

**THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AND THE HEROIC SELF-DEFENSIVE BATTLES
OF THE CILICIAN ARMENIANS
(Historical-folkloric Review)**

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Abstract

Starting from April, 1915, the deportation and massacre organized by the Ottoman Empire had embraced, in a few months, almost all Western Armenia, Cilicia and the Armenian-inhabited localities of the Ottoman Empire.

In some localities Armenians organized self-defense battles. Although the Turkish tyranny cruelly suppressed the heroic resistance and the self-defensive battles started in various localities, nevertheless the devoted Armenian heroes, who fought for their elementary human rights and for the physical survival of their nation, recorded brilliant pages in the history of the national liberation struggle and their heroic characters inspire the Armenian people till today.

Keywords: *Cilician Armenians, Armenian Genocide, Self-Defensive Battles, Eyewitness Survivors, Testimonies*

In 1908, following the dethronement of Sultan Hamid, the Young Turks came to power and endeavored, professing the reactionary Pan-Turkish ideology, not only to preserve the Ottoman Empire, but to forcibly annihilate or to amalgamate and Turkify the Armenians and the other Christian peoples and to create an All-Turkish state, extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Aral Sea, which would enclose all the Mohammedans.

A year had not elapsed since the proclamation of the “Constitution” (1908), when Adana and the surrounding Armenian-inhabited villages, which were saved from the previous massacres, became the target of hatred of the Ittihad members.

In 1909, in the Holy Week of Easter, the blood-thirsty Turkish rabble attacked the Armenian quarters of Adana and of the neighboring villages, plundered all the shops, slaughtered the unarmed and defenseless Armenians, not sparing the women and children.

*“Let the Armenians cry, the cruel massacre
Turned magnificent Cilicia into a desert,
The fire and the sword and the merciless plunder*

Ruined, alas, the House of Roubinians!¹

*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...
Prosperous Adana, alas, is deserted,
Entire Cilicia is burned to ashes...²*

The massacre of the Armenians of Cilicia was premeditated. That fact was disclosed by the telegram of the counsellor of Internal Affairs, Adil bey, addressed to all Turkish officials in the region of Cilicia where it was said: "The greatest care should be taken that no damage is done to foreign religious institutions and consulates."³

These historical-political events remained in the memory of the Cilicians as "*Slaughtered Adana.*"⁴

The following elegy saturated with expressive depth and artistic descriptiveness has been created under the immediate impression of the massacre of Adana:

*"Hey, cedars, cedars, variegated cedars,
The resin drips whenever the sun strikes,
The Adana River is full of blood and corpses,
I've come to see you, slaughtered Adana!
Alas! I've seen you, massacred children!"⁵*

About thirty thousand Armenians fall victims to the massacre of Adana. Dozens of Armenian-inhabited towns and villages were ravaged and burnt down, while Moussa Dagh, Deurtyol, Hadjn, Sis, Zeytoun, Sheikh Mourad, Fendedjak and a number of

¹ The House of Roubinians - Armenian princely (1080-1198) and royal (1198-1219) founding dynasty in Cilician Armenia.

² The popularized version of the poem of the Zeytouni historian and novelist, Smbat Byurat, see Svazlian 1994, № 447, 173-174. Henceforth, the references to the original texts, which I have inscribed from the Cilician narrators, are made according to the continuous number and page of the book.

³ Jizmejjan 1930: 174.

⁴ For more details see the memoir communicated by **Mikael Keshishian** (b. 1904) from Adana. Svazlian 1994, № 1409, 299.

⁵ Ibid., № 446, 173.

localities stopped the attack of tens of thousands of Turks with their heroic self-defense and were saved from the slaughter.

In fact, that was the beginning of the Great Genocide, when the Young Turks 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.

On the 15th of April 1915, a secret order sent by the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Turkish government, Tala'at Pasha, the War Minister, Enver pasha and the General Secretary of Ittihad and Minister of Education, Doctor Nazim, was sent to the authorities concerning the deportation and the extermination of the Armenians.⁶ And Tala'at pasha warned with violent hatred: “We have to square accounts with the Armenians,” and promised to spare nothing for that purpose.⁷

During one of the sessions of the executive committee of Ittihad, Behaeddin Shakir had declared that it was necessary to immediately begin and finish the deportation of the Armenians and, in the meantime, to massacre the people: “We are at war,” he had added, “there is no fear of interference from Europe and the Great States, the world press also cannot raise any protest and even if it does, it will be without much result and, in the future, it will be considered as a ‘fait accompli’.”⁸

Tala'at pasha, had issued a special order: “The right of living and working of the Armenians on Turkish soil is completely abolished. In accordance with this, the government assumes on itself the whole responsibility and orders not to spare even the infants in the cradle...”⁹

The executive committee of Ittihad had foreseen to carry out the deportation and the massacre of the Armenians without the help of the army or the police, entrusting the job to the criminals and murderers released from the prisons.

In these historical-political circumstances, the general mobilization (Seferberlik – in Turk.) had become the greatest evil for the Christian nations living in Turkey, including the Armenians. Under the pretense of recruitment to military service, Armenian males aged 18-45 were drafted to serve in the labor battalions (Amelé tabour) and, according to the special order of Enver pasha were taken to secluded places and were killed out of sight of viewers.

That is why, the Armenian young man, who had received the call-up papers (Vesica) and was being forcibly drafted into the Turkish army had the premonition that *“that was the road to death”*:

*“Mother, wake me up, let me go to the training,
Let me take in hand my mirrored rifle,
This, they say, is the road to death,*

⁶ Kirakossian 1965: 244.

⁷ Antonian 1921: 232.

⁸ Der-Zor 1955: 258.

⁹ Nersessian 1991: 564-565.

*God protect us!
There, they say, are lots of Armenians,
God save us!”¹⁰*

And he had come to the right conclusion:

*“I shall join the Turkish army,
I shall hold a rifle,
What shall I do with Turkey?
Behold! I am going to Armenia.”¹¹*

The Turkish mobilization was accompanied by ubiquitous round-ups, during which, on the pretext of collecting “arms,” the Turkish policemen ravaged the houses of the Armenians, plundered their properties, arrested and killed many of them. In the following Armenian-mixed Turkish song, which is widely known among the Western-Armenians, the Turkish officer asks the young Armenian:

*“- Hey! gâvur, tell the truth,
Have you got a gun?”*

The Armenian youth denies the accusation, considering it a slander:

*“- No, sir, it’s a lie,
I don’t know, I haven’t seen.”*

But then he adds secretly in Armenian:

*“It’s hanging on the wall, I won’t tell,
I won’t betray the Armenian nation.”¹²*

The arrest of the Armenian intellectuals followed the mobilization and the arms collection. On Saturday, April 24, at midnight, hundreds of Armenian notables of Constantinople were forcibly taken, in their night-shirts, to police quarters and were exiled on the very next day. Among those who were deported to the deserts of Changere and Ayash were the member of the Ottoman Parliament, the lawyer and writer Grikor Zohrap, the poets Daniel Varouzhan, Siamanto, the physician-writers Rouben Sevak, Nazaret DagHAVARIAN, the historian-novelist from Zeytoun, Smbat Byourat, the great musician Komitas, and numerous celebrated people from Svaz, Diarbekir, Marzvan, Erzroom, Kayseri, Izmir and other Armenian-inhabited localities.

Everywhere the Armenian schools and colleges were being closed:

*“They entered the school and caught the school-mistress,
Ah, alas!
They opened her mouth and cut her tongue,
Ah alas!”¹³*

Since the school-mistress had dared to teach Armenian to the Armenian children.

¹⁰ Svazlian 1994, № 424, 165.

¹¹ Ibid., № 423, 165.

¹² Ibid., № 437, 167.

¹³ Ibid., № 449, 174.

Besides the Armenian educational institutions, the Armenian churches were also ravaged. The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was incorporated into the Catholicosate of Sis and Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan was recognized as the spiritual leader of the Armenians of Turkey.

On March 15 and April 3, 1915, the Russian Intelligence informed about Turkey that Armenians were arrested throughout the country, systematic massacres were committed in Erzroom, Deurtyol, Zeytoun and its environs; bloody clashes took place in Bitlis, Van and Moosh; atrocities, plunder and murders occurred in Akn; economic collapse and a general massacre of the population were noted all over Asia Minor.

In the province of Van, connected with the military operations, the Turks succeeded, in spite of the one-month heroic self-defense organized by the valorous people of Van, not only in suppressing the revolt, but they had also time to exterminate on the spot thousands of Armenians. And when the Russian army units entered Van, followed by the Armenian writers Hovhannes Toumanian and Alexander Shirvanzadé, they became witnesses of bewildering scenes: "...Whenever they had the opportunity, they had massacre the Armenians," wrote H. Toumanian in his memoirs, "mainly the males and had taken away the beautiful women. And if they had sufficient time and when the terror of the Russian army and the Armenian volunteers had not been close, they had invented barbaric amusements; they had crucified people, various body parts of live people had been cut and arranged in different patterns; games had been invented: people had been put below the waist in cauldrons and boiled, so that the live half could see and feel...; they had cut with red-hot iron bars the various parts of the body and roasted them on fire; they had roasted live people; they had massacred children before the eyes of parents and parents – before the eyes of children."¹⁴ And when the Russian troops retreated, a great number of Armenians, who had heroically fought in the self-defensive battles of Vaspourakan and Sassoun, migrated after them to Eastern Armenia:

*"Van, a little town with its districts,
Full of corpses in hundreds and thousands,
The field was colored red with blood,
The clouds, the sky and the stars raised their voice
And roared and ordered loud enough
To be heard in Europe and America."¹⁵*

However, neither Europe, nor America interfered, and only the national heroes succored the helpless people, but they were little in number, while the enemy forces were innumerable, countless:

*"The province of Sassoun with its forests,
With its high mountains as ramparts,
Always withstood the Turkish army,
Sassoun smells now of hot blood."¹⁶*

¹⁴ Toumanian 1959: 212-213.

¹⁵ Svazlian 1990: 127.

¹⁶ Ibid.: 128.

The smell of “hot blood” was spread also in Karin, Pontos, Moosh, Svaz, Shapin-Garahissar, Kharbert, Malatia, Diarbekir, in the Armenian-inhabited localities of Western and Central Anatolia, Izmit, Bursa, Ankara, Konia and elsewhere. They exterminated, with unspeakable cruelty, all the Armenians, not sparing even the infants.

The life of the Armenians of Cilicia also became a nightmare. The Baghdad railway, which had a particular importance passed through Armenian-populated Cilicia. This circumstance troubled the Turkish government, since the laborious and active Armenians living in Cilicia could, by their prosperous state, become predominant in Turkey’s economy. The Armenian villages and settlements were scattered in mountainous Cilicia from Hadjn, Zeytoun to Deurtyol and their populations, although engaged in silk-production, weaving, carpet-making and other national handicrafts, had a sufficiently enlightened new generation owing to the presence of Armenian and foreign schools and colleges, which had played an important role in the formation of their mental-conscious outlook. Besides, the outrages and the massacres, which had started in many provinces of Turkey, coupled with the promised, but not realized “Reforms” following the Russo-Turkish war had not completely exterminated the naturally freedom-loving Cilicians, who sought an occasion for their independence. Zeytoun, the eagle-nest of Cilicia had, for a long time, become the flashpoint of indignation at the Turkish tyranny and it was, therefore, high time to square accounts with the bold inhabitants of Zeytoun as well.

The Zeytounis, who had glorious traditions of the national liberation struggle in the past, could once again fight in self-sacrifice, but this plan was hindered by the Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahak Khabayan and other Armenian notables, who, deceived by the false promises of the Turkish government, called the Armenians to “obedience,” arguing that “a little movement could endanger all the Armenian population of the provinces of Turkey.”

The voluminous ballad *“The Black Message Came from the Catholicos”* (i.e.: not to take up arms – V. S.) we have written down relates in tragic words this “impracticality” imposed from above.¹⁷

The Turkish government had already, as in the other localities, collected the Armenians’ weapons and drafted the young men into the Turkish army, although many of them had been able to escape from the army and hide themselves in Zeytoun. Khourshid pasha came with an army of three thousand soldiers to claim the deserters, who had taken refuge in the ancient St. Astvadsadsin (Holy Virgin) Monastery, built on the top of the Berzenka Mountain. On the 25th of March, 1915, the enemy started to shell the monastery. The self-defensive fighters of Zeytoun, under the leadership of Panos Chakerian, responded to the enemy’s attack, sparing their scanty bullets.

“Mister Panos Chakerian said:

‘This job has already become hard,

Own gold has become tin in the enemy’s hand,

*The rose of Zeytoun withered before it opened’.*¹⁸

¹⁷ Svazlian 1994, № 406, 158-159.

¹⁸ Ibid., № 398, 155.



Karapet Tozlian
(1903, Zeytoun)

“...The monastery was just opposite the town of Zeytoun,” told us an eyewitness from Zeytoun, **Karapet Tozlian**, *“And we, the Zeytounis, were standing and watching. Suddenly we saw a few policemen, who carried kerosene in tin containers to burn the monastery, but the gunmen fired at them from inside the monastery and killed them...”*¹⁹

After this battle, which lasted for twelve hours, the Zeytouni young men jumped from the rear windows of the monastery by night and ascended the mountain...²⁰

On the following day, the Turkish soldiers launched a new attack on the monastery and, thinking that the rebels were still there, they set the monastery on fire.

On the 9th of April, the notables of Zeytoun were taken to the military barracks, followed also by their families, who were all deported to unknown places. These were the first exiles. The forcible deportation from Zeytoun started. First, the district of the monastery was deprived of its inhabitants and, subsequently, all the villages surrounding Zeytoun were deserted.

Then the eagle-nest Zeytoun was ravaged...

The chairman of the missionaries in the Middle East, Johannes Lepsius, has referred to the deportation of the inhabitants of Zeytoun in his secret report “Massacres in Armenia”: “...The deportation of the whole Armenian population of Zeytoun was accomplished within a short time, numerous caravans following one another. The deportees were about twenty thousand in number. The town had four districts. The inhabitants were taken away one after the other, the women and children being often separated from the male adults; since one male from each profession was allowed to remain, only six men were chosen to stay behind. The deportation process lasted for several weeks. In the second half of May, the town of Zeytoun was completely evacuated. Of the denizens of Zeytoun six to eight thousand people were sent to the marshy regions of Karapunar and Suleimanié, situated between Konia and Ereğli, while the fifteen-sixteen thousand people were deported to Deyr-el-Zor, to the steppes of Mesopotamia, near the Euphrates River. The endless caravans passed through Marash, Adana and Aleppo. Food was scarce and nothing was being done to settle the deportees in some definite place or to bring the deportation to an end...”²¹

¹⁹ Ibid: № 1393, 260.

²⁰ Fighting a life or death battle, sixty braves combating in the monastery came to the rescue of their brothers in Fendedjak, near Zeytoun, whom the enemy was threatening to exterminate. During the heroic battle, which lasted for nine days, the enemy suffered hundreds of losses. The Armenians’ supply of bullets began to run short and they continued to fight with stones. During these fights, twenty-six Zeytounis, who had come to the rescue, fell victims, several others were saved among them the well-known hero of Zeytoun, Aram Cholakian with his comrades in arms.

²¹ Galoustian 1934: 178.

The deportation and massacre of the Armenian population of Cilicia started. One after the other, Zeytoun, Fendedjak, Marash, Ayntap, Sis, Tarson, Mersin, Yarpouz, Albistan, Adana, Hadjn, Antioch, Iskenderoun, Kessab and Beylan were deserted.

The genocide organized by the Turkish tyranny had embraced, in a few months, almost all the Armenian-inhabited localities of the Ottoman Empire, namely, Moosh, Karin, Pontos, Svaz, Shapin-Garahissar, Kharbert, Malatia, Diarbekir, the Armenian-inhabited localities of Western and Central Anatolia, Izmit, Bursa, Ankara, Konia, reaching up to Chanak-Kalé, Rodosto and elsewhere.

The disarmed, leaderless and helpless Armenian people were driven, with tearful eyes, thirsty and hungry, from their flourishing homes under the strokes of whips and bayonets of the Turkish officers. "The forcible deportation of the Armenians was only a fraudulently veiled death sentence,"²² wrote the French publicist, René Pinon. On the roads of exile, the ruthless policemen, the criminals and murderers set free from the prisons and wearing military uniforms, plundered and robbed everybody, ravished and dishonored the women and the girls.

The extermination of the Armenians was realized both on the spot and in the places of exile, in the vast deserts of Mesopotamia, especially in Rakka, Havran, Ras-ul-Ayn, Meskené and Deyr-el-Zor.

*"The nightingale sings, it's spring,
Don't uncover our wound; it's deep, deep,
Oh! Merciful Lord, what is this Der-Zor?
Weeping and weeping our eyes got blind!"²³*

And since it was prohibited to speak Armenian, they had to express their sorrow and affliction mostly in the enemy's language.²⁴

*"The desert of Der-Zor was covered with mist,
Alas, alas, our condition was lamentable,
I got up in the morning, the sun was shining,
The gunmen, seated, were oiling their arms,
I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!"²⁵*

The indescribable sufferings and the martyrdom of the Armenians started on the day of the Resurrection of Christ:

*"They dismantled the tents on Zatik-Kiraki (Easter-Sunday),
They drove all the Armenians into the desert,
They slaughtered the Armenians like goats,
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!"²⁶*

²² Pinon 1916: 27.

²³ Svazlian 1994, № 451, 174.

²⁴ Concerning this item see also Svazlian 1987: 38-47.

²⁵ Svazlian 1994, № 457, 176.

²⁶ Ibid., № 473, 178.

And the corpses of the Armenians “*dying for the sake of faith*” were scattered everywhere:

*“The place called Der-Zor was a large locality,
With innumerable slaughtered Armenians,
The Ottoman chiefs have become butchers,
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”²⁷*

Innumerable were not only “*the slaughtered Armenians,*” but also the sick people and the moribunds, since the typhoid epidemic was raging:

*“A row of apricot-trees in the desert of Der-Zor,
The Armenian exiles were infected with typhoid,
Alas, alas, our condition was lamentable,
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.”²⁸*

The desert of Der-Zor had become a living cemetery:

*“Mint has grown in the desert of Der-Zor,
The stench of corpses has spread all over the world,
This exile is worse than death for us,
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”²⁹*

Then the bewildering scenes followed one another, while lonely and helpless were the Armenian people in their distress:

*“There are many wounded in the desert of Der-Zor,
Don’t come, doctor, don’t come, it’s useless,
We have no one, but the Lord Himself,
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”³⁰*

And the people passing their road of death have expressed their indignation with curses:

*“You should lose your sight, Enver pasha,
No more Armenian youths are left...”³¹*

Or:

*“May the person, who planned this exile,
Be sacrificed on the road to hell!”³²*

The condition of the despoiled and child-deprived mothers was particularly distressing. Deprived of the elementary conditions of existence, after giving away their properties to the Turkish government and the armed brigands and feeling their imminent death, the Armenian mothers preferred to leave their beloved children to the kind Arabs

²⁷ Ibid., № 460, 176.

²⁸ Ibid., № 466, 177.

²⁹ Ibid., № 468, 178.

³⁰ Ibid., № 496, 182.

³¹ Ibid., № 531, 187.

³² Ibid., № 519, 185.

(or Kurds) in order to preserve the children's life in case they themselves would be martyred.

*“Khabur³³, make way for me, let me cross the desert,
My child is in the Arab village, bare and naked.”³⁴*



Grigor Gyouzelian
(1903, Moussa Dagh)

A 90-year-old survivor, **Grigor Gyozealian** (b. 1903, Moussa Dagh), remembered in his memoirs, with a feeling of infinite gratitude the kind old Christian Arab woman from the village of Muhardi on the road to Homs-Hama, who distributed in secret every evening the rice she had cooked and the pieces of bread thrust in her belt to the Armenian orphans lying exhausted at the base of the walls and then disappeared in the darkness...³⁵

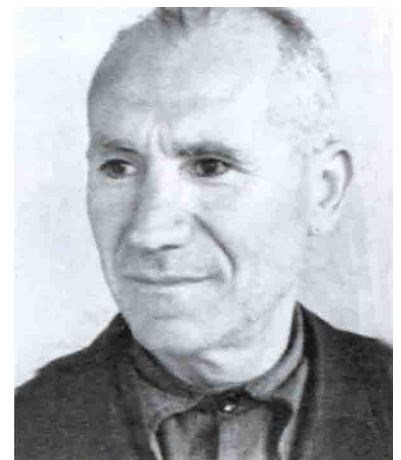
In that unspeakable turmoil of slaughter and carnage the children lost their parents:

*“I stayed confused in the desert of Der-Zor,
I lost my mother and father there,*

Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable

*At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor”.*³⁶

In the memoirs we have recorded there are numerous testimonies about the forcible apostasy of the Armenian children. **Harutyun Alboyadjian** (b. 1904) recalled with bitterness the painful days he had passed in the Turkish orphanage, where hundreds of starving Armenian children (even suckling infants), who had lost their parents, swarmed the center of the large hall of the Turkish orphanage, lying on a heap of straw, unaware that many among them had already died of hunger, while the Turks dragged those, who were still alive, took them away to circumcise them and to change their names and faith...³⁷



Harutyun Alboyadjian
(1904, Fendedjak)

That is why, in order not to deny their faith, not to become the wife of a Turk and not to bear Turkish children,

*“...Hand in hand, Armenian girls threw themselves
Into the Euphrates³⁸ River...”³⁹*

³³ A river flowing near Der-Zor.

³⁴ Svazlian 1994, № 500, 182.

³⁵ Ibid., № 1400, 280.

³⁶ Ibid., № 492, 181.

³⁷ Ibid., № 1410, 301-303.

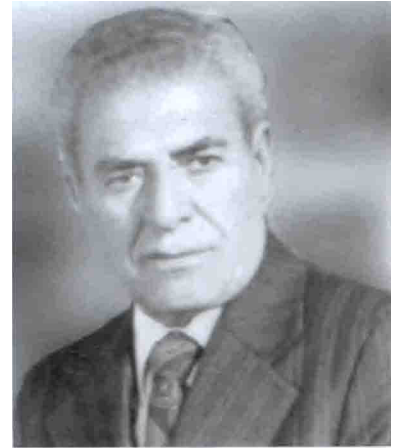
³⁸ The word “Yeprev” used in the original text is another name for the River Euphrates.

And as a protest, the Armenian girls' oath resounded:

*“Armenian girls, going, going!
One day death will come upon us,
Before becoming the enemy's wife,
Let us find death in the Euphrates...”*⁴⁰

And the River Euphrates was dyed red with the Armenians' blood...

*“The desert of Der-Zor is stony and impassable,
The waters of the Euphrates River are bitter,
You can't drink a single cup!
You can't drink water mixed with the blood of
Armenians!”*⁴¹

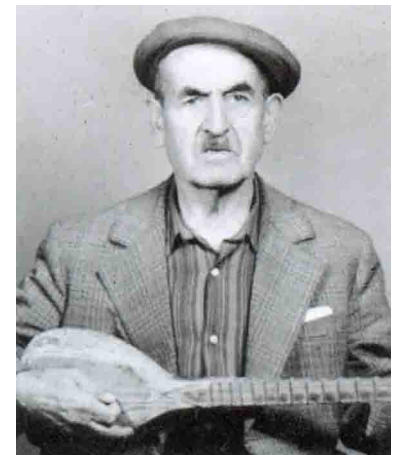


Soghomon Yetenekian
(1900, Mersin)

An eyewitness from Mersin, **Soghomon Yetenekian** (b. 1900), who was fifteen years old at that time has communicated us: *“...Girls and women, three to four hundred in number, united their belts, fastened themselves together and, one after the other, jumped into the Euphrates River. The current of the river could not be seen then. The corpses had risen to the surface and were piled up one upon the other like a fortress; the dogs got enraged by eating human flesh...”*⁴²

An eyewitness of these events, **Poghos Soupkoukian (Ashugh [Minstrel] Develli)** (b. 1887), from Moussa Dagh, communicated us, in 1956, his impressions about the deportation from Cilicia in the form of the following ballad:

*“The Turk pashas Enver and Tala'at
Instigated the exile
And totally exterminated the Armenian
nation,
Plague on them! They ordered
In nineteen hundred and fifteen
The massacre of the Armenians of Cilicia!
If only their tongues were paralyzed and
did not order!
What was the sin of the little infants?
If only those sword-holding hands were broken!
How can we forget the calamity of Cilicia,*



Poghos Soupkoukian
(1887, Moussa Dagh)

³⁹ Svazlian 1994, № 450, 174.

⁴⁰ Ibid., № 568, 196.

⁴¹ Ibid., № 506, 183.

⁴² Ibid., № 1425, 314.

*The girls threw themselves in water together with their sisters,
No one protected the Armenian nation.*⁴³

And indeed, “no one protected the Armenian nation,” which, disarmed and desperate, was being driven along the roads of exile. The deportation and massacre initiated by the Turkish tyranny had, within a few months, attained enormous proportions involving the regions of Lesser Hayk and Anatolia.

The towns of Svaz, Shapin-Garahissar, Kharbert, Malatia, Diarbekir, Izmit, Bursa, Ankara, Konia and the other Armenian-inhabited localities of Central and Western Anatolia were being deserted one after the other.

On the 18th of July, an order for the deportation of the Armenians of Kessab arrived. Seeing that their turn would soon come, nearly all the inhabitants of the seven villages of Moussa Dagh united together, on the 19th of July, and decided to disregard the disastrous order of deportation.⁴⁴

*“Yessayi Yaghoubian’s words resounded:
‘Let us all go up the mountain,’ he said,
‘We will not bend our necks before the enemy,
Let us strike, be stricken and die on our land’.*⁴⁵



Movses Panossian
(1885, Moussa Dagh)

The last participant in the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh, the 106-year-old **Movses Panossian** (b. 1885), narrated those events to us with a juvenile ardor peculiar to him, recalling the oath of the inhabitants of Moussa Dagh:

*“I was born here, I will die here,
I will not go to die as a slave,
I will die here with a gun in my hand,
But I will not become an emigrant!”*⁴⁶

Everybody was filled with a feeling of protest and vengeance. Men and women, children and old people left their homes and orchards and ascended the inaccessible summit of Moussa Dagh to defend their honor and dignity, to withstand the attack and to fight against the innumerable soldiers of the enemy.

All without exception and without delay, started, in an orderly manner, to set up tents and huts, to dig trenches, to build ramparts with solid walls, leaving small

⁴³ Svazlian 1984: 128.

⁴⁴ Pastor Tigran Andreassian from Zeytoun had already escaped from the procession of the deportees from Zeytoun, had reached his native land, Moussa Dagh, and had recounted about the sufferings endured by the poor exiles. He has been one of the active participants of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh and, according to Alexander Pashayan, he was the prototype of Aram Tovmassian, one of the heroes of Franz Werfel’s novel “The Forty Days of Moussa Dagh” (See Andreassian 1967: 5).

⁴⁵ See the entire epopee in Svazlian 1984: 128.

⁴⁶ Svazlian 1994, № 1397, 268.

embrasures from inside for shooting. In some places, they cut down the thick forest to enable them to see the enemy. Even the little boys, the so-called “telephone boys,” worked as signalmen. The women organized the food, the girls and the young brides carried water for the fighters from afar. Step by step, the enemy approached the positions of the Moussa Dagħ fighters, but gunfire opened from different spots created the impression of a complete encirclement, and the Turks fled, terror-stricken, leaving hundreds of dead soldiers.

During forty days, violent battles were fought. During that period, four serious battles took place on the heights of Kezeldja, Kouzdjegħaz, Damladjek and Kaplan-Douzagh. The enemy concentrated new forces to chastise the rebellious Armenians. The provisions and armaments of the Moussa Dagħ people were exhausted. The heavy rain rendered the three hundred shotguns they had, all in all, unfit for use, but they did not give themselves up to despair and continued to fight bravely:

*“We are courageous Moussadagh braves,
We are all well-trained gun-carriers,
The Turks want to deport us
And exterminate us in the deserts.
We do not wish to die like dogs,
We wish to leave a good memory,
To die with glory is an honor for us,
To be martyred is our nation’s praise.”⁴⁷*

The enemy had besieged the mountain on three sides. Seeing no way out and hoping to receive aid from the fourth side, from the Mediterranean Sea, the Moussa Dagħ people tied white bedsheets together, they drew the sign of the Red Cross and the note: “The Christians are in danger, save us!” and displayed them on the mountain slope overlooking the sea. After a few days, the French battleship “Guishen” passing offshore noticed the petition and on the 13th of September, 4,200 inhabitants of Moussa Dagħ were transported to Port-Said.⁴⁸

The heroic battle of Moussa Dagħ shook the world. It demonstrated to the mankind the immense capabilities of a handful of people, who have heroic traditions and unanimous willpower.⁴⁹

Still in May 1915, the new governor of Urfa (Yedessia), Ali Haydar, an Ittihad member, had organized the arrest of forty local Armenian notables and had demanded from all the Armenians to hand over their arms in forty-eight hours. At the end of July, the enlightened primate of the Armenian Diocese of Urfa, the Very Reverend Artavazd

⁴⁷ Ibid., № 402, 157.

⁴⁸ For the memoirs we have recorded from the participants in the heroic battle of Moussa Dagħ, **Movses Panossian** (b. 1885), **Movses Balabanian** (b. 1891), **Hovhannes Ipredjian** (b. 1896) and others see Svazlian 1994., № 1397-1399, 268-274.

⁴⁹ For more details concerning this item see Andreassian 1935 and Goushakjian 1970, and for the historico-folkloric songs and epic poems about these events see Svazlian 1984: 128-133.

Galenterian, was put under arrest. In August, one thousand five hundred young Armenian recruits from Urfa were slain in the localities of Gutemé and Karaköprü. Subsequently, the Turks apprehended one hundred Armenian tradesmen and collected bribes from their kinsfolk saying that they would let them free, but they killed them all. They captured also one hundred others, who were destined to the same lot. In those days the caravans of the exiled Zeytounis and of the poor Armenians deported from the six provinces of Turkey, all dispossessed of their valiant youth, arrived in Urfa, together with sobs and laments of the child-deprived mothers, the horrifying stories about the young girls and innocent infants...

Seeing all that, the thirty-five thousand Armenians of Urfa decided, after a special deliberation, to have recourse to arms similar to the inhabitants of Moussa Dagh.

In October 1915, the heroic self-defense of Urfa was organized under the command of Mkrtitch Yotneghbayrian and Haroutyoun Rastkelenian. The whole Armenian population of Urfa rose up. Children and old people, boys and girls fought like one man, in self-oblivion, during twenty-five days and nights uninterruptedly. The Armenian quarters were divided into six fighting regions, where eight hundred fighters were positioned. The Urfans took an oath: "We are ready to die the arm in our hands."⁵⁰

However, the Turkish policemen and the rabble made a new attack and occupied the Armenian Catholic Church. The Urfans let the enemy soldiers invade the Armenian quarter and, lying in ambush, annihilated them. Their intrepidity had become proverbial:

*"Urfa is large, it cannot be separated,
Its ground is firm; it cannot be dispersed,
The braves of Urfa
Are alone of their kind."*⁵¹

Meeting an obstinate resistance, a regular army of six thousand soldiers with a cannon, under the command of Fakhry pasha, was sent to Urfa, to which joined twelve thousand brigands. The defenders of Urfa put up a heroic resistance and inflicted heavy losses on the Turkish murderers. Fakhry pasha, enraged, declared in a worried tone: "What will our situation be if, in these critical days, several Urfas stood against us?"⁵²

Seriously wounded in the knee and lying on a stretcher, Mkrtitch Yotneghbayrian passed from one position to another and encouraged the fighters.

Fakhry pasha sent a mediator, the well-known German rug-factory owner, M. Eckart, to M. Yotneghbayrian, exhorting him to stop the battle and to surrender. But the heroic son of Urfa answered him: "If you have the feelings of a civilized and Christian man, save the innocent Armenian nation, which is being massacred in the deserts."⁵³

The next day, the enemy tightened the siege and destroyed the Armenian quarter with a heavy cannonade. The condition of the Armenians became more critical day after

⁵⁰ Sahakian 1955: 818.

⁵¹ Svazlian 1994, № 404, 158.

⁵² Arzoumanian 1969: 453.

⁵³ Memorial-book of the Great Genocide 1965: 804.

day. On October 23 the Turks invaded the Armenian quarter and cruelly slaughtered the devoted heroes of Urfa and deported the surviving eight hundred families of the neighboring Armenian-inhabited village of Kamourdj to Deyr-el-Zor and ruthlessly massacred the majority of them on the road.

Thus, the deportation and the massacre had already embraced not only Cilicia and Western Armenia, but also Lesser Hayk, the Armenian-inhabited provinces of Eastern and Central Anatolia, in other words, the entire Ottoman Turkey. About two million Western Armenians became the victims of the Great Armenian Genocide or were dispersed to the various countries of the world.⁵⁴

The executioner of the Armenian people, Tala'at, had declared boastfully, that he had solved the Armenian Question in a few months, while Sultan Hamid had not succeeded in doing it during decades.

Still in the days of the First World War, in 1916, two of the Allied countries, England and France, had signed a secret agreement (Sikes-Picard) that, in case of the defeat of Turkey, Cilicia, having two million six hundred thousand hectares of arable and fertile lands, would pass under the supervision of France. The English and French authorities had agreed earlier with the Armenian National Delegation that, if the Armenian volunteers fought against Turkey, the Armenians would enjoy ample political rights after the victory and the Armenian volunteers would constitute the garrisons of the towns of the newly formed Autonomous Armenian Cilicia.

Consequently, Armenian young men from the Turkish army, from the roads of exile, from various places and even from remote America (natives of Moussa Dagh, Zeytoun, Ayntap, Marash, Kessab, Hadjn, Hoosenik, Chenkoosh, Sebastia, Kharbert, Arabkir and other localities) were enlisted in the French army, creating the Oriental (Armenian) Legion.

The Armenian volunteers, filled with a feeling of vengeance for their numerous innocent martyred kinsfolk and defying death, defeated the German-Turkish armies and won the magnificent victory of Arara, near Nablous-Palestine.

The valorous Armenian legionnaires won the praise of the French and British Army High Commands. On the 12th of October, 1918, General Allenby sent a telegram to the President of the Armenian National Delegation, Nubar Pasha, saying "I am proud to have the Armenian regiment under my command. They fought courageously and had a great share in the victory."⁵⁵

The Treaty of Sèvres, signed after the war, provided that the Entente countries should establish supervision over Cilicia and that the Turkish troops should have already been evacuated from Cilicia.⁵⁶

Numerous Armenian deportees, miraculously rescued from Deyr-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn and other living cemeteries, exhausted, emaciated and destitute, gradually returned

⁵⁴ For more details see Kirakossian 1965.

⁵⁵ Keleshian 1949: 592.

⁵⁶ For more details see Sahakian 1970: 117.

and resettled in Cilicia. With hope and faith with regard to the future, they began to restore the ravage and to cultivate the abandoned orchards. However, the Kemalists, who had come to power, succeeded in coming to an agreement with the Allied States and urged the French to evacuate their forces from Cilicia. Unfortunately, not only did the French military administration showed unwillingness to undertake serious measures to ensure the security of the Armenians, but they left the local authority in the hands of the Turkish military officials, who, furthermore, were not disarmed.

Ignoring the Treaty of Sèvres and taking advantage of the indecision and weakness of the French military administration, the Kemalist forces and the local bandits directed their arms towards the Armenian population of Cilicia.

Starting from January 1920, the Kemalist forces launched an attack on the Armenian localities of Cilicia. During the violent battles, which lasted for twenty-two days, the eleven thousand Armenians of the town of Marash were slaughtered and burned to ashes.

*“Marash is called Marash, alas!
Marash, how do they call you Marash?
When they burn a church in Marash
And they burn Armenians in the church!”⁵⁷*



Verginé Mayikian
(1898, Marash)

A miraculously saved eyewitness survivor from Marash, **Verginé Mayikian** (b. 1898) narrated us: *“The Karassoun Mankants’ (Holy Martyrs’) Church of Marash was built on a hilltop. The Armenians sheltered inside the church waited for the doors to be opened at night. Ten o’clock in the evening came, then eleven o’clock, then midnight, but nobody opened the door. The Armenians were overcrowded inside. There was no water and no light inside the church, there was ordure everywhere, one was crying, another lamenting, and still another praying, in one word, a complete commotion. We heard their voices from the cellar of our house where we were hidden. At half past one after midnight we noticed from our narrow casement that a few Turks were climbing over the arched roof of the church and were throwing kerosene-soaked burning rags through the church cupola. The smell of burning flesh spread all over. The voices reaching from the church were heart-breaking. The monsters had realized their plan. Nobody was alive anymore in the church and in the neighborhood. The space of several hundred meters around the church, which was paved with large stones, was apparently covered with a thick layer of soap. It was, in*

⁵⁷ Svazlian 1994, № 539, 188-189.

reality, the grease of the burned Armenians, two inches in thickness, which had flowed down the threshold of the church and had hardened...".⁵⁸

Subsequently, the surviving eight thousand residents of Marash, together with six thousand Armenians from Urfa, were forcibly deported to Syria, to Aleppo and Damascus, to Beirut, Jerusalem, Baghdad and to the regions of Anatolia under Greek domination.

On the 1st of April, 1920, the Kemalists besieged Ayntap. The life of about ten thousand Armenian refugees from Ayntap and eight thousand from Sebastia, who had just re-established and found peace there after the end of the war and the armistice, became once more turbulent. A central military committee adjoining the National Union was created on the spot under the leadership of Adour Levonian. The latter took stock of the arms and the ammunition and organized the manufacture of shells.

These historic events have been recounted us by **Gevorg Hekimian** (b. 1937) from Ayntap: *"...Adour pasha collected the copper cauldrons from the inhabitants of Ayntap and had them melted to make shells. He and his volunteers attacked the enemy and broke through the siege, forcing the twenty-four thousand soldiers commanded by Ali Kelendj to flee in dismay in one night shouting 'Gâvurun gözü kan doldu' ('The gâvur's eye is filled with blood' – in Turk.; that is: 'The Armenians are full of revenge'). They had composed this song about Adour Levonian in our Ayntap:*

*"Adour pasha, get up!
Light your kindlings!
The Turks are attacking,
Charge, volunteers!"⁵⁹*



Gevorg Hekimian
(1937, Beirut)

The Armenians of Ayntap organized the self-defense of the town. A regiment composed of about seven hundred and fifty people was created. That unequal battle continued, with some interruptions, for a long time...

In the meantime, the commander-in-chief of the Turkish army for the occupation of Cilicia, Gozan oghlu Doghan bey, laid, with his innumerable soldiers, siege to the town of Hadjn. The town had initially an Armenian population of 30-35 thousand, of which only six thousand had been rescued from the Great Genocide. In the Kemalists' opinion, "the complete destruction and extermination of the Armenian citadel of Cilicia, Hadjn, was an hour's job and that they would be capable of burying the six thousand Armenians with a slight attack."⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid., № 1414, 306-307.

⁵⁹ Ibid., № 407, 160.

⁶⁰ Terzian 1956: 241.

The inhabitants of Hadjn, however, were resolute. They formed the superior council of the self-defense of Hadjn under the leadership of their governor, advocate Karapet Chalian, and elected as the defense commandant officer Sargis Jebejian, General Andranik's comrade-in-arms. Four military companies and a squadron composed of sixty cavalymen were organized. Hadjn and its environs were divided into four defense regions. Trenches were dug. Everybody was in fighting trim. Freedom-loving songs resounded everywhere:

*“Onward, onward, people of Hadjn,
Our deadly Turk enemy has come,
Onward, let us fight, take up your arms,
Let's see, what does the enemy want?”⁶¹*

The available 132 rifles were distributed to the 1,200 males aged 16-50, who were capable of taking up arms. Subsequently, 300 more rifles were obtained, but these were also insufficient to fight against the Kemalist army, which was armed with the inexhaustible Bolshevik ammunition.⁶²

That is why the Hadjnis, who were in great need of arms, waited impatiently for that help expected from abroad through the National Union of Adana; that help included not only arms and ammunition, but also new fighting forces. At last the long-expected airplane appeared in the sky:

*“The airplane came with great news,
Our hearts were filled with joyful hopes,
All the fighters wandered unarmed,
They wanted to kill the Turks with all their soul.*

*The brothers already wrote letters,
‘Fight, brothers, we’ll come to your help!’ they said.
The days went by, however, what happened?
Two out of a thousand didn’t show up.’⁶³*

The condition of the unarmed Hadjnis became desperate. The French high-ranking military representatives, Theyartayi and Colonel Bremont conducted an equivocal policy and though they had promised to provide provisions, arms and ammunition for the self-defense of Hadjn, they not only broke their word, but informed also the Turks about the self-defensive plan of the Armenians.

*“To live or to die, valiant people of Hadjn,
Let's seize, they said, otherwise we'll die,
Let's seize the mighty cannon,
Let's gain the glorious victory!”⁶⁴*

⁶¹ Svazlian 1994, № 413, 163.

⁶² For this and subsequent events see the memoir of **Hovsep Bshtikian** (b. 1903) from Zeytoun. Ibid., № 1392, p. 253.

⁶³ **Nazeni Satamian** (b. 1926) from Hadjn has communicated us, with a feeling of pride, but also with tears of regret, Aram Aspet's present poem converted into a song. See Svazlian 1994, № 414, 162.

The Hadjn freedom-fighters seized the enemy's enormous cannon with great difficulty, but they could not use it to defend themselves for the lack of shells. Starvation caused a great distress to the inhabitants of Hadjn, *“people were obliged to eat cats, mice, dogs, leather, the bark of trees, moccasins...”*⁶⁵ The enemy reinforced the army with new cannons and innumerable regular armed forces. After a prolonged and heroic resistance, which lasted for seven months, the Kemalist forces were able to destroy and to burn down all the stone houses of Hadjn by cross-wise heavy cannonade. Hundreds of valorous combatants fell on the fortifications; thousands of Hadjn denizens were cruelly massacred. Only 380 people succeeded in accomplishing a breakthrough by fighting and coming out of the terrible encirclement of fire:

*“Three hundred Armenian braves,
All armed with rifles,
Gave a heavy blow to Doghan bey's army,
Hadjn fell shouting 'Vengeance!'”*⁶⁶

With yells of “Vengeance” fell also the town of Ayntap, which had heroically resisted, fighting intermittently for 314 days, as well as the ancient capital, Sis, the town with a historic past, Tarson, the commercial center, Adana, and various other Armenian-inhabited localities of Cilicia, since the French government, breaking its obligations as an ally, handed Cilicia over to Turkey by an agreement signed on the 20th of October, 1921, in Ankara, condemning the Armenian population of Cilicia to the danger of massacre... The Armenian-scented eagle-nest, Zeytoun, which, still in 1862, had fired the first shot of rebellion against the Ottoman tyranny, had lost the greater part of its joyful and lively inhabitants numbering 30,000 souls; only 1,058 people had been miraculously saved during the Great Genocide, had returned to their native land and had barely started to restore their ravaged and burnt houses, when in reply to their national hero and leader, Aram Cholakian's, his comrades-in-arms, Hovhannes Simonian's, freedom-fighter Karapet's, Manouk's and other braves' appeal, many of them joined Avetis's (from Hassanbek – Adana) rebellious group of heroes in the Amanos Mountains.⁶⁷ That large group of about 500 male and female braves, which grew denser every day, spread terror, fighting gun in hand morning and night in the impassable mountains of Taurus, among the neighboring Turkish villages, though chased by the enemy soldiers and overcoming unspeakable difficulties, they continued to fight against the Turkish army until the Armistice, hoping to save the cradle of their ancestors, the former flourishing Cilicia established by the Roubinians Dynasty...

In 1921, after the forcible deportation of the Armenian population of Cilicia, it was the turn of the Armenians of Anatolia, whose majority had been ruthlessly massacred

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Aspet 1961: 242.

⁶⁶ Svazlian 1994, № 415, 163.

⁶⁷ See the group-photograph of the Amanos braves and the memoir of **Hovsep Bshtikian** (b. 1903) from Zeytoun. Svazlian 1994, № 1392, 253.

during the Genocide and those, who were miraculously rescued continued their existence in the Armenian-inhabited localities and especially in the port of Izmir (Arm. Zmyurnia).

In 1922, the Kemalists also burned down the Armenian and Greek quarters of Izmir, driving the Christians to the seashore.⁶⁸ That horrible event has been recorded in the memory of the people as “the calamity of Izmir.”



Arpinn Bartikian
(1903, Afion-Garahissar)

A survivor of the Genocide of 1915, **Arpiné Bartikian** (b. 1903) remembered with emotion the ghastly scenes she had witnessed and told us: *“...We lived there (in Izmir – V. S.) in the Armenian quarter. We had hardly started to draw a breath, when the Kemalist movement started. Izmir was committed to the flames. They burned the Armenian quarter, Haynots, in the first place and set fire to the Saint Stepanos Church since all the Armenians had taken shelter in it. We fled and ran to the seashore. There were numerous boats in the sea, but the Turks had drilled holes in advance in all the boats in order to prevent the Armenians from escaping. The poor Armenians sat in the boats and sailed to the open sea, but, after some time, the boats were filled with water and sank. The swollen bodies of the drowned people floated on the surface of the sea. They took us with the living ones to Baldjova and lodged us in wooden huts near the shore. They started to inspect us. They dragged and forcibly took away the pretty girls...”*⁶⁹

And along with the people’s torment the following mournful dirge was woven:

*“We came out of Afion
And came to the town of Izmir,
I didn’t find my dear mother,
And sobbed my heart out.*

*Ah, dear mother, they deceived us,
They separated me from you,
They threw you in the fire
And burnt you, they charred you...”*⁷⁰

The situation was fatal and inextricable. There was fire behind and water in front. Only those, who gave their last gold coins and ornaments to the Turks to save their lives were rescued from the hell-like turmoil, while those, who had no means, threw themselves into the violent sea-waves and, defying death, tried to swim to the ships

⁶⁸ For more details see Nersissian 1992: 87-93.

⁶⁹ Svazlian 1994, № 1455, 361-363.

⁷⁰ Ibid., № 546, 191.

anchored at a distance and bearing European flags, which would carry the homeless Armenians to unknown destinations...

*“We left for Constantinople,
We stayed at the church door,
They gave us bread and olives
And kept us for three days.*

*We fled from there to Greece,
Many others to France,
Still others to Egypt,
Thus we were dispersed in all directions.”⁷¹*

Uprooted from their ancestral homes and lands, the Armenian exiles found themselves in foreign lands, unaware of foreign languages and laws and only fit to work as cheap labor, despite the fact that the talented skill of the Armenian artisans and the elegant handiwork of the honest and diligent Armenian women had won the admiration of foreigners. Moreover, the dread of assimilation, degeneration and, particularly, unemployment gave the wandering Armenians no rest:

*“We found ourselves in foreign lands,
I yearn and long and cry,
May the Armenian Question be solved soon,
Have patience, my soul, have patience!*

*Rejoice and do not cry in grief,
Stand firm on your feet,
You will soon hear about Repatriation,
Have patience, my soul, have patience!”⁷²*

And the caravans of Western Armenians to Eastern Armenia followed one another announcing the beginning of Repatriation, first, in the years 1920-1930, from Turkey, France and Greece, followed, in the years 1946-1948, by the mass Repatriation from Syria-Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, France, Greece, the Balkan states...

The repatriates came to their Motherland full of nostalgia and exaltation, singing: *“Free, Soviet Land, Armenia...”*. They came to put, hand in hand with their sisters and brothers in the Homeland, a soothing balm over the wounds of their Motherland caused by the Second World War. For that noble purpose, the laborers brought the strength of their arms; the craftsmen – the skill of their hands; the intellectuals – their knowledge; the rich – their belongings and factories; the parents – their children...

*“I will go to Armenia
And stay there permanently.
What shall I do in foreign lands?*

⁷¹ Ibid., № 547, 191.

⁷² Ibid., № 603, 202.

*Lo! I go to Armenia!*⁷³

The dense caravans of repatriates returned to Armenia encouraged by the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War and, particularly by its official claim for the Armenian and Georgian lands laid to Turkey on November the 1, 1945...⁷⁴ And along with the great expectations the popular song was woven from mouth to mouth:

*"I want to go to Armenia,
I want to see Yerevan,
I want to hoist the flag
On the top of Mount Ararat!"*⁷⁵

Or else:

*"Kars and Ardahan will
Soon be returned to us,
In order that we transform
Those deserted lands into Paradise."*⁷⁶

However, the real life conditions waiting for them in Armenia were different. The displacement from the temperate coasts of the Mediterranean Sea to the Motherland having abrupt climatic changes was not a mere geographical migration for the repatriates. Along with the post-war difficulties, it assumed, first of all, a new public-political, socialist mode of life with its unusual system and willful laws, which were often incomprehensible and unintelligible to the newcomers. The latter had barely accommodated themselves to the new life conditions.

In spite of all these difficulties, however, a great number of repatriates started to study in the Motherland, raising the level of their secondary and professional education. Many of them became eminent figures of labor, arts, sciences and culture. With their diligence and the experience peculiar to the refugees to overcome the difficulties, they began to build their native home and village, founding around Yerevan new burghs and districts perpetuating the memories of their former cradles, such as: Nor (New) Zeytoun, Nor Hadjn, Nor Yedessia, Nor Aresh, Kilikia, Marash, Ayntap, Moussa Ler (Dagh), Kharbert, Arabkir, Malatia, Sebastia, etc., with comfortable private residences and well-cultivated personal plots. However, the ache of the former ruined house and extinguished hearth continued to fume in their memory and the dream of the lost native land was entrusted as the call of the soul from generation to generation in the form of a song:

*"When the doors of hope will be opened,
And we shall return to our country again,
Our magnificent Roubinian Country,*

⁷³ Ibid., № 605, 202.

⁷⁴ Subsequently the Turks answered: "We owe no debts to anyone in Turkish lands and rights. We shall live as honorable people, we shall die as honorable people." (See Lazian 1946: 372-373).

⁷⁵ Svazlian 1994, № 606, 202.

⁷⁶ Ibid., № 611, 204.

Which was taken from us with violence.

*I wish to see my Cilicia,
Its air is pure, its water clear,
I wish to see my Cilicia,
Monasteries and fortresses are plenty there.*

*When the Armenian Question will be solved
And our ancestors' land will be given to us,
We will cultivate our fields
And will populate our villages.*

*I wish to see my Cilicia -
Zeytoun, Hadjn and Moussa Dagh,
Tarson, Marash, Sis and Ayntap,
We, certainly, will embellish.⁷⁷*

It is remarkable, that the folkloric materials communicated by our narrators reflect also the way of thinking of the Armenian people.

Although the Turkish tyranny cruelly suppressed the heroic resistance and the self-defensive battles started in various localities, nevertheless the devoted Armenian heroes, who fought for their elementary human rights and for the physical survival of their nation, recorded brilliant pages in the history of the national liberation struggle and their heroic characters inspire the Armenian people till today.

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⁷⁷ Ibid., № 597, 200.

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