

WHAT IS OPERATION NEMESIS?

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On April 25th, 2023, a monument dedicated to the Operation Nemesis terrorists was unveiled in Yerevans Ring Park. The ceremony was attended by many members of the public, as well as artists, academics and descendants of the Operation Nemesis terrorists.

The monument dedicated to the Operation Nemesis terrorists was designed by Kamo Areyan. Kamo Areyan is the former mayor of Yerevan. In a report published in Asbarez, Areyan claimed that the country was covered in blood in April 108 years ago to justify the monument[1]. This statement completely contradicts the facts. To recall briefly, a circular was issued on April 24th, 1915, which resulted in a number of arrests. In the circular, after it was understood that Armenian separatist organizations were preparing for a collective rebellion despite all warnings, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ottoman Army instructed the military units on 27 February 1915 that the weapons, bombs and some coded documents captured within Armenian organizations showed that they were preparing for a revolution, and for this reason, it was ordered that Armenian soldiers in the army should not be used in armed services, to be more careful everywhere and to take the necessary measures, but not to harm those among the Armenians who were loyal to the state[2]. As is known, the Law on Relocation and Resettlement was issued on May 27th, 1915. According to the Law, only Armenians in the war zone and along the supply routes were to be subjected to relocation and resettlement, the three major provinces of Istanbul, Edirne and Izmir were excluded from the scope of this law. It was even decided to introduce some exceptions with the circular dated August 28th, 1915, which was subsequently issued for the implementation of the law.

As part of this process, some officials were found to have mistreated the caravans. It is known that these individuals condoned extortion attempts and some of them caused deaths. The administration acted in a very sensitive manner regarding this issue and in 1916, 1647 people were brought to court. Of these people, 500 were sentenced to imprisonment, more than 60 to hard labor and 67 to death.

Operation Nemesis, carried out by the Dashnak terrorist organization, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), was called the second period of Armenian terrorism and these revenge attacks were orchestrated to punish those responsible for the decisions taken on April 24th, 1915 and May 27th, 1915. Operation Nemesis is a terrorist act in the truest sense of the word. In February 2015, Syracuse University launched a digital and physical book titled Sacred Justice. The book was written by Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy, the granddaughter of Operation Nemesis member Aaron Sachaklian. In the promotional article, the members of Operation Nemesis are portrayed as heroes and their eternal hatred as a sacred oath. Aaron Sachaklians family knew him as a man who served for many years as the chief financial officer of the church he helped found; who, with his wife, provided housing for many Armenian families after World War II; who wrote countless letters on behalf of his people to governments, churches, and prominent leaders; and who wrote a play that was staged in Syracuse. Aaron Sachaklian served as the organization's finance and logistics officer[3]. Many years later, towards the end of his life, he bemoaned that I could have done more[4]. His granddaughter then told the whole story as if it was a tale of heroism. Aaron Sachaklian, who died on August 5th, 1964, said, I could have done more, suggesting that he was lamenting his own inadequacy concerning the organization he was a part of. It is clear that terrorists show no signs of remorse today, as they did yesterday.

In his book on Operation Nemesis, Eric Boghosian quotes Louise Nalbandians book The Armenian Revolutionary Federation: The Development of Armenian Political Parties Through The Nineteenth Century, he writes, In an 1892 publication, the Program of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, in which the goals and means of the organization are laid out, it is clearly stated that the organization would strive to stimulate fighting to terrorize government officials, informers, traitors, usurers, and every kind of exploiter ☀ to expose government establishments to looting and destruction[5]. By sharing this statement, Boghosian aimed to assign a different meaning to the concept of terrorism. Just as the expression genocide, which is a legal concept, was recognized by 33 parliaments despite the fact that the Armenian allegations were not recognized by a competent court, with the aforementioned and similar monuments, attempts are being made to establish the concept of terrorism is as a just cause movement. Through these and similar organizations, terrorists are being commemorated as heroes and legitimized. This is also seen in Boghosians book:

> With no recourse against government-sponsored violence, in the late nineteenth century, Armenians formed revolutionary societies, notably the Armenakan Party, the Hnchag (Bell) Party (or Hnchags), and the Hai Heghapokhakanneri Tashnagtsutiun (the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or ARF, also known as the Tashnags). Emboldened by revolutionary activity in Russia, these organizations had committed themselves to education of the peasantry, agricultural reform, and the establishment of a constitutional and/or socialist government. They were also, by their own admission, terrorist[6].

The book also includes a definition of terror in the notes section: Though the terms terror and terrorist can be found throughout ARF literature from its earliest days, the leaders of

the Tashnags and their fedayeen did not see terror in terms of direct attacks on innocent civilians. Assassinations of officials and traitors were the mainstay, though there could be exceptions, as seen in the paragraphs that follow[7].

Boghosians book also includes the assassinations of Azerbaijani high-level state officials. On June 19th, 1920, Arshavir Shiragian and Aram Yerganian, who are portrayed as heroes in the book, assassinated the former Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, Fatali Khan Khoyski[8]. On March 15th, 1921, a few months after the release of Tehlirian, who killed Talat Pasha in Berlin, Misak Torlakian, with the help of Harutiun Harutiunian and Yervant Fundukian, shot and killed Behbud Khan Javanshir, the former interior minister of Azerbaijan, in front of the Pera Palace Hotel in Istanbul on July 18th, 1921[9].

Operation Nemesis did not only target Turks. Armenians also lost their lives as a result of the attacks of Operation Nemesis members. Among those who lost their lives was an Armenian named Harutiun Megerdichian. Megerdichian was murdered by Soghomon Tehlirian, the assassin of Talat Pasha, following him step by step[10]. The details of the murder are described in Boghosians book. There were other Armenians who were declared traitors by the murderers of Operation Nemesis. Vahe Ihsan (Yesayan) was murdered by Arshavir Shiragian for informing the Turkish police of groups preparing to revolt and for assisting in arrests as a result of the Circular of April 24th, 1915. The terrorist Shiragian, it will be recalled, had assassinated Sait Halim Pasha in Rome on December 6th, 1921 and Cemal Azmi Bey in Berlin on April 17th, 1922. Hmayag Aramiantz was also assassinated by Arshavir Shiragian with the help of Arshag Yezdanian [11].

Boghosians book, Operation Nemesis, contains blood-curdling sentences. In addition to praising terrorism in general and presenting the use of terrorism to instill fear in the masses as a heroic act, it is essentially a handbook for terrorism. For instance:

> My second bullet got Ihsan in the arm. When he realized that he would not be able to use his gun, he started to run. I fired two more bullets after him as I chased him. There was quite a commotion in the street. Pedestrians were screaming and trying to take cover, and from nearby windows people were throwing things at me □□□□□□□□□□□ shoes, anything. But no one dared to get in my way or grab me. Ihsan fell; his head struck a stone. My third and fourth bullets had hit him, but he didnt seem human. He was still alive. He got to his knees and tried to stand. We were both being struck by the various objects which people were throwing at us from the shelter of their homes. Taking advantage of the confusion, Ihsan managed to get his revolver out of his pocket. He started to take aim. I jumped on him and fired my last two bullets into his head. Then I started to run away. But I couldnt leave. I had to turn back to make certain that he had stopped breathing. In my nervousness and because of my inexperience, I had done a sloppy job. His skull was shattered and his brains had splattered on the stones.
>
> Over the next few years, Shiragian would develop a more elegant killing technique [12].

All the information given above and sourced from Armenian authors clearly demonstrates that Operation Nemesis was a terrorist activity. In this context, what Artyom Yerganian, a journalist and descendant of Aram Yerganian, one of the Nemesis terrorists, said at the so-called memorial event in Yerevan is astonishing. Can you imagine what would have happened without Operation Nemesis? he asked, to which he replied, we would have been a sick nation suffering from psychological complications. I often compare them to psychiatrists. They made us feel worthy. These people are not terrorists, they are the executors of a just verdict by a legitimate court. It is sad that Armenians admit that they resorted to terrorism to define their identity or to make themselves feel worthy. This in itself shows the amount of psychological scars they have inflicted upon themselves. Moreover, the fact that they believe that there is a court of law present gives an idea of their current psychological state.

All statements regarding the so-called monument in question are incompatible with historical facts and encourage violence, anger, hatred and separation. It is a step that does not contribute to and even undermines the normalization process Armenia is in with Turkey. We respectfully commemorate the diplomats and citizens we have lost due to terrorism and we bow before their cherished memories.

*Photograph: *https://www.npr.org/2021/05/03/993128456/operation-nemesis*

[1] Nemesis Monument Inaugurated in Yerevan, *Asbarez*, asbarez.com, April 25, 2023, https://asbarez.com/nemesis-monument-inaugurated-in-yerevan/.

[2] What Happened on 24 April 1915?, *Marmara Üniversitesi*, Marmara.edu.tr, http://turksandarmenians.marmara.edu.tr/en/what-happened-on-24-april-1915/.

[3] Eric Boghosian, The Assassination Plot That Avenged The Armenian Genocide Operation Nemesis, The Little, Brown: New York, April 2015, p. 263.

[4] Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy, Sacred Justice The Voices and Legacy of the Armenian Operation Nemesis, Transaction Publishers: New Jersey, 2015, p. 83.

[5] Eric Boghosian, p. 57.

[6] Ibid. p. 50.

[7] Ibid. p. 318.

[8] Ibid. p. 247.

[9] Ibid. p. 241.

[10] Ibid. p. 132.

[11] Ibid. p. 244.

[12] Ibid. p. 246.

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