

THE ARMENIAN FORCED RELOCATION: PUTTING AN END TO MISLEADING SIMPLIFICATIONS

(ERMENİ ZORUNLU GÖÇÜ:
ALDATICI BASİTLEŞTİRMELERE SON VERMEK)

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Abstract: *This paper studies three aspects of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. First of all, contrary to what the main Armenian and pro-Armenian affirm, there were hundreds of thousands, likely 500,000 Armenians, who were exempted of relocation, particularly in Istanbul, Western and Central Anatolia as well as in the Arab provinces. Then, the policy of the Ottoman government vis-à-vis the Armenian exiles was a protective ones, even if this protection failed in a considerable number of cases. The orders from Istanbul are clear. In particular, it is false to assert that the Ottoman government did not provide food and opposed the foreign relief. Such accusations are based on manipulation of evidence and neglect Ottoman as well as American and German sources. The relocation of 1915-16 is also misrepresented if described as the only reason for the losses of the Ottoman Armenian community between 1914 and 1922. In fact, the Russian relocation and the flow of refugees have to be considered, as well as the direct responsibilities of the Armenian extremists in the emigration of Armenians from Cilicia during the French withdrawal and the Greek scorched earth policy in 1922, which included the forced exile of the Christians from Western Anatolia.*

Keywords: *Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Committee of Union and Progress, Greece, Social Democratic Hunchakian Party, Ottoman Empire, racism, Russia, Turkish War of Independence.*

Öz: *Bu makale Türk-Ermeni ihtilafının üç konusunu incelemektedir. İlk olarak, Ermeniler ve Ermeni yanlılarının iddia ettiği aksine, özellikle İstanbul, Batı ve Orta Anadolu ve ayrıca Arap vilayetlerinde, sayıları yaklaşık olarak 500.000'i bulan çok sayıda Ermeni sevk ve iskândan muaf tutulmuşlardır. Ayrıca, Osmanlı hükümetinin Ermeni sürgünlere yönelik politikası, çok sayıda vakada bu politika başarısız olmuş olsa dahi, koruyucu bir politikadır. İstanbul'dan gelen emirler çok açıktır. Özellikle,*

Osmanlı hükümetinin yiyecek sağlamadığı ve yabancı yardımlarını engellediği gibi suçlamalar kesinlikle asılsızdır. Bu tür suçlamalar tahrif edilmiş kanıtlara dayandırılmaktadır ve Osmanlı olduğu kadar Amerikan ve Alman kaynaklarının da göz ardı edilmesi anlamına gelmektedir. Eğer 1915-1916 sevk ve iskânı, Osmanlı Ermenilerinin 1914-1922 yılları arasında yaşadığı kayıpların asıl sebebi olarak sunuluyorsa bu gerçeğe aykırıdır. Aslında, Rusların gerçekleştirdiği sevk ve mülteci akını olduğu kadar Ermeni radikal gruplarının Fransızların çekilmesi sırasında Kilikya Ermenilerinin göç ettirilmesindeki sorumluluğu ve Rumların 1922'deki yakma politikası ile Batı Anadolu'daki Hristiyanların zorla göç ettirilmesi de göz önüne alınmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ermeni Devrimci Federasyonu, İttihat ve Terakki Partisi, Yunanistan, Hınçak, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, ırkçılık, Rusya, Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı.*

The Armenian question in general and the issue of the 1915-16 relocations led to countless misinterpretations, and even to use of certified forgeries. Prof. Xavier de Planhol observed that this issue is subject of an “immense literature, which contains frequently considerable historical distortions, which takes away any value to it.”¹ Worse, the lowest part of this literature “generated an authentic anti-Turkish racism.”² It also inspired Armenian terrorism from 1973 to 1997 and more recently Anders Breivik.³ The goal of this paper is not to discuss the background of the relocations, namely the decades-long fight of the Armenian nationalist organizations against the Ottoman state,⁴ or the security reasons at the origin of the decision taken by the Committee Union and Progress (CUP) cabinet in May 1915.⁵ It is instead to study three important topics, less discussed until now than the two previous ones: namely, the exemptions of relocation, the conditions of the relocated Armenians and the real effect of the exile to the Armenian population of Anatolia.

Indeed, the insufficient emphasis on these aspects led to regrettable distortions and errors. Not surprisingly, highly partisan authors such as Taner Akçam, Peter Balakian, Vahakn N. Dadrian and Yves Ternon are at the forefront for this oversimplification of history. However, some interesting historians who actually contributed to the advancement of our knowledge on the framework of 1915, the security concerns, the war crimes of the Armenian volunteers fighting in the Russian army and, more generally, the Russian policy vis-à-vis

1 Xavier de Planhol, *Minorités en Islam*, Paris : Flammarion, 1997, n. 144, p. 450.

2 Gilles Veinstein, “Trois questions sur un massacre”, *L’Histoire*, April 1995, p. 41. Also see Bernard Lewis, *Notes on a Century. Reflections of a Middle East Historian*, London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012, p. 290 ; Vincent Monteil, *Les Musulmans soviétiques*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1982, p. 215; and Turgut Tuncel, *Armenian Diaspora: Diaspora, State and the Imagination of the Republic of Armenia*, Ankara: Terazi Publications, 2014, pp. 42-45.

3 See the references to Peter Balakian in the manifesto of Anders Breivik: <https://publicintelligence.net/anders-behring-breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/> I searched if Mr. Balakian made any comment on the reference to his book by Anders Breivik, but I found nothing.

4 William Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951; Justin McCarthy, Cemalettin Taşkıran and Ömer Turan, *Sasun: The History of an 1890s Armenian Revolt*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014; Garabet Mouldjian, “Rebels With a Cause — Armenian-Macedonian Relations and their Bulgarian Connection, 1895-1913,” in Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi (ed.), *War and Nationalism. The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913, and their Sociopolitical Implications*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013, pp. 131-175; Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878-1896*, London-Portland: Frank Cass, 1993.

5 Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians. A Study in Counter-Insurgency*, New York-London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013 (more particularly pp. 97-212); Carter Vaughn Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity. A History, 1789-2007*, New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2010, pp. 209-211; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 356; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005, pp. 90-109; Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran and Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006; Stanford Jay Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I*, Ankara: TTK, volume II, 2008, pp. 859-965 and 979-991.

the Armenians seem like afraid of their own courage and their description of the course of the relocation is far from showing the same level of accuracy than their analysis of the context. The two most obvious examples in this regard are Michael A. Reynolds and Sean McMeekin.

The Armenians exempted of relocation

Istanbul and Izmir

The place of Armenians in the Ottoman administration *during* the First World War is an issue ignored by the supporters of the “Armenian genocide” label and not sufficiently stressed by most of the scholars who criticize it. Yücel Güçlü recalled us the cases of Hrant Abro, legal advisor of the Ottoman ministry of Foreign Affairs during the whole war, member of the Ottoman delegation to negotiate peace with Bolshevik Russia in 1918; and Bedros Hallaçyan, minister from 1909 to 1912, member of the central committee of the CUP from 1913 to 1915, representative of the Ottoman Empire at The Hague from 1915 to 1916 and eventually chairman of the commission in charge to rewrite the Ottoman code of commerce.⁶ Feroz Ahmad rediscovered Artin Boşgezenyan, CUP deputy of Aleppo from 1908 to 1918, still influential in the party in 1918.⁷ More regrettably, the only monograph on Berç Keresteciyan, deputy general manager (until 1914) and general manager (1914-1927) of the Ottoman Bank, who finished his public life as a deputy of Afyon at the Turkish national assembly (1935-1946), is an unpublished master thesis.⁸

Beyond such individual cases, it is particularly important to notice that most of the Armenians of Istanbul and Izmir were not relocated.⁹ However, not afraid to deny well-established facts with non-scholarly arguments and a non-scholarly wording, Taner Akçam pretends that the absence of relocation from Istanbul and Izmir is a “denialist argument,” nothing less.¹⁰ It could be sufficient to notice that, in this regard, Mr. Akçam is more “nationalist Armenian” than U.S. ambassador (1913-1916) Henry Morgenthau and his

6 Yücel Güçlü, *The Holocaust and the Armenian Case in Comparative Perspective*, Lanham-Boulder-New York-Toronto-Plymouth: University Press of America, 2012, pp. 79-84 and 86.

7 Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014, p. 93.

8 Semi Ertan, *An Armenian at the Turkish Parliament in the Early Republican Period: Berç Türker Keresteciyan*, master thesis, Sabancı University, <http://armenians-1915.blogspot.com/2007/03/1473-armenian-at-parliament-in-early.html>

9 Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks...*, pp. 81 and 85; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 203-205.

10 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity*, Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012, pp. 399-410.

ghostwriters (his secretary, Hagop S. Andonian, his dragoman Arshag Schmavonian and a journalist, Burton J. Hendrick). Indeed, in the book signed by Morgenthau but in fact largely written by Hendricks, Andonian and Schmavonian, it is explained that “Of the larger cities, Constantinople, Smyrna, and Aleppo were spared [...]”¹¹ Correspondingly, in his diary, there is no trace of any significant “deportation” of Armenians from any of these three cities.¹² Regardless, we shall see what sources are used by Taner Akçam to support his wrong assertion.

He quotes the Memoirs of Armenian patriarchate in Istanbul. Not only this clergyman was a Turkophobe, who has lost his position in 1922 as a result of the Kemalist victory, but what he writes in his Memoirs, is contradicted by the estimations of the Armenian Delegation to the Peace Conference in 1919. Indeed, this delegation concluded that there were no significant losses for the Armenians Istanbul, Izmir and Syria: they estimated the Armenian population in these three parts of the Ottoman Empire to be around 230,000 in 1914 and yet gave the same figure for 1918.¹³ Without any reserve, Mr. Akçam also presents us as evidence a “letter, written on 28 October 1915 by the Balkan branch of the Dashnaktsoutiun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation).”¹⁴ The fact that the ARF was at the vanguard of the fight against the Turks does not seem relevant for Taner Akçam in this regard. However, he may have understood that such sources are not convincing at all, and tries to find Ottoman documents, but they do not prove any of his claims. Taner Akçam writes that “there are examples of those deported for their membership in certain political organizations, such as ‘Serki, son of Kirkor [who was] deported from Istanbul to Konya when it was learned that he was a member of the Dashnaktsoutiun Armenian Committee.’”¹⁵ Nobody ever denied that members of the ARF, a revolutionary-terrorist organization working for the victory of Russia, were expelled from Istanbul.¹⁶ Incidentally, it may be noted that Taner Akçam argues that the goal of the “genocide” was to eliminate the Armenian people from

11 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, New York: Doubleday, Page & C°, 1918, p. 309. It is perfectly true that this book is, as a whole, dishonest (Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, New York-Toronto-London: MacMillan, 1928, volume II, pp. 167-182; Heath Lowry, *The Story Behind "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story"*, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1990); but precisely, each concession to the reality in such a book is remarkable.

12 Ara Sarafian (ed.), *United States Diplomacy on The Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau 1913-1916*, London: Gomidas Institute/Taderon Press, 2004.

13 A. A. Pallis, *Greece's Anatolian Venture—and After*, London: Methuen & C°, 1937, p. 53.

14 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks'...*, p. 401.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 405.

16 For details: Yusuf Sarımay, “What Happened on April 24, 1915? The Circular of April 24, 1915, and the Arrest of Armenian Committee Members in Istanbul,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, XIV-1 & 2, Fall 2008, pp. 75-101, http://www.turkishcanadians.com/wp-content/uploads/april_-24.pdf

Anatolia, and regardless gives the example of an Armenian sent from Istanbul... to Anatolia.

On İzmir, Taner Akçam is able to find only 256 expelled Armenians, who, according to an Ottoman document he quotes, were members of the revolutionary organizations.¹⁷ The same figure (256) is used in the list published by Yusuf Halaçoğlu.¹⁸ In 1914, the Armenian population in the city was about 13,000 and in the province, around 25,000.¹⁹ So, these 256 arrested revolutionaries represented 1% of the whole.

It is sometime difficult to distinguish, in publications supporting the “Armenian genocide” label, errors attributable to ignorance from deliberate distortions, including as far as İzmir is concerned.

Non-Turkish documents confirm the absence of relocations from Istanbul and Izmir. Reporting on the general conditions of the Ottoman Empire on 1st January 1918, Lewis Heck, secretary of the American embassy in İstanbul, wrote: “The Armenian population of Constantinople and Smyrna continued unmolested.”²⁰ In a letter sent after the armistice to General Townshend, Charlton Wittal, a businessman and “a representative of one of the oldest British families resident in Turkey” testified that “in the province of Smyrna,” “Armenians lived in peace and received a fair treatment.”²¹ These observations are confirmed by at least two reports of the French Navy’s intelligence service, written in 1919 and 1920. One noticed that in İzmir, there was not serious problem for the Armenian community during the war, and another one observed that the “one thousand Armenian families” of Ödemiş, in the province of İzmir, “prospered, even during the war, because they were unmolested.”²² Correspondingly, Willy Sperco (1887-1978), a leading Levantine journalist, recalls that in Istanbul and Izmir, “Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, French, English and Italians” attended theater plays together, during the Dardanelles battle, namely in 1915.²³

17 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks’...*, p. 410.

18 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of 1915. What happened to the Ottoman Armenians?*, Ankara: TTK, 2008, p. 56.

19 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 204; Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities. The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire*, New York-London: New York University Press, 1983, p. 80.

20 Report from Berne, Switzerland, dated 7 February 1918, p. 23, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park (Maryland), RG 59, M 353, reel 7 (867.00/813).

21 Letter dated 10 February 1921, The National Archives, Kew Gardens (London), FO 371/6499/2265.

22 S.R. Marine, Turquie, 16 décembre 1920, Service historique de la défense, Vincennes (SHD), 7 N 3211 ; S.R. Marine, Turquie, n° 833, 14 juin 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 232.

23 Willy Sperco, *Turcs d’hier et d’aujourd’hui*, Paris, Nouvelles éditions latines, 1961, p. 16.

It is sometime difficult to distinguish, in publications supporting the “Armenian genocide” label, errors attributable to ignorance from deliberate distortions, including as far as Izmir is concerned. Especially, Yves Ternon writes, without providing any source: “in the sanjak of Ismid [Izmit], the deportation is organized by the ‘responsible secretary,’ Djemal [sic] Bayar.”²⁴ So, not only this author (a surgeon without any real education in history) is wrong on the first name of the future Turkish president, but he wrongly places him in Izmit during the First World War: Celâl Bayar was in Izmir. Dr. Ternon should stick to medicine.

Other parts of Anatolia and Arab provinces

The exemption for Istanbul and Izmir are no exception. The most remarkable case is probably the vilayet of Konya. As noticed the French Navy’s intelligence service, the Armenians never suffered because of the Turks in this province. There was no massacre during the reign of Abdülhamit II or during the CUP years.²⁵ Even an American report written for the Peace Conference of Paris, and largely based, as far as populations are concerned, on the conclusions of Dr. W. Post—an American missionary working in Konya and who made no secret of his dislike for the Turks—explains that the Armenians were more numerous in this province in 1917 than in 1914, because “the number of exiles introduced to the vilayet is much greater than that of the emigrants [from Konya].”²⁶ Correspondingly, the exemption for the Armenians of Kütahya (more than 5,000)²⁷ is generally not denied, even by the supporters of the “Armenian genocide” label, but is frequently attributed to the sole action of the *kaimakan* (sub-governor).²⁸ In fact, no Ottoman document ordering, or considering, the relocation of the Armenians from Kütahya was ever found.²⁹ The exemption for the Armenians of Antalya³⁰ (about 800) is generally not contested but simply ignored on the Armenian side of the controversy.

Another case, interesting both in itself and by the treatment he receives in a

24 Yves Ternon, *Les Arméniens, histoire d'un génocide*, Paris : Le Seuil, 1996, p. 280.

25 S.R. Marine, Turquie, n° 1351, 25 novembre 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 235.

26 O. J. Campbell, Report on the Vilayet of Konya, p. 8, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University (California), Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920), U.S. territorial section, box 4.

27 Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and...*, p. 80.

28 Yves Ternon, *Les Arméniens, histoire...*, p. 280. Surprisingly, the same inaccuracy is present in Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks and the Ottoman...*, p. 82, and Yücel Güçlü, *The Holocaust and...*, p. 66.

29 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of...*, p. 91, n. 220.

30 Telegram of Talat to the governorate of Antalya, 17 August 1915, *TACD*, p. 213.

book of Taner Akçam, is Kastamonu. Mr. Akçam relies on the “written deposition of Kastamonu governor Reşid Pasha,” in 1919, relating that

“In his statement, the governor recounted that he had at one point received a memo from Bahaeddin Şakir (signed ‘Head of the Special Organization’) announcing that the Armenians of Kastamonu were to be deported and informing him that he was being removed from his position for noncompliance with this order.”³¹

Besid the fact that the “testimony” of Reşid was never submitted to cross-examination but simply written and read during a hearing a trial in front a military tribunal in Istanbul, there are at least two big problems with this source. Firstly, Şakir was never the “head of the Special Organization” and could not have signed any “memo” with such a title.³² Secondly, even after the removal of Reşid, Minister of Interior Talat wrote to the new governorate of Kastamonu, in October 1915: “There is no need, for the time being, to remove the Armenians living in your province.” Months after this telegram, a part of the Armenians of Kastamonu were “randomly distributed to the villages and districts where no Armenians or the people of other nations are living” to leave space for refugees “coming from the 4th Army region.”³³

According to a draft written in 1917 by a secretary of Talat, between 350 and 400,000 Armenians were not relocated and Edward J. Erickson estimates that the actual figure may have attained 500,000.³⁴ This last figure is the most credible, for two reasons: The draft does not include the exempted Armenians of Istanbul and Thrace; and there are several instances of underestimations, for example about the provinces of Izmir and Konya.

As a result, it is wrong to allege, as does Michael A. Reynolds without providing any source “that deportation orders were applied not just to Armenians in militarily sensitive areas but to virtually all Armenians outside Istanbul, Edirne, Izmir and the Arab provinces.”³⁵ That having been said, at least Dr. Reynolds mentions the Arab provinces. Armenian propagandists

31 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks* ‘...’, p. 416.

32 Yücel Güçlü, “Mislabeling Genocide?”, *The Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2006, pp. 67–68, <http://www.meforum.org/969/the-great-game-of-genocide>

33 Telegrams of Talat to the governorate of Kastamonu, 23 October 1915 and 20 April 1916, *TACD*, pp. 341 and 439.

34 Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians*..., pp. 216-218.

35 Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires. The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russia Empires, 1908-1918*, New York-Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 149. Sean McMeekin’s account is more subtle, but yet inaccurate: *The Russian origins of the First World War*, Cambridge (Massachusetts)-London: Harvard University Press, 2011, pp. 171-172.

regularly use a photograph showing, according to them Armenians hanged in Jerusalem. In fact, this photo represents Ottoman soldiers executed for desertion—indeed in Jerusalem—, in June 1916.³⁶ It also bears noting that in his extremely tendentious and inaccurate description of the events in the province of Aleppo,³⁷ Yves Ternon never mentions the fact that, except six or seven families, the 22,000 Armenians of Aleppo city were not relocated at all.³⁸

Special Categories

Another fact contradicting the “genocide” charge, and even more the baseless comparisons with the Holocaust, is the exemption of relocation for Catholic and Protestant Armenians, and well as for artisans and employees of the railroad and the Ottoman Bank.³⁹ Once again, trying to deny such facts, Mr. Akçam manipulates his sources. In particular, he alleges:

“On 18 September 1915 cables sent from Kayseri, Eskişehir, Niğde, Diyarbakır, report that all the Armenians had been deported from these provinces and that none remained.”⁴⁰

Except the cable sent from Diyarbakır, these documents do not say what Mr. Akçam pretends they say. The telegram from Kayseri explicitly refers to 4,911 Armenians who were not relocated. Correspondingly, the cable from Niğde mentions “an Armenian population of 221 persons, consisting of Catholics and Protestants” allowed to stay in the sancak (district). Eventually, the telegram sent from Eskişehir explains that “the number of Armenians required to be removed [from the sancak] amounted to 7,000” and that all of them were actually expelled.⁴¹ Interpreting such a formulation as a proof that “all the Armenians had been deported from these provinces and that none remained” is impossible. Indeed, according to the Ottoman census, there were 8,807 Armenians in the district according to the Ottoman census—about 10,000 according to the British estimate and according to Justin McCarthy.⁴² Considering the necessity to update the figures of the Ottoman census, it is fair

36 <https://bokertovyerushalayim.wordpress.com/2014/05/30/la-porte-de-yafo/>

37 Yves Ternon, *Les Arméniens, histoire...*, pp. 284-289.

38 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 191.

39 Kemal Çiçek, *The Great War and the Forced Migration of Armenians*, Belfast: Athol Books, 2011, pp. 78-81.

40 Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act...*, p. 177.

41 İsmet Binark (ed.), *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920)*, Ankara, 1995, pp. 94-97.

42 Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 80 ; Meir Zamir, “Population statistics of the Ottoman empire in 1914 and 1919,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, XVII-1, January 1981, pp. 100 and 104.

to conclude that about 3,000 Armenians were exempted in the district of Eskişehir only.⁴³

Taner Akçam also manipulated a telegram sent by Talat on August 29, 1915: this “new order was emphatically not retroactive but solely applied to ‘the Armenians who were not [already] uprooted and deported.’” The word “already,” added by Taner Akçam into brackets, has no basis at all in the text. The full text of this document is indeed the following (my emphasis):

“Objective of the transfer of the Armenians from the places they are currently living to the certain determined regions is to prevent their attempts and activities against the government and to render them unable to pursue their national goal of establishing an Armenian government. *Since there is no intention like the complete destruction of the Armenians* it is absolutely necessary to protect the lives of the individuals being transferred in convoys and to take every measure to provide their food supplies regularly during their travel, the cost of which to be met from the immigrants fund. It is also necessary for the government that, with the exclusion of those who were decided to be relocated, *the Armenians, particularly the families of the army members, as mentioned in the previous notice, as well as artisans and those belonging to the Protestant and Catholic sects will be left at their current place of residence.* About those who attack the convoys and seize their properties and dare to rape the Armenians by acting on bestial instincts, as well as the officials and gendarme members who act as the initiator of such acts, the legal investigation shall be started immediately for their severe punishment, without showing any mercy on them. Such officials shall be immediately dismissed from the service and brought before the military court. Furthermore, their names should be reported. In case similar attacks are repeated, the administration of the province where such attacks occur shall be held responsible.”⁴⁴

The addition of “already” is even less possible by considering that even a staunchly anti-Turkish testimony, the one of Abraham H. Hartunian—used by Taner Akçam himself⁴⁵—, mentions the case of 700 Protestants, as well as 200 Catholics and Gregorians, who were initially sent to the road of relocation and

43 On Eskişehir, also see SR Marine, Turquie, n° 1376, 1er décembre 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 234 ; Ahmet Refik (Altınay), *Two Committees, Two Massacres*, Firodil, 2006, p. 40; Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians...*, p. 216.

44 *TACD*, p. 235.

45 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks'...*, p. 314.

went back after “only a few hours,” in August 1915 precisely.⁴⁶ Not only the word “already” is a misleading interpolation, but the warning “Since there is no intention like the complete destruction of the Armenians it is absolutely necessary to protect the lives of the individuals being transferred in convoys and to take every measure to provide their food supplies regularly during their travel” is conveniently neglected by Mr. Akçam.

Regarding the Protestants, one of the most interesting Western documents is the report of the French Navy’s intelligence service on Afyon, explaining that the Armenians here “got away with it,” first of all because a significant part of them were Protestants and so not relocated. The report adds that a part of the Gregorians were exempted as well and that even the expelled ones suffered less than in other parts of Anatolia. According to this document, about 7-8,000 Armenians were still in Afyon in 1919.⁴⁷

The possibility to escape relocation by conversion to Islam⁴⁸ is rarely denied, even in the Armenian nationalist literature, but this exemption is often misrepresented. In particular, Vahakn N. Dadrian alleges that a “statement about the forced mass conversion of Armenian orphans is verified by the writer Halidé Edib, who denounced it as ‘wrong’”.⁴⁹ This summary is inaccurate, as a checking in the text shows (my emphasis):

“There were a large number of Turkish orphanages in Anatolia *filled with Turkish children whose parents had been the victims of the Armenians*. These orphanages had taken Armenian children as well and made them Moslems (which was wrong). The rest of the Armenian orphans were taken by the Americans. Apart from this, some Turkish families had taken Armenian children out of kindness and pity *without any desire to make them Moslems*: for the Moslem Turks do not have the missionary instincts of the Christians of the West. [...]

An international committee for the separation of the Armenian children was formed under the patronage of Colonel Heathcote Smythe. It rented a house in Shishli, and the central committee which had to separate the

46 Abraham H. Hartunian, *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep. A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1976, pp. 66-68 (first edition, 1968; manuscript written in Armenian at the end of 1930s and translated by Vartan Hartunian, the son of the author).

47 SR Marine, Turquie, n° 747, 6 juin 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 232.

48 Kemal Çiçek, *The Great War...*, p. 83.

49 Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Naim-Andonian Documents on the World War I Destruction of Ottoman Armenians: The Anatomy of a Genocide,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, XVIII-3, August 1986, p. 353, n. 78.

children were mostly Armenians. Nezihe Hanum, the general secretary of the women's section of the Red Crescent, was asked to represent the Turks. She went three times a week for nearly two months, but resigned afterward. She used to say that her presence did not in any way help *the Turkish children, who were being Armenianized daily*. The children who were brought to the association were left in the care of the Armenian women, and *these Armenian women, either by persuasion or threats or hypnotism, forced the Turkish children to learn by heart the name of an Armenian woman for their mother and the name of an Armenian man for their father.*⁵⁰

It is clear that the source used by Mr. Dadrian does not mention any “mass conversion” or any use of force by Muslims to convert an unknown number of Armenian orphans to Islam. On the contrary, Edip unequivocally described attempts to convert Turkish children to Christianity by force.

The actual conditions of life of the relocated Armenians

The displacement

After 1919, Arnold Toynbee abandoned one of his main war-time charges against the Ottoman government, admitting that the relocation as such was a “legitimate security measure” against a “fifth column” and the Armenian nationalist claims “had not been legitimate” because “they could not be fulfilled without doing grave injustice to the Turkish people itself.” However, Toynbee maintained that the way this relocation took place was criminal, and that the crimes were state-sponsored.⁵¹ This position is shared by various writers until today, with more or less nuances. To answer this biased analysis, it must be stressed, to begin, that the massacres were never systematic, geographically or during the time of the forced resettlement. Basing his conclusions on German and American sources, Guenter Lewy concludes that “in the absence of a large Kurdish population no massacre took place in Cilicia.”⁵² This is confirmed, with U.S. and Ottoman documents, by the research of Yücel Güçlü.⁵³ Cilicia was not an exception. For example, in a report of the French Navy's intelligence service on the Armenians repatriated to Bursa in 1919, there are

50 Halidé Edib (Halide Edip), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York-London: The Century C°, 1928, pp. 16-17.

51 Arnold Toynbee, *Acquaintances*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 241-242.

52 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 183-187 and 252 (quotation p. 252).

53 Yücel Güçlü, *Armenians and the Allies in Cilicia*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010, pp. 78-83.

certainly critiques against the CUP's relocation policy, but not a single reference to any massacre.⁵⁴

Then, it must be noted that no authentic order from Talat, Enver or any top leader of the CUP requests the killing of Armenians. On the contrary, both the documents conserved in the Ottoman archives⁵⁵ and those seized by the British army after the armistice (which are now in the British National Archives and were published by Salâhi Sonyel during the 1970s)⁵⁶ explicitly forbid violence. After the publication of such documents, Armenian American sociologist Vahakn N. Dadrian invented by mid-1980s a conspiracy theory: Talat was supposed to have written dozens of documents only to mislead future historians; real orders had cancelled the ones published by Turkish historians. To support this thesis, Mr. Dadrian relied on the Memoirs signed by Ambassador Morgenthau (he “reveals another feature of Talat’s cover and informal methods of transacting party and/or government business that is not mentioned anywhere else,” namely a “telegraphic equipment in the privacy of his home”) and a book written by Falih Rıfık Atay, a collaborator of Talat during the war, who is supposed to describe the minister of Interior as regularly sending telegrams cancelling previous ones.⁵⁷ Recently (2012), Taner Akçam has repeated the same arguments.⁵⁸ The problem is that, between these two publications, Heath Lowry has demonstrated that the “telegraphic equipment” is a pure invention of Morgenthau, Ara Sarafian has published the full text of Morgenthau’s diary, facilitating the verification of this conclusion, and Erman Şahin has explained—without being answered—how the words of Atay were distorted.⁵⁹

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54 SR Marine, Turquie, n° 1504, 30 décembre 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 234.

55 For example: Regulations, 30 May and 10 June 1915; telegrams of Talat to the governorate of Erzurum and Elazığ, 26 June 1915 and to the governorate of Urfa, 8 September 1915, *TACD*, pp. 80-81, 101-103, 115-117 and 255; Stanford Jay Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, New York-Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, volume II, 1978, p. 316.

56 Salâhi Sonyel, *The Displacement of Armenians: Documents*, Ankara: TTK, 1978.

57 Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Naim-Andonian...”, pp. 328 and 339-340.

58 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime...*, pp. 382-383.

59 Heath Lowry, *The Story behind...*, pp. 47-50; Ara Sarafian (ed.), *United States Diplomacy...*, entry 3 November 1914; Erman Şahin, “A Scrutiny of Akçam’s Version of History and the Armenian Genocide,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, XXVIII-2, August 2008, p. 314. Also see Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks'...*, p. 83.

Regardless, there is more. Taner Akçam pretends that the telegram dispatched by Talat Pasha to Ankara's province on August 29, 1915, is remarkable evidence that "the policies adopted against the Armenians were aiming at their annihilation." In an inaccurate translation, Mr. Akçam quotes only the two first sentences of this text: "The Armenian issue in the Eastern Provinces has been resolved. There is no need to sully the nation and the government[*'s honor*] with *further* [my emphasis] atrocities."⁶⁰ Let's see now the full text, in an accurate translation (italics added):

"The Armenian issue pertaining to the Eastern provinces has been solved. *Therefore*, there is no need to harm the reputation of our nation and government by conducting *unnecessary* cruelties. Particularly the recent attack conducted on the Armenians at a place close to Ankara has caused great regret of the Ministry, considering its way of occurring, the obvious incompetence of the officials charged with supervising the transfer of Armenians, and audacity on part of the gendarmes and the local people who acted on their bestial instincts to rape and rob the Armenians. The transfer of Armenians, which is desired to be carried out in an orderly and prudent manner, should henceforth never be left to the individuals having fanatical feelings of enmity, and that *the Armenians, whether or not they are subject to relocation, will be definitely protected against any assault and attack*. At the places where such a protection could not be provided, the transfer of Armenians should be postponed. From now on, all of the officials in charge shall be held responsible with respect to their ranks for any attack, which may occur and shall be brought before the military courts. It is necessary to give very strict orders to the relevant personnel in this regard."⁶¹

Taner Akçam also presented "the thesis that the Armenian genocide was not implemented solely as demographic engineering, but also as destruction and annihilation, and that the 5 and 10 percent principle was decisive in achieving this goal." He presents the following reasoning. He uses as a basis the draft published by Murat Bardakçı, assumes that all the 924,158 missing Armenians were relocated by the Ottoman armed forces and to the Arab provinces; relying on the Blue Book of Toynbee and to a publication of Johannes Lepsius, he elevates the number to "around 1.2 millions." And he concludes that, considering the Muslim population of the provinces where these "1.2 millions" Armenians were relocated, the application of the 10% rule (the Armenians

60 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks* '...', pp. 203-204.

61 Hikmet Özdemir and Yusuf Sarınoy (ed.), *Turkish-Armenian Conflict Documents*, Ankara: TBMM, 2007 (hereafter *TACD*), p. 235.

cannot represent more than 10% of the general population) could be achieved only by extermination.⁶² There are several problems with this way of reasoning. The estimation published by Mr. Baradakçı is a sum, including the Armenians relocated to Arab provinces, the ones resettled inside Anatolia and those who were taken by Russian forces to the Caucasus in 1915-16 (their number is estimated to be about 300,000).⁶³ Neither Toynbee nor Lepsius, who published propaganda books and not historical studies,⁶⁴ had any way to know the exact figure and their estimations seem inflated. Indeed, as the Ottoman Armenian population was about 1,700,000/1,750,000 individuals in 1914,⁶⁵ as around 500,000 were not relocated at all, tens of thousands relocated inside Anatolia, 300,000 resettled by the Russian army, as 50,000 others fled to Iran⁶⁶ and dozens of thousands joined the Russian army,⁶⁷ how “1.2 millions” could have remained to be displaced to the Arab provinces? Regarding now the 10% rule itself, it was valid for the pre-existing towns and villages only, not for the provinces; new agglomerations, with a mostly Armenian population, were planned by the Ottoman government.⁶⁸ So, the reasoning of Taner Akçam is once again invalid.

Relief for relocated Armenians

According to legend that can be found even in the scholarly literature, “the deportees were generally treated very harsh during their marches to the Syrian desert and those who survived the march were interned in camps along the Euphrates river, without any provisioning whatsoever.”⁶⁹ Outside the scholarly

62 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks* '..., pp. 242-263 (quotes pp. 242 and 258).

63 Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1967, p. 67.

64 Justin McCarthy, “Wellington House and the Turks,” in *The Turks*, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002, volume V, pp. 457-467; James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda. 1914-1919*, New Haven-London: Yale University Press/Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 221 ; Frank G. Weber, *Eagles on the Crescent. Germany, Austria and the Diplomacy of the Turkish Alliance. 1914-1918*, Ithaca (NY)-London: Cornell University Press, 1970, pp. 151 and 216.

65 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 234-235; Justin McCarthy, “The Population of the Ottoman Armenians,” in Türkaya Ataöv (ed.), *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, Ankara: TTK/TBMM, 2002, pp. 65-85.

66 Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 126.

67 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Facts on the Relocation of Armenians (1914-1918)*, Ankara: TTK, 2002, pp. 105. Also see Rafael de Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, New York-London: Charles Scribner's, 1926, p. 45.

68 Fuat Dündar, “Taner Akçam'ın Son Kitabı Vesilesiyle %10 Katliam Sorunu: Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuş mudur?,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, June 2008, pp. 181-183.

69 Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History*, London-New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004, p. 117. David Fromkin (*A Peace to End All Peace*, New York: Owl Books, 2001, p. 212) even alleges, also without footnote, that “Those who were not killed at once were driven through mountains and deserts without food, drink or shelters.”

field, Taner Akçam went a step further, alleging that “the distribution of aid to the [Armenian] deportees was absolutely forbidden. Humanitarian workers and the government officials who closed their eyes to these distributions were to be ‘severely punished.’”⁷⁰

These accusations have simply nothing to do with the reality.⁷¹ Mr. Akçam bases his allegation on a “Communication from interior minister Talat to the Command of the Ottoman Army, dated 25 March 1916,” but in fact, the content is entirely different. Not only this is not Talat personally who uses the words “several punished” (he forwards a document where this wording appears) but these “punishments” had a quite narrower scope: “the heavy penalties given to the officials who allow *the secret distribution of money* [my emphasis] among the Armenians.” Neither the distribution of money under the control of Ottoman officials nor the in-kind help is forbidden; on the contrary, it is explicitly written that the distribution of money under the control of the Ottoman officials is legal. This is confirmed by American documents, for instance a letter of an American relief worker, Annie Allen, to William W. Peet, treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), where she explains how she is distributing money to relocated Armenians, without evoking any problem.⁷²

Indeed, the Americans involved in the relief for Armenians did not pretend having face blockade in their activities, still less after autumn 1915. In March 1916, William W. Peet, the treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners for Missions Abroad (ABCFM) stated that “the relief already received has worked wonders.” In June of the same year, the American missionaries’ representatives told the U.S. Congress that “the situation from the point of view of human life is not quite so black as it seemed.”⁷³ Correspondingly, on 30 April 1916, the Minister of Interior, Talat, sent a telegram to 19 governors (with a copy for minister of War Enver), ordering to use “the immigrants’ fund” for the “need for food” of Armenians who stayed in Anatolia, “whose males had either been relocated or taken into the army, and therefore left without anyone to take care of them.”⁷⁴

70 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks* ‘...’, pp. 277-278.

71 For an overview: Kemal Çiçek, *The Great War*..., pp. 87-233.

72 American Board of Commissioner for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) archives, Harvard University, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Houghton Library, 16.10.1, box 8. The letter is dated “September 16”. The year is not provided, but, considering the dates of the documents before and after in the box, it must be 1915 or 1916.

73 *Relief of Armenians. Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, Washinton: Government Printing Office, 1916, pp. 12-13.

74 *TACD*, p. 443. Also see, p. 481, the telegram of the ministry of Interior to the governor of Samsun, in the same sense, dated 12 November 1916.

Leslie A. Davis, U.S. consul in Elazığ, frequently quoted as a “witness of the Armenian genocide” testified in a letter to the American Committee for Armenians and Syria Relief, dated 3 October 1917 that “for the past two years [1915-1917] systematic relief has been regularly give by American missionaries and myself to more than 6,000 in the vicinity of Harpout [Elazığ] alone.” Even more remarkable is the letter sent on 5 October 1917 by Abram Elkus, ambassador of America to İstanbul fom 1916 to 1917, to Charles Vickrey, general secretary of the ABCFM. This letter was sent with the explicit approval of the State Department:

“When I left Constantinople owing the breaking of the diplomatic relations with Turkey, the work of relief carried on by the American Committee for Armenian and Syria Relief was so thoroughly organized that arrangements were easily made for continuing that work in every department, even in the absence of the Embassy and United States consuls at different points in the country. *The work is now being carried on effectively at all of the centers under increasing friendliness on the part of the Turkish officials* [my emphasis] and with a need that is constantly growing greater as the winter approaches. A letter from the American representative now in Constantinople, date August 17 1917, which has just reached me, confirms that.”⁷⁵

The content of this letter is largely confirmed by a retrospective report written in 1918 by Jesse Jackson, U.S. consul in Aleppo until 1917:

“And so relief was being carried on when diplomatic relations were severed between the United States and Turkey in April, 1917. I thereupon arranged to have all relief funds thereafter sent to Mr. Emil Zollinger, a prominent Swiss gentleman of Aleppo, who is intensely interested in philanthropic work, and who receives and pays the committees the money necessary for the monthly distribution.

Aside from about 50,000 persons dependent on relief in Aleppo, there are twice that many more in the surrounding towns and villages all of whom receive relief through the committees that were organized under my supervision before my departure in May, 1917. [...] The American Committee for Armenian and Syrian relief, No. 1, Madison Avenue, New York City, is in touch with the committees in Aleppo through the medium of Mr. Zollinger, and *from last accounts the work is progressing very satisfactorily* [my emphasis].”⁷⁶

75 These two letters are in Library of Congress, manuscript division, W. Wilson papers, reel 337.

76 Report dated March 4, 1918, reproduced in Ara Sarafian (ed.), *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide*, Princeton-London: Gomidas Institute, 2004, p. 595.

As late as December 1917, the chief clerk replacing the U.S. ambassador in Istanbul, as a result of the severance of the diplomatic relations, observed: “the funds which have been, and are still being forwarded from the United States to Turkey have been very welcome and have accomplished a great deal of good. No attempt has been made by the Turkish authorities to prevent the distribution of this relief money — at least no attempt of a serious nature.”⁷⁷

Does it mean that, having wittingly decimated the Armenians by famine in 1915, the Ottoman government eventually allowed a foreign help for the survivors? Once again, the archival documents answer no. The regulation dated 30 May 1915, signed by Talat himself, stipulates, in its article 4, that “protecting the lives and property of the Armenians, *providing food to them* [my emphasis], and facilitating the rest on their journey to places of resettlement are under the responsibility of the officials of the locate administrations located along the transfer route.”⁷⁸ The circular dated 28 August 1915, also signed by Talat, orders (article 9): “The necessary food for the emigrants while on their journey until they reach their destination must be assured. The cost of the food for poor emigrants must be borne by the open credit for the service of the installation of the emigrants.”⁷⁹ These orders were not empty words. Indeed, “a total of 2,250,000 krş was assigned [in summer 1915] to meet the needs of the deportation,” and, as early as November 1915, “600,000 krş” were “allocated to the province of Aleppo” by the Ministry of Interior, and 200,000 others to the governorate of Eskişehir.⁸⁰

There is also first-hand evidence that Americans were allowed to provide relief to Armenians as early as 1915 (in addition to the letter of Leslie Davis already quoted). For example, the archives of the ABCFM contain lists of hundreds of Armenians with their names and the amount of money forwarded to them during the whole year 1915. They also contain a letter from Antep (today’s Gaziantep) to William Peet, dated 13 August 1915, explaining that “the helpful activities of the native Christians as well as the American missionaries surpasses anything the home churches can dream of.”⁸¹ And in a retrospective report written in 1918, Henry Riggs, a U.S. missionary who worked in Elazığ

77 Report to the secretary of State, dated 5 December 1917, NARA, RG 59, M 353, reel 7, 867.00/809.

78 *TACD*, p. 80.

79 FO 371/9158/5523 (original in Ottoman Turkish and translation by the British High Commissioner’s staff; this document was seized by the British army at the end of 1918). Salâhi R. Sonyel published all the seized documents of the file FO 371/9158: *The Displacement of the Armenians: Documents*, Ankara: TTK, 1978.

80 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of...*, pp. 73-75.

81 ABCFM, 16.10.1, box 8.

until 1921, explains that he and his associates could provide food to Armenians as early as 1915.⁸²

The Ottoman leader who was the most involved in these relief activities was Cemal Paşa, the number 3 of the CUP regime from 1913 to 1918 and the strong man for the Near East. Cemal did not so much that he got congratulations from American and German personalities who had no particular friendship towards the Turkish people, such as James L. Barton, Ambassador Paul von Wolf-Metternich, or Consul Walter Rössler, and also from relocated Armenians, particularly Hagop Sarkissian, who later migrated to the U.S. and took the name of James K. Sutherland.⁸³ Taner Akçam is forced by his own sources to admit: Cemal “had indeed tried [...] to ease the situation for the Armenian deportees”⁸⁴ but he does not provide any development on this crucial issue in *A Shameful Act, The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity*, or any other publication I read.

Hilmar Kaiser offered the most subtle description of Cemal’s actions written by a supporter of the “Armenian genocide” charge.⁸⁵ Certainly interesting, this description of the efforts made, as early as 1915, by Cemal, presents, however, a fundamental flaw: To save the “genocide” or “extermination” charge, Dr. Kaiser invents an opposition between the policy of Talat and the one of Cemal, without providing any evidence—particularly when Hilmar Kaiser writes, without providing any source: “Talaat’s claim that the deportations should be undertaken in a humane fashion probably applied to some general ideal and not actual policy.”⁸⁶ Actually, Dr. Kaiser showed us concrete cases proving the coherence between these two CUP leaders. The clearest example is the following:

“These sources provide a wealth of details, including a number of 4th Army documents, about opposition by Ahmed Djemal Pasha against Ottoman central government policies concerning Armenians. This data might have been utilized for a more careful analysis. For instance, in the case of Zohrab’s murder Djemal secured the arrest and execution of the two main perpetrators who were important CUP operatives.”⁸⁷

82 Henry Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia*, Ann Harbord: Gomidas Institute, 1997, p. 158.

83 Yücel Güçlü, *The Holocaust and the...*, pp. 68-79; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 196-198 and 218-220.

84 Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act...*, p. 186.

85 Hilmar Kaiser, “Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, XII-3/4, 2010, pp. 173-218.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 175.

These quoted lines are not based on any archival document, but on two second-hand sources, written well after 1915. A telegram of Talat, published and translated years before the publication of Mr. Kaiser's article, proves that the minister of Interior ordered to send these criminals to Cemal:

“Ahmet from Siroz and his friend Halil have been sent to Konya today, to be prosecuted by the Military Court of the 4th army for the crimes of murdering Armenians and usurping their possessions. The said individuals should definitely not be permitted to escape and they should be kept imprisoned in Konya, until receiving the request and written note of Cemal Paşa in that regard.”⁸⁸

Considering the extremely clear stance of Cemal on the criminals who killed, raped or expropriated Armenians, and his preference for the gallows to fix this kind of problems, Talat could not ignore that sending such persons to Cemal was sending them to death.

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The 1915-16 relocations are not the only reason of the Armenian losses

The scorched earth policy of the Armenian nationalists in Eastern Anatolia (1917-1918)

After the collapse of the tsarist regime and the Bolshevik revolution, the Russian army withdrew from eastern Anatolia. As a result, the Armenian nationalist organizations decided to leave to the Turks a desert only. The war crimes perpetrated by these groups began as early as the end of 1914 and had attained a highpoint during the revolt of Van. However, if a part of the Russian officers (particularly Cossaks) cooperated with the Armenian volunteers in this work of ethnic cleansing, another part opposed these practices, above all because these crimes made extremely difficult the occupation of eastern Anatolia, inhabited by a majority of Muslims.⁹⁰ However, in 1917-1918, there was no effective Russian opposition, for the simple reason that the last officers who were against such practices did not possess anymore the manpower able

88 Telegram of Talat to the governorate of Konya, 9 September 1915, *TACD*, p. 261.

89 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 112-113.

90 Maxime Gauin, “The Convergent Analysis of Russian, British, French, and American Officials Regarding the Armenian Volunteers (1914-1922),” *International Review of Turkish Studies*, I-4, pp. 18-25; Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires...*, pp. 156-158.

to curb such violence. This is not the place here for a general study of these crimes, so only some examples shall be provided.

Russian lieutenant-colonel Tverdokhlebov explained: “More than 800 unarmed innocent Turks were massacred [in Erzincan]. [...] They slaughtered the people as if they were sheep.” The slaughter continued in the countryside: “The Armenian mobs retreating from Erzincan to Erzurum exterminated all the Muslim villagers they met on their way. [...] All of those who could not manage to flee from Ilica were massacred. The Army Commander [General Odichelitzé] said he saw lots of corpses belonging to children whose throats were butchered with blunt knives, and bodies cut into thin and long strips.” And, as it is well-known, thousands of Turks were massacred systematically in Erzurum itself, in February 1918: about 3,000 during the bloodiest night only.⁹¹ This campaign of physical destruction was not limited to the Erzincan and Erzurum area.⁹² Indeed, a Turkish investigation carried out in 1921 showed that thousands other Muslims were exterminated at the beginning of 1918, between Erzurum and Van. In the village of Söylemez, the victims were burned alive.⁹³ Correspondingly, the official investigators of the U.S. government concluded in 1919:

“In the entire region from Bitlis through Van to Bayezit we were informed that the damage and destruction had been done by the Armenians, who, after the Russians retired, remained in occupation of the country and who, when the Turkish army advanced, destroyed everything belonging to the Musulmans. Moreover, the Armenians are accused of having committed murder, rape arson and horrible atrocities of every description upon the Musulman population. [...]

Although it does not fall within the exact scope of our investigation one of the most salient facts impressed on us at every point from Bitlis to Trebizond was that in the region which we traversed the Armenians committed upon the Turks all the crimes and outrages which were committed in other regions by Turks upon Armenians. At first we were most incredulous of the stories told us, but the unanimity of the testimony of all witnesses, the apparent eagerness with which they told of wrongs done them, their evident hatred of Armenians, and, strongest of all, the

91 Vladimir N. Tverbokhlebov, *Gördüklerim Yaşadıklarım/I Witnessed and Lived Through/Ce que j'ai vu et vécu moi-même*, Ankara: ATASE, 2007, pp. 51-56 (quotation pp. 51 and 52). Also see Ahmet Refik (Altnay), *Two Committees, Two Massacres*, Firodil, 2006, pp. 67-76.

92 For a general description: Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile. The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995, pp. 196-202.

93 Yusuf Sarımay (ed.), *Ermeniler Tarafından Yapılan Katliam Belgeleri*, Ankara, 2001, volume II, pp. 1039-1041.

material evidence on the ground itself, have convinced us of the general truth of the facts, first, that Armenians massacred Musulmans on a large scale with many refinements of cruelty, and second that the Armenians are responsible for most of the destruction done to towns and villages.”⁹⁴

In these conditions, it is not difficult to understand why 50,000 Armenians who had remained in eastern Anatolia left to the newly autonomous (soon independent) Armenia during the first months of 1918. Some were directly involved in the massacres; some applauded without having personally touched a gun or a knife; and others (very likely the majority) did not desire such crimes, but did not think to possess sufficiently rhetorical talents to convince an infuriated Muslim population that they were really innocent. As a result, the number of refugees in Armenia attained once again 200,000 (the 150,000 survivors of the Russian resettlements and these new refugees), but was once again reduced to 150,000⁹⁵ because of the epidemics in Armenia 1918-1919⁹⁶—a drama certainly due to the general, terrible context, but also to the incompetence of the Dashnak administration.⁹⁷

Beyond the particular case of the new refugees, the massacres and destructions of 1917-1918 prevented any reconciliation and made the post-1918 schemes of repatriation impossible. Remarkably, Richard G. Hovannisian had mentioned the massacres in his doctoral dissertation, in clear terms: “The intrepidity of such groups slightly mitigated the widespread impression of the distressing cowardice of the Armenian soldier. The frenzied troops and bands retreating from Erzurum killed any Moslem falling into their hands and burned the Turkish villages that lay in their path.”⁹⁸ However, fifteen years after the publication of this work, the same Richard G. Hovannisian felt free to discuss, in 20 pages, the projects of repatriation without saying anything on these crimes.⁹⁹ At least Mr. Hovannisian did not try to misrepresent these annoying

94 Justin McCarthy, “The Report of Niles and Sutherland—An American Investigation of Eastern Anatolia after World War I”, in *XI. Türk Tarih Kongresi*, Ankara: TTK, 1994, volume V, pp. 1828-1829 and 1850.

95 Colonel Chardigny, « La question arménienne », 30 octobre 1919, SHD, 16 N 3187, dossier 4.

96 Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, volume I, *The First Year, 1918-1919*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 44 et 128-147.

97 On this incompetence: A. A. Lalaian, *The Counter-Revolutionary Role of the Dashnagzoutiun Party (1914-1923)*, Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2007.

98 Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the...*, p. 135.

99 Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, volume II, *From Versailles to London, 1919-1920*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 1982, pp. 42-61. This is not the only case of selection of facts in this volume. See, especially, Heath Lowry, “Richard G. Hovannisian on Lieutenant Robert Steed Dunn. A Review Note,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, V, 1985, pp. 209-252, http://english.isam.org.tr/documents/_dosyalar/_pdfler/osmanli_arastirmalari_dergisi/osmanli%C4%B1sy5/1986_5_LOWRYHW.pdf

facts, unlike other Armenian authors.¹⁰⁰ It can even be noticed that his words were distorted by Peter Balakian. Trying to excuse the massacres against Turks and other Muslims in 1918, Mr. Balakian alleges that “the Turks” “massacred Armenian civilians” in 1917-18 and that the Armenian perpetrators “were attempting to avenge the atrocities of 1915.”¹⁰¹ The only source Mr. Balakian gives is the published version of Mr. Hovannisian’s doctoral dissertation. Verification shows that, in this source, there is actually no mention of “massacres” by Turks during the years 1917 and 1918, and no attempt to excuse the killing of Muslims by the “atrocities of 1915.”¹⁰²

The Armenian nationalists prevent the coexistence in Cilicia (1918-1922)

As early as 1915, Armenian nationalists claimed an “integral Armenia” from the Black sea to the Mediterranean sea,” a demand strongly reiterated in 1919.¹⁰³ The possession of the province Adana was considered indispensable for the future Armenian state, and even after the collapse the Armenian Republic, projects continued to be submitted for “Armenian national home” in this part of Anatolia.¹⁰⁴ These claims paved the way for particularly difficult relations with the occupying power of this part of southern Turkey, namely France.

As the Turks were in majority on these lands before the First World War, the repatriation of the relocated Armenians by the French in 1919 was not enough to secure an Armenian, or even a Christian majority. Thousands of Armenians of central Anatolia—particularly from Kayseri—were requested to come to Adana by their extremist coreligionists.

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100 For an overview: Maxime Gauin, “The Convergent Analysis...”, p. 30.

101 Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris. The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response*, New York: Perennial, 2004, p. 320.

102 Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the...*, pp. 114-115 and 134-135.

103 A. Tchobanian, Les aspirations arméniennes, 7 avril 1915, in Hasan Dilan (ed.), *Fransız Diplomatik Belgelerinde Ermeni Olayları 1914-1918/Les Événements arméniens dans les documents diplomatiques français, 1914-1918*, Ankara : TTK, 2005, volume II, pp. 152-167 ; Avetis Aharonian and Boghos Nubar, *The Armenian Question Before the Paris Peace Conference*, Paris : Imprimerie Dupont, 1919.

104 Yücel Güçlü, *Armenians and the...*, pp. 102-188.

no threat against them, which could justify this migration.¹⁰⁵ After the French administration had formally rejected the projects of an Armenian Cilicia and lost any trust in the Armenian nationalist organizations in Cilicia, these authorities expelled to Syria the migrants arrived from central Anatolia.¹⁰⁶

Only from 28 December 1918 to 15 February 1919, French sources mention 15 Turks assassinated by Armenian legionnaires or civilians, almost thirty cases of hold-ups or plunder, one affair of death threats against the inhabitant of a whole quarter and one case of racket followed by rapes.¹⁰⁷ In spite of the purges, violence continued during the years 1919 and 1920. Since this article is not a monograph on Cilicia, only two other cases are studied here: Maraş and Adana.

At the end of October 1919, the British army was replaced in Maraş by French officers, soldiers and Armenian legionnaires. The officer in charge, Captain André, was misled by his Armenian drogman and completely failed to understand the situation. A group of one hundred Armenian legionnaires burned villages surrounding the city, and other legionnaires murdered Turks in the city itself. The behavior of the Armenian Legion in other places left no illusion: There crimes were not abnormal, but what the local population should expect regularly. That is why the Turks of Maraş organized an uprising as early as January 1920.¹⁰⁸ The insurrection led to a particularly violent fight, but, contrary to a legend, spread until today by propagandists such as Gerard J. Libaridian—who presents a typical mixture of Francophobia and Turkophobia¹⁰⁹—, there was no massacre of unarmed Armenian civilians. After a systematic verification, Admiral Ferdinand de Bon, chief of the French Navy

105 Report of operations for week ending November 23, 1919, LC, Bristol papers, container 1, file November 1919; Commandant Labonne, « Le mouvement nationaliste » n° 11, 16 novembre 1919, 7 N 3210, dossier 1; Lettre du lieutenant Lemaigre-Dubreuil au haut-commissaire français à Istanbul, 13 septembre 1919, Centre des archives diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN), 36 PO/1/10.

106 Télégramme du ministre des Affaires étrangères à l'ambassadeur à Londres, 14 octobre 1920, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (AMAE) La Courneuve, P 16674 ; Compte-rendu de la visite de Mme Portoukalian au chef de bataillon Hasslier (Adana), 16 septembre 1920, p. 4, CADN, 1SL/1V/222.

107 CADN, 36 PO/1/9 ; Gustave Gautherot, *La France en Syrie et en Cilicie*, Courbevoie : Librairie indépendante, 1920, pp. 146-150.

108 Renseignement, n° 10, 2 février 1920, Archives nationales, Pierrefitte, 594 AP 4 ; SR Marine, Turquie, n° 1327, 20 novembre 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 234; Turkish military reports dated 13 and 20 November 1919, translated in Stanford Jay Shaw, "The Armenian Legion and its Destruction of the Armenian Community in Cilicia," in Türkaya Ataöv (ed.), *The Armenians in...*, pp. 159-160. Also see Yücel Güçlü, *Armenians and the...*, p. 121; and Nejla Günay, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı Sonrasında Maraş Yöresinde Sosyal Yapı Değişimleri ve bu Değişimde Ermeni-Franız Rolü," in *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş (Ermeniler, Türkler, Müslümanlar). Makaleler*, Karamanmaraş: Ukde, 2012, pp. 95-115.

109 See his arrogant speech pronounced in Paris on 17 June 2000: <http://www.collectifvan.org/article.php?r=0&id=51772>

in Mediterranean Sea: “As a result, so far, it is impossible to say that there was somewhere massacres of Armenians. It is widely discussed, but no one could provide me with a safe and accurate indication. [...] Armenians have participated in [this] action and suffered losses as all fighters. A serious study of the figures suggests that the Armenian losses did not exceed one thousand.”¹¹⁰ It is true, however, that, in addition to the clashes, the snow killed 2 or 3,000 Armenians, out of the 5,000 who left the city with the French army, in February.¹¹¹

Far from having renounced to violence after this episode, the Hunchak Party organized riots, murders and arsons in Adana, from June to August 1920. Completely exasperated, Colonel Édouard Brémond, who was a friend of the Armenian people all his life (he was recalled to Paris in September because of his biases), ordered in July to crush this violence by hanging Armenian criminals *without trial*—an order applied until the beginning of August. These extreme measures, added to the suppression of the Armenian Legion, the courts cases against other murderers and plunderers, the expulsions of Armenian nationalists leaders after the departure of Brémond and the internal conflicts among Armenian nationalists,¹¹² virtually eliminated the Armenian violence in this part of Anatolia.

General Henri Gouraud, the French High Commissioner in Beirut, summarized concisely in a note answering questions from the British government (November 1920):

“Previously arms had been indeed distributed to the Armenians, either to defend their villages or so that they could form auxiliary units attached to the French columns operating in Cilicia. In each instance, the Armenians have taken advantage of this retreat to treat the Turks exactly as the Armenians claim they have themselves been treated, looting and burning villages and massacring unarmed Muslims.”¹¹³

110 Télégramme du président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires étrangères, à l’ambassadeur français à Londres, 7 mars 1920, AMAE, P 16673. Also see SR Marine, Turquie, n° 2353, 10 octobre 1920, AMAE, P 16674.

111 Georges Boudière, « Notes sur la campagne de Syrie-Cilicie. L’affaire de Maras (janvier-février 1920) », *Turcica*, X, 1978, p. 160. Also see Maxime Bergès, *La Colonne de Marach et quelques autres récits de l’armée du Levant*, Paris, La Renaissance du livre, 1924, pp. 106-108.

112 Décision du colonel Brémond, 10 juillet 1920, CADN, 1SL/1V/139 ; Tommy Martin, Renseignements, n° 398, 13 octobre 1920, CADN, 1 SL/1V/222 ; Jugement n° 148/263, 16 juillet 1920; Jugement n° 175/290, 14 août 1920, SHD, 11 J 3202 ; Paul Bernard, *Six mois en Cilicie*, Aix-en-Provence : éditions du Feu, 1929, pp. 32 and 49-110.

113 Quoted in Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile...*, p. 207.

Needless to say, all these actions undermined the possibilities for reconciliation between Armenian and Turks in this region. However, Armenian nationalists went a step further and provoked the exile of most of their coreligionists from the province of Adana during the French withdrawal (November 1921-January 1922).¹¹⁴ Indeed, the report of the French commission of evacuation explains:

“The events that followed confirmed that this was a slogan coming from outside, and the implementation of which no one dared to escape. On December 9, heads of the [Gregorian, Catholic, and Protestant] communities explained to Mr. Franklin-Bouillon that even those Christians who were willing to stay were forced to flee, because their life was threatened.”¹¹⁵

More particularly, the Armenian nationalists-terrorists undermined the work of the joint commissions established in November 1921 by the French and the Kemalists to take care of Christian property and to concentrate the Christian population in city centers.¹¹⁶ The Armenians who wished to be members of these commissions were threatened to death by their extremist coreligionists.¹¹⁷

The Greek scorched earth policy in Western Anatolia and the Izmir fire (1922)

Since the first day of its landing in Western Anatolia, the Greek army committed committing all kind of crimes: pillages, rapes, assassinations, massacres.¹¹⁸ As a result of the pressure of the Western representatives, especially the French ones, the Greek high command was forced to put on trial a significant number of perpetrators of the crimes committed in İzmir itself during the first days. Among these culprits, twelve Armenians were sentenced, together with 48 Greeks, by the Greek military courts in 1919.¹¹⁹

114 Maxime Gauin, “How to Create a Problem of Refugees: the Evacuation of Cilicia by France and the Flow of Armenian Civilians (1921-1922),” *Review of Armenian Studies*, n° 25, 2012, pp. 65-101.

115 Rapport d'ensemble sur les opérations de la commission, mars 1922, p. 6, AMAE, P 17787. Also see Bulletin périodique n° 37 (5-20 novembre 1921), p. 5, SHD, 6 N 190.

116 The original of the regulations of these commissions is in: Bulletin de renseignements n° 285, 11-13 décembre 1921, SHD, 4 H 61, dossier 3. I translated this text into English in “How to create...”, p. 81.

117 « L'émigration des Arméniens », *Le Temps*, 30 décembre 1921, p. 2.

118 SR Marine, Turquie, n° 717, 740, 20 mai, 24 mai 1919, SHD 1 BB7 232; Cuthbert Francis Dixon-Johnson, *The Greeks in Asia Minor*, London: Cole & C°, 1919, <http://www.tallarmeniantale.com/c-f-dixon-Greek-book.htm> ; Berthe Georges-Gaulis, *Angora, Constantinople, Londres. Moustafa Kémal et la politique anglaise en Orient*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1922, pp. 58 and 80.

119 Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, London-Bombay-Sydney: Constable & C°, 1922, p. 401.

Both war crimes and Armenian participation to these crimes continued regardless. For example, to appease the Turkish population, in 1920, several hundreds of other Armenian volunteers were fired by the Greek General Paraskevopoulos because of their aggressive attitude vis-à-vis the Turks in western Anatolia; ten were sentenced to death and executed by the Greek military justice, according to the French Navy's Intelligence Service.¹²⁰ The Greek regular army also remained passive in August 1920, when a Turkish unit annihilated an Armenian gang notorious to have committed "the worst excesses" against the Turkish civilians, including the villages that had been previously hostile to the Kemalist movement.¹²¹ In Yalova peninsula, Armenians participated to the Greek "systematic plan of destruction of Turkish villages and extinction of the Moslem population"¹²² and the Greek army apparently abandoned once again its Armenian volunteers: at least some of them were put on trial in İstanbul, in front of an Ottoman martial court.¹²³ Other Armenian gangs put fire to Turkish villages around Bursa and killed at least dozens of inhabitants in July 1921.¹²⁴ Businessman Elzéar Guiffroy, the elected head of the French community in Izmir since 1914, was requested by Paris to make a report about the Greek atrocities. Adding his proper findings to the ones of his compatriots, he submitted his notes to the MFA on July 27, 1922. Guiffroy considered that "without exaggeration," the number of Turks killed by the Greek forces and their Armenian volunteers since May 1919 was in excess of 150,000, "without counting the deported persons, estimated to be 300,000."¹²⁵

As it is well-known, during its final retreat (August-September 1922), the Greek army "did take time to set fire to the many Turkish villages and grain fields—and anything else that would burn."¹²⁶ French engineer C. Toureille, a resident in İzmir at that time, confirmed, in a very detailed report (this document seems to be based on Toureille's personal diary): "In the Turkish houses, the inhabitants were, as far as the flying soldiers could, burned alive, merciless: men, women, children."¹²⁷ What is much less known is the fact that

120 SR Marine, Affaires arméniennes, 15 novembre 1920, AMAE, P 16674.

121 SR Marine, Turquie, Dans la région d'Ismid, 10 août 1920, SHD, 7 N 3211.

122 Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question...*, p. 284 (quoting the report of an Entente's commission). Also see Maurice Gehri, *Mission d'enquête en Anatolie (12-22 mai 1921)*, Geneva, 1921 ; and *Atrocités grecques en Turquie. Second livre*, İstanbul : Ahmed Ihsan & Cie, 1921, pp. 9-22, http://louisville.edu/a-s/history/turks/atrocites_grecques_en_turquie.pdf

123 Corps d'occupation de Constantinople — Bulletin de renseignement des 8 et 9 mai 1921, SHD 20 N 1082.

124 Rapports du capitaine Renaudineau, 18 et 19 juillet 1921, SHD, 20 N 1101.

125 AMAE, P 1380.

126 Lynn A. Scipio, *My Thirty Years in Turkey*, Rindge, Richard R. Smith Publisher, 1955, p. 179.

127 C. Toureille, *Prise de Smyrne par Moustafa Kemal — Incendie de Smyrne par les Grecs et les Arméniens*, pp. 1-2, AMAE, P 1380. Also see, in the same microfilm, *Extraits de lettres reçues de Smyrne*, septembre 1922.

the Greek army forced both Greek and Armenian civilians, including the majority who was not involved in these crimes, to leave. In the case of Eskişehir, we have the excellent report of Father Ludovic Marseille, chief of the French catholic mission in this city, who explained not only that the Greek army destroyed the city without any military reason, but also that the Christians were forced by this same leave without any security concern justifying this exile: The Turkish army had previously left the city in 1921 without doing any harm. Father Marseille's findings and conclusions were supported by General Maurice Pellé, High Commissioner in Istanbul.¹²⁸ The absence of Kemalist misdeeds in July 1921 in Eskişehir is confirmed by a report of Captain Renaudineau,

The culmination of this policy was the fire of Izmir. Prepared by the Greek army, it was primarily carried out by Armenian nationalists, because the presence of European and American ships prevented the Greek high command to order and supervise the arson openly.

Inspector of the Ottoman gendarmerie, dated 23 July 1921.¹²⁹ American documents confirm this situation for Western Anatolia in general: U.S. High Commissioner Mark Bristol wrote that “[Greek] villages were burned by the Hellenic Greeks as they retreated making it impossible for refugees to be returned to their homes even after conditions grow quite” and he was informed by U.S. Navy that “Greek refugees all tell same story: ‘Ordered evacuate by Greek military or priests. Saw towns in flames after departures.’ Say fault lies with Hellenic Greeks who burned their villages.”¹³⁰

The culmination of this policy was the fire of Izmir. Prepared by the Greek army, it was primarily carried out by Armenian nationalists, because the presence of European and American ships prevented the Greek high command to order and supervise the arson openly. Both Paul Grescovich, the chief of the Izmir fire brigade, and Mark O. Prentiss, an U.S. relief worker who conducted a personal investigation on this catastrophe, concluded that the main responsibility was an Armenian one.¹³¹ Correspondingly, the special envoy of *Le Petit Parisien* also put the blame on “Armenians and Greeks” as a result of his investigation in İzmir.¹³² In a masterpiece of concision and Cartesian

128 Télégrammes du général Pellé au ministère des Affaires étrangères, 8 et 17 septembre 1922 ; Rapport du père Ludovic Marseille, 15 septembre 1922, AMAE, P 1380.

129 SHD, 20 N 1101.

130 Mark L. Bristol, Report of operations for week ending 10 September, 1922, part four; War diary, 19 September 1922; USS Litchfield to Bristol, September 7, 1922 Corrected copy, LC, Bristol papers, containers 4 and 76, File Smyrna, Navy Messages Received 1922.

131 *Report of Mr. Grescovich Commander of the Smyrna Fire Brigade on the Great fire in Smyrna, İstanbul, 1922*; “Armenians, Not Turks, Set Smyrna Ablaze Relief Worker Declares,” *The San Antonio Express*, January 22, 1923.

132 « Une journée dans les ruines de Smyrne », *Le Petit Parisien*, 28 septembre 1922, p. 3.

reasoning, Admiral Charles Dumesnil, head of the French Navy in the Near East, concluded that the Turkish regular army was entirely innocent, that the Turkish irregulars certainly committed plunder but had nothing to do in the fire, and if Greek arsonists took part to the fire, Armenian ones were very probably the main perpetrators.¹³³

A full article, and even a full book, should be written on the sensitive issue of the Izmir fire. Since it is not the only, or even the main subject of this paper, I am giving only two striking examples on the use of sources by those who accuse the Turkish army. Marjorie Housepian—who is a retired professor of English, without any degree in history—alleges that American Vice-Consul Barnes “had seen Turkish soldiers pouring gasoline liberally along the street in front of the consulate, was meanwhile working feverishly to save the consular records.”¹³⁴ The compilation of American reports by U.S. Navy officer A. J. Hepburn actually indicates:

“The fire continued to burn throughout the night though considerably diminished. Several separate fires were observed to start in locations distant from the general conflagration, plainly indicating incendiarism. The Passport office, located upon the North pier of the inner harbor, burned after midnight with many heavy explosions, probably caused by gasoline, as a number of drums had been observed in and near this building a day or two previously. This building was only a few hundred yards from the ‘Litchfields’ anchorage, and the actions of the person that fired it were plainly observed by Vice-Consul Barnes from the forecandle, although the distance was too great to allow of any sort of identification. A number of Turkish troops were stationed at the inshore end of the building at the time.”

Vice-Consul Barnes also sent this self-explanatory cable, conveniently not used by Ms. Housepian:

“American press accounts of the Smyrna irregularities arriving here contain gross exaggerations and untruths. Impossible to say definitely number of Greeks and Armenians killed—perhaps 2,000. Atrocities committed in the interior by Greeks and Armenians outstrip those committed by the Turks in Smyrna in savagery and wanton destruction. Majority of the Americans here believe Smyrna fired by Armenians.”¹³⁵

133 Qui sont les auteurs de l’incendie ?, 28 septembre 1922, AMAE, P 1380.

134 Marjorie Housepian, *Smyrna 1922. The Destruction of a City*, New York: Newmark Press, 1998, pp. 168 and 262.

135 Heath Lowry, “Turkish History: On Whose Sources Will it Be Based? A Case Study on the Burning of Izmir,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, IX, 1989, pp. 12-14, http://english.isam.org.tr/documents/_dosyalar/_pdfler/osmanli_arastirmalari_dergisi/osmanli%C4%B1_sy9/1989_9_LOWRYHW.pdf

French Armenian “historian” Hervé Georgelin took similar liberties with the reports of French Consul general Michel Graillet. Mr. Georgelin alleges: “all reports signed by Graillet affirm, on the contrary” a responsibility of “the Turks.”¹³⁶ This accusation is entirely false. First of all, there is no document signed by Consul Graillet definitely accusing the Turks. He actually mentioned this possibility in his first reports, without going yet to a definitive conclusion. Secondly, after having rested (Graillet did a huge and particularly tiresome relief effort during the fire) and finished his investigations with Admiral Dumesnil, he concluded that the fire was put by “Armenian and Greek” arsonists, and explicitly rejected the accusations against the Turkish army. In his telegram dated 22 September 1922, Graillet wrote, dismissing the “testimonies” who accused the Turkish army: “Lies and fantasy can nothing against the reality of the facts, and imagination is even more vivid since these are people who promptly fled Smyrna.” And in his report sent four days later, he insisted:

“By my telegram n° 87 of 22 September [the one previously quoted], I demonstrated that the Armenians and the Greeks must be charged. If the Turks of Smyrna participated, it is quite possible, and an affair of revenge. But definitely the Kemalist army has nothing to do with that. Quite the contrary, it fought the disaster, with its weak ways.”¹³⁷

Reading the footnotes of Mr. Georgelin’s book proves that he worked in the microfilm where these documents are, and it is extremely difficult, to say the very least, to imagine that he could have missed them. I showed on Facebook a photo of one of these documents to Mr. Georgelin. He only answered: “You should publish about that.” So I did.

Conclusion

The CUP never conducted a policy aiming to wipe out the Ottoman Armenian policy. There was no general expulsion of the Armenians, as proved by the exemptions of hundreds of thousands, and no policy of extermination against the resettled ones. After having forced the CUP government to carry out a counter-insurgency policy in an exceptionally difficult context, the Armenian nationalist revolutionaries continued their devastating policy, killing Turks once again and worsening the demographic losses of their own people in Anatolia after 1918. As long as the mainstream Armenian (and pro-Armenian)

136 Hervé Georgelin, *La Fin de Smyrne*, Paris, CNRS, 2005, <http://books.openedition.org/editions-cnrs/2528>

137 AMAE, P 1380.

authors will refuse to admit these responsibilities, as long as most of them will continue to use fake documents (such as the “Andonian telegrams”), to slander their contradictors (called “denialists”) and to willingly distort sources, the very idea of a Turkish-Armenian dialogue will remain a dangerous illusion in most of the cases, and will be possible only with a small minority of honest and courageous specialists from the Armenian side. The problem is definitely not the divergences of interpretation—debates and controversies are only normal in history—, but the absence of intellectual honesty.

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