Thomas of Medzoph, an Armenian, who witnessed these atrocities, thus wrote of them in the year 1424:

"A crowd of Christians, reduced to wander here and there among the hills and mountains, perished in the torments of hunger.

"I am able neither to enumerate the dead nor to express the groans, the tears, the shrieks, and the ruin of our nation.

"The Kurd Paghesch ... pillaged, killed, and cut the throats of many of our families ... he completely exterminated the Armenian nation. The troops of Skandar ... took towns and villages, monasteries and hamlets: everywhere they pillaged and destroyed.

"They left neither bread nor grass ... They devastated the country in a horrible manner ... For fear of the enemy, we wished that the sea would swallow us up; while we listened without ceasing to the shrieks and wails of women and children ... In truth, the enemy overwhelms everyone with blows, and gives the bastionade."

Multitudes of Armenians having hid themselves in caverns and among rocks, "the enemy advanced round the mountain from all sides, like the eagle which pursues the bird of heaven; they shouted and vociferated with all their might.

"They filled with terror the hearts of men and women, which makes one tremble with as much horror as if the day of judgment had come. They massacred the rich, and went so far as to circumcise some of them and to tear them from their fate. They separated the women and children from the fathers of the family, and carried them into captivity. The mother called her son and the son his mother.

'Oh my mother,' said he, 'who will take me to see thee again!' The mother answered: 'Cursed be the day of thy birth! O child, thou must walk upon a sea of grief!'

"Such was this state of unheard-of calamity that it is impossible to describe it in a written composition; but we want to give those who come after us some knowledge of these things, so that you may weep bitterly over the ruin of the Armenian nation, for we ourselves have been in person in the midst of these events.

"The enemy took possession of much booty, and seized our unfortunate children to an incalculable number, as well in the towns as in the villages. They took an innumerable crowd of" women and children. Alas! Misery upon us, desolation upon us, from that day till now, and still on in the future.

"Behold, for seven years we are exposed to a terrible chastisement. In fact, the sword has broken, famine has killed, captivity has decimated, and the wild beasts have devoured man; birds have devastated the harvests, and toads and rats have destroyed the fields. It is a greater punishment than that of the Babylonians in the days of Abraham, arid much more cruel than the plagues which struck down the Hebrews and Egyptians.

"They reduced to captivity the wives and children of these innocent men, and oppressed the Armenian population in tormenting the men with fire and iron, as well as by inexpressible tortures ... Making even the women carry loads, they drove them through the snow, in which they perished by thousands ... One day was so frightful, in consequence of the Cruel and sanguinary race of Kurds, that it was altogether similar to the day of judgment.

"In all the extent of our territory, our country was filled with servitude and tears, with groans and sighs." The inhabitants "dispersed into Egypt, Khorassan, into the country of Bagdad, into Daghestan, and into an infinity of countries. The infidels said, 'Where, then, is Jesus their God? Let Him come and save those who believe in Him.'

"We cry and we bemoan our ruin with the liveliest grief, with lamentations and sighs; for innocent children; holy lambs and flocks redeemed by the blood of Christ; and chaste spouses delivered into the hands of the impious and thrown amongst an innumerable number of unbelievers: have been lost for ever."

The wretched Armenians, without ties and without land, have been wanderers, sometimes in single families and sometimes in colonies, over the face of the whole earth, and from the nature of their existence became traffickers and merchants between Europe and Asia. After the time of the Mogul invasion they followed those hordes to Astrakan, Kazan, the Crimea and the Ukraine.

Under the government of the Ottoman Turks large numbers settled in Constantinople. The Persians, perceiving the utility to their dominions of the establishment in it of such a thrifty, peaceable and industrious race, forcibly transplanted myriads of them into the suburbs of Teheran, from where they emigrated to different parts of Hindustan. Others settled in Russia, Poland, Venice, France, and even England.

"In consequence," says the Armenian Chamchian in his history of his own country, published over fifty years ago-"in consequence of the tyranny which the Mahommedans exercise over the Christians whom they have subjected to their power, Armenia is almost depopulated. The inhabitants seize every opportunity that occurs in order to leave their wretched country and settle in places under milder government. Russia being the nearest Christian power, multitudes have migrated thither, and have been uniformly treated by the Czars with as much kindness as their own native subjects. There are many thousands of Armenians naturalized in that vast empire, who have risen to opulence by their industry, and not a few who have been elevated to high offices of trust by the late Emperor: Alexander; a proof as well of the great esteem which he entertained for the nation, as of his liberality of sentiment in regarding them equally eligible for eminent positions as his own: native-born subjects."

CHAPTER X.

THE ARMENIANS.

The English Protectorate of Asia Minor popular with all Classes. - Echmiadzin. - Tolerance of the Armenians. The Patriarch. - The Nonsense written about Armenia in England.- Narses. - The Bishop of Baibourt. - Interest attaching to the Armenians. - Their Dispersions. - The Armenians a Nation. - The Lever they give to Russian Diplomacy. - Protection of Russia hailed with Delight. - Russian Officialism detested. - Strong National Feeling among the Armenians. - Mr. Bryce. - The Patriarch's View of Russia. - European Accounts of Armenia. - Difficulty of getting Information. - Examples. - General Loris Melikoff. - Reasons why the Armenians hate both the Russians and the Turks. - Their Fear of talking freely to Strangers. - Amusing Characteristics on the Capture of Hassan Kalé by the Russians. - Joy of the Armenians at that Event. - Russian Intrigues in Armenia. - Prince Joseph Dolgorouki made Head of the Armenian Church. - Apathy with which the Turks and Persians regarded this Appointment. - Armenians capable of the highest Civilisation. - Russian Meddlesomeness. - Real Liberty to the Armenians will stop Russian Intrigues. - Turkish Government fears Emancipation of Armenians. - Armenians the "smartest men" in the World. - Turks ever mistrustful of the Christians.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARMENIANS.

Political writers have passed the most severe strictures on the English protectorate of Asia Minor; yet it has struck me as very remarkable that long before such a sagacious project was mooted, or perhaps even thought of, a similar scheme was mentioned by the Armenian Bishop of Baibourt, whose ideas on that subject seemed to coincide with those frequently expressed both by Christians, Catholics (as they like to be called), and Turks, in every part of the country where I had opportunities of hearing their notions on the absurdity and inequality of the Sultan's rule.

This opinion was unanimous; and as the people concerned appear capable of forming clear ideas on the system most suitable to their wants, the benevolent designs of the English Government for the guidance and protection of Turkey, as well as for the support and care which it is hoped will be extended equally to all men without distinction of creed, may succeed in effecting a vast amelioration in the social condition of those benighted provinces.

It is true that the free institutions of the West appear unsuitable to the East; and if, by means of an European constitution, the Biblical inhabitants of Asia Minor are civilised and reformed, it will contradict the experience of millions of men during thousands of

years.

The convent and cathedral of Echmiadzin built in the year of our Lord three hundred and five, on the site of a heathen temple,- although frequently sacked and destroyed, has ever been restored by the piety of the Armenians; who as before remarked, come hither from the different parts of the earth, to which - in consequence of the fearful vicissitudes of fortune by which they have been so long overwhelmed and crushed down - they have been driven or scattered.

The Patriarchs of Echmiadzin, who are really the sole chiefs of the whole Armenian nation, have constantly resided here for upwards of four hundred years.

Among all the Eastern Christians, none are so tolerant as the poor Armenians; for, although they hate the Catholics on account of their interference in the affairs of their Church, as well as on account of the gross libels with which they have frequently been assailed by unscrupulous Jesuits, they acknowledge as Christians and co-religionists the baptised of all persuasions.

In the cathedral is built a monument to Mr. Macdonald, an English Ambassador to Persia, who, dying in the neighbourhood, was interred within its walls; and the burial of a heretic in such a sacred place is a clear proof of the kindliness and indulgence, towards even Protestants, on the part of the highest Gregorian ecclesiastics.

The Pope is so far acknowledged by the Armenian Church, that he is allowed to be the first Patriarch of Christendom; but the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, as well of course as the great Patriarch of Echmiadzin, are in every way his equals.

In reality, however, the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and of Constantinople have no greater claim to authority than those of either Lisbon or Venice, because any of them can be deposed by the Catholicos of Echmiadzin, as he is called; while he, being anointed, sits upon his spiritual, and indeed, so to say, temporal throne as securely as the Pope himself.

Nobody can depose him.

For centuries no separate Armenian history can be said to exist, because that unhappy people, subjected to either the Turks or the Persians, have lived only as slaves.

The Armenians do not look to the Russians?

The simplest answer to such a question was given five-and-thirty years ago by the Patriarch Narses to the enlightened and far seeing traveller, Baron Haxthausen of Berlin. "For two hundred years," said he, "we have been looking to Russia, and hoping for salvation from her. I could see safety nowhere but in alliance with Russia."

"Tell me," said the Armenian Bishop of Baibourt, "why you wise and sagacious English people read and write such absurd nonsense about Armenia and the Armenians in your honourable newspapers?"

Why indeed! Because such information is not intended to enable men at a distance to form clear notions on subjects concerning which they are entirely dependent

on the reports of others; but it is, on the contrary, meant for the advancement of so-thought party interests.

Armenia must ever be one of the most interesting countries on the face of the earth; because from here has spread out the legends and religions of the world; because here, since the prehistoric days of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Sesostris - since the more modern wars of the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians; of Darius, of Xerxes, of Alexander the Great; of the Romans, of the Parthians, of the Arabs; of Genghis Khan, as well as those of the devastating hordes of Timour the Tartar - the peoples and nations of the world have struggled for the dominion of Asia.

It was in these pastures that the Sooni and Shiah sects fought together for centuries; and now Christianity and Mahomedanism, apparently in accordance with those eternal laws of fate constantly directing the affairs of the universe, are preparing for their final struggle on ground which may be called the lists of the world; and which seems destined by nature as an artery for the transmission of the riches of the earth.

How is it possible not to feel compassion and sympathy with a classical people who, like trembling willows overwhelmed by the forces of tremendous floods, have nevertheless not been entirely swept away; but who have, on the contrary, and notwithstanding the smallness of their numbers, ever preserved their patriotism, their language, and their religion.

The majority of the nation is scattered over the face of the earth, where they exist, like the Jews, in separate colonies or communities; but the nationality has never been dissolved.

The old language of the fatherland has never been corrupted nor forgotten; separation from their kindred seems only to increase their pathetic attachment to ancient customs, habits, and the cradle of their race; and to-day, after centuries of fierce persecutions, they seem destined as the agents by which Asia Minor may become again civilised.

The dispersion of the Armenians has been compared to that of the Jews; but, unlike the latter, the former are a nation with a home, towards which their eyes are constantly turned, in which their centre of political and religious life is nourished, and of which Echmiadzin is the capital, and the Patriarch or Catholicos the king.

At his call, the Armenians living beyond the frontier of Armenia, and especially those of India, subscribe freely enormous sums of money for the support of their national church - and for the advancement of learning and culture in their dearly loved and elegant native tongue.

According to the traditions of the Armenians - Echmiadzin is built on the site of the Garden of Eden; and the angel with the flaming sword was the neighbouring Mount Ararat, at one time, without doubt, a burning volcano.

Russian diplomacy saw, in the discontented Armenian population of Turkey and Persia, a means by which their hold or pretensions on Asia Minor might be strengthened; and by degrees Muscovite influence began to be felt, not only in the

election of the Patriarch, but in the interior administration and economy of the Armenian Church - which may, in the absence of any other kind of autonomy, be called the Armenian Government.

The protection of Russia was hailed with delight; and says the calm and impartial Haxthausen: "The Russian occupation of their country was regarded by them not as a conquest, but a deliverance. They are the only people in countries south of the Caucasus really faithful to the Czar; a fact too little regarded by Russian officials."

Notwithstanding the great benefits to the Armenians, consequent on the substitution of the Government of the Czar for that of either the Sultan or the Shah, in the provinces which they inhabit - the unnecessary, impertinent and overbearing interference of Russian officials with regard to education, as well as to internal government, causes them to contrast such meddlesomeness with the indifference of the Turks.

Of all subject Asiatic races, the Armenians are the most national; and as they love their language as well as their country, nothing is more detestable to their minds than a process of Russification, which they believe will eventually absorb them into a people for whom they have no other affection than such as a weak and timid man has for the policeman.

Mr. Bryce's opinions upon the subject tally so exactly with what I have myself heard from Armenian priests, peasants, and merchants in several different parts of Armenia, that I am induced to quote a passage from his work, in which, with I think very even impartiality - he sums up in a manner equally lucid and natural. "Seeing," says he, "is like nothing else. Seeing with one's own eyes, and hearing people on the spot talk - people who are themselves so to speak, part of the problem - brings home to one certain facts and principles with a force and clearness which no amount of reading can give. Life and property," in the words of this accomplished and unprejudiced traveller, "are secure under the Government of the Czar. Antagonisms of race and religion are far less fierce than in Turkey, and Mahommedan races live contentedly under a Christian Government. When foreign armies enter Armenia, they are welcomed as deliverers by the subject population; and when they retreat, it is upon these unhappy subjects that the inhuman vengeance of the Turkish soldiery is wreaked. In Armenia at this moment (1877), a timid and inoffensive people, who have never meditated insurrection, who are not accused of anything more than sympathy with the invaders, are being slaughtered by thousands in their blazing villages. I dare say the generals in command have not ordered or approved these massacres and torturings. That they are the spontaneous acts of irregular soldiers perpetrated on their own unarmed fellow-subjects, makes them even a more dreadful evidence of the condition of the Turkish Empire. Russia, although her Government is mainly military, does not neglect her duties to the people; and by creating security, has made it possible for foreign capital and enterprise to flow into the country. The laws are equal and mild for all subjects; and as there is no disaffection, I do not think," continues Mr. Bryce, "that there can be much oppression. In Turkey, the

police are inefficient, the irregulars cannot be kept in order, the Koords systematically defy all authority, and indeed, although living within the bounds of the empire, have never been properly its subjects. No amount of supervision and reporting will ever get over this fatal defect of weakness. Annexation to Russia would of course be a boon to the Armenians, as compared with their present position; but in itself not a good thing for either the annexed provinces or for Russia itself."

"At Echmiadzin," says the Patriarch Narses, "the centre of my Church, I conceived the idea of founding a great academy for all the Armenians scattered throughout the world, with a college for the higher kind of spiritual and secular education. This institution, I hoped, would found a bond of union. The number of students was to have been two thousand. All preliminaries were ready, the locality was determined, and the intellectual plans were designed. The Armenians are animated by an intense desire to advance their national culture, and are ready for any sacrifice to attain this end. Although but a poor monk, I am the head of that national Church which the Armenians prize above everything, and hence am richer than, many kings. It only required a summons from me, for millions to be collected for such an object. I had even then received offers to an enormous amount, especially from India. I was able to assure the Russian Government that I sought nothing more than its sanction: the funds I could myself provide, and the institutions of the school at Tiflis would show how readily I could obtain pecuniary means for larger enterprises. But intrigues and suspicion arose; the permission was refused, and I was sent into a kind of exile as Archbishop of Kischenau in Bessarabia.

"The efforts of my whole life had been devoted to the liberation of my people from the bodily and spiritual slavery under which they everywhere groan. The head-quarters of our Church appeared to me the most natural starting-point where, *owing to the conquest and protection of Russia, the chains of slavery have been already broken.*

"I am a native," continued he, "of Armenia, and have seen and heard much; and have often wondered at the accounts given by Europeans who have travelled there - who, without any complete knowledge, touch upon everything; who by their fictions astound some, while to others they convey a totally false impression."

All this agrees exactly with what I have heard, and with what Mr. Bryce has written. Certainly, the Bishop of Baibourt might ask why it is that the wise and sagacious English people read and write such absurd nonsense about Armenia and the Armenians in their honourable newspapers: and reviews, he might have added, if he had read a recent article in a celebrated periodical.

Nothing is more common than the errors of a traveller who takes an individual's opinion for the views on the same subject of the general public, or who accepts an isolated fact as an established custom. An English gentleman in Italy, perceiving from the window of his carriage, when he drew up the blind, a red haired woman fighting in the street, wrote in his book that the population were very quarrelsome and all freckled.

Nowhere, in the world do such blunders occur more' frequently than in Turkey,

where every European journeying for his amusement or instruction is looked upon as a newsmonger, or muckbeer, as they call it; whose notions it is considered both prudent and advisable to tamper with.

For this purpose, very ingeniously concocted impediments to his obtaining clear ideas concerning the mode of government, the administration of the provinces, the collection of the taxes, the condition of the Christian population, or whatever other subject may form the motive of his researches, are placed in his way; and it frequently happens that the most intelligent and fact-investigating philosophers are completely deceived by the very people whose interests would be, to all appearance, advanced if they told only the truth.

A certain Armenian was introduced by the Pasha to an English gentleman who was travelling through the country, with a view to obtaining such accurate information concerning the Christian subjects of the Porte inhabiting those little-known and little-thought-about provinces, as might enlighten people at home about affairs which they had just commenced, though in a very vague and confused manner, to perceive had some connection with their own welfare.

The Armenian in question answered the queries of his curious interlocutor, whether they were leading or not, or whether they were put to him either in public or in private, exactly as if the replies had been dictated by his so-called Excellency himself.

He was afraid to tell the truth. He was afraid that if he expressed the aspirations, the wishes, or the sympathies of the Armenian nation, it might be repeated to his masters; and, being a calculating person, he very naturally reflected that such a course would certainly not do the said Armenian nation the least good, while it would, on the contrary, be quite sure to do him a great deal of harm.

His evidence was therefore similar to the evidence of such people everywhere else, and, as he bore witness, he thought only of himself.

After a long acquaintance with this wily Armenian, who was a very intelligent man, and who, although never out of his native country, spoke the French language with great fluency and emphasis - I discovered by degrees that he *disliked* the Russians because he was an Armenian, and did not want to be Russified; but that he *hated* the Turks, because, although a man in every way superior to any Mussulman, from the Pasha downwards, in point of knowledge, accomplishments, and education, he felt the social contempt under which he existed, and it touched him to the quick and galled him.

If these disgusting disabilities were removed, and if the Armenians enjoyed the same social equality as they do in Russia, there can be little doubt that they would give neither encouragement, sympathy, nor support to Muscovite aggression.

A single fact will show the hopeless condition of the Armenians under the Turks, compared with the state of the same people under the Russians. "In 1828," said an Armenian to me, "the father of General Loris Melikof, living in a small village near Erzerum, left that neighbourhood; and, like thousands of the population of the same districts, fearing the revenge of the Turks for the joy and gladness with which they

hailed the conquering Paskievitch on his triumphal entry into the capital, settled in Russian territory.

"About fifty years afterwards, General Loris Melikof came back to Erzerum as the Commander in Chief of His Imperial Majesty's forces.

"If," said the Armenian who told me this story, "Melikof had remained in Turkey, how different would have been his lot; and is it therefore in any way probable that we should prefer the government under which we are degraded to the condition of despised and contemptible slaves, to the one under which we live on terms of complete equality with our rulers?"

I confessed that I thought it extremely unlikely that any sensible man could give the preference to the first; and he assured me that I was quite right.

On the direct road between Erzerum and Bayazid, I frequently stopped with a rich Armenian family, because - like Mr. Hamilton, secretary to the Geographical Society, who travelled in these countries more than forty years ago - I "always preferred a Greek or Armenian house, in which we were less exposed to the inconvenient and sometimes impertinent curiosity of the host."

In one of my visits to this town, at a time when it appeared to superficial observers that the Russian invasion of Armenia had entirely failed, and that there was a much greater probability of the Ottomans besieging Alexandropol than of the Muscovites marching on Erzerum - a Turk, who had previously received me with demonstrations of politeness, absolutely refusing to let me in, recommended me to the house of a Ghiour as a more suitable resting-place for a good Christian man.

I accordingly claimed the hospitality of the Armenian, who, waiting on me himself, expressed with apparent sincerity the pleasure he felt at my visit.

In the course of conversation, he assured me that he, as well as all his fellow-countrymen in the town, hailed the repulse of the Russians with great glee.

The reasons that he gave for sentiments so hostile to people professing only to act for the emancipation of the Armenian nation, appeared certainly plausible enough; and are, in fact, all that can be urged, and there is much in them in favour of a continuance of Ottoman rule.

"We know the Turks," said he, "and under their administration we enjoy a self-government which leaves our language, the education of our children, and our national customs, so perfectly untrammelled and free from any official interference, that we have no wish to change it for the rule of a people who steadily endeavour, by means of carefully devised regulations affecting even our indoor family life, to absorb us altogether, to force their tongue on us, and in fact to alter us from Armenians into Russians.

"In fifty years the Muscovites have done more towards the moral annihilation of the Armenians, as a separate nation, than has been effected by the Turks in several centuries.

"For these reasons we have no sympathy with the Russians and wish only to be

left alone. Besides, we can trade with greater freedom in Turkey than in Russia; so that many Turkish Armenians become exceeding rich, and enjoy a monopoly of the commerce of the whole country.

"These are great advantages; and, notwithstanding some grievances against our masters, we do not want to swap them against certain extensions of liberty, which, although very plausible at first sight,- appear, on a closer examination, to be in no way compensated for by the several very troublesome and annoying Muscovite bureaucratic and centralising regulations to be weighed against them."

It is almost certain that a traveller in either Turkish or Persian Armenia, even if he spoke the Armenian language as well as Moses of Khorene, or Thomas of Medzop himself,- would hear expressions of opinion so exactly similar, that when he returned to Europe he would carry with him convictions about the feelings of the people, founded on evidence so indisputable, that nobody would be impertinent enough to question for a moment their perfect accuracy.

"If you honourable English folk," said the Bishop of Baibourt," really want to understand the kind of liberty and the amount of happiness we enjoy under the Turkish Government, why do you not send some of your countrymen, not to ride post through the country, not to stop with your Consuls in the large towns where our people are protected by the neighbourhood of Europeans; but to reside in some of our villages in different parts of Armenia for a few months?

"If you do so, we shall no longer laugh or cry at the truly absurd nonsense about us translated from your honourable newspapers into ours.

"Have you remarked the Armenians," continued he, "as you rode along the road? Had you never even heard of their existence before, would not their cringing manners and frightened looks cause you to notice a great difference between them and the haughty Osmanli or Koord, who, armed with knives and pistols, must ever feel a contempt for the poor defenceless Christian, no more capable of defending himself than an old woman?

"Must not unarmed people, living among warriors, be ever at their mercy?

"Would not these facts alone and in them selves cause an observant mind to make deductions more consonant with probability and reason than the mendacious accounts gathered either from Pashas, or from Armenians in their service and dependent upon them for bread?

"A cunning and sagacious traveller using his eyes alone, and without placing any dependence whatever on his ears,- might learn to suspect that after all the lot of a Christian in Asia Minor is such that people in England have but little idea of its social degradation.

"The warlike aspect and fine and independent manners of the martial Osmanli contrast so remarkably with the gentle and inoffensive air of the most unsoldierlike Armenian,- that those circumstances taken by themselves display two extremes of military pride and civilian subserviency."

Several visits to the Armenian whom I have mentioned in the preceding page, caused our acquaintance to ripen into confidence.

Considering me at length a person who might be trusted, and who would not go and repeat what he said to a Pasha, with a view to having his grievances redressed,- he told me exactly what I have always heard from every Armenian with whom I have been the least intimate.

"When I go to Tiflis or Erivan," said he, "I feel as I walk about the streets that I am a man; in this town, my native lace, I am constantly addressed as a disbelieving dog.

"Such insults I am accustomed to. I dare not redress them, because here, were a Christian slave - for we are slaves and nothing else - were a Christian slave, then, I say, to assault what men hereabout call a true believer, he would either be beaten to a jelly, or perhaps slain outright.

"God grant that the Russians may come here; we should hail them as deliverers."

Naturally astonished at what appeared to me such a sudden change of sentiments in a man who only a very short time previously had expressed wishes so entirely opposed to the hopes to which he now gave vent with every appearance of sincerity and truth,- I asked him the reasons for this wonderful modification of ideas.

"I have not changed; but what I told you first," said he, "is what I thought would be most pleasing to your ears, because you English I know hate the Russians, but you love the Turks."

And indeed the affection of the English for the Turk is so incomprehensible to the ordinary Armenian, that a young peasant in the mountains above Ghumish Hana, once asked me if we too were not Mussulmans like the Osmanlis.

I happened to be in the town in which my Armenian friend lived, when it was taken by the Russians at the end of October, 1877; and no sooner had the Turks been driven out at the points of the Cossack lances,- than a wonderful and interesting change was operated in the social aspects of the place.

An acquaintance of mine, whom I had often met in my Armenian friend's house - the High-Priest of the town, in fact - and whose timidity and shyness had always impressed me with feelings of pity, was suddenly promoted to the rank of a kind of civil governor.

It is the positions in which men are placed, rather than their natural dispositions and character, that causes the enormous differences to be observed between them.

The good priest, no longer adopting a mean or cringing attitude, nor walking, as he was in the habit of doing, very close to the wall for fear of being pushed out of the way by a swaggering Turk, strutted bravely, and with lofty paces, in the very middle of the street.

So far from saluting me as a brother in Christ, with the respect and humility which on previous occasions had invariably accompanied his civilities, he accosted me jauntily and with the air of Mister the Prefect on the Emperor's Feast, thinking, no doubt, that it was rather my place to salute him, than his to acknowledge me.

The impertinent and dignified old Turk who refused to let me in because I was a Ghiour, had quite lost the composure with which he was in the habit of insulting Christians; and such is the bent of the Oriental mind, ever ready to accept cheerfully and without a murmur whatever cannot be avoided, nobody in the town bowed lower to the recently inflated ecclesiastic than he did.

It was now the turn of the priest to speak contemptuously of unbelievers; so going to his church, he got up on a very high place in order that everyone might hear him better, and forcing his voice into a savage roar, cried out, "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered."

The whole Christian population of the town received the Russians with every demonstration of delight and joy; and, as there were many Armenian soldiers and officers in the regiments of occupation, their now happy countrymen and countrywomen crowding round, looked at them with honest pride, and no doubt sung songs of burthens somewhat similar to that of "See the conquering hero comes!"¹

Many an old grudge was perhaps paid for in hard words; but the Turks were not ill-treated, and perfect order was preserved in the place.

It was impossible, however, to witness the Russian occupation without feeling and seeing beyond a shadow of doubt that the Armenians regarded it as a delivery from the thralldom of their tyrants, and blessed the day on which they marched in.

The whole population of Erzerum turned out with tears of joy to greet the soldiers of Paskievitch, in 1828. Women and girls, singing hymns and psalms, threw flowers in the way; and so ardent was the wish of its inhabitants to be delivered from Turkish bondage, that great crowds of Armenians, selling all they had at the vilest prices, followed the retreating Russians across the frontier, and settled under the protection of the Czar.

The arrival of the Muscovites in the same place at the end of the year 1877 was equally pleasant to the Armenian people, who, with a view to expressing their satisfaction and pleasing the invading hordes - worked cheerfully, and like menial servants for the soldiers.

There was nevertheless an exception to this general jubilee; for although the orthodox or Gregorian Armenians are, as I believe I have shown, favourable to the Muscovites,- the Roman Catholic Armenians fear the supremacy of their heretical countrymen, or that of their protecting and sympathetic Russian friends.

They far prefer (at least, so I have always been told by their priests) the government of the Sultan to that of the Czar. The Pope has told them to hate the Russians more than the Turks, and they do so.

In a manner somewhat similar to that in which they claim a kind of protectorate over the Greek subjects of Turkey,- Russian influence has long been silently at work upon the conduct of the affairs of the Armenians; and no sooner had the power of the

¹ What I saw on this occasion only confirms the testimony of the Patriarch Narses, of Mr. Bryce, of Baron Haxthausen and of every impartial writer who knows anything about the subject of which he treats.

Czars been consolidated in their newly-acquired Caucasian provinces,- than their interference, threats, and expostulations protected, in a way, those unhappy and persecuted Christians against the tyranny of both their Persian and Turkish masters.

More than a hundred years ago the Patriarch actually obtained the sanction of Russia previously to his elevation to the patriarchal throne; and in the beginning of this century a thoroughly Russified Armenian, one Prince Joseph Dolgorouki, became head of the Armenian Church.

Both Turkey and Persia, with that carelessness and apathy so remarkable in the action of Oriental governments, - quite abandoned their right to a voice in the appointment of candidates for these dignities; and so it came to pass that the Patriarchs have been entirely chosen by Russian action.

For this reason the people have been educated so as to look to Russia for support; and in 1828, when Paskievitch quietly took possession of Echmiadzin, *the focus and centre of Armenian opinion and nationality*, - Russian influence extended throughout the whole country.

The Armenians are capable of receiving the highest European civilisation; and if Russia, instead of trying to drill them into mediocrity only suitable to their own peasants, would allow the free action of the national institutions,- the people would display such a knowledge for the management of their own affairs, as might in a few years astonish their numerous traducers.

Certain sentiments, such as a knowledge of right and wrong, for instance, are, it is said, innate in mankind, as a result of the original construction of the mental faculties. An additional sentiment or faculty is innate in the Russian official. It is called, for want of a better word, red-tape. This Russian red-tape can leave nothing alone. It has been even introduced into the Armenian Church: where the bishops, priests, and deacons are all obliged to write confidential reports on a variety of subjects to their superiors.

The parochial government of the Armenians, in consequence of the consecration of centuries, so dear to their hearts,- is changed by the Muscovites into a system of centralisation which must eventually absorb the nation.

The Government schools force the children to learn Russian, whether they like it or not; and it is the object of the St. Petersburg Government, in stamping out their language, to deal with the Armenians as they dealt with the Poles.

Those Armenians, who have been carefully educated in Russia with a view to being officials and officers in the service of the Government,- are so well drilled and disciplined for the duties required of them, that they become even more imbued with the red-tape system than the Russians themselves.

It is for these reasons that the people dislike the Muscovites; although for the sake of the security enjoyed under their rule,- they prefer them to the Turks. No man is so patriotic as to prefer his country to his own wife and children. Under the Turks the integrity of the nation is safe enough, but the family is in continual dread of being outraged.

If the English protectorate of Asia Minor gives the Armenians real liberty, protects their persons and their property, and places those people on a perfect footing of equality with their Mussulman neighbours,- there can be no doubt that any further Russian intrigues among them would fall on very barren ground.

The Turkish Government, often keenly alive to what concerns their own interests,- look upon the thorough emancipation of the Armenians, notwithstanding their comparatively small numbers, - with feelings of great alarm.

Scattered throughout the whole of Turkey, the Armenians, whose energies till now have been entirely devoted to trading, higgling, and peddling,- have possession of a great part of the commerce of Asia Minor; and, like any people who have paid extreme attention to one particular subject,- they are unrivalled in the useful arts of cheating and lying.

Nowhere in the world will be found such exceedingly (to use an American expression)" smart" men, whose ideas of business consist in trying to make others buy experience at great prices.

"As the active powers of the human mind, when roused to vigorous exertion in one line, are most capable of operating with force in other directions," it is almost certain that the Armenians, from enterprising merchants, thinking alone of the pursuit of gain, would, if a fair field was opened to them, turn their talents to good accounts as politicians.

Were the country once really freed from the oppression by which it has been weighed down for centuries, and were all its inhabitants, whether Christian, Jew, Turk, Devil-worshipper, Candle-extinguisher, or Gipsy, placed on a footing of perfect civil and religious equality,- many highly cultivated Armenians, living very far away, would bring back to their native land all the ingredients necessary for the thorough civilisation, good administration, and complete development of the vast resources of the country.

This is exactly what a far-seeing and enlightened Turk is afraid of; and consequently it is a duty that he owes to posterity to prevent a movement which would take a large share, if not the whole government of the country,- out of its hands.

If in every community governed according to modern ideas, mind and culture must sooner or later come to the surface,- it is quite certain that the germ of the Minor Asiatic civilisation can only be effected through the Armenians.

A smattering of French stamps the ordinary Pasha as a very enlightened man in the eyes of the pattern traveller; or rather of the pattern tourist, as the rapidity with which men push along nowadays causes a great difference between the two: but there is hardly a single Turk in Armenia who is what would be called an educated man in any European society.

The Turk wonders at our liberty, our customs, our institutions, our manners, and our curiosity in inquiring how the people in other countries get on; but he has not the least admiration for all these things; while he has such a, thorough hatred and suspicion of every innovation, - that the most insignificant alteration in anything to which he has become quite accustomed, is regarded by him as the thin edge of a wedge, preparatory

to something a great deal worse.

Since the days of the Crusaders, Europeans have been the deadly enemies of the Turks; for in the times when they were religious, they endeavoured to force their creeds on them, in the same manner as at present, when religion and politics are entirely separated, they try their best to force their civilization on them.

The Ottomans never wanted either one or the other; and although I have frequently heard Turks abuse their own absurd Government, and draw very unfavourable comparisons between it and that of the Russians, they are so afraid of the Christians, whose superiority to themselves in everything but brute force they are obliged to confess, - that it is one of the principal maxims of their policy to keep them down.

DOCUMENTS: ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

TURKEY AND THE ARMENIAN ATROCITIES.

A graphic and thrilling.

By Rev. Edwin M. Bliss

With an Introduction

By Miss Frances E. Willard.

1896

The book written and published in 1896 is a response to the Armenian massacres conducted in different parts of the Ottoman empire. Its purpose is defined by the author: "The object of this book is not merely to set forth the situation in Turkey as it is to-day, but to trace the influences that have produced it. Those influences are very complex. They include the social characteristics of the peoples of Turkey, the religious beliefs and ecclesiastical customs that have grown up in the empire during the past centuries, the political ambitions and jealousies of the European Powers, and the personal qualities of the different men who have been prominent in the control of affairs".

The extracted chapters which describe the details of the massacres of 1896 in Sassun, Constantinople, Trebizond and Erzerum are based on the reports of eyewitnesses, both Armenian and non-Armenian.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SASSUN MASSACRE.

A Deliberate Plan of The Turkish Government-Kurdish Raids-Armenians Defend Themselves-Kurds Reinforced by Regular Troops-Terrible Scenes of Slaughter- Stories of Survivors.

In view of the situation set forth in the preceding chapter the European powers emphasized more earnestly than before their demand for reforms, and the Turkish Government became convinced that another step was necessary in order to avert what they feared would be the complete destruction of their power. What that step was it is the object of this chapter to describe, leaving the inference as to the plan to come later.

Among the different plains of Eastern Turkey there is none more fertile than the plain of Mush, about forty miles west of Lake Van. From the earliest times it has been noted for its harvests and for the general prosperity of its people, who partook, to a greater degree than was true of many other sections, of the vigor of the mountaineers. Bordered with high mountains on every side it was always an object of envy to the Kurdish tribes. Incursions had been repeatedly made and some result was manifest in the increase of Moslem villages here and there over the plain. Still, however, it was the center of Armenian influence in that section; even Bitlis and Van were scarcely more

intensely Armenian than Mush.

It was natural also that some of the revolutionists should turn their eyes to this section. Here if anywhere must be the center of the new Armenia, and an effort was undoubtedly made to stir some of the people to a revolution in opposition to the Turkish Government. The plain villagers, however, furnished very little encouragement for anything of this kind. They realized perhaps even more clearly than the mountaineers did that opposition to the combined force of the Turkish Government and the Kurdish tribes was worse than useless, and the agitators found themselves turned aside after accomplishing but very little. They then turned their attention to the mountain villages where the spirit of independence was more strongly manifest. In the summer of 1893 one of these men was captured near the city of Mush, and the government had suspicion that friends of his were gathering in the mountains on the east. They accordingly sent word to certain Kurdish chiefs whose men had been enrolled in the Hamidieh cavalry to make a raid. Knowing the character of the mountaineers, these chiefs made their preparations somewhat carefully. They gathered their men from every side, and it became evident to the Armenians that there was to be trouble. For a time there were simply ordinary raids; animals were carried off, occasionally a man was killed-sometimes Armenian, sometimes Kurd. Ordinarily when a Kurd was slain his body was secured for burial before his people could come to claim it.

At last there was a pitched battle in which the villagers were able to do considerable execution without heavy loss of life to themselves. The Kurdish chiefs finding themselves worsted withdrew, and no sufficient pressure could be brought to bear upon them to make them renew the contest. The Governor-General of the province, however, with troops and field pieces, infested the mountains but made no attack, preferring apparently to come into parley with the Armenians. He asked them why they did not submit to the government and pay taxes. Their reply was that they were not at all disloyal to the government, but could not pay taxes twice, to Kurds and to the government. If the Turkish authorities would give protection, they were perfectly willing to pay the taxes. During the winter several of their leaders were invited to Mush but declined to accept.

With the advent of the spring of 1894, the situation became worse. The government decided to make the advance and reiterated its instructions to the Kurdish chiefs to attack the whole section, west of the Mush plain and known now as Sassun, which included about forty villages. They came on every side and practically besieged the whole province. They stole animals, and the result was occasional contests in which one or more on either side fell. On one occasion the Kurds succeeded in securing the bodies of two of their comrades who had been killed, and carried them to the government at the city of Mush, reporting that the whole region was filled with armed men, who were defying the power of the government. Then followed a general attack upon the different villages. The Armenians had the better situation, and defended themselves with considerable success. The Kurds appeared to be unequal to the task of

subduing them. The government reinforced them with soldiers, regular troops, but generally in disguise so as to retain as far as possible the appearance of the ordinary contests that had been going on for years between the villagers and the Kurdish chiefs. Reinforced by these men, the Kurdish chiefs spread on every hand. They were assisted by the Turkish troops, not only in positive attack, but in stratagems the most outrageous. Companies of troops would enter a village, telling the Armenians that they had come for their protection. They were received and quartered in the different houses; then in the night they rose and slew the villagers, men, women, and children. Realizing now the evident intent, the Armenians resolved to fight and sell their lives as dearly as possible. The result was that for nearly three weeks from the latter part of August there was a general campaign of butchery. So bitter was the contest, that the Governor of Mush, fearing that he had not sufficient force at hand, sent word to the general commander of the Turkish forces in Eastern Turkey, whose headquarters were at Erzingan, west of Erzurum, to gather what troops he could, to join with the troops already there, and the Kurds, in the fight.

Word meanwhile had been sent to Constantinople, that all Eastern Turkey was in rebellion, and the Sultan had issued a firman, calling upon his loyal subjects to put down the rebellion at all hazards. This firman was in the hands of the commander Marshal Zekki Pasha as he came to Mush. He read it before the troops, then placed it upon his breast, and exhorted the men to do their duty. Especially on the last day of August, which was the anniversary of the Sultan's accession to the throne, was this exhortation read, and by every means in his power he roused the troops to the bitterest attack. At this time all pretense of complaint of revolution was thrown aside. Villages against which no charge of disloyalty had ever been made, where there had been no trouble of any sort, suffered equally with those where there had been contests. The receipt of taxes amounted to absolutely nothing. On every hand it was proclaimed that there must be a clean sweep; that the whole population of the Armenian district must be exterminated. In one village the priest, and some of the leading men, went out to meet the Turkish officer, declaring their loyalty, and begging for mercy. It was all to no avail. The village was surrounded and every man put to death. The stories of individual outrages were such as scarcely can be believed. Private letters, from persons well qualified to know the truth, many of which are quoted in full in "The Armenian Crisis in Turkey," by the Rev. F.D. Greene, give instances almost too terrible for belief. We quote a few:

"A number of able-bodied young Armenians were captured, bound, covered with brushwood and burned alive. A number of Armenians, variously estimated, but less than a hundred, surrendered themselves and pled for mercy. Many of them were shot down on the spot and the remainder were dispatched with sword and bayonet.

"A lot of women, variously estimated from 60 to 160 in number, were shut up in a church, and the soldiers were" let loose" among them. Many of them were outraged to death and the remainder dispatched with sword and bayonet. A lot of young women were collected as spoils of war. Two stories are told. 1. That they were carried off to the

harems of their. Moslem captors. 2. That they were offered Islam and the harems of their Moslem captors; refusing, they were slaughtered. Children were placed in a row, one behind another, and a bullet fired down the line, apparently to see how many could be despatched with one bullet. Infants and small children were piled one on the other and their heads struck off. Houses were surrounded by soldiers, set on fire, and the inmates forced back into the flames at the point of the bayonet as they tried to escape.

"At Geligozan many young men were tied hand and foot, laid in a row, covered with brushwood and burned alive. Others were seized and hacked to death piecemeal. At another village a priest and several leading men were captured, and promised release if they would tell where others had fled, but, after telling, all but the priest were killed. A chain was put around the priest's neck, and pulled from opposite sides till he was several times choked and revived, after which several bayonets were planted upright, and he raised in the air and let fall upon them.

"The men of one village, when fleeing, took the women and children, some 500 in number, and placed them in a sort of grotto in a ravine. After several days the soldiers found them, and butchered those who had not died of hunger.

"Sixty young women and girls were selected from one village, and placed in a church, when the soldiers were ordered to do with them as they liked, after which they were butchered. "In another village fifty choice women were set aside and urged to change their faith and become *hanums* in Turkish harems: but they indignantly refused to deny Christ, preferring the fate of their fathers and husbands. People were crowded into houses which were then set on fire. In one instance a little boy ran out of the flames, but was caught on a bayonet and thrown back."

The following stories from survivors of the massacre will give a more vivid picture than any general description:

STORY OF A SURVIVOR. OF THE SASSUN MASSACRE.

"My name is Asdadur Giragosian. My home was on the sunny side of a high mountain, in the central village of the beautiful valley of Geligozan. This valley presents a charming scene when viewed from the top of one of the surrounding mountains, with many villages scattered here and there, and clumps of huge walnut trees between, giving the valley its name, 'Valley of Walnuts.'

"Up to 1894 my family was a prosperous one, as were most of the families of Sassun. The Kurds who lived about us were, on the whole, friendly, though they frequently practiced their habitual business of stealing cattle and sheep, but we were generally able to re-take our own, or others in their place. Our family consisted of twelve members, and we had many cattle and sheep. In the whole village were two hundred families, who possessed in the aggregate more than 15,000 sheep. Of course each of the sixty Armenian villages in the Sassun district (of which 42 are now ruined) had many cattle and sheep.

"In the spring of 1894 the Kurds began to drive away our sheep more boldly than

usual. At the same time the government, suspecting that there were many armed revolutionists in Sassun, sent to search for them, but failed to find them. They then wished to arrest some of our notables and take them to Mush as revolutionists, saying, 'You have revolutionary societies here.' We resisted and prevented their taking our men. As I said, the Kurds made several attacks that spring, carrying off our animals, and we pursued them and rescued the animals, killing one or two men, whom we buried so they could not find them. Twice they attacked with this result, but the third time we were not able to bury the two Kurds we killed, and they carried them to Mush and showed them to the government. A great tumult resulted, and it was reported, 'The Armenians of Sassun have rebelled and massacred the Moslem inhabitants.' Also, 'They are armed with rifles and cannon.' The Turkish Government availed itself of the excuse, and instigated the Kurds to attack the Armenian villagers and massacre them. This they attempted to do, a large number attacking us, aided by many soldiers in disguise. But though the Kurds had been well armed by the government, we were able, owing to our superior position, to withstand them successfully for fifteen days. The Kurds were constantly repulsed, leaving many dead and wounded. During this time the Turkish soldiers were being rapidly collected in Merge-mozan. About twenty-five battalions of soldiers were gathered there. In these fights with the Kurds we lost only seven persons, but three Armenian villages were burned.

"The assembled soldiers now began to attack. One day we heard the sound of their bugles, and for a whole day they continued to advance with great tumult and besieged Geligozan on the sides. The road to a very high mountain named Andok was left open, and we were able to carry our families and animals there, but this in a hasty manner, while fighting with Turkish soldiers. Then the army divided, one part going toward Andok, the other coming toward us. We had already left the village and taken refuge among the rocks above it. Our position enabled us to withstand them all day, but we could see that they had burned the village of Husentsik, near our own. Toward evening they made a fiercer attack and got nearer us. Our ammunition was nearly exhausted, and we began to retreat. They now set fire to our village too, and from a distance, in the dark, we could see it burning.

We fled to Andok, where our families and animals had been carried, but seeing that it was not a safe place to stay, we left it, and after a day's journey over rocks and mountains; towards evening reached a ruined church. Here we passed the night, but in the morning soldiers appeared and we hastened our flight. All our goods and most of our animals we left there. Near evening we reached a mountain named Gala-rash (Black Castle). We were very tired and hungry, but had nothing to eat, so we killed a sheep and ate it. But few of the villagers were to be found, the greater part having fled to other places. From this place we fled in the dark to the neighboring Kurdish village, where our Aghas (chiefs) lived. Before morning we learned that Aghpig was also burned. Our Kurdish Aghas came out from the village to defend us against the soldiers, but did not succeed, and returned to the village, and we were obliged to continue our

journey, though tired and thirsty.

"When it was possible to stop, our first care was to find water and kill a sheep for food. The following day we learned that Hedink also was burned. Hearing this we fled to Heghkat, and then to a near mountain. The next morning we heard that Heghkat was burned. We descended from the mountain into a valley up which we slowly retreated, changing our position every day. But on the third day our pursuers appeared, and we left all our sheep, and fled with our cattle. Soon we left the cattle too. One of my brothers, Atam, fled with the family, while my other brother, his fifteen-year-old daughter, and I, lagged behind and entered a forest, but when they saw my brother, two soldiers fired and he fell dead. Hearing the noise, the girl cried out and they saw her and shot her dead also. Me they did not find, and towards evening I came out of the forest, and hurrying forward, reached the family and told them of my brother's and his daughter's death. We wept aloud and spent the night disheartened, tired and hungry. In the morning, thinking the soldiers had turned back, we returned to a village to obtain food. I found my brother's body and buried it, but before I had time to bury the girl, the soldiers appeared. My remaining brother fled with the family, but I entered the forest. In the morning I found another refugee in the forest, who was seeking his family. He told me he had killed an ox, but had been obliged to leave it because the soldiers appeared. We were so hungry and faint that we could hardly walk, but we sought the ox and were about cooking some meat when soldiers again appeared.

"So we left the fire, climbed up the mountain, and hid behind some rocks. The soldiers saw us and two of them came to find us. We waited there for a few moments all trembling with terror. Suddenly a soldier appeared, aimed his gun at me and fired, the bullet piercing my leg. The other soldier also fired and pierced my thigh. Then they came up and severely wounded me with their short swords, in the shoulder and thigh. I shut my eyes and they thought me dead, and were about to depart when they saw my companion behind a rock; they fired at him with true aim, and I heard his horrible cry as he fell. Before leaving us, one of the soldiers suspecting I was still living, proposed to cut my body to pieces, but his companion rejected the proposition, objecting that there was no water to wash the swords. So they merely threw some large stones at me, which fortunately did no special harm. When the soldiers were far enough away I spoke to my companion to see if he was living, and he answered very feebly saying he could neither walk nor move, and I was in the same condition. Oh! our distress then! Tired, hungry, thirsty, severely wounded, we should die in torture, or be the prey of wild beasts. I cried to the soldiers, 'We are still alive, come and put an end to our misery.' I cried but they did not hear me.

"After a while two Armenian fugitives passed by and saw us, and we besought them to carry us to a ruined sheep-cote nearby. They were so hungry and weak they could hardly walk, and said they were not able to carry us, but yielding to our entreaties, they made a great effort and carried us there, gave us some water and fresh cheese and departed. We remained there three days, these friends coming to us at night and

going away in the morning. We soon saw that this was too dangerous a place to stay, as we constantly heard the sound of guns and bullets passing over our heads. So they transferred us to another ruin, where we were tortured by the heat by day and the cold by night, naked and wounded. Our friends did not do much for us, not believing we could live. After three days my companion's mother came, bringing some millet to cook for us, but going out to get some water, she heard the sound of bugles and fled, but soon returned and cooked it. The next day our brothers came with the woman and tried to cook some wheat, but were again frightened by the sound of the bugles and fled, my brother wishing to carry me with him, but I said, 'It is better for you and the family to escape. I must die.' Toward evening they came back and carried us on their shoulders to another place, where some other families had already taken refuge. Soon they were obliged to leave this place also, fleeing in haste, and left me there. I remained in this dreary place eight days alone with my suffering save that they sometimes brought me a little food. After the eight days we heard that a firman had come ordering the massacre to cease. The soldiers then drove any fugitives they met, wounded or not, to the ruined villages. I remained thus among the ruins for two months, till my wounds were healed. As soon as I was strong enough I left the ruins and slowly made my way to Vartenis (an Armenian village on the Mush plain). There I found my wife, but of the rest of the family I know nothing."

With the man whose story is told above was a lad of seventeen years, named Serope Asdadurian, from the village of Mushakhshen, not far from Mush city. His statement shows the state of the region before the date of the massacre.

STORY OF SEROPE ASDADURIAN.

"Our family consisted of fifteen members, of whom four are now living, the others having died by the hands of the Kurds and Turks.

"Before the year 1893 the brother of the celebrated robber chief, Mousa Bey, had abducted the daughter of the head man of our village. After a while the girl was rescued from his hands and married to a young man of Vartenis. In the spring of 1893 she visited her father's house, after which her father wished to send her, under safe escort, to her husband at Vartenis. He besought my father to carry her, and he accepted the charge. On the way fifteen Kurds attacked the party and attempted to carry off the woman, but my father and his companions resisted, and delivered the woman safely to her husband, two of the Kurds being killed in the affray. My father fled to Russia, but soon returned, and for a month or so remained so concealed that no one saw him. After a while, however, it became known that he had returned, and suddenly one day the Mudir (Turkish petty governor) of the neighboring village surrounded our house with a band of zabtiehs (gendarmes) to seize my father. He knew that to be taken was probably to be killed with tortures, and determined to sell his life as dearly as possible. So when the zabtiehs burst open the door and came in my father killed one of them and

rushed out with his rifle. But in his haste he struck his head violently against the frame of the door and fell, nearly dead. One of the zabtiehs fired and killed him. They then killed my mother, my two sisters, my uncle and four cousins. They carried away our cattle and sheep, robbed the house and burned it."

So the crimson storm of carnage rolled on, until not less than thirty villages had been laid waste, so completely destroyed that even the names had been erased from the official records. As to the number of killed it is almost impossible to give accurate estimate. It must have been not less than five or six thousand, many put it much higher. Some soldiers said that a hundred fell to each one of them to dispose of, while others wept because the Kurds did more execution than they. Some, however, claimed to have been unwilling actors in the scene and suffered great mental torments. The wife of one noticed that he failed to pray, as had been his invariable custom. She spoke of it to him and he answered, "God will not hear me. If there is God he will take vengeance for these awful deeds. Is there any use to pray?" It is also told of other soldiers that on reaching their homes they inquired of Armenian acquaintances, "Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? The Sassun women were constantly calling out to Him."

At last the carnage stopped. The commander-in-chief of the fourth army corps at Erzingan reached the field in time to save a few prisoners alive and to prevent the extermination of four more villages that were on the list to be destroyed. He then sent a telegram to Constantinople that rebellion had been overcome and that order had been restored in the province. For this he received a medal and the thanks of the Sultan.

CHAPTER XXI.

POLITICS AND MASSACRE AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

Investigation at Sassun-Mr. Gladstone on the Situation-Disturbances in Constantinople- Joint Notes by the Embassies-Plan of Reforms-New English Government-Massacre in Constantinople-Decisive Action of the Embassies-Signing of the Reforms-Subsequent Acts of Defiance-Breach Between England and Russia-Collapse of English Influence.

THE report of the massacres in Sassun aroused a storm of indignation throughout Europe. The British Consul at Van made investigation, confirmed the report of the massacres, which was again confirmed by the local military commander. The British Ambassador at Constantinople sent special officials to make public inquiries, with the result finally that the Turkish Government was informed that at prompt, efficient steps must be taken to secure better government in Eastern Turkey, or she would join with European Powers in such intervention as would secure peace and justice for the Armenians. Meanwhile Czar Nicholas had come to the throne, and just what course would be taken by him was not yet evident. There were indications that he would pursue a different policy from his father, more in the line of general liberty and toleration, and there was a widespread feeling that the English demand was practically supported by Russia. A Turkish investigating commission was appointed, but its personnel was such as to make it open to grave suspicion, and the British Consuls at Erzurum and Van were instructed to watch its course carefully. This suspicion was increased by the fact that the Turkish commander was decorated, and notwithstanding the repeated efforts of the Turkish Government to prevent the spread of news, the worst reports as to the massacres were confirmed all over the empire. At the same time the Turkish Government invited an American representative to attend the commission. President Cleveland declined to do this, but after negotiations with England decided to send, as an independent investigator, Consul Jewett, of Sivas. To this, however, the Turkish Government objected, and refused to give him the traveling papers.

As matters became more clearly understood, reports were spread of a separate commission to represent England, Russia, Austria, France and probably Germany, entirely apart from the commission appointed by the Turkish Government. This general intensity of feeling on the part of Europe aroused considerable anxiety among the Turks, and the result was that a commission was at last appointed with regular representatives of the different European Powers to attend it and insure that its investigations were carried on in an impartial and thorough manner. The anxiety, however, was by no means confined to the government. Throughout the empire word had been spread among the Moslems that the Christians, backed by the European Governments, were planning the overthrow of the Sultan. At the same time the Hunkhaaists redoubled their efforts. They evidently felt that a point had been reached at

which they might make a strike. The result was that disturbances were reported from the whole region of Western Turkey, especially in the vicinity of Zeitun, Marash and Adana. Destructive fires were started in several cities. The Moslems charged it upon the Armenians, the Armenians retorted the charge upon the Moslems, and the situation rapidly grew more intense even than it had been before. The next step of the Turkish Government was to announce that a new plan of government had been adopted for the districts of Erzurum, Van, Bitlis and Mush. These four were to be made a single province with a Mussulman governor appointed for five years, to be succeeded by Christians, who, however, were not to be Armenians. The gendarmerie were to be recruited from the district and commanded by a general named by the Sultan; local revenues were to be retained by the provinces except one annual contribution to the Porte; judges were to be elected and local ministries of education and public works were to be formed. This was largely as the result of the intense feeling roused in England, which was expressed by Mr. Gladstone in response to a deputation of Armenians from Paris and London on his eighty-fifth birthday, December 29, 1894.

The history of Turkey has been a sad and painful history. That race has not been without remarkable, and even in some cases, fine qualities, but from too many points of view it has been a scourge to the world, made use of, no doubt, by a wise Providence for the sins of the world. If these tales of murder, violation and outrage be true, then it will follow that they cannot be overlooked, and they cannot be made light of. I have lived to see the Empire of Turkey in Europe reduced to less than one-half of what it was when I was born, and why? Simply because of its misdeeds—a great record written by the hand of Almighty God, in whom the Turk, as a Mohammedan, believes, and believes firmly—written by the hand of Almighty God against injustice, against lust, against the most abominable cruelty; and if—and I hope, and I feel sure, that the government of the Queen will do everything that can be done to pierce to the bottom of this mystery, and to make the facts known to the world—if, happily—I speak hoping against hope—if the reports we have read are to be disproved or to be mitigated, then let us thank God; but if, on the other hand, they be established, then I say it will more than ever stand before the world that there is no lesson, however severe, that can teach certain people the duty, the prudence, the necessity of observing in some degree the laws of decency, and of humanity, and of justice, and that if allegations such as these are established, it will stand as if it were written with letters of iron on the records of the world, that such a government as that which can countenance and cover the perpetration of such outrages is a disgrace in the first place to Mohammed, the Prophet whom it professes to follow, that it is a disgrace to civilization at large, and that it is a curse to mankind. Now, that is strong language.

"Strong language ought to be used when facts are strong, and ought not to be used without strength of facts. I have counselled you still to retain and to keep your judgment in suspense, but as the evidence grows and the case darkens, my hopes

dwindle and decline; and as long as I have a voice, I hope that voice, upon occasion, will be uttered on behalf of humanity and truth."

Soon after came the formation of a commission, which was, however, so constituted as not to inspire the greatest confidence, the foreign representatives not being of high rank. However, it was better than nothing, and the general feeling was that its report would be awaited with interest. Meanwhile there came notices of disturbance elsewhere. There was a rising of the Christians in Albania, and considerable trouble in Bulgaria, where the Russian power was made manifest by the appearance upon the scene of Mr. Zankoff, who had been practically an exile for some time. The commission had started, and by the middle of February was thoroughly established in its work in Mush. On its way to that place it made some interesting discoveries. At the village of Bulanik some of the Armenian villagers came to the European members and reported that Turkish soldiers were at that time engaged in extorting money from villagers by threats of reporting them as rebels. The commission sent a polite invitation to the commander, asking him to come and answer a few questions. Instantly the whole body fled in every direction, evidently supposing that they would not be interfered with. This was a fair illustration of the kind of extortion carried on through the whole of Eastern Turkey. Those who made any difficulty were imprisoned, until it was said that there was scarcely a single Armenian of prominence in the city of Bitlis who was not in prison, while Armenian ecclesiastics of every grade were arrested. This fact also illustrates the nature of the charges of the government with regard to insurrection among the Armenians. At Khnus the commission found some genuine refugees whom they took along with them to Mush.

At the same time attention was diverted to the region of Marash, so far as appears, there was no special charge of insurrection, but a general uprising. The houses of the American missionaries were entered by force and searched for arms, which naturally they did not find. Complaint was sent to Constantinople and demands were made through the American Legation for protection. Similarly at Nicomedia a French Catholic complained that his domicile had been violated and that he himself had been arrested by the Turks. The French ambassador, standing firm upon the capitulations accorded to his government, demanded the removal of the governor, the punishment of the officers and a public apology to the priest. The Turks objected, but finally yielded. Even Constantinople was not safe. An American citizen passing through the streets, only a short distance from the Sultan's palace, was stabbed and killed by a Turkish soldier, who had also seriously wounded sixteen others. A day or two later another Turk in a theatre got into a quarrel with an Englishman and endeavored to kill him. The Englishman escaped, but a student friend who rose to defend him, was struck down with a single blow of the Turk's knife. The chief value of these incidents was that the government made every effort to excuse the criminals, and would give no punishment except under pressure. The official statement as to the man who murdered the American was, that the soldier had got into a quarrel with one of his comrades and

merely stabbed the sixteen Christians on the supposition that they were trying to catch him. The absurdity of this is evident from the fact that one of them was an Armenian girl, standing on the steps of her own home; another was a milkman, whom the soldier asked, "Are you a Christian or a Moslem?" and on being told that he was a Moslem let him go.

For some weeks there was no special change in the situation, though the relations between Turks and Christians were constantly more serious, so that the council of the Armenian Patriarchate at Constantinople presented a memorial to the Sultan, urging him to cease the constant ill treatment which the Armenians suffered at the hands of the Turkish officers. It was not surprising that the memorial was returned with a request that it be modified in form. How needful it was, however, was manifest from the following facts reported from a city a short distance from Constantinople. An Armenian pastor and teacher were arrested and imprisoned on the charge of having seditious letters, which letters, when read, were shown to be simply private correspondence. One man was imprisoned for two weeks because his name suggested a similarity to an address to which a telegram was sent saying, 'Come at once.' An Armenian was forced to sell his house at only a trifle over half value, because a pasha wanted it for one of his wives. A traveler happening to meet an official on the road was turned back and imprisoned for a week on no charge whatever, and released only on the payment of three Turkish pounds. These are but illustrations of what was going on near Constantinople. In the region of Dersim, north of Sivas and Harput, the Kurds seemed to have made special effort to search for proofs of sedition. In two villages papers were found stating that a certain order for arms had been filled and forwarded. No weapons were discovered, however, and subsequently a Turk confessed that he had himself forged the papers. Notwithstanding this, fifty people, thirty from one village, were imprisoned, of whom a number died. Everywhere throughout Asia Minor the Christians were in constant fear of the Turks, who were stirred by their priests to provide themselves with arms in order to be ready for any emergency, which the priests assured them would come as the result of the efforts of the Christians, supported by European powers, to overthrow the Turkish Government. For a time there seemed to be hope of better things. The Turkish Government revoked some of its appointments of notoriously unfit men, and the commission at Mush were making increasing reports of the situation, which aroused repeated and indignant protests throughout Europe. It became apparent that the moral sense of the Christian Powers was awake, and the Porte understood very well that that could not be ignored. The British Government had definitely announced its intention to secure protection for Christians throughout the empire. At the same time United States cruisers arrived on the coast, and in interviews with the Turkish governors made it very apparent that protection to Americans must be secured. The immediate result of this was the release of a large number of ecclesiastics who had been confined in various fortresses, and who, though for some time under surveillance in Constantinople, were practically at liberty. The summer thus passed by with a generally better condition and there were strong hopes that reforms would actually be

instituted, especially as reports came that Great Britain, France and Russia had united in a joint note to the Porte, stating the reforms which they insisted upon for the better conduct of the government in the interior. A complete statement of these reforms is hardly necessary here. In the main they followed the line of the different promises that had been made previously. Among the most important provisions were the following:

"A High Commissioner, appointed with the assent of the Powers, is to have general supervision over the whole empire, with the assistance of a commission sitting in Constantinople; the provinces of Eastern Turkey are to have Mohammedan or Christian governors, according to the preponderance of population, the vice-governor to be of different faith from the governor; taxes are to be collected by local and municipal agents instead of by soldiers or treasury agents, and the provinces are to retain enough funds for their own administration, and send the balance to Constantinople; there is to be a general amnesty for crimes and offences other than those against the common law; pending political trials are to stop and the prisoners are to be released; imprisonment without special warrant is forbidden and speedy trial assured, together with release in case of acquittal; the number of Christian judges is to be increased in proportion to the Christian population; Christians are to serve equally with Moslems in the gendarmerie; conversion to Islam by force is forbidden, and general freedom of religious confession is to be secured; the powers of magistrates are to be extended, and the local courts are to be under the supervision of a delegation from the Court of Appeals."

The position taken by the Ottoman Government with regard to these reforms was not such as to inspire much of hope. Answer was long delayed; furthermore, there was a change of ministry, the new Grand Vizier being one well known as anti-English in his policy and warmly supporting Russia. The one selected as Minister of Foreign Affairs was also president of the commission to investigate the Sassun massacre.

Meanwhile trouble had arisen in Arabia, there being attacks upon the English, French and Russian Consuls at Jeddah. The whole Moslem world seemed to be on the verge of an outbreak. The British Government was strengthening its garrisons in the Mediterranean and in Egypt, and there was a very general belief that it was ready to take extreme steps, even to the extent of occupying the Dardanelles, and perhaps the Bosphorus in case of necessity. At last the reply of the Turkish Government came, acceding to the general principle of control by the Powers of the plan of reforms, but asking that the period be limited to three years. As if, however, to complicate matters still more, reports came of an uprising in Macedonia. Bulgarian emissaries had apparently been at work among their brethren under Turkish rule, exciting revolt and urging annexation. The result was manifest in incursions across the mountains, and notice was given by the Bulgarian Government that it might be compelled to take decisive action with regard to the disturbances. Underneath all this there was generally recognized to be Russian, and perhaps Austrian influence, so that the general situation was uncertain in the extreme.

Just at this time, in July, came the overthrow of the liberal government in England,

and the return of the conservatives to power. Hitherto the conservative policy toward Turkey had always been aggressive, and everyone expected that tradition would be respected. In anticipation of this, the Sultan's Government sent conciliatory answers in regard to reforms, stating that they proposed to apply them to the entire empire; appoint Christian assessors to assist provincial governors; make the selection of under-officials from both Mussulmans and Christians, improve prisons, check the excesses of Kurds, etc. In Tarsus a mob attacked the building of St. Paul's Institute, and in other portions of the country there was manifest a great deal of tension of feeling. The Huntchagists again stirred themselves, and in Marsovan murdered two prominent Armenians, one a Protestant, the other a Gregorian. They also committed various murders in Constantinople, and threatened the life of the Patriarch because he refused to endorse their scheme for absolute independence. About this time also became increasingly manifest the bitter feeling on the part of the Turks themselves against their own government. Reports spread for the past year by the Moslem priests that the Sultan's rule was in danger, and that the Christians were planning to overcome the Moslem power, combined with the increasing taxation and the great injustice from which in many sections of the empire Moslems suffered not less than Christians, stirred the Young Turkey Party to an increasing degree of bitterness. Just to what extent this party was organized it has never been possible to learn; that remains for the future historian. It is, however, a fact that everywhere throughout the empire there was hostility not merely against the Christians, but against the Turkish Government for its failure to do justice to the Moslems even at the expense of Christians. Just at this time came Mr. Gladstone's famous address at Chester, in which he summed up very clearly the situation; under the treaty of 1856 the Powers of Europe had a right, clear and indisputable, to march into the country and take the government of it out of the hands of the Turks; England had a special right under the treaty of 1878 (the Cyprus Convention) and a special duty, from the fact that the making of promises in treaties carries with it the obligation to compel the keeping of the promises; the whole situation, therefore, he summed up in the three words: *coercion*, *must* and *ought*. The last he claimed had absolutely no meaning; *must*, he said, is fairly understood, but the first is the one that is thoroughly appreciated.

One of the first manifestations of spirit of the new English Government was the sending of an English fleet to the vicinity of the Dardanelles and there was a general feeling that aggressive action would be taken. Here, however, appeared a new phase. Having practically accepted the principle of European control, the Sultan now denounced it, saying that it was derogatory to his dignity and that it would endanger his own control over his empire. In this connection also he made complaint to France and Russia of the position taken by England. They indeed did not give him encouragement, but from this time it became questionable whether the concert of the three Powers which had been supposed to be firm was really so. Meanwhile relief work had been going on and a special commission had been sent into Eastern Turkey to manage the question of relief. This will be referred to later, but reference must be made to it here to show the peculiar situation in which England was placed. She was manifesting her

deepest sympathy with the Armenians, was apparently taking steps to coerce the Sultan and had made, or was on the point of making, propositions for his deposition. So far as appears, she was doing all that could possibly be expected. The next step was equally strong. It was asserted that, in an interview with the Turkish ambassador at London, Lord Salisbury had announced that the refusal on the part of the Turkish Government to execute Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin would be the signal of the dismemberment of the empire. This was indeed denied the next day, but it was generally believed to be virtually true, and the immediate issuing by the Sultan of a note stating the concessions he was willing to make with regard to the administration of the eastern provinces of his empire indicated that some extra pressure had been brought to bear upon him. Those concessions were not of remarkable character, merely in the line of what had repeatedly been said and repeatedly promised. It was evident, however, that there was increasing uneasiness throughout the empire. Next came reports that Russia and France had intimated their acceptance of the Sultan's proposals, while Great Britain insisted that they were incomplete. Fresh outrages were said to have started up throughout the empire. Despatches from the region of Erzingan spoke of a band of brigands attacking a company of Turkish soldiers, whereupon the authorities decided that the assailants were Armenian revolutionaries, and sent a force of 1,000 Turks to the Armenian village of Kemakh, the result being that five villages were pillaged, several thousand persons rendered homeless, men tortured, women and children assaulted and four monasteries attacked. There were also reports of an organization among the Turkish minor officials to attack the Christians on every hand if the government should definitely accept the scheme of reforms. For a couple of weeks there was apparent quiet, when the civilized world was astounded by the report of a massacre in Constantinople itself.

The long delay in effecting any result favorable to good order in Turkey from the negotiations respecting reform gave opportunity for the Huntchagists. At the same time the Turks were exasperated by the long continuance of the English fleet near the Dardanelles. The Armenians said that England and Russia had quarrelled. The Turks were inclined to believe also that there was weakness and fear on the part of the English, else the passage of the Dardanelles would be risked. Then came reports of all sorts. The Huntchagists circulated a story that the English Ambassador desired to have a few Armenians killed in the streets of Constantinople in order to have an excuse for bringing in the fleet. On Monday, October 1st, a procession of Armenians was formed, including perhaps 200, some armed with revolvers, but the greater part entirely peaceable men, and even those who were armed were for the most part ignorant of the use of their weapons. They started to the offices of the Sublime Porte to present their petition for relief from the terrible oppression under which their nation was suffering. Such petition was entirely in accord with the time-honored customs of Turkey. It was, however, not difficult to give it an illegal appearance, and taken in connection with various threats, it is scarcely surprising that the Turkish Government was alarmed. The police were drawn up hastily and the Armenians were ordered to disperse. In some way or other firing commenced, the Turks say by the Armenians, the Armenians charge it

upon the Turks. There was an attack upon the men by the police and a number of persons were killed before the procession was broken up. Once started, however, the disturbance was not easily stopped. It spread through different parts of the city. The Softas gathered from their Mosques and started on a riot through the streets armed with clubs. They attacked any Armenians they could find, knocking them down, wounding them severely and sometimes killing them; even attacking those who were already prisoners in the hands of the police. Through all that day and night and the next day this situation continued. During Tuesday night a number of attacks on Armenians in their lodging-places were made and from 70 to 80 were thus killed in cold blood. The whole number of killed is estimated at about 200 and most of them absolutely innocent of any action hostile to the government. The Turks, however, were thirsting for Christian blood and the Armenians were in a panic. The government sent for the Armenian Patriarch, but told him that none of his followers would be permitted to accompany him. He therefore declined the invitation and remained at his palace, where he was practically imprisoned, together with a large number of Armenians. In the main streets for two or three days there was apparently no difficulty, but on a side street it was not safe for an Armenian to be seen. The panic spread into the European quarter and 21 Armenian laborers at the glass works in Pera were killed. Multitudes took refuge in the churches, and in one case an effort was made to break through the walls, apparently to allow the Moslems free entrance to the church. Under the lead of the British Ambassador the foreign representatives acted promptly. The Dragoman of the English Embassy, under orders from Sir Philip Currie, visited the patriarchate to express sympathy with the Armenians. Sir Philip insisted upon the prompt acceptance of the scheme of reforms and demanded that every effort be made to restore order. For several days, however, it was impossible to persuade the terror-stricken Armenians to leave the churches where they were taking refuge, and it was not until the ambassadors sent their own officials to the churches, giving their personal pledges for safety, that the churches were cleared and quiet was reestablished in the city. Just at this time there came a change in the government and Said Pasha gave place to Kiamil Pasha, one of the ablest statesmen Turkey has ever known, and who was identified with the best interests of the empire. This, however, was attended by the sending to the Softas from the Sultan's palace of several hundred sheep and a quantity of delicacies as a reward for their loyalty. The flame once started in Constantinople, spread rapidly throughout the empire. The record of the massacres is contained in the following chapters. We confine ourselves here to a general survey of the political events following, until March, 1896.

The immediate result of the disturbance at Constantinople politically was the approval and signing by the Sultan of the scheme approved by the embassies for reforms in Turkey by the Sultan. This aroused great opposition among the Moslems in Constantinople and corresponding delight throughout the empire. It was not certain, however, what the general result would be. The Sultan claimed that it was done under compulsion and evidently cared very little about the reforms being carried out. At the same time came threats of the assassination of the Sultan on the part of the Albanian

guards in the palace, and the general situation in the capital being serious, the embassies made a demand for additional guardships for their own protection and the protection of the foreign residents. Further than this there was no indication of positive action on the part of the European Powers, and the conviction grew rapidly that a breach had formed between Russia and England and that nothing practical would be done. With the constantly repeated reports of massacres throughout the empire and the increased demands of the foreign Powers came another change in the ministry. Kiamil Pasha was summarily and very harshly dismissed and ordered to Aleppo. He appealed for protection to the ambassadors and receiving some support was sent to Aldin, a more favorable post.

The most significant item in the early part of November was a speech by Lord Salisbury, at the Lord Mayor's banquet, in which he expressed the hope that the Sultan would grant justice to the Armenians and secure their prosperity, peace and safety, but intimated very clearly that if he did not, it would be the ruin of his empire. The fact that this was coincident with the sending of the French Mediterranean squadron to the Levant and the massing of the Russian troops through the Caucasus, gave an impression that positive intervention was nearer than at any time before. It was asserted in the English papers that a joint ultimatum would be presented to the Sultan transferring the internal government to persons trusted by the Powers, and that in case of refusal the combined squadrons would advance on Constantinople. On the other hand, the Sultan was reported as terrified at the increasing bitterness against him on the part of the Turks; as improving every opportunity to decorate and advance men who had been identified with the outrages, and in general as holding an attitude of defiance. The time passed by, however, with no positive action. News came of massacres at Harput, Marash, Aintab and elsewhere, with increasing proofs of the complicity, to say the least, of the Turkish authorities. The man who was more than any other identified with the worst oppression in the province of Van was made governor of Aleppo, and there seemed to be on every side a condition of chaos. Some defended the Sultan, claiming that while he would be glad to stop the disturbances, he was powerless, the movement having become a popular movement and having gone clear beyond any ability of his to check it. The next phase was the discussion in regard to the admission of the guardships. The demand was entirely within the rights of the embassies, but the Sultan hesitated on the ground that it would exasperate the Moslem communities, and the European Governments hesitated to press the point. The result was, that more and more it became evident that there was on the one hand no cordial, united action between the European Governments, and on the other that the disturbances throughout the empire were under the direct orders of the Turkish Government. A significant event was the fleeing of the ex-Grand Vizier, Said Pasha, to the British Embassy for protection, on the ground that his life was in danger. He was kept there for some time and only left on specific assurance from the Sultan himself. Meanwhile on every hand reports of the situation in the interior increased in seriousness, but the government persistently denied them and spread the most atrocious lies with regard to the whole

state of the country; declared that in every case the Armenians had risen in defiance of the Turkish Government, and that where massacre had been reported there was simply a little disturbance.

The close of the year 1895 found everything in the empire in a state of uncertainty. The fleets had withdrawn, and there seemed to be no plan of action on the part of the various Powers, while the Turkish Government was doing its best by repeated falsehoods to arouse the Moslem populace to a high pitch of exasperation. At the same time the Turkish army was suffering from lack of pay, soldiers not receiving their wages and having no clothing or adequate food. A revolt of the Druzes in Syria called a large number of troops to the south, but it was difficult to secure military discipline among them. Meanwhile the widespread destitution resulting upon the massacres had called the earnest attention of Europe and of America, and appeals were made for assistance. This was at first refused by the Turkish Government, which would not even permit the Red Cross to enter the country, claiming that there was no war and no necessity; that the story of sufferings had been greatly exaggerated, and that the whole thing was the direct result of Armenian revolution. The month of January passed without any special change. The guardships were admitted, but the long delay had deprived the matter of any great significance. Then came reports of the secret treaty between Russia and Turkey, by which Russia would guarantee the Sultan's Government and in turn receive free passage for her fleets through the straits, which would be closed by Turkey to other nations. These reports were officially denied, but it was generally believed that there was basis for them. Early in February the report of the commission investigating the massacre at Sassun were issued. The actual statements confirmed the story of the outrages, showed that no steps were taken by troops to stop the Kurds, that in fact the soldiers and Kurds alike were the authors of the burning of entire villages; they also showed that there was no proof of revolt on the part of the Armenians. In the middle of February, Parliament assembled, and in the speech from the throne, which sets forth the general policy of the government, was the following clause in reference to Turkey:

"The Sultan of Turkey has sanctioned the principal reforms in the government of the Armenian provinces, for which, jointly with the Emperor of Russia and the President of the French Republic, I have felt it to be my duty to press. I deeply regret the fanatical outbreak on the part of a section of the Turkish population which has resulted in a series of massacres which have caused the deepest indignation in this country."

This clause aroused very strong criticism by the liberals, but Lord Salisbury claimed that it was impossible for the government to have done more, and intimated distinctly that Russia and France had refused to co-operate, and had distinctly said that they would resist any attack on the part of England to bring coercion to bear on the Turkish Empire.

CHAPTER XXII.

MASSACRES AT TREBIZOND AND ERZRUM.

Importance and General Prosperity of Both Cities-Threats by the Turks-Terror Among the Armenians--
Suddenness of the Attacks-Murder and Pillage by Regular Soldiers, Under the Eye of Foreign Consuls--
Ferocity of the Turks-Testimony of Eye-Witnesses- Terrible Scenes at the Burial of the Victims.

The city of Trebizond is one of the most beautifully situated in the Turkish Empire. On the eastern end of the Black Sea, occupying the southern slope of a picturesque range of mountains, which extends all the way from Constantinople to the Persian border, it has been since the time of Xenophon one of the most important places of the region. For centuries it was the starting-point of caravans to Persia, and all the Persian trade passed through its harbor, notwithstanding that that scarcely deserved the name, being little more than an open roadstead. The city itself has grown far beyond the original bounds, and there has seemed to be less of that fear which compelled the crowding together of the houses. Up the valleys of the mountains, and along the coast on either side, there extend gardens and vineyards, with many pleasant residences. Its population of about 45,000 is divided between Turks, Armenians and Greeks, the Turks being in a bare majority, and the Armenians somewhat outnumbering the Greeks. There are also consular representatives of the principal European countries, as well as of the United States. Up till within a few years trade has been brisk and the people acquired a reputation throughout the East for shrewdness of dealing. After the treaty of Berlin, and the occupation of Batum by the Russians, considerable trade that had formerly passed through Trebizond was diverted to Batum, and the wagons of the Circassians took the place of the mule and horse caravans of the overland route by way of Erzurum and Van. An effort was made to relieve the situation by the building of a very good carriage road over the mountain, south to Erzurum, a distance of about 180 miles. But the increasing disturbances in the region of Van, and over the mountains to Khoi and Tabriz proved more than an offset for the building of the road, and trade once diverted could to only a limited degree be brought back again into the old channel. Thus Trebizond has lost not a little of its importance. It is still, however, a city of considerable influence and its people are looked upon with more or less suspicion by the Turkish Government. Its proximity to Russia brought it within reach of the Russian Armenian agitators, and although the general tone of the Armenian community was thoroughly conservative there was sufficient noise made to create an impression of disturbance. The events in Constantinople narrated in the previous chapter created excitement all over the empire, and it was natural that in Trebizond the feeling should be quite intense.

About October 2d, two days after the disturbance in Constantinople, an Armenian, supposed to be a revolutionist, made a personal attack upon Bahri Pasha, the former governor of Van, who had been dismissed in consequence of the pressure brought to bear by the English Government after the disturbances at Sassun. It was said that the

attack was purely a personal matter, the man seeking vengeance for injustice done to himself and his family in the city of Van. The Turks, however, took for granted that it was another move in the same line as that at Constantinople and the disturbances early in the year at Marsovan. Coincident with this was the arrival of the news from Constantinople and the excitement on every hand was greatly increased. The Turks seemed to believe that all the Armenians were banded together and in armed rebellion against the government, represented that they were afraid of an attack from the Armenians, and even in some cases took measures to put their families in places of safety.

On Friday night, October 4th, there were extensive movements of armed men on the streets. At about 11 o'clock they seemed to disperse and nothing specially worthy of mention occurred through the night. On Saturday night, Oct. 5th, the excitement in town was very intense. The European Consuls had a consultation and going in a body to the governor, earnestly pressed him to arrest those who were exciting the people to acts of outrage. This he declined to do, but promised in his own way to do the right thing. Until Monday, Oct. 7th, matters seemed to be quieting down when an incident stirred up the excitement anew. On the previous Friday night, the son of a leading Turk of the town was wounded on the street, some say by one of his companions, others that he was shot by an Armenian whom he was trying to arrest. On Monday he died and the funeral revived the excitement in an intensified form, and loud and many were the "threats of massacre that night, and hundreds of the Armenians rushed to places of safety. Nothing occurred, perhaps, on account of rain. The next morning, October 8th, all dispersed in the hope that the danger was past. Men went to their shops, and were encouraged to open them as they had not done for two or three previous days. Suddenly, like a clap of thunder in a clear sky, the blow fell at about 11 A.M., Oct. 8th. Unsuspecting people walking along the streets were shot ruthlessly down. Men standing or sitting quietly at their shop doors were instantly dropped with a bullet through their heads or hearts. Their aim was deadly and there were few, if any, wounded men. Some were slashed with swords until life was extinct. They passed through the quarters where only old men, women and children remained, killing the men and large boys, generally permitting the women and younger children to live. For five hours this horrid work of inhuman butchery went on, the cracking of musketry, sometimes like a volley from a platoon of soldiers, but more often single shots from near and distant points, the crashing in of doors, and the thud, thud, of sword blows sounded on the ear.

Then the sound of musketry died away and the work of looting began. Every shop of an Armenian in the market was gutted, and the victors in this cowardly and brutal war loaded themselves with the spoils. For hours bales of broad-cloth, cotton goods and every conceivable kind of merchandise passed along without molestation to the houses of the spoilers. The intention evidently was to impoverish, and as near as possible to blot out the Armenians of the city. So far as appearances went the police and soldiers distinctly aided in this savage work. They were mingled with the armed men, and so far

as could be seen, made .not the least effort to check them. Apparently they took care to see that the right ones-that is, Armenians, were killed; also that an offer of surrender might be made to all that were found unarmed. To any found with arms no quarter was given, but large numbers were shot down without any proffer of this kind. This talk of surrender would seem to be on the supposition that all were in an attitude of resistance. One poor fellow when called on to surrender, thought he was called on to give up his religion, and when he refused he was hacked to pieces in the presence of his wife and children. The next day the city was in a great stir because news had come that the village Armenians, thoroughly armed, were on their way to attack the town. The real fact, however, seemed to be that the massacre was extending to the villages, though the constant effort was to show that this affair was only the quelling of an insurrection-like Sassun. Not one of the perpetrators of these outrages was arrested or disarmed, but all moved about with the utmost freedom to accomplish their nefarious purposes. On the other hand many of the Armenians were in prison.

The following account of the experience of an agent of the American Bible Society, who had been in the service for many years, and was a most valued man, will give an idea of the situation.

Krikor was at the government building, getting his pass- port to return, when the massacre began. He was with three others, and when the soldiers endeavored to put them out into the street, he refused to go, showing his special passport from Constantinople as a reason why he should not go. Two of his companions were instantly killed; the third was saved by Greeks who hid him two days in a trough of bread. But Krikor was able to delay a little by showing his passport. He then remonstrated with the guard, giving him at the same time a lira (\$4 40). This did not conquer the guard, who still continued to threaten him. But a second lira was more effective, and Krikor remained. He demanded to see the Pasha, but was told he was busy at the telegraph office, where, in fact, he remained in constant communication with Constantinople during the entire massacre. .

Another guard ordered him off, and was bought off like the first, but he took Krikor into the court near the prison. Here were soldiers who were threatening him when a Turk appeared who, though he did not know him, was influenced by mercy and immediately took charge of him. This Turk, an official in the prison, went with him to the "Bekje," a doorkeeper, saying to him, "This man is a friend of mine, a Turk, but he resembles an Armenian so much that he is afraid to go on the street lest he may be killed; you look after him." This the "Bekje did, and although through the afternoon many Turks came and glared at him, he was unmolested. Finally a clerk who knew him came by and said, "This is an infidel; why do you allow him to remain here?" Krikor had presence of mind to say, "No, it is you who are an infidel; get out of here," and the man slunk away. After dusk the friendly Turk came again to him, and took him into the prison, where he found a number of other Armenians, most of them officials in the Government House. Here he guarded them for two days-false alarms of death coming

often, keeping them in constant fear.

Finally, at night, the friendly Turk came in and took him out with him, going by a roundabout way to Mr. Parmelee's house, where he was safe under the American flag. Here he remained with some 150 others, for 10 days. At last his Turkish friend succeeded in getting him a passport to return to Constantinople, and when he first reached home he could not speak a word for joy. Some of the richest Armenians in Trebizond reached Constantinople in rags and poverty-so wretched that even their own friends did not recognize them at first.

From Trebizond the wave of excitement spread southward, following the line of the road to Erzurum. The first place reached was the city of Gumushkhane, famous for the silver mines from which it received its name, and which furnished the ore for the silversmiths of Trebizond and Constantinople. As in most mining districts the population was turbulent, and easily aroused. Details of the strife are wanting, at least such as furnish the basis of a reliable statement, but in general it is known that the Christian quarter of the city was practically destroyed.

From Gumushkhane the tide swept on to Baiburt, a thriving city of perhaps 15,000 inhabitants, Turks and Armenians. At Baiburt the road to Erzingan, the military headquarters for the whole region, branches off from that to Erzurum, and another gathers the trade of the Valley of Chorok. The Baiburt Armenians were noted for their intense national feeling and a vigor of character that frequently held the Turks in check. They were also regarded as among the shrewdest and most unscrupulous of their race. It was therefore to be expected that the Turks should take advantage of the general excitement to put down the men whom they hated and feared. The outbreak at Gumushkhane had occurred three days after the massacre at Trebizond, and two days later still the blow fell upon Baiburt. Here again there are few details available, but the Constantinople correspondent of the London *Times*, who had the best sources of information, estimated the number of killed at 1,000.

After the disturbances at Trebizond and these two places, all eyes turned to Erzurum, about eighty miles southeast of Baiburt. The city of Erzurum has been throughout the rule of the Turks the most important and influential city of Eastern Turkey. It has been a trade center, being the meeting-place of the various routes from the eastern end of the Black Sea to Persia, Bagdad and Central Asia Minor. It has also been the seat of the Governor-General of the Province, though the largest military force is at Erzingan, about ninety miles west, largely on account of the necessity of keeping the mountainous section occupied by the Dersim Kurds in order. It was thus the seat of consulates of the different European Powers interested in Eastern Turkey, chiefly England, Russia and France. Situated on a high plateau about 6,000 feet above the sea and surrounded by high mountains, the climate is very severe and the winters' cold and summers' heat are intense. Its proximity to the Russian border has made it the object of attack in the different Russo-Turkish wars and twice, in 1829 and 1878, it fell into Russian hands, being released only by special treaty stipulations. In the Crimean war it

was saved by General Williams's heroic defense of Kars. Of its population, estimated at 40,000, the Turks formed the great majority, though the Armenian community was strong, both in numbers, wealth and character.

Next to Van, Erzurum has been looked upon by the Armenians as belonging peculiarly to them, and as was natural the revolutionary party sought to exert their influence in it. That they so signally failed is but another proof of the inherent weakness of the movement and the general conservatism of the nation in regard to aggressive action against the Turkish Government. There was, however, much anxiety, and the tension of feeling between the two races had increased greatly. Only a spark was needed to start the Turks, while some Armenians were doubtless ready to begin, though in a city where they number 10,000 and the Mussulmans 30,000, including a large number of soldiers, it was sure to turn against the 10,000, who were, besides, almost all unarmed. For some days the Turks had been threatening to kill the Christians. Heroes from the Trebizond massacre, from the pillaging at Baiburt, from Erzingan and Kemakh, and from other places had come to Erzurum as the most likely place for another similar game. These men had boasted how much they had got, and all had the gold fever.

The time had been set several times, but nothing had been done and the Armenians had been induced to think that much of the threatening was mere words. The police patrol was very strong and apparently every means was used to preserve peace. Consequently the Armenians were all in their places when suddenly, shortly after noon on Wednesday, October 30th, the cry was raised, "They have commenced firing in the market."

A mob of Turks including many soldiers was seen running towards the market, firing right and left into the houses, from a few of which the fire was returned. The resident American missionary, Mr. Chambers, had been to the post-office to send a telegram to Bitlis to the Americans to say that all was right in Erzurum, and to inquire - how they were. On his way back through the long, straggling market he noticed a general uneasiness. Then he passed an Armenian who was running from one shop to the other telling his brethren to close their shops and run, for the firing would soon commence. But he had heard such words as these so many times that he paid no particular attention to them. Farther down in the markets he saw some shops already closed and some being locked up as he passed. But this had been done before, and several merchants had moved a large part of their best goods up to the mission building to be stored, until every corner was full. He passed on, walking rapidly, and before the Archbishop's house he saw a certain Murad having some trouble with a young and excited Turk. Evidently Murad had just taken away a dagger from him and given it back after some words. Mr. Chambers overheard an Armenian say, "He's given it back to him." This Murad, it was said on very good authority, had killed a number of Christians in the riots of 1890 in Erzurum. He was a police officer who watched every stranger that came to Erzurum; but on this occasion he behaved well, for in his quarter, which was thronged with Armenian shops, the mob was unable to commit any violence.

Mr. Chambers walked on for five minutes from the spot where he had seen Murad, when he heard shots behind him. The people began to run, and he followed suit. Some friends told him afterward that the Turks had fired at him, but he did not know whether it was the mob or the soldiers. He met one of the patrols of 20 soldiers, under command of an officer, who were supposed to keep the peace. These men had drawn their revolvers and were shooting right and left down the street and into the windows. The bullets whistled unpleasantly near to Mr. Chambers, who walked on until he was safe at his home in the mission building. All this time a perfect fusilade was going on, mostly in the direction of the bazaar. In the extreme western part of the city a large fire had broken out, the smoke of which drifted across the large barracks that are situated in that part of the city. There seven Armenians resisted the attack of the soldiers, who fired on them, riddled the house with bullets, and then set fire to it, and it continued to burn for 20 hours.

The attack was simultaneous on different sections of the city where Armenians resided. Whenever an Armenian appeared and the soldiers (who did by far the most of the killing, as well as plundering) could get a shot at him or cut him down with sword or dagger, they did so. The doors of the houses were broken open by force and the contents of the houses carried off. Everything that could not be carried off was destroyed. Boxes and furniture were broken to pieces. Pepper and pickles were mixed with flour that could not be removed, and the bread, often the provision for a week, was thrown on the floor and stamped to dust. As if to be sure that it would not be eaten by the hungry, a jar of pickled cabbage, or something of that kind, would be broken over it and trampled into it. As if the soldiers could not carry off all they wanted, a number of women attended them and carried off the plunder. An eye-witness reports that in one street he saw some officers lead a detachment of soldiers to two Armenian houses; the commanding officers themselves broke open the doors, entered and looted the whole house, stripping it completely. All through the afternoon and evening the suspense was intense. In the beautiful moonlight the Turks could be seen carrying away the plunder, while occasionally a volley of shots rang out on the night air.

All day Thursday the disturbance continued, though in somewhat less degree. An Armenian, speaking of his experience on that day, said that in the morning the soldiers entered his house. He and his family were driven out. The soldiers rifled the old man's pockets, took his watch and chain, but did not harm him. A soldier on the roof told the son to stand still or he would shoot him. But he dodged quickly under the lee of the wall and ran for the British Consulate, which he succeeded in reaching. Later he saw the same soldier, who had threatened to shoot him if he moved, acting as a special guard at the Italian Consulate. One of the guard before the English Consulate asked him sarcastically, "Which Consulate is this?" "The British," was the reply. "And this?" "The Italian." "Well, where's the Armenian Consulate? You were going to have a kingdom (beylik); you got a 'bey yesterday.'" In rifling the village of Purnagaban, a prominent Armenian, after being seized by the soldiers, with the naked sword at his breast, was

asked, "You wanted a' beylik;' here's your 'beylik.' " Another Armenian told how the soldiers on Thursday morning had taken his watch and rifled his pockets. The "dragoman" of the British Consulate, who had gone up to the Government House just before the massacre began, told his experience. He was with one of the "cavasses." On their way he heard an officer speak roughly to an unruly Turk as follows:- " Can't you keep quiet now; wait until it begins and then you can do what you like." In many places on the long way up he saw the soldiers all drawn up ready for the massacre. At the Serai he found not an official, which was very remarkable as this was a very busy time. All the lower officials were away. Both he and the "cavass" saw the storm brewing and hastened to return. They were about half-way, near an open market where fruit and grain and wood are sold, when the soldiers began to fire on the defenseless people. He relates that he saw one Armenian run up to a Turkish officer, throw his arms round him and beseech him to save him, but the officer pushed him away from him with both hands, drew his revolver, and shot him. Another, a blacksmith, they beat over the head with clubs as he ran until he fell, and then three soldiers standing within a few feet of him fired three bullets into him. One of them who looked at the body a moment saw the convulsive movements, and said to his companions, "Look, the dog isn't dead yet; look, look." For two hours the dragoman saw this from a safe place. The soldiers did the work, shooting every Christian they could see.

In the afternoon Mr. Chambers, with the English and Italian Consuls, and Tewfik Bey, of Shakir Pasha's suite, made a tour of the Armenian quarter between Gümrük street and the limits of the city on the east. What they saw there beggars description. A long large barracks with a parade ground in front is situated on the eastern side of the street. Then the massacre began these soldiers fired volley after volley into the houses, and then looted them. Those who had not escaped were murdered in their houses by the soldiers. In one house they saw two young brides brutally murdered lying on carpets bespattered with blood, disfigured, and almost naked. In another house were two men butchered in a barbarous way, splinters of broken boxes and doors, windows shattered to pieces, the plastering torn and broken, everything in ruin.

In very many cases Armenians came to the guard-houses for protection, and almost invariably they were first examined, and then shot down in cold blood. Sometimes this was done to single individuals, sometimes they were shot down in groups. During that awful four hours, the military gave no quarter to men found in the shops and streets, and in very many cases not even to men found in the houses. The wounds of the dead bodies were awful beyond description. Even the wounded had awful wounds. Mr. Chambers helped to dress the wounds, which included the amputation of the right hand and left thumb, of a man who had sixteen. Ten of them were on his head, all of them horrible gashes. Another he helped to dress, had three horrible gashes on his head, two dagger wounds in his back, and a bullet through his left hand. Coal oil had been poured on him preparatory to burning. A little nine-year old boy had his arm amputated. But this is enough to give an idea of the determined

onslaught. One soldier declared that he used ten packages of ammunition, each package containing twelve rounds, making in all 120 rounds of ammunition shot away by one man in four hours.

There was one redeeming feature. Many Turks (civilians) rescued Armenians who appealed to them. They kept them in their houses or in their shops, till it was safe to send them home. In one instance a Turk hid an Armenian under a pile of wool in the Armenian's own shop. When the shop was attacked, the Turk went in and helped to distribute the goods, trying in the meantime to turn the attention of the soldiers from the wool. However, they demanded the wool, which he was forced to give. Soon the Armenian began to appear. The soldiers were for shooting him at once. The Turk protested and prevented that. Then they insisted on searching his person and taking his purse and watch. Then the Turk said, "I am a Moslem. I have had no share in this plunder; the purse and watch must fall to me." The soldiers again demanded to kill him. The Turk whispered something to the officer in command, and they said that as the man was such a bad Armenian, he should be kept for hanging. After much persuasion the soldiers consented to this, so the Turk marched off the Armenian as if to the Government House, to be kept for hanging. However he got him to a place of safety, and later, restoring his purse and watch, sent him home. A large number of Armenians were saved by the good will of Turkish friends. This is all the more remarkable as the threats of slaughter against the Armenians seemed to be quite universal on the part of the Turks, and generally Turks joined with the soldiers in plundering the shops of their Christian neighbors.

By noon on Thursday, all was quiet again. The soldiers were bringing Armenians, who had managed to escape the slaughter by hiding in all sorts of places, to their homes. Many were brought to the Mission House first, where they again saw their kinsfolk. One was a sick and poor woman whose house had been entered by the soldiers. She fell at their feet and besought them to leave the few things she had in her home. One of the soldiers seized a "kalian" and struck her on the forehead, knocking her senseless. Quiet continued all day long, but the people could not be induced to return to their homes. Some went there to find everything cleaned out.

Thursday night passed much as the previous night had, and Friday morning came. This was the Moslem Sunday, and the terror of the Armenians was renewed. They had no confidence in the soldiers at all, and the Turks, as well as the soldiers, told them that the killing would begin again. Especially were the Bishop's house and the Sanassarian school threatened. The women with babies, girls, and more men flocked to the mission building until the building and enclosed garden held little short of 500 frightened people, who could not be induced to return to their homes. But gradually they ventured to go to their homes, and night found the crowd reduced to 200. The Turks made preposterous statements about the number of revolutionists, and arms and ammunition hidden in the Armenian church and Sanassarian school. Apparently they had been too cowardly to attack the place with their rifles, and now they threatened to bombard it from the forts.

The English Consul here lent his good services as mediator. The places were searched quietly by the Turkish officials, and, of course, not a weapon or a revolutionist was found, for there are no more law-abiding citizens in the Ottoman Empire than the gentlemen in charge of the Sanassarian school. They are fine, cultured men, who desire nothing more than peace to conduct their educational enterprise. In 1890, at the time of the riot, this same charge, equally unfounded, was made against them. But the affair in that year was really a riot, for a mob and not soldiers paraded the streets, looting and spoiling. In that year the English Consul lived in the mission building, where every glass was smashed in with stones.

It was natural that there should be the wildest statements as to the number of killed. Some put it at 2,000. The best estimate available makes it 800 to 1,000. Nearly all were men. Not a single dead Turk was reported or seen. A dragoman of one of the Consulates, who saw the firing for two hours in the bazaars, said that all the soldiers were out, fully armed, to the number of 3,000. They were not content with shooting a man once, but they fired at each one three and four times. He boldly declared that the government officials had ordered the soldiers to begin to kill. The patrol who held the foot of the street occupied by the American Mission House and several Consulates, deliberately squatted behind a pile of newly-chopped wood in front of the French Consulate and put the entrance to the Health Office under fire to prevent the Armenians from seeking refuge there. The English Consul stopped this, threatening to fire on them if they continued. Both the English and French Consuls, whose houses adjoin each other, were on their housetops when the attack began, and found the bullets whistling so unpleasantly near that they deemed it advisable to go below.

An eye-witness describes the scene on Friday afternoon as most horrible. He went with one of the cavasses of the English Legation, a soldier, his interpreter, and a photographer (Armenian) to the Armenian Gregorian Cemetery. The municipality had sent down a number of bodies, friends had brought more, and a horrible sight met his eyes. Along the wall on the north, in a row 20 feet wide and 150 feet long, lay 321 dead bodies of the massacred Armenians. Many were fearfully mangled and mutilated. He saw one with his face completely smashed in with a blow of some heavy weapon after he was killed: some with their necks almost severed by a sword cut; one whose whole chest had been skinned and his forearms cut off, while the upper arm was skinned of flesh. He asked if the dogs had done this. "No, the Turks did it with their knives." A dozen bodies were half burned. All the corpses had been rifled of all their clothes except a cotton under-garment or two. These white under-clothes were stained with the blood of the dead, presenting a fearful sight. The faces of many were disfigured beyond recognition, and all had been thrown down, face foremost, in the dust of the streets and mud of the gutters, so that all were black with clotted blood and dust. Some were stark naked, and everybody seemed to have at least two wounds, and some a dozen. In this list of dead there were only three women, two babies, a number of young children, and about thirty young men of 15 to 20.

A crowd of a thousand people, mostly Armenians, watched him taking photographs of their dead. Many were weeping beside their dead fathers or husbands. The Armenian photographer saw two children, relatives of his, among the dead. Some Armenian workmen were engaged excavating a deep trench twenty feet square, close by, to bury the corpses. Here, too, was a peculiar scene. The space of this trench contained many graves, and on one side were a number of skulls, perhaps twenty in all, and a pile of bones found in the excavating. He left the sad sight sick at heart. Apart from the rest was the horribly mutilated corpse of an Armenian priest, with whom a story is connected. He came from a village in the plain, Tevnik, where he had been attacked a few days before and his house looted. At the same time, to save his life, he signed a paper promising to pay the robbers 100 liras. As soon as he was free, he made for Erzurum to make complaint. This man, it was said, was the first Armenian killed. He was in the Serai, on his business, when he was shot dead in the premises with several other defenseless Armenians. This is the way it began at the deserted Serai, and is the other side of the story.

The news of the massacre at Erzurum created a great shock everywhere. That in such a city, in the very presence of English, French and Russian Consuls, with high dignitaries of the Turkish Government in command, such scenes should occur was in itself a matter of great moment. That the killing and pillaging should be carried on by the soldiers under the direct command of their officers, showed conclusively that it was no mere mob outbreak. Of course, there were various stories told. Among them was one to the effect that seven Armenians had run into the Government House and made directly for the audience rooms of Raouf Pasha. These had fired their revolvers right in the faces of those they met; but two of them were killed and five taken prisoners before they had done any harm. This was pretty hard to believe, for at the outside entrance of the Serai were always stationed at least two soldiers, and generally a dozen or more were strolling about fully armed.

More than that assurance upon assurance had been given that if the Armenians would be quiet there would be no trouble. The commanding officers claimed to be very indignant that the soldiers had been guilty of looting and it was said that they had done their best to stem the torrent. To those, however, who know Turkish officers and soldiers, this statement will carry little weight. Nine days after the massacre there was still great anxiety. Then commenced an outbreak of sickness, the result of the terrible nervous strain, of insufficient food and the general privation. Then, too, stragglers came in from the villages on the Passen, Khanus and Alashgerd plains, with their own stories of horrors, until it seemed as if the cup of suffering was more than full.

ON THE PREPARATIONS OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Christine Melkonyan

Institute of Oriental Studies of NAS RA

In the early 1960s, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Diaspora Armenians began a vigorous struggle both to solve the Armenian Question and to get international recognition for Armenian Genocide. The Soviet Armenia was also included in the cumulative maelstrom of the process, already commenced.

Unlike the USSR central government, the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin had started its works earlier, dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Armenian Genocide. On August 17, 1964, Catholicos Vazgen I issued a statement (kondak) on "the martyrdom of the Western Armenian people during World War I", proclaiming that the 1965 should be the year of "mourning and prayer for Armenian Church and people."¹ Taking into account the fact that the Armenian Church was not competent to make such a decision without the permission of Soviet Government, it can be said that the Church had received the consent of the latter. Let us note that the document, written by K. Dallakyan, the chairman of the State Council for Religious Affairs under the ASSR government and addressed to the head of the same department of the USSR Central Government, A. Puzin, reads clearly, "By the decision of Armenian government the republic will celebrate that anniversary in 1965 (means the 50th anniversary of Armenian Genocide - Ch. M.). As we have learned, the government (means the Armenian SSR government - Ch. K. M.) entered the Central Committee of the CPSU and got permission".²

The Armenian Church, too, had a chance to organize various events, dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Armenian Genocide. And often the Catholicos was taking self-made steps, which were seriously echoed in Diaspora communities. As a convincing argument for the events, organized by the Mother See, the factor of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) was being provided for Moscow by K. Dallakyan. He had made it clear in his letter that the Dashnaktsutyun party and the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, Khoren I, were trying to use the issue to inflame anti-Soviet sentiments.

According to K. Dallakyan, the issue of celebrating the 50th anniversary of Armenian Genocide had become part of Echmiadzin-Antilias struggle. In that way, he

¹ The National Archive of Armenia (hereafter referred to as NAA), s. 409 (Supreme Spiritual Council of Echmiadzin), I. 1, p. 520 (the kondak of Catholicos Vazgen I on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Armenian Genocide; August 17, 1964), p. 1.

² NAA, s. 823 (the State Council for Religious Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Armenia), I. 7, p. 73 (Report on Correspondence of Catholicos Vazgen I; 1964-1965), p. 7.

also justified the activities of Vazgen I, hinting that these steps were increasing the reputation of Echmiadzin among Diaspora Armenians.

Let us notice that this was not the first case when the ARF factor was speculated. On July 16, 1964, Ts. Aghayan, the director of the Armenian branch of Marxism-Leninism Institute, the head of the Oriental Studies Sector of the Armenian SSR, H. Inchikyan and the deputy head of the CPA Central Committee's ideology department, J. Kirakosyan brought the ARF factor as a convincing argument for marking the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide when addressing the letter "about holding events on the 50th anniversary of the mass extermination of Armenians in Western Armenia" to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA), having noted that "The anti-revolutionary, nationalist Dashnaktsutiun Party tries to use the issue to inflame anti-Soviet sentiments. ... Silence on the 50th anniversary of mass killings of Armenians will not be politically advantageous".³

This letter was almost identical to that Ya. Zarobyan sent to N. Khrushchev on September 18, 1964.⁴ In other words, it was one of the most solid arguments.

As to Catholicos Vazgen I, he was not satisfied just with the statement (kondak); he had been engaged in quite a large-scale activity. On September 24, 1964, he addressed Pope Paul VI⁵, Patriarch of All Russia Alexiy⁶, Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, and General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Visser't Hooft⁷, offering them to perform a liturgy, dedicated to the victims of Armenian Genocide.

K.Dallakyan's attempt in the letter to comment on the initiative of Catholicos proves once again that Vazgen I had acted independently and often did not inform the Soviet government for apparent reasons, thus provoking the latter's anger.

Despite this, his initiative had a positive effect as the Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of All England, Michael Ramsey, responded and performed liturgies to the memories of Armenians who were massacred in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.

Below are the documents, kept at the National Archive of Armenia - stock 323 (the State Council for Religious Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Armenia), list 7, piece 73 (Report on Correspondence of Catholicos Vazgen I; 1964-1965). It contains several interesting articles, related to the events held by the Mother See on the eve of the 50th anniversary of Armenian Genocide.

The archival piece under discussion starts with the letter of Catholicos of All Armenians, Vazgen I, addressed to Pope Paul VI and dated September 23, 1964, and

³ Harutyunyan A., The 50th anniversary of Armenian genocide and the Second Republic, Yerevan, 2015, p.22.

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵ NAA, s. 823 (the State Council for Religious Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Armenia), l. 7, p. 73 (Report on Correspondence of Catholicos Vazgen I; 1964-1965), p. 1-2.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁷ The letter of His Holiness Catholicos of All Armenians to religious leaders of sister-churches regarding the 50th anniversary of the the Great genocide of April, «Echmiadzin», 1964, 11, p. 8-9.

ends with the secret message of K. Dallakyan to Puzin in December 23 (the entire package includes 4 documents).

The following document, presented to the reader's judgment, is not the complete correspondence, but merely the last one. It gives a complete picture of tricks the government of the Soviet Armenia applied in 1965 to present the process of preparation of various events to the official Moscow.

Letter 1.

4 December

Secret

To the Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the Union of the SSR

To comrade Puzin A. A.

In the order of information, we report the following:

In the upcoming year, 1965, it will be 50 years since the mass killings of Armenians in Western Armenia. On November 29 of this year, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic, Comrade N. Harutyunyan, called it "the greatest catastrophe and tragedy" in the life of Armenian people in his report when considering this crime at a ceremonial meeting on the 44th anniversary of establishment of the Soviet power in Armenia. "What was committed by the ruling circles of Sultan's Turkey in relation to the Armenian people," he said, "during the first imperialist war, was in fact the beginning of the cannibalistic genocide in the history of modern times, which, 25 years later, during the second world war, Hitler's bloodthirsty fascists did on a larger scale and with more advanced methods in relation to a number of peoples" (newspaper "Sovetakan Hayastan", November 29, 1964).

By the decision of authorities of Armenia in 1965, this date will be celebrated in the republic. As we have learned, the governing bodies entered the CPSU Central Committee on this issue and received their consent.

1965 becomes important for foreign Armenian colonies. There is a sharp struggle over this issue between the progressive wing and the Dashnaks along this year. The former seek to hold the anniversary of the massacre under the sign of strengthening the struggle for peace, strengthening ties and uniting around the motherland - Soviet Armenia. Dashnaks, on the other hand, are trying to steer the public along the course of the American program for the "liberation of enslaved nations".

The Antilias Catholicosate, led by the Dashnaks, pursues its interests, too. On August 16, 1964, Khoren I issued a special kondak (encyclical) in which he almost literally repeats the corresponding paragraph of the decision of the Dashnak congress on "Liberation and Independence" of Armenia. The most dangerous thing was that in this Kondak Khoren turned not to his congregation, but to the entire foreign Armenian population, trying to take over the functions of the Catholicos of all Armenians. Thus, the

question of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the massacre becomes a decisive element in the common struggle of Echmiadzin-Antilias.

In this situation and in coordination with the governing bodies of the republic, the Catholicos of All Armenians Vazgen I issued a Kondak and sent it abroad, calling on foreign Armenians to fight for world peace, so that similar tragedies in the history of nations should have never been repeated. The Catholicos praises the free homeland, Soviet Armenia, and calls on all foreign Armenians to be united around it and actively support the motherland.

In addition, to raise Echmiadzin's reputation and seize the initiative from Khoren I, Vazgen I addressed letters to the Pope, Archbishop of Canterbury Ramsey and Patriarch Alexiy, asking them to "offer prayers for the souls" of Armenian victims during the First World War. Information about these appeals appeared in the foreign Armenian press and caused a great resonance, thus increasing the weight of Vazgen I as the only head of Armenian Church.

Paul VI and Ramsey have already positively responded to the mentioned letters. On November 18, a special liturgy was served in Vatican in line with the directive of the Pope, dedicated to mass victims - Armenians who fell during the First World War.

The translated texts of the above-mentioned Kondak of Vazgen I, as well as his references to Alexiy and Paul VI are attached. The contents of Vazgen I's letters to Wieser Huft and Ramsey are almost the same as those of the enclosed appeals.

Enclosure: 10 pages

Chairman of the Council

K. L. Dallakyan

Letter 2.

**To the Chairman of the Board of the Armenian Church Affairs at the Council
of Ministers of the Armenian SSR, Honorable Mr. Karlen Dallakyan**

We hereby confirm our letter dated August 17, 1964, and dedicated to the martyrdom of the Western Armenian people during the First World War, by which we declared the coming 1965 the year of mourning and prayer for the Armenian Church and people.

Our letter was printed abroad, in the Armenian press, and found a wide response in all the Armenian Church communities. Armenians everywhere are prepared to honor the memory of our two million innocent Armenians with dignity and honor. In some colonies such as New York, Buenos Aires and the Middle East, special monuments are being built to commemorate our martyrs.

Consequently, it is evident that a sacred duty is growing for us to build a monument-mausoleum anywhere near to the Holy Etchmiadzin to symbolize and

sanctify the memory of two million martyrs of our Western Armenians who did not have a grave, thousands of Armenian clergymen and church servants being among them.

This Christian and humanistic thought warmly speaks with our hearts and we want to accomplish it for the consolation of the servants of Armenian Church and our beloved people.

The monument we have planned should be built in an Armenian style and near the Cathedral, in an appropriate place, having roughly the usual fountain-monument dimensions.

Letter 3.

**To His Holiness the Patriarch of All Russia, Alexiy
Your holiness,**

The Armenian Apostolic Church and all the Armenian people should mark the 50th anniversary of the death of two million Armenians in Western Armenia next year, which took place during the First World War.

We, as the supreme patriarch of Armenian Church, considered it our duty to issue a special kondak for August 17, 1964, dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the great tragedy of our church and our people, announcing 1965 the year of mourning and prayer: and yesterday, with our letter of 24 September, addressed to the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, Father Wiesert Hüft, we suggested the World Council of Churches and its sister-members, driven by feelings of Christian mercy and justice, take part in the great mourning of Armenian Church on April 24 next year, having offered prayers for the repose of the souls of about two million martyred Armenians.

It will be extremely comforting for us to hope that Your Holiness and the Great Russian Orthodox Church will also be with us at our mourning moment with its ardent prayers at the time of mourning of our church and our people.

Accept, dearly beloved our brother in Christ, our greetings of pure love and our heartfelt benevolence, so that you may live for many years and continue to guide and console the God-loving great Russian people with your holy hand.

**With love in Christ
Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians
Vazgen I**

**Translated from Armenian (into Russian)
24/9, 1964, Echmiadzin**

Letter 4.**To His Holiness the Pope
Paul VI**

For us, it is a great spiritual satisfaction to send your Holiness a real message at a moment of historical significance for our church and people.

Next year, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the entire Armenian people should celebrate the 50th anniversary of the death of about two million Armenians in Western Armenia (Turkish Armenia), which began on April 24, 1915.

The annihilation of the entire Armenian people in Turkish Armenia was accomplished in a state-organized and premeditated form by the Sultan's government. During 1915-1920, thousands of cities and villages, monasteries and churches of historical Armenia were robbed, burned and turned into ruins, and a whole people - men, women and children, were driven into the deserts of northern Syria in an unbearable physical and moral torment, having been annihilated there in the deserts of northern Syria.

What happened was the first major crime of genocide in the history of modern times. The only guilt of the tortured Armenian people was their desire to live in this world as a Christian and as a free nation.

We, as the supreme patriarch of Armenian Church, considered it a duty of our conscience to publish a special kondak for August 17, 1964, dedicated to the 50th anniversary of this great tragedy of our church and our people, announcing 1965 the year of mourning and prayer.

We hereby draw the attention of Your Holiness and the entire Catholic Holy Church to the date mentioned, thinking that, having been led by Christian mercy and justice, you would deign on April 24 next year to join your great church prayers and that of your to our prayers for the rest of the souls of about two million tortured Christians.

The prayers of your Holiness and the prayers of all the sister-churches will be the deepest consolation for the grieving heart of all believers of the Armenian people.

Please accept your holiness our greetings of fraternal respect and love and our warm wishes for good health.

**With love in Christ
Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians
Vazgen I**

Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians

**St. Echmiadzin
October 24, 1964**

Translated from the Armenian by Vahram Gharakhanyan

125 ✓ 108с 8
23 декабря 4

Секретно

Экз. №...

ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЮ СОВЕТА ПО ДЕЛАМ РЕЛИГИОЗНЫХ
КУЛЬТОВ ПРИ СОВЕТЕ МИНИСТРОВ СОЮЗА ССР

Тов. ПУЗИНУ А.А.

В порядке информации сообщаем следующее:

В наступающем 1965 году исполняется 50 лет со времени начала массовых резней армян в Западной Армении. 29 ноября т.г., на торжественном заседании по поводу 44-ой годовщины установления Советской власти в Армении, в своем докладе, председатель Президиума Верховного Совета республики тов. Н. Арутюнян, расценивая это преступление, назвал его "величайшей катастрофой и трагедией" в жизни армянского народа. "То, что было совершено правящими кругами султанской Турции по отношению к армянскому народу, - сказал он, - в годы первой империалистической войны, фактически явилось началом того канибалского геноцида в истории новейших времен, который 25 лет спустя, в годы второй мировой войны, совершили кровожадные гитлеровские фашисты в более крупных масштабах и более усовершенствованными методами по отношению к целому ряду народов" /газ. "Советакан Айастан", от 29 ноября 1964 г./.

По решению руководящих инстанций Армении в 1965 году в республике будет отмечаться эта дата. Как нам стало известно, руководящие инстанции вошли в ЦК КПСС по этому вопросу и получили согласие.

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2.

1965 год приобретает важное значение для зарубежных армянских колоний. Уже с начала текущего года там происходит острая борьба вокруг этого вопроса между прогрессивным крылом и дашнаками. Первые стремятся провести годовщину резни под знаком усиления борьбы за мир, за укрепление связей и сплочения вокруг родины — Советской Армении. Дашнаки же пытаются направить общественность по руслу американской программы "освобождения пораженных наций".

Свои интересы преследует также руководимый дашнаками Антилиасский католикосат. 16-го августа 1964 года Хорен I издал специальный кондак /энциклику/, в котором он почти дословно повторяет соответствующий пункт решения съезда дашнаков об "Освобождении и независимости" Армении. Опаснее всего было то, что в этом кондаке Хорен обращается не к своей пастве, а ко всему зарубежному армянскому населению, пытаясь отнять функции Католикоса всех армян. Таким образом, вопрос о праздновании 50-летия резни становится звеном общей борьбы Эчмиадзин-Антилиас.

В этой ситуации, по согласованию с руководящими инстанциями республики был издан и заслан зарубеж кондак католикоса всех армян Вазгена I, в котором он призывает зарубежных армян к борьбе за мир во всем мире, чтобы никогда не повторялись подобные трагедии в истории народов, восхваляет свободную родину — Советскую Армению и призывает всех зарубежных армян сплотиться вокруг нее и активно поддерживать её.

Кроме того, для поднятия авторитета Эчмиадзина и перехвата инициативы у Хорена I, Вазген I обратился с письмами к Папе

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3.

Римскому, ВСЦ /в Мелневу/, Архиепископу Кентерберийскому Рамзею и патриарху Алексию, прося их "вознести молитвы за упокой души" массовых жертв армян в годы первой мировой войны. Информация об этих ~~публичных~~ обращениях появилась в зарубежной армянской печати и вызвала большой резонанс, в пользу повышения авторитета Вазгена I как единственного главы армянской церкви.

Павел VI и Рамзей уже положительно откликнулись на упомянутые письма. По указанию Папы, 18-го ноября в Ватикане была отслужена специальная литургия, посвященная массовым жертвам — армянам, павшим в годы первой мировой войны.

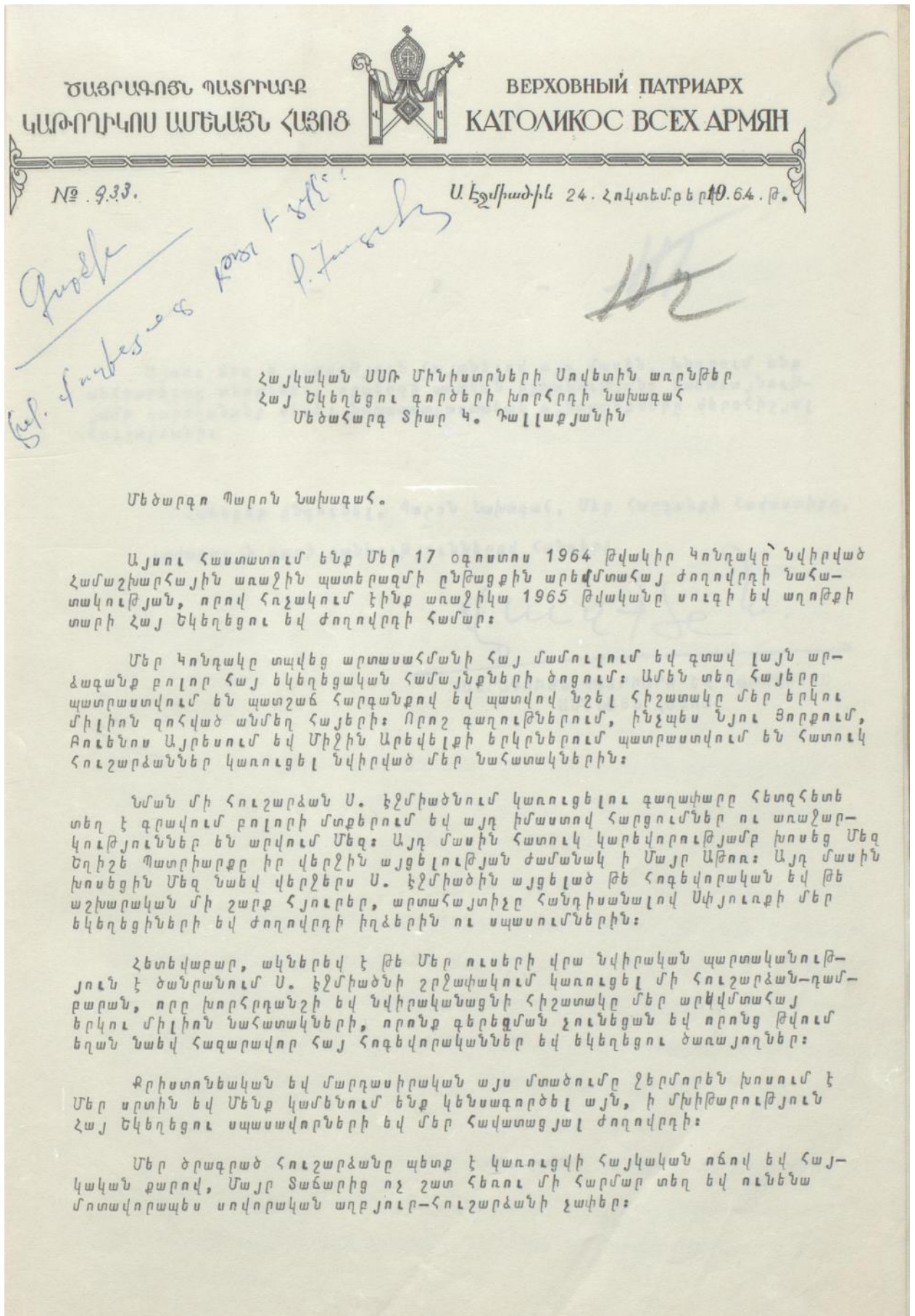
Переводные тексты упомянутого выше кондака Вазгена I, а также обращений Вазгена I к Алексию и Павлу VI прилагаем. Содержание писем Вазгена I к Визерту Хуфту и Рамзею почти аналогично содержанию прилагаемых обращений.

Приложение: на 10 листах.

ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЬ СОВЕТА

К.Л.ДАЛЛАКЯН

Отпеч. в 2-х экз.
Экз. № 1 — в адрес
Экз. № 2 — в дело
ЛА



3

Перевод с армянского

25/9, 1964 г.

Эчмиадзин

Его святейшеству патриарху
всея Руси Алексию

Ваше святейшество

Армянская апостольская церковь и весь армянский народ в будущем году должны отмечать 50-летие гибели около двух миллионов армян Западной Армении, которая произошла в годы первой мировой войны.

Мы, как всеобщий патриарх армянской церкви, сочли долгом Нашей совести издать специальный кондак, за 17 августа 1964 года, посвященный 50-летней годовщине великой трагедии нашей церкви и нашего народа, объявляя 1965 год годом траура и молитвы: и вчера, Нашим письмом от 24-го сентября, на имя общего секретаря Всемирного Совета Церквей отца Визерт Хуфта, предложили, чтобы Всемирный Совет церквей и его члены сестры-церкви ведомые чувствами христианского милосердия и справедливости, приняли бы участие в великом трауре армянской церкви и 24-го апреля будущего года вознесли молитвы за упокой души около двух миллионов замученных армян.

Крайне утешительно будет для Нас надеяться, что Ваше Святейшество и Великая Русская Православная церковь также своими горячими молитвами будет находиться рядом с нами в траурный момент нашей церкви и нашего народа.

Примите, очень любимый Наш Брат во Христе, наш привет чистой любви и Наше сердечное благожелание, чтобы жили Вы дол-

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где годы и Вашей святой рукой продолжали руководить и утешать
боголюбивый великий Русский народ.

С любовью во Христе

Вазген I

Верховный патриарх и католикос
всех армян

1161

Перевод с армянского

24/9, 1964 г. , Эчмиадзин

Его святейшеству Папе Римскому

Павлу VI

Ваше святейшество

Для Нас является большим душевным удовлетворением направить Вашему святейшеству настоящее послание в момент, имеющий историческое значение для нашей церкви и народа.

Армянская апостольская церковь и весь армянский народ в будущем году должны отмечать 50-летие гибели около двух миллионов армян Западной Армении /Турецкой Армении/, которая началась 24-го апреля 1915 года.

Уничтожение всего армянского народа Турецкой Армении совершилось в государственно организованной и заранее продуманной форме Султанским правительством. В течение 1915-1920 годов тысячетные города и села, монастыри и церкви исторической Армении были ограблены, сожжены и превращены в руины, и целый народ - мужчины, женщины и дети, в неистерпимых физических и моральных муках был загнан в пустыни северной Сирии и уничтожен.

То что свершилось, было первым крупным преступлением геноцида в истории новейших времен. Единственной виной замученного армянского народа было его желание жить на этом свете как христианин и как свободная нация.

Мы как всеобщий патриарх Армянской церкви, сочли долгом Нашей совести издать специальный кондак, за 17 августа 1964 года,

195 2.

посвященный 50-летней годовщине этой великой трагедии нашей церкви и нашего народа, объявляя 1965 год годом траура и молитвы.

Настоящим обращаем внимание Вашего Святейшества и всей Католической св.церкви на упомянутую дату, думая, что ведомый чувством христианского милосердия и справедливости, Вы сблаговолили бы 24-го апреля будущего года присоединить Вашу и Вашей великой церкви молитву к нашим молитвам за упокой души около двух миллионов замученных христиан.

Молитвы Вашего Святейшества и молитвы всех сестер-церквей будут глубочайшим утешением для скорбящего сердца всего верующего армянского народа.

Примите Ваше святейшество Наши приветы братского уважения и любви и горячие благопожелания крепкого здоровья.

С любовью во Христе

Вазген I

Верховный патриарх и Католикос
всех армян

NEW BOOKS



ETHNOPOLITICAL SHIFTS IN THE NEAR EAST AND THE ARMENIAN HIGHLAND IN THE VII-VI CENTURIES B.C.

By: Ruslan Tsakanyan

Institute of Oriental Studies, NAS RA, Yerevan, 2018, Edit Print, 290 p., 2 maps, 12 Fig.

The monograph of R. Tsakanyan deals with the fundamental ethno-political and geopolitical changes in the Near East and the Armenian Highland in the VII-VI centuries BC and transformations of the ethno-political map of the whole region. The study consists of four chapters.

In **Chapter 1** is represented the policy of mass deportations and resettlements in Assyria and Biainili-Urartu, **Chapter 2** describes the ethno-political situation in the Near East in the VIII-VII centuries BC, **Chapter 3** discusses the political situation in the Near East during the domination of Assyria, and **Chapter 4** is devoted to the changes of the ethno-political map of the Near East in the late VII c. and the first half of the VI c. BC.

The monograph has been carried out on wide source materials – cuneiform texts (Assyrian, Babylonian and Urartian) and studies of classical authors.

The author makes an attempt to present circumstances of ethno-political shifts in the Near East in the VII-VI centuries BC. Discussing the problems of the policy of mass deportations of the Assyrian and Urartian kings, it may be assumed that in both countries it has almost the same character. But it is possible that the policy of mass deportations against conquered peoples in their countries was first recorded in Urartu (Van Kingdom). Moreover, it is not excluded that the Assyrians could have borrowed this policy from the Urartian state. They carried out the displacement of population by force generally with the political purpose in Assyria, and with the economic purpose in Urartu. Such policy caused ultimately, in both countries changes of the ethnic situation and as a result, the decline of both states. In addition the author suggests Akkadian verb *nasāhu* - “to root out”, “destroy”, “drive”, and the Urartian verb *tamh(u)?*, *tašm(u)?*, *nah(u)?* - as terms for the mass deportations policy. And for the policy of mass resettlement in Urartu it is possible to offer an Urartian verb *eršid(u)*, *eršidu[bi]* – “made populated” and *ešiniduni* – “populated”.

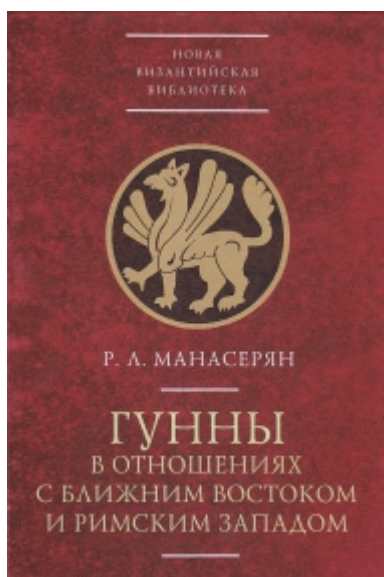
Also are discussed the issues of the Urartian king Rusa III's (685-660^(?)BC) campaign to Transeuphratian region, the circumstances of the Assyrian conquest of the country of Shubria by king Esarhaddon (681-669 BC), the specification of the year of the Medians' anti-Assyrian rebellion as well.

The comparative study of the ancient Near Eastern history permitted the author to conclude that the campaigns were aimed to prevent the possibility of the attack of the “House of Torgom” (*Bêt-Tôgarma/Torgāmā*)(in the reign of Esarhaddon new dangers

had appeared which attracted the Assyrian attention once again to some regions). The latter had occupied serious position in the Eastern Asia Minor at the close of the VIII century and now was trying to extend its influence in the East and in the South-East posing a threat for Assyria and Urartu. And only from such point of view it is possible to consider the necessity of the aforementioned campaigns. As to the Median's anti-Assyrian rebellion the author came to a conclusion that it took place after the Assyrian conquest of Shubria in the same year (672 BC).

In spite of the traditional opinion (basically in the Armenian historiography) that the loss of the independence of the Kingdom of Urartu dates from the last period of the Assyrian and Babylonian conflict (609-607 BC) and connects with the campaigns of Nabopalassar (625-605 BC) to North Mesopotamia - the author on the basis of the unique source (Babylonian Chronicles") concludes that such an opinion is purely argumented. Moreover, the lines 66-75 of the Chronicle B.M. 21901 obviously confirms that the campaigns of the Babylonian king Nabopalassar in 609 BC. was directed against the Assyrians which had besieged Harran with the aid of the Egyptians. According to the lines 70-72 of the Chronicle Nabopalassar battled in the mountains of Izalla, where he burnt down and destroyed numerous cities in the mountains, instead of helping Harran. The army reached the borders of "the district of?", garrisoned there and Nabopalassar returned to his country, without helping Harran which had obviously been lost at that time. Next year, in the 608 BC., the army of Babylonia approached the Armenian Highland and reached the borders of Urartu to the mountain of "Bīt-^mHa-a-nu-ni-ia", for the localization of which there is no common opinion. However, according to the march of the Babylonian army one can conclude that it was situated in the northwestern or northern part of Izalla which probably correspond to the Angeġun region of the "Armenian Geography". The author has come to conclusion that the identification of "Bīt-Hanunia" with Luwian Hanuni(a)assas and Old Armenian Khnunis or Korduk - is wrong. Thus, for the author it is unequivocal that the aforesaid three Babylonian campaigns - in 609 BC. in the mountains of Izalla, in 608 BC in the mountains of "Bīt-^mHa-a-nu-ni-ia" and in 607 BC. In "the district of?", were aimed to eliminate the remains of Assyrian power, and the theatre of military action was unequivocally in the south-western territories of the Armenian Highland.

It may be possible that there was another ethnopolitical power in this region - getting more powerful - the first Armenian Kingdom of "Bêġ-Tôġarmā/Torgāmā" – "The house of Torgom". The author concludes that the campaigns of Nabopalassar had undoubtedly directed against the Assyrians.



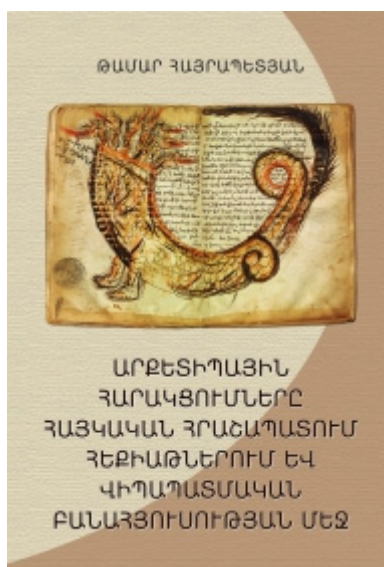
THE HUNS IN THE RELATIONS WITH THE NEAR EAST AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

By: **Ruben Manaseryan**

Saint-Peterburg, 2018: Aleteya, 118 p. (in Russian)

The topic of the study is the political role of European Huns of Attila, the reevaluation of their involvement in the international policy focused on the Western Roman Empire. Also the policy and diplomacy of Attila regarding his expected campaign against the Sassanid Empire in

449-450 AD is studied.



COMBINATION OF ARCHETYPES IN ARMENIAN TALES OF MAGIC AND EPIC HERITAGE

By: **Tamar Hayrapetyan**

"Gitutyun" Publishing House, NAS RA, Yerevan, 2016, 462 p. (in Armenian).

The monograph of Tamar Hayrapetyan is devoted to the study of Armenian folktales and epic heritage. It tries to reveal the hidden power of the subconscious, historiographical traces, symbol indicators and archetypes in different layers of verbal and non-verbal material both in Armenian folktales and Armenian epic heritage.

The research is aimed at studying national and cultural ideas, symbol indicators, as well as allegoric perception of Armenian folktales and epic compositions. The systematized study of ritual, religious and mythical features of Armenian archaic tales collected and published from the second half of the 19th century is urgent for the research of Armenian folktales and epic traditional compositions.

To reach the goal of the paper the following objectives are set forth: to study tales of magic and animal tales as original texts of oral tradition, containing conscious and unconscious layers of people's world vision and imagination; to examine the folktale protagonists (often nameless) and delineate similarities with their ancient precharacters on social, gender, age and occupation basis; to reveal natural and geological origin of indicators used in symbolic system of initiation, paying attention to calendar, astronomic, ethnic and cultural ideas of ancient people, their perception of the other world, time and space relations and so on; to survey ritual and charm mythic biophysical

indicators of Armenian folktales and in Armenian epic heritage, which are not completely studied not only in Armenian but in folktale studies in general.

The topicality of the work is defined by the choice of the subject of research. The systemized investigation of ritual, religious and mythological peculiarities of Armenian folktales and epic compositions published in the second half of the 19th century is urgent for the study of Armenian folktales and epic heritage.

The practical significance lies in the fact that the obtained results can be applied in the design of theoretical courses and seminars in folklore, ethnography, culture studies, psychology, and semiotics and basically in Armenian folktale studies. The following methods of analysis have been used in the research: historical-comparative, structural, historical-geographical and psychoanalytical methods of research of folklore texts.

As a factual research material, Armenian archaic folktales (tales of magic and animal tales) have been chosen. To be more precise, the 17 volume collection of Armenian folktales, published by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia, folktales from the periodical "Armenian Ethnography and Folklore", "Eminian Ethnographic collection" by Y. Lalayan, folktales from the first volume of Garegin Srvandztyants works, as well as folktales from the corresponding journals of the time ("Ethnographic journal", "Byurakn" and others) are used for the research. The materials from the folklore archive of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography are also used as a research material in the dissertation, as well as field data of the author of dissertation, collected during the last 15 years. Armenian national epics such as the "Vipasank", "Persian war", "The War of Taron" and the "Daredevils of Sassoon" are also investigated in the work.

The paper consists of an introduction, four chapters with the corresponding subchapters, conclusions, abbreviations, bibliography and appendix.

The Introduction provides the overview of the work, its subject matter, the topicality, the practical and theoretical significance of the research in the proposed field as well as the methods applied for the research.

Chapter one: "Material and natural basis of Armenian folktales" thoroughly examines those symbol indicators which have natural origin and are considered to be the symbols of initiation, they are time and space indicators, and ritual, curing and metaphysical indicators as well.

People have known about wonderful properties of minerals since ancient times. Stones were endowed with magic properties to conjure evil spirits, cure various ailments, and bring happiness and well-being. Armenian folktales possess prolific information about magical properties of natural stones. Ancient man used to observe celestial luminaries trying to understand their movements and to comprehend time. The process of time comprehension and search has been expressed in plots of Armenian popular tales of magic, where time is counted not by real units, but rather mythological perception is observed.

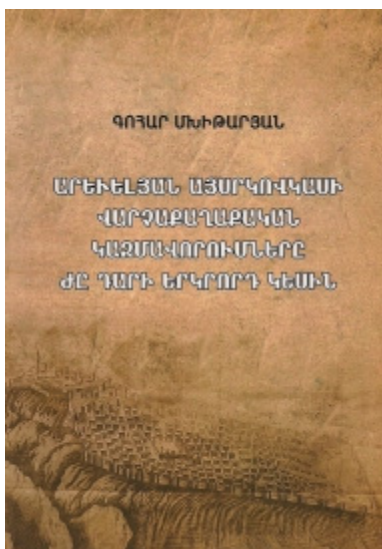
Chapter two: "Ritual and Mythological motifs in Armenian folktales and ancient folk epics" is concerned with those motifs that contain ancient prototypal characters and archaic features found in folktales in different ethnographic regions of Armenia. In our work we have studied the character and activities of the legendary Arabian wise doctor Lokhmany, who is often depicted in Armenian folklore, especially in Armenian folktales. Lokhmany's treatment methods were based on the medical therapy of wild nature. In Armenian fairytales biophysical (operation, balsam, bathing, treatment of animal or vegetable origin) and ritual-magical (prayer, akhtark, witchcraft, cosmic and astronomic notions) codes of treatment are similar, because according to folk wisdom the doctor has three weapons - speech, plant and knife. Parallels connected with the folk perception of Saint Gregory of Narek and heroes of Daredevils of Sassoon are also taken into consideration in this chapter.

The author also discusses mythological personages of Amanor and Vanatur who are the patrons of the first fruit ripe.

Chapter three: "Allegorical perception of new worlds and objects in Armenian folktales" investigates plots and motifs based on the people's assimilation of new cultures and traditions depicted in Armenian folktales and epics. This chapter also discusses the tradition of remaining silent in Armenian fairytales and investigates those tales in which the souls of the protagonists reside far from their bodies. Here we may find also investigation of the character of Solomon the Wise in Armenian folklore tradition.

In Armenian folktales the naming is connected with various ceremonies, which sometimes contain traits of the unknown ancient life of the people. The investigation of the name giving tradition helps to interpret the process of formation of our nation and different beliefs connected with it. According to our observations, the proper names in Armenian folktales are divided into four groups depending on their origin.

The fairy tale originated from myths and rituals and was enriched with both complementary and differentiating tale motifs. Fairy tales embody a number of ethnocultural features of the Armenian nation. Although under the influence of time and space developments the majority of fairy tales have transformed into retellings of the given themes. Moreover, the tales collected in Artsakh (Karabagh) maintain traces of archaic and cult rituals of our ancestors. The records made in Artsakh and their further publications and study have a great historical and cultural value for ethnography and folklore. They are important for the investigation of the genesis of the Armenian nation. Having compared and analyzed plots of Armenian folktales and ancient epics containing stable and changeable elements, from the perspectives of folklore, ethnographic, mythological, linguistic and archaic research, we can state that Armenian tales and epics have close connections with archaic beliefs and cult rituals of our distant ancestors and contain tracks of ethnocultural imagination of our nation.



ADMINISTRATIVE-POLITICAL UNITS OF THE EASTERN TRANSCAUCASIA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

By: **Gohar Mkhitryan**

Yerevan, 2018, "Gitutyun" Publishing House, 149 p.

In the monograph are studied the administrative-political units of the Eastern Transcaucasia, relations between them and the Russian Empire in the second half of the XVIII century. The topic is of special scientific significance for the comprehensive study of the historical, geopolitical and economic processes in the Transcaucasian direction of Russian foreign policy and the ethno-political situation in the Eastern Transcaucasia. Also, the actuality of the topic is essential for the study of the geopolitical interests of the Russian State and the Eastern Transcaucasian khanates, which provides a basis for a most in-depth analysis of a number of currently unresolved issues in Transcaucasia, particularly the Artsakh Issue, against the historical and scientific background. The monograph aims to explore the relations between the Eastern Transcaucasian khanates and the Russian Empire under the background of the geopolitical and regional developments in the second half of the XVIII century.

The Eastern Transcaucasia is a critical political hub of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea basin, a strategic way to the Middle East that has always been in the center of regional developments, having a unique role in the political processes. In this context, in the second half of the 18th century the political role of the Eastern Transcaucasian Khanates is highlighted that appeared in the field of political-military and trading-economic interests of the Iranian, Ottoman and Russian Empires. This implied the formation of the specific political relations between khanates of the Eastern Transcaucasia and the above-mentioned states whose study helps to emphasize many issues of strategic and constructive significance formed in the political processes.

Based on the analysis of the source materials, the policy of the Iranian, Russian and Ottoman Empires toward the Eastern Transcaucasia in the second half of the 18th century is revealed. Thus, Iran could not put up with the loss of the region that the country historically owned, as well as with the fact of the reinforcement of the opposing powers' (Russian and Ottoman empires) impact in the region. Though Kerim Khan Zend sought to reaffirm Iran's "historic rights" over Transcaucasia, he actually recognized the autonomous rule of the local rulers for having insufficient military-political and diplomatic potential. The Ottoman Empire was also unable to solve the Transcaucasian issue solely and taking into consideration the potential cooperation between Russia and Iran (through the example of 1720-1730) aimed to gain the affection of Transcaucasian

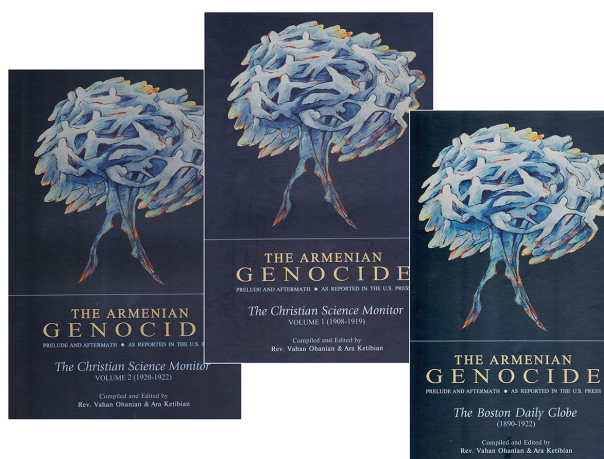
khans and rulers. Russia implemented the Transcaucasian policy through the long-term solutions and mechanisms, regulated relationships with the rulers of the Ottoman Empire, Iran and Transcaucasia. So, in the 1750-1770s, taking into account the Iranian-Turkish political factor in Transcaucasia and Daghestan, the Russian diplomacy refused the military intervention in the region for a while. During those decades the Russian policy toward the khanates was characterized by diplomatic interference which became a concept; a mechanism for making counterbalances in later years. In 1780s after solving the Transdnestrian, particularly the Crimean problem successfully, the Russian Empire skillfully applied to the principle of political equilibrium toward the most powerful rulers of Transcaucasia - the Georgian king Heraclius and the Ghubaian Fath Ali Khan, thus protecting Transcaucasia from the emergence of unipolar power.

Unlike the first half of the 18th century, when the Russian-Turkish-Iranian relations were regulated by a number of agreements, Iranian, Russian and Ottoman Empires adopted the policy of neutrality by excluding the military intervention in the region in 1750-1780s. The lack of central government in Iran was in line with Russia's military and political interests. The situation would have enabled the peaceful integration of the Eastern Transcaucasia into the empire. Therefore, taking the advantage of the unstable state of Zend dynasty's power, after the Russian-Turkish War (1791-1793) Russia was planning to integrate the Eastern Transcaucasia into the empire exclusively in a peaceful way by maintaining the Ottoman Empire's policy. The establishment of solitary power of Agha Mohammed Khan in Iran in 1794 aimed at the reestablishment of the national borders that existed during the Safavid state. The examination of the official documents of that period proves that the Russian authorities showed political indifference to the invasion of Eastern Georgia carried out by the ruler of Iran in 1795, and used it as a motive for military intervention in the region and a pretext for getting the support and sympathy of the peoples of Transcaucasia. The Russian Empire used the Agha Mohammed Khan's invasion of Eastern Georgia as a motive for launching the military intervention in the region. Both the invasion and the destruction of Tbilisi were a major blow to the Georgian statehood. The spread of the Russian domination from the Caucasian ridge to the South put these khanates to the dilemma: to support Russia, to recognize the supreme power of Iran unconditionally or to fight for their sovereignty? The Khanates' concept of maneuvering lost its viability after 1795, thus returning Eastern Transcaucasia to the Iranian state system. On the other hand, due to the "The disaster of Tbilisi in 1795" the region had doubts about the usefulness of the Russian Empire's protection. Khans were to face the historic and political election. Was it worth suffering from the "Qajar Danger" for the sake of Russian support? Khanates should be politically oriented toward the Russian and the Ottoman Empires or Iran.

The examination of archival materials and literature lets the author to evaluate the Caspian Expeditions organized under the leadership of V. Zubov in 1796 from a new perspective. Certainly, at that time the Russian Empire was not concerned about the fate of the Transcaucasian peoples tortured by Agha Mohammed Khan. Acting as a

"liberator" and "rescuer" for the people, the Russian Empire pursued the goal of expanding the borders of the state and using the South Caucasus for purely imperialist interests. That region had serious military-political significance for Russia as it could serve as a barrier to make the southern borders of the country invulnerable, at the same time being a convenient and reliable base to the Caspian Sea basin, for moving to Iran's Caspian regions and Atropatene trying to achieve the ultimate goal of the tempting prospect of moving to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. In the opinion of the Russian authorities the elimination of the threat from the southern borders of the Russian Empire was connected with the creation of the security zone on the west coast of the Caspian Sea in the face of the Muslim Buffer Powers under the leadership of Fath-Ali Khan's family members.

The Transcaucasian policy of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 18th century prepared a fertile ground for carrying out the task of capturing this strategic region in the first quarter of the 19th century. So, in 1800, the emperor Paul I decided to annex the Eastern Georgia to the Russian Empire. That ambitious plan was brought to life by Alexander I, the Russian emperor's (1801-1825) famous decree signed on September 12, 1801. Taking into account the expansion of the Russian influence in Transcaucasia, the khanates of Karabakh, Shaki, Shamakhi, Derbent, Quba and Baku recognized the dominance of the Russian Empire in 1805-1806. And by the Treaty of Gulistan signed on October 12, 1813, these khanates were legally included in the Russian Empire experiencing some serious administrative and economic changes in the first half of the 19th century.



THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE. PRELUDE AND AFTERMATH. AS REPORTED IN THE U.S. PRESS. THE BOSTON DAILY GLOBE (1890-1922), 1264 p. THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

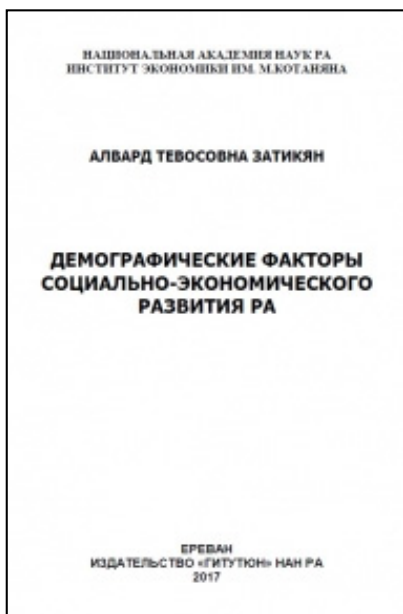
Volume 1, (1908-1919), 744 p.

Volume 2 (1920-1922), 884 p.

Compiled and Edited by Rev. Vahan Ohanian and Ara Ketibian, Mekhitarist Publication, 2019.

These volumes draw upon extensive American newspaper accounts about the fate of Armenians from 1890 to 1922 in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey. They, along with companion volumes, documents the Armenian experience of inequality, persecution, precursor massacres and the Armenian Genocide. The collection is part of a series of volumes that bring together thousands of pages of daily newspaper accounts that are invaluable reference work in revealing the fate of the Armenian people. These are part of a

comprehensive publishing project led by Rev. Vahan Ohanian (Mekhitarist Congregation) and Ara Ketibian. The series involves a planned ten books that systematically document the accounts from six leading American newspapers: The New York Times, The Boston Daily Globe, The Chicago Tribune, The Christian Science Monitor, The Los Angeles Times and The Washington Post. Such cumulative daily newspaper reports provide a documentary base from which to confront contemporary state-sponsored genocide denial that seeks to cast doubt about what happened in history. The witness accounts are a time capsule, but a powerfully moving one, even today.



DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

By: **Alvard Zatikyan**

Yerevan, 2017, "Gitutyun Publishing House", 192 p. (in Russian)

The monograph is aimed on the study of the impact of the demographic factors on the social and economic development of the third Republic of Armenia (1991-2017). The analytic part of the monograph is based on the statistic data.

The author discusses several key factors of the socio-economic situation - decrease of internal market demand, increase in expenditures of the state budget, changes in the market of labor, birth and mortality rate, number of population, migratory flows.

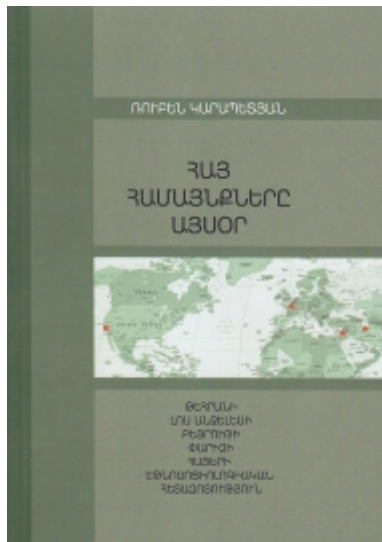


THE SATIRICAL PRESS OF SOVIET ARMENIA IN THE 1920S ("SHESHT", "ZURNA", "KARMIR MOTSAK")

By: **Hamo Sukiasyan**
Narine Yerosyan

Edit Print, Yerevan, 2018, 144 p. (in Armenian)

The book is devoted to the study of three satirical journals published in Soviet Armenia in the 1920s ("Shesht", "Zurna", "Karmir motsak"). It presents the history of foundation of the satirical press of Soviet Armenia, the activities of satirical editors Vahan Totovents and Eduard Khojik in this field.



ARMENIAN COMMUNITIES TODAY: ETHNO-SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF ARMENIANS IN TEHRAN, LOS ANGELES, BEIRUT AND PARIS. ETHNO-SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF ARMENIA AND THE DIASPORA, N 12

By: Ruben Karapetyan

*Publishing of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography
NAS RA, Yerevan, 2018, 220 p. (in Armenian)*

The monograph entitled “Armenian Communities Today” completes a series of publications, based on the materials of an ethno-sociological study on the Armenian communities of Teheran, Beirut, Paris and Los Angeles, which were elaborated by the author and carried out under his guidance. Over forty profound interviews with local experts underline the analytical elaborations found in this book. Thus, the main purpose of the ethno-sociological study of an ethnic group in a foreign environment, i.e. to understand its current situation and perspectives from inside, was attained.

CLASSICS OF ARMENOLOGY

JOSEF STRZYGOWSKI



J.Strzygowski was a Polish-Austrian art historian, who is well known for his fundamental studies in the field of Medieval Oriental art.

J.Strzygowski was born Biala, Austrian Silesia (today in Poland) in March 7, 1862. After a brief involvement into cloth manufacturing he entered the University of Vienna, then Munich where he studied art history. In 1885 he completed his dissertation entitled as "Baptism of Christ". Soon after Strzygowski visited Rome, Italy, where undertook a thorough study dealing with the Byzantine sources of Italian painting.

The next seven years Strzygowski's travelled to Greece and Russia, where he studied Byzantine and Russian art. In 1892 he entered the University of Graz, Austria, but soon after left for Egypt (1894-1895) focusing his scholarly interests to early Byzantine and Islamic arts (including Coptic art). By his return to Austria Strzygowski published numerous studies devoted to Byzantine and Islamic arts. Among them his "The Orient or Rome: contributions to the history of late antique and early Christian art" (1901, in German) where he tried to evaluate the negative impact of Oriental or Semitic art on Greek, a theory which triggered many art historians to oppose his attitude.

J.Strzygowski retired from the University of Vienna in 1933 and died there in January 2, 1941.

Armenian art and culture occupy a considerable place in J.Strzygowski's studies. He visited Armenia twice, in 1889 and 1915. He contacted with the leading Armenian architects T.Toramanyan and L.Lisitsyan, as well as with N.Marr and H.Ter-Movsesyan. Under his direct assistance in 1913 was organized an exposition of T.Toramanyan's photos and measurements of medieval Armenian churches. Inspired by Toramanyan's studies J.Strzygowski suggested to undertake a large program dedicated to medieval Armenian architecture after his expected visit to Armenia.

At the end of World war I J.Strzygowski published his two-volume monograph «The architecture of the Armenians and Europe» (Vienna, 1918), in which he claimed to have traced the origins of Gothic architecture to Armenia. He treated the Armenian medieval architecture on par with Greek and Northern (Gothic) architecture and caused western art historians to regard it as a highly developed and independent phenomena, but not provincial one, as it was regarded in Europe. Strzygowski formulated a monumental comparative study in which he defined Armenia's position within the architectural developments of Byzantium, Iran, and Western Europe.

In his monograph J.Strzygowski suggested a periodization of early medieval Armenian architecture as follows:

IV century - centrally-planned buildings (church architecture).

V century - the end of this form and the introduction of as the basilica was exported into Armenia from the Mediterranean. This was the result of the introduction of foreign architectural elements which corrupted the "purity" of the fourth-century national forms.

VII - revival of the centrally-planned form which reflects the strengthening of national feeling.

There is compelling evidence for Strzygowski's specific attraction to Armenia. Although being an author of numerous works on eastern regions such as Asia Minor, Syria, and Iran, Strzygowski found in Armenia something quite unique; a Christian (unlike Iran) and Aryan (unlike Asia Minor and Syria) land which had existed as an ethnic and/or national unit since the pre-Christian era. Armenia, according to Strzygowski, constantly struggled to repel foreign influences and maintain its national character.

Although some ideas regarded the origins and development of Armenian art and architectures put forward by J.Strzygowski were disputed by later scholars, his impact on Armenology is great.

GRIGOR KAPANTSYAN



Gr.Kapantsyan was one of the outstanding representatives of the XX century Armenian Armenologists, whose fundamental studies had pioneering impact on different fields of modern Armenology.

Gr.Kapantsyan was born in Ashtarak (not far from Yerevan) in February 13, 1887. After graduating the local school he continued his education at the Armenian-Georgian-Persian section of the Oriental faculty, Saint-Petersburg (Russia). Among his teachers were renowned linguists and orientalists – N.Marr, C.Saleman, I.Bauduin de Courtenay, N.Adontz, I.Javakhishvili.

After University he came back in Armenia in 1914 and was appointed as a teacher the Gevorgyan seminary of Echmiadzin (until 1918). At that same year Gr.Kapantsyan had participated in the archaeological excavations of Ani, the capital city of the Bagratide Armenia headed by N.Marr. In May 1918 he he was one of those Armenian intellectuals who fought against the Turkish army near Sardarapat who advances towards Yerevan.

After the Sovietization of Armenia, in 1921 Gr.Kapantsyan entered Yerevan state university where until 1954 he was the chair of the department of General linguistics. At the university he taught Classical Armenian (grabar), comparative linguistics of Armenian language, general linguistics, and Urartian language as well. In 1932 he became professor, and in 1943, was awarded the degree of doctor (without dissertation).

Until the end of his life Gr.Kapantsyan was the director of the Institute of Language, Armenian Academy of Sciences (1950-1956). He was also one of the establishers of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.

The scope of scholarly activities of Gr.Kapantsyan embraces different spheres of Armenology - philology, history and related disciplines. Due to basic education his studies are distinguished by infinite deepness of used materials, both Armenological and related ones. He was equally fluent in Armenology, Kartvelian studies, Iranistics, Hittitology and Urartology as well.

Among the scholarly interests of Gr.Kapantsyan were various aspects of Armenian ethnogenesis, early Armenian statehood, Armenian-Iranian, Armenian-Georgian, Armenian-Hittite interrelations. Gr.Kapantsyan was focused also on Armenian dialectology and pre-Christian Armenian pantheon.

Although some ideas of Gr.Kapantsyan, due to the appearance of new linguistic and archaeological source materials, as well as new theoretical approaches today are outdated, nevertheless they had paved way for current and future studies nearly in all aspects of Armenology.

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PERSONALIA

LEVON ZEKIYAN - 75

Archbishop Boghos Levon Zekiyan is an Armenologist, philosopher, Professor of Armenian Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Rome and Istanbul University, a member of the Academy of Venice, Foreign member of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences (1994), Corresponding member of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. He is the Armenian Catholic Archeparch of Istanbul. Zekiyan is the Founding President of the Associazione "Padus-Araxes", the director of Summer Intensive Course of the Armenian Language and Culture at the University of Venice (since 1986), and former editor of *Hye Endanik* (1974-82) and *Bazmavep* (1980-1985) periodicals.

Boghos Levon Zekiyan was born in 1943 (October 21) in Constantinople. He finished the Mekhitarist Seminary of San Lazzaro degli Armeni (1959) and Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome (Master in Philosophy (1962), and in Theology (1966)). He was ordained a priest in 1967.

He completed his Ph.D. dissertation ("The Principle of Interiority in St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge and the self-knowledge of the knowing subject") at the State University of Istanbul in 1973. From 1982 to 1985 he was the Principal of Moorat-Raphael College, and also the Secretary of the Armenian Academy of the Mekhitarist Fathers at San Lazzaro in Venice (1974-81). He is also visiting Professor of American Armenian International College of the University of La Verne, CA (1988/89 - 1991/92). Levon Zekiyan was Chief Organizer of the "Giornate di Studio: Gli Armeni nella cultura italiana" (1982, 1983, 1984, 1986) and 5th International Symposium on Armenian Art (1988), also - scientific coordinator of the Exhibition "The Armenians in Italy" (1990), founder and director of the Summer Intensive Course of the Armenian Language and Culture organized by the Moorat-Raphael College (1984-1986) and Summer Intensive Course of the Armenian Language and Culture at the University of Venice (1986-).

Scholarly interests of Boghos Levon Zekiyan include Armenian studies, particularly literature and philology, history and identity, as well as philosophical and theological issues.

In 2014 Pope Francis appointed Archpriest Levon Zekiyan as apostolic administrator "sede plena" of the archieparchy of Istanbul of the Armenians in Turkey, elevating him to the dignity of Archbishop.

With direct efforts of Levon Bogos Zekiyan the saint of the Armenian Apostolic Church Grigor Narekatsi was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Francis in 2015 in Vatican.

He knows, besides Armenian (classical and modern), Italian, French, English, German, Turkish, Russian and Modern Greek (both elementary), Georgian (initial), Latin, Classical Greek, Biblical Hebrew (elementary).

Selected bibliography of Boghos Levon Zekiyan

- The first steps of Modern Armenian Theatre and the Movement of Armenian Rebirth in the 18th century, Venice, 1975 (in Armenian).
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ARMENOLOGICAL HERITAGE

ON SOME TRANSEUPHRATIAN TRIBES OR PEOPLES IN REGARD TO THE ARMENIAN ETHNOGENESIS

Extracted from Gr.Kapantsyan, Hayasa - the Cradle of the Armenians, Yerevan, 1947, p.128-146 (in Russian).

The monograph of Gr.Kapantsyan, the renowned Armenologist of the XX century is devoted to the problem of Armenian ethnogenesis. The author discusses a wide spectrum of issues of early Armenian history based on ancient cuneiform texts (Hittite, Assyrian, Hurrian, and Urartian), studies of Classical Greek historians, Armenian medieval and later sources.

In the extracted passage Gr.Kapantsyan discusses the names and possible affiliation of several tribes attested in ancient sources which tentatively are located by scholars in the western and north-western parts of the Armenian Highland. According to the author, later these ethnic elements were Armenianized and had left their names in the toponymy and onomastics of the Armenian Highland.

Gr.Kapantsyan's study is one of the first attempts made by scholars on the issue under discussion. Some statements as well as references to sources might be argued under the light of modern scholarship. Anyway, Gr.Kapantsyan's some of his ideas became pioneering for the study of early Armenian statehood, ethnic history and related problems.

PALA or BALA

The people of *pala* or *bala*, probably, was numerous and first became known from the Hittite cuneiform inscriptions. They have a separate language, since the Hitt. *palaumnili* means "in Palaic". On this language the Hittite priests sang incantations on silver, which forces the scholars to assume that the *pala* people live in the region of modern Gumushhane or Bayburt where are located rich deposits of silver. According to the «Extensive Annals of Mursili II (2 BoTU. 61. A. 22'-25')», the country of Pala does not have fortified cities or places to be safeguarded. As this inscription tells (line 25'), Pala was a "lowlying" country (*dagan ešan*), according to the translation made by Ferd. Sommer (Bogh. St., X, 67, Anm.1; see also Götze, Die Ann. D. M., 259-260). According to cuneiform inscriptions, it was located between the cities of Tumanna (Dumanna) and Turmitta (Durmitta). First of this (Dumanna) I identify with the city of Domana (Δόμανα) of Ptolemy (V, 6, 18) to the west of Satala on the direction to Nicopolis (see N.Adontz, Armenia in the period of Justinian, p.74: «Satala, Domana, Tapura, Nicopolis, as the cities of Armenia Minor»). And since according to another cuneiform text (Bogh. St. III, S.158, Anm.3) the «people of Durmitta had fled to the country of Išūwa», i.e. to the region of modern Dersim-Mzur-Charsanjak-Harput, it could be assumed that Pala was located to the west of Azzi-Hayasa, approximately near Gerjanis and to the north

along the Kelkit valley (cf., probably, the name of the village Balanson near Gerjanis, not to mention Bał to the north of Kemakh). And Durmitta probably was located in the south-west, approximately near the modern Divriği.

According to the Hittite inscriptions these cities of Turmitta, Pala and Tumanna at some period were part of the “Upper country”. The latter included not only its original cities of Hakpiša and Ištahara, but also Marišta, Hiššašhapa, Katapa, Hanhana, Tarahna, Hattena, Turmitta, Pala, Tumanna, Kaššiya, Šappa, the country of the yellow river (see Götze, Kleinasien z. Hethiterzeit, S.7). Just to the east of this «Upper country» was located Hayasa-Azzi, which had conquered its territories until the city of Šamuha (= modern Kamışlı-dere near Gerjanis?).

With regard to multiethnic character and, possibly the beginning of re-settlement (towards the east) of these *pala*, I can point on the village Palaxor or Balaxor («breach or gorge of the *pala*?») which is located on a distance of four hours from Bayburt to the west towards Gümüşhane, and Balovit («valley of *pala*») – a forested valley in Hemshin (on the middle stream of Chorokh) where flows the river Balovit (Armenian toponymic dictionary of Eprikyan, p.355). In the initial part of these names we probably have the ethnic *pala* (*bala*) rather than Arm. word *bal* “cherry”. Cf. also the homonymous Bala-hovit on the lower Murad-chai.

It is known that at the end of the VIII century BC the Cimmerians were pressing Urartians in the west from the Euphrates (to the north of Melita) whose king Rusa I had suffered a severe defeat. At the same time the Assyrian king Sargon II (in 708 BC) had conquered Melitene. Through the whole VII century BC Cimmerians kept the Asia Minor in the state of wars and raids, advancing until Lydia. Consequently many tribes and peoples had left their original settlements including Hayasaeans, Pala, Moskhians, Tubal, Hittite Manda, Sala etc. and partially or completely emigrated to the east, to more safe places. I establish with certainty the routes of migrations or re-settlement of Hayasaeans and Pala, from the one hand towards the east along Chorokh and Araxes until Syunikh, and from the other hand to the south and south-east along the Euphrates until Armenian provinces of Turuberan and Arzanene. On the route of the movement of Pala to the east, besides Balovit on Chorokh, I can mention the swampy place «Palacatsio» in Tashir (according to Vakhushti). Further we are reported by the Arab author Baladzuri also about the «tribes of *bala*» (Balakaran), that in the later Armenian spelling (the change of «l» into «y») became Kara-bag, not to say about the ethnic *bał-* (= *bay*) in *Bałac ašxarh*, *Bałaberd* etc. in Syunikh (modern Zangezur).¹ Probably, the movement of *bala* further to the east, into modern Azerbaijan (= ancient Albania), where exists the river *Rot-i bala* «the *bala*-river» or *Balan-rod* (id.), which identical with the modern Bulgar-chai.

¹ We have also *Bał-kh* which means «*bals* (pl.)» (the region of modern city of Kapan), then *bałacikh* «balaicans», *Bałac tun* «house of *bals*», *Bałac erkir* (id.) etc. Armenian historian St.Orbelyan the name of *bał-* explains from the name of some *Bałak* whence the the place-name *Bałaki khar* (“The stone of Bałak”), *Bałaku amroc* (“The fortress of Bałak”), whereas *Bałak* is a personified form of the ethnic «bal» as it is known in regard to other similar cases (Mandak, Salak, Armenak, Haj-k etc.).

But the Bala people moved out from the Kelkit valley to the south and south-east along the Euphrates which is reflected in numerous toponyms or family names of their Armenianized principalities. Thus, there is a province of *Balahovit* «the valley of the *Bala*» with the city of Balu on the river Murad-chai. In the neighborhood of this Balu or Palu are mentioned two villages named as Palin² where, as is well known, we have Urartian inscriptions of the king Menua. Also is known an Armenian princely house *Palnatun* («the house of *Pala*»), which is written as *Palanakan tun*. There was also a principedom *Paluni*, located to the east of *Palnatun*, and *Balaovit* between the provinces of Taron and Ashtianene, to the south of Arshamuni where today lies the village Guvars (= ancient Kuvars) near Boğlan, on the river Menaskat (see N.Adontz, *Ibid.*, p.18 and 47). It is possible that the name of the city of Bitlis which formerly was pronounced as *Balēš*, Classic. *Balaleis*, as well as the settlement and region of *Palin* to the north of *Argana* (in Arzanene) along with the place-name *Pali*³ (*Ibid.*) also originated from this ethnic *bala/pala*.

Urartian inscriptions of the VIII century BC from Balu, Palin and Izoğlu-Kömürhan (on the Euphrates against Melitene) list in detail numerous names of cities, regions and even their owners etc., but say nothing about Bala and their settlements, from which I assume that the movements of these Bala, Hayasaean, Kashka, Manda and others to the new locations in Urartu, along the course of Murad-chai took place *only in the VII century BC*.

The comparison of “bala” or “pala” of Hittite texts with the name of the city of Palu (Balu) was first suggested by J.Garstang in the “Index of Hittite names” published in Jerusalem in 1923 by L.Meyer (see Gotze, Klein. Z. Heth., addition to the Preface), which was unknown to us. J.Garstang is right in his formal-phonetic comparison, but the existence of all these Balu (Palu), Balaovit, Paluni etc. is later phenomena connected with the resettlement of these Bala in the VII century BC from their territory to historical Urartu where they owned a whole region to the north of Lower Murad-chai and the valley of that river as well, not to mention their partial offshoot towards Bitlis and Palin near Amid (= Diyarbakir).

GASHGA or KASHKA

These numerous tribes are mentioned in the Hittite texts from the XV century onwards. According to the inscriptions of the Hittite king Mursili II, almost all regions to the west of the Upper Euphrates up to Azzi, including Pala, Turmitta etc. either belong to the peoples or tribes known as *gašga*, *kašgam* *kaška*, or were under their influence. This people or tribe is thought to be identical with the Kassites who continuously raided Babylon (in XVIII century BC). Assyrian king Tiglathpileser I (about 1115-1093) in his inscription on a prism regards these Kaska (^{mat}*Kas-ka* (*a*)-*ia*^{pl.}) as Hittite troops listing

² See the Armenian toponymic dictionary of Eprikyan, p.357.

³ See in the Armenian translation of Hübschmann “Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen, S.141-142, 179.

them along with Urumu, and after them Kummuh, i.e. Commagene to the south of Samosata on the Euphrates (in the inscription of the Urartian king Sarduri – Kumaha).⁴ The king Tiglathpileser IV mentions in 738 BC the Kaskaean prince Dadilu (^m*Da-di-i-lu alu Kas-ka-a-a*), after the princes of Gurgum and Melid (Melitene). It is written also as *Kas-ki*. Fr.Hrozny assumes from this that the Assyrian inscriptions also place Kaskaean tribes on the right bank of the Upper Euphrates (see Bogh. St., III, S.157-158).

From the description of campaigns of the Hittite king Mursili II it is evident that Kashkaeans had subdued or took control over Aravena (Hitt. Aravanna = modern Araban-ovasi on the river Araban-su to the north of Samosata), Kiššiya (southern Melitene?), Tegarama (Melitene and northern regions), and in the north reached the «Upper country» of the Hittites and the possessions of Hayasa-Azzi. But since Gashgaeans were harrasing and sometimes conquering the Pala who, according to my data, live in the eastern part of the Kelkit valley (at the point where the river Gerjanis joins it), these Kashka should be sought here also. A.Götze locates them in the Pontus near the Black Sea. And the Kashkaeans of Bihunia «who ruled as a king» were neighboring with Azzians somewhere between Tegaramma (between Divriği and Melita?) and Zimmuria (= modern Zimarra), and their movement towards «Upper country» and once on Hattusa, the capital of the Hittites (which they looted) coincides with the similar movement of Hayasaean from the north-east to the west, who had reached Gannuvara and Šamuha. Such a varying localization of Gashgaean tribes, beginning from the regions of Samosata until the Pontic region speaks in favor of the normal re-settlement of large nomadic tribes which sometimes live in distant places, neighboring with other tribes in-between.

Probably, it was very difficult to deal with these brigandish tribes, as they are named in the ancient cuneiform texts. By the way, with these hostile «Gashga-people»

⁴ These insubmissive Kashka and Urumu were four thousand in number. They attacked the borders of Assyria near the Euphrates in order to capture “Subarian” cities, but were fought back and gave up. On the cylinder-prism of Tiglath-pileser we read (Cyl. II, 100): 4000 Kashka and Urumu, insubmissive Hittite warriors who insolently captured the cities of Subartu, subjects of the king of Assur, heard of my advance to Subartu, were frightened, hit my feet (see Armenian translation of Sandalgyan in A.Khachatryan, “The History of Armenia in the cuneiform period”, Yerevan, 1933, p.37). According to Bilabel, Urumu were the population of Uruma or Urima on the Euphrates, on the place of modern Birejik (ibid.) above Samosata. Hardly these Urumu should be compared with later Armenians, although the term *uruma* looks like *arama* “Aramaeans” which initially could have been non-Semitic, for which see at the end of this study. The mention of Commagene and Comana after Urumu and Kaska definitely speaks in favor of their localization on the Euphrates to the north of modern Samosata and to the east of Tur-Abdin. I could not understand their localization on the «Upper Tigris» as it is demonstrated by A.Götze (“Kleinasien”, S.187), probably reading *Kat-muh* instead of *Kum-muh* which really was located near Mardin-Midyat. These Kashka and Urumu are named by him as «hethitische Scharen» («Hittite crowds»). See there, Anm.3. *Urima* is attested in Ptolemeus (see his Geographia, ed. K.Müller, Paris, 1901, p.970), then as *Orima* see Gelzer (Georgii Cyprii descriptio orbis romane, p.152), Armenian historian Matteos Urhayeci (see Hübschmann, S.5).

Hittite kings made alliances as, for example, the one regarding a safe pass of Hittite worshippers who carry gifts for the Storm god of Nerik (see Kl. F., B.I, S.347). Although Fr.Hrozny regards Nerik as an important Hittite province or city («Eine wichtige hethitische Provinz, bzw. Stadt, in dem *Tešup* verehrt wurde»; see Bogh. St., III, S.29), the first reference points that this Nerik was located on the border area between the Hittites and Kashkaeans, probably, somewhere on the Upper Euphrates, maybe even in the Pontic region (according to Götze).

The part of these Kashkaeans later had settled down in the Zagros mountains, in Northern Mesopotamia. Even today in Shiraz, near the city of Firuzabad in Persia and in Irak, near the city of Suleimaniye live a war-like Iranian (Kurdish) tribe of «Kashka».

The Armenian princely (feudal) and toponymic onomastics also had preserved the name of these influential tribes of Kaška who ruled for long in the western Transeuphratian regions. If one considers the final *-k(a)* as a patrimonial (tribal) marker, as we saw it already in the suffix *-ak* (Mandak, Sisak, Balak ...), or *-k* (*Haj-k* «hay», *sal-k* «Salaean», *etrus-k* «Etruscan» etc.), then the root of this ethnic name could be *kaš-* (cf. *kaššu*, *Cossey*, *Cassite*) which was pronounced *kaš-* by the Hittites (Russian *kash*), without aspiration, whereas the Assyrian writing *kaš-ka-a* speaks in favor of *khaš-*, i.e. with the aspirated «kh». Taking into account all abovementioned, still in my «Historical-linguistic significance of the toponymy of ancient Armenia (Yerevan, 1940, p.55) I wrote: The principedom of Khaĭberuni which in the document of places (*gahnamak*) occupies the 57th position, was formed from *khaĭ* which in Armenian means «brave» and from *ber* «family, clan» (cf. in the place-names Tarberuni, Tamber, Taruberan, Arberani, Oliberia etc.) with the suffix *-uni* (= «aeon»). It is possible that the first part *khaĭ* has ethnic origins connected with *khaš-* «Cassite» which in Armenian could have been falsely etymologized in regard to the adjective *khaĭ* «brave», although semantically the possibility of the transfer of ethnic name (i.e. noun) into its quality could not be excluded; cf. Arm. *ska* «gigant, giant» and ethnic name *saka* «Sak» (Scythian), Arm. *xor* «stingy» and ethnic name «*xor* = Hurrian», Georgian *gmiri* «hero» and ethnic name of *Gamir*, i.e. Cimmerians etc.⁵

But since in the Armenian province of Syunik were preserved ethnic and toponymic names of the ancient Armenia Minor like *bal-* (*pal-*), *Aza* (from Azzi), *Xndzorek*, *Añinĭ* etc., I assume that the old ethnic name *khaš-* «Cassite» also had survived in that same Syunik in the next place-names - *Khašathal-kh gawar* «region of

⁵ I think also that Arm. (and Georg. *khaĭ* «satan, demon» semantically also was formed from ethnic *khaš-* «Cassite», in Georgian even exists a place-name *Khaĭethi* «country of *Kaĭes*», i.e. devils. The meaning of «devilish» could be easily associated with «brave». Cf. also Arm. *tsur* «curvy» (i.e. «abnormal»), but also with «brave, giant, hero» (cf. for example, folk *Sasma cəter* «giants of Sasun», literally «daredevils of Sasun»).

Kasha-quarter», *Khaši marg* «farmland of Kash», *Khašunikh* «Kashes» (= the place of Kashians), which has apparent ethnic origins formed with the suffix *-uni*. These toponyms are referred to by the XIII century Armenian historian Stepanos Orbelyan (see his «History of the province of Sisakan», Tiflis, 1911, p.617).

Could it be that the name of the village *Khašax* of the province of Bitlis (in the region of Motkan) had preserved the name of the Kash tribe with the suffix *-ah*?

Kaskaeans to the west of the Upper Euphrates who even had captured the Hittite capital city of Hattusa during the reign of Hattusili II, without doubt, were among the causes of the disintegration of the Hittite state. After them only Cimmerians appear to be such fearsome tribe.

MANDA and SALA

In the Hittite code of laws among some tribes and peoples whose soldiers in the past used to be exempted from special types of obligations (luzzi, šahhan), are mentioned «soldiers of *Manda*, soldiers of *Šāla*, soldiers of the city of *Tamalki*, soldiers of the city of *Hatra*, soldiers of the city of *Zalpa* ...». I have no doubt that the tribes of Manda and Šāla (should be spelled as Šāla) had left their traces or legacy in the Armenian princely houses of Mandakuni and Salkuni (or Səlkuni) where the roots *mandak-* and *salk-* mean “of Mand-ean”, “of Sala-ean”. About the tribe of *manda* as a brigand people speak also Assyrian texts (cf. *umman manda* «*manda-warriors*», «people of *manda*») which testifies in favor of their numerosity and scattered nature. I could not tell precisely where live these *Manda* and *Šāla* who are mentioned as Hittite subjects and who in the past were exempted from some obligations. Probably, some of them live in the Transeuphratian regions. It is remarkable that the tribes of *manda-šala* appear together not only in the Hittite code but also in Armenian sources in the face of the princely houses Mandakuni and S(a)lkuni. This is attested in the study of the Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi (see his “History”, book II, par.8). The same is in the «document of places» (“about cushions” next to the king) where the house of Mandakuni occupies the 47th place, and S(a)lkuni - 48th place. Similarly in the “military decree” Mandakuni are listed in the 14th, and Slkuni in the 15th position, and in both cases these houses are obliged to provide 300 cavalry to the king (see N.Adontz, Armenia In the period of Justinian, p.250-251). These houses are closely related also geographically. Mandakuni rule in the region of Arshamuni which once was part of Taron and was located to the south of the mountain Bingöl, and S(a)lkuni possess with the fortress Olakan (modern Ahkan) on the river Aratsani. In other words, Mandakuni were located in the region of modern Bingöl-su, a tributary of Aratsani (Murad-chai), and Salkuni to the south of them, i.e. both houses had settled down to the north-west of Taron.

Among the cuneiform tablets unearthed in the Hittite capital city, are some which is thought to be written on the Mandaean language, where Indian gods Indra, Varuna,

Mitra and others are mentioned, which forces to suggest the Indian origins of these Mandaean. Also some Indian words are mentioned like *aikawartana* “one-fold”, *pancawartana* «fivefold», *sattawartana* «sevenfold». Even in the Hittite texts are used Indian words which were regarded as borrowings since they are supplied with special cuneiform sign before them, like, for example, before *tapašu* “malaria», *warwala* “generation”, *mata(šu)* - a kind of beverage for libation to the gods (cf. Russ. *med*, Arm. *math* from **mad* “boiled grape juice», Germ. *Met*, Greek *methu*). Also I think that those Indo-European words which are attested only in Armenian and Old Indian (Sanskrit) should be derived not from the promised Indo-European “proto-language” in India but through the co-habitation of these Indian tribes (Manda and others) and the tribes of *hay* (= Armenians) in ancient Asia Minor. As such are – Arm. *marmin* “body” = Sansk. *marmana* “exposed part of the body”; Arm. *arew* “sun” = Ind. *rawi* “sun”; Arm. *vist* “grief” = Ind. *vasta* (id.); Arm. *surb* “clean, pure, holy” (from which *sərbem* “I clean”) = Ind. *çubhrá* “clean”; Arm. *erg* “song” = Ind. *arká* or *rg* (id.); Arm. *arag* or *erag* “fast” = Ind. *raghú* (id.); Arm. *sal* “plate” = Ind. *çila* “stone, rock”; Arm. *indz* “leopard» = Ind. *sihá* (id.); Arm. *vagr* «tiger» = Ind. *vyagra* etc. The modern dialectic (Ararat dialect) *marmand* “slow (flow of the river), even (burning)” I explain from the Sansk. *mandam mandam* or *manda-mandam* “very quiet, slow” (next to simple *manda-* “slow, weak”).⁶ These Indian words does not have immediate and adequate correspondences in Iranian languages (both old and modern) which could regard these Iranians-Persians as intermediators. That in ancient Asia Minor could live Indian tribes, might be assumed partly by the existence of Armenian gypsies (Arm. *bosha*) which are regarded as migrants from India like othe gypsies (in Russia and other parts of Europe). These ancient Indians of Asia Minor had strong impact also on Hurrians who borrowed Indian divine names Indara, Arunašil, Mitrašil,⁷ Našatianna etc., and some historians even today are inclined to regard the ruling stratum of Hurro-Mitannians as being Indian. From the latters was borrowed the word *maryá* «young, hero, brave» which in the form “*mariyanni*-people” was adopted by the Hurrians and Syrians denoting the military aristocracy and ruling class (see E.Meier, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II, H.1, 1928, S.34 and 161).⁸

⁶ The Araratian *marmand* is formed from **ma(n)dmand*, with the transition of “d” into “r” which we have in the words of the same dialect – *zarzand* (from **zadzand*) “terrible”, *harhand* (from **hadhand*) “slow”. For the last word cf. modern Kurdish *hedi hedi* “slowly, quietly”, from the simple *hedi* «quiet» (*hedinga* “slowly, little by little”).

⁷ In the Hurrian borrowings *Mitrašil* (from *Mitra*) and *Arunašil* (from *aruna* «sea») -šil reminds me the Hittite *Muršil*, *Xattušil*, *Biašil* and the name of the Armenian river *Mamušet* (from **Mamušil*) in Armenia, in the Greater Sophene, where before the arrival of hays live Hittites.

⁸ In the book «History of Ancient Orient» of acad. V.Struve (OGIZ, Gospolitizdat, 1941), in the article «Mitanni» written by N.A.Sholpo (p.257), in regard to our issue we read: «There is an opinion in the science that at the beginning of the II millennium BC splinters of Indian tribes had joined the Hurrians. Possibly, the trading routes from the middle Tigris through its tributaries Diyala and Adheim connect the Near East with the Indo-Iranian world and by these routes eastern tribes affiliated with Indian ones

Hence, summarizing the mentioned above, it appears the next.

First of all the tribes of Manda and Šala which are mentioned in the XIV century BC Hittite code of laws live somewhere along the eastern limits of the Hittite state, near the Euphrates.⁹ They were homogeneous tribes who live together which continues even later (VIII-VII centuries BC), until they completely or partly re-settled to the territory of historical Armenia. Here they occupy the territory to the north-west of Taron (near Bingöl-su), but now as Armenian princely houses of Mandakuni and Salkuni.

Second, probably they were of Iranian but not Indian (according to Fr.Hrozny) origins and were distinguished by their gang behavior and backward nature, taking into account also the references in Assyrian texts about these “Manda-people” living to the south of the Taurus mountains (near Diyarbakir), which indirectly is proved by the Hittite code where it is said that originally these tribes of Manda, Šala and some others were exempted from some obligations, probably, in the sense of the supply of troops. Even now exists a Kurdish tribe *Mandaka*.¹⁰ Iranian tribes were disseminated into the territory

infiltrated into Mesopotamia. In the Hurrian which was spoken by Mitannians, possibly, also Indian words had survived. These are names of kings (for example Tushratta, Artadama etc.) and some terms connected with horse-breeding. Thus, in the well known «Treatise on horse-breeding» of one Kikkuli the terminology is completely Indian; also the charioteers comprising the king’s squad are named by the Old Indian word *mariyanni*. But already in the XIV century BC *mariyanni* were collected among Hurrians ... Finally, it should be mentioned that in two texts are named Indian gods – Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Nasatya. The names of these gods are mentioned in the swear-formula and not in the first position. Probably, these gods were personal gods of the royal family. I think that “bosha”, the modern Armenian gypsies, possibly, are the remnants of these Indian tribes through two millennias, although the later migration could not be ruled out. On numerous gypsies of Erzerum – *bosha* see N.Sargisyan, The description of places in Minor and Major Armenia, Venice, 1864, p.81-82.

⁹ Undoubtedly, these tribes live here even before, in the XV-XIV centuries BC, if not earlier, taking into account the words from the Hittite code: “Earlier the tribes of Manda, Šala ... did not perform obligations (*luzzi, šahhan*)”.

¹⁰ In regard to the issue of Manda I would like to raise the question of the ethnic name “*kurmanj*”, as the prevailing part of the Kurds name themselves. This *kurmanj* I regard as a compound word *kur-manj* where the first part *kur* now means «son, boy», and the second part I identify with the name Manda, this ancient war-like and widely disseminated in different parts people or, more correctly, tribe, although even today exists the Kurdish tribe *mandaka*, without the change “d” into “j” (dž). Here the meaning “son” is becoming the formal word for denoting the tribe like the suffix *-ak* (Armenak, Sisak, Mandak, Salak, Etruscan Romak “Roman” etc.). Cf. also the similar meaning of the word “son” among Assyrians and Babylonians: *mar Humri* («Israelite» next to «the house of Israel» (i.e. the country of Israel), *mâr ali* «citizen» (lit. “son of the city”), *mâr šipri* «messenger» (lit. “son of the message”) and others, in Arabic *ibn al sabil* “traveler” (lit. “son of the travel”), Arm. *čanaparh-ord* “traveler”, *ajg-ord* “gardener”, *andē-ord* “shepherd» (*andi* «cattle»), *awri-ord* «lady, madam” (from Urartian *ewrī* “lord”) etc. The formation of the Kurdish national name undoubtedly is based on this old ideology (cf. also the Evangelical formula “son of a man” in the sense of the “servant of a man”). It would be less convincing to derive *kurmanj* from «*Kurd*» and «*manja*», i.e. to understand as «Kurds (of the tribe) *manja* (i.e. *manda*). In both cases is apparent the

of Armenia also from the east which we see in regard to Medians (*mada*, *amada*) whence the Armenian princely house of Amatuni, Muratsan, then Mards after whom were named the provinces of Mardalia (Mardali) to the south of the Erzerum mountains and Mardpetakan (to the south of Ararat). The princely families of Kamsarakan and Dimaksean were also of Iranian origins.

Third, those Armenian words which are attested also in Old Indian but are absent in old and modern Iranian languages, should be explained through the influence of some Indian tribes who used to live in ancient Asia Minor and had linguistic and cultic impact (gods) also on the Hittites, Hurrians, maybe including the political elite of Hurri and Mitanni in the social-political and military sense, as it is assumed by many scholars.

TEGARAMA > TAGARAMA

As a name of a city (= country) Tagarama is mentioned in the Hittite texts since the early period, for example, in the inscription of the king Telipinu, and is written as Tagarama. But usually in other inscriptions it is read as Tegarama or Tegaramma which is identified with the name of the city Tilgarimmu of Assyrian inscriptions and Biblical Thogarma (see, for example, Bogh. St., III, S.105, Anm. 10), located by many scholars approximately near Melitene.¹¹ According to Bible, the sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath and Thogarma. Here Gomer personalizes Cimmerians (= Arm. *gamir-kh*), Ashkenaz - the Scythians (= “Ashguza” of cuneiform texts), Riphath - Paphlagonians, and Thogarma - Armenians. In old Armenian literature this Biblical Thogarma was distorted into Thorgom, whose son was Hajk.

All these peoples occupy either neighboring regions or historically encounter each other. Gamir-Cimmerians live mostly in Cappadocia which was named as Gamirkh by Armenians, Scythians predominantly were concentrated in the eastern regions of Transcaucasia and in Media near the lake Urmiya, but probably entered, as we shall see, into western regions as well. Riphath and Thogarma were Paphlagonians and Armenians-Hays, wherein the former live in the upper basin of the river Halys and

great influence of the Manda tribe in antiquity. I leave aside the question of the similarity of the names Manda with Matiaene and Mada (= Medians) assumed by many scholars. With our ethnic Manda accidentally is similar *mandeism*, the name of the religion of Babylonians and Syrians (“Mandaeans”) who live along the lower Tigris and Euphrates numbered about 1500-2000. Their sacred books are written in a special Syriac dialect (“Mandaean language”) and the word “Manda” is derived from the name of the light god «*Manda-di-haya*». Mandeism emerges in the I century BC, it represents the mixture of gnosticism and Biblical views and had as its adepts also Christians of Saint Baptist (see Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary, «Mandeism»).

¹¹ E. Forrer in his map in “Die Provinzeinteilung des assyrischen Reiches” (1921) locates Til-Garimmu near the river Gurun where was situated the city of Kamanu and where modern Divrik, Akn and Arabkir are located (See Khachatryan, p.238, n.1). Probably, the Hittite Tegarama replaces also Melitu since the latter is not mentioned in Hittite texts.

Armenians occupy the regions of Til-Garimmu, later Til-Gurana, i.e. Gürün, to the south or south-west of historical Hayasa-Azzi. By means of this neighborhood of old Tagarama and Azzi-Hayasa (i.e. Armenia) I am inclined to explain the Armenization (more correctly Hayasization) of the region of Thogarama = Torgoma, which was adapted by the Armenian national tradition, as the primary motherland of Armenians, since Hajk was the son of Torgom. It goes without saying that all these names - Gomer, Ashkenaz, Riphath and Thorgom personify the ethnic and political situation from the late VIII century BC when Armenia never existed in the area of Urartu and Urartu itself figured in the Bible in the form of Ararat as a state of mountainous countries to the north of Mesopotamia.

MUSHKIANS

These tribes appear on the historical scene first in the XII century BC when, as it is stated, different tribes and peoples - Phrygians, Lydians, Lycians, Bythinians and others invaded Asia Minor from the Aegean Sea and the Balkans, to whom are assumed to belong also the Mushkians.¹²

But in the destruction of the Hittite statehood and partial displacement of Hittites to the east in the direction of Melitene, Kargemish and Northern Syria, to my mind, were more responsible Kashka who, probably, were Iranians (Kurds?), taking into account nowadays Kashkaeans of Iraq (in Suleimaniyeh) and Iran (in Shiraz, near the city of Firuzabad), not to say about the possible internal factors in regard to the enormous number of slaves in the Hittite state, and the desire of confederates and vassals to secede as well. But during this period increases the movement of Greek colonists (Aeolians, Ionians) into Asia Minor (western regions, Pamphylia, Crete, Pontus ...). Phrygians had settled down predominantly in the elevated lowlands to the west of the river Halys and the lake Tatta in the region of Ikonian, including the regions on the upper stream of Maeander, and later the regions of Tyana near modern Höyük in Western Cappadocia, according to the Phrygian inscriptions from there. And Mushkians prevail in the regions of Propontis in the direction of Melitene and even more to the east until the Upper Tigris. Since at the end of VIII century BC Midas was the king of the Phrygians who by the way asks the god of Delphi in regard to his wellness and who married the daughter of the prince of Kyme, and, from the other hand, at that time Mita

¹² In the inscription of Egyptian pharaoh Ramses III (1200-1168) about these «overseas» or «insular» (Egyptian wording) peoples is said the next: "The insular peoples came ... immediately spread. Beginning from Hatti not a single country could withstand against their hands. Code, Kargamish, Arzawa, Alashya were annihilated. They encamped in a place in the country of Amurru. Their people they killed as if they never existed. They approached Egypt burning down (all) before them. They were joined as allies by Philistines, *Tkkr*, *Š'krwš*, *D'jnjlw* and *Wššš'*. They put their hands over the countries till the edge of the earth; their hearts were full of confidence and they spoke: "our plans (= aims) are successful (see A.Götze, Kleinasien, S.186-187).

was the king of Mushkians, scholars had suggested that there existed a united state ruled by this Phrygian-Mushkian king Mita. This similarity of the Greek Midas (where “s” is a Greek suffix) mentioned by Herodotus and Mushkian Mita first was assumed by Hugo Winckler still in 1898,¹³ and Fr.Schachermeyr even suggested the existence of alliance between this Phrygian-Mushkian political entity and Urartian state during the king Rusa (Ursana) I (730-714), which was directed against Assyria of Sargon II (722-705).¹⁴ In this regard Fr.Bilabel wrote (see his “Geschichte Vorderasiens und Ägyptens vom XVI-XI Jahrhundert v. Chr.”, 1927, S.182): «After the destruction of the Hittite state the state of the Mushkians which was formed on its eastern regions, in the so-called Cappadocia, had played very important role between Halys and Upper Tigris during a long period. 50 years before Tiglathpileser I it [Mushkian state] had captured the provinces of Alzi and Purukuzzi, therefore to the east of the Euphrates ... Undoubtedly, it was not a centralized governing body but a union of states, due to which it was able to field an army of 20.000 warriors”.¹⁵ The country of Alzi, which corresponds to Urartian Alzini, is Armenian Aldznikh, Greek Arzanene and was located in the mountainous region to the west of Sasun. Another Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta II (889-884) mentions the country of Moskhs but to the south of Tigris. It could not be doubted that all these are territories located to the south of the mentioned mountainous range of Armenian Taurus and known as Alzi-Purulumzi (Purukuzzi), i.e. approximately in ancient Shupria. Some English scholars like D.G.Hogarth (in “Anatolian Studies”, 1923, p.235f. dedicated to W.Ramsay, and also in “The kings of the Hittites”, 1926, p.59f.), L.Woolley (“Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology”, of the University of Liverpool, 1922, p.41-56), A.H.Sayce (“Moscho-Hittite inscriptions”, especially in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 1927, p.705f.), had suggested to see in the Mushkians the bearers of Late Hittite culture which is rightly argued by A.Götze (“Kleinasien”, S.187 and Anm.6).

About the clashes of Moskheans (Mushkians) with Sargon II we are told by the inscriptions of this fearsome king. There he tells the next: “I took the treasures of (the countries of) Kashka, Tabal, Hilakku; I chased away Mita king of the Mushkians. My strong arm extended from Media to Kashka, Tabal and Mushku, I laid upon them tribute ... Ambaris, the king of Tabal, whom I put on the throne of his father and gave him my daughter [as a wife], together with Hilakku [= modern Cappadocia] extended its limits, but he appear to be disloyal; in order to take my territories he sent envoys to Ursa Urartian and Mita of Mushku and in the country of Tabal they captured regions and cities” (see Khachatryan, p.237). We know that later these kings were defeated by

¹³ See “Altorientalische Forschungen”, II serie, vol.1 (1893), S.103-137 (cited from A.Götze, Kleinasien, S.187).

¹⁴ See Fr.Schachermeyr, Etruskische Frühgeschichte, S.60 (cited from A.Götze, Ibid., S.189).

¹⁵ See A.Khachatryan, “History fo Armenia in the cuneiform period”, p.236-237. The number of these Mushkians was 20.000 leaded by five “kings”. Of these only 6.000 were taken as war prisoners, the rest were killed in the battle.

Sargon and Rusa I even committed a suicide. Undoubtedly, the exhaustion of Moskhians and Urartians helped Cimmerians who just invaded through the Caucasus and inflicted a heavy defeat on Urartians and especially Moskhians. According to the Armenian version of Eusebius, this defeat of Moskho-Phrygians is dated with 696-697 BC (see A.Götze, *Ibid.*, S.189). Nearly all Asia Minor appeared at the mercy of these fearsome Cimmerians (cf. Georgian *gmiri* “hero”, from the name of Cimmerians), only Lydians succeeded to get free of them for a while. Urartu also survived which continued to exist for one more century, along with Assyria. From these semi-barbarian Cimmerians escaped not only Moskhians but Hayasaean, Manda (and Šala), Kashka, Pala (Bala) and others as well. Maybe Urartian lands appear to be the most peaceful in that VII century, since in this late period (VII-VI centuries) we see these tribes of Asia Minor at new territories in Urartu. In regard to the role of Moschians and others as well as their re-settlement I want to point on one passage in the Bible where the prophet Hezekiah speaks (par.27, lines 13-14): “Yawan, Thobel, Mosoch – the same markets for selling of peoples; and from the house of Thorgom your markets were filled by horses, horsemen and mules”. Or, for example, by the same prophet (par.39, lines 2-6): “Son of a man, look on Gog, Ros, Mosoch and Thobel. Here I shall raise against you Gog, , the prince of Ros, Mosoch and Tobel ...”. Here are mentioned also Gomer (i.e. Cimmerians) and the house of Thorgom which Armenians associate with their people etc. Here it is interesting that Hezekiah who live in 592-570s BC always refers to Mosoch and Thobel together (Thobel~Thabal), i.e. Mushkians and Tibarenoi. Without doubt these tribes are of Georgian origins and many scholars wrongly identify Moschians with Phrygians, regarding the formers as being Indo-Europeans.¹⁶ Similarly is wrong the comparison of the name Mushk with the Mysians of western Asia Minor (with the root *mušk* = Greek *μυσ-*, where “k” is either a marker of tribal affiliation or the discussed Armenian *kh*, i.e. the plural suffix), first proposed by Kretschmer. The main place of habitat of Mosochian tribes was Cappadocia whose capital city was Mazaka (= Arm. Mazhak). The name *mušk-u* of Assyrian sources had undergone many changes: *mosx*, *mosox*, *mešex*, *mašax*, *mesx* (>*mex*) etc. Later these Mosochs, according to Strabo (was born in 63 BC) already live in the valley of the Upper Phasis (p.498). Cf. also the phrase “moschorum tractus” (along the Chorokh). Are of interest the information given by Strabo in regard to the division of Moschike into three parts after the death of Mithridates of Pontus: “After the death of Mithridates Moschike was divided into three parts: the first was captured by Colchians, the second by Iberians, the third –

¹⁶ If Gog and Magog are of Scythian ancestry, they, especially Gog had infiltrated into the habitat of Armenians and Georgians (cf. Arm. *Kogo-ovit* «valley of Gog», *Gugar-kh* “Gogarene on the river Chorokh” etc.). The tribe name of *Ros* reminds me «Rus», but it would be historically justified to connect it with the Kurdish tribe “*Rosh-ka*” and the name of the Urartian king Rashu of the country of Ruishiani of one inscription of the king Sarduri II (see Archaeological Expedition of 1916 to Van, Petrograd, 1922, inscr. 11, line 50) which, indeed, is only a mere guess. Cf also the Urartian name Rusa.

by Armenians” or, for example (p.61), “Moschian mountains separate Iberians (= Georgians) from Armenians”.¹⁷

The connection of *mušk-* with Armenian *Mok-kh* (gen.sg. *Mokaç*) does not hold, from which we have acc.sg. *Mok-s*, like from **Kar-kh* (gen.sg. *Karuç*) - acc.sg. *Kars*, whence modern “Kars”. The root of the name of the Armenian province *Moks* is *mok-*. Also the similarity of the name of Mush of the Armenian province of Taron with the “stem” of the tribal name *muš-k* is accidental, if, indeed, one single out the final “k” which is doubtful.¹⁸

Although Moschians (Mesxians) should have been attributed to the Georgian ethnic milieu rather than to Phrygian or other, however we possess with some arguments for the connection of these Moschians with Armenians, taking into account the folkloristic data brought by Khorenatsi. Only one thing remains uncertain for me: was this connection which is strengthened by some linguistic commonality between Armenian and Georgian, either original based on the neighborhood and diffusion still from the II millennium BC when Hayasaean-Armenians contacted with these Mushkians, Tubalians, Colchians and others, or a result of later phenomena when, for example, a part of Mushkians (= Meschians) was Armenianized.

As it is known from the history of M.Khorenatsi, Mshak, the relative of the legendary Armenian king Aram was appointed as governor of Caesareia (resp. Cappadocia),¹⁹ which, as it is stressed by this historian, formerly was called Mazaka by the Greeks, which the locals spell as Mazhak (see his «History of Armenians», Book I, par.14). Indeed, according to the Armenian phonology the name “Mshak” should have been derived from “Mushak” (from which N.Marr and N.Adontz even derive the Georgian-Armenian common word *m(u)šak* “worker”), which represents the full phonetic form of moshak, like *moshox*, *mesheh*, *mashax* next to simple *mushk* (*moshk*), *mesx* (*meshx*) etc. But this name of the Meschians, besides the reminder of ancient legendary “relations», has also a new meaning for the Armenians, since until now Georgians call Armenians with that term; in Georgian *somexi* «Armenian», as it was assumed still by N.Marr, *-mexi* repeats the ancient Mesxi. The first part *so-* I do not regard as the remnant of ethnic *son-* «Swan», as it was suggested by N.Marr; it is rather a prefix like common Georgian prefix *sa-* which denotes places (countries), for example, from the name of *sper* we have Saspiritis; cf. also Sismara besides the older Zimara, not to say about Samcxe (✓ *mesx-*), Sakharthvelo and others. Georgians call Armenians as Meskhians since, as it was mentioned above, after Mithridates Meskheta partly was handed over to Armenians and there should not be difficulties in explaining the transfer of the term of Armenianized *Mesxs* on all Armenians, like the French people who call Germans by the name of Allemands, their neighbors, etc.

Translated from the Armenian by Aram Kosyan

¹⁷ See A.Khachatryan, Ibid., p.240.

¹⁸ For the name Mush I can compare it with the Hurrian *mus* “beautiful”.

¹⁹ In the text this passage says: “He left over the country a certain Mshak of his own family”.