

# REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF HISTORY,  
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Armenians in the Ottoman territory and their nation-building process in relation to the Great Powers.

Issue 6 includes an essay by **Etrüsk TÜRKER**. A book review and a section for the introduction of recently published books are the final sections of this issue.

**The Editor**



## FACTS AND COMMENTS

Ömer E. LÜTEM\*

**T**his article focuses on the main developments in Turkish-Armenian relations during the first five-months of the year 2004, which could be summarized as follows:

During this period one of the most important issues in Turkish-Armenian relations was the opening of borders between the two countries. Armenian hopes were not fully materialized, as Turkey connected the opening to compromises on the Karabagh conflict and to withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied Azerbaijan territories.

There have been some important developments in the United States. President Bush again did not mention the word "genocide" in his 24 of April statement, however the Democratic Party candidate for the next presidential election, Senator John Kerry, supported Armenian allegations. Worldwide famous *National Geographic* magazine, in an article in its March 2004 issue, did the same.

The Canadian House of Commons, neglected its government's opinion by adopting a motion that recognized the genocide allegations of the Armenians.

French President Jacques Chirac faced strong objections from his country's Armenian population when he said that the recognition of the Armenian "genocide" is not a condition for Turkey's membership to the European Union. On the contrary, the French Socialist Party stated that Turkey should recognize these allegations even before beginning EU accession negotiations.

The European Parliament resolutions on Turkey's accession and on South Caucasus policy reflected mainly Armenian views, however the European Court of Justice rejected an Armenian association request that claimed that the candidate status of Turkey to the European Union was in violation of the June 18, 1987 parliamentary resolution.

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\* Ambassador (Ret.)

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation held its 29th Congress in February. At the Congress, Party chairmen asked for the "liberation" of Eastern Anatolia.

As to Turkey, the Second Congress on Armenian Studies was held at the end of May in Ankara. A book entitled "Armenians: Exile and Emigration," which is based on non-Turkish sources and which contradicts Armenian allegations, has been published by the Turkish Historical Society. Finally, Turkish and Armenian scholars agreed to meet to discuss Turkish-Armenian issues.

## **I. Turkey-Armenia and Azerbaijan Relations**

### ***1. Visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister to Azerbaijan***

During the official visit of Foreign Minister Gül to Azerbaijan on 9-10 January 2004, bilateral issues as well as relations with Armenia and most importantly the Karabagh conflict were discussed. The Azerbaijanis were naturally concerned that Abdullah Gül—like his predecessor İsmail Cem—was having regular meetings with the Armenian Foreign Minister Oskanian and also because Oskanian was making optimistic comments about these meetings.

In an interview on television the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Vilayet Guliyev expressed their concerns with the following statement: "... naturally we have, so to speak, many expectations from Turkey, because Turkey is a country that is giving much support to Azerbaijan with regard to the occupation that Azerbaijan has been suffering. That is why, we are naturally following Armenian-Turkish relations with special sensitivity ... Armenia has territorial claims on Turkey as well. Armenia is constantly keeping the fictitious genocide issue on the agenda. That is why, if Turkey makes even a minor move towards Armenia, it may harm both Azerbaijan's and its own national interests. Any move of this nature should be attentively examined, and we hope that in general, moves of this nature will not be made until the Karabakh conflict is settled."<sup>1</sup>

Gül tried to alleviate the concerns of the Azerbaijani side during his visit. He stated that it would be hard to solve the problem peacefully as long as Armenia's occupation continues and that

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<sup>1</sup> ANS TV, Baku, January 10, 2004

there have been no recent changes in Turkey's relationship with Armenia.<sup>2</sup> On whether Turkey was considering reopening its border with landlocked Armenia, Gül said: "There is no such thing for now."... "We wish a peaceful solution to this conflict. In the future, we will come together in a trilateral meeting and discuss how to solve this."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, while visiting President Ilham Aliyev Gül said, "As you know, the Karabakh problem is not only yours, it is ours as well. Efforts are being made for the peaceful solution of this problem in the frame of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. We hope the other side will also demonstrate good will and a constructive position and the world will assist to settle this conflict peacefully and fairly, and that the occupied lands of Azerbaijan will be liberated. Turkey will do its best in this direction. There should be no doubt regarding this."<sup>4</sup>

## **2. Visit of the Turkish Prime Minister to the USA and the Armenian Issue**

The Turkish Prime Minister made an official visit to the United States at the end of January. Armenian organizations and supporters of the Armenians in the US undertook certain initiatives against this visit. In a letter sent to President Bush the co-chairs of the Armenia caucus, Congressmen Frank Pallone and Joe Knollenberg, insisted that the President demand from Erdogan that Turkey lift her economic blockade on Armenia in order for economic, political and cultural relations between Turkey and Armenia to be re-established. The letter was submitted to the other Congressmen with the aim of obtaining their signatures.<sup>5</sup> The fact that approximately 50 members signed this letter<sup>6</sup> shows that about half of the Armenian caucus did not participate in this initiative. On the other hand this letter dealt only with the opening of the borders and left out the topic of the genocide allegation that is generally always addressed. This displayed the fact that the issue of the opening of the borders has currently superseded the issue of the genocide claims.

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<sup>2</sup> *Baku Today*, January 9, 2004

<sup>3</sup> *Associated Press Worldstream*, January 8, 2004

<sup>4</sup> *Azer Tag, Azerbaijan Info Agency*, January 10, 2004

<sup>5</sup> *Armenian Assembly of America*, Press Release, January 22, 2004

<sup>6</sup> *A1plus*, January 28, 2004



The largest Armenian Dashnak organization in the US, the Armenian National Committee of Armenia (ANCA), objected when the American Jewish Congress presented its Bravery Award to Prime Minister Erdoğan. ANCA initiated a campaign in which protesting faxes and e-mails were sent to President Bush.

In New York, Prime Minister Erdoğan addressed the Armenian issue on January 27, 2004 while speaking to some of the representatives of Turks living in the US.<sup>7</sup> He displayed Turkish willingness to be more active on this issue by expressing that his Government did not want to follow a defensive policy but an offensive one. He also said that historians should deal with these matters, "Let us deal with today, let us deal with the future" Erdoğan stated. He pointed out also that there were numerous requests in Turkey from the persons living in vicinity of the frontiers with Armenia, that the borders be opened. The Prime Minister implied that this could happen if the friendly hand of Turkey is not pushed away (by Armenia).

When asked during a conference at Harvard University on January 31 what he would do if Turkey's accession to the EU would be made conditional on her recognizing the genocide, he said "it is wrong to depict something that did not happen as if it has happened and it is wrong to carry it into the future". He then mentioned the positive aspects of the relations between Turkey and Armenia such as the meetings of the Foreign Ministers and the flights between the two countries and added "it is wrong to talk of genocide after all of these developments, you can not serve humanity by talking about such things. In a world where we expect peace to become a global phenomenon these are bombs that shatter peace. You must serve peace."<sup>8</sup>

The above statements of the Prime Minister may be interpreted to mean that Turkey could open the borders if the Armenian side provides a gesture of good will first. Although it is difficult to assess what such a gesture should be, as the Karabagh issue is currently on the forefront, one might think that a positive step on this issue is expected from the Armenian side.

As to the official meetings, Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Bush met on January 28, 2004. While President Bush was informing the press about this meeting, he did not mention Turkish-

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<sup>7</sup> *Hürriyet*, January 28, 2004

<sup>8</sup> *Hürriyet*, February 1st, 2004

Armenian relations as one of the topics discussed. It was only natural that this issue should not come up when issues such as Cyprus and Iraq were the main points on the agenda.

On the other hand press reports seem to indicate that the matter was discussed between Foreign Minister Gül and Secretary of State Powell and that Gül might linked the opening of the borders to progress being made on the Karabagh issue.<sup>9</sup>

### **3. The Border Issue and President Ilham Aliev's Visit to Turkey**

After Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to the US some Azerbaijani circles had the impression that the Turkish border with Armenia was about to be opened. Protest mail was sent, articles critical of Turkey were published in the Azerbaijani press;<sup>10</sup> and comments were made that the Prime Minister was compelled to compromise on the opening of the border by the US government and the Armenian Diaspora.<sup>11</sup>

To a question concerning Turkey's attitude President Ilham Aliyev answered as follows: "I do not want to make assumptions. I talked to Mr. Erdoğan on this subject when I visited Ankara as Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Gül reassured me that Turkey would never open its border with Armenia until the Karabakh conflict is resolved. This is enough for me. I do not need any other explanation if I heard this myself. But I should say that the European Union and some other fairly influential countries in the world are exerting strong pressure on Turkey to make it open the border. I have repeatedly told the meetings with relevant sides that a Karabakh resolution will be generally impossible if Turkey opens its border with Armenia, because Azerbaijan will have lost an important lever and then peaceful negotiations will generally fail. This will stop the negotiations and lead to unpleasant results. For this reason, if the sides interested in the issue want a peaceful solution to the problem, then they should not put pressure on Turkey. Turkey is a big and strong state. I am convinced that Turkey will cope with all this pressure. Turkish-Azerbaijani fraternity is above everything for us and the Turkish people."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Anatolian Agency*, January 30, 2004

<sup>10</sup> *Baku Sun*, March 26, 2004

<sup>11</sup> *525*, September 13, 2004

<sup>12</sup> *ANS TV*, March 24, 2004

**Turkey shares the attitude of Azerbaijan in essence; however, Turkey might be willing to open the borders if some conditions are fulfilled.**

Reacting to the remarks of Aliyev, the Armenian Foreign Ministry stated that a lifting of the Turkish blockade would on the contrary facilitate a Karabakh settlement. "Turkey could really be an important factor in political and economic developments in our region if it abandons its one-sided approaches favoring Azerbaijan" a ministry statement said.<sup>13</sup>

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, during a visit to the Armenian capital, Yerevan<sup>14</sup> said on that subject: "It seems to me that the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey would benefit the peoples of both sides rather dramatically and rather quickly".

In an interview with Azerbaijan Television during the visit of İlham Aliyev to Turkey, Turkish Foreign Minister Gül stated that he was informed about those protests and about Azerbaijan's concerns. The Turkish government's official position is that the Turkish-Armenian border will not be re-opened unless Armenia is ready to make compromises on the Karabakh conflict, withdraws its troops from the occupied territories, and unless the US-based Armenian lobby drops its false claims about the alleged Armenian genocide. He also said he had voiced this stance during a meeting with his Armenian counterpart Vardan Oskanian and he would inform the Armenian government about the final and firm position of Turkey in this regard during their next meeting.<sup>15</sup>

Judging by the declarations above the attitudes of the relevant states towards the opening of the border can be summarized as follows:

Armenia and the US stand with opening of the borders without pre-conditions. Azerbaijan, on the contrary, is totally against opening of the borders. Turkey shares the attitude of Azerbaijan in essence; however, Turkey might be willing to open the borders if some conditions are fulfilled. But Armenia does not seem to be ready to accept any condition for the moment.

<sup>13</sup> RFE/RL Armenia Report, March 25, 2004

<sup>14</sup> Associated Press Worldstream, March 26, 2004

<sup>15</sup> Ans TV, April 14, 2004

The visit of President İlham Aliyev to Turkey in the mid-April has been successful. President Ahmet Necdet Sezer summarized Turkish position by saying that Turkey believes that the conflict must be resolved peacefully in accordance with the principles of international law and in a stage-by-stage manner.<sup>16</sup> Stage-by-stage manner should probably mean that the negotiation process will be divided into stages and in each stage Azerbaijan and Armenia will cede some concession to each other, reaching at the end a final agreement.

After President Aliyev visit in an interview to the Anatolian Agency Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül restating that border between Turkey and Armenia would not be opened said that Nagorno Karabakh issue should not be abandoned, it should be discussed solved. Gül also said that Turkey was trying to play a catalyst role and he is hoping that foreign ministers of Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan would hold a trilateral meeting possibly during NATO summit in Istanbul in June 29th.<sup>17</sup>

Foreign Minister of Armenia Mr. Oskanian reacting to the statement of Mr Gül said that there have been meetings on foreign ministers' level amid the three countries, during which regional issues were discussed. "But as regards the mediation of the Karabakh issue by Turkey in particular, it will make no sense, for Turkey, in view of the policy it conducts and the current situation, is just incapable of playing a role of an impartial mediator."<sup>18</sup> In other words, according to Armenian Foreign Minister Turkey cannot hold a mediatory position since she shares the opinions of Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Minister also mentioned their dissatisfaction with the Turkish government by saying that the relations with the Turkish government have initially had positive flow, and three meetings of Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers have taken place since 2003. "The first meeting (Madrid, June 2003) was good, the second (New York, September 2003) was not as good, and the third (Brussels, December 2003) was bad. First we concentrated upon bilateral issues. During the second meeting, Karabakh has become an issue of negotiations, and in the third meeting Karabakh became a precondition for normalization (of Turkish-Armenian

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<sup>16</sup> *Zaman*, April 13, 2004

<sup>17</sup> *Anatolian Agency*, April 19, 2004

<sup>18</sup> *Azg*, April 24, 2004

relations). Thus we ended up in the initial positions, just like the state of affairs was during the reign of the former Turkish government", said Mr. Oskanian.<sup>19</sup>

The discontent of Armenian government towards Turkey resulted in withdrawal of President Robert Kocharian from the NATO Summit to be held in Istanbul on June 29th. The Armenian president's press secretary pointed out that the reason for Robert Kocharyan's decision not to take part in the NATO summit in Istanbul is the "current state of Armenian-Turkish relations."<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, other factors should be taken into account since the NATO Summit is irrelevant to the Turkish-Armenian relations and the Armenian President had already participated to a NATO Summit in 1999 when the Turkish-Armenian relations are no different than today. According to the Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, Kocharian decision targeted domestic politics.<sup>21</sup> In fact Kocharian's position is shaken through the demonstrations, which have been going on for months. Kocharian might have attempted to acquire sympathy of the radical groups via his hard stance against Turkey. Moreover, Kocharian might be fulfilling the wishes of Russian Federation, as President Putin will not participate, either to the NATO Summit.

#### ***4. Armenian Foreign Minister's Views on the Relations with Turkey***

Some of the statements made by the Armenian Foreign Minister to journalists shed some light upon the expectations of his country from Turkey.

Although practically no result has been obtained from the meetings he had with his Turkish counterparts in the last two years, Mr. Oskanian believes these meetings to be useful. Regarding this he has said "my meetings with Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül last year let us believe that our dialogue is not over and we can achieve positive results if persistent work is carried out."<sup>22</sup> The Armenian Minister believes that there are no insurmountable problems in relations with Turkey and is of the conviction that due

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<sup>19</sup> *Azg*, April 27, 2004

<sup>20</sup> *Medimax News Agency*, May 10, 2004

<sup>21</sup> *Anatolian Agency*, May 20, 2004

<sup>22</sup> *Medimax News Agency*, January 14, 2004

to different reasons the Turkish authorities have a more serious desire to make positive changes in Armenian-Turkish relations.<sup>23</sup>

The Armenian Foreign Minister has also stated that the European Union can contribute to the normalization of relations, especially regarding the opening of borders. Oskanian went on to say they believed that the European Union should express in clearer terms the condition that Turkey must open her borders with all her neighbors, including Armenia, before negotiations are initiated.<sup>24</sup>

As for the issue of the genocide allegations, Oskanian said;“ we have expressed several times that there is such a problem and it will remain on our agenda. But the matter of recognition of the genocide by Turkey has never been a pre-condition and will never be for the normalization of our relations”. He added, “I think that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey will promote the discussion of the problem of genocide at the state level. Today, as there are no such relations, we are unable to put this problem on the agenda at the state level and to discuss it.”<sup>25</sup>

The claim that the genocide issue is not being brought on the agenda because there is no diplomatic relations between the two states is difficult to believe. This topic can be discussed as the other issues are discussed despite the absence of diplomatic relations and both sides can voice their positions. The real reason behind the Armenian reluctance to bring up this issue is the Turkish sensitivity on the allegations of genocide and Armenian fear that it may impact negatively on bilateral developments they attach particular importance to, such as the opening of the borders and the establishing of diplomatic relations.

## **II. United States and the Armenians**

### ***1- President Bush's Statement of April 24***

During the 2000 presidential campaign, Mr. George Bush, then candidate, in a written statement, referred to the “genocidal campaign” perpetrated against the Armenians. This event led to the expectations that President Bush might conceptualize the 1915 events as “genocide” in his statement of April 24. Nonetheless,

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<sup>23</sup> *Haykakan Zhamanak*, December 13, 2003

<sup>24</sup> *Radio France Internationale*, December 12, 2003

<sup>25</sup> *Haykakan Zhamanak*, December 13, 2003

President Bush had not used the term in his statements despite the written demands of the Armenians and supporting senators and congressmen.

169 representatives and 23 senators have asked the President to use the word "genocide" in his 2004 statement. The President did not oblige,<sup>26</sup> yet he used expressions like "most horrible tragedies of the 20th century" and "the annihilation of as many as 1.5 million Armenians" which easily could evoke genocide.

On the other hand, President Bush in his message commended individuals in Armenia and Turkey who have worked to support peace and reconciliation, including through the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, and called on Armenia and Turkey to restore their economic, political, and cultural ties.

The main Armenian organizations in the US had negative reactions to the President's statement. The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), a Dashnak institution, stated that the President again resorted to the use of evasive and euphemistic terminology to obscure the reality of Turkey's Genocide against the Armenian people. ANCA Director Hamparian said that the President's failure to honor his campaign promise to recognize the Armenian Genocide is compounded by the fact that, in this statement, he commends Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, which was created to block international recognition of the Armenian genocide.<sup>27</sup>

The Armenian Assembly of America, which usually cooperates with the government, stated that the President's statement used language to clearly define the events but once again stopped short of using the word genocide.<sup>28</sup>

## **2. The US Presidential Election and Armenians**

Prior to presidential elections in the US, the Armenian Diaspora always attempts to convince candidates to adopt a pro-Armenian stance. In this context, Diaspora organizations asked the candidates to express their attitude regarding the official

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<sup>26</sup> *White House.gov.(Press release)*, April 24, 2004

<sup>27</sup> *ANCA, Press Release*, April 24, 2004

<sup>28</sup> *AAA Press Release*, April 26, 2004

recognition of the 1915 "genocide", the blockade of Armenia by Turkey, the right to self-determination of Karabakh etc. "Are you going to pay an official visit to Yerevan in case elected President?" was also asked. According to the Armenian media the presidential candidates did not give at the beginning clear answers to these questions.<sup>29</sup> However in time it's understood that many candidates were in favor of accepting the allegation of the Armenian genocide.

One of the candidates, former Commander of NATO Forces, Wesley Clark sent a letter to the American Armenian Society on December 12, 2003 in which he stated, "What happened in 1915 was a genocide."<sup>30</sup> There is no doubt that this can be explained by political self interest because the same Wesley Clark had enjoyed good relations with Turkey as NATO Commander and signed a letter aimed at defeating a pro-genocide motion in Congress in October 2000. This was such a change of attitude that even some Armenian observers did not find Clark's action sincere.<sup>31</sup> General Clark later dropped out of the race for the Presidency.

Another candidate, Howard Dean, sent a letter to the Armenian National Committee of America,<sup>32</sup> promising to officially recognize the Genocide of the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey if he is elected. Another candidate, who is known to be an orthodox Jew, Joseph Lieberman, reminded his Armenian electors that he had participated in pro-Armenian initiatives in the Congress several times.<sup>33</sup>

John Kerry who has emerged as the official Democratic Party candidate against President Bush is also known to be a supporter of the Armenian views. Last year he was among the 167 Congressmen who urged George Bush to use the word "genocide" in his traditional April 24 message. Kerry, with 5 other colleagues appealed to President Bush urging him to influence Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan to remove Turkey's blockade of Armenia.<sup>34</sup> Senator Kerry, in a written statement on April 22, 2004 said that he was thanking Armenian Americans for their persistence in the

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<sup>29</sup> *Pan Armenian Network*, January 21, 2004

<sup>30</sup> [www.clark04.com](http://www.clark04.com)

<sup>31</sup> *The California Courier*, December 20, 2003

<sup>32</sup> *PanArmenian News*, February 9, 2004

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *PanArmenian News*, February 6 2004



**One could not say that all the American Armenians are chauvinist or otherwise extremist.**

struggle to gain international recognition of this atrocity (i.e genocide allegations), he was proud of his work with the Armenian American community to gain broader recognition of the Armenian Genocide; he was joining Armenian Americans and Armenians worldwide in mourning the victims of the Armenian Genocide; and he was calling on governments and people everywhere to formally recognize this tragedy.

Taking into account the strong commitment of Senator Kerry for the Armenian genocide allegations it's normal that militant American Armenians vote for him in the coming presidential elections. As a matter of fact an Armenian columnist entitled his article "Kerry Says Genocide; Bush Doesn't; A Clear Choice for Armenians."<sup>35</sup>

One could not say that all the American Armenians are chauvinist or otherwise extremist. There are certainly hundreds and thousands of people of Armenian origin who have migrated to the US three or four generations ago and have adopted American values. It is normal that these people would rather vote in line with the policy proposals of the candidates especially those concerning economy and would not give priority to the events happened nearly a century ago.

### **3. Some Armenian Complaints**

In the draft budget proposed for fiscal year 2005 the US Government allocated 8.75 million dollars in military aid to Azerbaijan while granting 2.75 million dollars to Armenia.

Armenian organizations in the US have claimed that this proposal violates the principle that there is to be parity between Azerbaijan and Armenia in military aid. Prior to the fiscal year of 2002, military assistance to Azerbaijan was prohibited according to Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, a provision that restricted U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan due to its ongoing blockades of Armenia and Karabagh. Following the terrorist attacks on

<sup>35</sup> Harut Sassounian, *California Courier Online*, April 29, 2004

September 11, 2001, Azerbaijan conditioned its cooperation with the United States in the war against terrorism on the removal of Section 907. The Administration pressed Congress to provide the President with the authority to waive Section 907 annually. Armenians claim that part of the understanding reached between the White House and Congress was an unwritten agreement that military aid levels to Armenia and Azerbaijan would remain even.<sup>36</sup>

Those Members of Congress who defend Armenian interests acted for establishing parity in military aid granted to Azerbaijan and Armenia. Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Frank Pallone called on his colleagues to co-sign a letter to President Bush expressing concern about the decision. The letter stated that the Congressional signatories "strongly believe that your request in this area would undermine the stability in the South Caucasus region, and would weaken the ongoing peace negotiations regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict."<sup>37</sup>

In fact the military aid granted by the US to Azerbaijan and Armenia is more of a symbolic nature. As stated by the Armenian Defense Minister, it is difficult to believe that Azerbaijan's armed forces would get four times stronger than the Armenian forces as a result of this aid.<sup>38</sup> It is understood that American Armenians were objecting to this aid because they always try to disrupt any development that may be in the interest of Azerbaijan (and Turkey).

Another problem for the American Armenians is the "Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status" that the USA grants to some states that allow them to enjoy lower tariffs and greater access to US Government credit facilities. This status is rarely granted to states that had emerged from what was once the USSR. The Armenian Diaspora undertook great efforts for this status to be extended to Armenia and House of Representatives took a decision to this effect in November 2003. However, the Armenian Diaspora was disappointed when the Senate did not include Armenia in the trade bill it passed on March 4.<sup>39</sup>

Another source of disappointment for the Armenians living in the USA was the State Department's annual human rights report on

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<sup>36</sup> *Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Press Release, February 16, 2004*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *RFE/RL, February 6, 2004*

<sup>39</sup> *Armenian National Committee of America, Press Release, March 4, 2004*

Turkey that used the term "alleged genocide of Armenians". The Armenian National Committee of America called this the most recent instance of complicity in Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand the Dashnaks objected to the fact that in the web site of the State Department no mention was found of the genocide in the section dealing specifically with Armenia. Armenians applied to the State Department requesting that this "serious error" be corrected.<sup>41</sup>

#### ***4. National Geographic Magazine and "The Rebirth of Armenia"***

The National Geographic Magazine in its issue of March 2004 published an article titled "The Rebirth of Armenia" which stated that, among other things, in 1913 the Ottoman Empire had an Armenian population of about two million, fewer than 100,000 remained in 1920, it was systematic slaughter, it was the 20th century's first major experience of genocide etc., The article stated also that dozens of Turkish diplomats and nationals were "allegedly" murdered by Armenian terrorists.

Mount Ararat is particularly emphasized in the article. It has been claimed that the Armenians have been pondering Ararat from the beginning of civilization (!) but since 1920 Turks have controlled this national icon. The article cites Vardan Oskanian, Armenian Foreign Minister saying sentimentally "Every morning we look at it (Ararat), It is only 25 miles from this building, and we feel we can almost touch it. But we can't go there. (Ararat is not forbidden to Armenians) Ararat is our pride and our frustration. Our history. The unfulfilled dreams that drive us". It's obvious that the article tries to give the impression that in the past Ararat belonged to Armenia, which is not the case.

The article is so biased that it gave the impression of being an advertisement. The Armenian Ambassador to Washington, Mr. Kirakosian's, feverish thanks to the magazine conforms with this impression.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> ANCA, Press Release, March 4, 2004

<sup>41</sup> Asbarez, March 2, 2004

<sup>42</sup> Embassy of the Republic of Armenia, Press Release, March 16, 2004

The Turkish Embassy in Washington and distributor of National Geographic in Turkey had warned the magazine about the mistakes and exaggerations contained in the article. As no correction was made, this article is not published in the Turkish version of the National Geographic.<sup>43</sup>

### III. Canada and Armenian Allegations

The longtime efforts of the Armenian Diaspora in Canada for the recognition of the so-called Armenian Genocide has been fruitful; and the Canadian Parliament adopted a motion on April 21, 2004 that says, "This House acknowledges the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemns this act as a crime against humanity."<sup>44</sup>

Foreign Minister Bill Graham before the vote in a letter to the members of Parliament stated that cooperation between Turkey and Canada exists in several fields and Canada should maintain good relations with Turkey, which is a NATO ally.<sup>45</sup> According to press reports, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce lobbied that the members of Parliament should consider the possibility that Canadian companies like Bombardier Aerospace and SNC Lavalin could lose out to European competitors for mega projects such as the extension of the Ankara subway system.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, these political and economic considerations did not have much influence on the members of the Parliament.

After the vote, Foreign Minister Bill Graham issued a statement saying that the motion will not alter the official Canadian government position that while the events in question at the start of the 20th century were a tragedy, they did not constitute genocide.<sup>47</sup>

The Turkish Foreign Ministry in a statement on April 22, 2004 condemned this decision taken under the influence of marginal opinions, drew attention to the risk of hatred among the people from different origins, emphasized the fact that it would not benefit neither the Armenians in Canada nor those in Armenia and expressed that Canadian politicians would be responsible for the negative consequences that this decision could bring.

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<sup>43</sup> *Milliyet*, March 4, 2004

<sup>44</sup> *Armenian National Committee of Canada*, Press Release, April 21, 2004

<sup>45</sup> *Hürriyet*, April 22, 2004

<sup>46</sup> *The Globe and Mail*, April 22, 2004

<sup>47</sup> *RFE/RL*, April 23, 2004

The Canadian parliament has taken this decision with the intention of satisfying its citizens of Armenian origin. As Canadian citizens of Turkish origin did strongly oppose this decision, Canadian Parliament favored Armenians and discriminated against its Turkish citizens. A Canadian newspaper stated in this respect "A multicultural country like Canada has to be careful about allowing ancient grievances to be played out such that they push foreign policy in a particular direction. Once that starts to happen in a country like this, it won't end."<sup>48</sup>

From the perspective of international law, we should be reminded that parliaments do not have competence to take such a decision. According to the 1948 United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article 9, disputes relating to the responsibility of a State should be submitted to the international Court of Justice and not to national parliaments.

#### **IV. France and the Armenians**

##### **1. President Chirac's Statement**

The French President Jacques Chirac, during a press conference on the European Union Enlargement on April 29, 2004, answered the question whether recognition of the Armenian "Genocide" is a pre-condition for the access of Turkey to the Union or not, that it is an issue between Turkey and Armenia; he added that he is content to see the positive developments in Turkish-Armenian relations and the future in the bilateral relations could not be evaluated according to the past.<sup>49</sup>

The Council of Coordination for the Armenian Organizations in France published a statement declaring that they were surprised by the statement of the President, France had passed a law recognizing the Armenian Genocide during the term of Chirac; and asked why the President had approved this law if it was a matter of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia. The Declaration also accused the President of washing his hands of the annihilation of Armenians in Turkey.

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<sup>48</sup> *The Globe and Mail*, April 27, 2004

<sup>49</sup> *Le Monde*, April 30, 2004

## **2. French Socialists and The Armenians**

The first secretary of France's Socialist Party, François Hollande and President of Dashnaksoutiun (France) Mourad Papazian announced in a joint statement on June 3, 2004<sup>50</sup> that to give a date to Turkey for the beginning of the accession talks to EU should be contingent, in addition to the Copenhagen criteria, to Ankara's recognition of the Armenian "genocide" as stated in the resolution of the European Parliament dated June 18, 1987.

The joint statement claimed also that the reforms in Turkey were inadequate, the major role of the military in the state affairs is in contradiction with the democratic principles of Europe, minority rights were not respected particularly in the case of Kurds, and Turkey does not abide by the Copenhagen Criteria. The two sides demanded Turkey to recognize the Armenian Genocide, which was committed by the "Ottoman Government". The Socialist Party announced that they would propose a draft law concerning punishment of those who deny the Armenian Genocide. The sides also called for voting for the Socialist candidates in the elections of European Parliament on June 18, 2004.

What is amazing in that matter is that the French Socialist Party considers as normal to have an electoral agreement with an Armenian Party which recently claimed that Turkey's eastern Anatolia provinces be annexed to Armenia.

## **V. The European Union and the Armenians**

### **1. The European Court of Justice Verdict**

The Euro-Armenia Association in Marseilles applied to the European Court of Justice in October 2003 claiming that the status of candidate for EU membership given to Turkey at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 was in violation of the June 18, 1987 resolution of the European Parliament on the "Armenian genocide" and therefore the Turkish candidacy must be annulled.<sup>51</sup>

Upon Turkey's application for membership in the then European Economic Community in 1987, the European Parliament had adopted a resolution calling for a political solution to the Armenian question. The resolution stated that the tragic events of 1915-1917

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<sup>50</sup> For full text of the joint declaration see: *Comité de Defense de la Cause Arménienne*, June 3, 2004

<sup>51</sup> *Anatolian Agency*, March 4, 2004

constituted genocide within the meaning of the UN Convention on genocide, however Turkey could not be held responsible for the tragedy experienced by the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. The same resolution stressed that neither political, nor legal or material claims against present-day Turkey could be derived from the recognition of this historical event as an act of genocide.

These resolutions asked the Council of Ministers to obtain an acknowledgement of the genocide from the Turkish Government. It also stated that the refusal by the present day Turkish Government to acknowledge the genocide would constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the consideration of the possibility of Turkish accession to the Union.

We must emphasize that the resolutions adopted by European Parliament are advisory and display the ideas and tendencies of that organization; they are not mandatory for the member states. Consequently, although the 1987 resolution demands it, the EU Council of Ministers never asked Turkey to recognize the Armenian "genocide". As well, the Copenhagen Criteria do not contain such a demand.

In the verdict regarding the case of the Armenian Association in Marseilles, the European Court of Justice stated that the application of the Armenian plaintiff did not have any legal base and rejected it stressing that the decision of the European Parliament of 1987 was "only and fully political" and that this recommendatory decision did not have a power of sanction. The European Court of Justice said that the European Parliament could change its resolution anytime and that it did not have any legal influence.<sup>52</sup>

This verdict is important because it makes clear that the 1987 resolution of the European Parliament would not obstruct Turkish adhesion to the European Union. It is therefore a serious setback for the Armenian extremists. Yet, this ruling will not prevent the European Parliament in the future from passing similar resolutions referring to the 1987 resolution. In fact, the two recently adopted resolutions that we will talk about in the next paragraph reference the 1987 resolution.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

## **2. The European Parliament and the Armenians**

The European Parliament has mentioned Armenian matters in two of its recent resolutions. The first of these is "EU Policy Towards South Caucasus" dated February 26, 2004, and the other one is the "Progress Toward Accession by Turkey" dated April 1, 2004.

In the Resolution on the Progress Towards Accession by Turkey, the European Parliament "request Turkey to reopen the borders with Armenia and to promote good neighbourly relations with Armenia, to work together to promote equitable solutions to the regional conflicts and to take any action that would stand in the way of a historic reconciliation". The Parliament also "would like a dialogue to be established between Turkish and Armenian academics, social and non-governmental organizations in order to overcome the tragic experiences of the past as has been expressed in its earlier resolutions (reference is made here to the resolution of 18 June 1987).

In the Resolution on EU Policy Towards South Caucasus, the European Parliament recommends the Council "to urge Turkey to be fully committed to its candidate status and to take the necessary steps to establish good neighbourly relations with the countries, with particular regard to the lifting the trade restrictions and the gradual reopening of the land border with Armenia". On the other hand the European Parliament "reiterates its position set out in its Resolution of 18 June 1987 on a political solution of the Armenian question, call on Turkey and Armenia to promote good neighbourliness in order to defuse tension and calls on Turkish and Armenian academics, social organizations and NGOs to embark on a dialogue with each other in order to overcome the tragic experiences of the past".

As can be seen, these resolutions are Armenian inspired. However they do not mention directly the genocide claims and are contented with a reference to the resolution of June 18, 1987.

## **VI. The 29<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and Turkey**

The Chairman of the Dashnak Party, (Armenian Revolutionary Federation-ARF) Hrand Markaryan strongly criticized Turkey during his opening speech of the 29<sup>th</sup> Party Congress held on February 6, 2004 in Yerevan. Some excerpts follow:



*"The international recognition of the Genocide and the liberation of Western Armenia (i.e. eastern Anatolia) are the very demands" (of the Dashnaks).*

*"We will continue our struggle; we will continue our pressure on Turkey until final victory, until the Genocide is internationally recognized, until United Armenia is created."*

*"Today's Turkey is the same Turkey that planned and perpetrated the Genocide."... "Turkey is the same Turkey of yesteryear with its aggressive and pan-Turkic goals."*

*"Armenian-Turkish reconciliation, the opening of the Armenia-Turkish border are irrelevant points of agenda so long as Turkey denies the fact of Armenian Genocide."*

*\* We oppose any relations between Armenia and Turkey...<sup>53</sup>*

Mainly, two points stand out in this harsh statement. The first one is the call of the leader of the Dashnak Party for the liberation of Eastern Anatolia, in other words the annexation of some parts of Turkish territory by Armenia. The second point is the opposition of the Dashnaks to improving relations or even to establishing any kind of ties with Turkey as long as she does not recognize the alleged genocide.

Yet these views do not conform to the policy that is currently being implemented by the Armenian Government as this Government has not made establishing normal relations with Turkey conditional on the acknowledgement of the "genocide" and has never openly voiced any territorial claims from Turkey.

The speaker of the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated about Mr. Markaryan's speech; "those are strictly the ARF's own positions and this is not the first time that they have expressed them publicly. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs disagrees with many of the positions expressed there and they do not reflect Armenia's foreign policy. It is true that the ARF is a member of the coalition, but foreign relations are constitutionally formulated by the President of the Republic."<sup>54</sup>

In his speech Mr. Markaryan addressed also to the irregularities during the last elections, in other words he indirectly questioned the legitimacy of the Armenian Parliament. This move, adding to

<sup>53</sup> [www.yerkir.am](http://www.yerkir.am), February 7, 2004

<sup>54</sup> Press Release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, February 6, 2004

**The Second Congress on  
Armenian Studies  
organized by the Institute  
for Armenian Research  
and the Ankara Chamber  
of Commerce was held on  
29-30 May 2004 in  
Ankara.**

the criticism of the Government's foreign policy brought up the possibility of the Dashnaks leaving the coalition. Yet while the Dashnaks displayed no desire to leave the government, the other members of the coalition did not seem willing to oust the Dashnaks either, despite the fact that even without them they would still have the necessary majority to govern.

The declaration that was published after the ARF Congress, contrary to the Markaryan speech, did not refer to irregularities during the recent election, to "United Armenia" and to the possible re-opening of the Turkish-Armenian border.<sup>55</sup> It seems that the Dashnaks, taking into account the dissatisfaction caused by Mr. Markaryan's speech, preferred to soften their rhetoric.

## **VI. Developments in Turkey**

### **1. The Second Congress Of Armenian Studies**

The Second Congress of Armenian Studies<sup>56</sup> organized by the Institute for Armenian Research and the Ankara Chamber of Commerce was held on 29-30 May 2004 in Ankara.

About 130 papers concerning nearly all aspects of the Armenian Issue, the Armenians and Armenia were presented to the Congress. The high number of the papers and the wide range of topics analyzed pointed to the interest in Turkey for Armenian issues.

The Patriarch of Istanbul, Mesrop II sent a congratulation message to the Congress.

The papers presented at the Congress will be published in a book, as in the case of the first congress.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> RFE/IRL, February 18, 2004

<sup>56</sup> The First Congress on Armenian Studies was held on 22 and 21 of April 2002.

<sup>57</sup> Ermeni Araştırmaları 1. Türkiye Kongresi Tebliğleri, (The Presentations of the First Congress of Armenian Studies, Three Volumes) Published by ASAM Ermeni Araştırmaları Enstitüsü ISBN 975-6769-88-2

## **2. Publication of the book "Armenians: Exile and Emigration"**

The book, entitled "Armenians: Exile and Emigration," written by Prof. Dr. Hikmet Özdemir, Prof. Dr. Kemal Çiçek, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ömer Turan, Dr. Ramazan Çalık and Prof. Dr. Yusuf Halaçoğlu was published by the Turkish Historical Society in April. The book is composed of three main chapters, namely the Armenian Population in the Ottoman State, Emigration and Relocation to Syria, and the Armenians after the Emigration.

The Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire is calculated according to foreign sources as 1.5 to 1.7 million, about 500,000 of which were subjected to emigration. Many of them returned after the First World War but emigrated again during the Turkish War of Independence. This new finding disproves the widely accepted Armenian allegation that 1.5 million Armenians died or were killed during the emigration.

The book, which is based on foreign sources that were almost unused previously, constitutes an important step in the scientific research of the Armenian issue.

## **3. Meeting of the Turkish and Armenian Scholars**

A "Viennese Armenian-Turkish Platform" was created in March 2004 in order to study the "Turkish-Armenian Issue" with scholarly methods and using historical documents.

Two scientists each from the Turkish Historical Society and the Armenian Academy of Sciences will discuss the issue. The moderator will be Prof. Dr. Wolfdieter Bihl from Austria. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Halacoglu, President of the Turkish Historical Society, and Prof. Dr. Hikmet Özdemir, chairmen of the Armenian unit of the Society will participate from Turkey; Armenia will be represented by Prof. Dr. Lavrenti Barseghian (Director of Yerevan Genocide Museum), and Prof. Dr. Ashot Melkonian (Armenian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History).

Each side is to submit a pre-determined number of documents to each other through the Viennese Armenian-Turkish Platform and no document will be accepted afterwards. In Spring 2005 a meeting will be organized, at which the documents will be discussed. This meeting will be recorded and the conclusions published.

This initiative derives its importance from the fact that the Turkish and Armenian historians will come together in a scientific environment for the first time.

# ARMENIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Prof. Dr. Aygün ATTAR\*

## **Abstract**

*A historiography, which is defined by some writers as writing about rather than of history, or as a history of historical writing, is conducted in this work on the topic of Armenian history and historical writing. The work considers in particular the effect of the Armenian Church on education and traditional Armenian historiography from the 5th century to the 18th and its reflection in the contemporary relations of Armenia and Turkey via the psychology of "Great Armenia".*

## **Keywords**

*Armenia, Historiography, Armenian Church, Great Armenia, Armenian Sources*

**T**he beginnings of Armenian historiography were set down in the first centuries A.D., and have left valuable historical resources for modern scholars. The Matenadaran Library is one of the richest libraries in the world not only for Armenian history, but also for resources on Caucasian, Anatolian and Middle and Near Eastern history. In addition to numerous manuscripts, the library has a unique richness and historical worth with authentic and official documents, letters, and religious and cultural texts. At present, though most of these sources under protection have been published in Russian and Armenian for the benefit of the wider academic community, there is still secrecy regarding some important documents. Since these documents bear a problematic potential for Armenians, they are kept in secrecy today, much as they were in the Soviet era.

The church has always had an esteemed position in Armenian social life. Though lacking an effectual religious status within Christianity, Gregorianism gradually became a national sect starting from circa the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., having proven to be compatible with Armenian national and historical life. Because the

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Armenian Gregorian church has always had supremacy over all political powers, the influence of the church is readily observable in almost all areas of Armenian life. Other than providing religious guidance, the Armenian Church has a tremendous and widespread amount of authority and it has been the primary power in building the cultural and historical values of Armenians. In this respect, it can be argued that Armenians' consciousness of their history was built under the monopoly of the Armenian Church. Since a modern understanding of history has been based on these sources during the Soviet era as it is today, Armenian history has virtually exclusively been developed under the strict influence of religious and nationalistic dogmas emanating from the Gregorian church. Thus, it is not surprising that most of the Armenian sources were written by clergymen.<sup>1</sup>

The oldest Armenian sources were written in the early periods of Christian history and the tradition was continued systematically until the Soviet era. Since the Armenian Kingdom, which had an important status in the region during the 2nd century B.C, capitulated first to the Parthian Empire, then to the Zoroastrian faith Choson Dynasty, then to be divided – as a consequence of a treaty between the Byzantian Empire and Iran – into West and East Armenia and thereby losing all political and administrative power, the Gregorian Church became the sole spiritual and material power to protect the Armenian community's social values. As Manuk Abeqyan has said, to spiritually elevate the Armenian community in a manner isolated from its political, administrative and legal sovereignty, "There was need for forming a great and perfect history of Armenia."<sup>2</sup> Through the keen efforts of the church, consciousness of and belief in their history became a religious motive in the life of the Armenian community. For this purpose, writers of Armenian history "adopted the principle of promoting the history of an independent Armenian Tsardom; they tried to instigate a spirit of revolt among the people, by presenting the thesis of Great Armenia, which had allegedly once existed on Armenian lands."<sup>3</sup> M. Abeqyan says, "There was need to sustain such theses, so that a people devoid of political power and social resistance could thrive."<sup>4</sup> It is a fact that Armenian sources were renewed

<sup>1</sup> *Kultura Rannefeodalnoy Armenii (IV-VII vv.)*, (Yerevan, 1980), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> M. Abeqyan, *Istoriya Drevnearmyanskoy Literature*, (Yerevan, 1948), p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> F. Memmedova, *Azerbaycanin Siyasi Tarixi ve Tarixi Coğrafyasi*, (Baku, 1993), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Abeqyan, *Istoriya ...*, pp. 233-234.

periodically, as suitable for such needs. Having realized this, as Adonts points out, "The written works were revised by the current perspectives and rewritten according to the existing situation and the needs of the era. As a result of this, there emerges an inevitable doubt as to the compatibility of many historical sources with the time they were supposedly written. Apparently these sources are old; but it is also apparent that they were modified at later periods."<sup>5</sup>

The fact that the center for education and culture was under control of the church and history teaching and history writing were managed by the church leaders, caused periodical re-processing and re-writing of Armenian sources. This in turn led to a loss of authenticity, letting different arguments and interpretations flourish concerning individual documents. On the issue of the censorship enforced by the Armenian Church, there is the following example taken from the book "Alban History", which was written between the 8th and 10th centuries A.D.: "Armenians accepted Christianity in the 43rd year of the Roman calendar. Albania,<sup>6</sup> on the other hand, accepted Christianity 270 years earlier than Armenians."<sup>7</sup> The name of the book, "Alban History," first appears during the Armenian Catholicos Anania's visit to Hacen (943-967). He went to Hacen as a guest of Alban Catholicos Gagik (948-962) in the year 958.<sup>8</sup> According to Gagik, he was appointed to Albania Catholicosdom with the name of Holy Gregory, as was the custom, referred to in the book *Alban History*. When Gagik wanted to consult this historical work, he was told that Albania had accepted Christianity before Armenia did. Anania Mokatsi objected and said: "this book cannot be authentic because Albania has a Bishop but Armenia has a Catholicos" Then, the book "Alban History" was given to the Armenian Catholicos and "he ordered the information to be found in history about Albania's acceptance of Christianity, which we yearn to see."<sup>9</sup> Following this, upon Gagik's order, the information on Albania's acceptance of Christianity before the

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<sup>5</sup> G. N. Adonts, *Armenyanskaya Literatura: Noviy Ensiklopedicheskiy Slovar*, Brokqauz I Efron, (? , 1915), t. III, p. 642

<sup>6</sup> Albania: Between the 4th and 7th Centuries B.C. They settled in Northern Azerbaijan; a possible political society was formed of Iskit/Saka-based Alban tribes. See K. Aliyev, *Anticnaya Avkazskaya Albaniya*, (Baku, 1992); T. M. Mamedov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, (Baku, 1992); F. Mamedova, *Politiceskaya Istoriya i Istoriceskaya Geografiya Kavkazskoy Albanii*, (Baku, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> Moisey Kalankatuklu, *Albanya Tarixi*, Trnsl. Z. Bundayov, (Baku, 1993), book I/6, pp. 81-82.

<sup>8</sup> *Albanya Tarixi*, Note of Z. Bundayov, p.7.

<sup>9</sup> *Albanya Tarixi*, Note of Z. Bundayov, p.7.

**Research on Armenian history using local sources encounters serious problems.**

Armenians was deleted from the book. These kinds of alterations are quite frequent in Armenian Historiography. Again, one of the famous ancient Armenian history writers, Stepannos Orbelian, reports an interesting event on these history alterations; according to him, as suggested by Anania, there had been scrupulous additions to "Alban History".<sup>10</sup>

All these help not only to reveal the level of reliability of Armenian sources but also enlighten us about the basic point of view of Armenian history writing. For this reason, research on Armenian history using local sources encounters serious problems. Nonetheless, while it would not be appropriate to conduct research on Armenian history by consulting solely Armenian sources, studies collected on Caucasian, Iranian, and even general Turkish history without consulting these sources would be equally unsuitable. Unfortunately, although Armenian sources are the only ones to fill in the information which Chinese sources fail to supply about Turks' mobility towards the west, these works have not yet been made available to researchers on Turkish history.

As N. Y. Marr states, Armenian historiography in the classical era was shaped under the influence of three big factors and eventually come to claim its present local status. The first of these factors was the Missionary Literature to which Syrian culture was entirely subjected; the second factor was the philosophical Scholastic literature created under the influence of Greek thought; and the third factor was the national – or local – literature.<sup>11</sup> It is not possible to mark these periods as independent of each other. According to N. Adonts, the basis for Armenian Historiography emerged in two stages. The first period, beginning in the 5th century, concluded in the 7th century with the works of Horenly, represents the foundation of Armenian Historiography and literature. The second period was completed by the end of the 11th century. The 8th century is a transition period between these two periods.<sup>12</sup> In his study of Horenly's famous work "Armenian

<sup>10</sup> Stepannos Orbelian, *Sunik Tarihi*, M. F. Brossen, (French Trasl.), SPb. 1861, p.161.

<sup>11</sup> N.Y. Marr, "K kritike M. Horenskogo: Res. Na kn.: Halatyanys G. Armyanskiy epos v "Istorii Armeni" Moiseya Horeskogo" – V kn.: VV, SPb. 1898, t. V, p. 228.

<sup>12</sup> Adont, *Armyanskaya ...*, p. 46.

History”, N.Y. Marr states that the said author reflects the properties of those three schools.<sup>13</sup> However, in its general sense Armenian Historiography can be subdivided into two periods: Mamikonians and Bagratunys. While all Armenian historians had tried to focus their works on the Mamikonian dynasty up until the time of Horenly, who is thought to have lived in the 8th century, this preference then shifted in favour of the Bagratunys.<sup>14</sup> Armenian Historian, G. Halatyants, the first person to have drawn attention to this issue, contends that two local dynasties were active in Armenian History in general. As it is known, after the Parths – who were of Scythian origin – seized Iran and the Caucasus, they formed subdivisions of the Archakian family, their subordinate, by ending all other local dynasties. Apart from the Archakian dynasty centered in Nesa in Iran, Alban - Archakian and Armenian - Archakian local dynasties were founded. These dynasties and their subdivisions were of Scythian origin; however, in the course of time they tried to establish their own independent statuses by merging with local tribes. By the first century, in addition to the Armenian Archakian dynasty (66-428), two more local dynasties had been founded. These were both of Armenian origin, the first was the Mamikonians, whose mission was *sparapetdom*; that is, commanders-in-chief of the Armenian army and the province administrators (*merzhubans*) were the descendants of this family. The second family was the Bagratunies, whose mission was to organize the coronation ceremony of a new monarch ascending the throne. For this reason, they were given the title *aspet*, or “coronator”. In the year 428, when the Armenian Tsardom was ended by default, both of these dynasties were dismissed from the central administration. As a reaction, the Mamikonians supported all civil rebellions there in order to restore the sovereignty they had been deprived of. As this attitude of the Mamikonians had a nationalistic character on behalf of the Armenian people and church, they were accepted as the representatives of Armenian national identity for a long time. Following the Arabian conquests, the Caliphate had preferred to exploit the Bagratunies in particular. However, between the years 747-750, when a general rebellion broke out in Armenia, the Caliphate was able to draw Ashot Bagratuni to its side, by offering very attractive promises. Thus, with the local and central administrations being seized by Bagratunies, the *knezdom* and

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<sup>13</sup> Marr, *K kritike ...*, p. 228.

<sup>14</sup> Memmedova, *Azerbaycan'in...*, p. 43



*sparapetry* missions of the Mamikonian family ended in Armenia. When Saak Bagratuni became knez and Smbat Bagratuni *sparapet*, they put all of the Mamikonians in the country to the sword and seized their properties. As a result, the Bagratuni era started in Armenia.<sup>15</sup> Owing to these facts, from a historical perspective, dividing the writing of Armenian history into two periods, Mamikonian and Bagratuni, is most feasible. Of course, as emphasized by Marr and Adants, the general characteristics of Armenian historiography should not be ignored regarding points of style and effect.

The sources of Armenian history consist of a series of works entitled "Armenian History" that date back as late as the 5th century. Such historiography studies that have become traditional are supported and notified to the public by Church. The first Armenian source obtained is "The Life of Mosto/Mosto'nun Hayati" that is thought to have been written by Koryun in about 440. This work carries properties of eulogy revealing the author's emotions towards his spiritual father and his teacher, however the book gives as well information about the educational and religious activities of the church.<sup>16</sup>

Another source of secondary importance is "About Vordon and the Armenian Wars," which was written by Yegise in the second half of the 5th century. This work, in the appearance of a history book, tells about the position of Armenian, Georgian, and Albon societies in the years of 450-451 and the public rebellions against the Sasan Empire. The work is a serious source from the point of view of general Turkish historiography. Yegise gives information for the first time about Haylanturk, the first nomadic tribe bearing the name "Turk". Apart from this, the work contains precious information about the beliefs of Hurr and Zarathustra. Once this work is investigated, it may confirm that the Turkish emigration towards the west, that is, the Caucasus and Anatolia, took place even before the birth of Christ.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See for details G. Halatyans, *Armyanskiye Arşakidi v "Istorii Armenii"* Moiseya Horenskogo, M. 1896, Nos. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> Koryun, *Jitiye Maštots*, (Yerevan, 1941) (in Armenian); Koryun, *Jitiye Maštotsa, Predisloviye k Per. Narussk. Yaz. Ş. V. Smbatyana i K. A. Melik-Oqadjanyana*, (Yerevan, 1962); *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes des l' Armenie* Per V. Langlois, (Paris, 1869), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Yelişe, *O Vardane i armyanskoy voyne*, (Yerevan, 1957) (in Armenian); Yelişe, *O Vardan i voyne armyanskoy, Per. S drevnearmyanskogo akad. I. A. Orbeli, Pedgot. K izd. K. N. Yuzbaşyan*, (Yerevan, 1971); See for Turkish and Hun migration by Yegise Yu. R. Djafarov, "Kvaprosu o haylandurak Elişe", *Pismennie pamyatniki i problemi istorii kulturni naradov Vostoka*, M. 1977, pp. 6-10; *ibid*, "Rannie gunni na Kafkaze K interpretatsii

Another work written in the second half of the fifth century is "Armenian History" by Faustas. This work consists of at least six books. Only the third to fifth books, covering the years 332-387, were able to be preserved so far. Faustas Busand was the first author who attempted to write the complete Armenian History. The work is the most serious source in its own field for its particular time period and theme. The work is not only about Armenia but also serves as a primary source to learn about Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Turkish emigration, Iran, and the history of Anatolia. This work rejects unfounded claims and opinions of Armenian historians and also facilitates the learning of Armenians' real situation from a historical and geographical point of view.<sup>18</sup> Busand had already caused some deviations by shaping his work according to the Armenian Church.<sup>19</sup> As a result of the technique applied by the various works which cited this work; deviated the theme of Busand's work from its own reality.<sup>20</sup>

Lazar Parpetsi continued the tradition of writing "Armenian History" which began with Buzand. Parpetsi's "Armenian History," written at the end of the 5th century and at the beginning of the 6th century, is the history of the societies beyond Caucasia, and comprises as well the period of the division of Armenia by Iran and Byzantine in 387.

Moisey Horenly is generally accepted as the father of "Armenian History". Horenly's "Armenian History" consists of three parts. Horenly, as he mentions in the preface of his work, wrote his book on Knyaz Saak Bagratuni's request, as the latter was keen on learning the history of the Armenian Community, the Armenian State, Armenian local sovereignties, and the Bagratuni reign. After doing this, Horenly undertook writing a general history of Armenia beginning from the oldest era until the year 428. In this work Horenly analyses the ethnic membership and historical position of

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греçеских и армянских истоçников", *Voprosi istorii, ideologii, filosofii, kulturni naradov Vostoka, Istoçnikovedenie, istoriografiya. Tezisi konferentsii aspirantov i molodih nauçnih sotrudnikov*, M. 1981, t. I, pp. 3-4.

18 *Istoriya Armenii Favstos Buzanda, Per. S drevnearm. I koment. M. A. Gevorkyana*, (Yerevan, 1953); Favstos Buzandatsi, *Istoriya Armenii*, SPb., 1883 (in Armenian)

19 For this reason, Armenian historians consider Buzand's piece as enlightening the histories of politics and the church. See *Kultura rannefeodalnoy Armenii*, p. 48;

20 M. Abeqyan considers the piece of Buzand as "A piece written by the public spirit ignoring chronology, and moreover it is full of exaggerations." See *Istoriya drevnearmyanskoy*, p. 230

the Armenian people together with the Babylonian Kingdom, the Assyrian Imperial, the Med Imperial, Persian societies and dynasties, the Scythian Part State, Rome and Byzantium and the Sassanids, and ultimately gives a rich example of history writing.<sup>21</sup> Of course, as stated above, Horenly's work could not avoid the psychological structure, which the Armenian Church tried to impose, and thus this attitude can be found in the work from beginning until end. As the famous writer N.A. Karaylov of the former Empire of Russia also states, the famous *History* of Horenly "proves the existence of the Armenian Tsars which was independent but under developed".<sup>22</sup> Horenly lived in the 8th Century, the period in which the Bagratunian dynasty developed in Armenia. For this reason, Horenly largely establishes his work on the political existence of this dynasty. Horenly's work is also a good reference book for studies on the history of the Turkish tribes. The writer provides considerable mention of the Turkish attacks on Azerbaijan, Armenia, Persia, and Anatolia. There is also much unique information on Bulgarians, *Basi/Barsil*, the Khazars and the Huns.<sup>23</sup>

The writer of "*The History of Armenia*," which has been much discussed and is supposed to have been written in the 7th Century, is not known. Some state that it was written by the author of "*Irak's History*," Sebeos,<sup>24</sup> on the other hand, some state that it was written by Husrev.<sup>25</sup>

Another book written in the 7th Century is "*The Geography*", "*Alharasuyts*" in Armenian, by Ananiya Şiraklı. As its name suggests, this book was about the general geography of the world, and it was based on the Roman author K. Ptolemaus' book, "*The Geography*".<sup>26</sup> However, those parts of the book on Armenia and neighbouring countries were written in light of researches made by the author himself. In this book, Asia is divided into 44 countries. The 26th country is Armenia, which is divided into 15 states.<sup>27</sup> For

<sup>21</sup> Movses Horenatsi, *İstoriya Armenii*, Per. N. O. Emina, M. 1893

<sup>22</sup> N. A. Karaylov, *Svedeniya arabskih pisateley o Kavkaze, Armenii i Azerbaydjane. III. Ibn Hordadbeh; IV. Kudama; V. Ibn Ruste; VI. Al Ya'kubi*, SMOMPK, 1908, vip. 38, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> Horenatsi, II, 8, 9, 22, 27, 65, 85. In these sections, the history of Turkish migrations is revealed.

<sup>24</sup> A. P. Novoseltsev, *Genezis feodalizma v stranah Zakavkazya*, M. 1980, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> G. Abegyan, *İstoriya Sebeosa i probleme "Anonima"*, (Yerevan, 1965) (in Armenian), pp. 207-231.

<sup>26</sup> *Ananiya Şirakatsi*, İzd. A. G. Abramyan – G. B. Petrosyan, (Yerevan, 1970).

<sup>27</sup> *Ananiya Şirakatsi, Kosmografiya*, Per. s drevnearm. predisl. i komment. K. S. Ter-Davtyana – S. S. Arevşatyan, (Yerevan, 1962); *Ananiya Şirakatsi, Voprosi i rişeniya*, Per. i İzd. İ. A. Orbeli, V, 1918.

about 150 years, Armenian historians have been talking about the dream of "The Great Armenia," and this dream is based, to a large extent, on this work of Şiraklı. However, when it is studied seriously, it is found that Şiraklı's work contradicts the claims of other Armenian historians. In this book, two regional geographic maps are taken as a basis for locating Armenia: the geography of the Archakian period and the regional position in the 7th Century. But the latter only consists of a presentation of the changes. In places where points in this work contradict with various other reference books, the contradictions tend to result from Şiraklı's loyalty to the traditional Armenian historians' attitude.

In the Arabian Imperial period, the most important and remarkable Armenian source book is Levond's "The Caliphs' History". This book enlightens the history of the period between the years 662-788, a period of about 127 years. This is an important work, which reveals the religious and social position of the Arabians and that of the Armenians in relation to their religious applications.<sup>28</sup>

"The Book of Letters- Girk ttots" is the most remarkable of the mentioned resources. The book consists of the letters of the administrators of state and church. The book includes not only the correspondences of the Armenian government and church but also the letters and official documents of the neighbouring countries. It is a very important source for understanding the place of the church in the social life of the Armenians.<sup>29</sup>

According to a rumour, the work "Ağvan / The History of Albania" which was written first in Albanian in the 8th Century and translated into Armenian with additions in the 10th Century, is also present among the Armenian resources. The author of the book, Movsey Kalankatuklu, is an Alban but presumed to be a Turk because of his name, is the only known historian of the Albanian State that existed on the land of today's Azerbaijan in the 8th Century. This book, which includes a vast amount of knowledge, is supposed to be the most important resource not only for the Albanian and Azerbaijanian history but also for Armenian Persian and Turkish history. This work is very important as it gives an opportunity to

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<sup>28</sup> Levond, *Istoriya*, SPb. 1887 (in Armenian); Levond, *Istoriya halifov*, Per. K. Pankratova, SPb. 1862

<sup>29</sup> *Girk ttots*, Tiflis 1901 (in Armenian); *Girk ttots, Kniga poslaniy*, Arm. Tekst s gruz. Per. issled. komment izdanl Z. N. Aleksidze, (Tbilisi, 1968).

evaluate the content and possible mistakes of the Armenian historians and resources. This work generally consists of three books, the first two of which were written by Kalankatuklu and the third by the Armenian author Movses Dashuranatsi in the 10th Century. *"The History of Albania"* includes the history of nearly a thousand years' history of the region.<sup>30</sup>

The most important author who continued the writing of the traditional *"Armenia History"* works was Catholicos 5th Yohann Drashankertly (catholicosdom period: 897-925). His work is very important for studies on the history of the Armenian Bagratunis dynasty after the Abbasids and the Turkish dynasty in Azerbaijan, in other words, the *Sac Oğulları* period. It also includes important knowledge on the history of Anatolia.<sup>31</sup> *"The History of the Artsruni Dynasty"* by Foma Arstruni, another Armenian author, is among the reference books for studies on regional Armenian dynasties.<sup>32</sup>

When studying the history of Armenia it is necessary to reveal the political role of the Bagratunian dynasty in the history of this country. The most serious resource on this issue is Stepannos Taronski's (Asogik) *"General History"* which includes the 119 years of the history of the Bagratunian dynasty between the years 885-1004.<sup>33</sup> Among the other remarkable Armenian source books are Vardan's *"General History"*,<sup>34</sup> Stepannos Orbelian's *"Sünik History"*<sup>35</sup> and Mhitar Ayrivantsi's *"Chronographic History"*.<sup>36</sup>

In the 12th Century, the writing of Armenian history was represented by mainly two famous names. In this period Armenia had no local element and the whole country was under Turkish control. The authors writing in Armenian were living mainly in

<sup>30</sup> Movses Kalankatvatsi, *Istoriya strani alban*, Izd. V. Şahnazaryan, (Paris, 1860) (in Armenian); aynı müellif, *Istoriya strani alban*, Izd. N. Emina, (Tbilisi, 1912) (in Armenian); *ibid*, *Istoriya aqvan*, Ruski. Per. K. Patkanova, SPb. 1861; *ibid*, *Istoriya strani alban*, Predisl. komment V. D. Arakelyana, (Yerevan, 1983) (in Armenian); *ibid*, *Istoriya strani Aluank*, Per. s drevnearm. predisl i komment. Ş. V. Smbatyana, (Yerevan, 1984); *The History of the Caucasian Albanian by Hovses Dashuranci*, Translated by C. J. F. Dovsett, (London, 1961); *Albanya Tarixi*, Azerice çvr. Z. Bunyadov, (Baku, 1993).

<sup>31</sup> *Histoire d'Armenie par le patriarch Jean VI dit Jean Catholios...*, (Paris, 1841).

<sup>32</sup> Th. Ardzrouni, X-e S. *Histoire des Ardzrouni*, tr. Par M. Brosset, Collection Historiens Armeniens, t. I st., (Paris, 1874).

<sup>33</sup> Stepannos Taronskiy (Asoqik), *Vseobşaya istoriya*, Per. N. Emina, M. 1861;

<sup>34</sup> *Vseobşaya istoriya Vardana Velikogo*, Per. N. Emina, M. 1861;

<sup>35</sup> About this resource, see K. P. Patkanov, *Bibliografiçeskiy oçerk armyanskoy istoriçeskoj literatur*, SPb. 1880, pp. 45-46;

<sup>36</sup> M. Ayrivantsi, *Hronografiçeskaya istoriya*, Per. K. P. Patkanova, SPb. 1849.

Gence. Among them, Mhitar Goş<sup>37</sup> and Kirakos of Gence<sup>38</sup> are significant.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, there is a serious recession in Armenian Historiography, generally seen as being caused by the Mongolian invasion. Although, there are in this period several Annuals written within the church community, they are far from being historical.<sup>39</sup>

The Armenian's main center was shifted to the Cilicia area because of the growing Turkish population in the 14th and 15th centuries. We come across many Armenian sources written in the 15th century. The Matenedaran M. Maşots Library is filled with documents, official correspondence samples, epistles, decrees, church scriptures, numismatic, and epigraphic materials. We already know the names of many of the Armenian authors of the 15th to 18th centuries: Foma Metsopski,<sup>40</sup> Samvela Anetsi, Ogannesa Arcişetsi, Arakela Davrijetsi,<sup>41</sup> Zakariy Kana Kertsi (Sarkavaga),<sup>42</sup> Zarariy Aguletsi,<sup>43</sup> Eremiy Çelebi,<sup>44</sup> Grigor Daranagtsi, Simeona Lehatsi,<sup>45</sup> Azariy Sasnetsi, Simeona Yerevantsi,<sup>46</sup> Haçatura Cugaetsi, Abraama Yerevantsi,<sup>47</sup> Abraama Kretatsi,<sup>48</sup> Akupa Şemahetsi, and Albanian Catholicos Yesey Hasan Celalyan.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Mhitar Qoş, *Alban Salnamesi*, translated from Azerbaijani by Z. Bunyadov, (Baku 1993).

<sup>38</sup> Qandzaketsi Kirakos, *Istoriya*, Per. s drevnearmyansk. T. I. Ter-Grigoryana, (Baku, 1946).

<sup>39</sup> See for Armenian resources of this period L. O. Babayan, *Soşialno-ekonomiçeskaya i politiçeskaya istoriya Armenii v XIII-XIV vv*, M. 1969.

<sup>40</sup> Foma Metsopskiy, *Istoriya Timur-lanka*, Per. T. I. Ter-Grigoryan, (Baku, 1957); Foma Metsopskiy, *Istoriya*, A-18 (1447) (na drevnearm. yaz), Hr. v rukopis. Fonde LO İVAN SSSR (Leningradskoe otdelenie İstitutu Vostokovedeniya AN SSSR)

<sup>41</sup> Arakel Davrijetsi, *Istoriya*, (Vagarşapat, 1896) (in Armenian); *ibid*, *Kniga istoriya*, Per. L. A. Hanlaryan, M. 1973.

<sup>42</sup> Zakariya Sarkavag, *Istoriya*, Vagarşapat 1870, t. I-III, (in Armenian); Zakariya Sarkavag, *Hronika*, Per. M. O. Darbinyan-Melikyan, M. 1969; M. Brosset, *Memoires historiques sur les Sofis par le diacre Zacaria*, Collection d'hist. Arm., T. II, SPb. 1876.

<sup>43</sup> Zakariya Aguletsi, *Dnevnik*, (Yerevan, 1938) (in Armenian); Zahariya Akulisskiy, *Dnevnik*, Per. russki., (Yerevan, 1939).

<sup>44</sup> Matenederana im M. Maşotsa, Rukopis. 1675, l. 84b-101a; See also *Kratkaya çetrehstotletnaya istoriya osmanskih tsarey*, (Yerevan, 1982) (in Armenian);

<sup>45</sup> Simeon Lahetsi, *Putevie zametki*, İzd. N. Akinyana, (Vienna, 1936) (in Armenian); Simeon Lahetsi, *Putevie zametki*, Per. predisl i komment. M. O. Darbinyan-Melikyan, M. 1965

<sup>46</sup> Simeon Yerevantsi, *Djamb. Pamyatnaya kniga, zertsalo i sbornik vseh obstoyatelstv svyatogo prestola Eçmiadzina i okrestnih monastrey*, (Vagarşapat, 1873), (in Armenian); Per. S. Malhasyantsa, pod red. P. T. Arutyunyana, M. 1958.

<sup>47</sup> Abraam Yerevantsi, *Istoriya voyn 1721-1736 gg.*, İzd-vo ArmFAN SSSR, (Yerevan, 1938) (in Armenian); *ibid*, *Istoriya voyn 1721-1736 gg.*, (Yerevan: İzd-vo ArmFAN SSSR, 1939).

<sup>48</sup> Abraam Kretatsi, *Povestvovanie*, Kritiçeskiy tekst, Per. na russk. yaz. Predisl. i komment, N.G. Korganyana, (Yerevan, 1973).

<sup>49</sup> Esai Hasan Djalalyan, *Kratkaya istoriya strani Agvanskoy*, (Jerusealem, 1868) (in Armenian); translated to French by M. Brosset; translated to Russian by Z. Bunyatov and T. I. Ter-Grigoryan, (Baku, 1989).

In the 16th century, *Chronicle* writing and *Notebook* composing were popular activities. Among these authors, Yoannesika Tsaretsi should be noted. Tsaretsi's *Annual* reflects the perspectives of the period's political, economical and social history.<sup>50</sup> The author, in addition to providing information about the Ottomans, provides particular details on Mustafa Lala Pasha's 1578-1579 campaign to the Caucasian Area.<sup>51</sup>

The Armenian Chronicles almost complete each other historically. Tsaretsi's *Annual* is essentially the continuation of Ovanes Arcişetsi's *Annual*.<sup>52</sup> In addition to the *Annual*, Tsaretsi wrote also a book called "Ağvan Ülkesinin Tarihi",<sup>53</sup> Vartapet Grigor Kamehetsi or Daranagtsi (1576-1643?), who is thought to have lived in the 17th century, continued Tsaretsi's tradition.<sup>54</sup> Daranagtsi's *Annual* consists of two parts. The first part includes Armenia's period from 1018 to 1539, and the second part considers the political situation in 1595-1634. It is possible to obtain from this work information concerning Safevi policy and Abhaza Pasha's campaigns in 1623-1624.<sup>55</sup> Simeone Lehatsi's work also provides information on Abhaza Pasha.<sup>56</sup> The common characteristics of Anatolian, Armenian and Azerbaijani history are shaped by the Celali Revolt. There are at least two works in the Armenian sources concerning the Celali Revolt: The works of Azar Soonetsi<sup>57</sup> and those of Yeremi Çelebi Kermuçyan.<sup>58</sup>

One of the most significant sources of the 17th century is Agutenti Zakari's "Catalogues". This rare work, which has the characteristics of a diary, is worthy for providing information about the region's social position.<sup>59</sup>

Russia's unification with Caucasia's political life in the 18th century is generally evaluated as having been an incredible

50 *MH: Melkie Hroniki XIII-XVIII vv.*, Sost. V. A. Akopyan, Yerevan 1951 (t. I), 1956 (t. II), t. II, pp. 235-239.

51 *MH*, t. II, pp. 235-255;

52 *MH*, t. I, pp. 227-234;

53 This work is reviewed in "Tarih" by Samuel Anetsi (Vagarşapat, 1893, in Armenian), pp. 185-199.

54 Grigor Daranagtsi, *Hronika*, İzd. Vartapeta. M. Nişanyana, (Jerusalem, 1915) (in Armenian).

55 Abaza Paşanın seferleri için bkz. G. Dranagtsi, *Hronika*, pp. 101, 142-145, 155, 158-160, 205-208, 210, 212, 215-274

56 Simeon Lahatsi, *Putevie zametki*, İzd. N. Akinyana, (Vena, 1936) (in Armenian)

57 Azaria Sasnetsi, *Plaç ot udarov, nanesennih vostoçnim oblastyam strani Armenii djalaliyami*, "Andes Amsorea", (Vena, 1936) (in Armenian).

58 Matenederan im. M. Maştotsa, Rukopis. 1675, vr. 84b-101a

59 There is wide information about tax types and taxing procedure in Zakariya Aguletsi, *Dnevnik*, pp. 95-121

opportunity for Armenia. This period is regarded as a new beginning both in the political life of Armenia and in Armenian historiography. Tsar Petro I's aim was to create a buffer zone between Caucasia and Ottoman ruled Turkey. The state that could achieve this mission was Armenia. However, 1000 years of Turkish presence and sovereignty had greatly Turkified the Armenian area, particularly Yerevan. Establishing so-called Armenia required a great preparation for the foundation of a new country. For this reason, an intensive propaganda within the Armenian churches in order to unite the national psychology of Armenians was initiated. In 1721, Tsar Petro I's Khazar campaign excited the Armenians.<sup>60</sup> Prayers were made for the Tsar in the Armenian Churches and Armenian national sentiments were stoked. There are great numbers of sources reflecting the period's events, including Russia's activities and Armenian propaganda activities.<sup>61</sup> These sources are preserved as documents and scripts in the Russian Central Archive of State,<sup>62</sup> Old Documentaries Section, in the Asrahan State Archive,<sup>63</sup> the Russian Political Archive<sup>64</sup> and in the Matenedoran Library.<sup>65</sup>

In the 18th century, the tradition of composing *notebooks* continued. Egi Muşegyan's Karnetsi catalogue,<sup>66</sup> reflecting the events of the beginning of the century, also explain Russia's regional perspective and the position of Iran and Turkey. Arakel Davrijets's Kōroğlu Collection<sup>67</sup> should be evaluated as a product

<sup>60</sup> See Kilise Divanları: Divan katalikosa, pap. 1 "a", dok. 7, 8; pap. 2 "a", dok. 1

<sup>61</sup> See G. A. Ezov, *Snoşeniya Petra Velikogo s armyanskim narodom*, SPb. 1898; A. G. Ioannisyan, *Vopros vozniknoveniya russkoy orientatsii armyan*, (Echmiadzin, 1921) (in Armenian); A. G. Abramyan, *Stranitsa iz istorii narodov Zakavkazya i armyano-russkikh otnoşeniy*, (Yerevan, 1953) (in Armenian); *ibid*, *Dokumenti iz istorii sovместnoy borbi narodov Zakavkazya protiv turetskikh agresorov v pervoy četvetti XVIII v.*, İFJ AN ArmSSR, 1964, N: 2 (dossiers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5); A. G. Abramyan – R. A. Abramyan, *Divan Egia Karnetsi*, (Yerevan, 1968) (in Armenian).

<sup>62</sup> TsADA: *Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Arhiv Drevnih Aktov*: Fond "Snoşeniya Rossii s Armeniye" (SRA), 1626-1718; Fond "Snoşeniya Rossii s Persiye" (SRP), 1715-1718;

<sup>63</sup> AVPR: *Arhiv vneşney politiki Rossii*: Fond "Snoşeniya Rossii s Armeniye" (SRA), 1722-1739; Fond "Snoşeniya Rossii s Persiye" (SRP), 1723-1727; Fond "Snoşeniya Rossii s Gruziiye" (SRG), 1500-1725; Fond "Snoşeniya Rossii s Turtsiye (Rusya ile Türkiye İlişkileri Fonu)" (SRT), 1723-1726

<sup>64</sup> GAAO: *Gosudarstvenniy Arhiv Astrahanskoy oblasti*, The data collected by Russia on Armenia in the second half of 18th century is conserved at the following dossiers: 1724: fond 394, op. 1, dossiers 81, vr. 200a, 201, 214, 245a, 258a; 1724, fond 394, op. 1, dossier 103, vr. 390; 1724, fond 394, op. 1, dossier 163, vr. 280a; 1725, fond 394, op.1, dossier 92, vr. 143, 144, 144a, 145, 221-222

<sup>65</sup> *Institut rukopisey pri Gosudarstvo Ministrov Armyanskoy R. im. M. Maştotisa — Matenedaran. Rukopisi (Yazma Eserler Listesi)*: N: 1- 8979

<sup>66</sup> AVPR, Fond SRA, 1722, dossier A, 12, 14-15-A, 1723-1723 "A", op. 100/1, d. 1, 12-A, E-1, d. 4, vr. 45; 1724, dossier 3: Arhiv Egia Muşegyana, pisma, pap. IV, vr. 22;

<sup>67</sup> A. G. Abranyan – D. Gabrielyan, *Naizdannie pesni Ker-ogli*, İAN ArmSSR, 1954, N: 9, pp. 71-93;



of cultural interaction and Petros di-Sorgi's Gilanentsi's Catalogue<sup>68</sup> as the product of political events of the region. Petros di-Sorgis Gilanentsi's other essay on the Nadir Shah period is also worthy of attention.<sup>69</sup>

Tsar Petro I's extremely religious and national theories caused, especially after the second half of the 18th century, a new perspective to emerge in Armenian historiography. It is observed that all the historical, literary and religious works of this period were written focusing on a single goal: to establish, if possible, Great Armenia. As the contents of these works will be dealt with in a separate essay it can be said that traditional Armenian historiography was completed by the first half of the 18th century.

It is obvious that traditional Armenian historiography was shaped within the church community between the 5th and 18th centuries. As mentioned above, the aim of writing these works was to prepare Armenians, psychologically, for realizing "Great Armenia," in order to re-establish the Armenian Tsardom, which had fallen in 428.

The Armenian problems, which occurred in Caucasia and Turkey after the second half of the 19th century, were the reflections of the social violence caused by this psychology. Armenian problems, which for about 150 years constituted the major problem in Turkey and Caucasia, have to be examined in a broad perspective within historical, regional, and religious values.

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<sup>68</sup> Patros di Sarkis Gilanetsi, *Dnevnik*, Jurnal Krunk, (Tbilisi, 1863) (in Armenian); Russkii Per. *Dnevnik osadi Isfagana afgançami, vedenniy Petrosom di Sarkisom Gilanentsem, 1722 po 1723 gg.*, K. Patkanova, SPb. 1870

<sup>69</sup> *Istoriya katalikosa Abraam Kretatsi o sobitiih ego jizni i o Nadişahe persidskom*, (Vagarşapat, 1870) (in Armenian).

# THE VIEWS ON WHERE NOAH'S ARK ANCHORED

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## **Abstract**

*Two celebrated places vie for the claim of being the final resting place of Noah's Ark. The first of these is Mount Ararat, which some claim is mentioned in the Old Testament, and the other is Mount Judi, which is expressed in the Koran. Those who make assertions on behalf of Mount Ararat can be accused of having certain historical, religious and political aspirations, which are not covered in this study. This study does argue however, that the more convincing religious, geographical/physical, historical and archeological findings and evidence support the claim that the Ark in fact anchored on Mount Judi.*

## **Keywords**

*Koran, Old Testament, Mount Ararat, Mount Judi, Noah's Ark*

## **Introduction**

**F**rom time to time, drawing on range of religious, political and historical reasons, various views about the possible places on which Noah's ark anchored have come to the agenda. Foremost among these arguments about the ark's final resting place have been two well-known views, first, that the location of Noah's ark, as stated in the Old Testament, was Mount Ararat, and the other, as stated in the Koran, was Mount Judi. In looking at these two opposing views, this small-scale study aims to reach at least a tentative conclusion by analysing various evidence, presented in the following section. For chronological purposes, the piece is structured with the evidence from the Old Testament section appearing before that from the Koran.

## **The Old Testament**

It seems necessary to first describe the geographical location of Mount Ararat before going into a detailed explanation on why Noah's ark may not have in fact landed on it.

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### Geographical Location

Mount Ararat, a volcanic mountain, is within the borders of the city Ağrı in western Turkey. It has 130 km circle length and occupies 1,200 km<sup>2</sup> field. The latitude of the mountain is at 390, 40', and the longitude of it is 440, and 45'. The peak of the mountain is at 390, 42' latitude and 440, 47'. With the highest peak in Turkey and Europe, so-called "big Ararat" reaches 5,165 meters and "small Ararat" is 3,896 meters. The Serdarbulak mountain pass, with an altitude of 2,700 meters, separates the big and small mountains (Ararats) from each other.<sup>1</sup>

Western researchers in particular have long insisted that Noah's ark landed on Mount Ararat. Throughout the years they have conducted a great deal of research for this purpose and have made many claims. Yet, according to some historical, religious, and archaeological findings, taken in conjunction with the geographical and physical conditions of Mounts Ararat and Judi, it seems virtually impossible to realistically show that the ark could ever have landed on Ararat. The following section explores these reasons individually.

'Ararat' is the name given by the Assyrians to the state of the Urartu. The word 'Urartu,' the origin of which was 'Uruatri' in the Assyrian language, was written as 'Ararat' in the Holy Hebrew as a result of mispronunciation. The word 'Uruatri' means "mountainous region, and city settled on a high place". This name (Uruatri) is seen for the first time in 1274 BC in the inscriptions of the Assyrian King Salmanasar I. referring to the 'mountainous region' lying to the southeast of Lake Van.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Streck, *Ağrı Dağı*, (İstanbul: İslam Ansiklopedisi (IA), 1986), I, 152; Hikmet Tanyu, *Ağrı Dağı*, (İstanbul: Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi (DİA), 1988), p. 481; The same author, *Nuh'un Gemisi, Ağrı Dağı, Ermeniler*, (İstanbul, 1989), p. 15.
- 2 Nicolas Adontz, *Histoire d'Arménie, (Les Origines du X. Siècle au VI. Av. J. C.)*, (Paris, 1946), p. 373; Oktay Belli, "Urartular", *Anadolu Uygarlıkları*, (İstanbul: Gorse Yayınları, 1982), p. 149; Altan Çilingiroğlu, *Urartu ve Kuzey Suriye (Siyasal ve Kültürel İlişkiler)*, (Bornova-İzmir: Ege Univ. Press, 1984), pp. 5-6; Bilal Aksoy, *Nuh'un Gemisi ve Tufan*, (Ankara, 1987), p. 163; İsmail Hüsrev Tokin, "Nuhun Gemisi Efsanesi ve Gerçek Olan", *Mimar Sinan*, Vol. 67, İstanbul, 1988, p. 57; Tanyu, *Ağrı Dağı*, DİA, I, 481; The same author, *Nuh'un Gemisi*, p. 18; A. Mecit Dogru, "Ağrı Dağı", *Coğrafya Araştırmaları*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Ankara, February 1989, p. 88. Notes: a) the Armenians call Mount Ararat as 'Masis or Masik'. b) It is highly possible that the word 'Ağrı' may derive from the Turkish language during Shamanism. In the Yakut language of Pekarsky the words 'Ağrı' or 'Ağrı' means 'big (large)' or 'God'. See Dogru and Tanyu, "Ağrı Dağı". DİA, I, 481. The big Ağrı is called "Haris", and the top of the small Ağrı is named 'Huveyris'. See also, Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, (Buldanu'l Hilafeti's-Sarkiyeye)*, (Translation to Arabic, Besir Firansis, Georgis Avvad), 2nd edition, (Beyrut: Muessesetu'r-Risale, 1985/1405), p. 217.

In the currently available Old Testaments, the word "Ararat" emerged as a result of mispronunciation, and does not refer to the actual "Ağrı Dağı". The meanings of this word in the Old Testament refer to various things, among these is "mountainous terrain":

"And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat."<sup>3</sup>

It refers to the names of "state, homeland, motherland":

"And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword, and they escaped into the land of Ararat: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead."<sup>4</sup>

It refers to names of "kingdoms and states":

"Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars."<sup>5</sup>

In this case, the word "Ararat" in the Old Testament is seen to refer both to the name of an Asian-origin nation and also to the name of the city established in 1000 BC by this nation, whose centre is current day Van.<sup>6</sup>

In St. Jerome's view, Ararat is in fact Middle Aratex (currently Aras meadow).<sup>7</sup>

The big Mount Ararat and other volcanic mountains of East Anatolia were formed before the first recorded signs of human life. The mountains of Mus and Bitlis (cities in southeastern Turkey) are even older still. If the water during the flood indeed reached up to the level of Ararat, Mus-Bitlis, and other mountains, with the subsiding of the water there would remain some traces, in the form

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<sup>3</sup> The Old Testament, Tekvin, VIII, 4.

<sup>4</sup> The Old Testament, II, Kings, XIX, 37, Isaya, XXXVII, 38. See, Urfali Mateos Vekayi-Namesi (952-1136), (Translation to Turkish by Hrant D. Andreasyan), (Notes by Edouard Dulaurer, M. Halil Yinanç), 2nd edition, (Ankara, 1987), p. 16 (48. Footnote), 38 (105. footnote), 44 (117. footnote), 74, 89 (222. footnote), 200 (237. footnote).

<sup>5</sup> The Old Testament, Yeremya, LI, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Tanyu, "Ağrı Dağı", DIA, I, 481.

<sup>7</sup> Aksoy, p. 163. Aras is a river which runs to a sea. See, Heredotos, Heredot History, (Translation by Müntekim Ökmen) 2nd edition, (Istanbul, ?) 1st book, 202th paragraph, 4th book, 40th paragraph.

of sand-stones, clay-stones, and petrified heaps both on the top of these mountains, and on their hillsides and valleys. In fact, it is impossible to find any of these things either on Mount Ararat or in its surrounding areas.<sup>8</sup> Take for example the accounts of John Morris, who traveled to Uzengili village (previously known as Meser), located 3 km. from the Iranian border, and in which a part of Noah's ark was claimed to have been found. Having conducting a three-hour research at this village and on the alleged piece of the ark, he wrote that "the fossilised thing which is similar to a wood piece in fact is a softened rock. Since its constituents include copper ore, it gave the signal of the copper during the research. In terms of geology it is impossible for Noah's ark to exist at the place in which the wooden item was found."<sup>9</sup>

As a result of another research and investigation undertaken in 1949 by a team of western researcher, it was clearly stated that Noah's ark was not present on Mount Ararat.<sup>10</sup>

If the ark had indeed landed on Mount Ararat, it would mean that water was covering all of Anatolia (modern Turkey), the Aegean Sea, the Arabic peninsula, Iran and India. Yet no evidence about such a flood has been found in these regions so far.<sup>11</sup> By the same token, Akurgal claims that it would be impossible to locate the ark above the 1,500 m. line. According to the unified-container-theory in physics, he argues, if that were the case, the whole world would have been covered with 1,500 m. of water.<sup>12</sup>

Dogubeyazit, which is located at 1,600 m. above sea level, is a town at the foot of Mount Ararat. The altitude of an earlier settlement, which is 8 km. south-east of Dogubeyazit, is between 1,810 and 1,930 m.<sup>13</sup> It can be claimed that the flood could not have reached the feet of Mount Ararat because no evidence of ancient flooding has been found even in Dogubeyazit or the older settlement.

Mount Ararat is high and steep, making climbing of it highly difficult. While many mountaineers and some scientists have

<sup>8</sup> Süleyman Türküenal, "Nuh'un Gemisi Ağrı Dağı'nda mı, Cudi Siradaglari'nda mı?" *Milliyet*, 10 September 1984, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Aksoy, pp. 220-221.

<sup>10</sup> Ahmet Sarbay, "Nuh'un (p.b.u.h) Gemisi Nerede?", *Tarih ve Medeniyet*, Vol. 16, Istanbul, June 1995, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> Ali Gürbüz, "Nuh'un Gemisi Ağrı Dağı'nda mı?", *Zafer*, November, 1985, Vol. 107, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Aksoy, p. 217.

<sup>13</sup> Tuncel, Metin, "Doğubeyazit", (Istanbul: Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi (DIA), 1994), IX, 492-493.

managed to reach the peak of the mountain, others have suffered injuries and even death when attempting to do so.<sup>14</sup> Above 4,000 m. the mountain is covered permanently with snow and a 12 km. square icy mass remains at the top of the mountain. The temperature at 4,500 m. falls below -80C, making the best time to attempt a climb August and September. Over 5,000 m., climbing even for experienced mountaineers become difficult and dangerous.<sup>15</sup> The conditions on Mount Ararat are thus unsuitable to meet the basic needs of a living organism, namely, there is a lack of food and shelter. Under these conditions, it is unreasonable to expect that people or animals from the ark could have survived on Mount Ararat.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, we can claim from the above stated reasons that Noah's ark did not land, and thus is not currently resting, on Mount Ararat.

### **Koran**

#### **Geographical Location**

Turning to the geographical location of Mount Judi, we see that it is located in south-eastern Anatolia, just 15 km. from the Iraq border. It is 32 km. north-east of the town of Cizre and its height is 400 m. It is positioned between the Tigris and Hezil rivers and 17 km. away from the city of Sırnak, the altitude of which is 1,350 m. The latitude of the mountain 370, 24', and the longitude is 420, 32'. The shape of the mountain is like an ellipse with four peaks, each of which has a height not exceeding 2,000 m.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Türk Ansiklopedisi, Milli Egitim Press, 2nd edition, İstanbul. 1971, I, 230 (Ağrı Dağı article).

<sup>15</sup> Tanyu, "Ağrı Dağı", DIA, I, 481; The same author, *Nuhun Gemisi*, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Streck, "Ağrı Dağı", IA, I, 152; Hikmet Tanyu "Cudi Dağı", (İstanbul: DIA, 1993), XIII, 80.

<sup>17</sup> Semsettin Sami, *Kamusu'l-A'lam*, (İstanbul, 1308), (Cudi article); Streck, "Cudi Dağı", IA, III, 223; *Türk Ansiklopedisi*, XI, 252, (Cudi article); R. İzbirak, "Sırnak", *Türk Ansiklopedisi*, XXX, 283; *AnaBritannica*, İstanbul, 1986, 1987, XX, 275 (Sırnak article); Tuncel, Metin - Ozaydin, Abdülkerim, "Cizre", DIA, İstanbul, 1993, VIII, 37; Tanyu, "Cudi Dağı", DIA, VIII, 79; Umar, Bilge, *Türkiye'deki Tarihsel Adlar*, (İstanbul, 1993), p. 185. See also, Buhari, Muhammed b. İsmail, *Sahihü'l-Buhari*, (İstanbul, 1981), Enbiya, 3, (Mucahid's word); Fahreddin er-Razi, Ebu Abdillâh Muhammed b. Omer, et-Tefsiru'l-Kebir, *Daru'l Kutubi'l-İlmiyye*, 2nd edition, XVII, 235; Yakut el-Hamavi, Sihabuddin Ebu Abdillâh er-Rumi el-Bagdadi, *Mu'cemu'l-Buldan, Daru'l-Kitabi'l-Arabi*, Beyrut., II.179 (Cudi article); İbn Kesir, Ebu'l-Fida İsmail, *Tefsiru'l-Kur'ani'l-Azim*, (ed. crit., Muhammed İbrahim el-Benna, Muhammed Ahmed Asur, Abdulaziz Ganım), İstanbul, 1985, IV, 256, 257; Alusi, Abu'l-Fazl Sihabuddin es-Seyyid Mahmud, *Ruhu'l-Meani fi Tefsiri'l-Kur'ani'l-Azim ve s-Seb'i'l-Mesani*, Daru'l-Fikr, Beyrut, 1987, XVII, 61; Mehran, Muhammed Beyyumi, *Dirasatun Tarihiyyetun mine'l-Kur'ani'l-Kerim, Daru'n Nehzati'l-Arabiyye*, Beyrut, 1988, IV, 92; Abdu'l-Vehhab en-Neccar, *Kasasu'l-Enbiya*, 1st edition, 1405 h., p. 37; Ates, Süleyman, *Yuçe Kur'an'in Çağdas Tefsiri*, İstanbul, 1988-91, IX, 160; Bayrak, Orhan, *Türkiye Tarihi Yerler Kilavuzu*, 4th edition, İstanbul, 1994, p. 584 (Sırnak article).

There is important historical, religious and archaeological evidence to support the view that the ark in fact landed on Mount Judi. Moreover, this view is supported by the geographical and physical conditions of the mountain. The following section explores this evidence in detail.

#### *Religious Evidence*

The main source of Islam (the Koran) clearly states that Noah's Ark landed on Mount Judi:

"And it was said: O earth! Swallow thy water and, O sky! be cleared of clouds! And the water was made to subside. And the commandment was fulfilled. And it (the ship) came to rest upon (the mount) al-Judi and it was said: A far removal for wrongdoing folk!"<sup>18</sup>

The Prophet (p.b.u.h) visited some Jews who were fasting during on the day of 'asure' (the 10th of Muharrem) and asked "what is the purpose of this fast?"/ It was stated that "this is the day during which Allah saved the prophet Musa and the Jews from drowning. The Pharaoh drowned, Noah's ark landed on the Judi, and Noah and Musa (p.b.u.h) prophes fasted to thank Allah. Also Nebi (p.b.u.h) said that 'I more deserve the Musa and today's fast' and the same day ordered (his followers) to fast"<sup>19</sup>

In addition, Yakut el-Hamevi (626/1228) narrates verbatim from one of the Old Testaments which has been translated into Arabic that "the ark landed on the Judi on the 17th of the 7th month."<sup>20</sup> It is seen that the verbatim quotation from the Old Testament clearly indicates that the ark landed on Mount Judi.

Furthermore, the Aramice and Suryanice translations of the 'Suryani Tevrat-Tekvin VIII/IV states that the place in which the ark landed is named 'Ture Kardu' and this place refers to the mountains located to the south-east of Lake Van. In the Suryani interpreters' view, Ture Kardu, as stated by the Koran, refers to the place on which the ark landed."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Koran, Hud (11), 44.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmad b. Hanbel, Musned, Istanbul, 1981, II, 359-360. See also, Taberani, Ebu'l-Kasim Suleyman b. 'Ahmed, el-Mucemu'l-Kebir, (ed. crit., Hamdi Abdulmecid es-Selefi) 2nd edition, Mektebetu Ibn Teymiye, Kahire, VI, 69 (Hadith No., 5538). This hadith was narrated by F. er-Razi (XVII, 235), Ibn Kesir (IV, 257) and Alusi (XVII, 62).

<sup>20</sup> Yakut el-Hamavi, II, 179 (Cudi article); Ates, IV, 311.

<sup>21</sup> Gunel, Aziz. (Horepiskopos-Baspapaz), *Türk Süryaniler Tarihi*, Diyarbakır, 1970, VII, p. 29 (1st footnote); Aksoy, p. 174, 180; Tanyu, "Ağn Dağı", DİA, I, 481.

Moreover, Katade (117/737) states that "Allah had Noah's ark land on the Judi as a warning. Of course, the first generation after the prophet saw it..."<sup>22</sup>

#### *Historical Evidence*

We see the following statements in the Gilgames saga: "The ark landed on Nisir (...) mountain, which swallowed the ark and did not shake it..."<sup>23</sup>

According to the old Babilonian story, the ark landed<sup>24</sup> on Nisir Mountain, located between the Tigris and Lower/Small Zapsuyu to the east of the Tigris. Such a definition points exactly to the location of Mount Judi.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the Gilgames saga contains various statements such as: "the city you know as Suruppak is located near Furatti (Firat). It is an old city..."<sup>26</sup> This statement also implies that the ark has landed on Mount Judi because Suruppak, as briefly stated, is a place near the Euphrates (on Uruk). Today this place is known as Fara<sup>27</sup> and is located much closer to Judi than to Ararat.

In addition, Berossus, while explaining the flood, states as follows: "those on the ark were ordered to return to Babil, to find the inscriptions in Sippar and inform mankind from the inscriptions"<sup>28</sup> This statement may also provide evidence that the ark landed on Mount Judi, as the place called Sippar is located to the north<sup>29</sup> of Babil, in a position much closer to Judi than to Ararat.

Berossus, in his history of Keldanis, states that Noah's ark landed on Mount Judi. Abydenus, a student of the famous thinker

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Kesir, IV, 257; Yazir, Hamdi, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili, İstanbul, 1979, VII, 4642; Mevdudi, Ebu'l-Ala, Tefhimu'l-Kur'an,, (translation by Muhammed Han Kayani...), 2nd edition, İstanbul, 1991, IV, 237.

<sup>23</sup> Günaltay, M. Semsedin, Yakin Sark/Elam ve Mezopotamya, Ankara, 1987, p. 430 (141-142 lines). See also, Gilgames Destani, (translation to English and Introduction by N. K. Sandars, Turkish by Sevin Kutlu and Teoman Durali), İstanbul, September 1973, p. 115; Kramer, Samuel Noah, History begins at Sumer, (Tarih, Sumer'de Baslar), (translation by Muazzez Ilmiye Cig), Ankara, 1990, p. 128-132; Ceram, C.W., Tanrilar, Mezartar ve Bilginler, (Translation to Turkish by Harullah Ors), 4th edition, (İstanbul, 1994), p. 229.

<sup>24</sup> Tanyu, "Ağrı Dağı", *DIA*, 1. 481.

<sup>25</sup> Gürbüz, p. 15; Günaltay, p. 213 (2nd footnote), 430 (1st footnote); Aksoy, p. 86, 174, 180; Tanyu, "Ağrı Dağı", *DIA*, I, 481.

<sup>26</sup> Günaltay, p. 425 (11-13. lines).

<sup>27</sup> Günaltay, p. 192.

<sup>28</sup> Günaltay, p. 211-212.

<sup>29</sup> Günaltay, p. 192.



Aristo, confirms this view and adds that some of the Iraqis found the pieces of the ark, dipped these pieces into water and claimed that the water had healing powers.<sup>30</sup> In other accounts, these people are also reported to have used the bitumen covering the outside of the ark as amulets.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Geographical/Physical Conditions*

The peak, valleys, rivers, and surrounding areas of Mount Judi are covered with evidence of a major flooding. Even the highest hills of this mountain are covered with sand and pebbles. It is clear from the physical conditions of the mountain that this region was once exposed to a flood.<sup>32</sup>

The asphalt matter used in making the ark was supplied<sup>33</sup> from Sirnak. In the Gilgamis saga, statements such as "I poured six times black mastic, inside the ark I poured three times pitch",<sup>34</sup> obviously suggest that the ark was covered with pitch and mastic.<sup>35</sup> If one is to dig down approximately one or two hand-breaths on the peak of Mount Judi, black pitch and mastic emerge. The layer beneath this pitch and mastic is too difficult to dig up.<sup>36</sup>

There are some settlements for religious services and pilgrimages at or around Judi. These also lend support to the idea that the ark landed on Mount Judi. For instance, the tomb of the prophet Noah is at Cizre. The village Yafes (Kasardela), named after Noah's third son, is 3 km. east of Cizre and on the left bank of the Tigris. A nearby hill, of 2,017 m. height, is called "Noah prophet's hill".<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, the Gilgamis saga narrates that people sacrificed animals on the mountain: "At that time, I released everyone and sent them everywhere and sacrificed an animal. At the top of the mountain I made a vow".<sup>38</sup> It is also stated that Noah the prophet

<sup>30</sup> Mevdudi, Ehu'l-Ala, *Tarih Boyunca Tevhid Mucadelesi ve Hz. Paygamber*, (compiler, Naim Siddiki-Abdulvekil), (translation N. Ahmed Asrar), Istanbul, 1983, I, 406; The same author, *Tefhim*, II, 396.

<sup>31</sup> Sarbay, p. 60.

<sup>32</sup> Bilge, Mahmut, *Nuh (p.b.u.h) ve Tufan*, Ankara, 1965, p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Bayram, Sadi, "Kaynaklara Gore Anadolu'da Proto Turk Izleri", *Turk Dunyasi Arastirmalari*, Istanbul, October 1989, vol. 62, p. 30.

<sup>34</sup> Günaltay, p. 428 (66-67. lines).

<sup>35</sup> See, Childe by V.Gordon, *Dogu'nun Prehistoryasi*, (translation, Sevkett Aziz Kansu), (Ankara, 1971), p. 112. This work states that the pitch is provided easily in this period.

<sup>36</sup> Bilge, Tufan, p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> Türküinal, p. 2; Tanyu, "Cudi Dagi", *DIA*, VIII, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Günaltay, p. 431 (156-157th lines).

had people build<sup>39</sup> a mosque at the mountain, formed<sup>40</sup> a village named Semanin (seksenler) at the foot of the mountain, and ultimately passed away<sup>41</sup> in this village.

Because of topographic reasons it would have been impossible for the ark to have reached the feet of Mount Ararat, but entirely possible for it to have reached Judi.<sup>42</sup> While explaining the geographical locations of these mountains, the altitudes support this view. As cited earlier, Akurgal argues that something known as "united-container-theory" would make it impossible for the ark to be located above 1,500 m. The altitude of Cizre is 400 m. and the altitude of Sirnak is 1,350 m. Because Judi is located to the south-east of a line drawn from Cizre to Sirnak, the altitude is suitable for the ark to have landed there. While some parts of Mount Judi reach 2,000 m., it is entirely feasible that the ark could have landed on a section with a lower altitude.

If we consider the subject in terms of climatology, and consider the severe weather currents and sea-rise from the Indian Ocean high pressure centre to the Basra Gulf lower pressure centre, the south valleys of the Judi, which are around Mardin and on the northern borders of Mesopotamia, are the most convenient place for the ark to have landed.<sup>43</sup>

Although some places of the Judi are harsh and rocky, making one's way up and down the mountain is easy and there are places for side-tracks and nourishment. Reflecting the latter perhaps, it is claimed that the place on which the ark landed is called 'green mountain'. Finally, Mount Judi has some flat surfaces on which the ark could have landed.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, there is an area (upon which the ark may have landed) which is quite flat and large, approximately 500 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>45</sup>

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39 Ibnu'l-Esir, Izzeddin Ebu'l-Hasen Ali b. Ebi'l-Kerem Muhammed b. Muhammed b. Abdulkerim b. Abdilvahid es-Seybani, el-Kamil fi't-Tarih. Daru Sadir, Beyrut, (EDIDIT CAROLUS JOHANNES TORNBORG LUGDUNI BATAVORUM, E. J. BRILL, 1868, I, 73; Yakut el-Hamavi, II, 179 (Cudi article); S. Sami, III, 1848 (Cudi article); Bilge, Tufan, p. 20; Tanyu Hikmet, Dinler Tarihi Arastirmalari, Ankara, 1973, p. 26.

40 Ibn Havkal, Ebu'l-Kasim Muhammed, Kitabu Sureti'l-Arz, 2nd edition, Leydin, I, 229; Yakut el-Hamavi, II, 84 (Semanin article); Gunel, p. 29 (1st footnote). See also, Aksoy, p. 180, 181, 182, 183, 188, 189; Gandur, Muhammed Yusuf, Tarihu Cezirati Ibn Omer, 1st edition, Beyrut, 1990, p. 306. These works verifies the description of the Judi and information about the prophet Noah.

41 Ayni, Bedruddin Ebu Muhammed Mahmud b. Ahmed, Umdetu'l-Kari Serhu Sahihi'l-Buhari, 1st edition, Egypt, 1392/1972, XII, 373.

42 Bayram,, p. 17 (see 16th footnote).

43 Bayram, p.16, 17 (see 16th footnote); Musaoglu, Ahmet, *Nuh (p.b.u.h.) Tufani*, (Istanbul, 1998), p. 191.

44 Tanyu, "Cudi Dag", *DIA*, VIII, 79, 80.

45 Bilge, Tufan, p. 20; Tanyu, "Cudi Dag", *DIA*, VIII, 79.

### *Archaeological Evidence*

One researcher, Friedric Bender, took mastic-like matter and thick wood pieces from Mount Judi to Germany and analysed them there. It was found that the mastic-like matter was approximately 50,000 years old, and the wood pieces were about 6,630 years old.<sup>46</sup> The famous German researcher Werner Keller states that research showing that the ark landed on Judi rather than Mount Ararat is more logical and convenient.<sup>47</sup> The English researcher David Fasold, after 20 years of study, has also concluded that Noah's ark likely did not land on Mount Ararat, but rather on Judi. He maintains that "using radar which takes underground picture of the soil it is possible to find evidence of the wood from the ark. I believe that these are the fossilised upper deck of the ark, and that the bottom part of the ark is lost".<sup>48</sup>

### *Linguistic Evidence*

The prophet Noah prayed to Allah about the place on which the ark must land as follows:

"And say: My Lord! Cause me to land at a blessed landing-place, for Thou art best of all who bring to land."<sup>49</sup>

Allah accepted the prayer of his messenger and landed the ark on Judi. The word 'Judi' stems from the root of 'cud' in Arabic and means 'to be generous, to give much'.<sup>50</sup> This meaning of 'cud' suggests a reference to 'Judi,' which is also a comparison adjective. The words "sacred / fruitful" in the verse verify this.<sup>51</sup> If a place is devoid of holiness and fruitfulness, this place would not be called as "sacred / fruitful". Hence the word 'Judi' may indicate that the ark landed on the Judi.

In the 48 verse of the Sura Hud it was stated that:

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<sup>46</sup> Sarbay, p. 60.

<sup>47</sup> Gürbüz, p. 16.

<sup>48</sup> See newspapers, *Sabah*, 17 January 1994, p. 30; *Meydan*, 2 February 1994, p. 4; *Yeni Gunaydin*, 19 February 1994, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Koran, Muminun (23), 29.

<sup>50</sup> er-Ragib el-Isfehani, Huseyin b. Muhammed b. el-Mufazzal, *Mufredatu Elfazi'l-Kur'an*, (ed. crit., Safvan Adnan Davudi), 1st edition, Beyrut, 1992, p. 211 (C-V-D article), Ibn Manzur, Muhammed b. Mukerrem b. Ali b. Ahmed el-Ensari, *Lisanu'l-Arab*, (Ali Siri), Daru lhyai't-Turasi'l Arabi, 2nd edition, Beyrut, II, 411 (C-V-D article).

<sup>51</sup> Sankçioğlu, Ekrem, "Kur'an ve Arkeoloji Isiginda Hz Nuh ve Tufan Olayina Yeni Bir Yaklasim", *Islami Arastirmalar*, vol. 9/1-2-3-4, Ankara, 1996, p. 203.

"It was said (unto him): O Noah! Go thou down (from the mountain) with peace from Us and blessings upon thee and some nations (that will spring) from those with thee. (There will be other) nations unto whom we shall give enjoyment a long while and then a painful doom from Us will overtake them."<sup>52</sup>

'Selam' means "to be sure from all dangers."<sup>53</sup> According to the verse 'landing peacefully and fruitfully' it must be understood that the landing occurred with no fear, and free of all dangers. These descriptions fit with the physical conditions of the Judi.

It is stated that the name of 'Sirnak', 17 km. far away from Judi, was 'the city of Nuh'(Noah),<sup>54</sup> but was later changed to Sirnak. Such a name change is not unusual, as there are other examples. For instance, the name Elaziz was changed to Elazig, Diyar-i Bekir to Diyarbakir, Ziya'eddin to Diyadin.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, it is possible that the name 'the city of Noah' may have changed to Sirnak. Consequently, from the evidence counted from 1 to 5 we can claim that the Noah's ark landed on the Judi. One point is that there are some other places called Judi apart from the big mountain Judi. One of which is called 'Judi hill'<sup>56</sup> and is near Mahser village in Dogubeyazit. Besides this, one of the Tayyi'i' mountains at Eca is called Judi.<sup>57</sup> Yet the most common and widespread of Judi in human mind throughout the history is the one given above with latitude and longitude. The word 'Judi' in the Koran is given as definitive 'el-Judiyy', this may refer to that point.

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<sup>52</sup> Koran, Hud (11), 48.

<sup>53</sup> er-Ragib el-Isfehani, p. 421 (S-L-M article); Ibn Manzur, VI, 342 (S-L-M article).

<sup>54</sup> Atalay, Ömer, *Siirt Tarihi*, Istanbul, 1946, p. 81-82.

<sup>55</sup> Alpaslan, Ismet, *Agri, (Anadolu'nun Giriş Kapsi)*, Ankara, 1984, p. 5, 43.

<sup>56</sup> Sarbay, p. 60.

<sup>57</sup> Yakut el-Hamavi, II, 180 (Cudi article). Also see, Yazir, IV, 2784.

# THE ROLE OF THE ARMENIAN MASS MEDIA IN COMPOSING SOCIAL MEMORY CONCERNING "THE ARMENIAN PROBLEM"\*

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## **Abstract**

*The article analyzes the Armenian problem from a different perspective. It asks whether societies have memories just like individuals, and if such a social memory exists how it can be modified. Composition of social memory on the Armenian problem and the role of Armenian mass media are specifically explored by the writer in the context of the theoretical discussions on social memory.*

## **Keywords**

*Social Memory, Armenia, Armenian Problem, Armenian Mass Media, Armenian Social Memory.*

**T**he discussion as to whether societies have memories like individuals has today led to the investigation of social memories. Discussions on the issue date back as long as half a century; however, the history of memory formation of societies is as old as the social life of humanity. This deduction arouses questions about storing knowledge in the memories of societies, saving the stored ones, the tools used for taking out this knowledge with a view to pass it down to the coming generations, amnesia, and the likelihood of deleting the present social memory and replacing it with a brand new one. This article focuses on particularly the last of these. There are highly diverse views on the issue of replacing social memory. Paul Connerton, handling it in an analytical method, says in "*How Do Societies Remember?*", "Whatever the kind is, to ensure that a certain experience is reasonable, we must connect it to the experience formed by the previous ones."<sup>1</sup> The whole world witnessed the failure of such an application in the USSR in 1991. The response of the Russian society to the political power trying to produce a new social memory was outstanding. The group refusing to untie itself from

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Do Societies Remember*, translated by Alaaddin Şenel, (Istanbul: Ayrıntı, 1994), p. 14.

**Due to technological developments of the 20th century, the mass media seem to have gained a function of not only storing, saving or transferring information, but also, potentially, of directing and composing completely new social memories.**

the past broke away from this process. Yet, those volunteering for a new future and a new memory were as equally voluntary to demolish the old memory, as they had been to establish it.

Turning to "the Armenian Problem," it is evident that theoreticians of social memory, working for centuries to place that of Armenian society, reformulated their ideas in the 20th century under the title of the "Armenian Problem." Towards the end of the 20th century, aided by technological advancements in mass media, they have found a speedy and vast area in which to maneuver, that even they could not have imagined.

I would like to mention two problems of the field in which I specialize: the first is that we should ask right questions in the right order to get the right answers.<sup>2</sup> The other problem that should be underlined is that available materials written in Armenian have not yet undergone scrutiny in Turkey. Therefore, the information in these documents cannot be evaluated.

In this study, ideas that have been adopted in line with the Armenian views in order to develop a prejudice in the readers will be compared with ideas from opposing texts. Moreover, much care is taken to choose ideas for comparison that derive mostly from texts in Armenian.

Due to technological developments of the 20th century, the mass media seem to have gained a function of not only storing, saving or transferring information, but also, potentially, of directing and composing completely new social memories – controversial though the subject may be. In this respect, the ethical values of those using mass media, and if proper to say, their objectives in using this power is of much importance. For example, the image of war in the minds of societies in the past was restricted to the memories and letters of soldiers, the explanations of military

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed information see Yu. M. Lotman, *O poetah i o poezii*, (Petersburg, 1996).

sources or the writings of a few writers who had had the opportunity to be in battlefields. Therefore, the discussion that the events belonging to that era may have been misevaluated and distorted is still a neverending matter of importance in our agenda. In his preface to *“War and Peace”*, Tolstoy makes crucial evaluations on this subject.<sup>3</sup> He states that in each minute following the end of the combat, the statements of the narrators begin to change, as their imaginative powers and feelings began to prevail. In our own day, although we can watch live combats audio-visually through television and internet, the reporter’s way of choosing among, using and presenting the available materials, may be done with the intention of disturbing one of the sides. This problem, rendering discussion on the reliability of the document, usually stems from deliberate attitudes. Even the apparent ‘reality’ of a photograph can be evaluated in different ways, as Özcan Yüksek explains:

*Photography changed the way human beings see the world, and many things. This art or means of communication had the power of displaying naked reality. At least it had such persuasiveness. Such a power that would also hide the reality while showing! The reality that is presented to the people who think they see might be a reality whose reality is removed; a piece of the reality, a moment of it with no future or past, for instance.”<sup>4</sup>*

These features of photographic texts are frequently exploited by the written texts dealing with the “Armenian Problem.” Very often this is done by presenting events belonging to isolated moments, which are torn away from their ties of the past and future completely. Like the photo-shots used for commercials, episodes effective in storing knowledge in the memories of societies and individuals without questioning are juxtaposed. What should especially be underlined is the discrepancy in the assertion that the written documents are not artistic, but considered realistic. However, this is highly controversial matter.

Austrian author Franz Werfel’s novel *Forty Days on Mount Musa* is a typical example of this issue. Werfel, 1890-1945, chooses the theme of his novel from Turkish history, and claims to have culled the materials from Syria and Antakya; he says:

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<sup>3</sup> Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, *The War and Peace*, translated by Atilla Tokatli, (Istanbul:Sosyal Publications, 1985), Vol.1.

<sup>4</sup> Özcan Yüksek, *The Camera Between The Reality and the Image*, Atlas/the Book Of War, May, 2003, p.36.

*This work was framed in Damascus in March 1929. The impetus was the desire for the revelation of the happenings in the country of the dead, the unbelievable fate of a people, and the misery of the perished immigrant children working in a rug factory.”<sup>5</sup>*

This extract placed on the back cover of the book gives considerable information to the reader about the content of the book and the attitude of the writer towards the narration. Another claim of the work is that what was told is true. After a 70-year lapse following the first printing, some photos from a private archive are annexed to the end of the novel so as to make it more striking and enhance the reliability of its so-called realistic claims. It has also been filmed in order to reach a wider audience. The fact we must include in our object of discussion here is that Franz Werfel completed his novel in 1933.

To better assess this work, we must first consider how two other authors, who had lived, thought and debated in the same period, but in different places than the Austrian writer Werfel, interpret those days, and also look at how the events lived on Mount Musa in 1915 are handled in an Armenian encyclopedia.

The first example is the short story entitled “Hegnar Fountain,”<sup>6</sup> written in 1935 by a Soviet Armenian author named Mkirtich Armen (1906-1972).

The topic Mkirtich Armen chose for his work is striking. While people in the story with Turkish, Armenian and Greek ethnic backgrounds lead their lives in a harmonious, peaceful and friendly way they witness a tragic end of a forbidden love. In the end of the story it turns out that a young Armenian woman, disguised under the veil worn by Turkish women in those years, betrayed her husband, her husband exploited people’s good will by tapping their superstitious beliefs. The events portrayed in the story take place around the end of the era of Tsardom and the first decade of Socialism. The topic is based on the author’s memories and daily lives of people.

Another example is a story by Ömer Seyfettin titled “Ashab-ı Kehf” published in 1918. In the foreword the author stated his aim as follows; “I wrote this story five years ago. I did not set out to

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<sup>5</sup> Franz Werfel, *Forty Days in Mount Musa*, trans. By Saliha Nazlı Kaya, (Istanbul: Belge Publications, 1997), back cover

<sup>6</sup> Armen Mkirtich, *Hegnar Fountain*, (Istanbul: Belge Publications, 1998).



come up with a literary work. I just wanted to compare the odd thoughts of our intellectuals with social ideas."<sup>7</sup> In 1914, Istanbul, being the capital of the Ottoman Empire, was the city where the events taking place in Anatolia were most deeply felt and discussed. Ömer Seyfettin chose as the hero of his story an Armenian youngster from that time and setting. The author views the nationalist ideas of this youngster named Hayk with respect and tolerance and showcases him to the Turkish intellectuals.

The question to pose here is, how could Turkish and Armenian authors, who should logically have shared the impressions that Franz Werfel saw from Austria and depicted, not do so?" Or is there the possibility of a kind of intolerance by Ömer Seyfettin and Mkirtic Armen? The information presented in the Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia can be an answer to this question.<sup>8</sup>

The encyclopedia depicts in Armenian the events in 1915 on Mount Musa. As the target reader audience has changed, the description techniques have changed too. Above all, instead of poor people placed as a visual object in the end of Werfel's novel, children with weapons in their hands and a young girl with a weapon around her belt stand proudly.

There is further striking information in a text written in Armenian by Arzumanyan. That is the similarity between Gabriel Bagratyan, whom Werfel introduced as an Ottoman army officer on leave, and Tigran Andreasyan – the preacher of the Protestant church in Zeytun who had come to Yoğunoluk a few days before the events on Mount Musa took place.

Arzumanyan's data state that Tigran Adreasyan was in Zeytun during the insurgency there. He comes to Yoğunoluk a few days before the insurgency on Mount Musa starts, and he paves the way for and participates in the insurgency.

In Werfel's novel, as in data presented by Arzumanyan, a clergyman named Aram Tomasyan comes to Yoğunoluk, the place where he was born and raised, from Zeytun. Yet, Werfel, who was also a clergyman, does not have Aram unite the people whose religious service he is in and incite them into an insurgency. The author assigns Aram an inactive role, placing a figure from the

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<sup>7</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, *The Dairy of an Armanian Young Man*, (Istanbul, Malazgirt Publications, 1972), p.9.

<sup>8</sup> M. Arzumanyan, *Musa İeran herosamart 1914, Haykakan sovetakan hanragitutyun, hator 8*, (Yerevan, 1982).

civilian populace, Gabriel Bagratyan, in his fictitious world. In the web of events Bagratyan, just like Aram, came to his birthplace of Yognoluk before the insurgency on Mount Musa started. Bagratyan is described as a member of the richest family in the region. It is written that he went to France with his family at the age of 12, lived far from the Armenians for many years. Now he is 30, he is married to a French woman and has a 12-year-old child. In spite of long years away, this key figure of Bagratyan did not lose his loyalty to the Ottoman Army where he once served and finds himself an insurgent among other insurgents while he waited for his relief from service as part of his civic duty as a citizen.

Werfel, thanks to his key figure of Gabriel Bagratyan, has thus rid readers of all means by which they can question a clergyman like Tigran Andreasyan. Moreover, the author introduces Bagratyan as the person who has been compelled by external factors in inciting the insurgency. Data presented so far and to be presented below lead us to believe that through this novel Werfel had aimed at forming a prejudice in the world against Turkey.

On the other hand, in Arzumanyan's article it is stated that, in line with views of the Taşnak Party and after suppressing the inner opposition, six Armenian villages agreed to move to Mount Musa and initiate the insurgency. They engaged in many armed conflicts with the Ottoman Army, inflicted many losses in the Ottoman Army, and returned gun fire to every "Surrender" call by the Ottoman Army.

Arzumanyan describes how Mount Musa was transformed into a military camp by the Armenian insurgents as follows:

*"... Isvendia Armenians led by Andreasyan and other leading activists moved at night to Mount Musa with their guns in their hands, food and animals. In a short time this place turned into a military camp. A special military organization was founded and Ye. Yagubyan became the administrator of the organization".<sup>9</sup>*

Yet Werfel filled his novel with motives that would compel readers to forget that the event was an insurgency and foregrounded images of Christianity. Through this image Mount Musa is depicted as the symbol of the mountain where Jesus Christ was crucified. Paralleling that, while the big size of Armenians' eyes

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

is often repeated as a leitmotiv, a weird simile is made by the author. This is the analogy between the form of Jesus Christ's eyes during crucifixion and the big size of Armenian eyes. Consequently Werfel intended to come up with a story to which no Christian could bear to remain indifferent.

Concerning this dimension of the problem, how Armenian intellectuals have interpreted Christianity in its own history is the aspect that has not been evaluated so far. Let us make a reference to Prof. G.H.Sarkisyan's study for that:

*It must be underlined that the restrictive structure of Christianity, at least its intolerance towards other ideas has made a very negative impact on the development of Armenian Culture. As mentioned before, pre-Christian Armenian culture had reached a very high level and had accumulated many material and non-material cultural values. Christianity spoiled many cultural traditions of the past."<sup>10</sup>*

The problem that must be considered here concerns the author's / researcher's approach. It is striking that so far no single author / researcher of non-Armenian ethnic background who has chosen "the Armenian Problem" as a topic to study and supported Armenian view, has directed his / her attention toward Armenian documents written in Armenian or in Armenian script. One of the many important reasons of this is the language problem. Today, as in past, the only way a non-Armenian researcher can reach documents in Armenian is through the help of an Armenian. Two important people from the world of Russian literature are worth mentioning about this topic. One of them is Valeri Bryusov. The famous Russian poet published in 1915 an anthology of Armenian poetry in Russian thanks to financial and informational support from Moscow Armenian Committee. The book was aimed at initiating a reaction among the Russian public against Turkey. In the preface of this anthology there is a survey by Bryusov of Armenian history. Noteworthy in this research is the fact that translations were made by Armenians and information was dictated to Bryusov.<sup>11</sup>

The second example is the contemporary Russian journalist Andrey Bitov. He was transferred to Armenia by his newspaper and assigned to write a paper about Armenia. No paper was written, but

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<sup>10</sup> M.G. Nersisyan, *Istoria armyanskogo naroda*, (Yerevan, 1980), p.89.

<sup>11</sup> Birsen Karaca, , V.Ya. Bryusov kak perevodchik armyanskoy poezii, *dissertatsia na soiskanie ucyonoy stepeni kandidata, hauchny rukovaditel* : Halik Guseynoviç Kor-oglu, (Moscow, 1999) and Birsen Karaca, *Almanac of Armenian Literary* , Ministry of Culture,2001.

one year later Bitov published travel notes titled "Armenian Lessons."<sup>12</sup> As is the tradition of such notes, the work is in the form of memories. These memories, which are alleged to be true, are translated into Russian and inserted into the text of the book by using montage or footnote techniques.

These two examples help enlighten another fact, namely, together with the political and academic circles in the West, the academic circles worldwide either display a consistent attitude to listen to and perceive the topic only from the Armenian point of view or provide a covert support by ignoring this attitude. However, the ethic of science is not to forgive such an attitude, deliberate or innocent, for ignoring one side.

To evaluate, let us return to the social memory issue. The dictionary meaning of the word "memory" is defined as "the power of storage and recall. The process in which the things, situations and experience leave trace in human memory and accumulate, and the ability to produce these again when necessary."<sup>13</sup> In this paper, what is meant by the term "social memory" is the common memory of large or small human groups. To fulfill the main function of memory, that is, to bridge the past and present, it has to be remembered. Nevertheless, what individuals and societies remember about the past may drastically change in relation to psychological properties, interest, power of perception, level of education, aspirations, age, and environmental factors and may be misleading. In short, when a group of people who witnessed the same event are required to retell the event, there will be as many different retellings as there are people witnessing the event. The French author Marcel Proust, who is the indispensable reference on memory, relates the memory of little Marcel and other family members about their neighbor Swan in his book called "Remembrance of Things Past".<sup>14</sup> The well-known result is of course quite colorful, as every member of the family keeps a different concept of Swan that they have created in their minds.

Archeologist Prof. Dr. Mehmet Özdoğan has some remarks about the topic:

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<sup>12</sup> Andrey Bitov, *Voskresniy den*, (Moscow, 1980), pp. 265-393

<sup>13</sup> Pars Tuğlacı, *Turkish Dictionary*, (Istanbul: Okyanus, 1995) p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Marsel Prúst, *Time Regained (Swan's Ways)*, translated by Roza Hakmen, (Istanbul: YKY, 1999).

*Thinking about the past is unique to human beings. We can perceive the past as "legendary past" and "scaled (measured) real past" in two different ways. The former one is a flat one in which reality, rumor, and belief get mixed and have no time scale (measure) and depth. From this point of view nothing has to be proven; it is enough to believe in what is told. Thinking about the past is a part of belief system. The opposite of this, examining the past with a concrete time scale (measure) is based on search and inquiry. Everything said has to be proven in a scaled (measured) time dimension and has to be connected with each other....<sup>15</sup>*

As can be seen in the Werfel and Bitov examples, a past which has no scientific basis, written in the form of memory and presented as a proof (scientific document) in the materials about the "Armenian Problem," has the features of a "flat past" and reflects uni-dimensional fiction. Moreover, the literary (artistic) value and guided aspect of these books have to be put on the agenda and presented to the world public opinion.

As a result, when the written, oral, and visual materials about the "Armenian Problem" presented to the world public opinion are examined, it can be argued that a systematic psychological war against Turkey has been carried out. What is aimed at by the Armenian society is to form a new social memory. For this purpose, the Armenian society tries to forget their common past with the Turkish society. Clearly, research on social memory should be included in strategic studies and has to be conducted via an interdisciplinary research and methodological approach. In particular, parallel to recent studies, research and evaluations carried out on social memory, a sharp increase in the number of theoretical studies has been observed. France and other countries like the USA, England, and Russia are leading on this topic. The transfer of the findings of the applied research and theoretical studies in the international arena, to the Turkish scientific circles, will help to facilitate the methodology required to reach a solution.

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<sup>15</sup> Mehmet Özdoğan, "Tarih Öncesi Arkeolojisine Giriş", *Atlas/Arkeo*, No. 1, 2002, p.10.

# TURKISH-ARMENIAN RELATIONS DURING THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF MARAŞ

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## **Abstract**

*Motivated by different goals, the Turks, the Armenians and the French entered into a fierce struggle in the city of Maraş during the French occupation from September 29, 1919 to February 12, 1920. During the struggle, the Armenian minority, who hoped for a free state with the support of the French, committed many atrocities against the Turks in order to clear the way to their final goals. They killed many Turks, insulted Turkish cultural and religious values and waged a war of nerves until the final confrontation. The Turks, for their part, tried to maintain the status quo. For this, they wanted the French occupiers to stay out of official matters and leave them to the Turkish public servants. The French, however, motivated by the creation of a large Syrian mandate, aimed to create an independent Armenia in Çukurova and in the Southeastern Anatolia region stretching up to the Taurus Mountains, which serve as a natural barrier and thus buffer zone between Turkey and Syria. For this aim, they supported the Armenian minority in their desire to establish a free Armenia. Thus, mismatching goals and conflicting desires led to deep hostilities that in return led to a bloody confrontation ending in a Turkish victory, the first of its kind in the Turkish Independence War.*

## **Keywords**

*Turkish-Armenian Relations, French Occupation, Çukurova, Maraş, Turkish Independence War*

**T**he French, who had replaced the British forces in Maraş on 29 October 1919, occupied the city and stayed there until their defeat at the hands of the Turks, and their subsequent evacuation from the city on the night of 11/12 February 1920. It was an arbitrary occupation and one in violation of the armistice. It gradually worsened the situation within the city, and eventually led to a bloody struggle between the Turks and the Franco-Armenian alliance, that lasted for twenty-two days from 21 January 1920 to 11 February 1920. It proved impossible to avoid the war and to find a common ground agreed upon by all sides since each side

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had its own goals for which they tenaciously worked to reach, and since the French occupation made many mistakes, which were considered as opportunities by the Armenian minority. The struggle, which was the worst of its kind in the Turkish Independence War in terms of the destruction it brought to the physical and biologic aspects of the city, meant survival for the Turks, success in occupation for the French to further their invasion northward, and hope for the Armenians in establishing an independent state. This paper focuses on the relations between the Turks and the Franco-Armenian partnership in the city of Maraş during the French occupation.

The British occupation of Maraş, which lasted from February 1919 to October 1919, was replaced by a French occupation force, according to an agreement reached between the French and the British on 15 September 1919. The agreement, called the Syrian Convention, brought certain changes to the Sykes-Picot treaty, secretly signed in 1916 between France and Britain while the Great War (World War I?) was being fought. The Sykes-Picot agreement had awarded the French with the whole of Syria, southeastern Anatolia and Musul, and allowed France to freely establish and pursue her imperialistic goals. The treaty began to be questioned by the British as they had gained an upper hand in the region in the aftermath of the war. The British were not happy in particular with the idea of leaving oil-rich Musul within the French sphere of influence and thus sought ways to make changes in the secret treaty. The situation that emerged after the war gave a chance for the British to gain Musul. In this way, the British, in return for Musul, agreed with the French to let them occupy southeast Anatolia in September 1919. The French, for their part, received arable lands on which cotton was growing in great quantities, and thus became able to support the French textile industry by itself.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, rivalry between France and Britain over Çukurova and Southeastern Anatolia delayed the signing of a final settlement over the fate of the Ottoman Empire. This delay caused nationalist forces to organize resistance groups all over Turkey to protect their lands against the unjust invasions. In Maraş, too, the English and

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<sup>1</sup> Paul du Vêou, *La Passion de la Cilicie, 1919-1922*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geunthner, 1937, p. 2. According to Vêou, "Cilicia produced 1.850.000 tons of cereal, of which 1.400.000 tons were exported. The cotton plantations, according to Turkish statistics, covered 3% of the whole region, and produced 250.000 tons of cotton, sufficient enough to support French industry."

French exchange of occupation forces gave new hope for the local residents to believe they could resist the foreign invasions.<sup>2</sup> In reality, the Turks, whose real homeland was and had been Anatolia, would have agreed to leave Arabic lands to the mandate of the great powers. They were not happy, however, to see any foreign power, no matter how friendly, establishing any type of occupation on their soil. This unhappiness worsened when the foreigners made alliances with minority groups against them. Thus, the British and French occupation in the region received a big resistance from the outset, and this resistance persisted until these lands were liberated from the foreign occupiers. Furthermore, the Armenians who reunited after the war in certain centers, especially in ukurova, Antep, Urfa and Marař, had their own agendas as well. Their number in these places reached to 120,000.<sup>3</sup> They wholeheartedly welcomed the foreign occupation since they had been hoping for many decades to establish an "independent" Armenia under the tutelage of these foreigners. They had accepted to be an instrument at the hands of the foreigners in return for help in pursuing their goal to establish a state. Thus, it was an alliance between imperialist states and minority groups against the Turks that defined the struggle in Turkey in these years.

The French, whose long-time contemplated Syrian Empire urgently needed the buffer zone and natural defense barriers of the Taurus mountains in the north, and whose growing industry and economy badly required the cottons of ukurova, preferred to leave Musul under the British rule. As soon as they made the agreement with the British, the French occupying troops moved into these places, bringing with them more Armenian soldiers and militants, who carried deep-seated hatreds towards the Turks. These Armenian forces under the French command had committed many atrocities in ukurova, which made the French occupation of the region an even more loatheful matter in the eyes of the Turks. Even the French were opposed to the Armenian atrocities, and sent back hundreds of the Armenian legions, but not all of them. Indeed, some French officers and commanders, such as Colonel Br mond, shut their eyes to the atrocities committed against the

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<sup>2</sup> Stanley E. Kerr, *The Lions of Marash: Personal Experiences with American Near East Relief, 1919-1922*. New York: State University Press, 1973, p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup> Andr -N. Mandelstam, *La Soci t  des Nations et les Pussances devant le Probl me Arm nien*. Paris, 1926; Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 36.



Turks because they received part of the spoil looted from Turkish villages and homes.<sup>4</sup> In any event, the occupation of Çukurova and southeastern Turkey was creating growing problems, and the region was becoming more and more unbearable for the resident Turks.

During the English occupation there had been no notable events, except for the prevention of a Turkish attempt to send arms and ammunition to Antep from depots of military enclosures in Maraş.<sup>5</sup> The British, who treated the Turks awkwardly at the beginning, quickly realized their mistake and began to act properly to deal with the different groups in the city. They acted very carefully not to interrupt the Turkish governmental and daily life that had been going on for centuries. They also seemed to understand Turkish character and the Turkish extreme love and devotion for their national and religious values. Thus, even though the British initially tried to act more on the side of the Armenians by generously letting the Armenians register every type of complaint against the Turks, in some cases leading even to the arrests of prominent men such as the ex-governor of the city, Kemal Bey, and sergeant Emirzade Ali (who were tried in Aleppo, found not guilty and later released as free persons<sup>6</sup>), the British were quick to see the reality and the true nature of things. They grew less naïve about the motivations behind the Armenians' accusations against the Turks. Furthermore, most of the British occupation forces were made up of Muslim soldiers from India. These soldiers did not have much difficulty in building up better relations with the Muslim Turks, and this subsequently prevented any unwanted problems between different groups of the city.

Unlike the British, however, the French, who reached Maraş on 29 October 1919, served to increase the tensions between the Turks and the Armenians, as well as between the occupation forces and the Turks.<sup>7</sup> The French had neither the knowledge of the social, cultural and religious ways of the local Maraş residents, nor

4 Yaşar Akbıyık, *Milli Mücadelede Güney Cephesi (Maraş)*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990, p. 277; Süleyman Hatipoğlu, "Çukurova'da Fransız-Ermeni İşbirliği (1918-1921)," *Sömürgecilik Hareketlerinde Fransa ve Anadolu'da Fransız-Ermeni İşbirliği*. Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi, 2003, p. 50.

5 Hüsamettin Karadağ, *İstiklal Savaşında Maraş*. Kahramanmaraş: Kurtuluş Müzesi Kurma ve Yaşatma Derneği, 1994, p. 11.

6 Ahmet Huyki Saral and Tosun Saral, *Vatan Nasıl Kurtarıldı: Nur Dağları, Toroslar, Adana, Maraş, Gaziantep ve Urfa'da Yapılan Kuvayı Milliye Savaşları*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası, 1970, p. 154; Karadağ, *ibid.*, p. 10.

7 Adil Bağdadlılar, *Uzunluk: İstiklal Harbinde Kahramanmaraş*. Kahramanmaraş: Kervan Matbaası, 1974, p. 45; Yalçın Özalp, *Mustafa Kemal ve Milli Mücadelenin İlk Zaferi*. Kahramanmaraş: Belediye Yayınları, 1984, p. 40-41.

the desire and effort to learn them. They not only failed to appreciate the national traits of the Turks, but also openly and foolishly displayed an occupier's pride, which was deeply resented by the Turks. They cared very little about the ideas of others especially those of the Turks. They thought they would do whatever they wanted. They acted as though they did not know, or did not want to know, that the Turks had always had a free life and had never bowed before tyranny and suppression of any foreigners throughout their history. Thus, the French failure to fully appreciate the Turks' character and love for freedom, flag and homeland created incurable hostilities between the French occupation and the Turks within the city.

In addition to their lack of understanding and appreciation of the real situation within the city, the French made a grave mistake by allying with the Armenian minority against the Turks. In order to be respected and successful in a foreign land as a ruler, the French failed to appreciate one of the most basic rules: impartialness in acts towards the occupied groups. They openly showed their desire to support the Armenian minority, which was indeed asked for by the Armenians even before the French forces came into Marař. Claiming that their lives would be in danger after the British evacuation of the city, the Armenians had written letters to the French military authorities and sent emissaries including Armenian Catholic bishop Avedis Arpiarian to the French High Commissioner Georges-Picot to urge them to occupy Marař before the British departure from the city.<sup>8</sup>

While the Armenians of the city were seeking a way to speed up the French occupation, the Turks dreaded it, as they were aware of the French treatment of the Muslims in ukurova. They had received abundant reports about French and Armenian atrocities committed against the Muslims, such as attacking women, killing children, burning villages, insulting Turkish and Islamic values and banishing a large number of Turks to the mountains.<sup>9</sup> These reports not only horrified the people of Marař, but also forced them to prevent similar misfortune from knocking on their door. They attempted to do this by sending protest letters signed by hundreds

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<sup>8</sup> Akbıyık, *ibid.*, p. 277; Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>9</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, "The Armenian Legion and Its Destruction of the Armenian Community of Cilicia," in *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, edited by Turkkaya Ataov. Ankara: The Turkish Historical Society, 2001, p. 157-170.

to the Allies' High Commander in Syria and the Sultan to prevent the French occupation forces from coming into the city.<sup>10</sup> They stressed in one of these telegrams that they learned the bad news from the already French occupied places with "excitement and sadness." They deeply felt that there was no need for the French to occupy their city and that the public had a great hatred of them because of the atrocities they had committed in Çukurova. They also stated that the French occupation would be a "second Izmir," creating undesirable events, of which the Turks would not be held accountable from the start.<sup>11</sup>

The French, who seemed to be determined to support the creation of an independent Armenia in Çukurova and vicinity under her protectorate, did not pay enough attention to the rising Turkish anger towards their occupation. One of the causes of Turkish extreme anger was coming from France's use of Armenian legionaries and militant-volunteers, who served under her uniforms to establish "peace and tranquility" in the region. In fact, these Armenians, who had always had an idea of cleansing the region from all things Turkish in order to enrich their goals, made raids on Turkish villages, insulted, and killed Muslims.

The Armenian soldiers, who had been trained and equipped by the Allies to fight against the Turks, served for both the French control of the region and the Armenian desires for independence. The French occupation forces contained thousands of such soldiers. These Armenian soldiers, who had been created while the Great War was being fought in 1916, had been called as the *Légion d'Orient*. They were mostly drafted from among those Armenians who had risen up in Musa Dagh in 1915, prisoners of war captured from Turkish military services, and others coming from the United States and Europe. Their training had started when Armenian leaders, especially Bogus Nubar Pasha, made the suggestion to the Allies to fight against the Turks in battlefields in the hope of receiving their help for their separatist aspirations. The French, whose military power was not large enough to occupy places received by the secret Sykes-Picot agreement, found this suggestion suitable to their after-war policies, and believed that they could use

<sup>10</sup> Bilal N. Şimşir (ed.), *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk, Nisan 1919-Mart 1920*. Ankara: TTK, 1992, belge no, 79; Karadağ, *ibid.*, p. 13. Protest telegrams sent by many places showed a coordinated anger against the French occupation of Maraş, Antep and Urfa.

<sup>11</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri (1918-1919)*, vol. 2, Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2002, dokument no, 41.

these Armenians in Çukurova and in southeastern Anatolia. Thus, these Armenians received military training in Cyprus for two years before they were used against the Turks in the South. "Indeed, the legion was intended to form only the advance guard of the main body of occupation troops and these were late in arriving, so that for two months two battalions of Armenians represented the only Allied force in Cilicia."<sup>12</sup>

The Armenian force in the French occupation "consisted of four battalions of 4,368 soldiers and 66 officers."<sup>13</sup> In addition, out of six units of French occupying forces of Çukurova led by General Gouraud, three were Armenian volunteers among whom many had belonged to militants of the separatist Hinchak and Tashnak groups. Furthermore, under the command of General Dufieux, there were 1,000 Armenian legionnaires. These Armenian forces were armed with the latest weapons and guns, and burned with desire for revenge. The Turks referred to them as "Armenian vengeance units".<sup>14</sup>

When the French occupation forces entered Maraş on 29 October 1919, it contained two battalions, one made up of Armenian volunteers wearing French uniforms, and the other being a French battalion consisting of mostly French and Algerian soldiers.<sup>15</sup> According to another source, the occupation force initially consisted of 1,000 French, 400 Armenian and 500 Algerian soldiers.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, a government document states that the number of Algerians was 40 while the number of Armenians was around 3,000.<sup>17</sup> Publishing news on the constantly growing occupation force in Maraş, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* stated that the occupation force contained 2,000 French, mostly Senegalese, plus Armenians.<sup>18</sup> According to another document, around 90 percent of the occupation force was made up of Armenians, among which were large numbers of Armenian militants from Adana and

<sup>12</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 30-35. According to Kerr, the legion fought for the first time against the Turkish forces on 19 September 1918 under Allenby's command while the Allies captured the Heights of Arara.

<sup>13</sup> Shaw, "The Armenian Legion," p. 157.

<sup>14</sup> Kemal Çelik, *Milli Mücadele'de Adana ve Havalisi, 1918-1922*. Ankara: TTK, p. 72.

<sup>15</sup> Genelkurmay ATASE Başkanlığı Arşivi, *Baş Faaliyetleri Koleksiyonu*, Klasör No:1162, E/Y Dosya No, 53/81, belge no, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Bağdadlılar, *ibid.*, 45.

<sup>17</sup> T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Documents on Massacre Perpetrated by Armenians*, Ankara, 2001, document no, 40.

<sup>18</sup> *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 13 Kanunuevvel (Aralık) 1335/1919.

Erzurum. These created much fear among the Muslims, who closed their shops lest their properties be looted by these Armenians.<sup>19</sup> It was obvious that most of the occupation force was made up of Armenian legionaries, and rest was made up of Algerian and Senegalese colonial soldiers.<sup>20</sup>

As soon as the French set foot in Maraş, the Armenians living in the city began to show their dark side. As the French were entering the city, the Armenians, who had been living in Maraş and who had come to the city after the armistice, showed great joy and celebrated the coming of the French occupying forces by joyfully shouting, applauding and making parades. They screamed, "Live the Armenians! Live the French! Death to the Turks!"<sup>21</sup> They were perhaps overly happy and joyful as they thought they were being offered a chance by the French to actualize their longtime-contemplated dreams of establishing a "free" Armenia. They continued to shout within the city crying out "Long live Cilicia, Armenia! Let those who are jealous go blind!"<sup>22</sup> As one Armenian, Nishan Saatjian, said, they felt that their "joy and enthusiasm reached a peak ... These were happy days, to end too soon!"<sup>23</sup>

It would be normal to expect that the Armenians would resent the foreign occupation of their homeland, on which they had shared a long history dating back to the eleventh century, even if they had had difficulties for the proceeding several decades because of their separatist actions. Instead, the Armenians relied overly on the French and openly showed their antagonism towards the Turks. Receiving hope and encouragement from the French occupation and especially from the Armenian soldiers within the French occupation force, the Maraş Armenians began to insult, threaten and mock the Turkish values. They considered the coming of the French occupation forces as the start of "good days and deliverance" for them.<sup>24</sup> The Armenian public figures of the city met in Kherlakian Agop's house, and decided to help the French.

<sup>19</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 51; Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> "The 22 Days of Marash," vol. 30, p. 387. According to this work, although the Armenian legionaries were greater in number in the French occupation, the French restricted their action and tried to control them from harming the situation in the city.

<sup>21</sup> Bağdadlılar, *ibid.*, p. 45; Özalp, *Mustafa Kemal...*, p. 40-41; Ahmet Eyicil, "Fransızların Maraş'ı İşgali," *Madalyalı Tek Şehir Kahramanmaraş Dergisi*, no. 8 (12 Şubat 1991), p. 14; Saral, *ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>22</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 61.

<sup>23</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>24</sup> Karadağ, *ibid.*, p. 14.

They had their young people wear French uniforms and patrol the streets,<sup>25</sup> aiming to frighten the Turks, who very much feared the possibility of being put under the rule of the Armenian minority.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike Armenian joy and happiness, the Turks, whose sacred values had been violated, and whose confidence in a peaceful future had been destroyed by the relentless Armenian propaganda and attacks,<sup>27</sup> went into a gloomy and thoughtful mood. They began contemplating how to rid themselves of uncertainties and of the enemy occupation. They knew that if the French were thoroughly settled in the city they would lose all hope of living in freedom, and of being free from the Armenian insults and attacks that had already started in the first days of the French occupation. The fear began to be solidified by unfortunate events following the French occupation. On the second day of the French occupation, the city witnessed one of the two most important events that prepared the grounds for the eventual confrontation between the French and the Turks.

The first event took place in the Uzunoluk quarter of the city, where several Turkish women wearing headscarves and coming from a public bath began to be insulted and attacked by some Armenian volunteers wearing French uniforms. These soldiers told the women not to wear headscarves anymore since the city no longer belonged to them but to the French. They physically tried to remove their veils. Seeing that their women were being attacked by the Armenian soldiers, a few Turks sitting at a nearby coffeehouse attempted to save the women but they were fired on by the soldiers and two of them were wounded. Upon witnessing the commotion, a Turk who had a milk shop nearby and who worked in the Ulu Mosque as *muezzin*, came to the scene and fired his revolver over the soldiers, wounding one of them fatally. According to an Armenian account, the incident happened when an Armenian soldier "intoxicated by several samples of *raki*, tore the veil from a Moslem woman coming from the bath. In the commotion which followed, someone shot and killed an innocent legionnaire—not the guilty one."<sup>28</sup> This man who fired the gun was Sütçü İmam and the incident came to be called as the "Sütçü İmam Incident."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Akbıyk, *ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>26</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>27</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İliřkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 54.

<sup>28</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>29</sup> Saral, *ibid.*, p. 159; *Documents on Massacre Perpetrated by Armenians*, document no, 40; Karadağ, *ibid.*, p. 15-16; Bagdadlılar, *ibid.*, p. 49; Özalp, *İlk Zafer*, p. 43-45.

Ultimately the story became an inspiration and heroic tale for the Turks to deepen their thoughts towards defending the city against the occupation. Many protest letters were sent from all over Turkey to the Allies' High Commissioners and to the Ottoman government, condemning Franco-Armenian atrocities committed against the Turkish women and men in Maraş and Çukurova.<sup>30</sup>

The Sütçü İmam incident, which has come to symbolize the defense of Maraş, was recorded somewhat differently when the incident was investigated by authorities. According to the report, the Armenian soldiers wearing French uniforms insulted two Turkish women, namely Elife and Fatma, on the same street but in different places. The Armenians tried to remove their veils but upon intervention of people in the vicinity and of the police, the incident was calmed. However, as the Armenian soldiers were leaving the scene, some Muslims followed them and a fight broke out between them. In this commotion, Hacı İmam, who either had a gun or was given a revolver at the time of the incident, fired on the Armenians, wounding one of them fatally.<sup>31</sup> In any event, the Sütçü İmam incident was the first in many deadly confrontations between the Turks and the Armenians.

Caring little of the Turkish thoughts and expectations, the French increasingly pushed for developments in the wrong direction by becoming more and more despotic in their hold over power within the city. They increased pressures on the Turks after the Sütçü İmam Incident, including ordering the Turks to give up their weapons. While encouraging the French to unarm the Turks, the Armenians were at the same time strengthening their churches and arming themselves.<sup>32</sup>

Encouraged by the French the Armenians continued to increase their attacks against the Turks and Turkish values. The French could not prevent Armenian attacks, which cost many Turkish lives. For example, a cousin of Sütçü İmam was found dead after obviously having been tortured, including having his ears cut off.<sup>33</sup> Several Turks who went to collect wood in Ahır Dağ were killed. A gendarmerie soldier who tried to prevent Armenians from seizing

<sup>30</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 75, 76, 77 and 81.

<sup>31</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 77.

<sup>32</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 55.

<sup>33</sup> Saral, *ibid.*, p. 159; Bağdadlılar, *ibid.*, p. 49; Karadağ, *ibid.*, p. 15-16; Özalp, *Mustafa Kemal...*, p. 43-45.

the governor's building, together with many ordinary Turks who were only passing on the streets at the time, were killed by Armenians.<sup>34</sup> In addition, an Armenian priest named Pascal Maljian reported that an Armenian militant fired on Maraş notables sitting in a cafe. He then threw a German-made grenade killing around twenty and wounding another twenty Muslims.<sup>35</sup> With these killings, the Armenians sought to subdue the Turks and break their will to resist against Armenian plans of establishing an independent Armenia, as premeditated by their militant organizations, such as Hınçak and Taşnak, and by their prominent leaders, such as Bogos Nubar Paşa, an Armenian politician from Egypt, Aram Baghdikian, president of the Armenian National Union, and Hırlakian Agop, an Ottoman ex-deputy from Maraş.<sup>36</sup> These Armenian leaders were also given encouragement by the foreign leaders, such as French Foreign Minister Briand, who had promised support for the establishment of an "independent Armenia" in the region.<sup>37</sup>

According to Armenian accounts, the French did not want to gain real victory, which could only be achieved by arming the Armenians. They tried to limit the armed Armenians and acted carefully not to let them gain adequate firepower. Nevertheless, the Armenians of Maraş did not refrain from action. They created the Armenian National Union, consisting of representatives of the political parties and other Armenian dignitaries of the city. The Armenian National Union discussed defense plans and gathered volunteers. It armed and trained these volunteers, who were in turn supervised by a French officer.<sup>38</sup> These moves are real proof of the Armenian desire to get rid of the Turkish existence within the city.

Despite their seemingly desperate and unfortunate way of life, the Turks still carried a hope of getting rid of the French occupation from the city. In order to do this, they even made suggestions to the Armenians to come together to defend the city against the foreign occupation; to combine Turkish and Armenian efforts to reach a friendly understanding to live in peace and harmony, and

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<sup>34</sup> *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 20 and 24 Mayıs 1336 (1920); *Documents on Massacre Perpetrated by Armenians*, document no, 40 and 43; *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkiler*, vol. 2, belge no, 51 and 61; Akbiyık, *ibid.*, p. 279; Özalp, *Mustafa Kema...I*, p. 45-48.

<sup>35</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>36</sup> Mandelstam, *La Société des Nations...*, p. 57-58; Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>37</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>38</sup> "The 22 Days of Marash...", vol. 30, p. 388. This source claims that while there were 30.000 Turkish chetes in and around Maraş, the Armenian volunteers did not develop to a well-armed state. Very few of them had rifles.



to maintain this friendship while curing past hatreds.<sup>39</sup> Their offer was unfortunately not accepted by the Armenians. The Armenians had undergone "a profound cultural renaissance" at the hands of European and American missionaries,<sup>40</sup> and had been brainwashed by revolutionary and separatist groups, and thus could not appreciate the value of the Turkish offer in the struggle against their common enemies of European imperialism and French occupation. Thus, the Armenians refused not only to ally with the Turks, but even to stay neutral in a struggle between the Turks and the French.<sup>41</sup> Instead, they sided with the occupation forces, in a mistaken hope to be more independent and happier. The Armenian choice of siding with the French occupation further offended the Turks, who considered their move as a betrayal.

Secret killings, psychological pressures, and a worsening French occupation, were coupled with open attacks by the Armenians and French on the Turkish flag-one of the most admired symbols of the Turks, signifying freedom, life and existence. When the French military governor of Osmaniye came to Maraş to "improve" the quality of the French occupation, he acted as an agent of the Armenians, trying to satisfy all Armenian desires, including pulling down the Turkish flag which flew on the citadel of Maraş. On 26 November 1919, when he first entered into the city, the Armenians, including women, children, and elderly, welcomed him with a large crowd, and chanted songs of freedom while cursing the Turks.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, after André was named as the governor of Maraş, he tried to intervene in Turkish official affairs by demanding rooms within the governor's building and by seeking control over official and unofficial affairs, which indeed was the order of the high commissioner Georges-Picot who wanted to establish a complete control over the official affairs.<sup>43</sup> He "had made a mess of things and mishandled the situation until trouble, which had been brewing for a few months past, came to a head."<sup>44</sup> The local residents of Maraş found these actions as unacceptable burdens, since these

<sup>39</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 85.

<sup>40</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. xx.

<sup>41</sup> "The 22 Days of Marash: Papers on the Defense of teh City against Turkish Forces, January-February 1920," in *The Armenian Review*, vol. 31 (Spring 1978), p. 65.

<sup>42</sup> ATASE, Klasör No:1162, E/Y Dosya No, 53/81, belge no, 2-3; Akbıyık, *ibid.*, p. 122; Bağdadlılar, *ibid.*, p. 53; Karadağ, *ibid.*, 19;

<sup>43</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, 69.

<sup>44</sup> Şimsir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk...*, belge no, 126.

new rules were putting them under the direct control of an occupation which they had never asked for.

Without considering the consequences of his actions, Major André ordered to take steps toward establishing a tighter control in the city, disregarding Turkish warnings and demands for leaving governmental jobs to be handled by the Turkish officials as had previously been done, even under the British occupation. The irresponsible actions of André created a dangerous mood in the city. On 30 November 1919, Turks who had gathered in the Ulu Mosque to perform the Friday prayer, demonstrated against the French occupation and raided the castle, forcefully pulling down the French flag and hoisting the Turkish flag before going to perform the prayer.<sup>45</sup> As an Armenian eyewitness, Dr. Harutuen Der Ghazarian, wrote, "So a crowd of about 1,000 Turks took heart and climbed the hill where, despite André's orders, they raised the Turkish flag. This incident triggered the events that began on January 21."<sup>46</sup> After offering Friday prayer on the spot, the crowd marched on the government building, where they beat up an Armenian and a Circassian, named Sitki, who was coming from Osmaniye as the commander of gendarmeries of that place.<sup>47</sup> However, as soon as the Turks put things back in their rightful place by both raising the Turkish flag on the castle and warning the French not to intervene in the official matters, they went to their houses, making no more demonstrations. As one renowned Maraş resident, Ali Sezai Efendi, told André after the incident, they only wanted peace, not fights with anyone, as long as their national symbols and customs were respected.<sup>48</sup> According to a document telegraphed by the thirteenth army subdivision, Major André forcefully removed the Ottoman governor from his seat and named himself as the governor, with the help of Kadir Paşa, a Maraş personage, and his sons, Şükrü and İhsan, along with others who had been loyal to the Sultan, and, who had also been disturbed by the rapid progress made by the Nationalists.<sup>49</sup> The Maraş residents

<sup>45</sup> ATASE, Klasör No:1162, E/Y Dosya No, 53/81, belge no, 2-4; Bagdadlılar, *ibid.*, p. 60-62; Karadağ, *ibid.*, p. 19; Özalp, *Mustafa Kemal...*, p. 54-55; Ahmet Eyicil, "Bayrak Olayının Düşündürdükleri," *Madalyalı Tek Şehir Kahramanmaraş Dergisi*. 72. Yıl Özel Sayısı. Yıl 9, sayı 9, (12 Şubat 1992), 45-48.

<sup>46</sup> "The 22 Days of Marash: Papers on the Defense of the City against Turkish Forces, January-February 1920," in *The Armenian Review*, vol. 31 (Spring 1978), p. 64.

<sup>47</sup> Saral, *ibid.*, p. 159-153.

<sup>48</sup> Şeyh Ali Sezai Efendi, "Maraş'ın Şekerli, Hatuniye, Bostancı, Kuytul Mahallerinden Mürekkep Şubenin Reisi Olarak Bilfiil Teşklâtı Yaparak ve Millî Müdafâ ve Harb Safahatından Bulunarak Yazdığı Tarihçeden İcab Eden Yerlerin Hülâsasıdır," Unpublished Manuscripts.

<sup>49</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 70.

also resented the French use of Muslim soldiers such as Circassians and other Caucasian immigrants from Osmaniye. They took it as interference in the internal affairs of the state.<sup>50</sup>

The flag incident showed that the Turks did not want to increase tensions in the city. They merely desired to have a secure life under their own administration, not wanting to attack the Armenians or even the French occupation, which became quite objectionable after this incident. The flag incident showed that the Turks were starting to believe in acting in harmony to defy the French occupation, and of course this eventually became fully realized.<sup>51</sup>

According to Armenian and American accounts, the flag incident did not take place as it was claimed since it was contrary to the French military tradition. They state instead that the French flag never flew from the citadel, but rather that only Dr. Mustafa and some nationalists raised both the Turkish flag and a green flag and then fired into the air, creating commotion within the city. These sources further write that the incident let the Turks insult the Beyazidzade for his obedience to the French and the Dayızade for his preach to obey the French.<sup>52</sup>

The French, finding it hard to suppress the Turks, began to seek new options to strengthen their occupation. For this, they not only encouraged the Armenians within the city, but also sent arms to the Armenians living in Zeytun and other villages. They were planning to use the Armenians for a bigger goal, which had two parts: one was to reach Sivas and the other to diminish the Muslim population in the region in order to intensify the Armenians<sup>53</sup> and thus create their buffer state between Turkey and Syria.

The French occupation forces, which contained Armenians and which were made up of small patrolling units of a couple of hundred soldiers, often went into Turkish villages where they attacked and killed people, assaulted women and looted what they could. Despite these horrific attacks, the Turks usually sought help from government officials. They did not resort to their own guns

<sup>50</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 82.

<sup>51</sup> "The 22 Days of Marash," vol. 30, p. 390; Kerr, *ibid.*, 71.

<sup>52</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 71; "The 22 Days of Marash...", p. 66. According to Dr. Ghazarian, Bayazidzade "Shukri and Kadir Pasha put the Armenians to the sword" when the fighting broke out, which somewhat sheds doubts on the accusation of their cooperation with the occupation forces.

<sup>53</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Fransız İlişkileri*, vol. 2, belge no, 95 and 96.

unless there was no other hope of defending their lives, honor and properties.<sup>54</sup>

The growing unpopularity of the French occupation forced the Turks to find a solution for their miseries. They knew that if the French were allowed to do whatever they wanted to do, they would obliterate all Turkishness within the city and, then, they would leave the city to the total control of the Armenians, who were looking forward to having any opportunity to establish a free state. Thus, even in the beginning of the French occupation, the third army division centered in Sivas protested the French and started to establish a resistance in and around Marař. For that reason, some renowned figures from Marař, including Dr. Mustafa, who had received his degree from military medical schools in Istanbul, went to Elbistan to coordinate the communication between the local resistance and the National Forces headed by Mustafa Kemal in Sivas. Dr. Mustafa and other leaders of the national defense organization tried to stock arms and ammunitions for use against the occupation when the time came.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, perfectly predicting the future in advance, Mustafa Kemal had successfully stocked "arms and ammunition in various cities of Cilicia such as Marař and Aintab for possible use in the future"<sup>56</sup> while he was commanding the Ottoman armies in Syria toward the end of the Great War. These national defense forces, that had provided a base for Mustafa Kemal to save the country, played important roles against the foreign invasions. Eventually, they led to the establishment of an organization called the Committee for the Defense of Rights headed by Arslan Bey in Marař. This national defense organization successfully appealed to the Turks who wholeheartedly supported it with all their means. In Marař, several such organizations were organized separately at the start but in a short time of their establishment, they combined their power to act together to defend the city.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, the Marař National Forces had well-constructed ties and lines of communication with the town of Pazarcık, where Kılıç Ali, the chief representative of Mustafa Kemal, and Gökşun, where Yörük Selim, another chief representative of Mustafa Kemal who

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<sup>54</sup> *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* 24 Kanunusani 1336.

<sup>55</sup> Saral, *ibid.*, p. 158; Kerr, *ibid.*, 67.

<sup>56</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 67.

had encouraged and ordered locals to resist foreign invasions in Çukurova and surrounding places, was located.<sup>58</sup> The organizations that were prepared by not only the city folk but also peoples of the surrounding villages were making plans to resist the French occupation. They divided the city into ten parts to organize small fighting units commanded by ex-officers of the Ottoman Army. Furthermore, the Turks successfully manipulated the French weaknesses originating from their failure to gain the confidence of the Turks and to learn about the geographic aspects of the region. These elements helped the Turks to cut off easy access of the French supplies.<sup>59</sup>

While the Turks were making preparations to defend their city against the occupation, the Armenians were not simply awaiting their fate. They were also organizing fighting units made of seven voluntary groups, who were trained by Armenians such as Setrak Kherlakian, formerly a major in the Ottoman Army, and Avedis Seferian, a graduate of the Turkish Military Academy in Istanbul. Moreover, these Armenians were being trained and supervised by French officers. The French were commanding Armenian volunteers who were armed by the French in their quarters.<sup>60</sup> Thus, both the Turks and the Franco-Armenian alliance were making preparations for a final confrontation, which was expected by both sides. Though the French several times met with dignitaries of both communities to seek an understanding, they failed to reach a peaceful solution that would be acceptable by all sides. Neither the Turks nor the Armenians seemed to have had a great desire for peace as long as both sides had not reached the goals mentioned above, and as long as one side's certain victory was gained.

Any hope of living together within the city disappeared when the French commander, General Quérette, invited official and non-official dignitaries of Maraş to his headquarters to make a final offer to put the Turks under total submission. He accused them of allying with the *chetes*, who were the national forces stationed in strategically important places between Islahiye-Antep and Maraş, in order to paralyze communication lines of the French occupation force. General Quérette proposed that the local forces cooperate with him to punish these *chetes*. He also wanted them to fully obey

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<sup>58</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>59</sup> Saral, *ibid.*, p. 166-169.

<sup>60</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 68-69.

the rules being issued by the occupation, and leave the city under the French rule. The Acting governor and others rejected these offers,<sup>61</sup> and as such, the governor of the district, head of the gendarmerie and some others came to be labeled as 'dangerous men'.<sup>62</sup> Thus, after the meeting the French general arrested these "dangerous" men, including the acting governor of the city, the commander of the gendarmerie, and held them as hostages until their submission before the occupation was realized. The arrests of five Turkish dignitaries<sup>63</sup> along with the increasing French pressure sparked armed confrontation. Understanding their weak and fragile position and the French occupation force's illicit action after these arrests, the Turks feared an imminent establishment of solid French rule in the city.<sup>64</sup> In righteous defense of their existence, the Turks began to defend their homes against heavy bombardments inflicted on them from the French controlled areas.<sup>65</sup> A telegram sent by the local Maraş residents read, "Under the Armenian artillery, machine gun and bombs, one of the most distinguished places of our homeland flows in fire and blood." The Turks called the fighting as the "struggle for survival"<sup>66</sup> for which they determined to continue until they ended all wrongdoings of the Armenians and reached total salvation.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, not only rivalry between the Allied states over the spoils of the Ottoman Empire but also French willingness to leave Çukurova and Southeastern Anatolia in return for security in Syria and economic rights in Çukurova, as agreed upon by many negotiations between Mustafa Kemal and the French statesmen, the French occupation forces lost their courage to be more resolute against the defenders. The nationalist forces, on the other hand, had been very carefully organized by Mustafa Kemal and were comprised of skillful commanders and courageous soldiers on the fields, which resulted in the defeat of the French forces in many places. Maraş was the first of these victories. As the first victory over a wide ranging occupation, which threatened to root out the

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61 "The 22 Days of Marash....," p. 65.

62 Véou, p. 87.

63 "The 22 Days of Marash....," p. 51.

64 *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 2 Şubat 1336 (1920).

65 *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 24 Kanunisani (Ocak) 1336/1920.

66 *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 2 Şubat 1336 (1920).

67 *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 11 Şubat 1336 (1920).

Turkishness in Anatolia, the victory in Maraş had a great importance in the broader national struggle. The victory belonged to the people of Maraş, who lost lives, homes and properties, and most importantly to Mustafa Kemal and his key role in organizing the national forces to get rid of the enemy on all fronts. The struggle in Maraş, after all, gave hope and confidence for the rest of the nationalists to chase the enemy out of the country. According to Kerr, Maraş "was the first major battle of the Turkish War of Independence, a war which ended in the expulsion from Anatolia of all foreign armies and the overthrow of the sultanate by Mustafa Kemal."<sup>68</sup>

The Armenians, who had finally lost all hope of establishing an Armenian supremacy with the help of French occupation forces, as the latter disgracefully left them behind and evacuated the city on the night of February 11, 1920, sought mercy and understanding from the Turkish authorities, who readily extended a shield over them by ceasing combat. While the French, who had pledged "protection" of the Armenian minority, had in fact "shamefully betrayed" them and had left Maraş in secret,<sup>69</sup> the Turks ended hostilities and started helping those who remained. In return for Turkish understanding, the Armenians sent telegrams to Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish Grand National Assembly praising the Turkish state and thanking them for Turkish mercy. They admitted and confessed that they had hoped for safety and protection from the "chivalric" French, but they were ultimately hurt during the French occupation. However, they received protection and kindness from the Turks.<sup>70</sup>

As the French departed from the city, which had almost destroyed by fire, artillery and other means, law and order was established. The Turks of the city felt in their hearts an "eternal" honor, though their city was in ruin and though they needed immediate aid, some of which was sent from Sivas. The Armenians left behind were secure after their weapons were collected.<sup>71</sup> Some 9,700 Armenians stayed in several compounds under the watch of the Americans, who were serving in the Near East Relief.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> "The 22 Days of Marash...", vol. 30, p. 389; Kerr, *ibid.*, p. xvi.

<sup>69</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. xxii.

<sup>70</sup> Akbıyık, *ibid.*, p. 281-282.

<sup>71</sup> *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 16 Şubat 1336 (1920).

<sup>72</sup> Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 181.

According to Bagdikian, "Eastern Cilicia was a pawn in the game being played by the French and the Kemalists; and Marash was sacrificed to the conflicts among the Powers."<sup>73</sup>

The residents of Maraş suffered heavily from the more than twenty day battle. They lost half of their city, 200 died and 500 were wounded.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Turkish losses have been estimated at somewhere between 200 and 4,500, while the French lost between 800-1,000 and the Armenians suffered some 8,000 to 11,000.<sup>75</sup> The number of losses on all sides, the devastation of the city and the duration of the war are enough to give an idea of the seriousness of the conflict.

The Armenians who were left behind sent a telegram to the Ministry of Internal Affairs stating that their youths had been forced by the French to obey their orders and attack the Turks. It also stated that the French had been responsible for the deaths of thousands of Armenians. After their evacuation, the Armenians received protection and security from the national forces.<sup>76</sup>

### Conclusions

The armistice years and the aftermath of the Great War, were chaotic years for all sides in Turkey since the victors failed to agree promptly on any acceptable agreement for all sides in the Turkish Empire. The failure occurred because of an increasingly fierce rivalry over the Ottoman legacy. With clashes of interests of all sides, a weak Ottoman government filling the post in Istanbul was unable to manage things, because it was under the close surveillance of the victors and because a growing nationalist movement headed by Mustafa Kemal challenged its sphere of influence. Thus, these years turned out to be eventful ones for all sides, that is, the imperialists, the Turks and the minorities in Anatolia. It was a time of struggle for the Turks to stay independent and alive against an enlarging imperialism, and against the minority groups who thought that the time had come for them to establish their own state at the expense of the Turks. The imperialists, on the

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<sup>73</sup> "The 22 Days of Marash...", vol. 30, p. 393.

<sup>74</sup> *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 21 Şubat 1336 (1920).

<sup>75</sup> ATASE, Klasör No:1162, E/Y Dosya No, 53/81, belge no, 2-13; Akbıyık, *ibid.*, 213, and 219; Kerr, *ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>76</sup> *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 21 Şubat 1336 (1920).



other hand, were after their prestige to spread their economic, social, cultural, military and religious desires.

The city of Maraş witnessed all the developments and suffered hardships of the armistice years, too. Ethnically, it had a mixture of residents, including a large Armenian minority. Geographically, it was located on a very important strategic place, being on a passing point between Syria and Anatolia. While the Armenians speculated that this place would be proper to realize their wish to establish a free Armenia, the French saw it as an opportunity to create a buffer zone between the Syrian mandate and also to build up an economically viable region for French industry. Both the Armenian minority and the French imperialists relied on Turkish weakness and acceptance of their fate. In order to weaken the Turks and force them to accept their desires, they aligned together against the Turks.

In Maraş, the Turks had to face an alliance of a minority group with whom they had spent many centuries under their rule, and an imperialist occupation of forces whom they had never asked to enter their city. All sides had their own agendas, and they did not have a common ground upon which to meet. With so many different desires of these different groups, it was virtually impossible to avoid going to war. Thus, as soon as the French occupied the city, the Turks, on one side, and the Franco-Armenians, on the other, began to attack each other. The Turks demanded a continuation of the *status quo* under their administration, and feared from massacres, which they felt would be committed by the Armenians backed by the French.

The Armenians, who had been in open revolt with the state for many decades and who were seeking vengeance for the suffering of the Great War years because of their temporary resettlement in the south, thought that the time for them to establish a free state had come. In order to achieve their long-time goals, they chose to ally with the occupation and attack the Turks because realization of their dream would be possible only if they got both the support of the French and the subjugation of the Turks. Serving in the occupation force with a large number, they succeeded in securing French support, but the subjugation of the Turks in the city was not an easy task. Though they attacked the Turks, and insulted Turkish cultural and religious values, they could not succeed in subjugating the Turks. Indeed, their attacks and insults came to stiffen the Turks' determination to resist against these attacks and insults.

The French who had failed to find an acceptable balance between the Turks and the Armenians made a significant mistake by allying with the latter. Their occupation began to be a despised matter for the Turks from the start. Thus, the French received a growing pressure from the Turks, who received the backing of Mustafa Kemal, head of the nationalists.

Because of differences in desires, goals and expectations of all sides, the French occupation in Marař solved nothing but instead created a big problem which eventually led to a bloody conflict that ended with the victory of the Turks in February 1920. During this bloody confrontation, the city was virtually destroyed, thousands of lives from all sides were lost and the Armenians had to leave their ages-old homes forever. The victory gave a renewed aspiration for the Turks to get rid of the invaders who had invaded many parts of their state.

# THE NATION BUILDING PROCESS OF THE ARMENIANS IN EASTERN ANATOLIA AND THE ROLE OF THE GREAT POWERS IN THIS PROCESS

Res. Assist. Özgür SARI\*

## **Abstract**

*The secularization process of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the weakening authority over them of the Istanbul Patriarchate and the Gregorian clergy are analysed and the impacts of the Great Powers on the Armenians' ethnic based nation building in place of the Ottoman millet system on the grounds of religious identity are criticized.*

## **Keywords**

*Russian Domination, Edcmiadzin Church, Millet System, Gregorian Church, Nation Building.*

## **Introduction**

The Islahat Edict was the stimulator of the transformation in social organizations and marked the turning point of the social and political transformation of the minorities in the Ottoman Empire. From this point on, Armenians experienced a change from the *millet* system organized on the basis of religion, to nationhood on the grounds of ethnic motifs.<sup>1</sup> The main initiator for this change was the activities of the Protestant missionaries begun in the 1820s. The missionaries introduced the distinctive characters of their national identity, culture, history, and religion to the Armenians. Later generations, growing up in the socio-political climate that resulted from the efforts of their predecessors, would strive to realize the idea of a "Great Armenia."

The most important of the early activities, was undoubtedly the Regulation of the Armenian Nation (*Ermeni Milleti Nizamnamesi*), first prepared in 1860 and confirmed by the Ottoman Sultan in

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<sup>1</sup> Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, TTK, 1983, pp. 64-72

1863. With this regulation, the Armenian Nation gradually gave up their traditional religious based social organization and moved towards a more national and class based model of organization. This is reflected in Kamuran Gürün's *Ermeni Dosyası* as follows:

With the governmental confirmation, the society had a constitution the main theme of which was national sovereignty; and proper steps were taken to revitalize the national education. Within these endeavors, there was collaboration of the clergy, however their contributions were not as had been expected. They were often ineffective in promoting development that would contribute to the nation...and thus (the clergy's) influence on the Armenian nation was diminished. The new generation would not consent to be herded by the clergy. The Armenians preserved their faith, language, and traditions and were not assimilated. They held the commerce of West Asia, traveled frequently, and controlled an expansive commercial network. In other words, they could be considered an intermediary between Asia and Europe.<sup>2</sup>

### **Results of the Regulation of the Armenian Nation**

It can be said that through this regulation, there occurred a serious secularization in the political organization of the Armenians. Moreover, there are indications of democratization in the Armenian ruling class, because the regulation ended the oligarchy of the clergy and gave the right of decision making to the Armenians living in the provinces. Constituting 99 different articles, the regulation ordered the establishment of a parliament including 140 members; 20 members from the clergy in Istanbul, 40 members from the provinces, and the other 80 from Istanbul. While the religious assembly consisting of 14 members and the political assembly with 20 members continues to exist, it was determined that the members of those assemblies would be selected by the newly constituted parliament as a democratic condition. Furthermore, the Istanbul Patriarchy would be selected by this parliament. The religious assembly would be able to announce its candidate, but at the same time the parliament could appoint a patriarch. The appointed patriarch's designation had to be made on the command of the sultan. This regulation enabled the parliament to select the patriarch in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 68

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 68-69

By this regulation, the Armenians could be rescued from the scholasticism and hegemony of the Gregorian Church and it was one of the main steps towards their modern nation building. While the categorization of the Armenians in Ottoman lands did not change, they started to build up their relations to the state through their parliament instead of, as had been traditional, via the clergy. The sharing of the social and political affairs by individuals or classes became the basis for actions against the monarch and the patriarch, whereas until this time, these affairs had also been managed by the clergy. As these political and social organizational models gained their autonomy from religious influences and the hegemony of the church, in the suitable intellectual environment and as the result of foreign missionaries' activities, a western type of organization could be applied.<sup>4</sup> In this organization, several Armenian associations were established:

*Hayırsevenler Cemiyeti (Benevolent Union)*

Established in Istanbul in 1860, this group and aimed to highlight the region of Kilikia.

*Araratlı (Van), Okulsevenler (Muş), Doğu (Muş), Milliyetçi Kadınlar (Erzurum)*

These groups were established between 1870-1880 and had socialist views.

*Kara Haç (Black Cross)*

Established in Van in 1878.

*Anavatan Müdafileri (Pashtpan Haireniats)*

Established in Erzurum in 1881, this group was active for 1.5 years.

The free atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire brought an understanding in which belonging to different religions did not mean having different statutes. The rights owned throughout the nation (millet) were eliminated and the patriarch became only a religious leader. This means that the solution of the organic ties

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<sup>4</sup> See for the detailed information about the missionaries' activities in the Ottoman Empire, Seçil Karal Akgün, "The Turkish Image in the Reports of American Missionaries in the Ottoman empire", *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1989, pp. 91-106; "Mormon Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire", *Turcica*, tome: 28, pp. 347-360

between the social stratas constitute the civic society and the disappearing of the most important apparatus of social control. The national identity of the Armenians became based on religion, as their identity construction against others was a differentiation in religion rather than an ethnic one. In other words, the word "Armenian" signifies the people from a different religion and moreover from a different denomination instead of from a different race.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Patronage of the Great Powers***

There were previous conditions for this process. Until the 19th century, there had not been any ethnic differentiation for the people living within the lands of the Ottoman Empire. In the classical Ottoman administrative system, categorization was made on the grounds of economic and religious features. In the economic sense, there were tax givers (reaya) and non-tax givers (generally military), and on the religious basis there were Muslims and Non-Muslims. The system of nation (millet) regulated the relations of different people to the state on the basis of their religious identities. Furthermore, each *millet* (Greeks, Jews, Armenians) was allowed to keep its original socio-cultural features. It was not, however, a caste system, but rather a flexible distribution system as a result of administrative and penal conditions.

Ottoman society came face to face with the concepts of "nation" and "nationality" in their modern meanings in the 18th century, when relations with the European states became intensive. Until the 19th century, the Ottomans had been calling the European societies as *Frenğistan (kefere diyarı)*.<sup>6</sup> The Egyptian campaign of Napoleon and the subsequent expansion of new political thoughts throughout the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Ottoman lands, first affected the minority groups in these regions. This campaign had great effects not only on the gained statutes of the Balkan nations but also on the Arabs and Armenians.

Napoleon showed interest in the Ottoman Armenians during his campaigns in Syria and Egypt, and in the occupation of Egypt in

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<sup>5</sup> Salahi R. Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire*, 1993, p. 197. See for information about the appearance of the Armenians as a different nation in history, Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, Ankara: TTK, 1983

<sup>6</sup> Referring to non-muslim lands outside of the Ottoman lands.

1798, he added some Armenian-origin Mamluks to his army. In 1802 he sent a communication to the French ambassador in Istanbul and announced that the Armenians in Syria and Eastern Anatolia were under his protection. First he aimed to use the Armenians in his planned campaign to India. While this campaign did not occur, the Armenians did not lose their importance in the eyes of Napoleon.<sup>7</sup>

The protection of the Armenians proved not only to be a turning point for the ethnic consciousness of minorities in the Ottoman Empire, but also for the reshaping of the international relations between the great powers (England, France, Russia) and the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent policies of the great powers towards the Ottomans. England and Russia, who first supported the Ottomans against this policy of France, soon came to understand the role the ethnic minorities could play in manipulating the Ottoman Empire. From the first decades of the 19th century, England and Russia started using minorities to manipulate internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> England and Russia, from the second quarter of the 19th century, became in particular the protectors of the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. England managed to convert some Armenians in Anatolia to Protestantism, and forced the Sultan to accept this separate Protestant community.<sup>9</sup> Russia, with the help of various geostrategic circumstances, established her influence over the Christian minorities in a more direct way. She tried to gain results through political and militarist means.<sup>10</sup> Russia's two most important instruments in this process were the Church of Edcmiadzin and military spies. With the Türkmençay Treatment in 1828, Russia took the Yerevan and Nahçivan Khanets from Iran, thus the Edcmiadzin Patriarchate passed to Russia. Patriach Nerses in the Russian-Iranian war between 1826 – 1828, gave a group of 60,000 Armenian volunteers to the Russian military service. Russia in 1828 launched a war on the Ottoman Empire and invaded

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<sup>7</sup> Napoleon Bonapart established the Armenian Language Professorship at the *School of Oriental Languages* in Paris after the campaign.

<sup>8</sup> The *Islahat* and *Tanzimat* edicts are the main results of this policy.

<sup>9</sup> Sonyel *op.cit.*, p. 200; Gürün, *a.g.e.*, p. 66. The acceptance of the Protestant Armenian community by the Sultan is the result of the influence of the English ambassador Lord Stradford Redcliffe Canning on Bab-i Ali. The English influence on the Ottoman Empire increased after the Trade Treatment of Baltalimanı in 1838. See Stanley Lane-Poole, *Lord Stradford Canning'in Türkiye Hatıraları*, translated by Can Yücel, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Mustafa Gül, "1896 Van Ermeni İsyanı ve Sonrasındaki Gelişmeler", *OTAM*, Ankara, 1997, Issue 8, p. 139.

(Anapa, Poti) Ahıska castles and the Ahılkelek and Akchur regions with the Treaty of Adrianople. Russia from this time onwards accelerated her provocation policy of the Armenians and started to change the demographic structure of the region seriously.<sup>11</sup> Although the former seems a religious center, it served rather political center for the Armenians (who were living in the Ottoman Empire and Iran) to organize revolutionary and militarist activities. Russia's policy of changing the power center after the 1820s, resulted in the religious and political inspiration center of the Armenians passing through Ecdmiadzin. The church of Kumkapı in Istanbul lost its former influence over its subjects. The development of the incidents in this way was the result of the changes of the religious features in the Armenian community after the 1850s. The dissolution of the religious ties meant, at the same time, the loss of the state controlling mechanisms over the Armenians, because the Patriarchate in Istanbul lost its importance for the Armenians living in Eastern Anatolia. Furthermore, in the second half of the 19th century, the Patriarchate in Istanbul was serving for the interests of the Armenian bourgeoisie and clergy instead of the Armenian subjects.<sup>12</sup> As the religious and political initiatives came to pass through the Church of Ecdmiadzin, and hence to Russia, politicization of the Armenians became easier. Particularly after the Crimean War, the prestige of the Istanbul Patriarchate and its authority over the Armenian people weakened.<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that there was in fact a role of the clergy in this decreasing effect of the religion as a social controlling instrument. For instance, Miğirdich Hirimyan started to publish a journal entitled *Van Kartalı*.<sup>14</sup>

Tzar Nicholas I continuously claimed himself as a protector of the Ottoman Christians and during his reign, radical Armenian activities increased. These activities were organized under the leadership of Hakadur Abovian and Mikhael Nalbandian.<sup>15</sup> As a

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<sup>11</sup> See Davud Kılıç, "Rusya'nın Doğu Anadolu Siyasetinde Ecmiyazin Kilisesinin Rolü (1828-1915)", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue: 2, June-July-August 2001, pp. 49-65.

<sup>12</sup> Sonyel, *op.cit*, pp. 202-203

<sup>13</sup> In 1896, in the biggest religious festival of the Armenians (6th January), the spiritual leader of the Gregorian Church in Van, Bogos, was killed by his subjects on the road to the church. Once again in the rebellions in Van, the Akadamar Patriarch tried to prevent the events and he was killed by the Armenians. These can show clearly the role and importance of religion in the life of the Armenians.

<sup>14</sup> Gül *op.cit*, p. 141

<sup>15</sup> Sonyel, *op.cit*, pp. 199-200



matter of fact, it is not difficult to argue that the instrument of Russian panslavist policy over Caucasia and Anatolia was to be the Armenians. For this reason, from the second quarter of the 19th century onwards, Russian activities over the Armenians intensified, peaking before the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War. In the wars against the Ottomans (1828-29, 1854-56, 1877-78) and throughout the 18th century, Russia used the Armenians as pawns.<sup>16</sup> For example, while the Russians were invading Erzurum in 1828, the Gregorian Armenians helped them. When Erzurum was restored to the Ottoman Empire in 1829, 90,000-100,000 Armenians emigrated to Yerevan, Ahilkelek, and Ahıska, because they thought they would be punished.

### **Conclusion**

The weakening of the religious authority over the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire lead to their secularization, but at the same time it meant a collapse of the *millet* system over the religious descriptions of the minorities in the Ottoman Empire. As a result of this process, the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire started to describe themselves as a separate nation on the basis of their ethnic identity.

Due to the policies of the Great Powers (Russia, France, and England) in international affairs and according to their interests in the Ottoman lands, patronage relations and the protective policies of the Great Powers over the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire motivated this minority to awaken their national identity.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 199; Kılıç, *op.cit*, pp. 52-53; Gürün, *op.cit*, p. 57.

# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Etrüsk TÜRKER

## Introduction

I would like to start my article by citing a story told in an ATA News Magazine in the USA about the affection held for Turks by a certain Jewish lady and its recognition by a Turk after he learned of her passing away.

ESTER HANIM by Mahfi Egilmez, excerpted from *Radikal*, 3 June 2001, translated by Oya Bain of ATA, DC;

One day as I was walking in Beyoğlu, I thought of Ester Hanım. Her family had settled in Istanbul where she had spent her childhood and youth. Later her family moved to the USA, she got married and had children. Whenever anybody asked her origins, she always told them she was an "Istanbullu".

I first met Ester Hanım in 1987 in Washington, DC. She was the secretary at the Commerce Counselor's Office at the Turkish Embassy. She wrote and spoke flawless English, French, Spanish and Turkish. Her Turkish was so good that sometimes she would correct the errors in the Turkish documents we prepared. She could single-handedly run the routine operation of our office. Her skills were such that she could easily have made more money at another job, but she preferred to work at the Turkish Embassy. Sometimes we would sit and talk about Turkey. She would follow the events in Turkey carefully and would express dismay when Turkey had problems. She would state that Turkey deserved a better place in the world opinion. She would reminisce about her youth in Turkey, her school days, walks in Beyoğlu after school, the highlight of her day which was having tea and pastries at the Markiz Patisserie. I had heard similar nostalgic stories about Beyoğlu from others, but I used to especially enjoy her accounts.

In 1991, when I went to Washington the second time with the same assignment as before, I found Ester Hanım still hard at work at the Commerce Counselor's Office, in spite of increasing health problems. Two years later her father passed away. During the

ceremony at the Jewish cemetery in Maryland, the rabbi finished his words as follows: "A life which moved from land to land without a country of its own ended today. To live and raise a family in exile is not an easy task, people who do not experience it, cannot comprehend the difficulties."

A year later, in April, the Armenians had organized a protest in front of the Embassy. We all had warnings about being careful with the protesters. In the morning, as I was coming to the office, I saw the protestors, gathered in front of the Embassy with signs in their hands. When they saw the diplomatic tag of my car, they started to approach me. I then saw a woman, with her back to me who was talking to the crowd trying to explain something. As I looked closer, I saw it was Ester Hanım. Ignoring the protestors, I got out of my car and walked towards her. The police started to move towards us. Ester Hanım did not notice me and continued speaking to the crowd: "Turks, shared their land with us at our most difficult time, you too had good lives in Turkey. Why are you so full of hate and betrayal?" She kept repeating these words. The protestors, who included some Americans, were amazed and quiet and did not know how to respond. They could not understand why an American Jewish woman would defend the Turks. Quietly I approached Ester Hanım, took her by the arm and led her to my car. The protestors were embarrassed and silent. Ester Hanım was crying and kept saying "Why are these people doing this? Don't they have a bit of decency? I could not respond as I was trying not to cry myself.

When I learned Ester Hanım passed away, all these memories came back to me vividly like a film strip. Whenever I take a walk in Beyoglu, I hear Ester Hanım's words: "Turks shared their land with us."

### **Historical Facts not Fiction**

Looking at history, one can see that Armenians and Turks did indeed live together for centuries in the middle-Eastern region and as subjects of the Ottoman Empire from the 13th to the 20th century. In the Ottoman Empire, many citizens of Armenian descent were placed in crucial positions within the treasury and in other departments where they were responsible for running the affairs of the country. Ottomans appointed many ambassadors of Armenian origin and they were even entrusted with managing foreign affairs.

There have been many books written by Armenians living in the USA, most of which can be accused of exaggeration and of reflecting one-sided events of the history that took place during the Ottoman Empire in the early parts of the twentieth century. These writings have served to fuel Armenian ethnic groups to continue to hate Turks. Through their lobbying activities, Armenian groups are continuously trying to influence the internal and external affairs of the USA regarding Turkey. They campaign to change the history books taught in schools in the USA to reflect a more one-sided view of the affairs. One such book entitled "The Black Dog" (Ref. 3), written by Peter Balakian, was recognized as one of the best books of 1997 by the Los Angeles Times newspaper. Unfortunately it is full of inconsistencies, exaggerations and unjustified accusations. It is hard to believe that such a book obtained recognition without an independent investigation on the validity of its contents. The Los Angeles Times might have a wide circulation among the Armenians living in Los Angeles, but this action by the newspaper serves no justifiable purpose when one considers the sensitivity of this matter.

My objective with this article is to point out some of the inconsistencies in this book and to present an alternative understanding by citing references from well known historians. The American public and the Armenian community at large need to be informed of these facts. Furthermore, I asked a Jewish friend of mine to read this book and to provide her comments. She knows quite a bit about the events that took place at that time since her grandmother relayed to her many personal memories of the historical events. The following includes cited statements contained in the book and shows many instances where the author contradicts himself.

### **Peter Balakian Remembers**

Peter Balakian asked his mother "Why are we Christians?" She replied that "Our people decided to follow the teachings of Jesus. There is a legend that Noah's Arc landed on Mt. Ararat in Armenia. That makes Jews and Armenians cousins" (p.40, Ref. 3).

My Jewish friend, in a way making fun of what Peter Balakian had written, remarked to me, "Can you see what this man has written. For somebody to claim for his own benefit to be relatives with us and to declare that Mt. Ararat was a holy place just like Jerusalem,

sets the best example of the cleverest Armenian attitude. It is amazing how soon they forget what they did to us during the Ottoman years." In a joking way, when I asked her if it is also possible for Jews and Turks to be relatives, she replied that it was certainly possible. When my Jewish friend went on to say that her grandmother had asked her to write her memoirs, I was deeply touched by her noble act and confirmed to her that exposing the realities of what really happened is an honest effort that I will cherish forever.

### **French, Maara Cannibals**

During the Crusades a blind poet wrote the following words,

"People can be separated into two groups,

Those with brain but no religion

And those with religion but no brain" (p.61, Ref.8)

This shows how brave and free thinking this poet was while reflecting on the events of that time. It might be worthwhile to collect the pictures from the museums depicting the vicious incidents of the Crusades to show the Europeans of today what their ancestors did. I do not think such a barbaric genocide was ever witnessed before in the history of the world. The Frank (French) Knights arrived at dawn and sliced their victims with swords for three continuous days. The French historian Raoul de Caen wrote "Frank fighters in Maara would boil the non-Christians alive and would place their children on skewers and eat them after barbecuing" (p.63, Ref.8). The author admitted that Turks would never forget the cannibalism of Europeans. When the news of these barbaric acts was relayed to Rome, their leader came up with an excuse that they had run out of food and to feed the starving soldiers they helped themselves to Turkish and Muslim corpses. Another French historian, Albert d'Aix wrote, "Our armies did not only cannibalize Turks and Muslims, they also ate dogs" (13 January 1099) (p.64, Ref.8).

### **Peter Balakian Remembers**

My Jewish friend continued. "Turks are not known very well in the USA and you Turks don't know how to get the reality across. We understand you well since Jews did live in Turkey. The Armenian lobby activity in the USA is like an industry. Americans are well

intentioned people and the Armenians take advantage of that. Furthermore, don't forget that you Turks are disadvantaged since you are in the minority compared to Armenians in this country."

We continued to read page 40 (Ref.3). "Is Armenia in another country? No Mt. Ararat... well both Armenia and Mt. Ararat are in other countries. But we are Americans and that is the main thing. They are too ethnic."

Today it is necessary to question the meaning of being an American. If Armenians living in the USA are true Americans, how come they still carry such hatred? There are many ethnic groups in the USA who escaped from their countries of origins due to political or religious pressures and settled in the USA. Some Europeans escaped from religious persecutions and settled in the USA. Even more recently, over two million Iranians escaped from the Khomeini regime and made their home here in the USA. It is important to note that none of these ethnic groups continued to live with hatred and none of them taught their children or grandchildren the degree of hatred that they had in themselves. I am very grateful to our great leader Atatürk who never allowed hatred towards any ethnic group living in Turkey and we as Turks grew up together with Turkish Jews, Armenians, Kurds and Greeks in harmony. Based on what Peter Balakian has written and what his mother relayed to him, it is hard for me to believe that he is an American.

Some of the books I read mentioned a big Armenian nation. I would like to reveal what I have discovered. Mr. Toros was the mayor of Antakya, a city in the southern part of Turkey. The Frank Knight Boudine refused to be a missionary and requested to be adapted by Mayor Toros. The arrangements for adoption were agreed to be in accordance with the Armenian traditions. Mayor Toros was dressed up in a large white dress and Boudine, half naked, entered under the dress and they rubbed their bellies against each other. A similar ritual was repeated with Toros's wife. There was a large gathering of spectators mostly of the Muslim faith observing this ceremony. Later, in accordance with Boudine's orders, Mayor Toros and his wife were brutally murdered by Armenians. As an heir, Boudine obtained all of the possessions of Mayor Toros. Later, Boudine became the Count of Odessa and he appointed many Franks into prominent positions. Although Franks and Armenians shared the same religion, this did not stop Franks from destroying Armenians and their rule in that area (pp.53-54, Ref.8)

### Looking for an Identity

My Jewish friend turned to page 41 (Ref.3) and said, "Look at what he has written here. He claims that things would be different if they were Jewish. This is a real inferiority complex. According to my grandmother, for their own personal gains they acted like Ottomans. Some of them even had furs sewn on the collars of their dresses just to look like the Ottomans in Istanbul. Now, they are trying to be relatives with those that have the strongest lobby in the USA."

Peter Balakian goes on to say, "We are American. We didn't go to church, Armenian bazaars or Armenian gatherings. We didn't talk about Armenia. I couldn't even speak the language" (pp.40-41, Ref.3). What Peter Balakian portrays in his book is full of inconsistencies, to say the least. At one point he shows them as a religious family and at another part of the book he writes that his mother did not even go to church. Balakian finds religious connection through Noah's Arc and on page 44 (Ref.3) he claims that he has nothing to do with religion. In the Spring of 1960, Peter Balakian told his mother "I am Jewish. I belong there and I know about Abraham and the Covenant" (p.44, Ref.3). On a following page he declares the contrary: "I feel strangely more American and more Armenian." So, it looks like his mood kept swinging back and forth, a sign of inconsistency.

Dear Peter Balakian should know that we could not stop laughing when we read this page with my friend. It appears that he was trying to get the sympathy of the Jewish people in the USA by trying to relate himself to them. How can he convince himself that this is his only salvage? My Jewish friend commented, "This is very funny. When is he going to decide whether he an Armenian or a Jewish? This is a good example of how Armenians manipulated the Ottomans and now in the USA they are trying to manipulate Jews to obtain the sympathy of the Americans."

It appears that we as Turks did not know Armenians very well. What were they trying to accomplish by such maneuvers? My Jewish friend had the answer "I think it is very simple," she continued "they are trying to get Jews on their side by muddying the water between Jews and Turks. Armenians love to create trouble as they did during the Ottoman times. You know the Turkish proverb "soul disappears but the habits never change."

Peter Balakian states on page 44 (Ref.3) "But in the Spring of 1960 my need to be a Jew had more to do with leaving Dickerson

Road than a deeper understanding of real kinship." My Jewish friend said "You see, he finally revealed what he is trying to do. He is trying to establish a bridge with Jews so that he can claim what was inflicted upon Jews also happened to them." My friend suggested that we should write back to him so he understands what he is. She began to draft the following:

"Dear Peter Balakian, you can neither be a Jew nor a true American. The only thing you are is a man full of hatred, an Armenian not even with a drop of love in his heart towards humanity as portrayed by Jesus and no matter where your destiny takes you, you will always remain as an ethnic poor soul. It is shame that all the education you had never taught you anything. You should know that as Jews when we lived in Turkey, we have given our love and devotion to the Ottomans. Jews never played two sides in 1914 as you Armenians did by providing military secrets trusted upon you to the Russians."

### **Armenian Revenge**

An Armenian man named Firuz, who had converted to Muslim religion, was in charge of making armored suits and shields. He had been punished since he was dealing on the black market. One day when the Frank soldiers surrounded the city, he made arrangements to let 500 Frank fighters into the city to take his revenge and also to capitalize on the money and land that was promised to him by the Franks. When the city fell to the Franks, Yagisiyon, the man in charge of the city, was shot, and fell off his horse while trying to flee. An Armenian woodsman passing by recognized him, cut off his head and brought it to the Franks in Antakya. This incident was another testimonial to the fact that Firuz, an Armenian, caused the death of many people living in the city of Antakya just to obtain money and land for himself (p.55, Ref.8). This incident was also similar to Armenians helping Russian soldiers to slaughter thousands of Ottomans in the Eastern part of Turkey.

My Jewish friend cited two poems written by Sephardim Jews in Turkey during World War I in support of the Turks (p.38, Ref.2):

Russia Russia what is your dream?

To conquer Turkey.

Let that day seen.



Hurry my brethren

Let us unite so that we do not become slaves to the Muscovite.

Poor Murad, unfortunate Mithat.

Who for liberty labored so hard.

Turks, Jews and Christians all Ottomans,

Let us join hands,

Let us pledge to be brothers!

We are parting for Istanbul

To combat the reactionaries

In order to preserve Turkish Liberty!

I embraced my Jewish friend and told her that I was really touched and I asked her to come with me so that I can make a Turkish coffee for her and tell her fortune. She went on to tell how the Haham Bashi and Talat Pasha had had a very friendly relationship and how the Alliance Schools were not closed during the War (p.39, Ref.2). As I was preparing the Turkish coffee, I noticed my Jewish friend continued to write her letter. After we both finished our coffee, we turned the small coffee cups over in their plates in order to tell the fortune after the plate cooled down. My Jewish friend remembered this song written in the early twentieth century by Turkish Jews. I had tears in my eyes and embraced my friend being very appreciative of her feelings.

My Jewish friend continued, "Istanbul is one of most beautiful cities of the world where people lived in harmony. However, the Western powers and the Armenians were very successful to muddy the waters to take advantage of the declining times of the Ottoman Empire. I know Armenians claim to be the first Christians and I believe they are also the first terrorists in the world."

My Jewish friend continued to talk about the history. "British, French, Russians and Germans ruined the whole area strategically and materially. Particularly the British divided up and carved out countries to sustain their influence in the area. Armenians played dual cards as citizens of the Ottoman Empire. At one point they teamed up with Russians to beat the Ottoman armies and at a later timeframe in history, they supported the French forces against the

Ottomans. Who benefited from all this? People living in the area died of hunger, sickness, disease and terrorist activities. My grandmother remembered that people were being relocated continuously, sometimes for their own safety and sometimes for the security of the state. As Turks escaped from Selanika in Greece, one could see roads full of dead bodies. Greeks as well as Bulgarians were attacking the people with vicious dogs. Unfortunately nobody has written about these events that took place against the Jews and the Turks. Europeans were requesting reforms from the Ottoman Empire, but they had no feeling towards the common people or those living in rural areas and villages. There was a tremendous religious bias and the Christians were trying to protect other Christians. Nobody cared about the Jews and the Turks. The villagers were being drafted into the military to fight and nobody was left behind to harvest the fields and as a result people were dying of hunger. Those being drafted were fighting on the fronts, protecting railroads, trying to stop the activities of the bandits and terrorist groups. The Europeans were continuously pushing for reforms but there was no money in the treasury to carry out the reforms and it was even difficult to impose a 3% customs duty on goods being imported. Capitulations were sucking the blood and the flesh of the country."

#### **Ottoman Protection of Jews from Armenian Atrocities**

I think Peter Balakian's grandmother did not tell him all of the things that went on or maybe he preferred not to write about them in his book. I think now he should list some of the actual events that went on during that time.

Armenians believed that Jews were using Christian blood in making "azyme" bread and that they were kidnapping Armenian children. Eastern Christians still are not convinced that Jews never used any blood. This belief leads to numerous atrocities conducted by Armenians upon Jews. Armenians would raid and search Jewish homes, attack Jews and in some instances even burn down their houses. When his ancestors did this to Jews, how can he claim to be a Jew? There were numerous such attacks. On January 8, 1872 a Rabbi wrote to the Ottoman authorities requesting help because Armenians were blaming Jews for kidnapping an Armenian and they had been threatening them for four days. On April 15, 1872 in Izmir a young Greek drowned in the sea. Greeks decided to remove the brain of the victim by cracking the skull. Although the autopsy

report revealed no foul play, Greeks blamed Jews, and then fanatic Greek gangs attacked Jewish homes with knives. Jews were terrorized and they lived in fear for the following three months (pp.74-75, Ref.6)

Dear Balakian made it look like Turks burned down Izmir based on his father's letter. On the contrary, Izmir was burned down by Greeks and, I am confident, also by some Armenians. A Greek newspaper reveals that the boy presumed kidnapped in Marmara Island in 1872 was in fact hidden by his mother (p.80, Ref.6). How can anyone believe Armenians? Ottomans were very patient when you consider they were occupied by the Armenian problems.

Armenian Easter is such a backward belief and I am sure that is still in their heads. I do not care what anybody says, but the type of person one should stay away from is the one that lies and makes false accusations. According to our beliefs they are guilty in front of God. These lies could have led to crimes by masses. I wonder what type of provocation tactics were used to influence poor people living in rural areas. How could these people, who proudly claim to be the first Christians and to be relatives with almost every civilization in Anatolia, accuse the Jews with such primitive ideas as "DRAWING BLOOD"? In Halep on 29 April 1875, Armenians threatened Jews and demanded that the so-called kidnapped child be returned or terrible things will happen to Jews. The situation returned to normal with the Ottoman Order (ferman) of 1840 when the so-called kidnapped child was again hidden by the Armenians in order to accuse Jews (pp.84-85, Ref.6). Those Armenians responsible were apprehended and put in jail by the Ottoman authorities. Let us not forget that these lies and false accusations could have led to riots resulting in the murder of innocent Jews. I am confident that those Armenians responsible for these actions continued their grudge against the Ottomans even after they migrated to the USA. Unfortunately Turks did not see the realities about Armenians like the Jews did. Mercy is God's gift to people and it should be upheld no matter what the religion is.

### **Carpet Story**

Another unbelievable story is told by Peter Balakian in his book (pp.182-183, Ref.3), with the sole purpose of insulting Turks. One day when his grandmother went to the house of a wealthy Christian family in Halep to drop off a wedding dress she had made, she saw

a carpet in the living room. She told this family that this carpet had been stolen from her house by Turks and requested to take it back. Of course, her request was not granted and the Balakian family decided to go to court to get the carpet back. There were no marks on the carpet to prove that it belonged to them and the accusation that the carpet had been stolen by Turks was her imagination. Nevertheless, strangely enough, the court decided in the Balakian family's favor and they managed to get the carpet back. Later, his grandmother sold the carpet in the bazaar and using that money together with the money sent by her brother, she bought tickets to migrate to the USA. This is a very bizarre and unbelievable story. It appears that Peter Balakian would not hesitate to make-up any type of story to insult and downgrade Turks. How could his grandmother have known who stole the carpet? There were many different ethnic groups living in that area and he had to go ahead and place the blame on Turks, like he blamed all of the killings on Turks.

### **The Occupation of İzmir Hidden from the World Press**

Peter Balakian stated (p.242, Ref.3) that "In the summer of 1922, my grandfather Murad Pasonian sent a telegram that read Smyrna (Izmir) has been burnt to ground, Greeks and Armenians are being slaughtered again." This incident is far from the truth and it amazes me how he can twist the facts. Let us look at what happened in Izmir at that time. "Greek armies were retreating full of vengeance and panic. As they were retreating towards the shore, their ultimate goal was to seek revenge on as much of the civil population as they could; they killed them, they beat them up, they burned down the towns and they filled the mosques with corpses of Turks that they killed together with the pigs they slaughtered"(p.90-91, Ref.14). This shows who was burning down Izmir and it appears that Murad Pasonian never noticed all those Turkish and Jewish civilians being murdered in Izmir by the Greeks and the Armenians. Probably Murad Panosyan did not want to see these realities. How can they be trusted when they ignore the realities?

In 1922, the country was very poor, people were dying of hunger, the nation had to deal with an overpopulated immigration problem and the country was fighting enemies on all fronts to gain independence. During such a difficult time, the Balakian family was enjoying a luxurious life in Geneva, Switzerland. Balakian himself admitted in his book that, "The great snowfields in the winter, my

father remembered the dreamy echoing of bells, bread and chocolate for breakfast. How could one do better?" (p.243, Ref.3). During this time, his grandfather was still in Istanbul and supporting the luxurious life style of his family in Geneva. This was a nice life and how could an Armenian in Turkey claim that they were being victimized while enjoying such nice living.

### **You Cannot Use a Turkish Song to Spread Hate**

Dear Peter Balakian,

The song you have tried to recite on page 179 (Ref.3) of your book is a Turkish folk song and it was a representation of the plea by the public to the Ottoman Emperor regarding their suffering. I am amazed that you have mistranslated the song to your liking to portray hatred. I have lived with Christians ever since I was 23 years old and I have observed that there are two types of Christians: those that carry the cross in their heads and those that carry Christ in their hearts. I think you fit into the first category of those carrying the cross in their heads. You have been seeded with hatred and you fail to see what really went on. This is not unique to Christianity and a similar classification can be made among Muslims. I consider myself among the millions of Turks that belong to the generation of followers in the footsteps of Atatürk. We are thought to love mankind, to live in harmony with all and to seek peace in the World. I strongly believe in the teachings of Mevlana and Yunus Emre who had open doors to anybody and who have tolerated men and women of all religions.

Regarding the song, I would like to enlighten you by providing the correct translation, at least for the first few lines:

There is no cloud in the air, what is this smoke,  
Nobody died in the neighborhood, what is this outcry,  
Those Yemen hands are so terrible.  
Ano is Yemen,  
Roses are bitter,  
I wonder why.  
This is Mush,  
The roads are steep,

Those that went there never came back,  
One wonders why?

.....

My grandmother used to cry every time she listened to this song. All of her five brothers were sent to Yemen to fight in the war and only one came back like a skeleton, sick and almost starving.

In your book you claim that Mush was a big Armenian city and the song, part of it cited above, was a death march lyric. In the first place you need to know that Mush has been under Turkish dominance for centuries. Although today, some circles try to exclude Mush and other Eastern cities from the territorial unity of Turkey, these efforts are all part of a big game to divide people and cultures and to create hatred and racism. In the second place you should know that this folk song was written to commemorate those that sacrificed their lives for their country in the war. You have no right to call this song an Armenian death march and to use it as another excuse to accuse Turks to accomplish your personal aims and to preach further hatred.

The common people during the Ottoman times were too worried about their own problems to be concerned with Armenians. These times provided opportunity for Armenians for awakening, renewal and further progress. There was no country in the world at the time where subjects were given ample religious freedom without any interference from the state. Missionaries were also free to travel and to carry on their activities. Unfortunately, today, even Europeans do not give us any credit for such tolerance.

As stated in your book (pp.227-232, Ref.3), the Balakian family was in the furniture (French style) business in the city of Tokat. Your grandfather managed to send your father to a private college and later to Germany to study medicine at the university. After graduation, Germany would not allow your father to remain there, although a Christian, he went on to Egypt to work there. Since he did not like Egypt, your father ended up in Istanbul working for a German company, an opportunity not easily available for a Turk. Ottomans opened all the gates to foreign powers while the country was being divided. Although our ancestors went through pain and extreme hardships, we chose not to teach these to our children to minimize dislike and hatred as requested by Atatürk. Irrespective of whether what the Ottomans did was right or wrong, we prefer to

bury it in the past. Armenians and, especially, you have no right to complain about those times because your family enjoyed all the benefits provided by the Ottomans to minorities while not making a single sacrifice. I would not blame the common people, particularly those living in Anatolia, if they were to complain since they were the ones living in poverty and they were always called upon to sacrifice and to fight in wars.

### **Wishful Thinking**

I am a strong believer that if Armenians had decided to remain in Turkey and to help to make prosperous the Ottoman Empire and later the Turkish Republic, both sides would have benefited. The guerilla groups that were killing innocent citizens would not have existed, peace and love would have subsided and Anatolian unity would not have been broken. Maybe it would have been possible to carry out a conversation with my lovely friend Mr. Ararat in Turkey. We are all born to share this world, not to destroy each other physically and psychologically. Let us all learn from the American song "This land is my land, this land is your land". For all these reasons Armenia/Armenians and Turkey/Turks should live in peace. Instead of spending all these monies on lobbying activities, let us join forces to erect a monument in the name of our ancestors who lost their lives during the early 20th century. Armenians and Turks should set an example for the whole world to admire and they should put an end to hatred and anger. In addition, we should invite our neighbors, including Azerbaijanis and Jews, to join us. Let us jointly build a PEACE MUSEUM in the city of Van and set our course towards "Peace in the Nation and Peace in the World" as dictated by Atatürk. I am proposing all these, knowing the facts that those Armenians living in Turkey have no problem and here in this country I have made many good Armenian friends.

### **Analogy with September 11**

World War I was a conflict in which many nations participated. This is in fact a very intriguing issue and it must be the subject of a separate research to find out how the Ottoman Empire was drawn into this war. In trying to understand the era better, it would help greatly if one were to read Justin McCarthy's book entitled "Death and Exile" (Ref.10). The author states that the western world tolerated Armenian terror against the Turkish diplomats because

the Armenians are Christians. The claim was also made in Peter Balakian's book that "the deaths of few Turks are nothing when compared with mass destruction of the Armenian people" (p.167, Ref.11). He further stated "I don't think these kids should be found guilty, even if they killed some Turkish diplomats" (p.168, Ref.11). I wonder what Americans would feel if Armenians were to have the same attitude towards the events of September 11 and claim that those nineteen terrorists should not be found guilty because they killed some Americans. Undoubtedly, it is the same thing because in both cases innocent people were murdered by terrorists. We see a similar attitude by Armenians towards the activities of Tehlirian, although they were carried out nearly eighty years earlier. Tehlirian killed one well-known Armenian in Istanbul and later on he assassinated Talat Pasha in Berlin.

### **Freedom of Expression Should not be Bought by Lobbying**

In later years, other Armenian terrorists killed more than fifty Turkish foreign staff working at various embassies. On page 167 of her book, Lorna Miller (Ref.11) states that the response of most of the Armenians interviewed was "If the boys are assassinating Turks! They do well!" One wonders if they would make the same statement for the terrorists of September 11. The historian Bernard Lewis stated to *Le Monde* newspaper on 13 November 1993 that the qualification of genocide, given the massacre perpetrated by Turks in 1915, was nothing more than "The Armenian version of this story" (Ref.15). The Armenian attitude towards terrorism is a typical Eastern Christian mentality: let a few more, that killed a diplomat, go to jail. It does not make a bit of difference.

### **September 11-Flight 93**

We were watching on TV a small-built, noble and courageous mother in tears. She was proud as she heard her son's voice for the last time via an airline telephone as the plane was plunging down somewhere in Pennsylvania. I could hear others, with family members on the same flight, crying as they were listening to the relentless pursuit of the terror. Turkish Government officials had tried for years to convince Western governments to cooperate to put an end to the terror which was taking the lives of Turkish diplomats, innocent civilians and military personal. The requests of Turkish officials were ignored because, particularly Europeans,



always acted with pre-conceived ideas. When Einstein stated that "it is much more difficult to break-up a pre-conceived mind than an atom", he must have used this not only for Jews but also for those not sympathizing with Turks. We must be thankful to the Swiss government who took the terrorism very seriously and convicted those who were responsible. The French Government almost overlooked the Armenian terrorist activities carried out in France and France became the breeding ground for Armenian terror.

As the TV program continued, Bill O'Reilly, the anchorman, turned to this mother and said "you must be a very brave woman". When I heard this remark, as a mother, I was also crying for those heroes on the airplane. I could sense what this mother on TV felt as she buried her loss in her heart.

Lorna Miller continued in her book, "Is there a fedai (volunteer) who could drop a huge bomb on Turkey now? Is it a sin today? Isn't there one Armenian who could do that and this would be for revenge!"(p.167, Ref.11). What a twisted mind. Doesn't this show that there were many Armenian fedais during the Ottoman years that were willing to carry out terrorist acts? I guess Lorna Miller doesn't really care who else would die if such a bomb were exploded over Turkey. Still today there are Armenians, Jews, Greeks and other ethnic groups in Turkey. Turks were never after revenge and we were never taught such evil thinking.

### **Conclusion**

The First World War was a tragic event and it caused hardships for the Turks as well as for the Armenians. It would be morally wrong to relate the consequences of this event to genocide. Ottomans were very tolerant and they shared their land as well as their wealth with people of different origins including Armenians, Jews and Greeks. There was no discrimination and on the contrary minorities benefited very nicely from the opportunities while sacrificing very little in return. As Ester Hanim, whose father grew up in Turkey, cried out loud to the demonstrating crowd "Turks, shared their land with us at our most difficult time, you too had good lives in Turkey. Why are you so full of hate and betrayal?"

We as Turks have not made our voices heard on this matter. One of the reasons might have been that we considered Armenians living in Turkey as one of us. When our diplomats were being killed by Armenians, the world reaction was weak and it was assumed to

be just some terrorist acts. However, after seeing all those books published by Armenians living in this country, it became obvious to me that, not only terrorists, but even the prominent individuals whether in business or in academic institutions were behind these activities. That is why we have to get our voices heard and solicit support of the whole world community. September 11 has shown what terrible tragedies terrorism can cause. In addition to stopping terrorism, it is essential to erase the pre-conceived ideas, to lead people to think and decide objectively and to modify the lobbying system to eliminate one-sided decisions.

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- 9 Georges de Maleville, *1915 Osmanlı-Rus Ermeni Trajedisi – Fransız Avukatın Ermeni Tezleri Karşısında Türkiye Savunması*, (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1998); translated into Turkish by Necdet Bakkaloğlu, pp. 104-110
- 10 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims*, (? : Darwin Press, 1995)
- 11 Donald E. Miller and Lorna T. Miller, *Survivors, An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, (? : University of California Press, 1999), pp. 42, 167-168
- 12 Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat – Armenia in Modern History*, (? : Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 224

- 13 Bilal N. Simsir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız (1973-1994)*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2000)
- 14 David Walder, *Çanakkale Olayı*, (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1970), pp. 90-92
- 15 *LeMonde* Newspaper web site  
“[www.hr-action.org/armenia/LeMonde.htm](http://www.hr-action.org/armenia/LeMonde.htm)”

## BOOK REVIEW

### **ERMENİLER: SÜRGÜN VE GÖÇ / ARMENIANS: DEPORTATION AND MIGRATION**

Authors: Hikmet Özdemir, Kemal Çiçek, Ömer Turan, Ramazan Çalık and Yusuf Halaçoğlu

(Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2004), 211 pp.  
ISBN 975161708-1

**Yıldız DEVECİ\***

Historians generally believe that without waiting 50 years after an incident, or in the case of opening archives, at least 30 years, history cannot be written properly. If written earlier than this, it will be full of mistakes and deficiencies. The reason behind such an argument concerns the ongoing formation of the events. That is, not all the consequences of the events can be clarified in such a short term, though they can be seen in the medium, and long term.

We can say that for the work examined here that the course of history has been "completed in the historical perspective". It has been almost 90 years since 1915. Although the fallout from these events continues, we can say that the subject is now ripe for the historians to study.

The Turkish Historical Society has responded to the Armenian genocide allegations with mathematical calculations based on western documents. The Turkish Historical Society presents the results of this research, which lasted approximately two years in the archives of the USA (missionary archives included), Britain, Germany and Ottoman Turkey, in the book called *Armenians: Deportation and Migration*.

\* ASAM, Institute for Armenian Research, Intern, Ankara. E-mail: ydeveci@eraren.org.

The book consists of three parts: the first part includes data on the Armenian population in the Ottoman empire, comments on population research, Ottoman population and sources, diplomatic reports and statistics of the Armenian Patriarch, British Statistics (1919), American Statistics (1919). It also considers so-called 'unusual factors' in the population calculations, new research on Armenian population and final assessments on Armenian population.

The Second part mentions about the deportations and transportation of Armenians to Syria, the road to deportations and the reports on deportations, migration to Russia and other places, the losses and the rest.

The third part includes Armenians after the deportations, the Decree on the return and resettlement of Armenians, the collaboration of Armenians with the occupation forces in Anatolia and the Armenians who migrated abroad in the wake of the Turkish National Liberty War. In addition a conclusion, appendixes, bibliography and index parts are presented to the reader.

This book, which was prepared depending on the foreign documents, assesses the genocide claims of Armenians scientifically and puts forward clearly the situation of Armenians and the Armenian population from 1914 to 1918.

The original language of the book is Turkish and it is printed on quality paper. On the cover of the book, there is a picture of Armenians subjected to deportation, which is taken from the German Archives.



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3. Charles van der Leeuw, 'Newly Independent Azerbaijan: Ever-Present Gunsmoke and the Kremlin's Long Arm', in Antero Leitzinger (ed.), *Caucasus and an Unholy Alliance*, (Vantaa: Leitzinger Books, 1997), pp. 48-52.
4. Arslan Terzioğlu, 'The Assasination of Dr. Bahaddin Sakir...', *Armenian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, September-October-November 2001, pp. 274-304.
5. www.mfa.gov.tr/OrtaAsya/aciklama123.htm, 24 February 2002.

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