

Armenian Atrocities: A Compilation Of Views

Preface

There is an orchestrated claim that the Ottoman Governments committed the crime of "genocide", beginning in April of 1915, against the Armenians even though they were loyal subjects of the Empire. Yet, the proponents of this claim can not even agree on the fundamental, including, the "duration of the genocide" or the "number of the victims". Some allege that it continued until 1917 and others extend it until 1923. For example, the Republic of Armenia has adopted among its National Memory Days, April 24 as the "1915-1923 Great Genocide" day. According to some others, the " number of the victims" exceeds even the number of the whole Armenian population of the Empire.

The advocates of these allegations ignore and overlook the simple historical facts of the period in question which covers the last 40 years of the Ottoman Empire. It was during this period that the Armenian rebels betrayed the Ottomans by actively supporting, invading and occupying foreign forces, particularly the Russians. The same circles claim that the Ottoman measures to relocate the Armenian population from the war zone in eastern Anatolia to safer parts of the Empire in 1915 was not motivated by the Great War or intercommunal strife. But in reality, in the First World War, the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire were invaded by Russia, and the Armenians, considering the war as an opportunity, launched an uprising to establish an Armenian state in a region that was predominantly non-Armenian. War-time casualties were increased by rapidly escalating fighting between Armenians and the Muslim civil populations. Famine and epidemics augmented the loss of life.

Ironically, while those who make these allegations recognize these historical facts in their publications, they chose to be subjective in their evaluation of this period for obvious political ends. The goal since the very beginning of the "Armenian question" in the fourth quarter of the 19th century, has been the establishment of an Armenian state in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire (after 1923, of the Republic of Turkey). Demands for reparation have been advanced in the last several decades.

In this document, the events that created the so-called "Armenian question" are narrated in a chronological order, with reference to Armenian and other foreign writers. In other words, the role of the Armenians in the domestic and foreign policy developments of the final 40 years of the Ottoman Empire is approached via the writings of non-Turkish experts, and especially of Armenians themselves. Thus, Ottoman documents and sources about the atrocities committed by Armenians on the Muslim population are deliberately excluded so as to preserve the consistency of this approach.

It should be stressed that, this document does not cover the atrocities committed by the Armenians on the Muslim population in Caucasia between the period 1918-1923, through which the Azerbaijani population was also deeply affected. This exercise does not claim to encompass each and every single detail of this tragic era of Ottoman history. It is, however, a meaningful cross-section of the main facts that shaped the events under consideration.

Introduction

The Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299. After almost three centuries of rise and the Golden Age, the period of decline began in 1579 and disintegration in 1699 with the Treaty of Karlowitz.

The Ottoman Empire was the major world power during the Golden Age. Even after the period of disintegration began, it took another seventy-five years before the European powers became stronger than the Ottoman Empire and were able to make their influence felt. Russia and Austria replaced the grandeur of the Ottoman Empire after the Treaty of Kuchuk Kaynarca signed in 1774. Britain, France and finally Germany joined the two powers in the 19th century. Prior to the First World War, the fate of the Ottoman Empire depended on, to a large extent, the decisions of these five powers.

Against this background, the Armenian question was raised as a European issue at the Berlin Congress in 1878.

The Armenians lived peacefully for six centuries within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. After the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, Mehmet II invited the Armenian bishop from Bursa to Istanbul and gave him the title of Armenian Patriarch.

Lord Salisbury, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a letter to Sir Henry Layard, British Ambassador at Istanbul, dated 30 May 1878, asserts:

" Asiatic Turkey contains a population of many different races and creeds possessing no capacity for self-government and no aspiration for independence, but owing their tranquility and whatever prospect of political well-being they possess entirely to the rule of the Sultan." (1)

Until the 1870's neither Russia nor the other powers were significantly involved with the Armenians. The rebellions broke out in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire in 1875-76 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and its aftermath provided the conditions that were to be exploited both by the Russians and the Armenians.

The Armenians also began to seek the aid of the European powers . These attempts were pursued by the Patriarchate and the clergy.

Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador, writes in a report to the Foreign Office on 7 December 1876:

"Yesterday the Armenian Patriarch paid me a visit. He expressed the hope, in the name of the large Christian community of which he is the leader, that the Conference (Berlin) would put pressure on the Babiali (Ottoman Government), that the privileges that are to be granted to the provinces which have revolted against the Empire also be granted to the provinces which remained calm, but which deserve equal treatment.

I replied with caution. I told him that the object of the Conference was to ensure order in provinces which have rebelled, and which endanger the overall peace, and that I did not think that it would handle the topic of the overall administration of the Ottoman Empire.

The Patriarch replied that the nation was very upset, and that if a rebellion was necessary to attract the interest of the European powers, then there was no difficulty in starting such an action."(2)

In a dispatch dated 14 July 1878, to Lord Salisbury, Foreign Secretary, Sir Henry Layard, British Ambassador, refers to about the Russian activities among the Armenian population:

"I am informed, on good authority, that Russia is already commencing her usual intrigues among the Armenians of Asiatic Turkey. Russian agents are being sent into the provinces inhabited by them with the object of stirring up discontent against the rule and authority of the Porte. A Russian party is being formed in the capital amongst the Armenians, which already includes some leading and influential members of that community."(3)

Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in Istanbul (1894-1897) writes:

"The Armenians were pleasantly accepted in London. The Gladstone Cabinet invited the displeased ones, classified them, put them in order and promised to support them. Henceforth, the propaganda committee was established in London which was going to be the source of inspiration.

Two simple concepts had to be adopted by the Armenian people: The concepts of nationalism and liberty. The committees believed that it was their duty to spread these... and thus with the help of propaganda they exploited the deficiency and faults of the Turkish administration and established secret organizations which will spread the concepts of national awakening and liberty..." (4)

With reference to Paul Cambon's report, the Russian General Mayewsky, Consul of Russia in Van and Erzurum, states the following in his study presented to the Russian General Staff:

"P. Cambon clearly claims that the rebellious Armenians believed that their duty was to make the villagers accept the concepts of nationalism, liberty and autonomy.

In this case, what would the attitude of the Turkish Government be against the activities of Armenian committees? Could the Turkish Government approve of these activities which are actually aimed to destroy her?"

The Armenian Committees and Their Activities

The Armenian historian Richard Hovannisian asserts that "the Armenians of the nineteenth century were not prepared, however, to propose independence... For the eastern Ottoman provinces, most Armenian leaders considered self-determination within the framework of the Turkish Empire as the most desirable improvement. Of the several political and revolutionary societies organized during the last quarter of the century only the Hunchakist, a Marxist organization initiated in 1887 at Geneva, advocated outright separation from the Ottoman Empire."(5)

"Even before 1878, in the regions of Daron-Sasoun and Vasbouragan there had been underground cells, secret groups, and bands of "brigands" who fought against government forces. During the eighties, Khrimian and Mgrdich Portugalian were active in Van... Expelled from Van in 1885, Mgrdich Portugalian left the Ottoman Empire and settled in Marseille, where he published the periodical 'Armenia'. His students and friends in Van considered 'Armenia' their voice, and in 1886 established the 'Armenagan' Party, the purpose of which was to 'secure the sovereignty of the Armenian people through revolution'."(6)

Hratch Dasnabedian summarizes the situation prior to the establishment of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF):

"Toward the close of the eighties, both Eastern and Western Armenians were caught up in the excitement of revolution. The Hunchakians had begun to expand throughout Constantinople, Asia Minor and Trebizond. In Vasbouragan the Armenians were at work. In Tiflis the Yeridasart Hayastan organization had been established; its members periodically visited Ottoman Armenia to become more familiar with the situation and disposition of Armenians there; on both sides of the border they had established military cells, called the 'Droshak' groups. In various regions of Western Armenia bands of 'brigands' or groups of partisans were already operating or gradually being formed...In Russia, the cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tiflis were centers of students moved by the spirit of revolution. In 1890, Sarkis Gougounian, a student in St. Petersburg, formed an armed group of 125 young patriots to cross from Kars into Turkish Armenia."(7)

Apart from the Marxist separatist Hunchakist organization, a second Armenian organization was founded in 1890 in Tiflis. Hovannisian defines this organization:

"In Transcaucasia and the eastern Ottoman vilayets, the platform Hai Heghapokhakan Dashnaksutiun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) founded in 1890 at Tiflis, became by the first years of the twentieth century the most powerful and comprehensive Armenian political organization. Its initial program, adopted in 1892, propounded the administrative and economic freedom of Turkish Armenia...To effect these aims, the Dashnaksutiun would organize fighting units, arm the populace, operate an espionage network, propagandize to raise the revolutionary spirit of Armenians, and, in particular, resort to the terrorization of corrupt officials, traitors and exploiters. The methods adopted by Dashnaksutiun were similar to those of the Russian Narodnaia Volia and its successor, the Social Revolutionary Party, both of which maintained close contact and ideological bonds with the Armenian leaders." (8)

Indeed, K.S. Papazian writes that in the program of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) adopted at the General Convention of 1892 the purpose of the organization is stated to be the achievement of political and economic freedom by means of rebellion.(9)

According to Papazian, "to run with the hare and to hunt with the hound, has been the tactics of the ARF"(10)

The American Commission under the leadership of General James G. Harbord, refers to the Dashnaksutiun in the following terms in its report presented to the Peace Conference and the United States Government in 1919:

"This is really a political society rather than a party. It contains three clearly defined elements, all of which are strongly socialist. a) The right wing composed of comitadji (meaning secret revolutionists who believe in strong armed methods) b) The centre comprising intellectuals who control both wings c) The left wing which is almost Bolshevik. It is highly organized, has agents everywhere and still plays a dominant part in Armenian national life. The opponents of the Dashnaksutiun say that, despite its patriotic work, it is only a relic of barbarism and must be suppressed. It is probable that the Dashnaksutiun still employs terroristic methods, and undeniable that it is now a source of danger, owing to its liability to precipitate conflicts."

Whereas Papazian asserts that "Terrorism has, from the first, been adopted by the Dashnag Committee of the Caucasus, as a policy or a method for achieving its ends."(11)

In fact, the heading "Means" in the Dashnag program adopted in 1892 reads as follows:

"The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, in order to achieve its purpose through rebellion, organizes revolutionary groups..."(12)

M.Varandian,the most prominent Dashnag ideologist and historian says: "The purpose of the Armenian movement, has been, from the beginning, to organize as far as possible a long drawn-out fight against the Ottoman tyranny, to create in the country a continuous revolutionary state, always having before our eyes the intervention of the third factor...the European factor"(13)

Lt. Col. Sir Mark Sykes, proposes a similar view about the tactics of the revolutionaries. He writes in 1915:

"...the Armenians of the Mush plain are at present an extremely difficult people to manage. They are very avaricious and would object to pay the most moderate taxes; they are also exceedingly treacherous to one another, and often join the revolutionaries to wipe off old scores on their fellow villagers. As for the tactics of the revolutionaries, anything more fiendish one could not imagine-the assassination of Moslems in order to bring about punishment of innocent men, the midnight extortion of money from villages which have just paid their taxes by day, the murder of persons who refuse to contribute to their collection boxes, are only some of the crimes of which Moslems, Catholics, and Gregorians accuse them with no uncertain voice....if the object of the Armenians is to secure equality before the law, and the maintenance of security and peace in the countries part inhabited by Armenians, then I can only say that their methods are not those calculated to achieve success."(14)

The Armenian Rebellions

"The centers of revolutionary activity in Turkish Armenia were Zeitun, Van, and Erzurum. The Zeitun Rebellion of 1862 was the beginning of extensive uprisings directed against the Ottoman government."(15)

C.F.Dixon-Johnson explains the fears of the Moslems from the Armenian revolts:

"In Turkey the people have a horror of secret societies and plots, founded on the experience of their own suffering at the hands of the Greek Hetairia and the Bulgarian Komitadjis. The fears of the Turks and the Kurds were genuine. They believed that the members of the once loyal 'millet-i sadıka'(the loyal nation) no longer merited that title, and that they were arming and preparing to massacre the Moslems."(16)

Hratch Dasnabedian evaluates the situation:

"Thus the eighties of the 19th century formed the period of preparation for the phase of armed struggle in the Armenian liberation movement. On both sides of the border revolutionary ferment gained momentum, and underground cells and clandestine armed organizations were formed."(17)

1. Zeitun (1862 and 1895)

The inhabitants of Zeitun were a rebellious community where there were revolts as far back as the 1850's. The last two major rebellions in Zeitun are summarized here.

Nalbandian describes the first major Zeitun rebellion:

"The Zeitun Rebellion of 1862 became the first of a series of insurrections in Turkish Armenia against the Ottoman regime which were inspired by revolutionary ideas that had swept the Armenian world. The Zeitunli insurgents had had direct contacts with certain Armenian intellectuals in Constantinople... These intellectuals were members of an organization called Benevolent Union... A letter, partly written in cipher, dated May 14/28, 1862, from the Benevolent Union member Serobe Tagvorian in Constantinople, to Mikael Nalbandian in St. Petersburg indicates that there were revolutionaries in the Turkish capital who had direct contacts with the Zeitun insurgents... Tagvorian's letter indicates that preparations for the Zeitun Rebellion (August, 1862) were probably begun as early as May, 1862."(18)

On 12 October 1895 another major rebellion took place. This time the Hunchak Party guided the insurrection. Sir Mark Sykes narrates the following about the 1895 rebellion:

"Some Revolutionary Society (The Hunchak Party) not being satisfied with the general state of affairs in Turkey and scenting collections and relief funds in the future, judged it expedient in the year of grace 1895, to dispatch certain emissaries to Armenia. On the warlike population of Zeitun they pinned their hopes of raising a semi-successful revolution, and six of their boldest agents were accorded to that district. What the end of the revolution would be these desperadoes recked little, so long as the attention of Europe was drawn to their cause and their collection-boxes... A number of Furnus and Zeitunli Armenians were in the habit of going to Adana for the purpose of earning money as farmers and handicraftsmen... They were foolish enough to pillage some Turkomans on their way home... The Turkomans addressed themselves in complaint to the Mutesarif of Marash who decided to investigate the affair... The agents (Armenian) saw in this move a chance of bringing matters to a crisis and either attacked, or persuaded the villagers to attack the commission killing Bimbashi (Major) and three of the guard, and carrying off the Christian commissioner with them. The surrounding Armenians ... joined the revolutionaries... The revolutionists decided to attack the garrison at Zeitun in order to force that town to join a jihad against the Osmanli... Having gained a victory of some importance, the Armenian force proceeded to the Kertul district where they plundered and sacked the Konak. On their way back to Zeitun they committed some most disgraceful murders at Chukarhissar in commemoration of the decease of the late Armenian kingdom which was finally ended at that place. (Writer's note: I was told some ghastly details, but I doubt the veracity of them, as the were related to me by a town Armenian)... They (agents) assembled the refugees driven in by Ali Pasha, and repaired with them to the Konak, where the imprisoned garrison was quartered, and proceeded to murder them with bestial cruelty... After that foolish slaughter... Edhem Pasha... arrived on the scene, and with the assistance of the European Consuls concluded an honorable peace with the town: containing, alas! a clause by which the miserable causes of all this unhappiness and bloodshed were allowed to return unmolested to Europe."(19)

Aghasi, member of the Hunchak Party, who began the rebellion in Zeitun recounts the insurrection in his memoirs:

"I was accompanied by my friends Apah, Meleh, and Heratchia. Towards the end of July, we arrived in Zeitun... On August 7th, the first encounter between Armenians and the gendarmes occurred... On October

10th the government of Zeitun (township center) had sent for the last time two gendarmes to Alabash, to examine , in secret, the situation of the Armenians, in view of a definitive attack. The inhabitants of Alabash, in an outburst of anger, tied these two gendarmes to a tree, and burnt them alive. On October 24th, we hung a red flag in the valley of Karanlık Dere. From that morning forward, the prominent leaders of all the Armenian villages started arriving with some fighters...At noon, we began negotiating. The discussions lasted for two hours:we established the plan of our struggle."(20)

The rebellion which began on 24 October ended on 28 January 1896. The 50 officers and 600 soldiers in the barracks were taken prisoner. Aghasi tells us that most of the prisoners were killed and only 56 of them were able to escape. According to Aghasi, from the beginning until the end of the insurrection, the Turks lost 20,000 men against only 125 Armenians.

The rebellion ended with the agreement proposed by six European powers and which was accepted by the Porte. According to the agreement, the five Hunchak revolutionaries who started the rebellion left Zeitun on 13 February 1896, under the protection of the British Consulate.

2.Erzurum Revolt (20 June 1890)

Han-Azad, one of the founders of the Hunchak Party described this incident in the Hayrenik newspaper published in the US in 1927:

"The founder of the Sansarian School had died in 1890. The government had been informed that there was a workshop in this school which produced weapons. It was thought that the informers were the Armenian Catholic priests. Two hours before the search, an individual named, 'Bogos the dog', belonging to the 'Defenders of the Motherland Society', spread the news that the school would be searched. Immediately, national history books, notebooks, objects which would draw suspicion and curiosity were concealed. Nothing was found during the search.(The denunciation made to the Government was that weapons were produced not only in the school, but also in the Church.The Church and the school were searched in the presence of the church priest and the school president. This is the reason for the charges that the church was desecrated.) Armenians cried out that the entering of the Turks into the Church was filth and indecency. The men of Gerechian, who was one of the founders of the 'Defenders of the Motherland Society, and who was later killed by the decision of the Erzurum centre of the Dashnaksutiun Committee the first to engage in provocations among the people. Shops were closed, worship in Church was forbidden, bells were not rung. As soon as they were in control of the situation, they seized this opportunity to yell that Armenians have been free for three days, and that they shall defend their freedom with arms. They demanded that the government reduce taxes and abolish the military conscription tax, that the Church which was desecrated be demolished and built anew, that the 61st article of the Berlin Treaty be implemented. Armenians stayed for 3-4 days in the cemetery, in the Church and in the School yard. Some prominent Armenians, who were trying to disperse the Armenians, were beaten. The order of the government, which demanded that everybody go back to their business, went unheeded. The committee members went around encouraging people. Meanwhile, Gerekchian's brother shot two soldiers and fighting began in the city, and continued till evening. It was believed that there were many casualties. The

following day the Consuls visited the city. There were more than 100 dead on both sides, and 200-300 wounded..."

The British Consul, Clifford Lloyd, reports to the Embassy about the Erzurum revolt:

"The order to search the Armenian institutions in Erzurum had come from Constantinople. This search had created some discontent among the Armenians. They decided to close the shops and schools, and send a letter of protest to the Sultan. The Consul tried to pacify them, and persuade them to open the shops. The Moslems and the local authorities saw the closing of the shops as an antagonistic act. The Governor-General discussed for this reason with the Armenian Bishop who returned to the Church advised the people, but the people began demonstrations against the Bishop. Upon this, the Bishop had asked the help of the soldiers, a battalion of soldiers had arrived, and the Armenians had opened fire on the soldiers, had killed two soldiers, and wounded three. Upon this the Moslems attacked the Armenians with sticks and daggers, and chased them as far as the neighborhoods of the Consulates. The British Consul had informed the Governor-General and had asked for help. The unit arrived shortly and was in control of the situation. Meanwhile 12 Armenians were killed and 250 individuals were wounded."(21)

The Erzurum revolt was reported in Europe as a massacre of the Armenians. Europe accepted this as such, and the incident became to be known as the first allegation of a massacre concerning Armenian revolts.

3. Kumkapı demonstration (15 July 1890)

It was the Hunchakian Party which organized the demonstration at Kumkapı. Nalbandian tells about this incident:

"The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party revealed its power for the first time in Constantinople on Sunday, July 15, 1890, when it organized the Demonstration of Kumkapı. The demonstration started in the Armenian Cathedral in the Armenian quarter of Kumkapı. Here Patriarch Khoren Ashikian was addressing a large congregation gathered for the Vartavar services. In the cathedral, Haruthiun Jangulian, a party member, read a Hunchak protest directed to the Sultan which advocated Armenian reforms.

Afterward, he went to the Patriarchate and smashed the Turkish coat of arms. Although the Armenian Patriarch protested, he was forced by the Hunchaks to join them in presenting the protest to the Sultan. Hardly had the procession toward Yıldız Palace started when it was blocked by Turkish soldiers, and a riot ensued in which a number of people were killed and wounded."(22)

The decision to hold a demonstration was taken by the Istanbul Committee of the Hunchak Party. It was led by Jangulian, Damadian and Boyajian. Damadian, later organized an anti-Turkish demonstration in Athens in 1891 and both Damadian and Boyajian took part in the Sassun rebellion.

The Armenians believed that the Kumkapı demonstration was successful in drawing attention of Europe and the Hunchak newspaper send the following message to Europeans: "Armenians shall refuse European proposals that are contrary to their supreme objective, and are ready to fight for this cause until their last drop of blood." in its issue dated 7 September 1890.

At the beginning of 1891, Sultan Abdulhamid declared an amnesty for Armenians. 76 Armenians who were freed in Istanbul went to the Patriarchate and gave an oath that they would never take part in such movements again. However, the agents of the Hunchak Party continued their activities.

4. Merzifon, Kayseri, Yozgat (1892)

Nalbandian writes that the Hunchaks were not deterred. "They continued to organize demonstrations and insurrections in town and villages inhabited by Armenians... Hunchak revolutionary activities were markedly evident in 1892 and even more so in 1893".(23)

In the summer of 1892, Merzifon was chosen as the center for propaganda activities. Kayseri, Yozgat, Chorum, Amasya, Tokat were some other towns where similar activities were carried out.

Nalbandian informs us that "the Hunchaks made the most of Turkish oppression by spreading various alarming reports through their publications, including exaggerations of Turkish atrocities. Hunchak revolutionaries posted placards on public buildings and walls of houses in the regions of Marsovan, Yozgat, Amasia, Chorum, Tokat, Angora, Sivas, and Diarbekiar."(24)

In December 1892, there was an attempt to assassinate the Governor-General of Van.

In September 1893, the Ottoman authorities raided a house of the revolutionaries in Merzifon. The Armenians who were in the house opened fire and threw a bomb at the soldiers. Twenty-five soldiers died or were wounded.

In December of the same year, an Armenian revolt occurred in Yozgat where armed attacks were carried out against the soldiers.

5. The First Sassun Rebellion (August 1894)

Nalbandian records that in the region of Sassun (located in the province of Bitlis) a revolutionary named Damadian, the Hunchaks, and others had been inciting hostilities between the Kurds and the Armenians. In August 1894, an actual rebellion broke out.

In fact, Mihran Damadian, who was one of the leaders of the Kumkapı demonstration first escaped to Athens where he organized anti-Turkish demonstrations in 1891, and later came to Sassun with the aim of inciting the Armenians to rebel. Damadian and his band raided the village Avzim in Mush in December 1892 and killed a Turk named Sergeant Ishak. Hostilities continued between the Kurds and Armenians after the Armenian band attacks. Another Armenian named Boyajian joined Damadian and later pursued his agitation activities. Boyajian band organized many attacks on communities living in the area and pillaged their properties throughout 1894. Nalbandian describes these events: "Murat (Boyajian) and a band of followers started minor acts of aggression against the Kurds, who countered with attacks against the Armenians."(25)

The intervention of the government soldiers met with armed resistance of the Armenians. The Sassun rebellion ended with Boyajian's arrest on 23 August 1894.

According to pro-Armenian writers the number of the Armenians who lost their lives in this rebellion changes between six thousand to twelve thousand. A commission of Consuls of Britain, France and Russia

reported the number of the Armenians died as 265. Neither of these sources mentioned the number of the Moslems killed. However, the Commission of the Consuls confirmed the attacks of the Boyajian band.

6. The Babiali demonstration (September 1895)

The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party organized a demonstration in Istanbul on 30 September 1895.

Nalbandian explains that months of secret preparations ended on 28 September 1895. On that day the Hunchaks sent the following letter, written in French, to the Embassies and the Sublime Porte:

"Your Excellency,

The Armenians of Constantinople have decided to make shortly a demonstration, of a strictly peaceful character, in order to give impression to their wishes with regard to the reforms to be introduced in the Armenian provinces. As it is not intended that this demonstration shall be in any way aggressive the intervention of the police and military for the purpose of preventing it may have regrettable consequences, for which we disclaim beforehand all responsibility.

Organizing Committee

Seal of the Hunchak Society"

The observations of Sir P. Currie, the British Ambassador about the aims and the course of the Babiali demonstration organized by the Hunchakians clearly shows the real motive of this organization:

"As I telegraphed to your Lordship on 30th ultimo, a communication bearing the seal of the 'Hindchag', the Armenian Revolutionary Committee, was addressed to the Embassies on the 28th ultimo, stating that a strictly peaceful demonstration was about to be made by the Armenians in order to express their desire for reforms...The demonstration took place on the 30th ultimo, but unhappily it had not the peaceful character attributed to it. The demonstrators were armed with pistols and knives of a uniform pattern which had no doubt been issued to them by the organizers of the movement.

There is good reason to suppose that the object of the 'Hindchag' was to cause disorder and bloodshed with a view to inducing the Powers of Europe to intervene on behalf of the Armenians.

It is stated that 3,000 persons took the Sacrament in the various Armenian churches on the preceding Sunday in order to be prepared for death.

On the morning of the 30th ultimo, crowds of Armenians assembled in various quarters of the town, the largest assemblage being in the Armenian quarter of Koum Kapou. They proceeded towards the Porte in numbers, estimated by eye-witnesses at about 2,000, though this is probably an exaggeration...

Shots were exchanged after the crowd refused to disperse, and the officer of the gendarmerie was killed. About fifteen gendarmes and sixty Armenians fell...It appears that the police charged the Armenians and struck them with butt of their muskets and flat of their swords, and seized upon their leaders: but there seems no doubt that it was the Armenians who fired the first shot."(26)

7. Armenian armed attacks occurred in various cities in 1895

The Armenian rebels continued their armed attacks in various parts of the Empire throughout 1895-1896. Some significant ones are in the following:

In Trabzon, the former Governor-General of Van and the Trabzon commander were attacked and wounded by two Armenians on 2 October 1895.

In Erzincan, Armenian volunteers shot several moslems in the local weekly market on 21 October 1895.

In Bitlis, Armenians attacked a mosque as the Moslems were praying on 25 October 1895.

In Marash, Armenians opened fire on Moslems on 27 October 1895.

In Erzurum, a group of armed Armenians entered the Government Office with the aim of assassinating the Governor and the staff, and killed the gendarmes who countered them on 30 October 1895.

In Diyarbakir, again shots were fired by Armenians on the Moslems praying in the mosque on 2 November 1895. Fire started later in the mosques, Muslim theological schools, and shops, ninety percent of which belonged to Moslems.

In Malatya, an Armenian barber killed a Muslim customer by cutting his throat with a razor at his shop which incited the Malatya incident on 4 November 1895.

In Harput, an Armenian fired at and wounded three Moslems which incited clashes on 7 November 1895.

8. Van (1895-1896)

Van was the center of the revolutionary Armenian Party Armenekan. The party was organized in Van in 1886. Armenian organizations such as "The Goodwill Society" advocating revolutionary resistance which were established in Russian Armenia were also active in Van.

The Armenian revolutionaries aimed at arming the Armenians in this town.

General Mayewski, Russian Consul for six years in Van and later in Erzurum informs us about the activities of these groups in Van:

"In 1895, the revolutionaries of Van were working to draw the attention of Europe once again to the Armenian question. Letters were sent to wealthy Armenians asking for money, threatening them with death. During this time, some political crimes were committed by order of the revolutionary committee of Van. The most important of these crimes was perpetrated on January 6th, that is on the day of the biggest Armenian holiday, on the person of the priest Bogos, as he was on his way to church to celebrate the holy service. The poor old man had been condemned to death, as he had strongly opposed the ignominious deeds of certain revolutionaries.

During the winter of 1895-96, young Armenians gathered in the spacious rooms of the houses near the Russian consulate (in Van), where they engaged in patrol and even detachment drills, and sometimes, transported by their zeal, they practiced shooting.

As happens everywhere, with spring, the preparations of the revolutionary movement began to gain importance. One even heard of certain attempts, such as the murder of some Kurds in the proximity of the city, whose bodies had been cut to pieces. The revolutionaries, seeing that no investigation was carried out in regard to these murders, increasingly plucked up courage. However, the patience of Moslems was being exhausted in proportion to the Armenians' audacity."(27)

British Consul Williams informs us that the Dashnaks had 400 members in Van and the Hunchaks had around 50 members. He tells us also that the Armenians not only terrorized their coreligionists but also provoked the Muslim community with their excesses and frenzy.(28)

In June, Armenian bands fired on the gendarmes patrolling behind the Armenian quarter of the Van orchards and wounded the commander and a soldier. The next day in the afternoon, the Armenians opened fire on civilian Moslems from the houses in this quarter. The soldiers intervened to prevent further incident. But the Armenians had fortified the houses and did not let anyone approach them. They refused the demand of the British, French, Iranian and Russian Consuls to lay down their arms. Instead, they escaped the city toward Iran and attacked the Shemiski tribe in the village of Salhane. Soldiers were sent to the area. The rebellion ended with an armed confrontation between the Armenians and the soldiers. As a result 340 Moslems and 219 Armenians were dead and 260 Muslims and 59 Armenians were wounded.

Armed confrontations between Armenian bands and the Moslems continued in the neighboring villages. Thus, the revolt which began on 14 June continued until the 24th. In total, 418 Moslems and 1,715 Armenians died and 363 Moslems and 71 Armenians were wounded.

9.The raid on the Bank Ottoman (26 August 1896)

The raid on the Bank Ottoman was organized by the Dashnag Committee on 26 August 1896. The raiders were led by a Dashnak revolutionist named Babken Suni. Gerard Libaridian describes this attack as "the first recorded act of urban terrorism".(29)

Hayik Tiryakian, who also took part in the raid gives the following account of this event:

"August 26th, 6:30 in the morning, 6 people were sufficient to begin the occupation. We set out early, with sacks full of bombs on our shoulders and guns in our hands. As we approached the Bank, we heard the sound of guns and bombs thrown by our vanguard friends. We rushed into the Bank. They thought we were robbers. I told them not to be afraid. The bombs were giving incredible results, they did not kill instantly, but tore their flesh apart, and made them writhe with pain and agony. We went with Garo (Armen Garo alias Karekin Pasdermadjian, was elected deputy to the National Assembly from Erzurum during the 1908 Constitutional Government and later fought against Turkey in Caucasia with his band during the First World War)to the President's office, and wrote down our conditions. We demand that the Powers fulfill our requests, that those who took part in this confrontation be freed: if not, we would blow up the Bank with ourselves. There were 17 left who could fight. Three had died, six of our friends had been wounded. Our enemies' casualties were also heavy."(30)

Simultaneous agitations by the Armenians continued in various parts of Istanbul. The British Embassy in its telegram of 30th August reports: "It cannot be denied that this constant bomb throwing by Armenians

has seriously provoked the Turks." According to British sources 120 soldiers were killed and 25 wounded. 300 Moslems were arrested because of the incidents after the raid. A special court was established to try the Moslems and the Armenians who were arrested because of the disorders that continued for a few days after the raid.

17 Armenian raiders left the Bank and were sent to France after the intervention of Sir Edgar Vincent, the Bank's President with Maximoff, the Russian Embassy's head dragoman, who represented the Powers.

10. The Second Sassun Rebellion (1904)

The second Sassun rebellion was also instigated by the Dashnaksutiun Committee. Antranik had the responsibility to organize the attacks of the armed bands. Although the Tashnaks, who since 1897 had begun to enter the Ottoman land from Iran and through the Van region and attack the Kurdish tribes, the actual rebellion began to spread from 1903 onward. K. Kukulyan, writes about the Antranik's attacks in his book entitled "The Antranik Battles" published in 1929 in Beirut:

"In April 1904, the Armenian rebellions spread from the hills of Sassun and the plain of Mush to Van. The Consuls mediated and offered an agreement with Antranik. Among the band leaders were the renowned Dashnak Committee members of Mush and Sassun, Murad of Sivas, Sebuk, Kevork Mko, and the new revolutionary Sempad... The Dashnaksutiun bureau met with the representatives of the Mush Central Committee, and chose Antranik to be the commander. Sebuk was seriously wounded. Keork of Akcha died. The renowned Hirayr, who did not want to leave Sebuk to the enemies, and tried to take him along, was also shot."

According to Armenian sources about one thousand Turks and just 19 Armenians were killed during the confrontations.

11. The assassination attempt on Sultan Abdul Hamid (1905)

This attack was also carried out by the Dashnaksutiun Committee. The assassination attempt occurred on 21 July 1905. The bombs placed under the carriage of the Sultan exploded before he got in. The Sultan pardoned the assailants.

Dashnabedian tells us about the organization of this attack:

"The final decision (to assassinate the Sultan) was taken during the meeting of the Demonstrative Body in Athens, in the summer of 1904. Kristapor headed the entire operation, which along with the Nzhouyk (steed) mission, had several other aspects (including acts of sabotage in Smyrna, where a number of European interests were present). Along with the appointed members of the Demonstrative Body, other revolutionaries-Armenian and non-Armenian- were invited to participate. In the following months, nearly all of them went to Constantinople under false names. Only a few remained in Bulgaria, to make arrangements for transporting explosives and other materials to Turkey." (31)

Kristapor died in an accidental explosion of the bombs in Sofia. Another member of the ARF, Safo, implemented the plan for the assassination.

The period starting with the 1890 Erzurum incident and ending with the 1896 Van rebellion is known in the West as the period of "massacres". According to various views the number of Moslems who died during the Armenian rebellions start from 5,000 and exceeds 25,000 (Aghasi claims that 20,000 Turks were killed only in the Zeitun rebellion).

12.The Adana insurrection (1909)

On April 14, 1909 an armed confrontation began between the Moslems and Armenians in Adana. The British Embassy reports the reasons for this development:

"After the proclamation of the constitution (24 July 1908)nearly none in Adana was really satisfied. The Turks hated the idea that they were no longer masters. The Armenians wanted to rush into Home Rule. The Greek mistrusted the constitution because he had not made it himself and because under it he seemed likely to lose certain facilities he had enjoyed under the old venal system...

Under the constitution all men might bear arms. From the delightful novelty of the thing, many thousands of revolvers were purchased. Even schoolboys had them and, boy-like, flourished them about. But worse followed. The swagger of the arm-bearing Armenian and his ready tongue irritated the ignorant Turks. Threats and insults passed on both sides. Certain Armenian leaders, delegates from Constantinople, and priests urged their congregations to buy arms. It was done openly, indiscreetly, and, in some cases, it might be said wickedly. What can be thought of a preacher, a Russian Armenian, who in a church in this city where there had never been a massacre, preached revenge for the martyrs of 1895? Constitution or none, it was all the same for him. 'Revenge' he said, 'murder for murder'. Buy arms.'A Turk for every Armenian of 1895'.An American missionary who was present got up and left the church. Bishop Mushech, of Adana, toured his province preaching that he who had a coat should sell it and buy a gun."(32)

The British Ambassador, in another report dated May 4, 1909, writes that the Armenian Patriarch was responsible to a great extent for the incidents.(1)

The incidents spread when Armenians killed two young Moslems and refused to hand over the assailant, and Moslems and Armenians fought in the streets for three days.

The clashes stopped after the intervention of the soldiers dispatched to the area by the Government.

First World War (1914-1918)

The Ottoman Empire entered the war on 31 October 1914. The Russian invasion of eastern Anatolia also started the same year.

After the Adana rebellion , the Party of Union and Progress which was the governing party made an agreement with the Istanbul delegation of the Dashnak Committee "in order to ensure the independence of the country, to protect till the end its integrity and policy, to eradicate the evil thoughts appearing in various individuals, and to establish good relations between Ottoman subjects."

" Considering the Adana disaster as a warning ,total agreement has been reached between the Committee of Union and Progress and the Armenian Dashnaktsutiun Committee on sparing the sacred Ottoman

country from any partition and separation, and making attempts to eradicate the rumors that Armenians are leaning towards independence, among others."(34)

Nevertheless, the Dashnak Committee, at its Congress held in Erzurum in June 1914, decided to remain in opposition to the Government of the Union and Progress.

Papazian writes as follows on this subject:

"When the world war broke out in Europe, the Turks began feverish preparations for joining hands with the Germans. In August 1914 the young Turks asked the Dashnag Convention, then in session in Erzurum, to carry out their old agreement of 1907, and start an uprising among the Armenians of the Caucasus against the Russian government. The Dashnagzoutune refused to do this, and gave assurance that in the event of war between Russia and Turkey, they would support Turkey as loyal citizens. On the other hand, they could not be held responsible for the Russian Armenians... The fact remains, however, that the leaders of the Turkish-Armenian section of the Dashnagzoutune did not carry out promise of loyalty to the Turkish cause when the Turks entered the war. The Dashnagzoutune in the Caucasus had the upper hand. They were swayed in their actions by the interests of the Russian government, and disregarded, entirely, the political dangers that the war had created for the Armenians in Turkey. Prudence was thrown to the winds: even the decision of their own convention of Erzurum was forgotten, and a call was sent for Armenian volunteers to fight the Turks on the Caucasian front."(35)

Kachaznoui, the Prime Minister of the independent Armenian Republic shares the same views with Papazian:

"In the beginning of fall 1914, when Turkey had not yet entered the war, but was preparing to, Armenian volunteer groups began to be organized with great zeal and pomp in Trans-Caucasia. In spite of the decision taken a few weeks before at the General Committee in Erzurum, the Dashnagzoutune actively helped the organization of the aforementioned groups, and especially arming them, against Turkey... There is no point in asking today whether our volunteers should have been in the foreground. Historical events have a logic of their own. In the fall of 1914 Armenian volunteer groups were formed and fought against the Turks. The opposite could not have happened, because for approximately twenty years the Armenian community was fed a certain and inevitable psychology. This state of mind had to manifest itself, and it happened."(36)

Hovannisian joins the above Armenian writers:

"Although most Armenians maintained a correct attitude vis-a-vis the Ottoman government, it can be asserted with some substantiation that the manifestations of loyalty were insincere, for the sympathy of most Armenians throughout the world was with the Entente, not with the Central Powers. By autumn 1914, several prominent Ottoman Armenians, including a former member of parliament, had slipped away to the Caucasus to collaborate with Russian military officials."(37)

When the mobilization started, the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin sent a letter to Vorontsov-Dachkov, the Governor General of the Caucasus, on 5 August 1914. He writes:

"Based on the information I have received from the Istanbul Patriarchate and the Armenian Assembly, I am convinced that any reform to be implemented by the Government...will not survive long...I request from Your Highness that you present to His Majesty the Emperor, the devotion of his faithful subjects on my behalf and on behalf of my congregation in Russia, the sincere loyalty and attachment of the Armenians in of Turkey, and at the same time that you defend to the Czar the Hopes of the Armenians of Turkey..."

Governor General Vorontsov-Dashkov replies on September 2, 1914:

"I wish that the actions of the Armenians here, as well as those on the other side of the border, be now in accordance with my instructions. I request that you use your authority over your congregation, and ensure that our Armenians and those who reside in the border regions implement the duties and services which I will ask them to carry out in the future, in the event of a Russo-Turkish war, as in the situation of Turkey today."(38)

"Having agreed to the proposal of Vorontsov (to create volunteer corps) the National Bureau selected a special committee to supervise the operations of the volunteer corps. Functioning from Tiflis, Alexandropol, and Erivan, the committee began its activities by assigning enlistees to the four authorized units, all of which were immediately filled to capacity... The first group over 1,000 men, was led by Andranik, an experienced revolutionary who had participated in the Balkan wars as commander of an Armenian contingent in the Bulgarian army. Andranik's unit joined the Russian forces in North Persia, while the other three advanced toward the Turkish border. Dro, assisted by the former Ottoman parliament member Armen Garo, directed the second group, which, moving over Iğdir in the Erivan province, poised for an offensive in Van. The third and fourth units, commanded by Hamazaps and Keri, took advance positions along the western border of the Kars oblast, from Sarıkamış to Olti."(39)

"What the National Bureau did not know was that representatives of the Romanov sovereign were earnestly negotiating the partition of Turkey with the other members of the Entente. Moreover, Russian designs to annex the eastern vilayets included no provisions for Armenian autonomy." (40)

Prof Stanford J.Shaw, expert on Ottoman History, elucidates this period:

"The Armenian leaders told Enver(leader of the Union and Progress Party) that they only wanted to remain neutral, but their sympathy for the Russians was evident, and in fact, soon after the meeting several prominent Ottoman Armenians, including former member of parliament, slipped away to the Caucasus to collaborate with Russian military officials, making it clear that the Armenians would do everything they could to frustrate Ottoman military action...Meanwhile, Czar Nicholas III himself came to the Caucasus to make final plans for cooperation with the Armenian National Bureau in Tiflis, declaring in response:

"From all countries Armenians are hurrying to enter the ranks of the glorious Russian Army, with their blood to serve the victory of Russian arms...Let the Russian flag wave freely over the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Let, with Your will, great Majesty, the peoples remaining under the Turkish yoke receive freedom. Let the Armenian people of Turkey who have suffered for the faith of Christ receive resurrection for a new free life under the protection of Russia..."

"Armenians again flooded into the Czarist armies. Preparations were made to strike the Ottomans from the rear, and the Czar returned to St. Petersburg confident that the day finally had come for him to reach Istanbul."

"In April 1915... Dashnaks from Russian Armenia organized a revolt in the city of Van, whose 33,789 Armenians comprised 42.3 percent of the population, closest to an Armenian majority of any city in the Empire... The Russian army of the Caucasus also began an offensive toward Van with the help of a large force of Armenian volunteers recruited from among refugees from Anatolia as well as local Caucasian residents. Leaving Erivan on April 28, 1915... they reached Van on May 14 and organized and carried out a general slaughter of the local Muslim population during the next two days while the small Ottoman garrison had to retreat to the southern side of the lake." (41)

The Armenian support given to the invading Russian army in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire is depicted by W.E.D. Allen and Paul Muratoff. They write:

"The Armenian nationalist movement (Dashnaksutzion) rose in revolt, and after fierce street fighting took possession of the ancient city by the lake (Van) (13-14 April)... (1915)

Well informed by Armenian agents of the situation at Van, Yudenich determined to take advantage of it. Since March four of the Armenian druzhiny (battalion) had been concentrated at Bayazit. Yudenich added to this force of sturdy nationalist volunteers the 2nd Transbaikalian Cossack Brigade of General Trukhin, and ordered this officer to cross the Teperiz Pass over the Ala-dağ and advance on Beğrikale and Van...

Trukhin and his Armenians and Cossacks were engaged during June in clearing the Turks from the southern shores of Lake Van. The Armenian druzhiny, under such popular leaders as Antranik, Hamazaps and Dro, fought with great elan, and drove the Turkish gendarmerie units from Vastan on the lake and from the two villages of Çatak and Müküs on the road to Siirt. On 20 June (1915) the Armenians took Sevan, on the 25th, Sorp-both villages on the shore of the lake...

Pomiankowski (Zusammenbruch, p. 147) states that the Armenian rising in Van vilayet influenced decisively the failure of Halil Paşa's offensive in Azerbaijan. The rising held the Turkish gendarmerie division round Van at the critical moment when Halil was checked at Dilman... The insurrection of the Armenians and Nestorians of the Van vilayet; the presence of strong Russian cavalry formations in the country between the two lakes; and the maneuvers of General Oganovski's troops in the Murat valley—all these factors tended to make Turkish general headquarters anxious for the Bitlis-Muş region, the successful occupation of which by the enemy might outflank the stronghold of Erzurum and open the way into the interior of Anatolia." (42)

During the campaigns of 1914-1916 offensives and counter-offensives between the sides in the eastern provinces continued.

"...the irregular bands operating on either side had begun the work which famine and epidemics had completed. The remnants of the Armenian population had fled into Russian territory or had been deported by the Young Turk administration; the Moslems, scarcely more fortunate, had suffered equally from

famine, epidemics and irregular slaughter, and the survivors had dispersed with what remained of their livestock into the interior of Asia Minor."(43)

"The months March through October 1917 were permeated with Armenian hopes and emotions...For Western Armenia, autonomy, or perhaps unification with the Armenian region of Transcaucasia was the envisaged solution. The March Revolution eliminated the czarist restrictions and gave the Armenians the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the administration of occupied Turkish Armenia."(44)

In 1917 while the Russian Revolution penetrated more deeply into the morale of the troops "the Russian general headquarters was compelled to rely only on the national formations" in the defense of the Caucasian front against the Ottomans.(45)

"The divergent tendencies and interests of the three national groups (Armenians, Georgians and the Azeris)constituting the federation (The Caucasian federation set up in response to the transfer of power in Russia to the government of soviets)immediately became evident;...The Armenians remained strongly pro-Ally-and fundamentally pro-Russian- and they tried to develop a national army with the help of Russian general headquarters on the Caucasian front and in the eventual hope of securing support from the British."

"By 1 January 1918 the Armenian Corps consisted of two divisions of Armenian rifles, three brigades of Armenian volunteers, a cavalry brigade and some battalions of militia...the volunteer brigades were made up four battalions each and the cavalry brigade was composed of two regiments each four squadrons strong. The rifle divisions were made up of men from the Armenian rifle druzhiny (battalions) which had seen hard and honorable fighting during the campaigns of 1914-1916.Their numbers were increased by Armenians from different units of Yudenich's army who decided to join their compatriots. The volunteers were natives of Turkish Armenia who joined the national army on the spot-in Erzincan, Erzurum, Van and the Eleşkirt valley.

"The feelings of the Moslems towards the Armenian national army became clear even before the Turks began their(counter) advance...Local encounters between Armenians and Kurds immediately broke out and there were killed and wounded on both sides almost every day."(46)

"The frenzied troops and bands retreating from Erzurum killed any Moslems falling into their hands and burned the Turkish villages that lay in their path."(47)

"The Ottoman forces, having encountered victims of Armenian atrocities all the way from Erzinjan, feared for the safety of Moslems in Kars. When smoke was seen rising from the city, they marched to the rescue of the populace."(48)

"Vehip Paşa had initiated military action against the Armenian detachments who were holding the front line following the withdrawal of Russian troops. Vehip began by sending repeated protests against the action of disbanded Russian soldiers and the massacres of Moslems committed by Armenian bands."(49)

Hratch Dasnabedian gives the following information about the formation of the volunteer movement and the volunteer battalions:

"At first, the volunteer movement that developed in the last months of 1914 was the result of the initiative taken by the Armenian National Bureau in Tiflis, with the encouragement of the Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashnov... Around mid-1916, by decision of the Russian command, the Armenian volunteer battalions were integrated into regular units of the Caucasian army, thus losing all independence of movement and initiative... The volunteer battalions were not the only form of assistance the Armenians brought to the Allied war effort. More than 250,000 Armenians fought against the Central Powers, about 200,000 of them in the Russian army on the European front."

Dasnabedian continues to confirm: "Near the end of October, 1917 (on November 7 of the new calendar), the Bolshevik Revolution shook the entire Russian Empire. Headed by Lenin, the new government (the Sovnarkom) not only adopted the principle of the free self-determination of nations but also issued, in January 1918, a decree on 'Turkish Armenia', which granted military, administrative, and political freedoms of 'Turkish Armenia' and its people.

Nevertheless, on March 13 of the same year, communist Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Article 4 of which not only returned all the conquered 'Turkish Armenia' to Turkey but also gave up regions of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum..." In the meantime Armenians continued their back stabbing against the Ottoman forces.

"The ARF militias, which had been organized secretly and sometimes semi-officially after the dissolution of the Armenian volunteer battalions, were insufficient for the task. Apprehensive, The Western Armenian Bureau formed a Security Council, which issued a call to arms. With the assistance of the Caucasian high command and the National Council of Eastern Armenians, the Security Council succeeded in forming the Armenian Corps, which was placed under the overall command of General Nazarbegian. The number of Armenian fighters was nearly 30,000..."

"While Armenia fought for its life, Transcaucasia fell apart as a political unit. On May 26, with the blessings of the Germans, Georgia declared independence. On the very next day, Azerbaijan followed Georgia's example.

Finally, on May 28, 1918, sanctioning a situation already extant since January, when the Armenians were forced to fight alone against Turkey, the Armenian National Council in Tiflis drafted a declaration of Armenian independence and sent its representatives to Batum to sign a separate truce with Turkey. On June 4, 1918, Turkey became the first nation to officially recognize the Republic of Armenia."(50)

Conclusion

Prof. Gerard Libaridian, in a debate sponsored by University of Pittsburg at Johnstown on 21 October 1982 on the subject "Was there an Armenian Genocide?" says "A genocide is not a question of numbers, it is the quality of the act that is committed. That is, a government, a force, decides to get rid of an element because of its race or ethnic origin or religion and does it, the intent is what counts... The genocide in 1915 did not have much to do with what Armenians ultimately said or did... There was no armed Armenian population in 1914".

Historical facts proves the contrary. The following information given by Hovhannes Kachaznoui, the Prime Minister of the independent Armenian Republic, disproves what Prof. Libaridian asserts:

"In the beginning of fall 1914, when Turkey had not yet entered the war, but was preparing to, Armenian volunteer groups began to be organized with great zeal and pomp in Trans-Caucasia. In spite of the decision taken a few weeks before at the General Committee in Erzurum, the Dashnagtzoutune actively helped the organization of the aforementioned groups, and especially arming them, against Turkey".(51)

In this connection it is befitting to also refer to claims of equation between the Jewish Holocaust and the relocation of the Armenians . In fact, such an equation is totally unjustifiable when the reasons for and the conditions at the time of the relocation are taken into consideration.

Nevertheless, some Armenian historians attempt to draw a parallel between the Jewish Holocaust and the case of the Armenians. Dadrian claims that "one of the most significant elements between the Armenians and the Jews has been the inferior status to which they have been relegated for centuries as disdained minorities by nation-states and the dominant groups operating within them". He continues to claim "legal disabilities often compounded these social liabilities. For the Armenians, the legal disabilities included the denial of the right to bear arms in a land where their adversaries were armed to the teeth, especially in the interior and the distant provinces. For extended periods, both the Armenians and the Jews were politically disenfranchised and, barring some incidental exceptions, were excluded from the governmental power structure of their respective societies."(52)

Other Armenian writers have different views:

Mesrob K.Krikorian, in the preface of his research entitled " Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire 1860-1908" states that both in Anatolia and Syria, the Armenians were employed in various administrative , judicial, economic and secretarial fields and, to a lesser extent, in technical affairs, agriculture, education and public health. Armenians were also employed in the police force of provinces where there existed Armenian communities. Armenians held high level posts in the Ottoman Administration such as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Secretary General of the same Ministry, Ambassadors, Ministers of Finance, Treasury, and Public Works, Presidents of the State Banks and Post Services and as Governors.

In his conclusion, Krikorian asserts: "It is advisable for comparative study to notice the parallel participation of the other principal non-Turkish elements of the population. Summing up the participation of the communities other than Armenian, it is clear that none of them had such a large and permanent co-operation with the Ottoman Government in the public affairs of Eastedn Anatolia and Syria as the Armenian "millet"." (53)

In an article entitled "La Societe Armenienne Contemporaine by B. Dadian, which appeared in Revue des Deux Mondes (Juin 1867) the writer says: after the Turks hoisted their victorious flag on the citadel of Istanbul, they did not make almost any change on the civil and political conditions of the Sultans, the christian population maintained a sort of independence and their nationality."

Ironically, in order to oppose the information in the Ottoman documents disclosing that the Armenian bands were purchasing arms for revolt throughout the Ottoman Empire, Hovannisian asserts, "that the Armenians possessed weapons was not astounding: they had carried arms for decades to defend their homes and fields from depredation." (54)

One other crucial point is that for an objective and complete analysis of the Ottoman-Armenian relations, the Armenian archives should be opened and made accessible to the public. Documents on Ottoman-Armenian relations both in Erivan and abroad must be translated and published as were the documents from the Ottoman archives. According to Prof. Hovannisian the most extensive and valuable primary sources for the history of the Armenian Republic (The Armenian Revolutionary Federation's archives) are housed in Boston Massachusetts. For reaching the truth, historians must have access to the facts in these archives.

C.F. Dixon-Johnson, in his book "The Armenians" written in February 1916, with the aim of "presenting the public an opportunity of judging whether or not 'the Armenian Question' has another side than that which has been recently so assiduously promulgated throughout the Western World", concludes with the following message to those who carried out disservice to future generations by distorting history:

"Truth can never be inopportune so long as our conscience is clear; which it would not be if we allowed false stories to remain uncontradicted simply because untrue assertions might be detrimental to an enemy." (55)

Routes and transit lines of men (Armenian bands) and ammunition(56)

1/Salmas-Van (via the monastery of Derik),extending towards Sasoun (via Lernabar, south lake of Van).

2/ Nakhichevan-Van direct (via the monastery of St.Thaddeus or Stepanos Nakhaveka).

3/ Yerevan-Van direct (via Ararat).

4/ Kars-Akhlat (via Alashgerd).

5/ Kars-Sasoun (via Pasen, occasionally with a branch towards Grain).

6/ Batum-Sassoun (via Kars).

Photographs

City of Erzincan, Eastern Anatolia, demolished by Armenians

A group of Armenians under the command of Vartan (S.Mehrabian)



Le Petit Journal Seine et Seine-et-Oise / 24 November 1895

Letter of Boghos Nubar

Reproduction of the letter from Boghos Nubar, Head of the Armenian Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference (1919), to the French Foreign Minister. (The first page is shown in its entirety; from the second page, only the salutation and Boghos Nubar's signature are shown.)



Translation of Boghos Nubar's letter:

Dear Minister,

I have the honor, in the name of the Armenian National Delegation, of submitting to Your Excellency the following declaration, at the same time reminding that:



The Armenians have been, since the beginning of the war, de facto belligerents, as you yourself have acknowledged, since they have fought alongside the Allies on all fronts, enduring

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heavy sacrifices and great suffering for the sake of their unshakeable attachment to the cause of the Entente:

In France, through their volunteers, who started joining the Foreign Legion in the first days and covered themselves with glory under the French flag;

In Palestine and Syria, where the Armenian volunteers, recruited by the National Delegation at the request of the government of the Republic itself, made up more than half of the French contingent and played a large role in the victory of General Allenby, as himself and his French chiefs have officially declared;

In the Caucasus, where, without mentioning the 150.000 Armenians in the Imperial Russian Army, more than 40.000 of their volunteers contributed to the liberation of a portion of the Armenian vilayets, and where, under the command of their leaders, Antranik and Nazarbekoff, they, alone among the peoples of the Caucasus, offered resistance to the Turkish armies, from the beginning of the Bolshevist withdrawal right up to the signing of an armistice.

(The letter bears the date on which it was received in the French Foreign Office-December, 1918) (57)

(57) Erich Feigl, *A Myth of Terror-Armenian Extremism: Its Causes and Its Historical Context* (Austria, 19X6), pp. 102-103

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