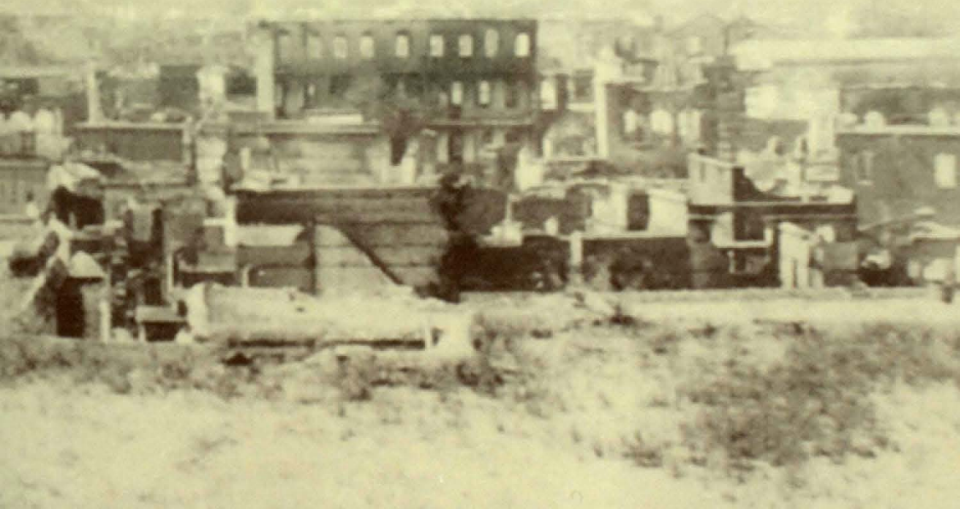


HRACHIK SIMONYAN

THE DESTRUCTION OF
ARMENIANS IN CILICIA,
APRIL 1909

translated by
Melissa Brown and Alexander Arzumanian



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Gomidas Institute
London

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHERS: This work is a translation of Hrachik Simonyan's *Հայերի Զանգվածային Կոտորածները Միլիկիայում (1909 թ. Ապրիլ)* [The Widespread Massacres of Armenians in Cilicia (April 1909)] (Yerevan State University, 2009). It represents the forefront of Armenian language historiography on the Adana Massacres of 1909 and was recommended for publication by the Center of Armenian Studies of Yerevan State University. The English translation of Simonyan's work was arranged in Armenia and appears here with a few changes: (1) Western Armenian and Ottoman proper nouns have been edited (eg Kharpert not Kharberd, Hagop not Hakob, Bzdgian not Pztkyan). (2) The illustrations in the original Armenian work have not been reproduced because of their poor quality. (3) New maps, photographs, and an index of proper nouns have been added. (4) The title of the work has been changed from "The Widespread Massacres of Armenians in Cilicia (April 1909)" to "The Destruction of Armenians in Cilicia, April 1909."



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FOREWORD

Throughout half a millennium under Turkish tyranny, Armenians were subjected to cruel oppression and massacres. The national and religious intolerance towards non-Turkic peoples of the Ottoman Empire manifested itself most vividly during the more than three-decade-long regime of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. It was at the will of this despot that Western Armenians (Turkish Armenians) suffered general massacres in 1895–1896, in which some three hundred thousand people lost their lives, thousands of households were broken up, whole families destroyed, and hundreds of settlements ravaged.

It might have seemed that after that heinous crime, the slaughterers' passions would have subsided somewhat. That is what Armenians began to think, especially after the Ottoman revolution of July 1908, when the Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) assumed power and proclaimed the Ottoman Empire a country of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Armenians embraced the cause for the renaissance of their country with utter devotion.

Inspired by the slogan of fraternity, Armenians were just beginning to believe in the possibility of a life of freedom and security, when, in the naïveté of their newborn hope, they were taken unawares, and just nine months after the victory of the Ottoman revolution, they once again found themselves face-to-face with their age-old destiny of martyrdom. After a brief burst of radiant hopes and expectations, a violent tempest struck, shattering their illusions.

After knocking on every door in search of salvation, Armenians were turned away by all. They sought but found no way out, condemned to new and terrible destruction.

The old regime, which still retained many levers of power, and the "constitutional" Young Turks, who controlled the political situation in the country, perpetrated yet another mass crime—this time within a single area of the Empire.

Cilicia became the arena for a new Armenian Golgotha. In April 1909, according to a meticulously developed plan and with unique cruelty, Cilician Armenians were subjected to a bloody massacre, committed with cold-blooded determination that employed every method of murder. Within ten

or twelve days some thirty- to thirty-five thousand Armenians were slain, and thousands of others died later of injuries, starvation, and psychological shock. Many were forced to flee, taking refuge in different countries. All those who survived would carry in their hearts for the rest of their lives the smoldering embers of wounds that would never heal. The reader will receive powerful evidence of this destruction in the pages of this book.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN LITERATURE AND OTHER SOURCES ON THE CILICIAN MASSACRES

While writing this history of the 1909 massacres of Cilician Armenians, the author used archive documents, available literary sources, and the print media of the time.

The majority of the literary sources on the calamity of Cilician Armenians are memoirs published, with very few exceptions, in the year of the massacres (1909) or during the two or three years that followed (1910–1912).

Based on data from the European and Russian press, a forty-page pamphlet in Russian titled *Adanski Chernye Dni* (The Black Days of Adana) authored under the pseudonym S. Z., was published in Baku in 1909. It represents an outline of the Cilician massacres.

The first comprehensive narrative of the Armenians' newest, great tragedy was written by Souren Barteven (Sisag Bardizbanian from Kadiköy). His book *Giligyan Arhavirku* (The Cilician Catastrophe), printed in Constantinople in 1909, is the first memoir about the Cilician massacres, written by a patriotic son of the Armenian nation with boundless anguish of heart. This exceptionally valuable book describes the massacres in all their terror and ghastliness. In the days of the massacres, the author applied himself with determination to the cause of saving his surviving compatriots from the jaws of death.

In 1910, the book *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadouneru* (The Adana Massacres and Their Instigators) by the Prelate of Adana vilayet Bishop Moushegh Seropian, was published in Boston. This volume demonstrates with irrefutable evidence that the governors of the vilayet were the direct organizers of the massacres.

Not long after the massacres, the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople dispatched renowned writer and public figure Zabel Yesayan to Cilicia, who learned firsthand the unbearable conditions of the survivors, listened to the sorrowful stories of the wretched, and recorded it all with an anguished heart and a skilled pen in a 1910 memoir titled *Avenagneroun Mech* (Among the Ruins), printed in Constantinople.

In the same year but months after the massacres (October 1909), Arshagouhi Teotig was sent by the Constantinople Union of Patriotic Armenian Women to Cilicia. She stayed there for quite a while and reflected what she had seen and heard in a narration containing about forty scenes titled *Amis Mu i Giligya: Gugdour Noter* (A Month in Cilicia: Fragmentary Notes), published in Constantinople in 1910.

Krikor Koudoulian, the author of the book *Hay Leru: Garmir Trnagner Giligio Agheden* (The Armenian Mountain: Red Episodes from the Cilician Disaster), published in Constantinople in 1912, makes numerous valuable facts available to the reader.

In the days of the massacres, especially in their aftermath, Bishop Nerses Tanielian was, with his moral and spiritual homilies, a tower of strength for the survivors of the massacres, particularly widows and orphans. He included some of his sermons in his book *Gatil Mu Chour Aynade Sderou* (A Drop of Water for Burnt Hearts) published in Constantinople in 1912.

The memoirs by one of the leaders of Armenian resistance in Adana in those days, a pharmacist from Hadjin and martyr of the 1915 Armenian Genocide named Hagop Terzian, titled *Adanayi Gyanku* (The Life of Adana), printed in Constantinople in 1911, and *Giligio Aghedu* (The Calamity of Cilicia), published in Constantinople in 1912, are of great value, and they were highly regarded by a number of intellectuals at the time. Catholicos of Cilicia Sahag II (Khabayan) of Cilicia wrote that Terzian "with his eyewitness account and official documents has created an indelible impression upon everyone as a serious and trustworthy chronicler. It is a laborious, inquisitive, vivid picture of the Great Calamity, brought to white light from under the ruins and ashes by a native son of Cilicia, which will remain an everlasting stain upon the glorified civilization and unquenchable humanism of the twentieth century." In a letter addressed to Terzian, Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian noted, "I have read your *Giligio Aghedu* with great pain in my heart. It is not a red thread that runs through the white pages of your book, but a wide, black band that stands out defiantly against the bloody pages." Archbishop Maghakia Ormanian praised the author's work and stressed, "You too, my dear, as a cognizant and conscientious explorer resolved to elucidate it [the massacre], and I can say with confidence that you have managed to carry through the most complete and perfect work. You have displayed in your work not narrative art or poetic flights, but what is more impressive, true stories, meticulous accounts, and complete information, which have enriched the four volumes of your work..." (See the addendum to Terzian's

Giligio Aghedu). In 1915, Terzian was arrested in Constantinople along with other Armenian intellectuals and deported first to Ayash and then to Chankiri, where he was slain. *Giligio Aghedu*, written with truthful and accurate observations by a witness and a passionate figure, has greatly helped the author of this study in specifying the sequence of events and in evaluating the role played by the Armenian organizations and individuals in the days of the calamity.*

In 1919, *The Massacre of Adana: A Report by Hagop Babigian* was published in Constantinople; it will be discussed in detail in the following pages of this study. The book *Hayagan Giligya* (Armenian Cilicia) by Vahan M. Kiurkdjian (New York, 1919) was based on various publications by the Mechitarists in Venice.

In 1922, Krikor Koudoulian's textbook *Giligyan Ashkharbakroustian* (Geography of Cilicia) was published in Constantinople. It is of much use to researchers in verifying the localities and toponyms of specific places in the region.

The collection *Giligyan Gsgitsner, 1903–1915* (Cilician Anguish: 1903–1915), published in Beirut in 1927, which includes documents, letters, and other material from the archive of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, is an important source for researchers. A significant portion of the documents in the collection concern the 1909 Adana massacres. The materials related to the mass deportation that followed the massacres are of special value.

More than forty years after the Cilician massacres, the voluminous memoir *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher* (The Adana Massacre and Memories from Konya) by the spiritual leader of the Evangelical Armenians of Adana Rev. Hampartsoum Ashdjian, was published in New York in 1950. Due to his position, the author was at the center of the events, and he described in great detail the horrors that took place and the work that was done by non-Islamic religious leaders in the vilayet to alleviate to some degree the unbearable condition of the victims.

The voluminous, 1,061 page work by Piuzant Yeghiayan, *Adanayi Hayots Badmoutiun* (History of the Adana Armenians) was published in Lebanon in 1970, and pages 211 through 301 deal with the Adana disaster. Hagop Cholakian's three-volume work, *Kessab*, Volumes I and II (Aleppo, 1995 and

* Also see a partial English translation of Terzian's epic work, Hagop H. Terzian, *Cilicia 1909: the Massacre of Armenians* Ara Stepan Melkonian (trans.) and Ara Sarafian (ed.), (Gomidas Institute, London, 2009).

2005, respectively) of which cover the April 1909 misfortune of this Armenian town, are also of use to researchers. *Andioki Mertsaga Roudji Hovidi Hayeru* (*Batma-Azkakragan Ousoumnasiroutiun*) (The Armenians of the Roudj valley in the vicinity of Antioch: A historical-demographical study), published in Antelias in 2006 by the same author, deals with the suffering inflicted upon the Armenian settlements in the Roudj valley in the Antioch administrative district in the western part of the Aleppo province and of neighboring Kessab and surrounding villages.

Studies and memoirs dealing with the Aleppo province and, especially with the city of Zeytoun, comprise a separate set. The following publications are worth mentioning: Avedis Berberian's *Hayots Badmoutiun* (History of Armenians) (Constantinople, 1871); Hagop H. Allahverdian's *Oulnia gam Zeytoun, Lernayin Avan i Giligya: Ngarakir Deghagan, Gensapanagan, Panasiragan yev Lezouapanagan* (Oulnia or Zeytoun, a Mountainous Town in Cilicia: Topographical, Biological, Philological and Linguistic Descriptions) (Constantinople, 1884); Hampartsoum Arakelian's *Zeytoun: Deghakragan, Azkakragan yev Varchagan Desoutiun* (Zeytoun: A Topographical, Ethnographical and Administrative Review) (Tiflis, 1896); Mnatsagan Semerdjian's *Zeytouni Antsyalen yev Nergayen* (From the Past and Present of Zeytoun) (Vienna, 1900); Hagop Terzian's *Giligio Aghedu* (The calamity of Cilicia) (Constantinople, 1912); Mamigon Varzhabedian's *Housbig Zeytouni* (Memories of Zeytoun) (Marzouan, 1912); Emmanuel Voskerichian's *Giligyan Housher* (1907–1929), (Cilician Memories [1907–1929]) (Aleppo, 1930); Krikor H. Kaloustian's, *Marash gam Kermanig yev Heroi Zeytoun* (Marash or Kermanig and Hero Zeytoun) (New York, 1934); and Misak Siserian's *Badmoutiun Zeytouni (1409–1921)* (History of Zeytoun [1409–1921]) (Beirut, 1996).

In addition to these studies, the author has referred again and again to the fruit of the untiring efforts of the giant of Armenology, Father Ghevond Alishan—the famed and magnificent work *Sisouan*, devoted to the geography of Cilicia and the history of Rupenid or Armenian Cilicia. This research study is a colossal monument, one of the prides of Armenian bibliography. In it, Father Alishan compiled with great care all information directly or indirectly related to the history of Cilicia.

The book *Gilikya, Ports Ashkharakrutyan Arti Giligio* (Cilicia: An essay on the geography of modern Cilicia) was published in Saint Petersburg in 1894 as a part of a series published by the magazine *Arax*. It was profoundly influenced by Alishan's *Sisouan* and was based on eyewitness accounts by

travelers and studies by European researchers, in particular, Book IV of Volume II of the three-volume work by Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie. Géographie administrative, statistique descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie Mineure* (Asiatic Turkey: Administrative geography, descriptive statistics and rationale of each province of Asia Minor), published in Paris in 1891, which deals with the vilayets of Adana and Aleppo. In this book, the reader can find detailed information on the geography, way of life, trade and crafts, natural resources, harvest, flora and fauna, and ruined as well as existing buildings, fortresses, and churches of Cilicia.

The study *Mi Desoutiun Hayagan Giligio Harstoutyan Vra* (A review of the wealth of Armenian Cilicia) authored by Vahan Kiurkdjian (Paguran), which was included in Volume II of *Anax* magazine (Saint Petersburg, 1893, pp. 31–64), is worthy of note. While disagreeing with a number of assertions by the author, I cannot but pay him homage for his inquiring study of the subject and, in many instances, unusual interpretation of historical phenomena and conclusions.

The valuable work *Kilikiyai Haykakan Petutyun Patmoutiun* (History of the Armenian state of Cilicia) by Grigor Mikayelyan (Yerevan, 2007) has been useful.

A great volume of material about the 1909 massacres of Cilician Armenians and their consequences was provided by the Armenian press of the time, the pages of which are filled with harrowing descriptions. The events were covered on a daily basis by *Piuzantion* (the official organ of the Armenian Patriarchate), *Arevik*, *Zhamanag* of Constantinople, the Armenian newspapers and periodicals of Smyrna (Izmir), Garin (Erzurum), Trabzon, and other cities of the Ottoman Empire, and almost all organs of the Russian Armenian press (*Mshak*, *Horizon*, *Kovkasi Lraber*, *Surhandak* and others). Numerous articles were published in the pages of the Russian, European, and American press of the time.

Both the eyewitness accounts and the documents kept in the archives of Armenia were taken as a basis for the authors of a large number of studies of the Cilician calamity in subsequent decades. There are a great number of documents that have not yet been studied or used, housed in the National Archives of Armenia, the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Madenataran), the Charents Museum of Literature and Arts, and the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute of the National Academy of Science of the Republic of Armenia. A portion of the documents related to the 1909 massacres in Cilicia from the above mentioned archives was included in a very

valuable collection titled *Genotsid Arman v Osmanskoï Imperii* (The Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire), published in Yerevan in 1966. There are materials concerning the massacres in the Archive of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, but for obvious reasons, Armenian researchers are unable to use them for the time being.

The 1909 events in Cilicia have been insufficiently researched both in the Soviet period and since the declaration of independence. A small number of articles have been published, among which the work *Kilikiyai 1909 Kotoratsnere* (The 1909 Massacres in Cilicia) by Professor Azat Hambaryan, which appeared in *Patmabanasirakan Handes* (Historical-Philological Journal) (Yerevan, no. 4, 1988), stands out. The issue was also covered in some collections (see, for example, *Hay Zhoghovrdi Patmutyun* (History of the Armenian people) published by the Academy of Science of the Armenian SSR (Volume III, Yerevan, 1976 and Volume VI, Yerevan, 1981) and in monographs. Among these monographs are Tsatur Aghayan's *Hay Zhoghovrdi Azatagrakan Paykari Patmutyunis* (From the History of the Liberation Movement of the Armenian People) (Yerevan, 1976); Makich Arzumanyan's, *Hayastan, 1914–1917* (Armenia, 1914–1917) (Yerevan, 1969) and *Daravor Goyamarte* (Centuries-Long Struggle for Existence) (Yerevan, 1989); Aramayis Mnatsakanyan's *Hay Zhoghovrdi Voghbergutiune Ruse yev Hamashkharhayin Hasarakakan Mtki Gnabatmamb* (Tragedy of the Armenian People in the eyes of Russian and world public opinion) (Yerevan, 1965); Vardan Parsamyan's *Hay Zhoghovrdi Patmutyun* (History of the Armenian People) (Yerevan, 1967); Haykaz Poghosyan's *Zeytuni Patmutiune. 1409–1921* (History of Zeytoun, 1409–1921) (Yerevan, 1969); and a work titled *Haykakan Kotoratsnere Kilikiayum* (The Armenian Massacres in Cilicia) (Yerevan, 2005) by Ruben Gasparyan, which encompasses the period from the 1890s to 1921 and includes a chapter on the 1909 Cilician massacres.



Justinian Bridge, Adana, cir. 1909

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Cilicia (also called Karamania) is located in the southeastern corner of Asia Minor, opposite Cyprus. Its natural borders are the Mediterranean Sea, whose crescent shores form the Tarsus Gorge, the Alexandretta (Issus or Armenian) Gulf to the south, and to the east, the Amanus Mountains, which stretch northeast to southwest, fencing in the eastern shores of the Alexandretta Gulf, and ending in the Cape of Ras el Khanzir.*

Cilicia is divided into two parts, distinct in setting and natural environment—the southeastern area, a vast fertile plain, the Cilician Plain (*Cilicia Pedias*) or Chukurova (some consider this plain to be the "Aleian Plain" celebrated in Homer's *Iliad*) and the eastern area, comprising rough, hilly and mountainous country edged by the Taurus Mountains, as Rugged Cilicia † (*Cilicia Tracheia*). The true history of Cilicia's ancient past is fused with mythology.

Located at the intersection of Europe and Asia and very close to Africa (Egypt), with its advantageous geographical features (a calm and picturesque harbor, inaccessible mountains and gorges, and fertile fields), Cilicia played an important historical role for centuries. With its roads, it had been an open window to the outside world since ancient times. Its coastal cities had been the only passageway for exporting raw materials from Asia Minor and importing goods from Europe.‡

There is no consensus among scholars regarding the name "Cilicia." Setting aside the mythological variants, many consider it probable that the name derives from the Hebrew word "khilkim" (kilki), which means "stone" or "rocky." Others believe that a Phoenician military commander named Cilix settled in this land and it was named Cilicia after him.

* *Kilikia. Pordz Ashkharagrouyan Ardi Kilikio* [Cilicia: An Essay on Geography of Modern Cilicia] (St. Petersburg, 1894), 16–17.

† Hampartsoum Arakelian, *Zeytoun: Toghakragan, Azhakragan yev Varchagan Desoutiun* [Zeytoun: Topographical, Ethnographical and Administrative Review] (Tiflis, 1896), 6–7; Krikor Koudoulian, *Hay Leru: Garmir Tragner Gilggo Agheden* [The Armenian Mountain: Red Episodes from the Cilician Disaster] (Constantinople, 1912), 9; Krikor H. Kaloustian, *Marash gam Kermanig yev Zeytoun*, [Marash or Kermanig and Heroic Zeytoun] (New York, 1934), 3–4.

‡ Koudoulian, *Hay Leru*, 15.

Over time, Cilicia was alternately in the possession of the Phoenicians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Armenians, Egyptian sultanates, and finally, the Ottoman Turks.

From time immemorial, Armenia had neither seas nor rivers fit for safe and secure navigation. Their many rapids made the rivers that did exist unfit for transporting cargo, and at the same time, their foam-crested currents made them nearly impossible to cross, greatly impeding travel between different parts of the country. In general, the lack of passable roads and other means of contact, due to the abrupt relief of the mountainous country, severely hampered Armenia's economic development. That is why since ancient times Armenians had longed for open waters, for a sea that would allow them to enter into contact and establish trade relations with civilizations near and far.

It is difficult to determine in precisely which century Armenians migrated to Cilicia, but it is beyond all doubt that the earliest traces of their settling this land are buried in time immemorial.

Since ancient times, Armenians had traveled as far as Babylon on ferryboats along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. But in order to reach the Mediterranean coast, they had to choose the Cilician route. Some Armenian traders who had established active ties with the Phoenicians settled down in Pontus and Cilicia. These livable places began to attract new groups of Armenian migrants.

The more often the Armenian heartland was subjected to destruction and invasion, the greater the migration to the west, especially to Cilicia. The number of Armenians in Cilicia grew to such an extent that they attained numerical superiority, and the country became a new homeland for them. In 1080 under the leadership of one of the great princes of the Rupenid dynasty, Prince Rupen, the independent Armenian Principality of Cilicia was founded, and in 1198 the Rupenid dynasty established the Kingdom of Cilicia. The sovereignty of the Armenian state in Cilicia lasted for almost three centuries.

Medieval Latin historiographers referred to the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia as *Arménia Minor*, *Arménia*, and *Ermenie*, and in Armenian sources this state was called *Hayots Ashkharh*, *Giligio Doun*, and sometimes *Sissouan*,^{*} after the capital city of Sis. At the height of prosperity (in the 13th

* Grigor Mikayelyan, *Kilikiaiyi Haykakan Petutyun Patmutyun* [History of the Armenian State of Cilicia] (Yerevan State University, Yerevan), 2007, 5-6.

century), the territory of the Kingdom came to forty thousand square kilometers and its population reached nearly one million.^{*}

With its advantageous geographical location, favorable climatic conditions, and Armenian population truly devoted to the land, and having established broad contacts and interstate relations with many countries in Europe and Asia, Armenian Cilicia became one of the most economically developed countries of the time.

The economic prosperity of Cilicia and progress in agriculture and the trades gave impetus to the development of cities. The number of large and medium-sized cities grew to ten, especially noteworthy among them being the capital city of Sis, Anazarba (Anavarza), Misis (Mopsuestia or Mamistra), Ayas (Aegea or Aegeae), which was one of the busiest ports of the Mediterranean, and two other notable ports—Corycus (Corycos or Korykos) and Anamour. The improvement of existing ports, bridges, and roads and the construction of new ones greatly contributed to the development of domestic and transit trade. A powerful merchant fleet was established, connecting Cilicia via sea routes with Genoa, Venice, France, Spain, Crimea, and countries of the Near East and Western Asia. The port of Ayas became the country's sea gate for transit trade.

Trade convoys from Cilicia used the sea and land routes to export cotton, grain, timber, livestock, dried fruit, olives, spices, and minerals to different countries. Cilicia imported silk, jewelry, weaponry, soap, and other goods.[†]

Although the currencies of various countries were in circulation within the state, domestic trade was mainly conducted using gold, silver, and copper coins minted in Cilicia.

Education, science, literature, and the arts reached high levels in Armenian Cilicia. There was a wide network of public and private schools. Elementary education (three- and four-year schools) was free and widely accessible. At the same time, the centers of higher learning established during the previous century were improving and new ones were being established. Eminent teachers and provosts emerged, and through their efforts, the universities were growing into temples of science. Among them, the Trazarg, Mashgyevor, Barlahon, Arek, Shughru, Skevran, and other centers of education and science, where various branches of learning, including literature, historiography, philosophy, linguistics, geometry, arithmetic, and

* *Hay Zhoghovrdi Patmutyun* [History of the Armenian People] (The Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1976), 3:671-673.

† *Ibid.*, 731-732.

almost all the realms of the arts—poetry, music, painting, theatre, and rhetoric—achieved especially wide fame. Men of science and arts enriched the intellectual treasury of the Armenian people through their creativity.* Vahram Rapouni and Nerses Lampronatsi (Saint Nerses of Lampron) were outstanding thinkers. Lawmaker Smpad Sparabad (Smpad the Constable) and man of letters Krikoris left a great scientific and literary legacy. Historiographers Vartan Areveltsi (Vartan the Easterner) and Hetum, fabulist Vartan Aykegtsi, poet and prose writer Nerses Shnorhali (Saint Nerses the Graceful), manuscript illuminators Toros Roslin and Sarkis Bidzag, composers Gosdantin Srig and Hovsep Trazargtsi, and many others created works of everlasting value.

The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was a centralized and rather powerful state. The great princes and kings of the Rupenid dynasty, through their unbending will and ceaseless efforts, constant vigilance, and delicate diplomacy, were able to maneuver among the enemy forces on different sides and ensure the security and peace of their people. Surrounded by enemy states and constantly under the threat of foreign invasion, the Cilician Armenian state was compelled to maintain a powerful regular army of tens of thousands of men, predominantly cavalry. Armenian cavalry resembled the knights of Western Europe in many ways and were equipped like crusaders. The Armenian army of Cilicia was not intended to conquer other countries; its purpose was to defend the state and its borders from invasion by Seljuk Turks and Mongols. The creation of a wide network of defensive installations covering the entire country is evidence of this. In mountainous areas alone, there were more than a hundred fortresses, most of which were built during the days of the Cilician Armenian state. Among the most important fortresses were Vahga, Lampron, Gouglag, and Gaban.† Numerous fortresses were built in the low-lying areas of the country, on the riverbanks and harbors. The Armenian military defended the sovereign country against foreign conquerors for three hundred years, with valiant deeds and glorious episodes in the struggle for freedom, restoring the military glory of the Armenian past.

While the Armenians in the motherland were mostly deprived of national statehood, the three-century existence of the Cilician Armenian state was both glorious testimony and affirmation of the aspiration for the independent industriousness of the Armenian people.

* National Archives of Armenia, fonds 56, RG 15, file 536, p. 67.

† *Hay Zhoghovrdi Patmutyan*, 3:673.

But weakened by protracted wars fought against the armed forces of the Egyptians, Seljuk Turks, Mongols, Byzantines, and the Crusaders, and by internal quarrels, Armenian Cilicia eventually succumbed. In 1375, the army of the Egyptian Sultanate conquered Cilicia once and for all, putting an end to Armenian sovereignty. With the fall of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, this significant page in the history of the Armenian people was closed.

In the course of bloody wars, the majority of the Armenian population of Cilicia was killed. Some people were unable to bear the yoke of the conquerors after the demise of their own statehood and fled to other countries. Many underwent forcible or voluntary conversion to Islam. A small group of Armenians managed to establish themselves on the slopes of the Taurus (Goul) and maintain their autonomy for many years. Until the 19th century, Armenian communities led a semi-independent existence in Zeytoun (Oulnia) and other mountainous areas of Cilicia.

In 1487, Ottoman Turks conquered Cilicia. Under their domination, the ancient name of Cilicia was consigned to oblivion and the entire country was called the Adana *vilayet* or province. In Cilicia, as in Armenia proper, the destiny of the Armenian people was to remain under a cruel foreign rule for centuries accompanied by precipitous political and cultural decline.

Over the subsequent centuries of Turkish domination, it was only with great effort that the Cilician Armenians were able to maintain their national existence and ethnic identity, withstanding the pressure from dense throngs of Turks, Turkmens, Kurds, and, at a later stage, Circassians.

From the mid-19th century, Cilicia gradually restored its historical role, assuming ever-greater economic and strategic importance. It became increasingly significant as an international market. The construction of the Berlin-Baghdad-Basra railroad was to contribute to that status even more. While the Suez Canal had facilitated communications with the Jewel in the British Crown, India, and the Far East, the railroad under construction passing through Cilicia would recreate the overland route between Europe and Asia that had existed in the past. The railroad segment from Constantinople already reached the city of Konya in the Western part of the Adana vilayet. It would enable Cilicia, due to its geographical location, to become an extremely important region.

The Baghdad railroad would open broad prospects for Armenia proper as well. Once it was put into operation, the construction of other railroads in Armenian provinces would begin. Then Cilicia would become the site where India, in one direction, and the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire

in the other, would be connected to Europe. In other words, as important as Cilicia was to become to the world market, it would be, perhaps, of even greater importance to Armenia.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL COMPOSITION, SIZE, AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE POPULATION OF CILICIA

The population of Cilicia was heterogeneous, with both native inhabitants and newcomers. The older inhabitants consisted of Armenians who were descendants of Armenians from the times of the Rupenid kingdom, Greeks who were descendants of the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire and had appeared there long before the Armenians, Kurds who arrived in Cilicia in the 9th century, the Hayoug Kurds (Kurdified Armenians) whose lifestyle was wilder than that of the Kurds, and the Pozan tribe, also of Armenian origin but milder by nature than the Hayoug tribes. The Hayoug and Bozan tribes bore little resemblance either to Turks or Kurds, in characteristics or customs. According to tradition, they were descendants of Arshagouni Armenians.

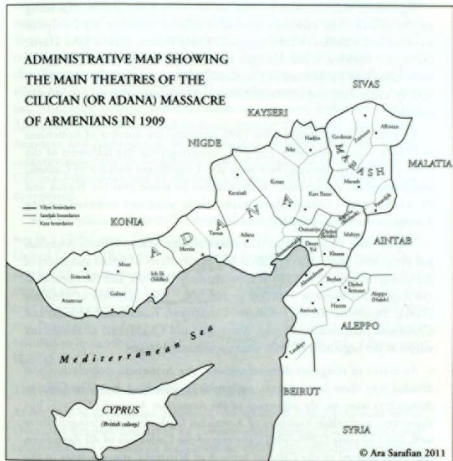
Among Cilicia's newcomers were Turkmens who settled in the 11th century at the time of the Seljuk invasions and constituted a significant portion of the population of the vilayets of Adana and Aleppo. The same is true of their kindred tribes, the Yuruks and the Afshars (who according to tradition, also descended from Armenians). The majority of the Turkmens were nomads. Other newcomers were the Turks, or Osmanlis, who settled in Cilicia in the 16th century. Though insignificant in number, they were the ruling class and all others submitted to them. The Circassians, who fled there from the Caucasus beginning in 1864, were engaged in banditry at first, but after three or four decades adapted themselves to farming. The Assyrian sectarians, who resided in the lowlands of the Adana vilayet, were skilled farmers. Their religious beliefs were similar to those of the Yezidis. The small community of Kizilbash was sectarian, like the Yezidis. A great number of Ansari (Alevi) Arabs would come to Cilicia in summers for the haying.[†] There were a few thousand Persians. Finally, there were a number of nomadic Gypsies.

Taking into consideration the deplorable situation regarding statistics in the Ottoman Empire at the time, it is impossible to give exact figures for the population either in the Empire as a whole or in the separate provinces, including Cilicia. Beginning in the 1880s, official statistics were falsified to

* Arakelian, *Zeytoun*, 41-42.

† Ibid.

ADMINISTRATIVE MAP SHOWING
THE MAIN THEATRES OF THE
CILICIAN (OR ADANA) MASSACRE
OF ARMENIANS IN 1909



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serve political ends; population figures for the Christian nations in particular were greatly underrepresented, and at the same time, the number of Muslims was inflated.

Figures for the Armenian population of Cilicia differ greatly, depending on the source. The numbers quoted in official statistics* by European travelers and scholars (Victor Langlois, Élisée Reclus, Edwin John Davis, Henry C. Barkley, Cyril Mango, and others), by Armenian religious institutions (the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Catholicosate of Sis), and by individual researchers (Dzerents, Haygouni, and others) do not coincide.

Official Ottoman statistics for 1892 presented the number of Armenians in Cilicia at approximately 150,000, counting only the followers of the Apostolic Church, though there were also a significant number of Catholic and Evangelical Armenians.† It should also be noted that the Hayuk and Puzant Kurdish tribes of Armenian origin were not counted among Armenians, but among the Muslims.

Taking these circumstances into consideration, Hampartsoum Arakelian put the general population of Cilicia (the entire vilayet of Adana and a part of the vilayet of Aleppo) in 1896 at approximately 500,000, and the number of the Armenians alone at 150,000 to 200,000.‡ The numbers of Muslims (Turks, Turkmens, Kurds, Fellaheen, Circassians, Yuruks, and Afshars) and Christians (Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and Chaldeans) of the Adana vilayet at the beginning of 1909 were approximately equal.**

In terms of religious denominations, the Armenian population was divided into three large groups, each with its own branches. The Cilician Armenians were mostly adherents of the Armenian Apostolic Church, but there were noticeable numbers of Armenian Catholics and Evangelicals as well. For 150 years (1293–1441), the seat of the Catholicos of All Armenians had been located in the Cilician fortress of Hromgla, moving later to the Monastery of Trazarg and finally to Sis, the illustrious capital of the

* The last census in the Ottoman Empire before the Cilician calamity was taken in 1892.

† The chancellor of the Adana Prelacy in 1905–1915, Kerovbe Papazyan, mentions the number of Apostolic Armenians alone at about 125,000. See Puzant Yeghayan, *Adanayi Hayots Badmoutiun* [History of the Adana Armenians] (Antelias, 1970), 296.

‡ Arakelian, *Zeyton*, 48–49.

** Rev. Hampartsoum Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Konkiye Housher* [The Adana Massacre and Memoirs from Konya] (New York, 1950), 14.

Rupenids. When in 1441, the seat of the Catholicos moved to Holy Echiadzin, the Catholicosate in Sis continued to exist as the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. Over the subsequent centuries, internal divisions within the Cilician Catholicosate on the one hand and the persecutions and constraints imposed by Ottoman authorities on the other drove the Catholicosate in Sis to the verge of collapse. By the end of the 19th century, the Catholicosate was completely deserted, and the monasteries and churches throughout Cilicia, including the famous monasteries of Sev Ler, which had been temples of light and knowledge, were in ruins. Under Greek and Armenian domination, education, science, art, and literature had flourished in the famous and glorious cities of Tarsus, Sis, Ayas, Misis, Anavarza, and Alexandretta, but as a result of Turkish domination and the centuries-long crisis in the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the cause of educating Cilician Armenians was in decline, and the centers of science and art disappeared.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the education of Cilician Armenians was in a pitiful state. Over the preceding years, through the efforts of the United Cultural-Educational Society of Armenians in Constantinople, a number of schools were opened in Cilicia—in Marash in particular—but they did not survive for long. The small, outdated national schools that did exist languished in poverty. The only bright spot was that foreign Catholic and Protestant missions established schools and colleges with religious orientation in various cities of Cilicia (Tarsus, Marash, Aintab, Adana, and Hadjin).

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF CILICIA

At the time of the Cilician massacres, the whole of Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire consisted of twenty-one vilayets. Each vilayet was subdivided into *sandjaks* or *mutasarrifliks*, which corresponded to provinces in the administrative division of Russia. The *sandjaks* were subdivided into *kazas* (literally, "jurisdictions"), *kazas* into *nahiyes* (communes), and *nahiyes* into *kariyes* (villages).

Each of these administrative units had its own ruler. A vilayet was governed by a *vali* (governor general) appointed by the central government and based in the main city of the vilayet. Each *sandjak* was governed by a *mutasarrif* (head of province) and each *kaza* by a *kaymakam* (governor). Each *nahiye* was governed by a *mudir* (superintendent), and each *kariye* by a *mukhtar* (head of village). *Mutasarrifs*, *kaymakams*, and *mudirs* were

appointed by the central government, and *mukhtars* were elected by the village communities.

Adana vilayet contained most of historic Cilicia, and a smaller area was in Aleppo vilayet. Following an administrative reform in the Ottoman Empire in 1865, Adana vilayet covered 15,000 square miles. It was divided into four *sandjaks* including 19 *kazas* with 49 *nahiyes*. The administrative status of the Adana vilayet in the days of the Cilician calamity was as follows:

* The *sandjak* of Adana contained the *kazas* of Adana, Mersin, Tarsus (Tarsus), and Karaisalı.

* The *sandjak* of Djebel-i Bereket contained the *kazas* of Yarpuz, Erzın, Osmaniye, İslahiye, Bulanık, Hassa, and Payas.

* The *sandjak* of Kozan contained the *kazas* of Sis, Fekke (Vahka), Hadjin, and Kars Bazar.

* The *sandjak* of İchel (Seleucia) contained the *kazas* of Silifke (Seleucia), Gulnar, Anamour, Ermenek, and Mout.*

Large and small rivers flowed from the headwaters in the Taurus Mountains to the plain, which made up a substantial part of the Adana vilayet. The four main rivers were the Calycadnos (Kalykadnos, Gökso, and Silifke Su), which flowed from the west to the south, the Cydnus (Berdan and Tarsus Cay), the Sihoun (Sarıs, Seyhan), and the Djihoun (Pyramus, Ceyhan). The Djihoun is the biggest river in Cilicia, and it flows in the eastern part of the land. The Sihoun is the second biggest river. The first passes near Seleucia, the second near Tarsus, the third near Adana, and the fourth near Misis, then flow into the Mediterranean Sea.

* Arakelian, *Zeytoun*, 35. It should be noted that as a result of the administrative reform introduced in the Ottoman Empire after the Cilician massacres in 1913, the Adana vilayet had five *sandjaks*, one of which was autonomous (i.e., it was vested with a greater degree of self-governance compared to other *sandjaks*). At this time, too, the *sandjaks* were subdivided into *kazas* and *nahiyes*. According to this administrative division, the Adana vilayet had the following configuration: 1. The *sandjak* of Adana: The *kazas* of Adana, Djeyhan, Karaisalı, and Youmourtalık; 2. The *sandjak* of Kozan (Sis): The *kazas* of Kozan (Sis), Hadjin, Fekke (Vahka), and Kars (*Kars-zül-Kadirlik*); 3. The *sandjak* of Djebel-i Bereket (Payas): The *kazas* of Djebel-i Bereket, Deortyol (Chork-Marzban), İslahiye, Bahche (Bulanık), and Hassa; 4. The *sandjak* of Mersin: The *kazas* of Mersin and Tarsus (see Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, [Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985], 172); and 5. The autonomous *sandjak* of İchel (separated from the Adana *sandjak*): The *kazas* of İchel, Anamur, Gulnar, and Mur (*Ibid.*, 184).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the main cities and towns of Adana vilayet were Sis, Hadjin, Misis, Mersin, Hasanbeyli, Osmaniye, Deortyol, and Hamidiye. Mersin, a well-situated port, was the residence of foreign consuls in the Adana vilayet. The city of Adana was connected to this port by a railroad, which afforded the administrative center of the vilayet the opportunity to establish direct sea links via Mersin with the Empire's capital, Constantinople.*

The majority of the population of the Adana vilayet was engaged in agriculture. The peasants in the lowlands cultivated wheat, cotton, rice, tobacco, and various vegetables. There were large areas of vineyards and citrus groves. In the mountainous regions, the main occupations of the peasants were animal husbandry and the export of forest products and wood, mainly to the neighboring provinces.

Near the peasant homesteads stretched the farms, or *chiflik*s, of larger landholders. Advanced agricultural machinery from Europe was rapidly bringing about revolutionary changes in farm management. Furthermore, the Adana vilayet was relatively accessible compared to many other places in Turkey, and tens of thousands of seasonal farm laborers came from various vilayets of the empire, especially from Western Armenia, to work for wealthy farmers on the *chiflik*s and in the processing facilities. All of this contributed day by day to the growth of the economy.

The Cilician lowlands or the Chukurova plain of the Adana vilayet, was very fertile, yielding cotton, sesame, wheat, barley, rice, oranges, lemons, grapefruits, tobacco, sugar beet, grapes, and other agricultural products.

The Armenians were not only engaged in agriculture, but also in craft and trade. Eighty-five percent of the craftsmen were Armenians; the rest were Greeks and Turks.[†] The fertility of the land, the opportunities offered by sea trade, and the gradual penetration of European production enabled Armenians, who embraced progress and were clever by nature, to achieve an advantageous economic position.

As was noted above, whereas the entire Adana vilayet with its four *sandjaks* made up the main portion of the territory of historical Cilicia, only the northwestern part of the Aleppo vilayet had once been part of the Rupenid Armenian state. A number of *kazas* of the vilayet (Antioch, Alexandretta, and

* Arakelian, *Zeytoun*, 14-15.

† Hrachya Acharyan, *Tachkabayots bartsı patmutsiune (skzbis minchev 1915)* [The history of Turkish Armenians (from the beginning to 1915)] (Nor Nakhichevan, 1915), 57.

Aleppo) had remained outside of the borders of Cilicia, despite the fact that they had a dense Armenian population, which from the standpoint of the church administration belonged to the Catholicosate of Sis.

Before the Cilician massacre, the Aleppo vilayet was administratively divided into three *sandjaks* and twenty-two *kazas*, as follows:

* The *sandjak* of Aleppo contained the *kazas* of Aleppo, Aintab, Kilis, Beylan, Alexandretta, Antioch, Harem, Jisr-ash-Shugur, Idlib, Maarat al-Numan, Bahr-Djebbul, Membidj, and Rakka.

* The *sandjak* of Ourfa contained the *kazas* of Ourfa, Rumkale (Hromgla), Suruch, and Birejik.

* The *sandjak* of Marash contained the *kazas* of Marash, Albistan, Zeytoun, Enderun, and Pazardjik.

* The twenty-two *kazas* contained twenty-four *nahiyes*.*

As a result of the administrative changes of 1911, the structure of Aleppo province changed as well.[†]

All of these territories were almost entirely mountainous, with the exception of the Pazarjik plain near the city of Marash, which competed with the Adana vilayet in producing cotton, rice, cereals, grapes, and other fruit.

There were many oak, sycamore, and wide-trunk walnut trees in the forests of Aleppo vilayet, and the residents were engaged in woodworking, exporting the finished products to neighboring vilayets and abroad, thus generating great profits for the province.

The mountainous plateaus were favorable for animal husbandry.

Aleppo vilayet was also known for its iron ore mines and smithing, which was entirely in the hands of Armenians. Most of the iron ore came from the mountains of Zeytoun, and even though it was processed using traditional,

* Arakelian, *Zeytoun*, 35–36.

† After this new administrative division, the Aleppo vilayet had four *sandjaks*. One of the *sandjaks* was autonomous and had some degree of self-governance. The administrative division of the vilayet had the following configuration: 1. The *sandjak* of Aleppo: The *kazas* of Aleppo, Alexandretta (Iskenderun), Idlib, Antioch (Antakya), Bab, Beylan, Jisr ash-Shugur, and Harem; 2. The *sandjak* of Djebel-Semaan: The *kazas* of Djebel-Semaan, Maarat al-Numan, and Mumbec (Munbic); 3. The *sandjak* of Aintab: The *kazas* of Aintab (Antap), Kilis, and Rumkale (Hromgla); and 4. The autonomous *sandjak* of Marash (separated from the Aleppo *sandjak*): The *kazas* of Marash, Albistan, Zeytoun, Gökşun (Gogison), and Pazardjik. See Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 176 and 186.

family-based methods, the product was of good quality and significant quantity.

Lacking any more or less convenient means of contact with the outside world, the population of Aleppo vilayet was greatly isolated and was compelled to develop its own textiles—there were thousands of home-based weaving workshops for manufacturing cloth. The finished product was sold not only locally, but also outside the vilayet and abroad.

The shortage of arable land, however, laid restraints on the residents of the mountainous areas of the vilayet, especially those from Zeytoun, so that during the planting and harvesting seasons, thousands of them went to the fertile fields of neighboring Adana to work as day laborers.

The Armenians of Aleppo vilayet were also subjected to massacres, though not on the same scale as those in Adana. Whereas in the province of Adana, Turks were the main perpetrators of massacres, in Aleppo, Turks, Turkmens, and Kurds were equally involved.

Two out of four *sandjaks* of Aleppo vilayet—Marash and Aleppo—were home to a significant number of Armenians. In Marash, the biggest *sandjak*, Armenians made up the majority of the population. This *sandjak* abutted several districts that extended alongside the eastern part of the Gulf of Alexandretta and were included in Aleppo *sandjak*, which also had a sizeable Armenian population. Taking into consideration the large number of Armenians, the events that took place in these two *sandjaks* will also be presented in detail.

In Cilicia, both in the vilayets of Adana and Aleppo, all favorable conditions existed for the multi-ethnic population to lead a decent life. But both under the sultan's tyranny and during the regime of the Young Turks, it was impossible to take advantage of this opportunity.

THE CAUSES OF THE MASSACRE OF ARMENIANS IN CILICIA

In April 1909, the Armenians of Cilicia experienced a horrific tragedy, and their native land was soaked in their blood. What were the main causes that led Muslims, especially Turks, to perpetrate yet another mass crime in Cilicia?

To begin with, the mutual mistrust between Armenians and Turks, which prior to the 1908 Ottoman revolution had reached the level of racial hatred, had not yet been overcome. When the *Midhat* Constitution was restored in July 1908, the backward masses—not only in the remote villages of Cilicia but in towns and cities as well—remained unaware of the changes. They had a vague sense that the word "constitution" had something to do with freedom, but they had no idea of the meaning of that word, where it was supposed to

come from, and to whom it was addressed. Instead, their minds were agitated by rumors that the dexterous Armenians had played a hand in the promulgation of the so-called constitution, and if that was the case, then nothing but bad things could be expected from it. Turks and Kurds were especially irritated by the fact that the constitution gave Armenians and other Christians of Cilicia equal rights with Muslims. How had the humble, trembling Armenians of yesterday become their equals today? This was impossible, inconceivable, and infuriating. It was beyond comprehension that anyone as infidel and despicable as an Armenian could be equal to them. Muslims could not accept the notion that they might be punished for such mere trifles as robbing or killing yesterday's slave race or defiling their family relics. They perceived such a prohibition as mockery, as something amounting to a tragedy.

Another cause of the massacres was the religious fanaticism of Muslims. There were not only diverse nationalities in the Ottoman Empire, but also diverse religions with a variety of branches. The main religions—Islam, Christianity, and Judaism—were in a state of constant mutual intransigence. The followers of each of these religions had not the slightest understanding of the other two, but were hostile towards them nonetheless.

The enemies of the constitution missed no opportunity to incite the Muslim masses groping through mental darkness against the "liberated" Christians by provoking their baser instincts with such absurd myths as "our sacred religion is in danger," "the God-given rights of the Serene Sultan have been shamelessly violated," or that the constitution had brought the country to the verge of collapse. And, as the prime cause of all this, they pointed to Christians, and to the "infidel" and "shameless" Armenians, first and foremost.

The bitter chauvinism of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress (Ittihat ve Terakki Dcemiyeti) played a vicious role. Although the Young Turks based their activity on the ideas of being Ottomans, after coming to power they took the path of rampant nationalism.

The party of the Young Turks was open to members of other nationalities, including Christians, but here, too, they were treated as second rate. The Turkish members of the party referred to each other as *kardash*, (brother), but they addressed Armenian party members as *effendi* (sir or mister)—for example, Mustafa Kardash *but* Khachadour Effendi. When a Young Turk politician of Armenian descent complained about being called "effendi" to his local Ittihat party's chapter, its Turkish chairman said, "No, Habib Effendi,

the Turks are brothers but you are 'effendi.'" In other words, the Christian Young Turks were not equal to the Turkish.*

The "new" Cilician authorities took no preventive measures against the fanatical defenders of the old order. Those who adhered to medieval obscurantism were absolutely free in their actions, and the local chapters of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) were not interested at all in whether the masses had been informed of the constitutional changes, and thus, did nothing to neutralize the xenophobic propaganda. They were confident that there were no forces in their environment that could oppose them. One of the main reasons for this confidence was the fact that in Cilicia, as in the entire country, the Young Turks were still amazed at how easily they had succeeded in coming to power after the sudden triumph of the revolution.

For the anti-constitutional forces in Cilicia, the uneducated and illiterate masses of Turks and Kurds provided fertile ground for the growth of the poisonous fruit of fanatical nationalism.

As early as October 1908, one of the editors of the Tiflis newspaper *Mshak*, Hampardzoum Arakelyan, predicted a probable coup d'état by the "old" Turks and the possible overthrow of the government of the Young Turks. He sounded the alarm that under such circumstances Turkish Armenians would inevitably face new calamities. He wrote, "If, regrettably, the new regime is unable to establish its hoped-for order, if reactionary forces come forward in Turkey and the barbaric Armenian-hating regime of Abdul Hamid raises its head again, what will be the lot of the poor Armenian people?†

Another major cause of the massacres was the return of many Armenian refugees who had fled their villages in Cilicia. During the general massacre of Armenians in 1895–1896 and in subsequent years, hundreds of villages in historic Armenia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, including Cilicia, had been deserted and fallen into the possession of Turks, Kurds, and Circassians. Now that their rights had been restored by the revolution, many of those Armenians who had been evicted from their homes ten or twelve years earlier began to return and ask for permission to resettle in their villages. At first, the authorities met their wishes, and after moving some Kurds in the villages, turned some houses over to their former owners. But the process was very quickly suspended.

* Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 152–153.

† Editorial, *Mshak* (Tiflis), October 16, 1908.

The fact of the matter was that after settling in Armenian villages, many Kurds and other nomadic tribes had adapted to settled life and became accustomed to agricultural labor—in some places even to plowing and sowing—and they now considered Armenian lands to be their own. The emerging tide of discontent and indignation among those who had taken possession of the property of others, especially among Kurds, was directed against returning Armenians and Armenians in general. The rising tide of general discontent compelled the authorities to abandon the process of resettling Kurds. The local authorities declared that it was beyond their power to return Armenians to their former places of residence, and the Young Turk government in Constantinople gave its consent to remove the issue from the agenda altogether.

The retrograde forces in Cilicia succeeded in taking the opportunity that arose and employing it in xenophobic propaganda, they drove the new settlers' discontent with the government and simmering hatred of Armenians to the boiling point.

Another probable cause was the fact that in various corners of Turkey, Armenians were making vainglorious statements claiming that they had been the first to raise the banner in the struggle against the despotic regime of Sultan Abdul Hamid and had contributed to the success of the 1908 Ottoman revolution.^{*} The constitution aroused the foolish enthusiasm of these Armenians. Vahan Tekeyan, the prominent poet and atypically wise political figure, ridiculed those Armenian politicians and the organs of the press who "applauded foolishly" and "stifled in the noise of this applause every serious thought, growing unable to reflect upon anything."[†] As in Constantinople, Smyrna, and elsewhere, on Armenian stages of Adana, too, naïve and simplistic plays were performed whose motifs were adopted from legendary periods of national history. Some people adorned the walls of their homes with pictures of national heroes of ancient centuries painted with vivid romanticism.[‡] Some Armenian figures did not properly weigh what they were saying or writing. The ostentatious course, and arrogant statements and huckstering *reklamcı* (boastful advertising agent) behavior of one or another Armenian political group left a disagreeable impression upon their narrow-minded Muslim neighbors. "Perhaps this was the reason," one study by historian Leo (Arakel Babakhanyan) reads, "that even sensible [Armenian]

* Editorial, *Kohak* (Constantinople), May 30, 1909.

† Editorial, *Shirag* (Constantinople), May 16, 1909.

‡ Editorial, *Shirag*, May 25, 1909.

leaders fell into a naïve and zealous ostentation," without taking into account the reactionary and fanatical milieu, which was "more reserved and cautious in its expressions regarding the new constitution. Instead of sensibly and discreetly educating naïve and uninformed Armenian people, they [Armenian leaders] too went with the flow; they too sprang forward madly giving themselves up to the empty and credulous demonstrations and hurrahs."[†] Naturally, in various corners of the Ottoman Empire, including Cilicia, Turkish and Kurdish elites and Muslim masses in general were filled with hatred and vindictiveness against Armenians. And now, when the opportunity offered itself, they took their revenge.[‡]

Finally, the reactionary movement in Constantinople, which began on March 31, 1909, greatly contributed to the unfolding of the tragic events in Cilicia.

In addition to these general causes, other local causes appeared in Cilicia. Among these, the newspaper *Iridal* (Moderation), published in Adana, which made it normal practice to spread provocative rumors about Christians and incite Muslim crowds against Armenians in particular, played a malicious role.

The newspaper, abusing proclamations of freedom of the press, constantly gave vent to bile against Armenians and persuaded faithful Muslims and the illiterate mob that Armenians wanted to destroy the Ottoman-Turkish state and establish their rule over Muslims.

The paper's unbridled anti-Armenian propaganda was possible because although the state had been proclaimed constitutional, it had essentially remained unchanged—with the same rules, apparatus, and human relationships, repression by government, and the illiteracy and poverty of the masses. Ottoman Turkey was democratic in name only; it was "constitutional" in Constantinople alone, but both in form and conception of government in the provinces, including Cilicia, it was as despotic as before.

The second local cause can be found within the activities of Cilicia's local administrations. The Turkish rulers from Adana to Antioch were aware that the Christians were going to be subjected to a massacre. Not only did they not place any obstacle in the way of the bloodthirsty mob, they also encouraged it however they could, and in some cases even led it against the unarmed and unprotected Armenians. With insignificant exceptions, every

* Leo, *Turkahay heghapokhuryan gaghaparanbanutiune* [The ideology of the Turkish Armenian revolution] (Paris, 1935), 2:60.

† *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* [Historical-Philological Journal], no. 4 (1988): 14. 29

official in Cilicia, regardless of rank, fomented murder and robbery in those dark days.

In Cilicia, as elsewhere throughout the Empire, the representatives of the old regime had become members of the *Itihat ve Terakki* party, in order to maintain their positions, and they pretended to be staunch defenders of the constitution. In reality, though, they remained zealous supporters of the monarchy.

Those high- and low-ranking former officials who had been relieved of their posts were also awaiting political change. Having been moved aside, they followed the ups and downs of the internal situation of the country, ready at any moment to seize the opportunity to join the side of the Red sultan, to stamp out the constitution, and to get hold of some kind of post, even at the cost of their lives. With that end in view, they engaged in a whispering campaign, intoxicating the mob with the venom of vengeance and setting them against the constitutionalists and above all, against Armenians who had supported the constitution so enthusiastically. And when on March 29, 1909 the monarchists openly protested against the constitution in Constantinople and cast stones at the *Itihat* for the first time since July 11, 1908, the Cilician regimes made their move with the support of dismissed former officials. The time had come to settle old scores, and this precious moment was not to be wasted.

Finally, the other serious local cause for the Cilician calamity was connected to the economic position of Armenians. In the course of the 1895–1896 massacres, Cilician Armenians had suffered sizeable human and material losses. But during the subsequent ten to twelve years, Cilicia was a relatively peaceful place for Armenians, compared to the provinces of Ottoman Armenia. With painstaking labor, they succeeded in restoring their economy, maintaining progress in the fields of trade and crafts, achieving rather good positions, and in some places, even becoming the majority. The fact that thousands of Armenian migrants from Armenia, doomed to destruction and famine, had come to Cilicia in search of a better life contributed to all of this. During cultivation, both Turkish and Armenian farms attracted thousands of laborers, of whom more than half were Armenian. Owing to the manpower of these outsiders, the fertile plain of Adana was now assuming its former importance.

The economic growth achieved through honest work in such a short time stirred discontent amongst Muslims. The fact that *gavurs* (infidels) could have beautiful families and possessions upset Turks. While Turks oppressed

them, Armenians kept developing and expanding, even under the heavy burden of tyranny. Turks and Kurds could not tolerate the fact that a people that was subject to them, their Christian neighbors, were prosperous, had good families, comfortable houses, flourishing orchards and farms, and abundant stores, while they themselves remained behind. Their inability to compete with Armenians aroused an insurmountable inferiority complex on the one hand, and deep feeling of vengeance on the other. With their resentful gazes and their dark, hidden feelings, Turks and Kurds were constantly on the alert, waiting for the blissful day that they could seize the property of Armenians.

The rise of Armenians caused discomfort and anxiety in the central government and the Cilician administration as well. They thus came to the conclusion that there was only one way to stop the progress of Armenians, and that was to destroy them. The massacres were initiated in Adana where the position of Armenians—as traders, business owners, and landlords—was a striking phenomenon.

The crime was premeditated—the organizers of the killings had designed a detailed plan of action in advance. Their ultimate goal was to rid Cilicia of Armenians and to appropriate Armenian wealth, properties, and land. In order to prevent Armenians who might escape the slaughter from returning to their places of residence in future, they set many Armenian houses on fire soon after the massacres.

Almost none of the former names of the hundreds of villages in Cilicia, neither with a mixed population nor inhabited solely by Armenians, survived. The task was to erase the Armenian names of those few settlements still in use, along with Armenian geographic names of lakes, rivers, and mountains. Cilicia, which was once Armenian, would thereby become solely Turkish.*

In order to secure this objective, it was planned to eradicate Armenians and their entire families, to make sure that no other kinsfolk would survive and return home. The orders were to massacre the men first, especially the young men, since they could cause trouble, as well as prominent and wealthy people, since their money and influence could contribute to the emergence of centers of resistance. It was necessary to prevent Armenians from coming to the aid of one another, and the roads from one village to another would have

* It is noteworthy that the Armenians of the Cilician plains had in the late Middle Ages been made to speak Turkish only under the threat of "cutting off their tongues," and three or four generations later, they forgot their native tongue.

to be blocked and transportation halted. Near the coast, no obstacles were to be placed in the way of those who would try to flee to Egypt or farther away.

Once the men had been massacred, only women, children, and the elderly would be left behind, and their punishment would take just a day or two to carry out. Indeed, the women, especially beautiful girls, would be "justly" divided among the perpetrators of the bloody deeds. Other valuables would be taken in the same way—to each according to their fervor and brutality. Anything of little value that remained in Armenian houses, along with the houses themselves, would be consigned to flames in order to remove all traces of Armenians who had lived there.

The Constantinople newspaper *Piuzantion*, on December 17, 1908, published an article titled "The Situation in the City of Adana" that had been sent from Adana and signed as "reporter," which read, "Our province was in a more peaceful situation under the [Hamidian] dictatorship than now. And some realities lead us to the conviction that the comedy of the constitution is gradually setting the stage for the bloody scenes of a tragedy." The author informed the readers that "bewilderment and fears of a massacre have arisen in the villages of Djebel [Djebel-i-Bereket]" and went on to describe the tension that had intensified due to everyday quarrels between Turks and Armenians in Adana and Misis and the bias against Armenians that the authorities manifested. When the head of the Adana Prelacy, Bishop Moushegh Seropian, complained to the governor, the latter angrily retorted, "What? Did you think we had died?"

Thus, a whirlwind of fire and blood was to burst forth over the land of Cilicia, killing every Armenian, destroying every chimney, and extinguishing every hearth.

A PRETEXT FOR THE CARNAGE: DIABOLIC ACTS OF PROVOCATION

In order to incite the religious fanaticism of Turks and find a pretext for anti-Armenian massacres, the organizers of the slaughter gave instructions that the doors of Adana's Ulu Djami Mosque (The Grand Mosque) be smeared with excrement. In the morning, this caused a great disturbance among the Muslim faithful. The Turks who came to the mosque swore not to leave this deed unpunished and vowed vengeance, calling down curses upon the unsuspecting Armenians.

In a letter addressed to Bishop Moushegh of the Adana Prelacy, the Cilician Catholicos, Sahag II (Khabayan), noted with pain and alarm that in order to satisfy their bestial bloodthirsty desires, the instigators had defiled

their shrines with their own hands, ascribing the blame to Armenians. This was yet another example of a method they had used for centuries.

In mid-March of 1909, gangs of thugs roamed Adana's neighborhoods calling their kinsmen out into the streets with shouts and cries claiming, "The Christians have planned to besiege and destroy our military garrison tonight. Stay alert and be ready!" The Turkish population spent the entire night in the streets, in a state of great agitation "while we," as Hagop H. Terzian wrote, "remained asleep in our beds, unaware of what was going on in our neighborhoods."[†]

Rumors were spread that Armenians in Adana and Mersin had been heard singing militant songs. Another provocative rumor was that an Armenian bishop was touring the Cilician plains and urging the people to eat less, smoke less, sell all their clothes, and buy weapons; and even worse, this bishop had had his photograph taken with a royal crown on his head. One day, word spread that "the Hadjin Armenians had revolted and were marching on Adana." Turks grew alarmed once again.

In the face of these and many other provocations, the provincial administration took no measures to discover or punish the instigators. When the authorities realized that slander and lies were not enough to rouse their fellow believers against Armenians, individual Armenians were murdered here and there.

Starting on March 15, members of a group that was part of a secret Turkish organization set up in the city would roam through Armenian neighborhoods beating, torturing, and robbing Armenians they encountered. After two or three days, this group also started robbing Armenians in broad daylight.[‡]

Another group from the same organization led by a certain Kara Ali laid an ambush on the outskirts of the city and attacked Armenian ploughmen as they returned from the fields, beating and robbing them. Two days later, the same group attacked and robbed Armenian workers at a cotton ginnery located outside the city, owned by Shaker Boutros, a Lebanese industrialist.^{**}

* *Gilguyan Gygisner – Vaverakerer Giligio Gatoghigogagan Tivanen* [Cilician Anguish – Documents from the Archive of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia] (Beirut, 1927), 73–74.

† Hagop H. Terzian, *Giligio Agheda* [The Calamity of Cilicia] (Constantinople, 1912), 12.

‡ Bishop Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadouneru* [The Adana Massacres and their Instigators] (Boston, 1910), 46.

** Ibid.

There were alarming reports from other parts of the province as well. On March 16, three Armenians riding in a carriage from Misis to Adana came under attack some eight or ten kilometers from the city.

The bandits pulled the Armenians out of the carriage saying that "gávur have no right to ride a coach" and that "those shameless Armenians" should have stopped their carriage, gotten out, and bowed before them. *Pizantion* wrote that "this reminds us of the good old times of the Shariat when, if a Turk would come across a gávur, he would make him shoulder his heavy load, or if he saw a gávur wearing a new pair of shoes, he would exchange them for his own worn-out pair, saying that it didn't befit a gávur to wear new shoes. By mentioning the Shariat, the Turks who stopped the carriage alluded to those good old days." After beating the travelers to within an inch of their lives, the bandits left.

On March 17, three Armenian mule breeders traveling from Osmaniye to Hadjin were slaughtered in the vicinity of Sis. The perpetrators of the crime declared that they had taken vengeance on these Armenians because their nation had supported the constitution, which was to trample on the Shariat. That same day, two Armenians, Krikor Dadrian and Yeprem Bourchazian, disappeared in the neighborhood of Kars Bazar. Their bodies were discovered in a deserted area a month later.

On March 18, on the road from Hadjin to Kayseri (Caesarea or Gesaria), in a place called Kazbel, a gang attacked ten Armenian orphan girls who, accompanied by American missionaries, were being transferred to the American orphanage in Kayseri. They raped all the girls before the eyes of the missionaries and left.

On March 19, on the road from Sis to Adana, a group of Muslim bandits attacked Armenian travelers, who suffered various injuries and narrowly escaped to Adana. The next day, Arakel Berberian, an eighteen-year-old student at the American college in Tarsus and native of Antioch, ran into a group of Turks on the outskirts of Hamidiye; they stabbed him with a dagger and then killed him with five shots from a pistol.[†] By the end of March, criminals were acting openly and fearlessly in the central districts of Adana. With every passing day, the turmoil was growing more dangerous.[‡] In spite of numerous complaints, the government made no attempt to arrest a single

* *Pizantion* (Constantinople), April 29 (May 12), 1909.

† Koudoulian, *Hay Leru*, 34.

‡ *Arvelyan Mamoul* (Smyrna), no. 17, April 21, 1909, 492-495.

criminal. Meanwhile Turkish and Kurdish criminals had solved the problem of furnishing themselves with arms long before they unleashed the massacres.

At the direct orders of the authorities, large quantities of weapons, mainly various types of rifles and pistols of the time, had been removed from state arsenals and handed over to bandits. They were also armed with the traditional weapons that they kept at home—swords and daggers. In addition, the mob had provided itself beforehand with several types of diabolical homemade tools for destroying Armenians and other Christians. One such product of the wicked mind of the Adana criminals, for example, was a metal pole with a sharp hooked end meant for striking Christians on the heads so that their brains would spill out.

By the third week of March 1909, everything was ready: a detailed plan had been worked out; the government was determined to lead the bloody cause, and the mob was ready and willing, just waiting for order to be given. All that was needed was a pretext to unleash the carnage. And that malicious pretext was found.

Garabed and his family lived in Shaabaniye (also called Tosbagha Kalesi), a poor Armenian neighborhood in Adana, where they had moved from the town of Palou. On March 21, his recently married twenty-year-old son Hovhannes,^{*} a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), was on his way home from work when he encountered a Turkish gang led by the notorious Armenian-hating thug Isfendiar. The Turks stopped the young man and surrounded him, menacingly demanding that he immediately satisfy their bestial desires and then lend them his wife for the same purpose. When the dignified, defiant young man categorically rejected their foul demands, the thugs brutally beat him and left him lying unconscious by the side of the road.

In the days that followed, Hovhannes lodged complaints against Isfendiar and his gang with the police, the prosecutor's office, and even the vicegerent, but no one would listen; he was jeered at and turned away wherever he went.[†]

Encouraged by the fact that Hovhannes had received no backing from any official, Isfendiar and his fellow criminals decided to murder him.[‡] Hovhannes learned of his assailants' plans and saw no other way out but to take the matter into his own hands. Towards that end, he bought a small, five-chamber pistol at the bazaar and carried it with him.

* In some sources he is described as a seventeen or eighteen years old.

† *Droshak* (Geneva), no. 5, May 1909, 54.

‡ *Pizantion*, no. 3815, April 17 (30), 1909.

A week later, in the evening of March 27, Isfendiar and two accomplices hid by the side of the road where the Armenian youth would pass on his way home from work. When Hovhannes approached the spot, the criminals came out of their hiding place wielding daggers and guns and attacked him. His pleas and entreaties were to no avail. Realizing that this was his last chance, Hovhannes managed to take out his pistol and began shooting. The ringleader, Isfendiar, fell lifeless to the ground. One of his accomplices was severely wounded and the other was slightly hurt. As for Hovhannes, he had a narrow escape.

In the morning of the following day, March 28, Turks who had been looking for an excuse to massacre Armenians entered the scene. They took Isfendiar's body and carried it through all the Turkish neighborhoods, before taking it to the cemetery for a crowded funeral. Moving and stirring eulogies were delivered, and then the funeral party headed for the Shaabaniye district and surrounded Garabed's house, demanding that his son be turned over to them. It was clear that if he were, the angry crowd would immediately tear the young man to pieces. When Hovhannes's family told the crowd that they did not know where he was, a group of Turks fell upon them, trampling them underfoot, and tore their house to the ground.⁷

At this tense moment, in order to stir up the Turks even more, provocateurs murdered an Armenian from Kayseri named Lutfig near Saathane Square that same day, knowing beforehand that he had been circumcised. The murderers immediately began spreading the news that "the *gávurs* killed another Muslim and have decided to slaughter us all." Every Turkish neighborhood boiled over with rage. With rancor in their hearts, the Turks sought vengeance. Several hundred of them gathered in front of the governor's office demanding that he "cleanse the Muslim blood with the blood of *gávurs*." Several Turks who had known the murdered man expressed suspicion that he might be Armenian. The governor's office decided to subject the body to a physical examination and summoned a doctor named Keroye Djezvedjian who, after the examination, had the courage to state that the murdered man was an Armenian—the joiner Lutfig. The doctor said that he himself had performed surgery on the man a few days earlier, and he showed them a tattoo of a cross on the man's arm.⁸

* *Puzantion*, no. 3809, April 9 (22), 1909; no. 3815, April 17 (30), 1909.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 19–20.

‡ Moushegh, *Adanayi Charu yev Badaikhanadouneru*, 49.

But the doctor's testimony was not enough to curb their passion. Out for revenge, Turks began killing Armenians throughout the city.

On March 30, one of the two wounded Turks who had attacked Hovhannes died. The frenzy of the Muslims reached its peak. The dead man's funeral procession was huge. The crowd at the cemetery screamed and shouted, with many stirring eulogies delivered. This time, appeals were made to massacre the city's Armenians. After the funeral, the procession again headed for the Shaabaniye district, ready to raze the neighborhood to the ground. The Armenian residents of the district fled in panic to the city center.

Meanwhile, thousands of other Turks from Adana took to the streets and squares and, calling down threats and curses upon Armenians, headed for the governor's residence. They demanded that the "*gávur's* cub" be found at any cost and made to pay. The governor general, Mehmed Djevad, not only did not take any steps to restore order but, in his turn, poured oil on the flames, further enraging the crowd, which was already out of control.

On March 31, an American missionary, the Reverend William N. Chambers, medical doctor Hampartsoum Salibian, and the spiritual leader of the Armenian Evangelicals of Adana, Reverend Hampartsoum Ashdjian, called on the governor general and asked him to intervene to restore order. Djevad Bey, a former secretary in Abdul Hamid's palace, firmly demanded that Armenian leaders "promptly find and surrender the criminal." They responded that no one knew his whereabouts and that it was not they but the authorities that were required to make arrests. Not long after, the governor received the news that Hovhannes had managed to board a ship and take shelter in Cyprus. Infuriated, the governor summoned Ashdjian and threatened him, warning that if he did not fulfill his demand, the Armenians of the city would pay heavily. Upon his return to the church, the terror-stricken reverend told those present, "I heard no good words from his mouth. We are facing a terrible danger."

The morning of March 31 arrived, bringing with it the frenzy of Turks—screaming and howling—and the nightmare of Armenians, speechless with horror and frightened to death.

When they learned that Djevad Bey had been unable to arrest the Armenian youth, a Turkish mob went to the Armenian neighborhoods under the pretext of looking for the "*gávur's* cub" and searched the houses themselves. They managed to find a few rifles. This gave them a new motive,

* Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 148.

and they made the rounds through their neighborhoods displaying the guns and claiming that Armenians had made thorough preparations to attack and murder Turks. At the same time, they took care of other business, transporting and distributing weapons, running about and making final arrangements.

The administration, in its turn, summoned thousands of Turks to Adana from neighboring villages for help. At noon, special groups began marking houses and shops that belonged to Armenians. Meanwhile, Turkish clergymen and mullahs played an ill-starred role by stirring up the animal instincts of "believers" in the mosques, calling them to arms to "bring the overfed *gâvurs* to justice."

Armenians were overwhelmed by the nightmare of a massacre that loomed before them. Many of them could not yet perceive what was going on around them, or why Turks were becoming so frenzied. And those who did understand were naively confident that if Muslims for some reason attempted to use weapons, the "honest-minded," "constitutional" local government would immediately send in the army to suppress any anti-constitutional action.

Before resorting to bloody actions, in the evening of March 31, the fanatical mob gathered in front of the governor's office and demanded that Djevad issue an official order to massacre Armenians. Since, that morning, the governor had sent a telegram to Constantinople asking for permission to launch a massacre, he urged the leaders of the mob to go home, stay prepared, and wait for the response from the capital.

The mob, which consisted of thousands of criminals, was dissatisfied and began to raise an uproar. Some minutes later, howling with frenzy, the crowd attacked some Christians who happened to be in the vicinity of the governor's office and beat them until they bled. Dozens of Armenians were injured. The fanatical mob stood in the streets and squares of the city at full attention, waiting for orders.

The Armenians spent the troubled night of March 31 to the dawn of April 1 in a state of horror. As if it were not enough to be condemned to persecution and suffering in the Empire, Armenians were now threatened with the deprivation of life.

In just two or three hours, a terrible tragedy was to arise, and new, shocking scenes of Armenian martyrdom would unfold.

MASSACRES IN THE CITY OF ADANA

The time had come for the storm of blood and flames to spread throughout Cilicia, killing and mutilating tens of thousands of Armenians. Adana was to become synonymous with a great crime. For Armenians, it would be a monstrous monument to atrocities that embodied the malice of Turks, the barbarity of Kurds, and the hypocrisy of Europeans. The Adana massacre was among the most horrific that had ever been perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire. The illiterate Turkish and Kurdish mob saw it as an act of worship sanctified by law and religion. For the Europeans, it was simply a sight that aroused interest, a chance to watch unprecedented crimes, and an occasion to pass by the victims with indifference.

The city of Adana^{*} was the administrative center of the vilayet of the same name and a major commercial and cultural center. Its history stretched back more than 2,000 years.

By 1909, this largest city in Cilicia had 66,000 residents, including 25,000 Turks, 15,000 Fellaheen (Alevi Arabs), 22,000 Armenians (20,000 members of the Apostolic Church, 1,500 Evangelicals, and 500 Catholics), 2,000 Greeks, 1,000 Assyrians, 600 Maronites, and 400 Chaldeans.[†] Every spring during the planting season, 40,000–50,000 poor tillers and laborers from various Turkish vilayets, Turkish Armenia in particular, would come to Adana and the surrounding villages to earn a few pennies a day.[‡] This was the reason that, when the slaughter began, there were more Armenians in Adana and its vicinity than all other minorities combined.

Before the slaughter, Adana had eighteen mosques and eight churches, of which three belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church, one was Armenian

* It is assumed that the word "Adana" is an altered variant of the Phoenician word "atana," which means willow. At the time of the foundation of the city, it is said there were forests of willows along the Eastern bank of the Sihoun River.

† The data on the numbers and national composition of the population of the city of Adana presented in various sources differ. For example, in one source it is said that the population of the city at the beginning of 1909 was 80,000, half of which was Muslim and the other half Christian. The latter, according to the source were divided into four groups: 5,000–6,000 Orthodox, 1,500 Evangelicals, the same number of Catholics, and 20,000–25,000 Armenian Apostolics. The majority of Evangelicals and Catholics was Armenian (See the Archive of Anshag Alboyadjian, file 4, item 36, Madenataran, Yerevan).

‡ Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 14.

Evangelical, and one was Armenian Catholic. The Greek, Assyrian, and Chaldean communities each had one church.^{*}

The different communities had their schools as well. The Armenian community had two educational institutions: the Mousheghian-Apkarian School and the Ashkhenian School. Some Armenian young people attended missionary schools—the French Jesuit Missionary Schools for Boys and the American Girls' Boarding School. There was also the state-run Mektep-i Sultani High School, attended by young people of various nationalities. All of these schools offered quality education.[†] In total, there were over four thousand students at all of the educational institutions in the city.[‡]

As in other cities of Ottoman Turkey, the Armenian quarter of Adana was completely separate from the Muslim quarters and was considered to be more sophisticated and beautiful. To the north and west were the Fellaheen (Arabs), Cretans (Muslim refugees), and Greek quarters, and to the east and south by the Turkish neighborhoods.

Industrial life had gradually penetrated the city. There was a cotton ginnery, a tile factory, a distillery, and nine textile mills. These enterprises employed up to two thousand permanent workers and a few thousand more day laborers.

As was previously noted, the Adana massacre was not the consequence of a random chain of events, but the implementation of a well-planned program. Turks and Kurds had prepared in advance, although Armenians were unaware of their designs. The Turkish and Kurdish attacks started at the same time, not only in the city and the vilayet of Adana, but all over Cilicia.

In the hours preceding the Adana slaughter, Turkish leaders of other areas of the vilayet knew what was going to happen. "Something is going to happen in Adana today," they whispered to one another enigmatically.

Meanwhile, signs with the inscription "İslâm dükkanı" [Muslim shop] were hung on the doors of shops owned by Muslims in order to distinguish them from Christian-owned shops.

THE FIRST MASSACRE IN THE CITY OF ADANA

April 1 (14), 1909^{**} was a Wednesday, the fourth day of Easter. At dawn, Turkish youths began to run about the city's neighborhoods spreading

* Ibid.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 14.

‡ Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badashkhanadouneru*, 50.

** Occasionally the author refers to two calendars to mark important dates that have been cited. In such instances, the date according to the modern Gregorian calendar will precede the Rumi calendar date for the same day, as indicated in parenthesis.

"reliable news." One would say that the night before Armenians had taken a Turkish woman into the woods, raped her, cut off her breasts, and then killed her. Another would proclaim that an Armenian had gone to his Turkish neighbor's house and slaughtered the entire family, and so on and so forth.

Nevertheless, most Armenians went to work as usual that same morning. Thousands of workers went to the orchards, farmhands went to the farms, merchants opened their shops, a number of which were located in the central bazaar, and Armenian and other Christian schools, that had been closed for Easter, opened their doors.

At about 10:00 a.m., groups of Turks, Kurds, Circassians, and Muslim refugees from Crete stormed into the bazaar armed with cudgels, swords, daggers, axes, and adzes. All of them, without exception, wore white headbands and were on alert, waiting for orders.^{*}

Alarmed, the Christian religious leaders and prominent laymen of the city gathered for a meeting at the Armenian Prelacy. They immediately designated a delegation to call on the governor, Mehmed Djevad Bey. Arriving at the Governor's Office, the delegation asked the vicegerent to avert possible massacres. The vicegerent contradicted the delegates, saying that he saw no danger and that their ugly panic was pointless. He advised the members of the delegation to go straight to the bazaar and urge the "cowardly" Christians to go on with their commerce as normal.[†]

Meanwhile, the armed mob at the bazaar was growing in number and Armenians were forced to shut their shops. All the schools were quickly closed and students rushed home. Terrified, everyone locked themselves in their homes. Trade was left to Turkish shopkeepers, many of whom sold firearms. And now hundreds of *bashi-bazouks* [irregular forces] were lined up in front of their shops, jostling for guns. Turkish dealers were selling weapons at very low prices and in many cases were giving them away free of charge. When these shops were emptied, the mob broke into the closed shops of Armenians who also sold firearms, making off with whatever they found.

This was taking place before the very eyes of policemen and soldiers who "witnessed all of this with absolute indifference and cryptic smiles."[‡] It was not long before they joined the armed mob themselves.^{**}

* *Droshak*, no. 5, May 1909, 54.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 16.

‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 28.

** *Akhuryan* (Alexandropol), no. 28, April 17, 1909.

At the insistence of Governor Djavad Bey, a group of Christian and Muslim religious leaders—including the eparchial vicar of the Armenian Apostolics, the pastor of the Armenian Catholic Church, Archimandrite Haroutiun Keklikyan, the minister of the Armenians such as Tavit Effendi Ourfalian, a public figure who had held various state and national positions, and Haroutiun Shadrigran (Shadarevian), a well-known merchant—went to the bazaar. Among the Turkish members of the group was Baghdadi Zade Abdul Kader Effendi, whose father was at the same time making the rounds of Turkish shops with the *khodjas* and mob-leaders and giving orders.

At 10:30 a.m. (Turkish 4:30), shooting broke out in the bazaar. It was not long before the tempest was unleashed. Armenians—old and young, merchants and shoppers—were annihilated. At a signal given by Abdul Kader Effendi, someone in the group sent by the governor, a Kurd, killed Ourfalian, a man of talent and character who had been a source of pride for local Armenians.*

After shedding the blood of innocent people, the *bashi-bazouks* smashed the doors and windows of shops and stole all money and goods. This looting kept the rioters busy for a while and delayed them from attacking the Christian houses in the neighborhood.

Meanwhile, massacres had begun in the districts surrounding the bazaar, and the poor and overwhelmingly Armenian Tosbaga Kalesi (Shabaniye) district was turned upside down.† A pack of rioters roamed throughout the district, calling out wild curses upon Armenians and their religion while praising their own last prophet, and breaking into houses to perform their "sacred duty."‡ This caused unimaginable panic and frenzy. The screams and shouts of the mob could be heard at once from all sides: "Death to the *gávurs!* Away with them! Everything they own—their land, their houses, their wives and daughters—belong to us. No one will punish us for our deeds. This is what the caliph [successors of Mohammed] has ordered. This is what we—the masters of the Christians—want." Mercilessly and with utmost savagery, the gangs slaughtered young and old, women and children. When they had accomplished their mission, they departed the houses of Armenians in triumph, their swords dripping with blood.

* *Pisanzion*, no. 3843, May 21 (June 3), 1909.

† *Karoun* (Constantinople), no. 17, March 19 (April 2), 1909.

‡ *Drosbak*, no. 5, May 1909, 54.

When the slaughter in the Tosbaga Kalesi district was over, it was the turn of Armenians living in Turkish neighborhoods, none of whom escaped. Their shops and houses were looted. With a horrendous clamor, Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Abdals, Gypsies, and Cretan refugees smashed through with axes and other tools and stole everything inside. Countless women and children took part in the looting; they would run off with their booty in various directions, and then come back for another raid. When the shops had been emptied, arsonists set them on fire.

While the looting of the shops and houses of Armenians in Turkish neighborhoods went on, the armed mob split off into groups and attacked the city center, which was home to many more Armenians. Here, too, unimaginable frenzy broke out. The executioners killed Armenians with rifles and pistols, axes and knives, cudgels and daggers, clubs and stones. They tried to kill as many Armenians as possible in order to grab their belongings. They even killed each other over the belongings of Armenians, later putting the blame on Armenians.*

The carnage spread, even reaching the vicinity of the Governor's Office, where Shadrigran, among others, was killed in the presence of Governor Djavad Bey.† Everywhere, there were butchered corpses and rivers of blood. Pleading and calls for help hung in the air. The sorrowful wails of children and the heart-rending cries of mothers were lost in the noise of gunfire and the howling of the savage mob.

As documented in the archive of Matteo Izmirlian, in one instance, when they had killed all the males in the Boyadjian family, the murderers raped the women and girls in the house and hung their bloody undergarments outside the windows, then exposed the half-naked women they had raped to the mob outside the house, inviting them to do the same.‡

In the neighborhood of the Yagh Djami Mosque,** bloodthirsty attackers burst into the house of Yapoudji Kevork, and tortured to death the fifteen men who happened to be there. They laid the victims on the ground still alive, cut open their chests with knives and ripped out their lungs, tossing them in front of their wives, mothers, and children.††

* *Karoun*, no. 17, March 19 (April 2), 1909.

† *Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, no. 4, 1988, 15.

‡ *Ibid.*

** Yagh Djami (The Oil Mosque) and Ulu Djami (The Grand Mosque) used to be Armenian churches.

†† *Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, no. 4, 1988, 15.

Then came the turn of the other Armenian neighborhoods. It was not until two hours after the massacre began that Armenians in those neighborhoods realized their lives were subject to the enemy's vicious whim. They had by then seen ample evidence that no one was there to protect them. It had become clear that the administration had organized everything and joined the street mob with its army and police. Only then did Armenians resort to weapons.*

A group of young men, about a hundred of them, who had bought weapons in the course of the first months of "liberty" under the new political order, left their homes to take a stand against the thousands of blood-thirsty murderers who had taken to the streets. When the Armenians fired their first volleys, the mob that had been killing women and children fled in panic at the audacity of those Armenians.[†] As they fled, they spread word that the "Armenian *fedayeen*" were coming. The truth was that most of their pursuers were taking up arms for the first time in their lives. In any event, this was to be the start of a real war that would last for three days, with major losses on all sides.

In order to break the determined resistance of the Armenians, the administration called in twenty thousand Kurds who had come from Mesopotamia to work on cotton plantations and opened up their arsenals to arm them. The armed Kurds joined the Turkish mob at once, and together, they attacked the Armenian positions. A group of Armenians fought with such bravery that it aroused admiration among the Europeans who were present.

The first successful resistance encouraged all Armenian men and women who were locked inside their homes waiting to be killed, and they took up all available weapons in their houses and went into the streets to fight to the death.

To head such an important province as Adana, the Young Turk government had appointed the master of destructive provocation and an Armenian-hater, Mehmed Djevad Bey. The military command of the province had been entrusted to a man notorious for implementing the infernal plans laid by Yildiz Palace, the organizer of the 1895-1896 massacres of Armenians in Marash *Ferik*[‡] Mustafa Remzi Pasha, who, it appeared, had been sent to Adana to take vengeance on Armenians for his defeat in Zeytoun. The police forces of the province were under the command of an uneducated fanatic, Ahmed Bey.

* Archive of Matteo Izmirlian, RG 34, file 14, item 475, Madenataran, Yerevan.

† Acharyan, *Tachkahayots Hartsi Patmutiune*, 58.

‡ *Ferik* - military rank, equivalent to Lieutenant-General.

The bloodthirsty ringleaders of the slaughter, surprised and enraged by Armenian resistance, were filled with a new fury for vengeance. They gathered at the Governor's Office and demanded additional quantities of weapons to arm the Muslims to the last man.

Meanwhile, Governor Djevad Bey summoned provincial officials subordinate to him and instructed them to protect only foreign nationals during the massacres unleashed in the province and to be merciless toward the local Christians, encouraging the "brave men" to carry out massacres in every way possible.

The governor, who had just a few hours earlier ordered the distribution of weapons among the newly recruited *redifi* (reserve soldiers), was generous toward the mob leaders gathered there, and he granted their every demand. Upon his instruction, the main arsenal of the city was opened up again and the mob was given a huge amount of weaponry—rifles, Mausers, and cases of ammunition. Additional stocks of weapons were also given to the twenty thousand Mesopotamian Kurds from the cotton plantations.*

These gangs of slaughterers gathered near *Valide Sultan* Mosque. After rousing prayers by religious leaders and seditious calls, the crowd of thousands of people led by the *khodjas*, *sofias*,[†] and *sheikhs* prepared for the decisive assault.

In contrast to these ordinary slaughterers and monsters in military uniform, Armenians only had outdated weapons and a serious shortage of ammunition. They did not have enough bullets to reload their guns.

The day of April 1 (15) passed with sporadic attacks by the assailants and fierce defense by the Christians. A few Armenian fighters fought with incredible courage. Residents took advantage of what opportunity they had to move to the centers of their neighborhoods. The men who owned rifles, 173 altogether, took up positions in strategic points in the city center and prepared for the decisive battle against the armed mob of more than 30,000 men.[‡] Thanks to the resistance of these few men of courage, the remaining Armenians of Adana were saved from complete destruction, at least for the time being.

As darkness fell, the besieged had a brief chance to catch their breath. But the enemy decided not to give them even an hour's peace. Since they had not

* Acharyan, *Tachkahayots hartsi patmutiune*, 58.

† *Softa* - A Muslim student of divinity and jurisprudence.

‡ Terzian, *Gilgig Aghedu*, 38-39.

accomplished their goal with swords and rifles, the Turks and Kurds resorted to the last means of barbarity—arson. In order to burn down Armenian houses, churches, schools, and other communal buildings throughout Adana province, more than five hundred arsonists received serious training and thorough instructions. The buildings that were to be reduced to ash were already marked on the city map by the governor's administration.*

Soon, flames leaped up throughout the Christian quarters. Several dozens of houses were burned down, turning them to ash and incinerating the people inside. When little children, crying and whimpering, tried to flee the burning houses, the rumble of guns followed, knocking them to the ground. This was followed by a renewed attack by the Turks, more violent and horrifying than the last. People spent the entire night until dawn beleaguered by all-consuming flames and bursts of gunfire. And Armenian fighters continued to resist and fortify their positions.

Meanwhile, the permanent under-secretary of state in the Ministry of the Interior, Adil Bey, sent the following telegram from Constantinople addressed to all local authorities in Cilicia: "Utmost care should be taken that no harm is inflicted on foreign religious institutions or consulates."[†] This was, in essence, an order to massacre Armenians.

The Turks held their fire for a while before the sun rose on April 2, the second day of the massacre, but they renewed their attacks with redoubled energy at first light. On the first day, the slaughterers had killed all Christians without distinction, but in the morning of the second day, a strict order came not to harm the Greeks and small flags were raised on Greek houses to identify them. However, quite a number of Greeks were killed before the order reached all corners of the province.

At the same time, in order to incite the crowd even more, white headbands were tied round the heads of murdered Armenians, to make it appear as if many Muslims had been killed.

The Armenian churches of the Holy Mother of God and St. Stepanos, and the Armenian Catholic, Armenian Evangelical, Assyrian, and Maronite churches, were filled to the brim with victims. By noon, it had become clear that Armenians could be saved only in the homes and institutions of Christian foreign nationals. They mercifully gave refuge to the victims who had flocked to the American Girls' Boarding School, the houses of the Jesuits

* *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.*

and missionaries, the apartment of the interpreter of Russian Consulate Artem (Artemis) Yango, and the homes of American missionary William N. Chambers and other Christians. During the course of the day, American missionaries David Miner Rogers and Henry Maurer were killed defending Armenians, and French Jesuit Father S. J. Sabatier was severely wounded.

The Assyrians, in particular, risked their own lives to render great assistance to Armenians. Just as the Armenians reached the vicinity of the Assyrian church, the mob caught up with them, killing several and preventing others from entering the church. Assyrian men gathered near the church, took out their pistols, and warned the gang that they could enter the church only over their dead bodies. The slaughterers were compelled to give up, and the Armenians found shelter in the Assyrian church.

This was not the case with the Greeks who had, at the authorities' instructions, hung red flags or rags beforehand to signal that they were not Armenians. As a token of appreciation to the government, the Greeks refused to give Armenians shelter.[†] Instead, they sat quietly at home watching what was going on outside and thanking God that they had not been born Armenian. Indeed, there were instances when they handed those unfortunate Armenians who had tried to find shelter with them over to the mob.

During these two bloody days, none of the European consuls residing in the port city of Mersin made a move to stop the horror. It was not until the second day of the massacres that the British consul, Charles Hotham Montagu Doughty-Wylie, began making rounds with Turkish soldiers provided by the vali, hoping to influence the slaughterers with his presence.[‡] But this was to no avail; in fact, the Turks wounded the consul and his horse.[§] According to Athanasios Trypanis, his dragoman, Doughty-Wylie had earlier blocked the debarkation of the superpowers' marines from the warships after exchanging secret telegrams with the British Embassy in Constantinople.[¶] He also took part in collecting weapons from Armenians after the first massacre.^{||}

* *The New York Times*, April 28, 1909.

† Terzian, *Gilgilo Aghedu*, 44–45.

‡ *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 17, April 21, 1909, 497.

§ *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910. The Turks declared that the Armenians fired upon the consul.

¶ Yeghiayan, *Atanayi hayots pamutian*, 250.

|| *Piuzantion*, no. 3827, May 1 (14), 1909.

For Armenians, the dreadful minutes and hours passed like days. The enemy resumed its fierce attacks once again at dawn of April 3, the third day of the massacres. During the night, the ranks of the murderers had been replenished. Thousands of armed Turks and Kurds, drawn by the frenzy of killing and looting, rushed to Adana from the villages of the vilayet and far afield.

The Armenians were running out of ammunition, children were dying of hunger, and the small group of Armenian fighters was exhausted. Many among them had already been slain or severely wounded by enemy bullets. Among the martyrs was one of the heroes of the self-defense regimen, Dikran Effendi Bzdgian. The perimeters of the Armenian districts were gradually shrinking and the last gleam of hope of rescue was fading. One of the prominent leaders of the defense, Hagop Terzian, wrote that those who reached the doors of death "would forgive each other for any wrongdoing; children would kiss their parents' hands; husbands and wives would weep inconsolably." The enemy rifles were going off just a few dozen meters away.

Several people among those condemned to death, seeing no way out and in a state of utter despair, decided to make one last move and appeal to a prominent Turk, Takeli Zade Osman Bey, who had always maintained warm relations with the Armenians. They begged him to go in person to the Governor's Office and ask the vicerent to have mercy on Armenians. At once, a group of young men headed for the center of the Armenian quarter where Osman Bey was at the time. He had gone there with his men to prevent packs of rioters from attacking Armenian houses.

Osman Bey was that rare man among Turks who had a kind heart. Wasting no time, he went straight to the Governor's Office and entered Mehmed Djavad Bey's suite. At that moment the mob leaders surrounded the vali, discussing their next steps. Osman Bey presented the Armenians' written request and demanded on his own part that the slaughter be stopped. The Armenians' request read, "For the love of God, the Prophet, and the Sultan, this massacre must be stopped; just tell us definitely what we are required to do. If your demand is something feasible, we will do it with pleasure but if it is unworkable, do what you want, only cease firing. If it is possible to come to an understanding, let us try to do so together."^{*}

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 52.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Konyayi Housher*, 19.

The governor and his advisors categorically rejected the proposal at first. Osman Bey protested vigorously, stating that he, as a believer, considered what had happened to be godless and wicked. In the end, the slaughterers led by Djavad Bey agreed to a cease-fire, with the condition that Armenians would sign a plea. Upon his return, Osman Bey gave Armenians the good news and suggested that several prominent Armenians join him and go to the Governor's Office to do the paperwork.^{*}

As the violent fighting continued, the honorable Turk took a group of Armenians under the protection of his personal bodyguards passed through the mob in Turkish neighborhoods and reached the government's administrative headquarters. A meeting between the Turkish and Armenian community leaders took place chaired by Djavad Bey. An armistice was signed on the following terms:

- (1) both sides would immediately observe a ceasefire;
- (2) the Armenians would disarm completely within three days and surrender to the authorities all weapons to the last firearm; and
- (3) the defense of the city would be handed over to the newly arrived army units, which would destroy all defensive barricades and organize patrols in all Armenian and Turkish neighborhoods.[†]

The Armenians did not dare mention Turkish weapons, since no one would have listened to them anyway, and the reaction would likely have been, "Where would the poor Turks have gotten weapons? The only weapon they have is the *sopa* (wooden club)." The armistice agreement was signed, according to which Turks would thereafter have no right to slaughter Armenians, and Armenians, as a token of appreciation to their Muslim neighbors, would be obliged to surrender all their weapons within the agreed timeframe.

With that agreement, the massacre came to an end. The first Adana massacre began at 10:30 a.m. (Turkish 4:30) on Wednesday, April 1, 1909 and lasted till 1:00 p.m. (Turkish 7:00) on Friday, April 3, 1909; in other words it had gone on ceaselessly for 50 hours. After signing the armistice agreement, the Turkish leaders, "deceptive and false," as Terzian remembers, "exchanged Judas kisses and then went on rounds through the city to stop the attacks and resistance."[‡]

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 52.

† *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910.

‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 54.

The Judas kisses were accompanied by reminders of the disarmament demand. That was the sole, unalterable price for peace. But handing over all weapons could have been fateful for those Armenians left alive. It was a matter of life and death. There was no guarantee that a new massacre would not be unleashed once the weapons had been surrendered. That was the reason why Armenians could not come to a final decision.

Doughty-Wylie intervened and assured Armenian leaders, on behalf of his government, that "There is no danger anymore, so the weapons must be surrendered." Shortly thereafter, a telegram came from the Constantinople Patriarchate demanding that the weapons be handed over. The Adana Prelate, Bishop Moushegh Seropian, took a similar stance.

Under these circumstances, the Armenian community leaders left the Governor's Office and upon arriving in the central square, began disarming their kinsmen. "Bring in your weapons and hand them over!" they shouted. "There is an armistice! There is an armistice!" The young men protested, but to no avail. No one listened to them. The weapons were collected and handed over to the administration. Only after that did the military take the Christian schools, houses of prayer, and neighborhoods under their protection.

If Armenians had not surrendered their weapons on April 3, perhaps the second, larger scale massacre in Adana would have been avoided, since the enemy had an unjustified suspicion and fear of the Armenians' strength.

After the massacre, groups of Muslim leaders visited the Armenian meeting places to express their condolences, though in fact, their purpose was to gather information. One of these groups visited the Church of Armenian Evangelicals and had a conversation with the pastor, Reverend Ashdjian. When one of the Turks called down curses upon "the instigators of these painful events," Ashdjian responded:

Effendi, we do not call down curses upon the instigators of these tragic events, but we ask God to see and judge them. However, at the same time, I have something to say to you. Why do you judge people on the basis of their nation and religion? Nationality is a divine arrangement. God did not ask me what nation I wished to be born into. If He had, I would perhaps have chosen another nationality. I am not to blame for being born Armenian, and as for you, it is not to your credit that you were born Turkish. This is a divine arrangement and is unalterable. Religion is a heritage as well as a matter of personal conviction. I am Christian because I was born to a Christian family or I preferred Christianity over other

religions. And you are Muslim because you were born to Muslim family and you consider Islam to be the last and most perfect religion of the human race. You are free to think this way, but it is not right to condemn those who do not think so.

People should be judged by their character and deeds, and not on the basis of their nationality and religion. I would like to also add that you should not train your people to pillage and loot. This will cause them to regress, to become lazy and brigand-minded and have an eye on other people's possessions. When they finish with our possessions, they will turn to yours.

The Turks reacted by saying,

Yes, Preacher Effendi, what you say is correct and that is how it should be. But, God Almighty, who is the one who speaks and who is the one who hears? It is one thing to hear, and another thing to speak. The people's trouble is not in seeing the truth, but rather in putting it into practice."

It seemed to some people that the passion of those Turks and Kurds who had been caught up in the plunder and slaughter had reached its peak, and now, having been sated, had perhaps died out. But these hopes and expectations were deceptive.

THE HORRIFIC 'PEACE'

The morning of April 4 brought "peace" to Adana, at the cost of thousands of Armenian lives. The city presented a dreadful picture. Countless lacerated, blood-drained bodies were scattered about the streets, hanging from trees, impaled on stakes.[†] The bodies were torn apart, the faces were mutilated, with missing noses, ears, and lips. The ranks of the murdered included hundreds of children who had breathed their last breaths on the point of swords. There were thousands of wounded lying scattered, on top of each other, half-dead. Wailing mothers who had lost their children went mad as they searched for them among the piles of corpses.[‡] According to Terzian, "The most courageous among the rioters [had] come to view with exultation the innocent Armenian martyrs lying on the bloody field."^{**}

* Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 22-23.

† *Abhuryan*, no. 28, April 17, 1909.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910.

** Terzian, *Gilgijo Aghedu*, 56.

Vali Djevad Bey decreed that the Muslims be buried with great funeral processions in accordance with all the procedures and customs of Islam. At the same time, he issued instructions that all traces of the savagery committed towards Armenians be erased as quickly as possible. With that end in view, dozens of carts were immediately put to service. The drivers and their helpers gathered the corpses and loaded them onto the carts. When the carts had been fully loaded they headed for the Sihoun River on the eastern side of the city. There, Turkish and Kurdish farm laborers were at hand to help throw the bodies into the water. Sometimes, they drove the carts to the nearest bridge^{*} connecting the two banks of the river and dropped the dead bodies into it.[†]

Many severely wounded people lying helplessly in the streets were also loaded onto the wagons along with the corpses. Among those was a man who had enjoyed great respect among the city's Armenians, the wise and kindly Diran Effendi Arakelian. This unfortunate intellectual's cries for help fell on deaf ears, and he too was thrown into the turbulent river.[‡]

The Sihoun River was high and raging at this time of year, overflowing with waters from the spring thaw, and it tossed and spun the bodies of countless innocent Armenians as it carried them to the sea, some twenty kilometers away.^{**} Weeks after the massacres, mutilated bodies would be discovered on the shores of Cyprus.^{††}

Those Armenians left alive had reached the final depths of misery. About twenty thousand people, homeless and abandoned, stunned and deranged, did not know what tomorrow would bring. Left starving for four days, the crowd could only murmur, "Bread... bread..."

On the fifth day, most of the people were at last able to return to their homes, still standing or in ruins. Countless injured people had yet to receive treatment. The girls' school located in the yard of St. Stepanos Church was turned into a hospital where the wounded were transferred. The Ashkhenian

* The bridge over the Sihoun (Sarus) River, which according to historical record was built in the 2nd century, A.D. by the Roman Emperor Hadrian and was renovated by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian in the 6th century, was 30 meters long and had 24 arches (see Ashdjan, *Adenayi Yegherbna*, 13; Yeghiayan, *Adenayi Hayots Badmoutian*, 57.

† Archive of Arshag Alboyadjian, file 4, item 736, Madenataran, Yerevan.

‡ Archive of Arshag Alboyadjian, file 4, item 736, Madenataran, Yerevan; Yeghiayan, *Adenayi Hayots Badmoutian*, 237.

** *Droshak*, no. 5, May 1909, 56.

†† *Pisaention*, no. 3841, May 19 (June 1), 1909.

and Mousheghian-Apkarian schools served the same purpose. Treatment of the wounded was complicated due to lack of medicine and equipment.

At that moment of shock and despair, the foreign missionaries working in Adana—the French clergymen in particular—rendered invaluable assistance, donating all the medicine they had to the makeshift hospital, and personally, according to Terzian, "running here and there after the injured with wagons and stretchers."^{*}

These benevolent actions were comforting to the Armenians who had survived the massacres. They seemed to compound other reassuring signs. Although news of the massacre continued to reach Adana from the provinces and new refugees continued to fill the city, the Armenians had already begun to believe that the evil was completely over—they had "in their hands" a signed "agreement," according to which Turks were "deprived" of the right to kill unarmed Armenians anymore. Why should they not believe, with their centuries-long naïveté, that there would be no more slaughter? Guided by this belief, some of them gradually left the compounds of the European institutions where they had taken shelter—compounds that were still filled with thousands of others. Soldiers from the city garrison regularly patrolled the streets "maintaining order." And finally, the fact that Turks, too, had suffered in the course of the fighting—with 300 or 400 dead against 1,500 Armenian martyrs[†]—also gave them some cause for comfort.

But in contrast to Armenians, Turks reached a different judgment following the massacre. First of all, they were extremely uneasy about the fact that they had not succeeded in completely uprooting Armenians in Adana; there were still isolated houses that had not been destroyed or plundered. They were not inclined to tolerate this situation, especially in light of encouraging news from outlying areas that "things had been successful there." There was no fear that Armenians elsewhere could organize armed units and come to the aid of their kinsmen in Adana. And the most important thing for the slaughterers was the fact that the local Armenians had been disarmed. Even if there remained a few weapons in Armenian hands, there was little they could do with them, and the Turks were able to butcher them.

The Armenians understood that very well. A draft telegram composed on April 6 (19) by the Christian religious leaders of Adana and addressed to the president of the Chamber of Deputies of the Ottoman Parliament, Mustafa

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 56.

† This number includes 200–300 Assyrians and Greeks who had been killed as Christians or were mistakenly taken for Armenians due to their similar appearance.

Nuri Bey, attests to the degree of despair and despondency that existed among them. The telegram was never sent, though a draft was preserved:

To the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Mustafa Nuri Bey Effendi,

We have been subjected to atrocity and persecution that did not even occur in the time of Genghis Khan and Timur Lang [Tamerlane]. Contrary to conscience and justice, our peaceful and law-abiding people have fallen victim to inexpressible barbarity. Plunder, fire, and massacre have rendered the destruction and devastation absolute. Those of us who remain alive are threatened by hunger and disease. For the non-Muslim population, Adana province has turned into a land of the dead and a heap of rubble. We have serious doubts as to whether a government that has allowed such a ruthless attack by Muslims on non-Muslim peoples is worthy of its status. Therefore, we suppliantly request, in the name of justice, law, and humanity, that without wasting any time, you send a special delegation to investigate our situation, repair the damage done to us, and punish severely the officials responsible.*

Once they had signed the short-term armistice with Armenians, Turks spent their time gathering fresh groups of Turkish villagers from around Adana and nomadic, thieving Kurds living in tents in the mountains to join the ranks of slaughterers.

Beginning on April 5, two days after the massacre ended, the French armored cruiser *Victor-Hugo*, the British cruiser *Savior*, the German cruiser *Lorelei*, and the Italian cruiser *Piemonte* arrived one after another in the port of Mersin, located west of the mouth of the Sihoun River. On April 9, one Russian and two American cruisers anchored there as well. The massacres were threatening to spread to Mersin, and this gave occasion to move the warships to the Cilician shores. The ships' crews made no move to show empathy to the people. Rather, they gave the impression that they had come for their own amusement. The warships lined up at some distance from each other. Games and shows were organized on their decks flooded with lights.

Referring to the light-hearted attitude that the Europeans assumed, Arshagouhi Teotig, who had come to Mersin from Constantinople, wrote some months later:

Musing and reflecting upon this bold scene, I have a memory of the unexpected April days when foreign warships came and lined up in

* Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniyae Housher*, 21.

these waters, with the menacing, symbolic, and futile rearing of their great cannons.

These powerful iron non-entities sent from the civilized world carried men whose job it was to peer with apathy through their binoculars all day long at the misery of the Armenians on the shore, or to take photographs of the pitiful Armenian bodies floating in the bay. At night, inside under electric lights, they surrendered themselves to the joy of worldly carnal desires, unconcerned, indifferent, without the slightest care that outside—Oh, outside!—bullets were raining down incessantly, swords were flashing everywhere, Armenian blood was flowing and flames were devouring everything. And to think that all of this would stop, would die out, if only the sailors from these imposing armored masses set foot on land at the threatening orders of their chiefs.

But they did not, and thousands ceased to exist through the most excruciating deaths, and a wealthy and prosperous land was ruined and razed to the ground.*

The essentially inhuman behavior of the foreigners "gave the vandals cause to wield their swords more fearlessly."[†] The encouraged mob "rushed to carry out new massacres."[‡]

Five days after the massacre of Armenians in Adana—on April 8—it became clear that new horrors awaited. A vivid manifestation of this was the April 7 issue of the "liberal" newspaper *Itidal*, which printed more copies than usual and distributed them among the Muslim population free of charge from early morning. The issue contained anti-Armenian articles and other material filled with vengefulness, hatred, and slander. The newspaper laid the entire responsibility for the massacres that had taken place on the unfortunate Armenians, accusing them of having revolted against the lawful authorities.

The political section of the newspaper contained an article titled "A Dreadful Uprising." Its author, Ismail Sefa, depicted Armenians as savage criminals who had collected large quantities of weapons and, armed to the teeth, had attacked the city's Turks and left thousands of their corpses in the streets. He wrote that the *gâvurs* had particularly and shamelessly slaughtered

* Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya* [A Month in Cilicia] (Constantinople, 1910), 13, 15.

† *Anahid* (Paris), no. 11–12, March–April, 1909–1910, 273.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910; Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 61. 3 *Itidal* (Adana), April 7, 1909.

Turkish women, children, and elderly people, in spite of their harrowing entreaties, cries, and sobs. He also alleged that Armenians had in an organized manner set fire to numerous beautiful houses owned by Turks, reducing them to rubble, and in doing so had sown terror all around in order to prevent their owners from trying to return and retake possession of their homes. According to the writer, the reason for all this was the fact that after the Young Turk revolution, the Armenians had become so insolent that they no longer wished to live with Muslims, and by "annihilating us they want to become the masters of the entire province and live separately from the Turkish state... Let us see what will eventually happen. The brainless Armenians have destroyed us, the Fatherland, and themselves. Unfortunate Adana has now witnessed this catastrophe as well."

By misrepresenting the April 1-3 massacre of Armenians as a massacre of Turks committed by Armenians, and in order to justify the upcoming massacre, Sefa broke the bad news that Armenians had not handed all their weapons over to the authorities and therefore, it was not excluded that they would "organize further bloodshed."¹

In an article titled "Can the Armenians Create a State?" Burevan Nuri wrote that the ungrateful Armenians had revolted against the principles of the very revolution that had granted them "equality" and "fraternity." Their goal was to have an independent state, the writer stressed, adding that not even a fool believed the Armenians, who numbered less than two million and were dispersed in all directions, would, relying on their strength and the might of their arms, be able to achieve victory and create an independent state.² Emphasizing that the Armenians' goal was to "create their state in the Adana province or the Cilicia of old," Nuri wrote that, "If the Armenians want to have a state, they should look for a territory for that state not within the Ottoman Empire, but in the sandy deserts of Africa, and move there. Otherwise, they will not achieve their dream and will remain dispersed and isolated in places like Constantinople, Smyrna, Adana, Aleppo, Diyarbekir, Bitlis, and Van."³

Referring to Nuri's article, *Piuzantion* wrote, "Until when should our blood and tears flow in the name of the absurd, delirious notion of the

* *Itdal* (Adana), April 7, 1909.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

** *Ibid.*

'Armenian Kingdom,' which you do not believe in and cannot believe that Armenians would be so stupid as to believe in...."

In an article titled "Chaotic Events" in the section "News from the Province," Ihsan Fikri claimed, "In those days so many [armed] Armenians from Marash, Hadjin, Kharpert, Diyarbekir (Dikranagerd), and the Armenian-populated provinces of Anatolia poured into Adana that now every Armenian family in the city is accommodating between five and ten other families."⁷ The reality was, however, that in the days of the massacres it was tens of thousands of Kurds and other Muslims that flowed into Adana from various places. The writer was sure that no one would ever imagine that Turks had been responsible for the chaos.

Twenty other articles and reports followed one another in the columns of *Itdal*; they had, the editorial board assured the readers, been "received" from the streets of the city and from the province. These pieces, saturated with lies and slander, were published under provocative headlines such as "The Origin of the Incident," "A Crime," "A Second Crime," "The Spy," "Soldiers Scarce and Muslims Unarmed," "Armenians in Their Homes, Muslims in the Streets," and "The Murder of a Reporter from the *Osmanli* Newspaper." The main content of the news "received from the streets of the city and from the province" was the same: "Thousands of poor and helpless Muslims were slaughtered at the hands of inhuman and ungrateful Armenians."

Although the editor-in-chief of the newspaper did not take part in the Armenian massacres with a rifle or dagger, but with the mendacious articles he churned out, in the April 7 issue in particular, he was one of the principal instigators and organizers of the second, more brutal massacre in Adana, urging the mob to finish the job it had begun. Who could have imagined that a newspaper aiming to enlighten people would instead inflame the animal instincts of a blind mob?

On April 8, a telegram from the commander of the Liberation Army, Mahmud Shevket Pasha, arrived in Adana from Constantinople announcing that a unit of his army fighting against the sultan's anti-revolutionary forces had been sent from Dedeagach to Adana. Many copies of the telegram were made and distributed among the population, bringing profound joy to surviving Armenians who believed the "salvation military unit" had been specifically sent to guarantee their security. But this time, too, they were sadly mistaken.

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3823, April 27 (May 10), 1909.

† *Itdal*, April 7, 1909.

At noon on April 12, the military unit consisting of two regiments arrived in Adana. The cheering Armenians met their would-be saviors with thunderous applause. They embraced each other, thinking that the nightmare had irreversibly become a thing of the past. How were these poor people to know that a more dreadful catastrophe was about to befall them? The regiments passed by the Armenian neighborhoods and were quartered outdoors, beyond the city limits.[†]

THE SECOND MASSACRE IN THE CITY OF ADANA

On April 12, just nine days after the first Adana massacre (from April 1 to 3), the second massacre of the Christians in the city was unleashed.

In order to shift the blame from the local authorities and the central government, Turkish fabricators distorted the facts to blame Armenian political parties for the massacre. One of them, Damar Arıkoğlu, wrote, "It is beyond doubt that the second riot was brought about by Armenian political figures for the purpose of creating a pretext for foreign intervention."[‡]

Here is how the events unfolded in reality. As previously mentioned, between April 5 and April 9, warships from four European countries—England, France, Germany, and Italy—as well as Russia cast anchor in the port of Mersin. Though their crews did not intervene in the bloody events taking place in Cilicia, their mere presence aroused serious fear among Turks, who had assumed a wait-and-see attitude, since it was not clear who was going to win in the ongoing armed clashes between the supporters of Sultan Hamid and the Young Turks in Constantinople and other cities of the empire.

Under these circumstances, it was extremely undesirable for Cilician Turks to have at their shores a powerful foreign force such as European military cruisers. They feared that perhaps news of anti-Armenian massacres had reached Europe and that Christian countries had sent their warships to help their fellow Christians and take revenge on Muslims. The mob was becoming terrified at the possibility of European intervention and retaliatory actions by their military. How could the slaughterers have known that for Europe, the blood of Armenians was nothing but water, and that no foreign power had

* *The New York Times*, April 29, 1909.

† Differing data is presented in various sources regarding the number of troops in the "liberating" Turkish military unit sent to Adana: anywhere from 200 to 2,000.

‡ Damar Arıkoğlu, *Hatıralarım – Milli Mücadele Çukurovada, Fransız İşgali ve Kanlı Savaşlar* [My Memoirs: The National Struggle in Çukurova, French occupation and Bloody Battles]. İstanbul, 1961, 54.

ever sacrificed a single soldier to rescue Armenians? But an uneasy conscience betrays itself, and this was the case with Cilician Turks in those days.

After weighing the pros and cons, Turkish leaders demanded that the governor spare no effort to remove the warships from the harbor area of Cilicia, claiming that their presence made Muslims nervous and might give rise to new clashes with Christians. On April 10, the cruisers that were in the Cilician seaboard hauled anchor for no particular reason and left Mersin.^{*}

The ringleaders of the slaughter had yet another concern about how the military unit sent by the Young Turk government and quartered outside the city on the banks of the Sihoun River would respond if a new massacre were carried out.

Thus, they made a vigorous effort to win the military unit to their side. To that end, they sent people to the military quarters to turn the soldiers against Armenians by engaging in fanatical propaganda and spreading false rumors.

April 12 (25), 1909 was a Sunday. In the morning, a large crowd of Turks had gathered for a rally at Clock Tower Square (Saatkhane). The speakers denounced all Christians, but Armenians bore the brunt of the curses and foul language. Every speaker in turn called upon the mob to "uproot that damned nation" since "if we don't put an end to them, we will never have peace."

That evening, a rumor was spread throughout the city that an Armenian youth had attempted to set the Yagh Djami Mosque on fire. Turkish youths ran about their neighborhoods and shouted, choking with rage, "The Armenian fedayeen are attacking the Turkish quarters and slaughtering the Muslims mercilessly! Help them!"

In an act of provocation, a few bullets were shot from a Turkish house, thus creating a pretext for spreading rumors that Armenians were shooting in the direction of the military quarters to kill Turkish soldiers.[†]

The soldiers of the military unit of the "liberation army," followed by *redifs* and the crowd, poured out into the street and rushed furiously toward the Armenian quarter of the city. With their rifles ready, the soldiers hurried to "rescue the Muslims." The Muslims—dissatisfied with the first massacre—began to wail and complain about their misfortunes. "Your presence here is very serendipitous," they told the soldiers. "The Armenians destroyed our houses, burned down our mosques, and subjected us to inexpressible

* *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayı Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 25.

suffering, but we were unable to retaliate. We beg you to take revenge on our behalf..." These lies were supplemented with new ones alleging that Armenians had killed one Turkish soldier and wounded another, or that they had attacked the Saldjilar district and slaughtered all the Muslims.[†] This military unit, led by its commanders, inflicted the greatest losses upon Adana Armenians. The latter were unable to resist this one-sided intervention.

Within minutes of their arrival on the spot, soldiers encircled the "enemy" quarters and without asking any questions unleashed volleys of gunfire.[†] The ruthless massacre took place in the streets, squares, and houses. Within seconds, doors shattered and those sheltered inside were tortured and butchered.[‡]

Unparalleled crimes were committed not only by Turks but, to an equal if not greater extent, by Kurds who had come down from the mountains and revealed themselves to be most savage and base beings imaginable.^{**}

Soon after, the mob composed of the dregs of humanity engaged in one of their favorite activities, and in all corners of the Armenian neighborhoods, tongues of flame and columns of smoke rose once again. The soldiers also took part in arson; they poured kerosene on houses from kegs made ready in advance and set them on fire. The piercing agony of Armenian women and children, their cries of grief and sorrow, the keening and pleas for help of the innocent, the thunder of the guns, and the crackling of fires came together in an unbearable pandemonium.^{††} Those who tried to escape from their houses or ventured to look out of windows were shot, and those who did not dare to come out of their houses were burned alive in the flames. It is beyond the grasp of imagination how nature could have woven so much evil into the souls of these beings in human appearance. Reason and logic failed before the boundless crimes of the mob.

The most horrible thing was that if, during the first massacre, Armenians had weapons and could put up some resistance, they were now disarmed. This was the reason that the mob no longer had any fear and approached each house freely and bravely as they committed their crimes. With no way to defend themselves, people rushed madly through the conflagration, only to

* Ibid.

† *Droshak*, no. 5, May 1909, 55.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910; *Ararat* (St. Echmiadzin), no. 4, April 1909, 381.

** *Puzantion*, no. 3820, April 23 (May 6), 1909.

†† *Arvelyan Mamoul*, no. 22, May 26, 1909, 517.

fall on the ground, enveloped in flames. The monsters watched this heart-rending scene uttering hellish cries of joy.

Some of those who lived near churches were able to break openings in the walls and enter them. Large crowds of ill-fated Armenians gathered inside the schools and churches of Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical Armenians, and those of the Assyrians as well.

Tongues of flame quickly branched off and spread throughout the Armenian market and the neighboring houses, consuming Armenian lives and property. More than five thousand Armenian villagers, who had come to Adana from the surrounding villages were beaten and robbed, and now they were huddled hungry and naked in the streets and yards, suffering the same fate as other Armenians. When the massacre began, several hundred of them had run terror-stricken into the buildings of the Mousheghian-Apkarian school. Their shrieks and moans, as flames enveloped them, filled the hearts of Armenians with dread.^{*}

One of those who sheltered in St. Stepanos church described the situation there on the night of April 13.

All the people—men and women alike—knelt down and in heart-rending voices, weeping and wailing, cried 'Lord have mercy upon us!' And the mob outside poured oil into the church drainpipes... The parish house caught fire. The turn of the church had come, and it became impossible to enter the churchyard. The interior of the temple was filled with suffocating black smoke and violent heat. Though entirely made of stone, the cupola, walls, and marble columns cracked in the intensity of the heat. The people inside screamed desperately in one voice, 'Help! Help! Have mercy, we are burning!' Women were weeping tears of blood, crying 'Take pity on us!' Men were calling for silence, and children were suffocating. The uproar, the shouts and cries, the panic turned St. Stepanos church into an absolute hell.[†]

The ill-fated victims wept mournfully and called out heart-wrenchingly, "Lord have mercy upon us!" They cried the invocation "Kyrie! Kyrie!" But what was the use? Who would come to their aid, the God of Armenians? No, He was deaf, the God that Armenians worshipped so fanatically. Since they had adopted Christianity, perhaps no other people had built as many churches and monasteries as the Armenian people—glorifying Jesus, kneeling

* *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910.

† *Terzian, Giligio Aghedu*, 103.

before His image, and whispering prayers for salvation inside their walls for sixteen centuries. Where was His compassion, if He had any? And if He had, but refused to extend His hand to the old and young who had fallen into the jaws of death, then He was merciless and pitiless.

Neither the entreaties and supplication nor the bitter cries and moans of those locked inside the church could save these people, abandoned by fate. The deranged men and women, the children and elderly, the injured and unharmed, all were burned alive as they embraced each other, all up in flames. The entire sky turned crimson. Flames rose in every part of the city. On that day, throughout Adana, more than a thousand Armenians were burned alive in church fires alone.

Besides the churches, the buildings of foreign missionary schools, hospitals, and other institutions had been turned into shelters. The Evangelical and Catholic schools were packed with more than three thousand Armenians and other Christians. There was no space to sit, let alone lie down. The unfortunate people had to stand on their feet, confined for days without food or water. The picture was the same in the charities, hospitals, and other institutions run by foreigners. The shelters became filled with an unbearable stench. Women and girls were in an especially intolerable state. Children were coming into the world in that Gehenna, dead or half-alive. Every hour, dozens of lives were lost to gunshots fired at those buildings.

"The bestial mob," wrote Bishop Nerses Tanielian, who witnessed the second Adana massacre, "left nothing unfinished. Ah, how many ill-fated mothers lost their minds in these harrowing moments. Heaven and earth have not, perhaps since their creation, witnessed such monstrous, horrendous barbarity."

As previously mentioned, the crews of the European and Russian warships anchored nearby had not intervened in the bloody events as they had occurred, but on the first day of the second Adana massacre, several dozen officers and sailors came ashore in Mersin and headed for Adana. They witnessed horrible scenes.

On May 7, 1909, the French newspaper *Le Figaro* published letters from an anonymous French naval officer who served on the cruiser *Victor-Hugo* and was among those who went ashore in Mersin. He went to Adana with a description of what he had seen. In a letter dated April 24, the officer wrote:

* Bishop Nerses Tanielian, *Gatil nu Chour Ayradz Srdzerou* [A drop of water for the burned hearts] (Constantinople, 1912), 50–51.



A general view of the main Armenian quarter in Adana after the massacres, 1909.

The river was carrying three thousand corpses that had been thrown into it.

They were drifting near the riverbank, swollen, shredded, and hideous. I could discern the body of a girl no older than four or five years. I also saw the body of a man with his arms and legs slashed and broken looking like a slaughtered animal.

...

As I end this letter I now learn that despite people in European military uniforms in the city, despite the commanders of three European cruisers going to Adana and strongly warning the Turkish vali, the murders and arson have not stopped.

That night, the process of collecting the bodies of dead Armenians and throwing them into the Sihoun and Djihoun Rivers continued at a rapid pace.[†] The Sihoun River alone had already carried some three thousand corpses to the sea.[‡] One eyewitness, a French journalist of Greek descent named Adossides, wrote, "The Alexandretta Bay has never seen such an intrusion of sharks. The officers have watched this scene for days, taking numerous photographs."[§] A *Droshak* reporter attested to the same thing,

* *Droshak*, no. 5, May 1909, 54.

† Teotig, *Amenoun Daresouystsu* [Everyone's Almanac], vol. 4 (Constantinople, 1910), 32.

‡ *Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, no. 4, 1988, 16.

writing that thousands of corpses had reached the sea, and sailors from the European warships were "taking photographs without any sense of shame."

At the same time that Armenian corpses that had been hauled in carts and dumped into the Sihoun and Djihoun Rivers were drifting in the sea, thousands of Armenian men, women, and orphans—deprived of their houses and belongings, bereft of their loved ones, half-naked and starving—wandered through the mountains surrounding Adana, coming upon murderers armed with rifles and yataghans everywhere they went. During those fateful hours, the Italian and French ships approached the Cilician shores to offer safe haven to terrorized Armenians. After summoning them with cannon fire, they transported some poor people to Beirut.

On April 12 and 13, more European warships approached the shores of the Adana vilayet. On April 12 the British cruiser *Triumph*⁷ came to anchor in Mersin, and the next day, the French battleships *Jules Ferry* and *Jules Michelet*, and two armored cruisers, the French *La Vérité* and Italian *Ferruccio*, arrived. But the presence of these European battleships did not end the atrocities, either.

With the dawn of the second day, April 13, the shooting resumed. Armenians pierced an opening in the wall of St. Stepanos church and some of them escaped to the small Assyrian church located nearby, where Assyrians who had fled the massacres huddled together, awaiting death. The Armenians had barely reached the churchyard when a few hundred armed Turks attacked the church. Bursting inside, the mob ruthlessly massacred the Assyrian men, women, and children, and murdered the pastor. Then they set the church and the adjacent school on fire. As for the Armenians huddled in the yard, after suffering several losses, they fled back to St. Stepanos church in confusion.

That afternoon, the murderers stiffened the attack on the churches and none of the Armenians sheltered there had any hope of staying alive. Only a miracle could have changed the situation.

It was at the last moment, as they were bidding their lives farewell, that a gleam of hope for salvation appeared. The pastor of the French church of Adana, Frère Antoine Dioscore, and the British consul, Doughty-Wylie, came to the aid of the unfortunate. These two Europeans had asked a young Turkish officer to have his soldiers protect the Christians subjected to massacres. And the officer had complied with the request. On his orders, the

* *Druhak*, no. 5, May 1909, 56.

† Days later, the cruiser commander would "inform that the Sihoun River was full of numerous corpses." See *Piuzantion*, no. 3822, April 25 (May 8), 1909).



soldiers set up a barricade before the slaughterers. Thousands of Christians left the churches and shelters, entrusting their lives to the exceptionally noble Frenchman. The brutal mob looked on from afar like furious hungry beasts waiting for the soldiers to leave so they could go on with their rampage. But the officer was determined. He warned the rioters that he would order his soldiers to open fire if they attacked.

Those who had escaped death gathered in the Jesuit church and the area surrounding it. But a little later, this church, too, was consigned to flames. After that, at the request of Doughty-Wylie and Frère Dioscore, the vali allowed them to bring the Armenians to the garden adjacent to the Governor's Office.

A train of Armenians accompanied by soldiers moved toward the place, passing by Turkish neighborhoods and mosques. A crowd gathered at the roadside, pouring down thousands of curses, insults, and accusations upon the exhausted Armenians, and calling the vengeance of heaven down upon their religion and cross, and upon the constitution and those who had adopted it. The mob leaders watched the miserable people mockingly, cursing those who had survived.

Reverend Ashdjian, who was among the procession of Armenians, wrote afterwards with sorrow, "It is beyond description either in the spoken word or in writing to relate the chiding and derision this huge multitude was subjected to... It seems to me that not even the Jewish people were so abused when they were taken into captivity in Babylon. It is a hard thing to be subjected to oppression and censure for no reason or wrongdoing and to withstand it. O Lord, grant us patience!"

When the chain of people reached its destination, Governor Mehmed Djavad Bey and Commander of the Armed Forces Mustafa Remzi Pasha, surrounded by their fellow chief executioners, appeared in the residence's windows. As if to mock them, the governor ordered the naked, barefoot, and tormented Armenians to "disarm." As he did this, he eagerly awaited news from Constantinople of the ultimate victory of the Hamidian counter-revolution, in order to be able to slaughter what remained of the Cilician Armenians.

While the ranks led in front of the Governor's Office awaited further humiliations, the vicegerent ordered several Armenians to be given axes, and

* Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 26.



Putrid remains of massacre victims, April 1909.

he made them personally destroy the Arch of Liberty that had been erected after the proclamation of the constitution.

After executing this order, the half-dead ranks of Armenians received yet another order from the vicegerent, and they began to pray for the health and the glory of Abdul Hamid. After this prayer, Djavad Bey ordered the Armenians from his office to shout at the top of their lungs, "Down with the constitution! Long live our king!" Only then did the governor say that the *gavurs* were free to leave his sight.

The Armenians who had, thirsting for light and freedom, naïvely raised their heads for just a moment after the Ottoman revolution were now completely destroyed. Against this heart-rending background, the evildoers celebrated their shameless victory.

Almost twenty thousand Armenian men and women—homeless and unfortunate, hovering between life and death—who had passed through fire and sword to escape the first and second massacres left the garden, but immediately found themselves at a loss, not knowing where to go. They hesitated for a moment, and then, accompanied by the soldiers, they made their way back to their neighborhoods under an avalanche of curses, mockery, and abuse from the enraged mob. Silently, with downcast eyes, they finally reached their destination.

The sight that awaited them was horrifying. Three-quarters of the city had been consigned to flames.^{*} It resembled a black forest of smoldering ruins. The solid, renowned buildings of the Armenian neighborhoods had been charred and reduced to rubble. Some 3,500 houses had been incinerated, burying the bodies of thousands of innocent people. Demolished as well were the glorious Armenian schools and marketplaces. In the main Armenian neighborhood, which had been home to thirty thousand people, only a few houses had not been touched by the flames, and only the main church still stood erect. All of the churches had been desecrated, and the altars and crosses had been destroyed, the holy vessels stolen, and the shrines trampled. All of the non-Armenian Christian churches, with the exception of the Greek church located at the edge of the Christian quarter, had been burned to the ground. The foreign institutions in the neighborhood had been incinerated as well.[†] Bodies—burned and mutilated, stabbed and bullet-riddled—lay all throughout the city. Among them were many people who were still half-dead or in great agony. Packs of wild dogs roamed the streets and yards, and tore the victims apart, those who had breathed their last, and those still in their last pangs of death. Blood had been shed in such abundance that the passers-by could not avoid treading upon it.[‡]

During the second massacre, 3,500 permanent residents of Adana were killed, including 2,500 Armenians, 500 other Christians, and 500 Muslims. A thousand Armenians who had come to the city from other places for seasonal work were also killed. Six hundred and thirty-five of them had come from Kharpert, 37 from Malatia, 263 from Kayseri, 17 from Arapkir, and 50 from Palou. Out of 200 Armenians working in farms outside the city, 194 were killed (only one family escaped). Thus, around 3,700 Armenians were killed in Adana and its outskirts.

Because the army had sided with the Muslim population during the second Adana massacre, the number of Armenians killed there was more than seven times greater than that of Muslims. And this time, Christians of other nationalities, the Greeks in particular, suffered as well.

In addition to the organizers and perpetrators of the first and second massacres of Christians in Adana previously named, history has recorded the names of other Armenian-haters as well, including Kani Zade Said, Kerim

^{*} *Piuzantion*, no. 3806, April 6 (19), 1909.

[†] *Taraz* (Tiflis), no. 5-6, May-June, 1909.

[‡] *Horizon*, no. 52, March 9, 1910.

^{**} *Horizon*, no. 64, March 23, 1910.

Agha, Kerkeli Ali, Bayrakdar Zade Bekir, Vanli Ahmed, Arif Zade Esad, Tekeli Abdullah, Darbag Zade Hadji Ali and Reuf, Hamal Zade Hasan, Ibrahim Rasikh, Bosnali Salih and Mehmed, Pambukdji Motili, and Ghasab Zade Hussein, among others.^{*} With respect to the atrocities, the Gypsy tribal chief Abdul Kerim was on par with the Turkish, Kurdish, and Circassian slaughterers.

For the other peoples of Turkey, the change of power may have raised hopes for a better future. The Armenians, however, were fated to plunge into deep mourning, to be torn to pieces, massacred, and burned alive. The Adana massacre buried once and for all any illusions Armenians may have had about the possibility of improving their situation. What could they do? Did they have any compassionate friend or protector? Who had put Armenians in this defenseless and helpless position? Was there any way out?

In those dark, bloodstained days Armenians were unable to find answers to these questions. Were they again destined to be satisfied with moaning and weeping? Was lamenting and covering their heads with ashes as in the Israel of old, and mourning the heartbreaking death of their children, mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters all that had remained for them? Was there any grain of hope left? Didn't a greater calamity await them in that damned country?

Time would tell.

^{*} Souren Bartevean, *Gilgian Arhavirku* [Cilician Calamity] (Constantinople, 1909), 38-39.

MASSACRES IN THE VILAYET OF ADANA



Armenian agricultural worker in Adana before the massacres, 1909

The massacres that occurred in the cities and villages of Adana vilayet were as dreadful as those in the capital. The massacres quickly spread from the city of Adana in all directions throughout the vilayet, with the exception of Icheli *sandjak*, where there were no Armenians, or rather, only a very small number.*

Once again, everything was planned and organized. It was as if some hidden force was skillfully directing the bloody actions of the murderers throughout the province. The perpetrators of the slaughter fell into three groups—those who planned it, those who managed it, and those who carried it out.

For a number of reasons, the situation in the provinces was particularly awful—there was no contact with the outside world, not even a remote possibility of receiving help. The Turks were not afraid of European intervention, of consular officers or missionaries, as may have been the case in the cities and, especially, in the ports. That is why they were the absolute masters of their victims and could do whatever they pleased. Here, too, the most heinous crimes were committed. As in the city of Adana—indeed, even more so in the provinces—the mob had no wish to achieve victory at the cost of its own blood and sacrifice, but rather attempted to disarm the Armenians first, and then carry out the slaughter. In many places, events followed the same pattern. The mob in the streets would be assisted in each town by local Turks, who would utter vows of friendship toward their Armenian neighbors, beat their breasts as they called upon the Prophet as their witness, and swear on the Koran that if Armenians surrendered their weapons, the evil would come to an end, and that they would do everything they could to ensure that no one touched a hair on the Armenians' heads. The Armenians, surrounded by enemies and prepared to resist, yielded to the entreaties of their good neighbors and surrendered their weapons. Then the scene would change at once—the obsequious neighbors would turn wild and lead the surrounding mob into the village with victorious shouts.

The events that ensued in the provinces continued to follow a pattern, unfolding in a similar way in most of the villages. The same atrocious scenes occurred over and over again. Intoxicated with blood, monstrous evildoers would tear their anguished and tormented victims to pieces, and then wildly

* *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 22, May 26, 1909, 517.

celebrate the cutting down of so many souls in the bloom of their lives. It is therefore impossible to depict how so many innocent souls were killed, how their shrines were defiled, and what unheard-of crimes were perpetrated, since this would involve endless repetition, something that has, unfortunately, been impossible to avoid completely in this study.

Thus, the massacres carried out in the villages with Armenian or mixed populations will be addressed with only brief descriptions.

THE SANDJAK OF ADANA

The fate of Kozuluk was horrific. The village was located eight hours' walking distance northeast of Tarsus, at the foot of a high hill. Surrounded by numerous Turkish villages, Kozuluk had a mixed population, with seventy Armenian households. The Armenian villagers were armed and able to defend themselves.

Upon receiving news of the events in Adana, the local Turks got together and told the Armenian priest that they were unarmed and therefore afraid. They said they did not want the Armenians to suddenly make a mistake and attack them. Hence, they proposed that the Armenian villagers disarm as well. Deceived by their neighbors' wheedling and trusting naively in their avowed peacefulness, the Armenians surrendered all their weapons, for the sake of harmony and to avoid any wrongdoing. The Kozuluk mob was waiting for just that. At the order of the village mufti, unheard-of atrocities took place.

The Turks captured an Armenian and ordered him to cross himself. When the man complied with the order and crossed himself with his right hand, the bloodsuckers cut it off and then made him cross himself with his left hand, cutting off that one as well. "Now cross yourself with your feet," one fiend demanded. Naturally, the poor man was unable to comply. "That means you don't need your feet," the executioners said, and they cut off both his feet and threw him into a cesspool.^{*}

Mass rapes began—they raped daughters, sisters, and wives before the eyes of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. At the same time, they separated a group of men and killed them, and continued to rape the women on top of the dead bodies. In the course of this brutality, the murderers seized the children—who were weeping piteously and clinging to their mothers—by the feet and smashed their heads against the rocks, killing them.[†]

* Terzian, *Gilgilo Aghedu*, 673.

† Ibid., 671–672.

According to Terzian, they perpetrated horrendous brutality against pregnant women as well, emptying their guns into their wombs saying, "The boys in there must be killed!... And they poured gunpowder into some of the pregnant women's vaginas and ignited it."^{*}

Among the rape victims were girls no more than eight or nine years old and little boys as young as four or five, some of whom were molested in an unnatural way. As a result of this savagery, many of the children died on the spot, and many others succumbed to shock or lost their minds and committed suicide.[†]

At this dire hour, the police who had purportedly come to help the Armenians declared upon their arrival in the village that they were unable to restrain the mob. Instead, they advised the survivors of the massacre to take shelter in the neighboring Turkish villages. The unarmed, panic-stricken population began fleeing in all directions.

Further horrors lay ahead. Seventy-one villagers who had escaped from Kozuluk gathered in the nearby Turkish village of Buchak. But it was not to be a place of shelter or salvation. The head of the village approached the Armenians and told them he was unable to protect them and advised them to move to another village. The terror-stricken people, left in a state of extreme dread, went to the nearby village of Incir-Ketik, taking refuge in the stables there.

The following morning, a mounted policeman named Abdul Azim came to the village accompanied by a group of thugs. At his instruction, the gang turned the poor people out. Hidden in the dark corners of the stable, eleven of them miraculously escaped slaughter. The murderers encircled the remaining sixty people who, petrified, awaited death.

The gang led the Armenians toward the Turkish village of Yanikkishla. On the way, they selected from among the captives the fifteen most beautiful brides and virgins and five or six young boys, and separated them from the rest. The Turks placed them upon their camels as booty and headed home. "Our Ahmed Agha has no children; I'll take this boy for him. But the girl is mine, I won't give her to anyone," said one toothless fiend. "And I'll take these brides," croaked another, dressed in rags.

Among these ill-fated young people was seventeen-year-old Berdjouhi, beautiful and slender, the newlywed bride of twenty-two-year-old Aharon.

* Ibid., 672.

† Terzian, *Gilgilo Aghedu*, 672.

Appalled by the Turks' heartless talk and perceiving the tragedy that was to befall her, the lovely Berdjouhi called upon her husband to take out his knife and cut her throat so that her honor would remain unblemished. The miserable young man begged his beautiful wife not to make such a terrible demand, but she did not waver, tearfully imploring him again and again to comply with her request. The husband, compelled, fulfilled his wife's last wish and then killed himself.*

Once the beautiful brides, maidens, and young boys had been separated, the rest of the captives were subject to the whims of the mob. The crowd began its revelry before they reached Yanikkishla. Axes glittered through the air, falling on the heads, arms, and backs of the victims. The dismal moans of men mixed with the shrieks of women and the sorrowful cries of the children. The brutes all did as they pleased. For instance, they dragged a wretched old man to a rock, poured oil on his head, and struck a match. He managed to stumble a few steps before he fell, engulfed in flames. This pitiful old man was the priest of Kozuluk.

At that point, the final act of ruthlessness began. The captives—many still alive, others stabbed and dismembered or shot and killed—were all piled up on top of each other. Altogether there were forty-five souls, mostly adult men with their families. The mob spread brushwood on top and around the wretched people and set it alight. Tongues of flame and thick smoke leapt up to the sky—toward the most-merciful God. According to Terzian:

From inside the flames one could hear the piercing shrieks of children, harrowing pleas of mothers, and heart-rending moans of the wretched. One would try to escape the heat of the oven, clothes aflame; another, his body half-scorched, would try again and again to escape. The ghastly sight filled the animalistic mob with joy; they laughed and jeered each time the victims screamed. What joy the human brutes felt before this ghastly sight, with what laughter and vengeful curses the Turkish mob reacted to each of the victims' cries. And when at last the screaming and outcry ended, and the moans and roars were heard no more, a pile of corpses smoldered and fumed, and heaven was satiated with its putrid smell, indifferent in its boundless patience.†

* Ibid., 173.

† Terzian, *Gilgjo Aghedsu*, 176.

The falling darkness covered the blackened remains of the Armenian houses of Kozuluk. The Armenian quarter no longer existed; it had been completely destroyed.

Similar appalling events took place in the village of Abdoghlu (Abdoğlu) in Adana *sandjak*, which was several kilometers from the town of Misis on the banks of the Djihoun River, and had a mixed population of sixty-six Armenian and thirty Turkish households. The Armenians had a church and school. At the time of the massacre, there were also 242 migrant Armenian farm workers in the village.‡

Learning that Armenian massacres had been unleashed in Adana on April 1, the Turks who lived in the village began moving their families to Turkish-populated villages nearby. The Armenians, anticipating the imminent calamity, asked them not to leave, believing that the Turks who lived next door and shared bread and salt with them would help in the event of danger. But the Turks left, without providing the Armenians with any promise of safety.

On the morning of April 3, a Monday, a large group of horsemen appeared outside the village. An hour or two later, other mounted groups approached the village and surrounded it. Not long after, the Turkish men who had left the village joined the horsemen—on foot and horseback. The threat of disaster loomed over Abdoghlu. The young Armenian men, intending to fight, produced five Mausers and sixty revolvers, as well as *chifte* and *tufenk* rifles.§ But, as Zabel Yesayan describes, the head of the village, Baghdadoghlu Garabed, opposed their plan categorically and shouted at them, out of his mind with fear, "And now are we meant to fight against Islam? *Chiftes* are for shooting birds, not men! For each *tufenk* they have twenty martins [Martini rifles]... We must bow our heads, surrender our weapons, and hope for their mercy.**

The young men insisted that it was necessary to resist, saying, "Death only comes once. Let today be our last day, but let us not give up the *silâhs* [arms]. For what day have we saved our bravery? For what day have we denied ourselves and bought weapons? Our wives and children have relied on our weapons. How can we appear before them empty-handed?††

* S. Z., *Adanskie Chernye Dni* [The black days of Adana] (Baku, 1909), 10–13.

† Zabel Yesayan, *Avenagueroun Mech* [Among the Ruins] (Constantinople, 1910), 87.

‡ Ibid.

** Ibid., 88.

†† Ibid.

But they argued and pleaded in vain. Baghdadoghlu Garabed did not waver. He raised a white flag and the village surrendered.

At about noon, the enemy entered the village and collected all the weapons. Then the massacre began. The perpetrators ruthlessly killed all the men first, not even sparing the young boys. They crucified several school children side-by-side on the church wall and then poured oil on the rest of the children and set them on fire. The innocent children ran about in flames, desperately hoping for rescue.

After that, the Turks gathered all the women in one place and lined them up. They chose about a hundred very young girls and new brides, divided them among themselves and began at once to rape them in plain sight. "Not even street dogs could be so lustful and shameless," an eyewitness wrote.

In the course of the slaughter, carnage, and disgrace, those Turks who had lived side by side with Armenians and had been their friends a day before displayed exceptional zeal. It was at their hands that Baghdadoghlu Garabed was killed in his house, after witnessing the deaths of his wife, sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren.[†] Some of the women were taken captive by the Turks and forced to convert to Islam; others managed to escape, fleeing in panic to Christian-populated Misis, naked, barefoot, and starving.

After committing all manner of monstrous deeds, the slaughterers looted the houses and set the village on fire. They then burned all the farm equipment that they could not carry away.[‡] Abdoghlu was reduced to a pile of rubble. In total, 422 Armenians had been massacred—180 locals and 242 outsiders.^{**} Some two hundred women had been taken captive. Of the entire male Armenian population of the village, only one little boy survived, though he died of an illness soon after the massacre. The Armenians of Abdoghlu had been cut off at the root.

The fate of Misis (the historic Mamistra [Mamestia] or before that, Mopsuestia), located in the eastern part of Adana on the Djihoun River, was perhaps even more devastating. Misis had been a city in the Roman era, and at the time of the massacres it was the center of a *nahiye* (district). The majority of its population was Muslim, with 150 Armenian and other Christian households.^{††}

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 180.

† Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 88.

‡ *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 22, May 26, 1909, 517.

** *Horizon*, no. 64, March 23, 1910.

†† *Ibid.*

On Wednesday, April 1, when news of the Armenian massacre in Adana reached the town, gangs from the surrounding villages joined the local Turks and attacked the upper quarter of Misis, which was entirely populated by Armenians. The mob first burst into the shops and houses and looted them, and then set about slaughtering the residents of the quarter.

The Armenians and other Christians (Greeks and Assyrians) in other quarters escaped the massacre thanks to the newly arrived Turkish commander, Lutfi Bey. This humane military man warned the mob that he would sternly punish them if they dared to attack the Armenians. He instructed several wealthy Turks to shelter Armenians in their houses and protect them from the mob, and so they did.^{*}

On Thursday and Friday, the town was more or less calm; the military had taken the Armenian houses under their protection. But late in the day on Friday, news circulated that the commander and his unit were to move to Hadjin to protect the endangered Christians there, seven Europeans in particular. The prominent Misis Armenians begged the commander not to leave, convinced that their lives would be in danger if he did. The military commander told them that it was not his decision to make. Still, before he left, he summoned the Turkish leaders and made them take an oath that they would not touch the Armenians. After receiving their assurances, he and his men headed for Hadjin on April 4, leaving a small detachment behind. The commander's departure proved fateful for the Christians of Misis. Through April 10, the Armenians and other Christians remained locked in their homes, in a state of apprehension.

In the evening of April 11, a strange commotion arose among the Turks. On the morning of the next day, a Monday, an armed crowd attacked the other Armenian neighborhoods in Misis. The military detachment the commander had left in the town also joined the mob. Terzian quotes one of the Armenians—who was unidentified—and later escaped death, recalling this black day:

We, the ill-fated Christians, were seized with terror and began looking everywhere for places to hide. But where could we hide or run to? How could we save ourselves? We were besieged from every quarter. The rifles were thundering, the bullets were pounding, the

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 182.

axes were shattering the doors, and the heralds were exhorting people to take part in the slaughter.*

On April 12, the madmen began to attack the Armenians who had gathered in several large houses. None of the twenty-five Armenians sheltered in the house of Hovhannes Terzian survived; when the house went up in flames, they were all burned alive. On fire, they desperately threw themselves out the windows, and the vicious mob began to dance, laughing diabolically.†

At that point, one of the prominent Turks invited the leaders of the mob to his house and ordered them to murder more than 180 Christians, mostly males, who were present there. Calling upon the Prophet, they got underway at once, and within half an hour they had butchered everyone.

Then it was the turn of the others. The slaughterers, mostly Turkish refugees from Crete, attacked the house of Shevki Effendi, where two hundred Armenians and other Christians had taken shelter. The housewife tried to oppose the murderers' attack, but her husband intervened and invited the pack inside, where they viciously fell upon the people sheltered there. A *virtabed* (archimandrite) from the Holy See of Cilicia, the Right Reverend Father Mikayel Achabahian, who had come to Misis on business the night before, fell victim to the cruelest atrocity—he was torn to pieces alive.

When the slaughter and arson began, Berber Kapriel's wife, Mariam, gathered her five daughters, who were between twelve and eighteen years old, and said, "I know what is going to befall us. They will murder my husband, and then they will abduct my daughters and me. But I will not give them my daughters." The mother tied her daughters together by the hair and pushed them into the flames; when she saw that they were burning, she threw herself in, too, and they were all burned alive.‡

According to Terzian, the Christians who had taken refuge in the house of Yeprem Agha suffered the same dark fate. The mob dragged them out of the house into the large yard and slaughtered them all. Among the victims was a deportee from Constantinople known as Dr. Davoud, who resisted the executioners for a while but was eventually forced to succumb. An Armenian woman who miraculously escaped recalled, "Before my very eyes they killed my husband, my four brave sons, and my incomparable son-in-law, Harutiun Makheian from Hadjin, who was a man renowned for his courage. There

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 185.

† Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 137.

‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 672.

were weeping and lamentation, uproar and commotion on all sides, and I don't know what happened to me after that..."

Everywhere was scenes of horror. In one house, a gang fired up the *tonir* [a cylindrical clay oven dug in the earth], threw young boys into it, and covered it with a lid. When the boys stopped screaming, the gang killed their parents, who had witnessed the whole scene.‡

Not many people in Misis were killed with guns. Most fell victim to axes and flames. The attackers had conserved their bullets. There were no European families in Misis, and no European flags under which Armenians could seek protection. All in all, 350 Armenians were killed in Misis. Eighty houses were burned to the ground.‡ After all of this, the butchers gathered the few women who had escaped the massacre in the house of a Turk and searched them thoroughly, seizing whatever jewelry they happened to still possess. During the search, the Turks found a man wearing women's clothes, the coachman Misak, and they took him out and shot him on the spot. This was followed by another unimaginable crime—they took the babies away from their mothers and slew them all.

In the end, there were ten or eleven women left, petrified and speechless at what they had witnessed.** "A scant few of us," one of these Armenian women testified, "stayed at a Turk's house for days, and then we were transferred to Adana, and now we never want to see that damned place again."††

Zabel Yesayan, who went to Misis one month after the massacre, was shocked at what she found. "A dead city, deathly silence," she wrote. "Historic Mamestia, the civilization of old, with its ancient fragments and crumbling palaces, looked on in astonishment and disgust... at the wreckage..."‡‡ "There were no Armenians left in Misis... except for several blacksmiths, who had been converted to Islam and kept here, since there are no other smiths..."*** These two men had been left alive "to repair their [the Turks'] weapons and to sharpen their knives."†††

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 188.

† *Ibid.*, 674.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 64, March 23, 1910.

** *Ibid.*

†† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 188.

‡‡ Zabel Yesayan, *Avenaknerus mej*, 139.

*** *Ibid.*, 141.

††† *Pincantion*, no. 3 82 1, April 24 (May 7), 1909.

On the evening of April 1, news of the Adana massacres reached the village of Shehymourad in Adana *sandjak* near the Djihoun River, which had forty-five Armenian households with a total of two hundred residents.

On the morning of April 2, Turks from the villages of Arap-Keoy and Danishman attacked the small Armenian village of Aghzibuyuk, not far from Shehymourad. They killed the nearly two hundred people who lived there, and then looted and set fire to the houses. This took place before the eyes of the residents of Shehymourad, who watched in horror from the roofs of their houses.

Their turn was soon to come. On the evening of April 2, Turks encircled the village and began to fire their rifles. The small village did not give way to despair, but pulled together closely. Young men armed with hunting rifles were positioned throughout the village and returned the enemy fire. The attackers retreated.⁵

The daring resistance by a handful of Armenians enraged the enemy, and they decided to attack the village with forces redoubled. On the morning of April 3, a mob numbering a few thousand, on horse-back and on foot, besieged the village from all sides. The slaughterers had gathered from the neighboring Turkish villages of Khayirli, Tashdji, Kilisekeoy, Chotlou, Karaoghlan, Chanakli, Pekmez, Huyuk, and Gemi Souren.

A fierce battle broke out. The young Armenian men defended their village with selfless devotion. At about noon, the enemy entered the houses on the outskirts of the village. The besieged lacked ammunition and were forced to use it sparingly. Yet those brave souls did not give way to despair—they gathered the residents in the village square and increased their resistance tenfold. The *bashi-bazouks* broke into the fifty empty houses, looted them, and set them on fire.⁶

Unable to withstand the enemy's pressure, the Armenians left the village and fortified their position in a solid, walled-in structure not far away. The mob entered the village, looted and burned the remaining Armenian houses, and then attacked the walled structure. But they were met with stiff resistance and were forced to retreat.

On the morning of April 4, Turks were preparing to attack once again, with forces redoubled. The night before, villagers from Yaghdjikeoy, Avrat-Mezer, and Kuchukler had come to gather up whatever had been left after the looting.

* *Horizon*, no. 54, March 11, 1910.

† S. Z., *Adanski cherny dni*, 21.

At noon, a crowd of thousands of people took the offensive, pressing the besieged Armenians. The Armenians caught sight of a metal water pipe lying near the wall; they plugged one end, poured gunpowder into the other, and set off several deafening explosions. The ignorant mob thought that the Armenians had cannons and ran away.

By the morning of the fifth day of the massacres, a Sunday, the ammunition of the besieged Armenians was running low, and the enemy forces were growing in number, since following the suspension of the first massacre in Adana, a large number of Turks had come to help their kinsmen. Nevertheless, the Armenians were determined to resist to the bitter end. Though dozens were killed, the Armenians succeeded in repulsing every attack. Eventually, as it was growing dark, the Armenians ran out of ammunition completely. Under those circumstances, the only way out was to try to break through the siege under the cover of night and flee to Adana. In the dark of night, two hundred men, women, and children quietly left the building and crept away.

As documented by Yesayan, a few hours had passed when the escapees encountered a mounted gang on the road, armed to the teeth. The moment was potentially explosive, but then the unexpected happened—a brave young man from Hadjin known as Krikor approached the horsemen and reprimanded them loudly, in perfect Turkish, saying, "Now we will kill you like the dogs you are, you *gávurs!*" Taken aback, the horsemen informed him that they were Circassians and Muslims themselves, and that they had participated in the massacre of the Christians in Adana and were now traveling about looking for *gávurs* to kill. The Circassians rode off and the group continued on its way, having evaded deadly peril.⁷

Early Monday morning, those exhausted, starving, and tormented Armenians arrived in Adana. They found shelter in the buildings of the Mousheghian-Apkarian school, which a few days later, in the course of the second Adana massacre, would be burned to the ground, and where along with hundreds of other villagers, those fifty residents of Shehymourad would go up in flames.⁸

Between April 1 and April 12, numerous other Armenian settlements in Adana vilayet were subjected to attacks that ended in murder, captivity, arson, and destruction. The Armenian merchants from other provinces who happened to be in these villages on business were killed as well.

* Yesayan, *Averagneroan Mech*, 91–92.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 200.

There were only fifteen or twenty households in the Armenian village of Aghzibuyuk, located across from Sheyhmourad. On April 1, armed gangs from the neighboring villages surrounded Aghzibuyuk and offered the residents the chance to surrender. The villagers decided not to leave the village in the hope that they would be able to find common language with the assailants and buy their salvation by voluntarily handing over their belongings. Instead, the Turks entered the village the next day and barbarically killed every one of them.

Appalling events took place in the village of Khayirli, not far from the city of Adana. The daughter of Abdal Khalo, a savage Turkish woman named Senem Khanum, lived there. She used her influence to persuade her fellow villagers and the Turkish residents of the surrounding settlements to round up almost all of the Armenians of both sexes from Khayirli and the nearby villages that had mixed populations. She separated the beautiful girls and brides and distributed them as gifts among the Turkish men, and then she ordered the villagers to drag the remaining women into the village bakehouse, pour oil on them, and set them on fire. After that, the villainous Turkish woman ordered all the Armenian men to be taken to the riverbank, where she personally stabbed them all and threw them into the river, "for the sake of peace of mind." "Here is a woman," Terzian wrote, "whose cursed bust should be put on display in exhibitions throughout the world as the embodiment of the ruthlessness of the twentieth century in women's clothing."⁴

There were only ten or fifteen Armenian families in the Muslim village of Kadikoy. The Adana massacre of April 1 had encouraged the village Turks, and they seized the opportunity to rid themselves of the unbelievers, with the local imam in the lead. They assembled all the Armenians in the yard of a house and tied them up with rope, preparing to slaughter them. At the last minute, the ill-fated people tearfully and on their knees begged the Turks to spare their lives, promising to convert to Islam in return. Their offer was refused, and at the order of the imam, they were all killed with knives and swords.

The Armenian residents of the small village of Gemi-Souren, seeing that Turks had already surrounded their village, had no other choice but to take up arms. The Turks ordered them to disarm immediately, and upon being refused, they attacked. The Armenians waged a heroic four-day resistance, and when they had used up their ammunition, all of them—young and old—were assembled in one of their houses and set it on fire. They all went up in flames.

⁴ Terzian, *Gilgig Aghedu*, 251–252.

There was a farm called Amir-Tatman near Adana, where 168 Armenians and 20 Greeks worked. On April 2, a Turkish mob encircled them all and slaughtered them with skewers, clubs, and stones. One hundred and eighty people were killed, four Greeks hid in haystacks and later escaped, and two Greeks and two Armenians went missing without a trace. The farm was looted and destroyed.

The Turks attacked the village of Indjirlik, which had sixty houses, pillaged and set it on fire, and then began to annihilate the residents. Almost all of the men were killed and the women and girls were abducted. Only a few people were able to escape. The Armenian village ceased to exist.

Muslim tribes besieged the village of Kristian Keoy, which included seventy Armenian households. This picturesque settlement was nestled among orange and lemon groves. The savages went into Kristian Keoy, looted and destroyed it, murdered most of the villagers after subjecting them to horrible torments, and made off with women and girls.

Turks assaulted Karataş, a state farm on which most of the laborers were Armenian, dragged them all together in the main building, and prepared to set it on fire. The Turkish manager of the estate refused to let them burn the building down, so they made the victims go outside and set them on fire there. Some thirty Armenians who had remained alive were beaten to death with wooden clubs by the orders of the *mudir* (directress).⁵

The Armenian populated village of Gozalt was located a few kilometers from Tarsus. It was surrounded by a number of farms where between 250 and 300 laborers worked, depending on the day. The Tarsus *kaymakam* (governor) and an influential *khodja* went to the village and ordered the residents to disarm, and they complied at once. Then the massacre began. The brutality reached such a degree that all of the boys and girls as young as seven or eight years old were raped. After slaughtering the village residents, young and old, the assailants moved on to destroying the farms and killing the workers. The farmhands were lined up against the walls of one of the buildings and butchered one by one. This horrendous and infernal act was committed in plain sight. The harrowing entreaties, screams, and cries of innocent people rent the air. This was the final sound as their lives were taken from them, one after the other.⁶

⁵ Archive of Arshag Alboyadjian, file 4, item 739, Madenataran, Yerevan.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Five hundred and fifty-three people were killed in Gozalt and its environs. The majority of them—353 people—were between 15 and 35 years of age. Fifty-five among the slain were children and forty-five were women and girls.

Tarsus, one of the oldest cities of Cilicia and the center of an Adana *sandjak* district located between the cities of Adana and Mersin, suffered great losses. The city, founded by the Phoenicians, was one of the oldest in Asia Minor. In the early years of the Common Era, it was among the well-known intellectual centers of the Hellenistic world, with a university, renowned scholars, scientists, and especially philosophers. Throughout the subsequent centuries, the city had gradually lost its ancient glory as a center of science and education. The city, filled with mulberry, olive, orange, and lemon groves, was a place of beauty. It had a population of 20,000, with 2,500 Armenians.[†]

Most of the Armenian townfolk were skilled craftsmen and some were small shop owners.

Passions flared in Tarsus the day after the Adana massacre. For two or three days, various provocative rumors were spread throughout the city. At the same time, the *khodjas*, *mullahs*, and several soldiers were organizing armed groups.

The arrival of a train from Adana on the morning of April 2 immediately caused a commotion, with some of the arriving passengers noisily alleging that the Armenians had been massacring Muslims in the capital.

One of them exclaimed, "Adana has been burned down; why should we not take care? Let's set Tarsus on fire!"[‡] Upon hearing this, a Turkish mob, led by a man named Shevket, who was the chairman of the local chapter of the Committee of Union and Progress, Hamid, the chairman of the Arab Club, Yaghdi Aziz from Kayseri, and Ali Refik, a medical doctor, proceeded toward the city arsenal.

* *Karoun* (Constantinople), no. 17, March 19 (April 2), 1909.

† *Horizon*, no. 64, March 23, 1910. Another source put the number of Armenians in Tarsus as of 1908 at 3,139 (see the footnote on page 162 of Terzian's *Gilgila Agheda*). According to a third source, the population of the city was 12,000, including 3,500 Armenians. See Hagop H. Allahverdian, *Oulnia gam Zeytoun, Lernayin Avan i Giligya: Ngarakir Doghagan, Gensapanagan, Panasiragan yev Lzouapanagan* [Ulnia or Zeytoun, a Mountainous Town in Cilicia: Topographical, Biological, Philological, and Linguistic Descriptions] (Constantinople, 1884), 3.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3815, April 17 (30), 1909.

On April 3, the viciousness and calls for violence continued. Provocative rumors of all sorts circulated throughout the city. Once they had been supplied with weapons, some of the agitated Muslims dispersed throughout the city, allegedly to cut off the mounted fedayeen that were "coming to conquer Tarsus."

On April 4, as reported by *Ararat*, the Turks took to the streets determined to "rid the city of Armenians." One group of Armenians, fleeing the enemy swords, went to St. Paul the Apostle Armenian church. About fifty Tarsus Armenians sought shelter in St. Paul's College, which was run by American missionaries and open to young people of all backgrounds. Some of them gathered in the main building of the college, and the rest in a smaller building. But this did not save them. The *bashi-bazouks* surrounded the smaller building first and set it alight. Most of the ill-fated people died in the fire. The others tried to flee in all directions, but the murderers ran them down and took their lives with bullets, cudgels, and axes. Next, *Piuzantion* wrote, the mob committed the church of St. Paul the Apostle to flames with all the believers inside.[†]

The mob then encircled the main building of the American College. Dr. Thomas Christie, the college headmaster, was in Adana at the time, but his noble wife, Carmelite Christie, magnanimously and courageously took the Armenians under her protection and saved them from imminent death.

At that same moment, a Turk named Kerbala Zade Esad from the town's Tekke district appeared on the scene. He was a convicted felon who had spent many years in prison. But seeing the crimes against innocent Armenians unfolding around him, he underwent a metamorphosis and his conscience awoke. He gathered some thirty wounded men, women, and children who were lying in the streets, took them to his run-down home, dressed their wounds, and fed them. Not satisfied with that, he went back into the streets and rescued from the fire five women who had fled to Tarsus from Adana, a few migrant workers, and some natives of Tarsus, and took them all to his house as well.

Two other Tarsus Turks, Guvent Zade Mukhtar and his friend Momojan, followed Esad's example. The former saved twenty-three and the latter fifty Armenians, sheltering them in their houses until the slaughter ended.

* *Ararat*, no. 7–8, July–August, 1909, 666, 671–674.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3815, April 17 (30), 1909.



Tarsus Armenian quarter, April, 1909

When the massacre was over, the Armenian women from Adana were full of gratitude and wished to give Esad a golden ring and some other jewelry as a gift, but he nobly declined the offer.*

About 100 Armenians were killed in the city of Tarsus,[†] and including the surrounding area, a total of 560 people were killed. The latter figure included 160 people from the village of Kozuluk. More than eight hundred Armenian-owned houses in the city were looted and burned, one by one.[‡] None of the neighboring houses owned by Greeks was damaged.[§] The material loss in Tarsus amounted to 500,000 gold liras.[¶]

Bloody events unfolded in Mersin (once Zephyrion), a rapidly developing city on the Mediterranean coast. It was the gateway to the city of Adana, linked to it by a six-hour railway journey. Many European consuls were headquartered in the town. Mersin was home to 1,000 Armenians and had a

* Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 197.

† *Pisanzion*, no. 3823, April 27 (May 10), 1909.

‡ E. K. Sarkisian, *Ekonomicheskaia Politika Osmanskoi Imperii v Zakavkaz'e Nakanune i v gody Pervoi mirovoi Voiny* [The Economic Policy of the Ottoman Empire in the Transcaucasus on the eve of and during World War I] (Yerevan: The Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1962), 174.

§ *Pisanzion*, no. 3815, April 17 (30), 1909.

¶ *Ibid*; Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 166.

total population of about 15,000, including Greeks, Egyptians, and predominately Turks.

When news of the Adana massacres reached Mersin, some Armenians took shelter in the European Consulates, and most locked themselves up in their houses. The Europeans did not have enough room to offer protection for everyone.

On April 13, the attacks on Armenians, who had locked themselves in their houses, began. Upon learning the news, the Russian Ambassador to Constantinople, Ivan Zinovoyev, ordered the captain of the battle cruiser *Unalets*, which was anchored near Haifa, to go to Mersin at once.

Upon landing in Mersin, a group of Russian sailors went ashore. They saw about seventy Armenian children, eight to ten years of age, trapped in a house that some Turks were preparing to set on fire. The leader of the group of sailors demanded that the Turks open the doors of the house, but they refused. He threatened to open fire and the Turks fled. The sailors broke down the doors, freed the children, and took them to Alexandretta (Iskenderun), leaving them under the guardianship of Armenians there. Ambassador Ivan Zinovoyev informed his foreign ministry of the incident in a 22 April 1909 memorandum.* Fortunately, the disorder did not last long in Mersin proper, but outside the city seventeen Armenians were killed.[†]

Located on the western shore of the Gulf of Alexandretta, covered in lemon and orange groves and surrounded by orchards, the picturesque city of Ayas (Aegeae in Greek) had a glorious past. In the first centuries of Christianity, it had been the see of the Armenian archbishops. In the time of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, Ayas was a prosperous trade center, the heart of the state, protected by two mighty fortresses—one inland and the other by the sea. Ayas was a royal port of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, known as *Portus Agacie domine Regis Armenie*.[‡] The Cilician merchants traveled from there on *ayas-* and *layasen-*type ships. In 1322, on the order of Sultan Al-Nasir Muhammad, the Egyptian Army conquered the port, but during the reign of Constantine II, Ayas once again passed into Armenian hands. In 1522, under the reign of Sultan Suleiman, the Ottomans conquered the city and it fell into a gradual decline, losing its significance

* *Banber Hayastani Arkhivmeri* [Herald of the Armenian archives] (Yerevan) 102, no. 2 (2003): 16.

† *Horizon*, no. 64, March 23, 1910.

‡ *Hayagan Giligya* [The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia] (New York, 1919), 16–20, 39–60.

over the course of subsequent centuries. By the time of the April massacre of 1909, it was just a small town of some 4,000 residents, among them several dozen Armenians. On April 2, the Armenian houses were seized and the people were all put to the sword by their Turkish neighbors.*

THE SANDJAK OF DJEBEL-I BEREKET

Of the four *sandjaks* of Adana province, Djebel-i Bereket was the site of the greatest destruction and loss of life. The Armenian villages were laid waste with such barbarity that not a trace of them was left. Even fields and orchards were razed to the ground.

There were three main reasons for the extent of the losses in the Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak*. The *sandjak* was one of the most fertile regions in Cilicia, arousing the envy of the Muslim villagers, making them eager to possess the lands of neighboring Armenian villages. A great number of small Armenian villages were located far from each other, with no means of contact, and were surrounded by Muslim settlements, a fact that prevented Armenians from coming to each other's aid and joining forces during the fighting. These villages were forcing to resist thousands of murderers on their own. Furthermore, the *sandjak's mutasarrif* (governor), Mehmed Asaf Esad Bey, was a brutal Armenian-hating Turk who personally managed the massacres throughout the area.

THE DISTRICT OF ERZIN

In Erzin, in the northwest of the Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak*, lay the town of Osmaniye, with its three thousand residents, including nine hundred Armenians.† They were mainly settlers from Hadjin who were engaged in agriculture, trade, crafts, and raising silkworms. Thanks to their diligence, they had become more or less successful.

Before the proclamation of the constitution, the Osmaniye Armenians had been oppressed, prohibited even from tolling the bell of the local church (as an exception, they were allowed to sound the bell on holidays, but then only with the specific permission of the local authorities and at a low volume). After the constitution was proclaimed, the Armenians began to ring the church bell every day, calling believers to prayer, and to boldly ride horses—something unthinkable under the former regime. They opened a village library and reading room, and even joined the local club of the Young Turks, making speeches there. All of this aroused bitter resentment among the

* *Arevêk* (Constantinople), no. 7090, May 5, 1909.

† Allahverdian, *Oulnia gam Zeytoun*, 57.

town's Turkish residents, who, according to author Hagop H. Allahverdian, would say angrily, "The country is passing into the hands of the *gâvurs*."

On the evening of April 1, a group of prominent Turks and local officials were invited to the house of a well-known local Turk, Hadji Hussein, for a meeting. A decision was made to call the men from the adjacent villages to quickly go to Osmaniye that night, to take part in massacring the Armenians and looting their property. Men were sent at once to inform the villagers of the plan.

The unusual commotion that night filled Armenians with terror. Their leaders tried to find out what was going on, but the commander of the Turkish military unit who had come to the village vowed that no one would make a move against Armenians, and explained that the reason for the bustle was that inmates had escaped from the Payas Prison and reserve forces had been called in to catch them. The fact was, however, that the Payas Prison inmates had not escaped, but rather had been set free, given weapons, and sent to participate in massacres at the order of the prison administration. The assurances by the military commander that the reservists had just been called in to capture the inmates and return them to prison did not assuage the anxiety of Armenians, and they found it necessary to appeal to the *kaymakam*. He, too, told the Armenian delegation, "Don't worry, there is no need for concern." Yet he did not fail to add, "The Armenians did a bad thing by massacring all the Muslims living in Adana, Misis, and Hamidiye."† Though the Armenians felt more or less reassured by the *kaymakam's* words, they were apprehensive as they saw the mob grow.

In the early morning of April 2, thousands of Turks flocked to the village and gathered at the bazaar to the sound of a beating drum. Their leaders made provocative speeches, falsely claiming, as had the *kaymakam*, that Armenians had slaughtered almost all of the Muslims in Adana, Misis, and Hamidiye. Although most of the Turks from the villages had come armed, at the instruction of the local military commander, one thousand rifles and plenty of ammunition were taken from the arsenal and distributed among the crowd. In a token of appreciation, the mob fired their rifles in the air, making it known that they were ready to use the weapons. The Armenians present at the bazaar fled to the church and the house of a prominent Armenian, known by the name Bakalian.

* *Pusantion*, no. 3824, April 28 (May 11), 1909.

† Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 182.

Shortly thereafter, the Turks were ordered to attack the upper districts of Osmaniye, which was populated mostly by Evangelical Armenians. The military unit led the mob in its sacred duty—murder and destruction.

At that moment, seventeen Armenian Evangelical leaders from Aintab and Marash, who were staying in Osmaniye overnight on their way to Adana for a convention of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Cilicia on April 4 (17), had gathered at the church for a night of prayer and meditation. Among them was Sarkis Levonian, a graduate of a German university and a professor at Aintab College. The Turks burst into the meeting room and murdered the clergymen with knives.^{*} Two or three of them who tried to escape were caught by soldiers at the exit and shot dead.

After they had killed the pastors, the frenzied mob of soldiers and civilians went from house to house, putting all Armenians to the sword.

When they had razed the district, the mob turned toward the lower part of town, which was populated by Apostolic Armenians. Within minutes, a church that was sheltering more than 250 men, women, and children was put to the torch.[†] They all went up in flames with harrowing howls, screams, and cries, while outside the mob celebrated, dancing to the music of the *zourna*. One of those who miraculously escaped recalled, "The rattle of the brutes' sabers," recounts Terzian, "the blare of the military trumpets, the crackle of the man-eating flames, the sound of the drums and *zournas*, the heart-rending shrieks of burning people, and the roar of the mob—all mixed together—created an unbearable situation..."[‡]

The bloodthirsty mob stood at the doors of the church and ripped open the bellies of the pregnant women who tried to escape the flames, so that the fetuses fell out. How many children were thrown alive into the flames? How many fell prey to street dogs?

After incinerating the 250 people in the church, the savage mob, led by *Miulazim* (lieutenant) Kemal, Fettah Zade Ahmed, Zapriye Kemal, who personally killed Ghazaros Kerominian, a teacher at the Armenian College, Nuri the cart-driver, and Mehmed Ali Bey, attacked Bakalian's house, where three dozen men and many women and children had taken shelter. Everyone was taken out to the yard. The women prostrated themselves before the mob, begging the criminals to spare their children's lives, but they were only jeered

* Yeghiayan, *Adanayi Hayots Badmoutian*, 240.

† Yesayan, *Avenagueroun Mech*, 91–92.

‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 198–199.

at in response. All of the ill-fated people were cut to pieces with axes, daggers, swords, sickles, and clubs.^{*}

Terzian documented that, when both Armenian districts had been completely destroyed, the slaughterers began searching the houses of the kind-hearted Turks of Osmaniye, looking for Armenians. They found some fifty Armenian men and about as many women and children in the house of a compassionate Turkish man and murdered them all. Seventeen young Armenian men escaped and took shelter in the post office, whose Turkish manager hid them in the attic. But five days after the massacre, his Turkish housemaid went out to the street and raised the alarm that there were *gávurs* in the post office building. One of the mob leaders, Hadji Hussein Effendi, went upstairs and persuaded the Armenians to come out and surrender any weapons they had, promising to spare their lives. The boys went downstairs and were immediately surrounded. At Hussein's orders, they were all slaughtered at the hands of a fiend called Arab Mehmed. After cutting the throat of Samouel Mtrbian, the beast in human form cupped his hands to drink the blood as it welled up, shouting, "Praise be to Allah, I have drunk the infidel's blood and I will never die..."[†]

Here is another horrendous scene: the commander of a police unit that had come to Osmaniye ordered his subordinates to take the sole Armenian policeman in the unit, a man named Sarkis, to the main square and strip him naked. After that, the police chief went to the square and loudly invited each one of those present to tear off a piece of the *gávur's* flesh. An Armenian eyewitness to this scene wrote in a letter sent to Constantinople, "Hundreds of people fell upon the poor fellow and sliced off his flesh with knives, and the pitiful victim gave up the ghost in unspeakable anguish."[‡] The newspaper *Piuzantion* wrote in reference to this letter, "Having heard of these heart-rending events, one wonders where one lives—among the cannibalistic tribes of Africa or Oceania, or in a pack of wolves and beasts!"[§]

One thousand Armenians were killed in Osmaniye, and a few dozen Armenian women were taken as booty by the Turks from the neighboring villages.

The town of Hamidiye (after the calamity it was renamed Djihan) was located in the southeastern part of Adana, in the Erzin district of the Djebel-i

* Ibid.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 199.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3827, May 1 (14), 1909.

§ Ibid.

Bereket *sandjak*. Not far from there stands the fortress of Amouda, dated back to the Rupenid era, which with its colossal, towering grandeur seemed to be sending an age-old Armenian protest up to heaven. In the past, it had been called *Levonğa* (Levon's Castle), but now it was known by the distorted name *Yilankale* (Snake Castle). Hamidiye had 1,000 households, of which 150 were Armenian. The Armenians had bakeries, workshops, a school, and a church. At the time of the massacre, there were about 1,500 Armenian migrant laborers in Hamidiye as well.

The news of the massacre in Adana reached Hamidiye the day it happened, on April 1. As Turkish officials in the town hall read a telegram describing the events, in low voices and with great interest, an Armenian official named Margos Effendi asked what it was about, and he was rudely told, "It's none of your business." The Armenian official was surprised at the perturbation that the telegram aroused among his Turkish colleagues.

Not sure of themselves even in the face of their great advantage in strength, the Turks called upon the tribal Kurds from the neighboring villages for help.

That day, just a few hours after the telegram had been received, the massacre of the Armenians began, with the first act of sedition committed by Hadji Hindi, who had come from Constantinople. He was joined by the local *muftri*. As documented by a Member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Ottoman Parliament, Krikor Zohrab, Sari Mehmed called upon the Muslim believers to be harsh and merciless. "Spare no one older than two years of age; if you want to save bullets, use axes," he urged. A little while later, the *kaymakam* of the *kaza* of Erzincan, Noureddin, arrived. After gathering the local judges and prominent Turkish figures, he told them to be bold, to put compassion aside and shed as much blood as possible. "Kill the men. The property and the women belong to us."

The Turks that he had summoned attacked the church first, killing Father Garabed Dellalian. Minutes later, they besieged the bazaar and murdered the Christian traders; only thirteen people among them managed to flee to the town hall, in the assumption that it would be a safe haven. But they were all killed there, as the officials looked on and in some cases even participated in the killing. After that, the mob embarked upon the mass slaughter of the Armenians of Hamidiye.

As they saw what was happening, the horror-stricken Christians hoped to join forces by locking themselves inside one or two spacious houses and

* Fonds of Krikor Zohrab, no. 2175/II, 2, Museum of Literature and Arts (Yerevan).

preparing to resist. But the Turks had foreseen that and kept the streets of the Christian populated neighborhoods under constant fire to prevent them from gathering in one place.

Now it was easy to deal with the *gávur* individually. The enraged mob, led by the *muftri* Mehmed, nicknamed Sari Kadi, the Muhuddin and Faris brothers, and other ringleaders, went on the offensive in the Armenian neighborhoods, and the bloody massacre began. The mob surrounded the house of Ghatir from Marash, where about two hundred Armenians had taken shelter, and set it alight. After a desperate resistance, everyone was incinerated.*

As documented by *Arevelk*, the rabble then turned to the other houses. The women were going out of their minds, and when they recognized their neighbors among the crowd, they begged them to have mercy on their children. Their heart-rending pleas rang out on all sides: "Spare my sons! Save my baby! Have mercy on us!" But there was no mercy, no compassion. The screams, cries, and wails went unheeded. Worse, many among those neighbors satisfied their lust upon the six- to ten-year-old children and then butchered them with swords before the eyes of their parents, as they waited to be killed themselves.†

Days after the massacre, Zabel Yesayan spoke to several women from Hamidiye who had miraculously escaped death. They told her incredible things. One of them said mournfully

"The evildoers were caught up in a frightful intoxication, roaring and howling. They attacked even stray boys, their eyes rolling in their heads, devoid of any human feeling; they were like nameless beasts. As I recall these scenes today, it is hard to believe—even for me who saw them with my own eyes—that they were real."

From another woman's account: "We had taken refuge in a house, some fifty or sixty people. The young men resisted but it was to no avail. The enemies were coming from all sides, too many to count. Eventually they began firing; they shot all three of my sons, with every step I took, I saw one of them fall. My sons' bodies were left on the ground...."

From the account of a young woman: "Our life has been a curse... We have died many times each day remembering what happened

* Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 142.

† *Arevelk*, no. 1707, May 25, 1909.

and seeing the slaughterers of our loved ones. We knew them all and they knew all of us by name; they were examining the corpses to find out who had not been killed, and waiting for them to come out... to kill them."

Another woman tearfully cried out: "They killed my son in my arms. Everyone was killed, only I and my last son were left. He was little, barely ten years old. I was soaked in blood but I didn't know if it was my own blood or my children's that covered me. When all the sounds in the house ceased, one of the criminals came toward us holding an axe red with blood to its handle.

'My last one is left, have mercy,' I said.

'Is it a girl?' he asked.

I clasped my son in my arms covering his head.

'Yes,' I said, 'it's a girl.'

He stopped for a while, hesitating and shifting his gaze from me to my child, whose hand was trembling in my palm, and back again. Suddenly he stooped, lifted the cloth, ascertained the sex, and killed my son with one blow of the axe..."

Dispirited and despondent at these stories, Yesayan wrote, "A ferocious silence followed these words, the eyes of everyone present there glittered like glass, we were blazing with fury and fever, and tears swirled on our irises."⁴

All of the farm workers who had come from other places were exterminated. Seventy of them climbed into a hayloft hoping to escape, but the enemy soon came upon them and set the shelter on fire, burning them all to ashes. Among those killed were five brothers, Aghazarians from Evrek—Mrdich, Garabed, Sarkis, Hadji, and Simon.

By evening, much of the Christian part of town no longer existed. The mob attacked the central quarter. There, the Hamidiye Armenians were the first among the Christians to take up arms during the Cilician massacres. The Armenians who had gathered in the house of Hovhannes from Marash, in the center of town, resisted their assailants. A few rifle shots were all it took for the murderers to flee, stumbling over one another in their haste. Thanks to the resistance, the Turks failed to invade the Armenian neighborhoods during the daytime, but that night, they set fire to several houses, including that of Hovhannes from Marash.

* Yesayan, *Averagroun Mech*, 218–220.

† Ibid.

On the second day, the mob was once again unable to prevail, as the Armenians had decided to die honorably and fought with amplified zeal. Seeing no other way out, the Turkish leaders sent messengers to the neighboring Muslim villages asking for help, saying, "Come to our rescue, otherwise the Christians will kill us all."

On the third day, countless murderers and looters poured into Hamidiye and attacked the Armenian houses. The Armenians fought back courageously for six full hours, but then their ammunition ran out and they were compelled to surrender. Like a pack of wolves, the mob fell upon the unarmed people with cries of joy, and slaughtered them in a devilish frenzy until not a single soul was left alive. The massacre was carried out with unspeakable cruelty, employing the vilest means. Not even the suckling infants were spared. Especially brutal were the Crimean Tartar raiders, who had settled in the adjacent villages and, in particular, the Nogay Tartars, who had migrated from Russia and settled in the village of Yarsuvat, and in whose hearts the fire of savagery had not waned at all when they moved to Cilicia. The bestial slaughterers seized little children by their feet and bashed their heads against walls and rocks, impaled them on bayonets, and threw them into the flames.

Yet seven hundred and fifty women and children managed to escape with their lives, thanks to the compassion of a French family named Sabatier. The Sabatier family had settled in Hamidiye thirty-five years earlier, bringing European culture and philanthropy to this wilderness of barbarity. Madame Sabatier had established a cotton ginney, employing dozens of poor people of various nationalities.

Upon learning that the Sabatiers had sheltered many women and children, the pack of man-eaters attacked their house and tried breaking the door down. Madame Sabatier, her husband D. Sabatier, their daughter Antoinette, and son Charles did everything in their power to turn away the armed mob as it prepared to storm the house. It was at that moment that Charles resorted to a bold move—he stood steadfastly on the porch and pointed at the French tricolor flying on the rooftop, exclaiming, "You will enter this house over my dead body!" The mob was forced to retreat.

Having done their work, the fiends walked about the accursed town bragging about their bravery. As for the Hamidiye *mufiti*, he was handing out one *ghouroush* [1/100 of a lira] to each murderer to collect the *gâvurs'* corpses and throw them into the Djihoun River. Horror spread throughout the town.

* Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 142.

When evening came, of the 3,000 Armenians of Hamidiye, only 840 were still alive, 750 of whom were the women and children sheltered in the Sabatier house. For a whole month, they stayed under that hospitable roof and in the ginnyery, living on the flour from the Sabatier's mills and their food reserves.

It was also of some comfort that a number of Armenians were able to hide in the house of a kind Turkish landlord, who kept them for almost twenty days and then committed them to the care of charity organizations.

In October 1909, Arshagouhi Teotig came to the region from Constantinople and called on the Sabatier family to express her gratitude. During their conversation, Madame Sabatier related to her numerous details of the unspeakable April crimes. "What happened is beyond imagination," the Frenchwoman said. "It was horrifying. I will never forget for one second what the Armenians went through, until the day I die."

The Armenians from the Turkish villages of Erzin sustained relatively small losses, for which they owed thanks to the village *mufiti*, Mousa Effendi, a local prominent figure, and especially a young Turkish man named Mehmed.

At 11 a.m. on April 1, the *mutasarrif* of the Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak*, Mehmed Asaf Esad Bey, received a telegram from Adana stating that a massacre of the Christians would soon begin, and therefore the Muslims should take up arms. In compliance with the instruction, he ordered the distribution of weapons among his fellow Turks.

On April 2, four Armenians from Deortiy, who were on their way to Erzin to buy cheese, were attacked on the road and killed. Sensing that the danger of the slaughter of Armenians was becoming real, the *mufiti* of Erzin and Musa Effendi gathered two hundred local Armenians and migrant laborers in the inn to spare them from the mob's attack. When they learned of this, the armed crowd, joined by several *khodjas*, launched an assault. Seeing that the situation was spinning out of control and that it would not be possible to save the Armenians from the massacre, the goodhearted Muslims managed to relocate them from the inn to the prison building, which had solid walls and thus was more secure. Though the Armenians were better protected in the prison building, there was no way to get food in from outside. Realizing that the people locked up in the prison would not be able to bear their hunger after three or four days and would be forced to come out,

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 194; Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 148.

the crowd surrounded the prison building and patiently guarded it round-the-clock to prevent anyone from breaking away.

By the fourth day, life had become unbearable for the starving people under siege. And at that moment, a twenty-year-old Turkish boy who had settled in Erzin, Mehmed from Marash, began to bring food to the prison with tireless devotion, almost by the hour, putting his own life in danger. Even more, he gave what money he had—five Ottoman gold lira that he had saved up over the two or three years that he had worked for an Armenian craftsman named Giragos—to the starving people. The Armenians of Erzin, most of whom were migrant laborers, owed their lives to this Turkish youth.

Referring to the humanity the boy had displayed, Yesayan wrote, "What a ray of light he was against the darkened conscience of the enemies; what was the source of that light that prompted the Mehmeds to rise above the mass unconsciousness of the mob and stand up on their own against its deadening, destructive power and triumph?"

The Turkish village of Saygechid, with its approximately ninety households, was located along the road from Sis to Adana. There were no Armenian families living there, but some thirty migrant Armenians worked in the village as shoemakers, blacksmiths, and saddlers. At that time, a caravan was headed from Sis to Adana with many Armenians in it, including Armenian Evangelical preachers traveling to Adana to take part in the convention of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Cilicia. On the day of the massacre, the caravan had stopped in Saygechid overnight.

On April 2 at dusk, the Turks began their preparations. They launched their attack before dawn. Two mullahs began to urge loudly from the minaret, "Fellow Turks, what are you waiting for? Crush the Armenians!" These words were followed by fierce gunfire and then a ruthless slaughter with cold weapons. The unarmed Armenian men, appalled yet having no possible course of action, could only stand by and listen to the women's mournful pleas and children's plaintive cries. After a short while, the entreaties ceased and silence fell. All of the Armenians, both the migrant workers and those who happened to be in the village, including the Evangelical clergymen, were slain. Only one Armenian man escaped, after receiving eighteen wounds, and he managed to reach Sis, bloodstained and exhausted.[†]

The bloodshed continued in other villages in the Erzin district as well. The slaughterers assaulted the village of Ekizler with its fifty Armenian

* Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 212.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 214–215.

households, and there they killed two hundred people, stole everything, raped the women and girls, and then cast lots for the prettiest among them. One hundred Armenian houses in the village of Katirlar were looted and set on fire, and some four hundred people were killed. More than half of those slain were children. Those who escaped the massacre fled in all directions. The village was razed to the ground. The village of Kôr-Gayis with its fifty households was completely destroyed by the Hamidiye Kurds. The village of Tourouchlou was burned down, and none of the Armenian residents of its twenty households escaped. Turks and Kurds attacked the Armenian-populated village of Djebil, with its 150 households; all of the villagers were killed and their houses were destroyed. The Armenian residents of the village of Ekbez took refuge in the Latin Monastery, and the mob entered the village unimpeded, plundered the houses and shops, killed more than ten people, and abducted Armenian women to convert them to Islam. Upon entering the village of Fasili, which had just fifteen Armenian families, the Turks burned all of the houses down, killed sixty out of some hundred residents, and forced fifteen people to convert to Islam. With similar savagery and cruelty, mobs destroyed other villages in the Erzin district, including Karagulnar, Keoyoghlu-Pochayi, and Karaheoyuk, putting the residents to the sword.

THE DISTRICT OF DEORTYOL (CHORK-MARZBAN)

The center of Deortyol district was the town of Deortyol (Chork-Marzban), whose Armenian residents successfully resisted the enemy.^{*} Deortyol was located in the southern part of Adana to the north of Alexandretta, not far from the Mediterranean Sea, near the historic fortress of Payas. The town was filled with orange and mulberry plantations.

Deortyol had eight hundred houses, several dozen of which belonged to Turks.[†] It was home to roughly five thousand Armenians. The villagers were mainly engaged in growing oranges and raising silkworms. This large village, with its bold and intrepid Armenian population, commanded respect among Turkish villages and supported the smaller Armenian villages in the area.[‡]

Before April 2, life in Deortyol was as peaceful and quiet as always, with no sign of danger. But on April 2, two Armenians were killed in the field of a farm called Keoprucheg, and small Armenian villages and *chifliks* (farms) in the vicinity of Deortyol were looted and destroyed.^{**} Unable to resist the

* S. Z., *Adanskiye chernye dni*, 24–26.

† Acharyan, *Tachkahayots barsi patmutiune*, 59.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 55, March 12, 1910.

** Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 204.

savage mob, the villagers fled to Deortyol, leaving everything behind and suffering many losses on the way.

When the residents of Deortyol learned of the massacres in Adana and the destruction of neighboring Armenian villages, they understood that calamity was approaching. The villagers, who had learned how to protect themselves from all sorts of violence, determined to resist to the last man.^{*}

They got to work at once, digging trenches in vulnerable places outside the village, setting up barricades, and posting sentry units, each ten-man strong, at some 170 points. To lead the self-defense, military councils were set up, consisting of middle-aged men and village *aghas*, along with several especially bold and capable young men. The clergymen did not remain idle, either; they encouraged the residents in their sermons and urged them to fight. The young women went to work in the shops, making gunpowder and loading it into cartridges. Even a few makeshift wooden cannons were constructed, tied up solidly with cords.[†]

On the morning of April 3, the Turks began to set the area around Deortyol on fire. Many of the arsonists were Turkish neighbors who had sworn the night before that they would never lift a hand against their Armenian brothers.

In the village of Nadjarli, not far from Deortyol, there were more than one hundred Armenian households and fifteen Nestorian Assyrian households.[‡] In the early morning of April 3, the village was surrounded by a large mob. Their fellow Turkish villagers tried to persuade the Armenians to surrender their weapons^{**} to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. But knowing well the value of such mediation, they categorically rejected this advice. An assault on the village followed, and the Turks met fierce resistance. The fight lasted all day. The Armenians, fearing the enemy outnumbered them, left the village under the cover of night and headed for Deortyol. The journey was tormenting. The women carried their children in baskets strapped to their backs—a few babies to each woman. Along the way, they encountered the enemy face to face. To protect their women, the men of Nadjarli engaged in battle, suffering

* *Pinzantion*, no. 3828, May 2 (15), 1909.

† Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 207–208.

‡ Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 177.

** In contrast with the overwhelming majority of Armenian settlements of Cilicia, the Deortyol Armenians possessed some weapons, thanks to the organizational skills of a prominent Hnchag activist, Mkho Shahen. See Manoug G. Djizmedjian, *Badmoustan Amerigahay Kaghakakan Gousagsoutyants, 1890–1925* [History of American-Armenian Political Parties, 1890–1925] (Fresno, 1930), 88.

considerable losses, but they finally broke through the enemy chain and arrived in Deortyol at noon on April 4. The Turks fell upon the vacated village of Nadjarli, plundered it completely, and then burned all the houses down. The village was reduced to a pile of ashes.

The residents of the Armenian-populated village of Odjakli, which lay to the northwest of Deortyol and had four hundred households, managed to reach the town with relatively minor losses. On April 2, Cretan migrants from the neighboring villages of Ghouzou-Uch and Idjadiye attacked Odjakli. Some armed group of brave men from Deortyol rushed to help and stopped the attackers. Seizing the opportunity, the men of Odjakli, taking only their weapons, women, and children, fled to Deortyol to seek refuge; fifteen villagers were killed along the way.[†]

The neighboring Armenian village of Eozerli, with two hundred households, suffered a similar fate. There, too, residents were able to go to Deortyol in time, taking their weapons with them. The Turks entered Eozerli and looted and destroyed all the houses.

Turkish and Kurdish gangs massacred most of the Armenian residents of Deyi-Keoy village, which had a mixed population, and all of the Armenians working at the nearby farm of Iskandarian Effendi (sixty-one people), and burned the buildings down. The attackers ruthlessly slaughtered sixty small traders from Hadjin, who were staying in the village for a day on their way to Adana on business. A fraction of the local Armenians (fifty-nine people) escaped the massacre, thanks to their fellow villager, a Muslim, Baytaro Ali Effendi, who sheltered them in his house and then escorted them to Deortyol.

Thus, more than eleven thousand people who had fled from the surrounding Armenian villages amassed in Deortyol. Homeless and lost, these villagers found shelter, food, and consolation among the Deortyol residents, both in the time of fighting and the following days. In gratitude for this brotherly conduct, they joined the residents and courageously fought against numerous mobs.

The attacks on Deortyol were led by the *mutasarrif* of Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak*, Mehmed Asaf Esad Bey. He had stirred up anti-Christian sentiments throughout the *sandjak* with provocative rumors and overseen the destruction of entire regions. He now turned his attention to Deortyol. Taking rifles from state arsenals, he had armed a motley collection of twenty thousand savage

* Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 177.

† *Horizon*, no. 54, March 11, 1910.

thugs, military men, *redifs* and criminals who had been freed from the prison in Payas, located across the Gulf of Alexandretta.

The forces led by Asaf Esad advanced toward the town exclaiming, "Long live Sultan Abdul Hamid!" and letting off rifle volleys and a military cannon. The valiant Armenians fortified their positions and put up fierce resistance, returning the enemy fire, and setting off their homemade wooden cannons. The Armenians from the neighboring villages sheltering in Deortyol took part in the fighting with selfless courage.

Facing stern resistance, the Turks retreated, rearranged their ranks, and repeatedly attacked, backing off each time they suffered losses. This went on for two days, until the Turks were convinced that they would not be able to enter the village through a frontal attack. At that point, they resorted to a more base tactic.

The enemy increased its pressure and succeeded in seizing the barricades set up in the eastern part of Deortyol. In this area there was a large brook, which originated in Bag-Poushi and flowed through Deortyol. At the order of a mob-leader named Indje Arab, the Turks changed the course of the brook.*

The people who were already condemned to starvation now faced a harsher fate. It would require superhuman effort to withstand an unquenchable thirst, but the Armenians had to stand this test as well. They continued to resist the enemy of many thousands. Moreover, the Armenian youths mustered all their strength and bravely counterattacked the eastern barricades, retaking the diverted segment of the brook and returning it to its natural course. For a short while, the besieged Armenians slaked their thirst, but the Turks concentrated their forces upstream and blocked the flow of water once again. The situation was gradually becoming unbearable—more than five thousand people were deprived of water. The villagers were forced to dig wells. Many risked their lives to sneak out to a segment of the brook by night and collect water in goatskins. Yesayan documented that people drank "all kinds of water, the poisonous and stinking swamps dried out, and it was said that their brackish water was 'as warm as blood.'"[†] But there was nothing they could do to alter the situation. Everywhere, people could be heard sighing, "Water... water..." The Turks guarded the blocked segment of the brook ever more fiercely, and as a result, the Armenians had no water for days. Meanwhile, attacks and counterattacks continued, favoring one side, then the other. The Armenians spared no effort to drive the enemy away from

* Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 179.

† Yesayan, *Avergeneroun Mech*, 209.

the brook, employing both traditional military methods and cunning actions. Fierce fighting raged, but the overall situation did not change, and the enemy waited for the Armenians to give way to despair and submit to its vengeance. But the Armenians refused to even consider that course. New acts of heroism were displayed, many fateful moments came and went, and Deortyol remained as unshakable as before.

Infuriated by Armenian successes, Asaf Esad Bey reinforced his ranks with fresh gangs of Turks, Kurds, and Turkish migrants from Crete and Rumelia, and he launched a decisive attack.

Gunpowder was running out, and with it, the possibility of self-defense. In addition, the Armenians had been deprived of water for nine days and were parched with thirst. The lack of water was especially devastating for the children. According to Yesayan, "Little boys were dying in terrible torment, and it was as if fire was burning in everybody's veins; they were burning with fever and their tongues were drying up in their mouths."^{*} At that fateful moment, the Armenian leaders decided to resort to the last possible measure and seek help from the foreign consuls in Djebel-i Bereket, who resided in the coastal city of Alexandretta, not far from Deortyol. The military council selected twenty brave young men who left town at night and headed for Alexandretta. Nineteen of them fell into the enemies' hands on the way and were torn to pieces. Only one of them managed to reach his destination and called on the consuls of Great Britain, France, and Italy, informing them of the situation in Deortyol, and asking for their help. The consuls, however, attached no importance to his request and the besieged Armenians were left to battle until the end.

The Deortyol military council decided to launch a decisive attack by night, in an attempt to break the blockade. To that end, bullets were molded and spears were forged in smithies to arm the women and girls so they could protect themselves. The plan for the crucial attack drawn up by the military council was as follows: everyone, to the last soul—both local residents and refugees from the surrounding villages—was to leave the village at the same time. The young and middle-aged men who had distinguished themselves by their bravery were to be in the first ranks, armed with rifles. They were to be followed by all the other men, armed with whatever they had, and then the elderly men and women, and then the girls were to follow, armed with spears and sickles. They all swore to die honorably and never to kneel before the foe.

* Ibid.

Deserters were to be regarded as base traitors worthy of bullets from their comrades. No woman or girl was to be abducted, and if she were, she would kill herself. Women were to replace the men who fell in battle and fight to their dying breath.

On April 8, the residents of Deortyol noticed that a ship, the British steamship *Diana*, was approaching the shore. For a moment, the shooting stopped on both sides. News reached Deortyol that the British had demanded that negotiators be sent to the coastal village of Chayli. The Armenian delegates went to the meeting point and were offered the chance to surrender their arms in exchange for water and peace. They turned the offer down and the ship left. The shooting resumed with more intensity.^{*}

The siege and fighting went on for days, and no one expected any outside help any longer. It was then that a Turkish man from Odjakli named Bayrakdar Zade Hassan appeared in Deortyol. He had gathered some seventy Armenians hiding here and there from the barbarians and escorted them to Deortyol, maneuvering between the barricades. Arshagouhi Teotig, who traveled to Deortyol after the massacre, addressed the following words of appreciation to him:

And to think that among these detestable packs of tigers and hyenas, a man could exist who risked his own life for the cause of the salvation of oppressed Armenians. This very magnanimous Turk rendered the Deortyol Armenians such invaluable services that even the lives of the several dozen people he saved pale in comparison. To this day the natives of Deortyol pronounce the name Bayrakdar Zade with respect and gratitude.[†]

The consuls in Alexandretta, meanwhile, had decided to seek a way to help the Armenians. After holding consultations, they appealed to the commander of the second Ottoman Army, who assigned five hundred soldiers to the task.[‡] The military unit set out, led by a British missionary named Bennett, with the approval of the French and Italian Consuls. On the evening of April 11, the military unit reached its destination and dispersed the mob.

Thus, the heroic epic of Deortyol came to an end. Peace was established, thanks to the superhuman resistance of the Armenians and the backing of the European consuls.

* Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 187–188.

† Ibid., 181.

‡ Ibid., 188.

In ten days of incessant enemy attacks, the Armenians had lost just six people, whereas in the neighboring Armenian villages, which put up no resistance, more than six hundred had been killed.* The assault and siege of Deortyol cost the Turks dearly—four hundred of them lost their lives.†

A few days after the military unit had quartered in the town, the residents were ordered to disarm, but the Armenians in Deortyol, in contrast to their docile kinsmen in many areas of Cilicia, did not surrender a single weapon.

THE DISTRICT OF BAHÇHE (BULANIK)

Terrible events occurred in the district of Bahçhe in Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak*.

The large and prosperous village of Hasanbeyli had 385 houses, 300 belonging to Armenian Apostolics, 65 to Armenian Evangelicals, and 20 to Muslims. The total number of Armenians was 2,190.‡

Before dusk on April 2, more than 10,000 Turks and Kurds from Diyarbekir, Kharpert, Ayntab, Marash, and Malatia besieged the village.™ The next day, they launched an attack. The criminals were led and encouraged by the *mufi* of Bahçhe, Ismail. The Armenians put up resistance and violent clashes followed. The enemy began firing upon the village from the southwestern side. About forty daring Armenian boys led by Bedros, the son of the village head Giragos Agha Keshishian, left the village and bravely threw themselves on the enemy, prepared to die. This took the thousands of attackers by surprise and they ran away frightened in all directions, trampling upon one another in their haste.

The Turkish and Kurdish forces were infuriated by the defeat, and they reorganized their ranks and prepared for another attack. Since the forces were unequal the Armenian villagers fled to the mountains at night. Hours later, the enemy approached the village again, and seeing that no one was there, looted the houses and set them on fire.

The Armenians who had fled did not stay in the mountains for long. On April 4, they received word that the Turks had run out of gunpowder and returned to the village. On the way, they were encircled by a large mob. The Armenian men, who had taken their weapons along when they went to the mountains, engaged in a life-and-death fight. The Turks fled, leaving behind several dead bodies, and the Hasanbeyli residents reached their village.††

* Fonds of Krikor Zohrab, no. 2175/I, 2, Museum of Literature and Arts.

† Ibid.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 66, March 25, 1910.

™ *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

†† *Horizon*, no. 54, March 11, 1910.

The next day, the enemy again drew close to the village. The Armenians were completely out of ammunition, and it made no sense to stay there. Once again, the villagers went up to the mountains.* But not everyone managed to get out. On orders from the ruthlessly anti-Armenian *mufi* of Hasanbeyli and the local commander, Kel Agha, almost all of the Armenians left in the village were killed, including the village priests Bedros Keshishian, Nerses Boghosian, and Hovhannes Keshishian. An article published in *Piuzantion* reads:

Father Nerses fell on his back, still alive after being shot, and his teeth were smashed in with a stone and then his head was crushed. They tried to abduct Father Nerses' young daughter, but the poor horror-struck girl clung to her mother, and so the remorseless monsters butchered the mother in her daughter's arms and took the girl away—now she lives in the village of Kaypak in the house of Abbasin Oghlu Ali Keheya, to whom she was forcibly married. The daughter of Hovhannes Agha from Entili was kidnapped in the same way, and now she is in Arpali Huyuk—in the house of the son of Kisadjik Ibo. These are the witnessed and known cases, but many others are not confirmed. They stuffed gunpowder into Father Hovhannes's mouth and killed him by lighting it on fire.†

The mob then pursued the escapees like wolves. And there in the mountains, the most doleful scenes unfolded. Anyone they came across was shot on the spot. *Piuzantion* quoted an unidentified eyewitness who said:

The hungry, naked, terror-stricken runaways had no idea where to go or who to turn to. Mothers searched for their children, children who had become separated from their mothers screamed, and the ruthless packs chased the poor creatures, raped, and defiled the lovely virgins and brides, and killed the men with the most obscene cruelty. The modest Armenian women implored their brothers and their husbands to take their lives, in order to prevent them from falling prey to the savage passions of the gang. Many a man fulfilled their wishes and were then brutally butchered next to the bodies of their loved ones.‡

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

† Ibid.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

Not a man was spared. The beautiful women were taken away, and the rest were killed with the men. For a whole month, the hunting of Hasanbeyli's residents continued in the mountains.

Every house was consigned to flames, and the human losses amounted to 285 people. Some three-dozen men and about two hundred widowed women who had escaped the massacre split into three groups and fled to Findijak, Deortyol, and Aintab. Several of those who were going to Findijak were massacred, and only four or five of the people who were going to Deortyol and Aintab survived—the rest were slain here and there.^{*}

When they had razed Hasanbeyli, the Turks and Kurds invaded the Armenian-populated village of Lapachi, which had 124 households, wiping it out completely. One hundred and forty-nine people were martyred, including the local priests, Father Hovhannes Keshishian and Father Ghevond Keshishian. Father Ghevond hid in a corner of the burned down church, but was discovered during a search two days later and shot on the spot. Beautiful women and girls were abducted, and the houses were looted and burned to a cinder.[†]

The Armenians were almost completely wiped out in the village of Kharni. There were 140 Armenian Apostolic, 38 Evangelical, and 18 Muslim households. The blow was unexpected—the first attacks were on the bazaar, shops, and field laborers. The village Muslims were instantly joined by mobs from outside and the massacre began. Everyone was killed at work, every house had its own loss, grief, and lamentation. The young men were killed first by the most gruesome torments. There was only one instance of resistance in the village, by the large family of Boghos Agha Poladian. The Circassians had joined the Turks in attacking the house. Enraged by the resistance, they seized the house and put the entire family to the sword. Only one twelve-year-old boy miraculously escaped.[‡]

Kharni was plundered and set on fire. In all, 186 men, 5 women, and 25 children were murdered in the village. The girls and brides were taken captives. Most of them were forcibly converted to Islam; the rest were at last set free, after being kept in the houses of Turks and Kurds for months. Those who had escaped the massacre fled to the mountains. There, the children starved to death, and the rest dispersed in various directions.

* Koudoulian, *Hay Leru*, 50–52.

† *Ibid.*, 52.

‡ *Ibid.*, 53.

The district center, the town of Bahche (Bulanik), had 128 Armenian households (824 people) and 65 Muslim households. Gangs from the neighboring Turkish and Kurdish villages amassed around the town, preparing to attack. The Turkish residents of Bahche joined them. The local *mufiti*, Ismail, and his brother led the mob. The local Armenian priest, Father Vahan, and a member of the judiciary, Boghos Agha, appealed to the *kaymakam*, asking him to do something. He reassured them that there were *redjisi* in the town who "[wou]ld not permit any unrest." The prominent Turks said soothingly, "If our ancestors were able to live in peace, why shouldn't we?" "After those trite words," teacher Krikor Koudoulian wrote, "these Armenian-eaters would come to our doors to cheer up our frightened, trembling wives, daughters, and sons."^{*}

On the morning of April 2, the Armenian *aghas* and Koudoulian met at the house of Father Vahan Der-Sdepanian to discuss what to do. There were two opinions expressed at the meeting: the experienced men thought that the only salvation lay in putting up resistance. The naive ones believed that the only way out was to seek shelter in the mosque and appeal to the authorities. The latter proposal came from the wealthy *aghas*, who thought it was necessary to plead with the officials and *bey*s to save the people from a massacre. This was like clinging to a serpent while drowning in the sea. Yet the latter proposal was adopted at the meeting. Koudoulian recollected later, "Going from one Turkish door to another, we tried in vain to soften the hardened, ruthless hearts. We made the rounds of the local administrator, the property controller, and all of the administrative officials, begging and petitioning, but it was all for nothing, to no avail, and we returned in despair. The plans for the massacre had been drawn up long before, and all that remained was to carry them out."[‡]

The Armenians had just a few weapons for self-defense. Though the local members of the Armenian national revolutionary parties had in the past made efforts to provide villagers with weapons, they had always met opposition from local leaders. The Armenians had eventually come to their senses, but too late. The unarmed people began instinctively to gather at the houses of those who had weapons of one kind or another.

The relations between the town's Armenians and Turks had broken down, and the town had come to a standstill. The entire Armenian population of

* *Pisantzian*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

† Koudoulian, *Hay Leru*, 37.

‡ *Ibid.*, 38.

Bahche had grown quiet, in the calm before the storm. Dead silence reigned as they all awaited imminent disaster. The roar of the mob could already be heard in the distance. No one could sleep that night.

Mufi Ismail led hundreds of murderers to the Armenian neighborhood of Kazerler quarter shouting, "*Mohammede salawat* [Blessed be Mohammed]!" A group of terrified Armenians turned to the German missionary nuns working in the town, but fearing the mob, the nuns shut their doors to the poor Armenians, and they all fell victim to savage fanaticism.*

In despair, Father Vahan and Boghos Agha took shelter in a mosque, but they were dragged outside and the priest was shot. A little later, seeing that he still was still breathing, the murderers "cut his head off and tossed it to each other in the streets all day long, with appalling curses. Boghos Agha was murdered in a similar way..."[†]

Having accomplished the mission, the rabble that had succumbed to fanatical bigotry continued their crimes. They were ready to carry out the *mufi*'s every order, directive, and wish. At his signal, the crowd shouted, "*Sultan chok yasha* [Long live the Sultan]!" three times and set the Armenian church and school on fire. They then went to the houses of the Armenians, who were condemned to death. The fire and the sword devoured everything. Many of the Armenians threw themselves into the flames to avoid falling into the evildoers' hands alive.

A fiend known as Paltadji[‡] Eomer took an axe and butchered and dismembered thirty wounded people lying on the ground, and then cut off their heads.**

Children who had lost their parents huddled and fainted against the walls, in horror at the terrible scene and the thunder of rifles; others ran back and forth searching for their mothers with heart-rending wails. None of them survived.^{††}

The Germans who were working on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad looked on in enjoyment at the ghastly sight of the massacre of the Armenian villagers.^{‡‡} The massacre continued into the night.

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

‡ *Paltadji* – A master of killing with an axe (*Palka* means "axe" in Turkish).

** Koudoulouian, *Hay Lere*, 43.

†† *Ibid.*, 44.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, 42–43.

On the morning of April 4, the town was a pitiful sight. Bahche had been reduced to ashes; a few charred remnants of the Armenian houses were still smoldering here and there. Turks and Kurds were collecting the bodies and throwing them into wells that belonged to Armenians.

When the massacre had begun, some of the Armenians had fled to the mountains. Starting on April 6, gangs of Turks went on manhunt to find and murder the starving, miserable people who had spent days hiding out in forests, caves, and thorny underbrush.

While the Bahche massacre was going on, the neighboring Armenian villages were going through anguish as well. The thirty-six homes in the village of Entilli, not far from Bahche, was pillaged, and twenty-six people were killed (twenty-two men and four women).

The residents of the neighboring village of Say-Bournou managed to escape before the slaughterers came close, suffering several losses on the way. The enemy looted the village and consigned all seventeen houses to flames.

The village of Geok Chayir had fifteen Armenian households (114 residents) and thirty Muslim households. The Muslims attacked their neighbors and killed fifteen of them, wounded many more, and drove off all those who had survived.

Turks and Kurds attacked the Armenian-populated village of Koyag, which had thirty households, killing forty people and abducting most of the women and girls. Those who miraculously survived fled to the mountains, where most of them either were killed by their pursuers or starved to death.

The Armenian populated village of Kizlach, which was squeezed on both sides by Aghcha Dag Mountain, had just nine houses. The residents of a neighboring Turkish village at the foot of the mountain, which had forty households, attacked Kizlach in groups, exterminating young and old, seizing their property.*

The Armenian village of Yanik-Deyirmen, with twenty-five to thirty families, was not far from Bahche. Some four or five kilometers away was the Turkish populated village of Pileylik-Kiyiklar, with two hundred households. On April 4, these Turks joined a mob of residents of the neighboring Muslim villages and attacked Yanik-Deyirmen, having blocked all the exits in advance. The entire population was put to the sword, and the village was looted and burned.[†]

* Krikor Koudoulouian, *Hay Lere*, 54.

† *Ibid.*, 55.

The Turks from the neighboring villages of Tabaklar, Koushchou, Chotlou, Pirichikli, Eybeyli, Kirmitli, Alibozlou, Youzkoumlou, Gharkhin, Gharachaghi, Aghcha-Koyoun, and others attacked the villages of Koyag and Geok Chayir, and a few other small villages located not far from Kharni, slaughtering the Armenians there. The girls, pretty women, and brides were kidnapped. A very few people managed to escape and take shelter in Findjak.^{*}

The small village of Sarilar, with ten houses, was located half-an-hour's walking distance from Bahche, and was right next to the Turkish village of Savranli. Throughout the Cilician calamity, Sarilar was the only place where the Turks from the next village had the courage to take their Armenian neighbors, who, as a minority, had no means to defend themselves, under their protection. It is unimportant what the motive was for the Savranli Turks' act of kindness—whether they were guided by compassion or the consideration of possible danger and future consequences. What is important is that human lives were saved.[†]

Some of the residents of the village of Koushchou (twenty-three houses) in the Bahche district were able to flee and take refuge in Deortyol; the rest were massacred, and the village ceased to exist.

THE DISTRICT OF ISLAHIYE

In the district of Islahiye, in the Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak*, catastrophe befell five villages and ten farms. In the village of Kishnaz, which had thirty-nine households (265 residents), forty people were killed, all of the houses were looted, and twenty-eight of them were burned down. The nearby village of Kesne, with 108 houses, was leveled to the ground. Forty-seven men and four women were killed.

The Armenian residents of the central village of the district, Islahiye, had fled to the mountains in time and survived. There were many farms around the village with several houses each. Among these were the Kurd-Bakhchisi, Kiunelner, Abidin-Pasha, and Kurfali farms, which had sixty-one households all together. There was no resistance when the mob attacked. Fifty men and two women were killed. All of the buildings were looted and set on fire. The Dagh Oghlu Mehmed and Bostan-Aga farms, with twelve houses, suffered the same fate—four men were killed and the farms were destroyed.

* Ibid., 56.

† Ibid., 55.

In contrast to the villages of Kishnaz and Kesne, the villages of Hadj-Chavoush and Kizlaran in the Islahiye district, which consisted of fifty houses each, resisted the mob heroically. The bold, daring strikes by the Armenians of these villages made a strong impression on the local Kurds, who later recalled these deeds with admiration.

There were seventy houses with some four hundred laborers in the Koumarlou, Balyan Effendi, and Sari-Maz farms, located near those villages. Turks and Kurds attacked those farms, committing heartrending crimes; they hanged the laborers from trees, shot them down, burned them alive, and even boiled them in cauldrons. One hundred-and-fifty people escaped and the rest were murdered. In the six neighboring farms of Tavit Effendi, sixty local and seventy migrant laborers were killed and the farms were set on fire.

All of the other small Armenian settlements in the Bahche and Islahiye districts, including Kourtlar, Kaypakk, Keller, Kiurd-Dalaghin and others, were destroyed with similar savagery and barbarity. Some residents were massacred, others managed to flee, and about one thousand three hundred houses were burned to the ground.

THE SANDJAK OF KOZAN.

THE DISTRICT OF KOZAN

The main settlement of this district (and of the *sandjak* as well) was Sis, which was home to the seat of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia and the monastery of St. Sophia.

Under Roman domination, Sis had been an important outpost of the empire, as the ruins of a massive fortress attest. Later, the city lost its former importance, and became one of Cilicia's secondary cities.

In Sis, too, Armenians lived through bloody days. On the eve of the massacre, Sis had 3,700 inhabitants, including 700 Muslims.^{*} The residents were mainly farmers, gardeners, small traders, and craftsmen. There were a number of day laborers as well.

The news of the Adana events stirred up the eight thousand residents of the adjoining Muslim villages,[†] who hoped to eradicate the Armenian presence in their environment.

The Turkish attack on the Armenians of Sis went on for days. The most massive attack—from the south, west, and north—took place on April 6. In the face of stout resistance by Armenians, the gangs retreated. During a

* *Horizon*, no. 72, April 1, 1910.

† Acharyan, *Tachkahayon harts'i parmutsiune*, 59.

renewed attack on the following day, the young Armenian men resorted to hand-to-hand combat, and the enemy, unable to match them, ran away again.*

After suffering defeat at the hands of the defenders of Sis, the Turkish mobs attacked nearby Armenian villages, large and small, looting and setting fire to them, and burned many farms to the ground. The following villages and farms were among those destroyed: Tlan (fifteen houses), Udjafik-Eora (forty houses), Tekirdje (seventeen houses), Sali Punar (ten houses), Aghdam (thirty houses), Yavr Effendi (five houses), Upper Chokakli (forty houses), Lower Chokakli (sixty houses), and Alapounar (sixty-five houses).†

As the enemy attacks were being repelled, feverish activity was underway to avert starvation. Feeding the thousands of refugees who had crowded into the city and had not had a bite of food for days was the most pressing task. The women played a tremendous role in accomplishing this end—they worked day and night with selfless devotion, preparing food and distributing it among the starving people. They were also entrusted with taking care of the wounded.

In those fateful days, the Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahag II (Khabayan), who was in the city, played a major role in the defense of Sis. He opened the monastery's storehouse and allocated the entire reserve of grain and other foodstuffs to the famine-stricken people and the city's protectors. He went to the frontline of the fighting, inspiring the defenders with words of encouragement and advice, and they, in turn, took a vow to fight to the last breath.

In these days of self-defense, extraordinary courage was displayed by a *vartabel*‡ from the See of Cilicia, the Right Reverend Father Ghevond Toursarkisian. The young clergyman was always on the frontline of the fighting, and it was hard to distinguish him from any of the other combatants. He was bedridden from his injuries for a long time and died at the Holy Saviour National Hospital of Constantinople in July 1910.

The Armenian population of Sis emerged from its defense with relatively minor losses. One reason was that the Muslims were much fewer in number than the city's Armenians and were afraid to make any ill-considered moves. Moreover, when the massacres in the environs of Sis had just begun, the city's

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Vartabel*: a highly-educated archimandrite in the Armenian Apostolic Church tradition who holds a Doctorate in Theology.

prominent Turks joined in signing a petition addressed to the governor that had been drafted by the city's Armenians. The petition demanded that all the necessary measures be taken to protect their lives and property and, as the only way to achieve that end, they asked the province administration to arm everyone without national distinction, so that they could defend themselves from the numerous *bashi-bazouks*, along with the small military unit stationed in the city. It is no coincidence that when the mob surrounded Sis, the military unit defended one section of the military position and the Turkish and Armenian citizens the other.*

What took place in Sis and its environs was unique in the whole of Cilicia and, perhaps all of Turkey as well. The Armenians sustained the following losses: 200 people were killed in Sis, 28 of them local residents and the rest migrant workers and refugees from the villages, while in the surrounding area, some 700 people were murdered.†

The Catholicosate of Sis suffered great material losses. The main source of income for the monastery had been Tilan farm, where the plunderers put the farm-workers to the sword, made off with the mules, and burned all the buildings down. No longer able to maintain the monastery's Zharankavorats School, Catholicos Sahag II closed it and sent the students home.‡

The village of Roumlou in the Kozan district had a mixed population (seventy Armenian households and thirty Muslim) and was situated near the mouth of the Sihoun River to the north of Hadjin. In the course of events in Hadjin, the village *mudir* left Roumlou. The next day, on April 5, the local Muslims, joined by Turks from outside the village, launched an attack on Armenian houses. The Armenians put up no resistance. During the massacre, the army did not stand idly by, and *redifs* armed with state weapons led the mob looting throughout the slaughter. Twenty-five villagers lost their lives and the rest fled to Hadjin. The Armenian houses were looted and burned down.

The village of Khasdikhan in the same district, which had twenty-eight households, suffered a similar fate, the only difference being that all the Armenians managed to flee and take shelter in a neighboring Circassian village. The Circassians accommodated and fed them for several days before handing them over to the authorities. Khasdikhan was utterly destroyed.

* *Horizon*, no. 54, March 11, 1910.

† *Horizon*, no. 72, April 1, 1910.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

THE DISTRICT OF HADJIN

The most populous Armenian settlement in the Hadjin *sandjak* was its administrative center, the city of Hadjin (formerly known as Harka).

Hadjin existed from the days of the Rupenid Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and was located some one hundred kilometers north of Adana. On the eve of the massacre, it had five thousand houses, of which only sixty were owned by Muslims.⁵ The Armenians belonged to the Apostolic, Evangelical, and Catholic churches. Most of the Armenians of Hadjin were craftsmen and their reputation extended beyond the borders of Cilicia.⁶

Though the city was surrounded by vineyards and thick forests, Hadjin residents were compelled to seek work in various areas of Adana and Aleppo provinces, since neither forestry nor crafts could provide a living for all. A number of Circassian villages had been founded on the fertile lands seized from the Hadjin Armenians between the 1870s and 1890s, and three-quarters of the adult male population of Hadjin had been forced to go elsewhere and engage in craftsmanship or physical labor.

By April 4, Hadjin was already encircled by thousands of *bashi-bazouks*. In the preceding days, the city's Muslims had left their houses and taken shelter in neighboring Turkish villages. The leader of Hadjin, the Right Reverend Father Nerses Tanielian, gave the order that no harm should be done to Muslims or their property. In spite of this, false rumors were being spread among Muslims outside the city that Hadjin Armenians had set fire to the city mosque, town hall, and Turkish quarter, slain the male population, and stripped the women and girls and led them through the streets, mocking and jeering.

It was clear that hard days lay ahead for Armenians. The danger was growing day by day. Other than hunting rifles, the Armenians had no weapons. Hadjin had always been a site of religious intolerance and internal strife between the Apostolic Armenians and members of other denominations. Nevertheless, the Hadjin Armenians set aside their internal differences and fought together as one.

The April 5 attack was repelled. On April 7, the alarm was raised again, and the Armenian religious leader sent a letter to the *sandjak binbashi* (military commander), asking him to come and defend the city, but the *binbashi* arrested the messengers for daring to ask for such a thing. The Armenians began to prepare for another battle.⁷

⁵ *Aranat*, no. 5-6, May-June, 1909, 527.

⁶ Terzian, *Gilgig Aghoda*, 232.

⁷ *Horizon*, no. 55, March 12, 1910.

The Turks who had left Hadjin, together with thousands of Muslims from the numerous neighboring villages who had joined them, launched an attack. A hail of bullets fell upon the Armenian defenders from all sides.

At the same time, the religious leader took under his paternal protection the sixty houses of the Turks who had stayed in Hadjin, fearing that in a moment of anger the Armenians might disregard their neighborly duty and kill them.

In the midst of this siege, extraordinary humanity was displayed by a selfless American missionary, Miss Rose Lambert, who sent a strongly worded telegram to the British Consul in Mersin demanding that urgent measures be taken to save the Armenians.⁸

The Armenians' heroic self-defense continued until April 13. On April 15, an Ottoman military unit, under Lutfi Bey's command, reached the foot of St. Sarkis Mountain above Hadjin. Thanks to twelve days of courageous fighting against several thousand armed Turks, the Armenians of Hadjin avoided slaughter.

However, Hadjin Armenians were among those who suffered the greatest losses throughout the Cilician massacres. Some one thousand six hundred natives of Hadjin employed as farm workers in various parts of Cilicia were killed in the massacres that took place in different places.⁹

On April 3, the small Armenian village of Shar, near Hadjin, was subjected to an attack by the residents of neighboring Turkish- and Kurdish-populated villages. The Armenians, whose arsenal consisted of eight or ten hunting rifles and four or five pistols, were determined to resist. The villagers took up axes, poleaxes, pipes, and sticks, ready to fight to the end. Quite unexpectedly, the situation changed, and the neighboring Circassian village came to the aid of the Armenians. Several dozen villagers, led by the Circassian Aslan Bey, came to the rescue of Shar. The Circassians forced the mob to lift the siege, threatening to focus their fire on them.¹⁰

About one thousand Armenians were living in the Turkish-populated town of Kars-Bazar to the east of Sis, most of whom were from Hadjin or

⁸ Not only did Rose Lambert render unforgettable services to the Armenians, but she also took the utmost tender care of numerous Armenian orphans—boys and girls—for years. Upon returning to America, she published a booklet called Hadjin, and the Armenian Massacres (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1911) with a brief description of the massacres in Cilicia and, in particular, the siege and self-defense of Hadjin.

⁹ Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mechb*, 150-151.

¹⁰ Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 146-147.

Marash. Since the climate was not good, they only stayed there during the winter; from mid-spring to mid-fall they returned to their villages.

Kars-Bazar was one of the settlements where the Armenians did not give themselves up to the mob in creeping terror, but bravely stood up to the enemy in defense of their lives and honor. Though they were few in number and their weapons and ammunition were scarce, the defenders at Kars-Bazar worked one of those miracles that can be recorded with pride in the pages of the painful history of the black days of the Cilician massacre.

In the early morning of April 2, an Armenian called Djin^{*} Toros came to Kars Bazar, bringing news that some two thousand Turks armed with Martin rifles would soon attack the town.

Djin Toros was a policeman. Seeing that his Turkish fellow policemen were getting ready to invade Kars Bazar, he ran to the town, arriving out of breath. He stayed in Kars Bazar for the entire course of the events. He assumed the overall command of the self-defense and skillfully organized the resistance. He got all the Armenians onto their feet and concentrated about two hundred people near the school building and other stone structures. Sick people and children, along with six hundred Armenian families that had fled the nearby villages, were accommodated in those buildings. Djin Toros instructed the Armenian merchants to bring food from their stocks and exercised strict supervision to ensure the economical use of bread and other foodstuffs. On top of that, he displayed unshakeable personal courage. "Everyone was moved to tears by gratitude," Yesayan wrote. "The inconspicuous policeman of yesterday, an Armenian that had been Turkified, perhaps, in body and soul, had all of a sudden awoken to their national pain and become their providence."⁷

The Turks attacked and the self-defense began. Four thousand Armenians had only twenty-six Martini and a few hunting rifles between them. They also had four tin boxes of gunpowder, which played a significant role in the fighting—the defenders put lead and gunpowder into spent cartridges and fired them again, making it possible to resist longer.

The very first attack by the mob was met with the stubborn resistance of every man able to hold a gun. The enemy was repelled with tangible losses. A second enemy attack failed as well.

* Djin – Literally genie in Turkish; in a figurative sense, exceptionally brave, fearless.
† Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 160–161.

A main reason for the fortunate course of events for the Armenians was the fact that the Turks of Kars Bazaar did not join their kinsman from outside the town in the attack. This was another exceptional, almost unique episode in those tragic days in Cilicia.

On the following day, April 3, after the morning prayer, Turks crying "Mohammede salavat [Mohammad be praised]!" burst into the Armenian quarter, looted all the houses and shops, and set fire to sixty houses and one-hundred huts. After that, they attacked the people. Djin Toros had ordered the men to wait before returning enemy fire until the crowd had huddled together near the buildings where the Armenians were holed up. The enemy tried several times to set these buildings on fire, but the Armenian snipers did not permit them to approach. The mob eventually lost patience and attacked the fortified buildings en masse. The Armenians met them with a hail of bullets. The enemy retreated, cursing Djin Toros, who had foiled their wicked plans.

After this victory, the Armenians stayed locked up in the fortified buildings until a unit consisting of forty or fifty soldiers under the command of an officer named Husni came from Sis. The local Turkish leaders Mousa Aga and Veli Effendi joined the military unit, and by the end of the day, they had dispersed the mob. Under military protection, the besieged Armenians left the buildings, and all Armenians from nearby villages that had taken refuge in Kars-Bazar returned home.

But their joy did not last long, since it was soon discovered that dozens of Armenians who had remained outside had been killed. "Scarcely had our hearts throbbled with the delight of victory when agonized cries and howls rang out," a defender recalled of the Armenian women's anguish. "Mothers who had lost their children rent their hair and resented us for not letting them die during the night, so that they would not have to open their eyes upon this black world."⁸

The Armenians of Kars-Bazar escaped the massacre, thanks to the personal courage and skillful leadership of Djin Toros and the fearlessness of the self-defense fighters.

The Armenian village of Shar-Deresi, with 130 houses (74 of which belonged to the Evangelical Armenians), was surrounded by Turks on April 7. The residents resisted stubbornly. Thirty-four people were killed and seventy-seven houses and almost all of the shops were burned down. The Armenian Apostolic church was destroyed. The village of Yerepakhan had a mixed

* Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 158–159.

population, with 130 Armenian houses (including 49 houses belonging to Evangelicals). They managed to stop the mob's attack through negotiations, though fourteen people were killed on the village's outskirts.

Kale-Deresi was one of the poorest villages of the Kars district. It was saved with the help of Turks from the neighboring village of Yerepakhan, who blocked the mob's path.

THE DISTRICT OF FEKE

The Feke district center, the village of Feke (Vahka), was located next to the fortress by the same name, which dated back to the time of the Rupenids. The village had 203 houses, of which 178 belonged to Armenians. The mob failed to enter the village because the local *kaymakam* blocked their way, but they managed to kill ten people outside the village.

Kutakli came to a horrible end. The Turks burst into the village and slaughtered all the residents—not a single person escaped.

The Armenians of the village of Miurfet, which was located thirty-five kilometers from Kars and had thirty-two households, were forced to resist a mob four or five thousand strong. Fortunately, the Miurfet Turks remained neutral and did not stab them in the back. Moreover, Mahmud Khoja, the son of fellow villager Hussein Effendi, saved the village from complete destruction. Along with his men, he protected the Armenians and drove the slaughterers out of the village.⁴

* Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 175-176.

MASSACRES IN THE VILAYET OF ALEPPO

Although the Cilician calamity is known as the Adana massacre, Armenians from many cities and villages of Aleppo vilayet fell victim to it as well, sustaining great losses of life and property. As has been mentioned, the Aleppo vilayet, which comprised parts of Cilicia, had three *sandjaks*—Aleppo, Ourfa, and Marash.

THE SANDJAK OF MARASH

The *sandjak's* center, the city of Marash was also the name of the district center. It is thought to have been the ancient city of Kermanig. At the time of the calamity, the city had a population of 50,000-55,000. Approximately twenty thousand were Armenian, most of whom belonged to the Apostolic church.

When they heard the news of the Adana massacres, Turkish officials in Marash did not hesitate to let the Armenians and other Christians know that an order to massacre them had already been issued, and the only remaining question was how the *gavurs* were going to die.⁵

On April 5, the Armenians of Marash learned that the city's Muslims had finished their preparations and would attack the city's Christian neighborhoods in a few hours. Terror-stricken by the news, they locked themselves up in their houses.

The Turkish tinkers and other craftsmen working in the workshops of the Charshi Bashi and Seray-Alti Bazaars attacked Armenians as they fled in panic, killing nine people and wounding another nineteen, some of whom died later on.

Fortunately, it was possible to prevent further unrest. A prominent Turk from Marash, Bayazid Zade Kadri, went to the town hall and demanded that strict measures be taken to restore order. In addition, rumors had spread that brave Zeytoun Armenians had decided to attack the city should the Turks and Kurds attempt to massacre the Marash Armenians. These two factors had a mitigating influence, and the mob was restrained, though it did manage to kill eighteen Armenians in various parts of the city.

At the same time that the alarming events were unfolding in the city, there were disturbances throughout the district as well.

* Terzian, *Gilgjo Aghedu*, 276.

In the district of Marash, the first victims were Christians who were traveling from Marash to Adana in a caravan. As the caravan was passing through the Bahche district, which neighbored Marash, the surrounding Turks launched an attack. Some of the travelers were killed and the rest fled, reaching Marash on April 3.

Meanwhile, Turks and Kurds had already begun to attack the Armenian-populated villages of Marash. The first villages to suffer were Sarilar and Geok-Cheyiz. In Sarilar, all the men older than fifteen were put to the sword, and the women and children were distributed among the Kurds. In Geok-Cheyiz, all the men were killed.

The Turks spilled a great deal of blood in the village of Eloglu Chakalli. First, they murdered thirty-four Armenian merchants from Kharpert who had stayed in the village overnight on their way to Adana, and then they put to the sword more than two hundred migrant laborers from various regions who were working there.

An armed mob from the same village, including a fair number of women, attacked the adjacent Armenian-populated villages of Keshifli, Chakiroghlu, Findijak, and Derekeoy.

In the course of the attack on Keshifli, the Turks killed seven people and wounded many others. The Armenians crowded into the church and began preparations for self-defense, but fortunately, the slaughterers dispersed and the people who had taken shelter escaped disaster, though seventy houses were looted and set on fire.

Findijak, the largest Armenian village in the Marash district, was located twenty-two kilometers from the city of Marash and had 400 households with 2,500 inhabitants. On the morning of April 4, the mob still had not dared to enter the village, but on April 5, they launched an attack. The villagers took up their positions and repelled several attacks by the mob. Findijak sustained no losses and the enemy moved on to encircle the village of Chakiroghlu, leaving a number of corpses behind. Victorious yet doomed to starvation and misery, the Findijak Armenians, after establishing relative peace, poured into Marash to drag out their existence.

Turks and Kurds attacked the village of Chakiroghlu, which had just thirty-two houses, and killed several people, while the rest managed to leave the village and take refuge in Findijak. The gang looted all the houses and burned them down.¹

* *Horizon*, no. 72, April 1, 1910.

† Terzian, *Gilgig Aghedu*, 262-264.

Brave and proud Zeytoun (Oulnia), along with its twelve Armenian populated villages, was left completely untouched by the massacre. No blood was shed there and no need to resort to self-defense arose. The renown of the Zeytoun Armenians was enough to instill terror into the hearts of the thieving rabble.

Zeytoun was one of the four *kazas* of the Marash *sandjak* in the vilayet of Aleppo. The towns of Zeytoun and Marash, as two important Armenian-populated centers, were closely associated with each other, through both neighborly relations and political processes. It is thought that the name "Zeytoun" derives from the Arabic word for olive or olive tree, which had been absorbed into the Turkish language, since in this part of Cilicia there were vast areas covered by olive trees.

After the Kingdom of the Rupenids had collapsed and Cilicia had finally fallen under Turkish domination, freedom-loving Armenians who could not accept the situation left their places of residence and took refuge in the towering, pristine natural fortifications closely attached to the slopes of the Taurus Mountains. This fragment of society, left from the times of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, remained self-governing and free, with its own laws and customs, for hundreds of years.

The Armenians of Zeytoun were a patriarchal people, honest and stalwart, with a simple way of life; they lived in unity, were thankful for small mercies, and earned their bread by the sweat of their brow, working as gardeners, muleteers, shoemakers, saddlers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and gunsmiths.* The spirit of fighting and rebellion had made Zeytoun Armenians superb gunpowder-makers—the powder they made competed with even the purest English gunpowder.†

The Armenians of the town and the district of Zeytoun, with insignificant exceptions, belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church.‡ The houses of Zeytoun were built one on top of the other on the hills and hemmed in by natural fortifications, rising above the terrain like an amphitheatre.

The town was divided into four wards—Shovroian (Bozbayir) in the east, Yaghubian (Kargilar) in the south, Yeni Dunya (Upper) in the north, and Sourenian (Central) in the middle of the three others. The wards were ruled

* Mamigon Varzhabedian, *Houshik Zeytouni* [Memories of Zeytoun] (Marzouan, 1912), 13.

† *Arev* (Cairo), March 13, 1936.

‡ Kaloustian, *Marash gam Kermanig yev Heros Zeytoun*, 96.

and administered by four *ishkhans* (princes), who succeeded each other by virtue of heredity.*

The wards had borders and were completely independent of one another. The residents of each quarter and the outlying villages under its control greatly venerated their own prince, and the princes of other quarters had no power over them.†

Scuffles frequently broke out among the quarters, but they always came to an end in the face of an outside threat. In such cases, they all came together, set their vindictiveness and antagonism aside, and concentrated their efforts to adequately and promptly rebuff the menace.‡

Zeytoun had four beautiful churches, one in each quarter. Each church had one coeducational preschool, and there were also central schools for boys and girls.**

Among the most vivid characteristics of the Zeytoun Armenians were their bravery, honesty, innate sense of dignity, and their readiness to help one another. The Ottoman armies tried to subjugate the Zeytoun Armenians many times, but each time they were hurled back.

From the beginning of the 19th century, however, the situation had changed. The Turkish government could no longer tolerate the independent existence of a small Armenian community and decided to "remedy the situation" through military intervention. The highlanders were subjected to attacks that became more and more frequent, eventually developing into incessant fighting.

The Turkish army, having achieved no tangible results, laid lasting siege to Zeytoun. As a result, the highlanders faced the threat of starvation and were forced to accept a new condition set by the government—they were to pay taxes of 60,000 *guruş* (Ottoman silver coins) a year. As a consequence, Zeytoun became an Ottoman *kaza* with its own *kaymakam*. While no longer free of taxation, Zeytoun Armenians were now entitled to the same rights as the neighboring Muslims. At the same time, the highlanders maintained the right to freely carry weapons granted them by the Sultans.

Over time, however, Zeytoun Armenians again refused to pay taxes and the government launched new attacks in an attempt to subdue their rebellious spirit. But each time the army met with failure and retreated.

* Allahverdian, *Oulnia gam Zeytoun*, 57.

† Varzhbedian, *Hushig Zeytouni*, 11.

‡ Ibid.

** Ibid.

The most ferocious attacks by the Turkish army were undertaken in 1850 and 1862. That was when the first attempts took place to drive Zeytoun Armenians out of the district and settle it with Muslims, thereby altering the demographic composition of the region. This aroused stubborn resistance on the part of Zeytoun Armenians. The highlanders revolted in 1862 and heavy fighting ensued, during which they accomplished many heroic feats and eventually drove off the Turkish army.

The final conquest of Zeytoun was launched in the late 1870s. In order to achieve its goal, the government built a large garrison right in the center of the district, to permanently accommodate 800 military personnel. The offer to build the garrison came from a Turkophile Armenian, Nurian Effendi. The Zeytoun Armenians, constrained by a large military unit, were compelled to accept the new situation, though the spark of freedom never died out in their hearts. They continued to bear arms and fulfill their traditional role as protectors of the surrounding Armenian settlements.

Accordingly, when the governor of Marash, Veysi Pasha, initiated a cruel campaign of oppression against the neighboring Armenian villages in 1885–1886, Zeytoun Armenians rushed to help their kinsmen, battling and ultimately defeating the military units. After that, Veysi Pasha was forced, at least temporarily, to abandon his anti-Armenian designs.

Zeytoun went through difficult times in the early 1890s, when the Armenian question had once again surfaced, and the Turkish government was trying hard to silence the voices of concern coming from Europe. Among other measures to suppress Armenian protests, Sultan Hamid set in motion a plan to crush Zeytoun once and for all. On his instructions, a large military unit led by Salih Pasha moved toward Zeytoun. The army set up camp near the highlanders and harassed them continuously. The aim was transparent—to wear the Armenians' patience thin through provocations and induce them to act against the military unit. Eventually, this is what happened; the Zeytoun Armenians lost patience and took the field against the army, which was disheartened after a short skirmish and left the garrison. On orders from the Pasha, the military unit attacked the adjacent villages, destroying them and killing hundreds of villagers. After redeploying personnel and receiving reinforcements, the Turkish army approached the town again. Not daring to attack, they laid a lasting siege to the town, and eventually the residents, under threat of starvation, agreed to the redeployment of the army in the town garrison. Thus, Zeytoun avoided destruction.

During the Armenian massacres of 1895–1896, Zeytoun, too, had come under great danger, when 30,000 troops under the command of Edhem Pasha moved toward it. Fierce fighting ensued and the Turks suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of the highland Armenians. Edhem Pasha was compelled to sign an armistice mediated by the European consuls, and he and his troops ingloriously withdrew from Aleppo vilayet.^{*} After this battle, the residents of the small Turkish-populated villages in the environs of Zeytoun left their homes out of fear and moved to larger Turkish villages for safety.

As for the leaders of the heroic highlanders, faithful to the traditions of their forefathers and self-assured, they sent letters and telegrams to various Turkish officials, warning them not to dare touch the Armenians in the neighboring villages and threatening to descend from the mountains and retaliate bitterly against the oppressors.

According to one source, there were 1,600 households in the town of Zeytoun with 12,000 Armenians.[†] Other sources quote more or less the same number.[‡] The district as a whole consisted of thirty-two Armenian and Turkish villages and farms, and had a population of 21,500 people, 18,500 of whom were Armenian.^{**}

When the first news of the April 1909 massacre in Adana reached Zeytoun, it caused the highlanders deep pain and anger. At the same time, it was clear that the massacres would not be confined to the center of Cilicia, but would spread to other regions as well.

Zeytoun began to prepare for battle. The positions around the towns were fortified. Twenty-four-hour sentry duties were organized on the roads leading to Zeytoun. One memoir reads, "The Zeytoun Armenians are in turmoil; we've spent a whole week with our clothes and shoes on, with fur cloaks thrown over our laps, waiting in the streets and on the roads on the outskirts of Zeytoun."^{††}

* During the 19th century alone, the Zeytoun Armenians rose in rebellion against the Turkish tyranny four times—in 1819, 1861–1862, 1872, and 1895–1896. Each of these uprisings was followed by persistent fighting against the Ottoman troops.

† Krikor Kalousdian, *Marash gam Kermanig yev Heros Zeytoun*, 96.

‡ Zeytounsi, *Zeytouni Antsyalen yev Nergayen* [From Past and Present of Zeytoun] (Vienna, 1900), 22.

** Varzhbedian, *Hushig Zeytouni*, 12–13.

†† Misak Siserian, *Badmoutian Zeytouni (1409–1921)* [History of Zeytoun (1409–1921)] (Beirut, 1996), 295.

Unable to come to the aid of Adana, the Zeytoun Armenians directed all their efforts toward protecting the surrounding Armenian settlements. They could not give shelter to their fellow Armenians, since they did not have sufficient food.^{*} Instead, the leaders of Zeytoun instructed the Armenians from all the adjacent villages not to leave their houses, and promised to come to their rescue at once in the event of danger.

In order to prevent possible massacres in the surrounding area, the Zeytoun leaders appealed to the *kaymakam*, asking him to take necessary measures to preclude any disturbances. But instead of carrying out his official duties, the *kaymakam* abandoned his post in fear of Armenians and took shelter in the military garrison. They demanded that he come out of the garrison and attend to his duties, but the *kaymakam* surreptitiously fled to Marash that night and proclaimed that Zeytoun Armenians had tried to kill him and he had narrowly escaped.

Disappointed in the *kaymakam*, Zeytoun Armenians entered direct negotiations with local officials throughout the area, asking them to maintain the previous, more or less bearable relations and prevent them from deteriorating, threatening to otherwise punish those responsible.

These officials, and the Turks in general, knowing quite well what those threats meant, attempted to reassure Zeytoun Armenians. In many places, the Muslims asked local Armenians to communicate with Zeytoun Armenians, to tell them not to worry and assure them that all was calm and there was no danger. The governor of Marash, in particular, spared no effort to deceive and placate Zeytoun Armenians. "The people of Marash are calm and nothing has happened here," he told them. But they could not reconcile themselves to the fate of their kindred who were being slain, and searched for a way to save at least the Marash Armenians.

The Vicar General of the Catholicosate of Sis, Supreme Vartabed Vagharshag Arshagouni, the nobleman, *aghas*, and schoolteachers held a meeting in Zeytoun and decided to present an ultimatum to the governor of Marash. After the meeting, they sent strongly worded telegrams of warning to Marash. The reply came at once—at the governor's request, a telegram came signed by the Vicar General of the Marash Diocese, Reverend Father Sahag Der-Bedrosian, Aharon Shirechian, Hagop Agha Khlakian, Nazaret and Armenag Bilezigchian, Gosdan Effendi Vartabedian, Hazarabetian, Chorbadjian, and other prominent Armenians and Turks stating that

* *Surhandak* (Tiflis), no. 40, December 9, 1909.

everything was fine in Marash.⁶ "In the name of Jesus, the Zeytoun Armenians should not move," the telegram read.⁷ Though Zeytoun did not move toward Marash, its mere existence saved the city's Armenians from the massacre.

The appearance of prominent people from Zeytoun in Marash and the outlying villages was of great significance in the Armenians' salvation there. Among the noblemen, *aghbas*, and members of the Political Assembly of Zeytoun, Nazaret Effendi Yenidounian, Khachig Effendi Yaghoupian, Baba Agha Pasilosian, Sarkis and Garabed Effendi Baldjian, Astvazdadour Agha Antreasian, Hovannes Effendi Aharonian, Hagop Effendi Tashdjian, and others spared neither sacrifice nor devotion.⁸

At that crucial moment, the Armenians—not only from nearby, but from distant areas as well—associated salvation, if only in their minds, with help from Zeytoun. It may definitely be said that the Armenians of all Cilicia pinned their hopes upon Zeytoun. In the "Song of Adana," the exhausted Cilician Armenians asked, "Why does not the rock-solid Zeytoun make a move?" But in what direction were the Zeytoun Armenians to move? How were they to rescue their kinsmen located at a distance of hundreds of kilometers to the east, west, north, and south?

Naturally, the Zeytoun Armenians wished to go everywhere and help their kinsmen, no matter the consequences. But together, the local leaders and the Reverend Father Vagharshag Arshagouni were able to restrain them and calm them down. The mere name of Zeytoun saved the neighboring Armenian villages of Firouz (Fornos, formerly Khzhod) and Teonkale, where no incidents occurred.

The district of Anderun (Enderun), which lay near Marash and Zeytoun and was populated by Armenians and Circassians, surrounded by Muslim settlements, sustained few losses, thanks to the warnings from Zeytoun. The villages of Anderun, Echemli, Shivilki, Chakourghach, and Deyirmen-Dere were looted but did not suffer significant human losses.⁹ In contrast, twenty lives were lost in the village of Anidjik (with thirty-five houses) and four in the village of Artadli (with forty houses).

Losses in the villages of Bntouz (Panduz), with seventy houses, and Gaban, with two-hundred-and-fifty houses, in the Anderun district were

* Siserian, *Badmoutiun Zeytouni*, 294.

† Koudoulian, *Hay Leru*, 64.

‡ Ibid.

** Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 265.

greater. In Bntouz, thirty-five people were killed and in Gaban, sixty were killed (most of them were murdered outside the villages). Both villages were looted.¹⁰

Not far from Zeytoun lay the Geoksun (Gogison) district, with seven villages. The largest village of the district, Geoksun, had 350 houses, 107 of which belonged to Armenians.¹¹ On April 4, the residents of the district's other villages fled to Zeytoun and their houses were looted. The Armenians of the villages of Deyirmen-Dere, Kilidj (Kirich Pounar), and Chams-Neyouk sustained losses during the flight. The residents of Geoksun stayed in their village, hoping that the military unit stationed there would prevent an attack.

But on April 5, a mob from the adjacent villages launched an attack on Geoksun. The Armenians appealed to the administration of the Marash *sandjak* for help, but no assistance was provided. Learning the news, the Zeytoun Armenians appealed to the *kaymakam* of Geoksun (since their own *kaymakam* was on the run), demanding that the mob be stopped. The *kaymakam*, appreciating the value of a warning from the Zeytoun Armenians, consulted with the military officer in charge of the district, and they decided to stop the attackers and post sentries on the roads leading to the village. The *kaymakam*, fearing, nevertheless, that the mob might find a way into the village at night, lodged the Armenian women and children in Muslim homes, ordering their hosts to take care of them. The Armenian men stayed in their own houses to defend them. The mob was unable to prevail and left the village.

The Zeytoun Armenians led the villagers from the Geoksun district who had taken shelter in their town back to their paternal homes and reclaimed their stolen belongings from the looters.

The village of Toluluk, which had 119 Armenian households and 31 Muslim households, suffered the greatest losses in the Geoksun district. On April 5, the village was surrounded and inside the village the Turkish residents took up arms. Thirty-one Armenians were killed and the rest fled to the mountains.¹² When they went back a few days later, they saw that their belongings had been stolen and their houses wrecked to such a degree that it would take years to restore them.

Attacks of varying intensity were launched against Mkhali (Avakgal), Alabash (Arekin), Yenidjekale, Moudjouk Deresi, Arabli, Keotekli, Yeghialar, Churuk Geoz, Demrek, Pounarbashi, Kitili-Tagh, Ganchi (Choukourhisar),

* *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1910.

† *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1910.

‡ Ibid.

Epehus (Ephesus, Yarpouz), Pertous, Beshen, and other large and small Armenian-populated villages, hamlets, and farms. In most cases, these attacks failed.[†] Some eight thousand Armenians lived in various parts of the districts of Albistan and Pazardjik in the Marash *sandjak*.[‡] No incidents occurred in these districts. The number of Armenians killed in the town of Marash and the adjacent villages was approximately eight hundred in total.[§]

In summing up the events in the Marash *sandjak*, it would be justifiable to state that one of the reasons that the *sandjak* avoided widespread massacres, and the killing and looting was confined to a few areas, was the fear of the Zeytoun Armenians. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the districts of Antioch, Kessab, and Beylan in the neighboring Aleppo *sandjak* located at some distance from Zeytoun.

THE SANDJAK OF ALEPPO

In the Aleppo *sandjak* the Armenian massacres unfolded in three districts—Antioch, Kessab, and Beylan. The Antioch district was located in the Southern part of the *sandjak*, its administrative center being the town of Antioch (Antakia). Eight hundred Armenians resided there permanently. In the early spring of each year, between 500 and 800 laborers, mostly Armenians, came from different regions to work on the many farms throughout the district.

The news of the Adana massacre threw the Antioch Armenians into a state of horror. On April 6, the Armenian merchants closed their shops, rushed home, and locked themselves inside. At about noon, Turks and Kurds attacked the Armenian Prelacy of Antioch and broke into the building, killing the Vicar General of the Catholicosate of Sis, Arsen Vartabed Haroutiunian, the Reverend Father Taniel Vartabed, who was visiting Antioch from the Gdouts Brotherhood, Father Armenag Donatosian, and the prominent Armenians who had gathered there, and stealing all of the church furnishings. The mob dragged the bodies of the martyred clergymen through the streets and market places, calling upon Muslims to destroy all Christians. About 700 of the 1,000 Armenians present in the town were slaughtered.^{**} The massacres spread throughout the district and went on all night. The organizers were the *mutaserif* of Antioch and the prominent Turks Husni

* Galustyan, *Marash kam Germanik yev heros Zeytoun*, 57.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 262–264.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1910.

** Rev. Dikran Khlopian, *Vukemadyan Hay Avdaranagan Mioutyan*, [Golden Book of the Armenian Evangelical Union] (Beirut, 1950), 1:335.

Agha, Khalef Agha Zade Vahid, Bereket Zade Rifat, and Bereket Zade Reshid.[†] The calamity was engraved into the memory of district Armenians as the *talán* (pillaging).[‡]

Within a few hours, the entire ill-fated Armenian population, as well as the Assyrian minority in Antioch, had been exterminated. The Aas (Orontes) River, which flowed past Antioch, was filled with the corpses of Christians. There were no Armenians left in the district, except for twenty people, ailing and wounded, who had managed to escape. One thousand, two hundred people had been murdered.

Once they had slaughtered the Christians, the Muslims wrecked and burned down the Armenian Apostolic church, the Armenian Evangelical church, and the Assyrian houses of prayer.

The laborers on the farms in the vicinity of Antioch, terror-stricken at the bloody events unfolding in the district, fled and took refuge in the town of Antioch. On April 6, a mob of Turks and Kurds, joined by local Turkish gangs, attacked the Armenian quarter from all sides, looting the houses and setting them on fire.[‡] The majority of the town's native Armenians (six hundred people), along with migrant laborers, were murdered with the most tormenting cruelty.^{**} The Constantinople newspaper *Piuzantion* wrote, "To choose from among the thousands of Turkish and Greek houses those eighty houses that belonged to the poor Armenians and destroy them is the ultimate degree of rage and savagery. (Were those people rebels, too? Did they, too, have bombs and cannons?)^{††}

James Creelman of the *New York Times* wrote an account of the events in Antioch claiming that when the mob began massacring Armenians, a large group of Christians took shelter in a tavern. The Muslim owner of the tavern locked the door and told the surrounding mob that no one was inside. The mob moved away for a while, but soon returned, proclaiming the name of the Prophet Mohammed, and burst into the tavern to murder all of the Christians sheltered there. The murderers left the tavern with blood dripping from their swords and knives. Creelman wrote:

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 255–256.

† Hagop Cholakian, *Andioki Mertsaga Roudji Hovidi Hayeru (patma-azgagrakan sunmasiruyun)* [The Armenians of the Roudji valley in the vicinity of Antioch (a historical-demographical study)] (Antelias, 2006), 108.

‡ *Aravelyan Mamoul*, no. 20, May 12, 1909.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3827, May 1 (14), 1909.³

†† *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

This little boy was in the arms of his father, a respectable, hardworking muleteer, who turned his back, crouched, writhed, and received slash after slash and stab after stab in his effort to save his child. When the father was slain and his body thrown out of the window, the boy, whose elbow was already broken by a bullet, was shot in the chest, stabbed twice, and then flung out of the window after his father's body.^{*}

Those few Armenians and Assyrians who remained in the city of Antioch were saved, thanks to the humanity manifested by the crews of nearby French ships. The French steamship *Niger* cast anchor at Larnaca.

On the evening of April 11 (24), the French Consul in Beirut asked Captain Lafon to sail quickly to Latakia and take the Christians who had narrowly escaped the massacre on board. The steamship set sail at once and reached its destination the next morning. A French passenger on the *Niger* gave an extensive interview to a reporter from *Piuzantion*. Here is an excerpt:

At noon the *Niger* cast anchor in the harbor of Basit as close to the seacoast as possible, and two large lifeboats under the French flag were launched. Nobody was to be seen on the shore, but we suspected that the poor refugees were hiding behind the knolls, so it was decided to fire a cannon to attract their attention. After five cannon shots, a crowd came to the shore, and many people hastily threw themselves into the local boats trying to get away. The sailors—who are the same everywhere and at all times—were taking even the poor fellows' clothes and trying to prevent them from approaching the *Niger*. Finally, Captain Lafon took all the refugees on board as the Consul oversaw the process on shore.

There were 2,211 refugees, including a large number of boys; all of them were starving, thirsty, and half-naked. They were all cared for immediately. Everyone, including Captain Lafon, the officers, Commissioner, and the sailors, displayed great devotion.

The sight was distressing and heartbreaking—I am unable to describe it. Imagine the state of mind of those pitiable people, who had been within a hair's breadth of death, afraid of being killed at any moment. After enduring a hail of bullets, passing through fire

* James Creelman, title unknown, *New York Times*, September 26, 1909, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9A0CE7D91539E632A25755C2A96F9C946897D6CF>. For the Armenian translation of the article, see *Gochmag* (Boston), October 23, 1909.

and sword, they were suddenly reborn on board the ship—under the protection of the glorious French flag. They were weeping and embracing one another; they did not know how to express their boundless joy. The Commissioner liberally handed out food to everyone and milk to the babies, since their mothers' milk had dried up. I repeat once again that the behavior of everyone on board the *Niger* commanded admiration, and I will never stop voicing this admiration everywhere.

One must find oneself under such circumstances that constitute the sorrowful pages of history to feel the bitter anxiety we felt on the ship. Even the most selfish hearts were distressed, and the tears streamed down their cheeks in the face of such sorrow, devastation, and despair.[†]

On its way, the *Niger* encountered the French cruiser *Jules Ferry*, and when its captain learned what had happened, he changed course and headed for Kessab. There the crew gathered 1,800 Armenian refugees and transported them to Latakia.[‡]

Encouraged by the news that Armenians had been massacred in the district of Antioch, the rabble decided to do the same in the district of Kessab. Between April 2 and April 8, Turks and Turkmens, led by the *kaymakam* of Jisr-ash-Shughur and the *mudir* of the Ordou *nahiyja*, laid waste to the *sandjak's* small Armenian villages of Karatouran, Ekiz-Oluk, Keorkouna, Chakalchok, Chinari, Douzaghach, Baghchaghaz, Kayachok, and Khayit. Some of the villagers were killed and the rest took shelter in Kessab.

On April 9, a mixed horde of about 15,000 Turks, Turkmens, and Kurds was preparing to attack the village of Kessab, which had 1,200 households.[§]

The slaughterers' main goal was to loot the village, which had a bazaar that rivaled those of Jisr-ash-Shughur and Antioch. The huge crowd of looters first gathered in the village of Ordou, whose entire Turkish and Turkmen population was stirred to action. Crowds from the neighboring *nahiyjas* of Harem, Antioch, Jisr-ash-Shughur, Bayir, and Bouchak rushed to Ordou, and the mob soon numbered 30,000.^{**}

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3824, April 28 (May 11), 1909.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3827, May 1 (14), 1909.

** Cholakian, *Andioki Merisaga Rowdji Hovidi Hayeru*, 108.

On April 10, gangs under the command of the Kurd Sherif Agha entered the Kessab district from the direction of Ordou. The next day, after putting up a brief resistance, many Kessab's residents gathered at the shore in Basit and were transported to Latakia by the French cruisers.[†] But not all of the villagers managed to reach the shore. A great many of them, mainly women and children, took to the hills nearby. On the way, many fell into the hands of the murderers and were killed.[‡] Women and girls were abducted. Many thousands of plunderers looted Kessab and burned its buildings down. Many ill and disabled people ended up in the ruins.^{**}

Samvel Kel-Boghosian and his wife took cover on a hill not far from Kessab. When they were discovered by the mob, his wife was stabbed in the thigh and was unable to run away. Her husband clung to her, trying to protect her from further blows. He was butchered and cut to pieces before the eyes of his wife. She was raped and stabbed several more times, and then left for dead. The wounded woman managed to crawl to the top of Djebel Akra, where she stayed for six days, quenching her thirst with snow.^{††} In a place called Yedi Dere, several Kurds chased after eighteen-year-old Feride Basmadjian. The girl ran away and reached a hilltop in exhaustion, but her pursuers were a few steps behind. To protect her honor, Feride threw herself off of a precipice. The wife of Serovpe Ghazarian delivered a baby boy while on the run. Driven mad by her fear of the pursuers, the mother abandoned her newborn and fled. In a place near Kessab, a young girl named Feride Abelian was surrounded by a dozen Turks. She armed herself with rocks and defended her honor with indescribable bravery, managing to escape. Five Kessab women hid in a cave for eight days, hungry and thirsty. One of the women was forced to strangle her one-year-old baby boy, in order not to reveal their hiding place to the slaughterers.

Some two thousand people continued to wander about the deserted shores of Suedia (Svedia, Suwaidiyah, Musaler, Djebel-Mousa). They were saved through the heroic efforts of an Italian Franciscan monk and the French vice-consul, Edgar Geoffroy. As described above, these men led the terrorized throng to the steamship *Niger* and two other French cruisers, which transported them to Latakia (Lazkiye).^{‡‡}

* *Ararat*, no. 5–6, May–June, 1909, 539.

† *Andioki Mertsaga Roudji Hovidi Hayeru*, 108.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1910.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3823, April 27 (May 10), 1909.

†† *Ibid.*

‡‡ Barteveian, *Giligyan Arshavirku*, 43.

After turning Kessab upside down and murdering 200 people, the gangs began to massacre people from other Christian-populated settlements in the vicinity. They destroyed the small Armenian-populated villages of Arfali, Yamadi, and Kochi in the Ordou *nahiya* in the south of Antioch.^{*} They crossed the Orontes River and went up to the Djebel-Musa Mountains to attack the Christian villages. But thanks to the measures taken by the *mudir* of Suedia, Seokely Khalid Effendi, the mob was compelled to disperse and 11,000 Christians escaped certain massacre.

Six thousand Armenians who fled the massacres in Kessab and the surrounding villages took refuge in Latakia. Fortunately, they, too, came across a man of humane character—the Arab *mutaserrif* of Latakia, Mohammed Ali Bey. Not only did he take the refugees under his protection, he also personally accompanied the people of Kessab back to their villages and only returned to Latakia once they had been settled.[†]

Thanks to the pressure exerted on the Aleppo *vali* by the French and Italian Consuls, the rabble refrained from attacking two Armenian villages in the Roudj Valley near Antioch—Yakubiye and Kniye—which had been surrounded by Turks and Turkmens since April 10.[‡]

Now it was the district of Beylan's turn.

The Armenian-populated village of Kirik-Khan, with ninety Armenian and five or six Muslim households, was located on the road from Alexandretta to Aleppo. The villagers were engaged not only in farming but also in trade and crafts.

On April 5, Turkish, Circassian, and Kurdish men from the twelve neighboring villages, joined by the Cretan refugees who had settled there, attacked Kirik-Khan.[§] The villagers determined to resist. After eight hours of fighting, a delegation of the village Muslims approached the Armenian leaders and began to persuade them to hand over their weapons, swearing that they would never let the mob enter the village, and that if the mob attempted to do so, they would immediately return the weapons and join the Armenians in repulsing the attack. The naïve villagers took the Turkish promises on faith and surrendered their weapons. The gangs waiting outside the village were informed at once; they concentrated fire on the village and

* Cholakian, *Andioki Mertsaga Roudji Hovidi Hayeru*, 94, 108.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 257. For details about the self-defense of the Kessab Armenians and their transfer to Latakia, see Hagop Cholakian, *Kessab* (Aleppo, 1995), 1:89–98. *Andioki Mertsaga Roudji Hovidi Hayeru*, 108–112.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3818, April 21 (May 4), 1909.

then stormed in, beginning their bloody carnival. The evildoers first locked up all the Armenians in one of the large houses, which was followed by looting and arson. All of the buildings were burned down, including twenty-eight shops, two bakeries, three coffee houses, one inn, and fifteen taverns.^{*}

After that, the pretty women and girls were selected from among those locked up in the large house and were taken away as spoils. The rest of the Armenians were taken to a mosque not far from the village, located on land belonging to a *pasha* called Mustafa. On his order all the eighty-two men were murdered. In the crimes they committed, the villains rivaled the fiends who had made a bloodbath of Kessab, sparing not even the slightest boys. The murderers then threw the remaining 250 people—the widowed women and orphans—upon the mercy of the *pasha* as his slaves. The *pasha* gave most of the women, some 200 in number, to Kurds as gifts.[†]

During the Kirik-Khan massacre, many men from the neighboring Armenian villages who were out working in the fields, gardens, and mills were brutally killed. The villages of Atik, Kanlidere, Sari-Chinar, Soghandji, Mezgiteon, and Hadji-Mousali were located near Kirik-Khan. Unable to withstand the Kurdish attacks, the villagers abandoned their houses and fled to Beylan. Turks looted the vacated houses and set them on fire.

Terrified by the dreadful events, the villagers who had fled to Beylan, along with the local residents, locked themselves up in the houses from April 5 to April 10, not daring to go out. Nine soldiers under the command of *Chavoush* (sergeant) Bekir were sent to the village from the center of Aleppo vilayet. The soldiers had barely arrived in Beylan when Kurds launched a massive attack from the direction of the village of Atik. The soldiers stood against the Kurds with utmost dedication and ardor and dispersed them. On orders from the *kaykacam*, forty soldiers quartered at Kirik-Khan also moved to Beylan, and the Armenians were spared from a massacre.[‡]

Six Armenian villages of the Suedia *kaza*—Vakif, Yoghoun-Oluk, Pitias, Khdrbek, Kebusiye, and Hadjihabibli—were located on the coast to the south of Antioch. Some five thousand Armenians, the majority of whom raised silkworms, lived in these villages. When the Kurds and Turks attacked the group of villages, many of the villagers were away in the area of Antioch on business. They were all killed in the massacres there.

* Terzian, *Gilgigo Aghedu*, 258.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*, 260–261.

After the Kessab massacre, the rabble tried to attack Suedia, but fortunately, a British warship approached the area. Its presence terrified the slaughterers, and they were compelled to abandon their plan. The warship took aboard some 1,600 people—mostly young women and children who had taken shelter in the mountains—and transported them to Alexandretta.^{*} Many Armenians from Suedia escaped the inevitable massacre.

But this was cold comfort, since some five hundred Armenians in the villages throughout the *kaza* of Suedia were annihilated, including one hundred residents of Mousaler.[†] The Orontes River carried hundreds of Armenian bodies to the sea. Those who escaped the massacre took refuge in the mountains, where they endured starvation and suffering for days. The Suedia ordeal was one of the final events of the Cilician massacres of April 1909. It seemed that the end of the calamity was drawing near.

It should be noted that the French who resided in the Aleppo vilayet, the officials in particular, rendered as much assistance to the Armenians as possible. The French Consulate in Aleppo petitioned the *vali* many times, calling upon him to demonstrate an unbending attitude toward the slaughterers. Moreover, the Consul in Aleppo, Fernand Roqueferrier, was so disturbed by the brutal scenes of the massacres that he suffered a heart attack. This humane diplomat soon died of sorrow, leaving an indelible mark upon the memory of the Cilician Armenians.[‡]

Naturally, they were all the grounds for the atrocities unleashed in the first half of April 1909 in the provinces of Adana and partly of Aleppo to spread throughout Asia Minor and claim the lives of tens of thousands of people.

Letters and telegrams sent to the Patriarchate of Constantinople sounded the alarm that Old Turks and the Muslim clergy had been engaged in vigorous propaganda among the troops stationed in the Asian provinces of Turkey, and that anti-Christian, and especially anti-Armenian, incitement had been taking place among the Young Turks. The beloved son of the deposed Sultan Abdul Hamid, Burhan Eddin, had been enlisting supporters in Asia Minor with the aim of restoring his father to the throne.

Turkey was at the edge of a volcano, and a new crisis could be expected at any moment. Statements by foreign ambassadors that their respective governments would send troops to Asia Minor if the unrest were not brought to a halt by the beginning of May 1909 caused uneasiness in Constantinople.

* *Pisanzion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

† *Azrag* (Beirut), January 1, 2009, 149.

‡ Arshagouhi Teotig, *Amis Mu i Giligya*, 148.

Fortunately, the riots in Asia Minor did not develop into bloodshed, and the massacres were confined within Cilicia. The Christians, the Armenians in particular, in the territories stretching from Kayseri, Everek, Tomarza, Konia, Sivas (Sepasdia), Arapkir, Kharpert, Agn, and even Diyarbekir (Dikranagend) were spared widespread massacres.

Among other motivations, one significant reason for this was the defeat of the Hamidian movement in and around Constantinople and the declaration by the Sublime Porte that it would take measures to stop the spread of the disaster.

Nevertheless, the Armenians in Armenia proper were not assured that the tragedy of the Cilician Armenians would not recur in their locale. A letter received in Constantinople from Kayseri stated:

The awful massacres in Adana and its environs had an evil effect on our minds and nerves. We were unable to utter words and were sick with anxiety. We all considered the calamity unleashed by the nationalists—horrendous and unparalleled in history—to be directed against us, and were in constant fear as to whether we would hear such grievous news from other places. Should the Turkish fanaticism be considered spent and satiated after laying waste to the respectable Armenians of Cilicia? Who knows? If one looks at Ottoman history, one will see that every reformation or promise of reform has brought with it massacres of the Christians. Perhaps this is the reason that the French say, *Les massacres sont corollaires aux réformes.*

* *Prisazention*, no. 3824, April 28 (May 11), 1909. Translation from French: "The massacres are corollary to reforms."

THE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE CALAMITY

When the massacres ended, the Cilician Armenian leaders were left stunned. A once prosperous land was now groaning under the ruins. Cities, villages, and fields were smoking. The disaster was so vast and terrible that it seemed there was no sense in trying to do anything at all. Hunger, misery, and nakedness reigned absolutely; tears streamed down everyone's cheeks. The situation was desperate everywhere. The people were left without guidance in the most painful circumstances. The Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahag II, had lost his prestige, and this public figure had no idea of where to begin.

Observers of the horrendous events attest that not even the vilest beasts could have committed crimes so unheard of and unparalleled in the history of mankind. The language of every nation and tribe on earth is far too poor for an exhaustive description of these ghastly scenes, which freeze the very process of human thought. The hearts of the eyewitnesses bled as they depicted the shocking occurrences. For the Boston-based newspaper *Hairenik*, one wrote after the massacres:

...These monsters slaughtered husbands in their wives' arms, butchered infants at their mothers' breasts, carved out their lungs and fed them to their mad mothers, or cut off the mothers' nipples and forced them into their babies' mouths; they raped sisters in front of brothers, wives in front of husbands and daughters; they forced Armenian girls to undress and perform an infernal circle dance in front of their fathers, pouring kerosene on the miserable victims and setting them on fire; they violated even the charred corpses, and pitilessly butchered sixteen-year-old Armenian virgins to make bloody baths for barren Turkish women, in the ignorant hope of curing their infertility.*

It was very hard to accommodate the survivors and refugees from the surrounding villages of Adana that had been reduced to ashes in the massacres and conflagration. Up to fifteen or twenty people crammed into small rooms without any food, let alone clothing or fuel. But even in this state of utter despair, it was necessary to take some action. It was essential to save at least some of the survivors from starvation and epidemic, and this was possible only through intense, selfless work.

* *Hairenik* (Boston), no. 34 (539), August 17, 1909.

Since in the course of the Cilician calamity the city of Adana had suffered the greatest losses, the Armenian Church and Armenian charity organizations concentrated their efforts there first.

FIRST AID TO THE SUFFERERS

On April 13, the survivors of the Adana massacres left the garden adjacent to the vilayet government house and moved toward the railway station outside the city. On the way, some were allowed to quarter at the cotton mill owned by the Trypanis brothers (one of whom was also the dragoman of the British Consulate), and the rest settled in another factory nearby, which was owned by German entrepreneurs.^{*} The exhausted Armenians who crowded into the Trypanis brothers' factory and yard were lucky to be alive. At noon, hundreds of thugs amassed around the mill, waiting for an opportune moment to break in. Fortunately, soldiers arrived and halted the mob. The situation was the same at the German factory, the vicinity of which swarmed with gangs of slaughterers.[†]

On the evening of April 14, a Turkish military man entered the grounds of the cotton mill and stood on a raised area to make several announcements. He said that the great criminal, Sultan Hamid, had been deposed and that Mehmed Reshad had been enthroned as the new Sultan. "Do not be afraid anymore. We, the soldiers of liberation, have come here to protect you. From now on, you are free. Therefore, pray for the life of our new sovereign."[‡]

The joy was boundless. It was as if they were dreaming. It seemed that the days of tragedy were over, and the days of prosperity and bliss had arrived.

After those dreadful days, now everyone's main concern was to find a piece of bread. The misery in the Armenian cities and villages of Cilicia was limitless. Forty thousand starving Armenians were clustered in the open in Adana, Tarsus, Hamidiye, Latakia, Kessab, Hasanbeyli, Kozoluk, and other places, subjected to sweltering days and cold nights. Added to that was the communication ban, keeping the ill and starving people in a state of intimidation, and so on. Everywhere cries of "Bread! Bread!" could be heard. All anyone asked for was bread. The cries of the starving children rent the hearts of the adults.[§]

It is bitter to imagine that the Armenians of the proud, magnificent city of Adana, who had never been beggars and had never known what it was to ask

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3823, April 27 (May 10), 1909.

† *Droshak*, no. 5, May 1909, 55.

‡ National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 2, file 1202, pp. 8–9.

for something from others, let alone beg, were forced to stretch out their hands after the awful disaster, asking for help. Among the starving were rich and prominent local Armenians—along with thousands of others they pleaded for a crust of bread.

Arevelyan Mamoul wrote:

The noble families whose houses were deluged with delight and happiness just one month ago... have today joined those who narrowly escaped the unparalleled calamity in longing for stale bread... The mere specter of the once luxurious Adana remains. The pretty women of yesterday who walked to the accompaniment of swinging golden jewelry and the young men who boasted of luxury are, alas, unable to find rags to cover their nakedness.^{*}

On April 15, at noon, a doctor from a British cruiser anchored in the port of Mersin went with his assistants to Adana and took measures to save the Christians from starvation. They bought a few hundred sacks of flour and distributed them among the starving people.

Upon learning of the plight of their kindred, the Mersin Armenians also gathered flour and sent it to Adana. Dozens of bakeries were put into operation to feed the starving people. In addition, some people attempted to bake the dough on pieces of sheet iron found here and there, and distributed it half-cooked.[†] For the people who had found shelter at the factories of the Trypanis brothers and the German businessmen, help also came from elsewhere.

French Jesuit priests and nuns, the British Consul in Adana and his wife, the officers from the British warship anchored at Mersin, and American missionary William N. Chambers, joined the Trypanis brothers and the German entrepreneurs, sparing no effort to be of help. Various benevolent organizations began distributing aid to 75,000 people.[‡]

Greeks were among the first to lend a brotherly helping hand. Not only did they provide the Armenian organizations with foodstuffs, but they also set up a special group in Adana to collect donations among the Greeks. *Piuzantion* wrote that the Beirut Greeks had also founded a charitable organization to collect donations for the Cilician sufferers.^{**} "The noble brotherly sentiments manifested by our Greek compatriots filled us with

* *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 22, May 26, 1909, 519.

† National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 2, file 1202, p. 14.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1909.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3822, April 25 (May 8), 1909.

gratitude and deeply moved all those hearts who were grieving for their brothers and sisters in Cilicia."^{*}

The first steps were taken to transport the migrant survivors from Adana to their homes. They had suffered the greatest losses in Adana, even greater than the local Armenians. Souren Bartevian described the moment when the migrant laborers were being registered to be sent home:

First the men came forward. In rags, half-naked, barefoot, burned, with cuts on their faces, disheveled hair and beards, they were a ghastly and harrowing sight; to look at them froze one's blood. Some were lame, dismembered, leaning on walking sticks; others—ailing, gasping for breath, wheezing, hardly able to drag their legs along— came and stood before us with a respectful, pleading, almost worshipful air.[†]

Many of them had come from Van, Diyarbekir, Sivas (Sepasdia), Kayseri, and especially, the villages of Kharpert. The Prelacy vicar of Charsandjak informed the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople that four hundred laborers from there had been killed.[‡] The Armenians of Hadjin suffered the greatest losses in Adana .

The same witness questioned one of the survivors who had approached the registration table:

"Where are you from?"

"From Mush, Agha."

"Why did you leave your land and come here?"

"There is no way to make a living in my land; I came to work as a tiller..."

He uttered a painful sigh and said, "We're done for. Oh, we're done for."

It was as if that terrible and painful cry, mixed with the sullen resentment that sprang from this man's dried-up breast, had arisen from the remote and anguished depths of Armenia, saying, "We are done for! We cannot bear this catastrophe, this misery any longer! Hasn't it been enough? We are done for!"^{**}

At this most difficult moment, the European and American hospitals, charitable organizations, and missionaries operating in Cilicia graciously lent a helping hand to provide care for the wounded. A great many injured people would have died had the foreign institutions not been there. Especially

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3827, May 1, (14), 1909.

† Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 128.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3 85 1, June 11 (24), 1909.

** Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 129.

extensive work was carried out by the British hospital in Adana, under the personal supervision of the Consul's wife. Many of the injured owed their lives to this lady.*

The number of wounded people in Adana alone amounted to several thousand, and under insistent pressure from the charitable organizations and foreign consulates, many public buildings and schools were transformed into hospitals.

But the measures taken were a drop in the ocean of total misfortune. Both national and foreign-run hospitals suffered acute shortages of doctors, medicine, and medical instruments. For that reason, some of the people who were performing surgery were taking up a scalpel for the first time in their lives. Makeshift tables of rough-hewn wood were used in place of surgical tables. Under such circumstances, it was possible to provide medical aid to only a fraction of those in need. Most of the patients were at death's door.

As was previously mentioned in the first chapter, the French newspaper *Le Figaro* published letters from an anonymous French naval officer who served on the cruiser *Victor-Hugo* anchored in Mersin, describing what he witnessed in Adana. In a letter dated April 23, 1909, he wrote:

...the missionaries had taken us to the community of French nuns.

What a sight! The classrooms and visiting rooms were full of ragged, emaciated, and dejected Armenians who had gone there for shelter at first shot. The number of people two days before our arrival was more than three thousand. Yesterday and today many having been reassured returned to their neighborhood. Armenian women wept and complained, their children light-heartedly played nearby, and the men sat peacefully in silence.

...

We were taken to the infirmary. An Armenian who was somewhat a doctor was dressing the wounds of an old woman sitting in an armchair. I approached. She had eight wounds as large as a finger on her head; some of them exposed the meninges. She had been hit with a saber. The brutes had cut off one of her arms and feet. Her daughter had been raped and murdered before her very eyes.

Need I add that the poor woman had gone out of her mind? She shook her head. "It can't be possible! It can't be possible!" she seemed to say.

...

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 145.

Then we passed through the courtyard. The women—nearly all of them elderly—fell down on their knees, tugging at our clothes as at something sacred, as though they would protect them from the Turks. They were crying, pleading, and begging us to save them, but with such humility, such humility. They were hugging my legs, kissing my feet, kissing my footprints. Yes, my footprints... This isn't some vision, it's the plain truth, by women, gray-haired women. My throat tightened, I couldn't utter a word. We left. I have, I believe, never felt such emotion. ...*

Zabel Yesayan described the medical treatment of another Armenian woman, who was covered with countless wounds:

...her lower legs had been amputated, one arm had been removed... she was blinded, everywhere on her chest she had traces of stabbing and burns... nearly half of her human form was gone... but she lived like that for long time and was in her right mind... every day to her last breath, a part would be cut off, separated from her body, since all the wounds were rotting, and to her last breath, she was conscious of her appalling condition... Shocking...†

Every day, dozens of corpses were transported from the hospitals to the cemetery.

Here is a moving letter Hadjin resident Mardiros Toumanian sent from the German hospital to his parents before he died:

My Dear Parents,

I have been shot and am going to die. Do not let that worry you; I will go to a place where it is very quiet. I, too, will be registered in the book of thirty thousand innocent martyrs. I do not feel pain from the bullet; what hurts me, though, is not dying from one bullet, but being unable to do anything good for you in return for the sacrifices you have made for my education. It does not pain me to die young, at the age of 26; it inflicts more pain on me not to have paid my debt to my nation, not having served them enough, and it especially hurts me that I am dying at the hands of this evil. I

* *Le Figaro*, May 7, 1909.

† Yesayan, *Averageroun Mech*, 54.

am dying without fear of death, the Lord has so decided, His will be done. Give my greetings to all my relatives and friends. Forever yours... Adana, April 13, 1909*

The approximately twenty thousand Armenians that had crowded into the Trypanis brothers' cotton mill and the German factory could not remain there indefinitely. The factory owners did not complain, but with every passing day, they incurred substantial financial losses.

Through the efforts of charitable organizations, a hundred tents were brought in and a camp was set up in a field not far from the factories. The victims were accommodated there; each tent could hold thirty or forty people, and the rest stayed out in the open.

The tent camp was a living hell. Inside the tents, there were nightmarish scenes: emaciated human beings lay there bloodstained and in rags, their faces wet with tears. And outside the tents, thousands of ghosts—burned by the sun and tormented by sorrow, pallid and morose—lay on the ground.† The crowd withered in desperation. Worn out from the suffering, they no longer had the energy to raise their heads. The hope of life, of revival, had been killed in all their hearts. The outrageous reality was beyond human imagination. It is no coincidence that many people lost their minds before they died.

Hunger was taking a heavy toll, especially among the children and adolescents. It was compounded by another misfortune—a rubella epidemic broke out, taking the lives of dozens of children each day. Suffering children lay in agony in their mothers' laps as other children played nearby, unaware of what was going on. "Dry-eyed mothers, enraged by the extreme of the misfortune, dug holes next to the tents and buried their boys there, without even turning to a priest," wrote Yesayan, who witnessed all of this.‡

The dead children were buried in holes dug next to the tents, one on top the other. As documented by Barteveian, a visiting stranger asked what the mounds all around the tents were, and one of the mothers, unable to restrain her violent sobs, replied, "These are our dead little ones, the dead little ones that we buried here next to our tents in the days of horror, not daring to take them away, to the cemetery... With one hand we closed their eyes, and with the other, we dug holes to bury them in..."§ The stranger wrote of this tragic

* Terzian, *Giligio Agheda*, 852–853.

† Yesayan, *Averageroun Mech*, 65.

‡ Yesayan, *Averageroun Mech*, 65.

§ Barteveian, *Giligyian Arhavirku*, 163.

scene: "I ran away, far away from these tents and mounds to carry the ruins of my heart, my tears and my sobbing, away to an isolated corner..."^{*}

It was beyond the power of charitable organizations and individuals to provide the starving people in the camp with 200 grams of bread a day. Everyone in the crowd of 20,000 people received 45 grams of bread and 35 grams of rice per day.

It is no coincidence that between fifty and seventy people died each day, due to disease, incurable mental disorders, and lack of food.[†]

When Yesayan went to the camp, she tried to console one of the ill-fated women, but the latter replied angrily, "I saved my three children from sword and fire and now I have lost all three of them on this black soil, one after the other. There are no tears left in my eyes, no grief left in my voice, and my heart is as hard as stone. Let the world come to rack and ruin—what do I care?"

THE INITIATIVES OF THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITIES IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Starting on April 15, immediately after the massacres ended, the Armenian authorities of Constantinople buckled down to the job of helping the Cilician victims.

By April 19, the Patriarchate had sent 1,600 Ottoman gold liras to Adana and other areas of Cilicia.[‡] At the same time, it appealed for and received funds for Adana from other places—1,200 gold liras from Manchester and 8,000 gold liras from Smyrna.

In November 1908, the Patriarchate had set up a fundraising commission in Constantinople to support needy Armenians in the provinces of Armenia and Cilicia. After the calamity, the commission was able to deliver just 1,000 gold liras to Adana.

The Armenians of Constantinople, stunned by the news of the tragic events in Cilicia, opened up their half-empty purses to render assistance to their brothers and sisters and the children who had escaped the mass atrocities, swords, and tongues of fire. Every week, clothing was sent in bales to Adana and Aleppo. Young Constantinople Armenians formed groups and went house-to-house through their neighborhoods, collecting clothing—shoes, shirts, pants, and whatever was offered. The ladies of Constantinople made their donation with tears and sorrow.

* Ibid.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 122.

‡ *Gohag* (Constantinople), no. 15, September 5, 1909.



Armenian refugee camp in outskirts of Adana, 1909.

After some time, a group of doctors sent from Constantinople arrived. A Red Cross medical team, organized under the aegis of the Constantinople Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, hastened to Adana to set up a hospital and pharmacy. The group not only put into place a large-scale operation in Adana, but also worked for months in the neighboring provinces.

Apart from everything else, the Cilician massacres had been an outrage to the national pride of the Armenians, which is why the Armenian community in the capital city manifested its displeasure and fury in so many ways.

On April 19, the board of the Armenian National Assembly presented memoranda to Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha, Commander of the Liberation Army Mahmud Shevket Pasha, and the Chairman of the Ottoman Parliament, calling upon them to render urgent assistance to the victims.

On April 20, a memorial service for the victims of the massacres, and for those who had lost their lives during the struggle for the preservation of the Young Turks' authority against the reactionary forces, was held in the cathedral of the Armenians of Constantinople. Some four thousand people gathered in the church and adjacent area. Sultan Muhammad V sent his first secretary to participate in the service. Ittihat military leaders Enver Bey and Ahmed Niazi Bey were present as well.

On the same day, after the church service was over, a mixed delegation consisting of Apostolic, Evangelical, and Catholic Armenians went to the Dolma Bahche Palace and delivered memoranda on the massacres of the

Armenians and other Christians that had taken place in the city and the vilayet of Adana, and on the disturbances that were still going on in certain other places, to the newly enthroned Sultan Muhammad V. On April 21 and 22, other delegations of prominent Armenians of Constantinople did the same. These documents stated that according to press reports, murders at the hands of Turks and Kurds continued in the areas adjacent to Adana, and that disorders had taken place in the Armenian villages around Latakia on April 14, with villages looted and burned. Dozens of Armenians had been murdered by Kurds in Diyarbakir and elsewhere.

The Sultan promised to give the necessary instructions to the government. He also said that the Army commander, Mahmud Shevket Pasha, had already sent troops to Cilicia, though he supposed it would be quite some time before the troops reached various areas of the region.

On April 22, Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha submitted the composition of the new Cabinet of Ministers to the Parliament for approval. Former minister Ferid Pasha was confirmed as the Minister of Internal Affairs, Salih Pasha as Minister of War, Khalil Hamada Pasha as Minister of the *Vakıfı*, Gabriel Effendi Noradoughian as Minister of Trade and Public Works, Aristidi Pasha as Minister of Geology, Mines and Forests, and Raif Pasha as President of the Council of State.

By the order of the new government, the bloodthirsty governor of Adana, Mehmed Djevad Bey, was dismissed and replaced by a Kurd, Baban Zade Mustafa Zihni Pasha, who arrived in Adana on April 28 (May 11), 1909.*

On April 24, the Armenian National Assembly held a session in Constantinople, which was presided over by the Chairman of the Political Assembly, Sdepan Karaian. A member of the Political Assembly of the Armenian National Assembly, Haroutiun Shahrigian, presented a report on the bloody events and terrible atrocities that had taken place in Cilicia. He reminded the gathering that the memorandum sent by the board of the National Assembly to the central government on April 19 had not received any reaction thus far, and noted that although the Board of the National Assembly had launched a fundraising effort, the amount raised was not sufficient, and that greater fervor must be demonstrated in future fundraising. Shahrigian also expressed dissatisfaction that although the government had verbally promised to allocate 30,000 gold lira for Cilicia, no one knew when the money would be sent or how it would be distributed.

* Ashdjan, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Konkiye Housher*, 30.

In conclusion, Shahrigian proposed presenting the government with a draft decision consisting of the following six points: (1) To return the Armenian women, girls, and adolescents abducted by Turks and Kurds; (2) Not to entrust the investigation of the organizers of the massacres to the local authorities of Adana and Aleppo vilayets, but to carry out investigations through impartial bodies consisting of unprejudiced individuals of different nationalities; (3) To return all looted properties to their rightful owners or their heirs; (4) To distribute the money allocated by the government though agencies that were composed of mixed nationals; (5) To bring to account those who sold or bought looted goods; (6) In order to prevent the painful events in Adana and Aleppo vilayets from recurring in other Armenian populated vilayets, to dismiss the old regime's police officials who contributed to these events as well as those policemen who committed crimes, and to set up groups for maintaining public order under the command of liberal officers and composed of people who enjoyed public confidence and were devoted to the constitution.

Dikran Adjemian, Mihran Karakashian, Archbishop Hmayag Timaksian, Krikoris Vartabed Balakian, Aram Haladjian, Krikor Zohrab, and others took part in the debate on the report. The majority of speakers strongly criticized the government for its sluggishness in providing help to Cilicia. In his statement, Krikor Zohrab disagreed with those delegates who believed that the government was not interested in helping Armenians and other Christians subjected to the massacres. "I would like to ask," he said, "that we have faith in the goodwill of that supreme body [the Parliament]." Archbishop Hmayak interrupted Zohrab saying, "That's wrong, it's false, I don't believe it." Zohrab continued, noting that criticizing the actions of the Ottoman parliament was beyond the scope of the Armenian National Assembly and was insulting to "our Turkish compatriots." He reminded the Assembly that the parliament had unanimously adopted a proposal to send financial aid to Adana and added, "I don't find this unnecessary attack on that well-disposed attitude to be correct, and it also contradicts our policy." He thought it necessary "not to become desperate, but holding sorrow and grief in our hearts, to adhere to the Ottoman constitution, which has become stronger now." He then proposed setting up a trustworthy mixed commission and dispatching it to Cilicia to justly distribute the donated 30,000 gold liras.*

* Terzian, *Gilgigo Aghedu*, 525-527.

After comprehensive discussion, the draft submitted by Shahrigian was amended with eight new points, and again at his suggestion, the National Assembly adopted the memorandum consisting of fourteen points to be sent to the Sultan, the Ottoman Parliament, and the Government. The memorandum stated in particular that the Armenians should not—as was customary under the tyrannical reign of Abdul Hamid—be unjustly presumed guilty for everything and subjected to persecution, that Armenians forcibly converted to Islam should be returned to their nation, that those officials in Adana province who had headed or taken part in massacres should be arrested, that the newly appointed Governor Mustafa Zihni Pasha should be dismissed, that stolen property should be returned to its owners, that the process of distributing 30,000 gold lira allocated by the government should be accelerated, and so forth.^{*}

On May 4, a gathering of Armenian clerics took place in Constantinople, which also adopted a memorandum raising many of the same issues that had already been addressed in the April 24th memorandum to the central government adopted by the Armenian National Assembly.

The first demand by the Armenian national authorities in Constantinople was the dispatch of official investigative commissions that would study the causes of the calamity and the scope of the massacres, disclose the names of the organizers, and present reports to superior bodies.

In order to help move the matter forward, the Patriarchate set up yet another commission—the Commission of Interethnic Assistance—to raise money among merchants and prominent individuals of Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and other nationalities. This initiative proved to be useful—more than 7,000 gold liras were raised, and the amount was spent to buy medical instruments, medication, bandages, foodstuffs, linens, blankets, utensils, and other basic necessities. Travel expenses and accommodation allowances for doctors and nurses going to Cilicia were also paid out of this amount.

Although during the first days after the massacres everyone involved worked feverishly to spare the victims from starvation, the efforts applied were inadequate. Therefore, religious, political, and intellectual circles expressed their alarm and raised the question of who was to put an end to the widespread disaster. "It is necessary to feed and shelter the survivors and bring them to life,"[†] wrote Souren Bartevian in a letter to the Cairo newspaper

* Ibid., 517–518.

† Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 49–50.

Lousaper-Arev. In another letter sent from Mersin to the newspaper *Azk*, published in the United States, he pointed out with pain:

The superficial amount provided by the aid commission sent from Constantinople by our National Council is a drop of water in an ocean of indigence. With this amount, it is not even possible to provide those sheltered in Mersin with plain bread for a few weeks. The whole nation should focus its attention on Cilicia and channel all the material assistance they are able to provide there. And this should be done not with the naïve pretension of mending the calamity, but to halt its already immense proportions and to prevent, to rule out, its dreadful consequences—death by starvation, epidemic, demoralization, forced emigration, etc.^{*}

Bartevian then wrote to Armenians in the United States, pleading for them to heal the wounds of their Cilician kinsmen:

Let all American Armenian organizations devote themselves at once to this vital cause. Let the newspapers *Azk*, *Hairnik*, *Yeridasart Hayastan*, *Gochmag*, and *Asbarez* start columns for donations. Let our political parties, who lately entertained the Cilicians with such sweet and futile songs, work together to help them, do everything it takes to succeed, and do it swiftly....

I ask all the Armenian newspapers in America and elsewhere to respond to this critical appeal, this clanging alarm bell, since we will have to cope with more grievous news to come... If only we can bring our hearts together, fraternize amidst this great national pain.

This is an entreaty of a Cilician wallowing in blood...[†]

The insufficiency of means to provide aid to the victims prompted the Prelate of Adana, Bishop Moushegh Seropian, to make a stirring appeal from Cairo on May 25 to the Armenians all over the world, asking them to be swift in providing aid to the Cilician Armenians. He wrote:

There is not a single house, not a single building, not a single church, not a single school belonging to Armenians or Christians in the city or the villages; they have all been reduced to ashes. The churches have been desecrated, the altars and the crosses destroyed, the holy vessels stolen, every sacred object trampled, and now only the minarets tower above these all-embracing ashes and thousands of

* Ibid., 44.

† Ibid., 45.

decomposing bodies without graves, like awful crosses shouldered by the Armenians..."*

Concluding his appeal, the Bishop wrote:

Oh, Armenians, this call stained with blood and tears is addressed to you. Tomorrow it will be too late—the slightest indifference on your part will cover with graves the blood-soaked episode of the great calamity which Turkish fanaticism has created once again in the heart of Cilicia and which in its atrocities has surpassed all of the crimes in history.

Help! The children, the orphans, the widows, the childless—the remnants of the martyred people, those who were mutilated, crucified, burned alive, who experienced firsthand all of cruel mortal suffering and anguish, for whom and on whose behalf I call upon you, with their pain in my heart, and their bloody tears welling in my eyes.

Help! Help! Help! If you do not wish to see Cilicia destroyed altogether.[†]

The Armenian National Assembly again discussed the issue of the Cilician massacres at its June 12 session, presided over by the newly elected Patriarch, Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian. The Assembly addressed the questions of recovering stolen property, guaranteeing insurance payments, returning women and girls who had been forcibly converted to Islam to the nation and the Mother Church, fairly distributing donations among the needy, and above all, the question of caring for the orphans.

Haroutiun Shahrigian informed the gathering that the order from the central authorities to return goods stolen from shops and household items taken from homes had been ignored in Adana, since the order had been received by people who themselves had actively participated in the looting. After long delays, some survivors were able to recover a few pillows here and a few chairs there, confiscated from the pillagers' houses.

After the June 19 session of the National Assembly, the Patriarchate raised with the government the issue of making insurance payments to the victims of the Cilician massacres. Albeit reluctantly, the government did finally address the matter, issuing the following decision: (1) To make insurance payments to the heirs of those persons killed during the Cilician incidents

* *Mshak*, no.112, May 28, 1909.

† *Ibid.*

who had been insured; (2) To follow the insurance money of those persons killed and had no heirs with the insurance companies; and (3) Not to pay fire insurance, since insurance policies did not cover damage inflicted by fire resulting from social unrest or mob attack.

The appeals and requests had some positive impact. The funds raised grew considerably. The Cilician victims received some assistance from abroad as well. For instance, the United States government provided \$50,000, and \$5,000 was donated by the American College in Beirut.

Yet the damages suffered in Cilicia cost millions of dollars and, therefore, the amounts sent were insignificant. It was impossible to end the starvation or heal the wounded with these sums, let alone restore the houses of prayer and schools. It took the Christians many years and great amounts of money to repair and renovate the ruined churches, school buildings, and residences.

After the massacre of Christians, many Armenian individuals and delegations came from Constantinople to Cilicia to investigate the situation on the ground and let the Armenian public know the truth.

At the request of the Constantinople Patriarchate, novelist and political essayist Zabel Yesayan was among the first to arrive in Cilicia. From the very first day, she plunged into the pain of her kinsmen, and later she published a book titled *Averagneroun Mech* [Among the Ruins], in which she described the scenes of the tragedy with white-hot emotion, so vividly that the reader could feel them.

Arshagouhi Teotig, the wife of the Armenian writer, publisher, and editor Teotig (Teodoros Labchindjiyan), who founded *Amenoun Daretsouyts* [Everyone's Almanac] in 1907 and edited various other almanacs, went to Cilicia as well. Before that, Arshagouhi had written a collection of short stories titled *Memoirs from the Life of a Student*. On October 20, she disembarked from a ship in Mersin (Zephyrion) and wandered throughout the disaster zone, going everywhere and witnessing the misery of the oppressed, tormented, and starving people. It was there that she began committing to paper what she saw and heard in a book titled *Amis Mu i Giligya* [A Month in Cilicia]. It is not the writer's words that speak in the book, but her inflamed heart, whose outpourings touch the reader even now, a hundred years later.

Yesayan was accompanied by a young unmarried Armenian woman from Russia, Satenik Ohanjanyan, and they visited jails to comfort Armenians who were kept in chains, raised the spirits of those in need, wiped away tears, and wept with others.

THE NUMBER OF FATALITIES

When they had more or less returned to consciousness, the Armenians tried to determine the extent of their losses. This was especially necessary since the Turkish administration was hastening to present a distorted picture of what had happened.

The newly appointed Governor, Baban Zade Mustafa Zihni Pasha, was the first to present the public with false information. Ignorant and foolish by nature, he failed to perceive the situation and make appropriate plans. Thus, he soon became a tool in the hands of others, and at these people's urging, he sent false and biased telegrams and other communications to Constantinople. In a May 1st telegram to the Sublime Porte he stated, "The number of Muslims killed in the Adana vilayet is 1,924, and the number of Muslims wounded is 533; the number of Armenians killed is 1,455 and 383 Armenians were wounded."^{*}

The government accepted these incredibly mendacious numbers from Adana as preliminary data and instructed Mustafa Zihni Pasha to obtain a more accurate final number of the losses. After all kinds of supposed verifications and deliberations, the constitutional Ottoman government finally determined the number of losses, and officially announced to the world, that in the course of the Cilician massacres, 5,538 people had been killed, including 3,502 Christians and 2,036 Muslims.[†] Government representatives insisted stubbornly on these adjusted numbers in their dealings with foreign correspondents.

The Turkish government sent notes with the same numbers to its foreign ambassadors as well, in order to have them published in different languages and mislead public opinion.

The Ottoman Embassy in Paris distributed a statement that was first published by the Young Turk daily *Tanin* in Constantinople in its issue dated May 15, 1909, and it was reprinted by newspapers in the French capital. The statement emphasized that the number of people killed on all sides in Cilicia had not exceeded 4,000, and that all talk of 20,000 or 30,000 dead was a figment of the imagination of local Christians.[‡] In order to minimize the number of Armenian victims by ten or twenty times, high-level Turkish officials declared the number of Armenians in Adana vilayet—which had

* *Arevelk*, no. 7085, April 29, 1909.

† *Horizon*, no. 64, March 23, 1910.

‡ Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 42.

between 150,000 and 200,000 Armenians—to be 48,000 or even as low as 40,000.^{*}

There were dozens of exclusively Armenian-populated villages in which the number of Armenian families had been reduced ten or twenty times, or they had been annihilated altogether. There were no men left in the ruined and razed Armenian villages—they had all been killed.[†] Upon entering a village, before unleashing a general massacre, the mob first sought out the strong and daring young men and prominent wealthy Armenians. These people were killed by reputable thugs, who considered killing poor and miserable Armenians by common murderers beneath their own dignity. In many Armenian settlements, no male older than three remained.[‡] About eight thousand people had died in the flames when the houses and churches were set on fire. Everything that was strong, energetic, and full of life was ruthlessly destroyed.

In response to the misleading statement made by the Turkish ambassador in Paris, the Christian leaders of different denominations of Cilicia sent a protest letter to the French newspaper *Le Temps*, stating that the number of people killed in Cilicia was at least 20,000, and could quite possibly be 30,000.^{**}

During and after the massacres, reporters from Europe had given numbers to their newspapers and journals that differed entirely from the numbers presented by Turkish officials. Their main conclusion was that from 30,000 to 35,000 people had been killed in Cilicia between April 1 and April 14.^{††} The Consul General of Russia in Beirut, Prince Gagarin, attested to the same thing, describing the number of human losses suffered by Armenians as more than 30,000.^{‡‡}

The numbers quoted by the Armenian mass media were close to those of foreign newspapers. *Arevelk* put the number of Christians killed in Adana and the surrounding areas at 25,000, among them 23,000 Armenians.^{***} According to data from the newspaper *Azadamard*, 18,627 people were killed in the city of Adana alone. Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak* was second in the

* *Pisuzantion*, no. 3834, May 11(24), 1909.

† *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 22, May 26, 1909, 517.

‡ *Horizon*, no. 45, February 27, 1910.

** Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 42.

†† National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 3, file 19, p. 6.

‡‡ *Banber Hayastani Arkhivneri*, no. 2 (102), 2003, 17.

*** *Arevelk*, no. 7075, April 17, 1909.

number of human losses; according to the newspaper *Horizon*, 5,800 people were killed there.* According to the same newspaper, in another *sandjak* of the vilayet Kozan, some 1,000 people were killed.†

Thus, the numbers of those killed quoted in the Armenian press range between 31,000 and 32,000, among them 29,000–30,000 Armenians.

Souren Bartevian estimated the number of people killed in Adana vilayet alone at 20,000.‡ The Reverend Hampartsoum Ashdjian estimated the number of Armenians killed in Adana and adjacent areas at 20,000.¶ According to Hagop Terzian, 22,512 Christians were killed in Cilicia, including 21,361 in Adana province and 1,151 in Aleppo province. Among the victims, 18,839 were Armenians, 1,250 Greeks, 850 Assyrians (Suryani), and 422 Chaldeans (Keldani) (the numbers for the latter three minorities had been given to Terzian by their spiritual leaders).††

The governing body of the Armenian National Assembly quoted the number of Cilician victims at 22,500 in its information bulletin.††† However, according to a member of the Political Assembly of the same Armenian National Assembly, Haroutiun Shahrigian, the total number of people killed in Cilicia exceeded 30,000.*** And lastly, Member of the Ottoman Parliament Hagop Babigian put the overall number of Christian victims at 21,000, including 19,479 Armenians, 250 Greeks, 850 Assyrians, and 422 Chaldeans.††† During the first massacre alone, 2,762 migrants were killed in the khans of Adana alone.††††

Thus, according to Armenian sources, the number of Armenian victims in Cilicia ranges between 20,000 and 25,000, and the number of other Christian victims is between 1,500 and 2,500. All of the figures provided in various publications are approximate and do not give a clear view of the enormity of human losses.

* *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1910.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhasirku*, 32.

¶ *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniayev Housher*, 27.

†† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 278–281.

††† National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 3, file 19, p. 9.

*** Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 514.

†††† Hagop Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu. Deghegakir Hagop Babigian* [The Massacre of Adana: A Report by Hagop Babigian] (Constantinople, 1919), 48.

††††† Puziantz Yeghiayan, *Adanayi Hayoti Badmoustian* [History of Adana Armenians] (Antelias, 1970), 232.

Naturally, it was very difficult to determine the real number of the fatalities for the following reasons: (1) Both the authorities and murderers often hid the corpses; (2) no one thought about counting the fatalities during the days of horror, and the unfortunate victims were buried as quickly as possible; (3) many bodies of the dead were left in the depths of forests, wells, and caves, or they were taken to sea by the rivers; (4) no one dealt with identifying the bodies of thousands of unknown migrants; and (5) many among those missing were considered to have left Cilicia, although the majority of them had been slaughtered on their way to the ships. For these reasons, no fact sheet containing an exact number of the fatalities in the course of the massacres was compiled, as thousands of people had vanished without a trace.

It was not only the direct barbarity, by means of swords and axes, rifles and fires, that had inflicted immense losses on the Armenians. After the massacres, thousands died of cold, hunger, and mental anguish. Simon Zavarian estimated, for example, that if in the past there had been thirty to thirty-five deaths per year among the Armenian Evangelicals in the city of Adana, after the massacres, this number rose sharply. During the first three months immediately following the massacres, 55 people died within the same community and another 110 people died in the subsequent eight months (between July 1909 and March 1910), totaling 165 deaths in one year—in other words, five times more than in any previous year.*

Between forty and fifty people died each day in the city of Adana alone, mainly children. The majority of them were buried without priests, since the clergymen were unable to attend all of the burials, and moreover, many priests had themselves been killed. Many mothers dug the graves of their own children, but would not cover the bodies over with earth, since their other children were at death's door and were to be laid in the same grave. According to rough estimates, following the massacre, eight thousand people were killed by frost or famine.†

Thus, the total number of people killed in the course of the massacres that took place between April 1 and April 13, and those who died under unbearable conditions in the aftermath, might be approximated at 40,000,‡ and was, in any case, no less than that number, according to the Secretary of

* *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1910.

† *Horizon*, no. 73, April 2, 1910.

‡ *Pruzantion*, no. 3827, May 1 (14), 1909.

the Armenian Prelacy in Adana, Kerovbe Papazian.* Naturally, this figure is also rough, as are all the others quoted.

The living grieved over their losses, but it is impossible to assuage their fathomless sorrow.

MATERIAL LOSSES

The material losses sustained by the Armenians were vast. In the city of Adana alone, they amounted to 300,000 Ottoman gold lira (in 1909 prices).[†]

Piuzantion reported: "With our weak voices and deficient means we tried in vain to make ourselves heard and make it understood that 'the name of Adana should be erased even from the maps from now on,' for today that neat and prosperous city is non-existent; today only ashes, memories, and pools of Armenian blood exist."[‡]

After the tragedy, large amounts of goods stolen from shops owned by Christian merchants were transferred to Muslim houses of trade. Many Turkish merchants became rich men overnight. Portions of the goods were transported on carts, camels, and mules to the surrounding villages and towns and even to distant provinces, out of fear that the authorities would force the robbers to return the loot.

The majority of Christian villages in Adana vilayet had been literally leveled to the ground. Though the authorities concealed by all means the real extent of the disaster, some of them were compelled to make at least some data public. For instance, even the minimal figures quoted by the new Governor of Adana, Mustafa Zihni Pasha, ascertained that two-thirds of the public wealth of that province alone had been destroyed. About half of the houses belonging to Armenians in the province had been burned down and destroyed. The picture was almost the same in the Aleppo vilayet.^{**} But it was impossible to determine the real extent of the material losses. All of the Armenians—rich or poor—had been deprived of their livelihood.

The bitter blows and vivid scenes of bloodshed numbed the minds of the Cilician Armenians and turned their feelings to stone. At the same time, the miserable economic situation that had turned the lives of the half-starved Armenian peasants of Cilicia upside-down also forced them not to raise their eyes and look beyond the borders of their ruined villages, since they had

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3839, May 16 (29), 1909.

† *Arvelk*, no. 7075, April 17, 1909.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3827, May 1 (14), 1909.

** *Horizon*, no. 22, January 30, 1910.

neither the energy nor the heart to think about the unhappy lot of their brothers, kinsmen, or neighbors. This was natural, since the fresh wounds in their hearts still smarted, and the ferocious prospect of starving to death loomed on their doorsteps like a ghost.

NEW EXODUS

As a result of the massacres, as well as the hunger and disease in their aftermath, the number of Cilician Armenians decreased by 30,000 to 35,000. It was compounded by the dire sorrow at the martyrdom of thousands of their brothers, sisters, and children, and the flight from the land of crime and blood of many thousands of Armenians, who carried with them the mournful memory of their incinerated paternal hearths.

Migration or emigration was Armenia's ancient wound. The endless wars and oppression by the nations that dominated them, and their overall insecurity, had forced the Armenians who had been repressed and subdued as Christians to emigrate to unknown foreign lands in the hope of finding the most basic living conditions.

In Cilicia, every Armenian had lost the hope of ever living again and thought only of flight and saving themselves from that land of death, which had reduced them to a state of nervous shock amounting to madness. Leaving behind their homes and jobs, friends and relatives, many Armenians gathered what they could and embarked upon the path of flight, without any knowledge of where they were going or where would they take refuge.

"They killed us, killed us and put into chains those who had saved themselves, hanged those who had resisted... Let us escape, let us escape... The sun of this land of ours has turned black..." they said with heavy hearts as they abandoned their homes.

The very first massacre in the city of Adana triggered the panic-stricken exodus of the Armenians of Cilicia.[†] A Greek intellectual from Cyprus wrote during those days, "The Armenians kept fleeing, constantly fleeing. They ran away not only from daggers and flames, but also from the courts, which having been created in the name of justice, were looking for ways to torment the innocent instead of punishing the guilty..."[‡]

The Armenians who had miraculously escaped from sword and fire huddled together in the port of Mersin. Among them in particular were a large number of widows and orphans—barefoot, half-naked, mud-spattered,

* *Arvelk*, no. 7133, June 25, 1909.

† *Droshak*, no. 9, September, 1909. [‡] Yesayan, *Averagneroun Mech*, 214.

eyes dilated in terror, each one of them having suffered unprecedented ordeals, each with their own story and pain.

The European cargo ships anchored at the port suspended the transport of goods because their lower decks and main deck were filled with Armenian refugees who were leaving with haphazardly bundled clothes, cursing their country, fate, and God. The French captains of the ships and seamen demonstrated particular humanity.

On April 25, Captain Lafon of the steamship *Niger*, which was owned by the company *Messageries Maritimes* and had sailed in from Cyprus, took on board and cared for 2,200 massacre survivors from the Syrian shore. The refugees were similarly indebted to the captain of the *Victor-Hugo*, who had taken as many people on board.³ The same humanity was demonstrated by the crews of the cruisers *Jules Ferry* and *La Verité*, which had saved hundreds of victims from death by transporting them to Latakia under the moral patronage of France. The captains of British, Russian, and German ships also gave aid to the refugees, taking them to Lebanon, Egypt, and Cyprus.

In the second half of April, five thousand people were transported to Beirut by European vessels, and approximately the same number of Armenians went to Cyprus. More than three thousand refugees took shelter in Alexandria, Egypt. A number of Armenians were taken by ship to Crete.*

The Armenians who had taken shelter in Cyprus and Egypt appealed to the local diplomatic representatives of Russia, committing themselves to adopting Orthodoxy, hoping that in this way they would fall under the protection of the Russian Tsar and would be able to return to their ruined homes with Russian help.

For example, Avedis Gulbenkian, along with three other Cilician Armenians sheltered in Cyprus, wrote a letter to the Catholicos of All Armenians Matteos II Izmirlian, informing him that "having no trust in the constitutional government of Constantinople anymore," they had decided to "adopt the Russian religion in order to live in Adana under the protection of the Russian government."[†] Upon receiving the letter, the Catholicos wrote a note on it urging them to "renounce such thoughts."[‡] For similar reasons, the

* It is worth mentioning that the Russian government intended (in 1898–1899) to send 40,000 Armenians who had settled in the Caucasus in the aftermath of the 1895–1896 massacres of the Turkish Armenians to Crete, but it had to drop the idea under public pressure. See *Droshak*, no. 6 (97), June, 1899, 89–90.

† Archive of Matteos Izmirlian, RG 34, file 14, item 521, Madenataran.

‡ Ibid.

desire to join the Catholic or various Evangelical Churches was also widespread.

More and more groups of refugees left the Cilician shores. Many did not go to the neighboring regions, but traveled far away from the Ottoman Empire, to Europe and America.* Turkish steamship companies had been instructed not to sell tickets to those Armenians going to Beirut or any other Ottoman port, but only to those who were leaving for foreign countries.

The situation of the refugee Armenians aboard Turkish ships was unbearable. The crewmen on these ships were all Muslim, the majority of them Laz (Islamized Georgians). A witness traveling aboard of one of those ships wrote:

[The Laz seamen] could not control their hatred toward the miserable Armenian refugees, even outside Turkish borders, and all day long looked for an excuse to reproach, mock, and otherwise humiliate them. How many times have I heard these man-like beasts saying to each other with sarcastic grins, 'The Armenians have conquered Adana... The Armenians have established a *Beylik* [sovereignty]. They have... ha, ha, ha...'

But I ran out of patience when one of them shouted to a refugee Armenian woman, 'Aren't you done for yet, you pigs?'

I went to complain to the captain but he just looked at me with indifference.[†]

The wide scale exodus was alarming. Historical Armenian Cilicia was being deserted in front of everyone's eyes. The efforts to save the victims from starvation were not enough to stop the mass migration. More radical measures were needed.

In order to improve the situation to some extent, if not to stop the exodus then at least to slow it down, the central government's intervention was necessary. Souren Bartevian wrote, "If the central government in Constantinople through its direct and strictest orders does not bring an end to this awful situation, the entire nation will pour into the sea to escape, to run away. Hundreds of people are already leaving by ship, with their families and children."[‡]

* *Pisantzian*, no. 3849, June 9 (22), 1909.

† Bartevian, *Gilguyan Arhavirku*, 148–149.

‡ Ibid., 40.

He noted the same figure in his letter of April 19 (May 2), 1909 addressed to the Cairo newspaper *Lousaper-Aree*. He wrote, "We must also deal with the future fate of the Cilician victims. Where should they go, what should they do, how will they manage to reestablish a foothold to live in this ruined and scorched land? Assistance, no matter how abundant, cannot become a lasting basis for the life of the entire population. Will we allow the Cilicians to emigrate en masse and assimilate in the alien ocean, to disappear, or will we manage to keep the survivors attached to their land—restoring their incinerated hearths and creating means for their survival?"*

The government and the Patriarchate had to think not only about saving the victims from starvation, but also finding the sums necessary to restore the ruined economy.

The Cilician massacres raised a new wave of emigration of Armenians from Western Armenia and other regions of Turkey as well. The deceptive Ottoman constitution had not brought about any improvement for the Armenian population. During the brief reign of the Young Turks, life in the Armenian-populated provinces had gradually deteriorated even further. It was especially intolerable for the young generation, who had grown up with national self-consciousness and aspirations and had compulsory military service hanging over their heads like the sword of Damocles.

A new initiative by the murderous authorities of Adana further contributed to the exodus of the Cilician Armenians. Just a few days after the massacres, they embarked upon the strict collection of various taxes from Armenians who had not yet recovered from the calamity and found themselves in the jaws of starvation and disease, thus also threatening to deprive them of all their property.[†]

Every young Armenian man who had any possibility strove to leave Turkey in order to avoid becoming a soldier.[‡] The emigration to Russia and Persia of mostly single young men gained new impetus. But this time, the main stream headed for Europe and America. The small group of Armenian youths who had returned to their native land from America after the 1908 Ottoman revolution left Cilicia as well. They, who had returned to their home country with such yearning, were again inclined to run toward steamships heading for the New World. Many of them settled in South

* Barcevan, *Gilguyan Arhavirk*, 148–149.

† *Pisaxantion*, no. 3832, May 8 (21), 1909; no. 3 84 1, May 19 (June 1), 1909.

‡ *Nor Hadjin Radmakirk, 1921–1973* [Nor Hadjin Chronicle, 1921–1973] (Buenos Aires, 1974), 28.

America. Those who emigrated to the Americas injected new strength and ardor into the expatriate organizations operating there, initiating at the same time the opening of various new branches.

The successful escape of several thousands of Cilician Armenians gave some Armenian periodicals and national figures occasion to believe that in order to be saved, the Cilician Armenians as a whole should migrate to a foreign country, where they would find security for their lives, honor, and property and would have a decent life.

This issue had first been raised before the Armenians by a number of American and European Armenophiles following the large-scale anti-Armenian massacres of 1895–1896. They suggested moving the entire Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire to America, in particular, allotting them fertile land there. It was this unfeasible idea that emerged once again after the Cilician calamity, taking on for some people the illusion of a real possibility.

This might have meant the incipient destruction of the spirit and way of thinking of the Armenian people, more devastating than any massacre in Cilicia or throughout Armenia, and it had to be stopped at all costs. Vahan Tekeyan, referring to the 1895–1896 massacres of Armenians in the Armenian *vilayets* of the Ottoman Empire wrote, "Fourteen years ago, we were not yet at this stage of decline; at that time, we learned to endure our pain more nobly... After the [Adana] massacres, we should not have been generally so weak and fainthearted as if we had been almost wiped out and forced to save ourselves by fleeing from our religion, nationality, and country."[§]

The Armenian Church, political parties, and many intellectuals vigorously opposed the idea of abandoning the country en masse. The leadership of the Hnchag Party believed that the possibility of gradually rendering the Ottoman Empire more humane and making the constitution really work had not been exhausted. The official party weekly newspaper *Gohak*, published in Constantinople, wrote, "As long as Turkey remains a constitutional country and does not hinder the advancement of all its citizens, the self-determination and physical existence of nations will remain inviolable. As long as the Ottoman peoples have the opportunity to freely and self-sufficiently enjoy justice, and everyone is the master of his own life, property, honor, and labor,

§ *Shinag* (Constantinople), no. 14–15, May 16, 1909, 297.

the Armenians will always be honorable and devoted constituents who build this beautiful country and make it flourish.”*

The weekly noted that if the Armenian people had been an adventurous and nomadic tribe consisting of a few thousand families, perhaps it would have been somewhat excusable to consider moving them from one place to another, but fortunately, that was not the case. Instead, they had their past, history, rich culture and literature, distinctive traditions and customs cemented with blood and sweat of millennia. All of this was strongly attached to their native land.†

How could a people who had been settled, civilized, and agrarian for centuries, who had houses, land, and farms leave all that behind and emigrate? And what about the material, physical, and political hardships and problems related to language, customs, way of living, and climate in a foreign country, should they choose to move?

Yet despite all the efforts that the national organizations exerted, they were unable to stop or even slow down the emigration. The specter of new massacres drove people to unknown distances. Historian Arshag Albovjadian wrote on this subject:

Seeing the probable danger of the exodus of Armenians, national religious authorities and party leaders made every endeavor to stop the process. But all to no avail. The natural instinct of our people is much more powerful and expressive than all the eloquence and philosophizing of the would-be orators.

The very near future [the 1915 Genocide] would come to demonstrate [that] the natural instinct of Armenians had not deceived them.‡

Replacing the departing Armenians, foreign populations were settling in Cilicia, including, according to the newspaper *Isidal*, three hundred Jewish families who were expected to engage in trade and agriculture.**

WHO ORGANIZED THE MASSACRES?

Who, after all, were the organizers of the Cilician massacres? Who guided the actions of the bloodthirsty mobs A century has passed, but no clear-cut answers to these questions have been found.

* *Hobak* (Constantinople), no. 1, May 30, 1909.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Arshag Albovjadian, *Badmoutiun Malatyo Hayots* [History of the Armenians of Malatia] (Beirut, 1961), 1317–1318.

** *Pisanzion*, no. 3856, June 17 (30), 1909.

From the very first days of the massacres, the conviction emerged in the public consciousness that what had happened was one of the last crimes of the Hamidian clique, that the main actors were the Adana governor, the commander of the local troops, and other Armenian-hating Hamidian forces of the vilayet. The fact that the Cilician massacres took place concurrently to the military rebellion in Constantinople convinced many people that Sultan Abdul Hamid's supporters had carried out the massacres on orders from Yildiz Palace.

This view was first put forward by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), which by that time had for a year-and-a-half been connected by ties of friendship with the Young Turk Ittihat party. The official position of the ARF was that the Cilician calamity was Abdul Hamid's last attempt to restore his former unlimited power, a chance "misunderstanding" and a deed committed by individuals. In protest against the inaccurate reports on the Cilician massacres printed in the Paris newspapers, the Geneva headquarters of the ARF issued a statement in May 1909 which read, in particular, "It is indeed unheard of that the current government is trying to share the responsibility, when even individuals representing the new regime have confirmed unanimously and with so much evidence that the massacres were planned and organized by the Hamidian officials even before the March 31 coup d'etat..."

Armenian historian Hrant Pasternadjan was correct when he wrote that "the ARF in particular, which closely collaborated with the Young Turks in the joint struggle against the Hamidian regime, now, after its fall, prefers to ascribe the bloody slaughter to the old dying regime."† The press outlets of the ARF tried repeatedly to inculcate into the Armenians that the Young Turks and the Hamidians had nothing in common, that they were antagonistic forces. But not many people believed these tales. Everyone remembered that after the fall of the Hamidian tyranny, the Ittihat party had tried to create the impression that national discrimination had been fully abolished and that all Ottoman subjects were equal before the law. However, the Young Turks, after coming to power in July 1908, not only reneged on their promises, but turned into open enemies of the various national liberation movements. They fully adopted the bloodthirsty policies of Abdul

* *Pisanzion*, no. 3841, May 19 (June 1), 1909.

† Hrant Pasternadjan, *Histoire de l'Arménie depuis les origines jusqu'au Traité de Lausanne* [The History of Armenia from the beginning until the Treaty of Lausanne] (Paris, 1964), 396.

Hamid, even surpassing him in cruelty. To solve the national question, the Young Turks chose the path of annihilating the nations, and the Cilician calamity was the first ugly manifestation of their criminal activity.

It was the Young Turks who were responsible for the Cilician disasters; it was they who incited the fanatical people and military against the Armenians. This was accompanied by the concealment or distortion of facts. Thus, the official censor, in his official memorandum of April 21, 1909, demanded that the newspapers stop "the extremely exaggerated and agitating publications" about the Adana events.^{*} On this ground, the publication of *Piuzantion*, which had been revealing the truth, was halted from May 28 (June 10) to June 9 (22). In order to preserve the "equality principle," the provocative newspaper *Itidal* was also punished for the same period of time.

The ARF, which had been allied with the Itihāt party since the end of 1907, spared this party of criminals and leveled its criticism exclusively against Abdul Hamid as the organizer of the slaughter of the Cilician Armenians.[†] This was despite the fact that the Itihāt party itself protected the Sultan as it had before—even after the failed coup d'état of March 31, 1909—by sending so-called investigative commissions to Cilicia. The official investigation conducted in Adana did not corroborate the former Sultan's guilt. The court-martial published a statement in which it fully absolved the former Sultan of responsibility for the Cilician massacres. Yet the court-martial, having come to such a conclusion, did not deem it necessary to find out and inform the public about who had organized the massacres after all.

Bishop Moushegh wrote, "We have been unable thus far to determine the degree of responsibility of the Itihāt in these crimes. But if there were a serious and impartial investigation, it would be able to shed light on the dark sides of the problem."[‡]

Some days later, however, questions arose as to whether there was a link between the Cilician slaughter and the Committee of Union and Progress.

Arshag Tchobanian had already noted "the great extent to which the old regime, the old barbaric mentality, was alive within the so-called new regime."[§]

The Reverend Hampartsoum Ashdjian asked Itihāt party member Hagop Babigian during one of their conversations, "Babigian Effendi, did your

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3819, April 22 (May 5), 1909. ³

† *Arevēlyan Mamoul*, no. 22, May 26, 1909, 518

‡ Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badashkanadosneru*, 57.

§ *Anahid* (Paris), no. 5–6, August–September, 1909, 141.

brothers^{*} have a hand in the Adana events?" Babigian responded, "They are good people, they would not do such a thing." Ashdjian replied, "They would, and would even go further. And, naturally, they will not tell you anything about that, since you are an Armenian, after all. There is a small clique among them who knows about this." Ashdjian wrote, "After considering the issue for a while, Hagop Effendi saw that this was indeed the situation... He became very upset."[†] Ashdjian was convinced that "the main responsibility for the Adana slaughter lay with the Committee of Union and Progress, Turkish nationalism, and chauvinism."[‡]

Of course, in the beginning, the Armenians did not yet have clear evidence to judge that the Committee had organized and carried out the massacre. They were more inclined to accept the ARF's view, which was propagated by all the press outlets of the party. Even one of the sworn adversaries of the ARF, Souren Bartevian, in the aftermath of the massacres, considered the black forces of Abdul Hamid to be the guilty ones, and spoke naïvely of Armenian-Turkish "brotherhood."[§] But as the days went on, new facts came to light and the participation of the Itihāt party in the crime was gradually substantiated.^{¶¶}

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PIECES OF EVIDENCE?

The Committee had a strong presence in the city and vilayet of Adana, and if it had wanted to, it could have placed obstacles in the path of the disaster, both through its influence and by employing direct measures. Yet none of its members applied any effort to restrain the slaughter; on the contrary, many of them joined the ranks of the despotic Hamidian forces and took part in the massacres.

Numerous facts confirm that not only did the Adana chapter of the Itihāt party do nothing to avert the massacres, but its members participated in them zealously. Among these facts was the acknowledgment by one of the leading party members, Mevlanzade Rifat. He stated that even in the alarming days of the Hamidian coup, the Itihāt party did not overlook the Armenians. "According to the instructions received by the Adana chapter from the center, preparations for a general massacre in Cilicia and in Adana, in particular, were

* He is referring to members of the Itihāt party, or, perhaps, masons. The majority of the Itihāt party leaders were masons.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yegheru yev Konkiye Housher*, 51–52.

‡ *Ibid.*, 152.

§ *Piuzantion*, no. 3823, April 27 (May 10) 1909; no. 3834, May 11 (24) 1909.

¶¶ National Archives of Armenia, fonds 424, RG 2, file 8, p. 9.

under way."^{*} Herbert Adams Gibbons attests to the same: "The Adana massacre was the first effort on the part of those who usurped Abdul Hamid's policy and methods when they usurped his authority, to destroy the Armenians."[†] This was also confirmed in a May 29, 1910 "confidential and personal" memorandum sent by the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Gerard Lowther, to the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Charles Hardinge, stating that Ittihat party members "quieted the Armenians with the Adana massacres (1909)."[‡]

The biggest role in the Adana massacres was played by the journal *İttidal*, which was the organ of the local Young Turk committee. In the days preceding the slaughter, this publication had been severely critical of the governor for not being able to hold out against the Armenians, but after the massacre it began praising him and his administration for their efforts to "establish law and order." During the first massacre in Adana, *İttidal* wrote that the Armenians had suffered almost no losses, while the city streets had run with Turkish blood, thereby inspiring the Muslims to undertake the second, larger-scale massacre. It also turned out that the newspaper's editor, İhsan Fikri, was in constant contact with the Ittihat city committee.

The second Adana massacre was put into action at the hands of a military unit that was part of the Second Army stationed in Salonika under the command of the Young Turk government. The commanders of this unit justified their heinous deeds with the implausible allegation that the Armenians had put up armed resistance and they had been compelled to respond with force of arms."^{**}

The European press demonstrated with strong evidence that the Committee of Union and Progress had taken part in the massacres, and moreover, did not rule out that many leading Young Turks were among the organizers. This was how the situation was presented in a May 9, 1909 editorial in the French newspaper *Le Temps*. The author believed that the Young Turk government had designed the bloody slaughter of the Armenians. He wrote that the *vali* of Adana vilayet had organized the massacres "on

* Mevlanzade Rifat, *Turkakan heghapokhutyun must tsalkere* [Inner folds of the Ottoman revolution (in Armenian)] (Beirut, 1975), 171.

† Herbert Adams Gibbons, *Poslednie izbienia v Armenii* [The Latest Massacres in Armenia] (Petrograd, 1916), 26.

‡ Gevorg Yazichyan, *Zgushacek keghts barecamnerits* [Beware of false friends] (Yerevan, 2002), 70.

** *Shirag*, no. 11, April 18, 1909, 259.

orders from higher-ups and this is proved by a telegram from the interior ministry official [*müsteşar*, or advisor] Adil Bey [to the Adana *vali*], which clearly stated that 'no Europeans should be harmed.' It is clear that he made it understood that 'the Armenians should be harmed.' From there it was but one step to massacring Armenians, and that is what the Muslim population did."[†] Referring to this telegram from Adil Bey, Suleiman Nazif Bey, who had always been sympathetic toward Armenians, stressed in the May 3, 1909 issue of the newspaper *Osmanlı*, "Neither God nor civilized humanity accepts this massacre... The main responsibility for it lies with the Sublime Porte."[‡]

Piuzantion wrote that the Young Turk-Armenian Revolutionary Federation "brotherhood was Judas-like," since the Young Turks "more or less followed the Armenian-hating policy of Hamid whenever an opportunity offered itself..."[‡]

After the Cilician calamity, the Ittihat party made no official statement condemning the massacre, and no party leader expressed sorrow. Moreover, one of the Ittihat party leaders and the President of the Ottoman Parliament, Ahmed Riza, who was in Paris, declared at the very beginning of the massacre that the Armenians were the guilty ones."^{**} Bartevian noted:

At the dawn of the Cilician tragedy, we longed to hear a spontaneous and impassioned cry of the heart from the Young Turk leaders and activists; we waited, yes, for the Ahmed Rizas and Hussein Djahids^{††} to be moved and spring forward in an earnest impulse of pain and compassion.

But they uttered not a single word, breathed not a sigh in the face of the dreadful evil committed, and kept silent motionlessly, as though petrified... And when it was necessary to open their mouths, their incoherent words, vague syllables, and stock phrases were devoted to obscuring the sinister reality."^{‡‡}

* For the Armenian translation of the *Le Temps* editorial, see *Mshak*, no. 94, May 6, 1909.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3818, April 21 (May 4), 1909.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3827, May 1 (14), 1909.

** *Shirag*, no. 12-13, May 2, 1909, 288.

†† Hussein Djahid Bey was a zealous Ittihatist member of parliament, a Donme Jew, and the editor of the newspaper *Tanin*.

‡‡ Bartevian, *Gilgigyan Arhavirk*, 118.

When the Cilician Armenian lawyer Khntir Simonian was asked what sort of a Young Turk Yusuf Kemal Bey was, he responded, "This man has not killed Armenians, but when an Armenian dies, he rejoices."^{*}

One Young Turk activist reprimanded a Muslim resident of Adana during a conversation, saying, "When we told you to rub the Armenians' noses into the dirt a bit, we did not mean to destroy all of them like this."[†]

Even if the conspiratorial aspirations ascribed to Armenians had been accurate, if the slanders against them had been partly true, and if some of them had indeed nurtured rebellious ideas, this could not serve as a reason for the Young Turks to remain silent over the massive savagery committed by Turks against Armenians.

The disclosures regarding the zealous participation of the so-called constitutional government in organizing the massacres that were gradually coming to light left no doubt about the hostile attitude of the Young Turk ruling circles in Constantinople towards the Armenian people. Referring to this increasingly toughening attitude, the periodical *La Revue de Paris*, in an August 11, 1910 article titled, "New Armenian Massacres," attributed the organization and implementation of the Armenian massacres to the Young Turks and their government, and also emphasized that these massacres would not be the last ones, but were the precursors of further massacres to be organized by the Itrihat party.

The Constantinople Armenian intellectual circles believed that if the Cilician massacres had taken place during the despotic regime of Abdul Hamid, the Turkish Armenian people would not have felt so strongly about the occurrence as they did now, under the new regime, whose architects had come to power with anti-Hamidian slogans.

True, they would still have been shocked, but at the same time they would have considered it to be yet another periodic misfortune, and would not have fallen into the depths of despair.

It was not just the Armenians of Cilicia who were in a state of utter despondency and desperation, but the Armenians everywhere—from Constantinople to the provinces of Western Armenia, from the Caucasus to the Armenian communities abroad.[‡]

* Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaeye Housher*, 90.

† *Ibid.*, 91.

‡ *Hinchag* (Paris), no. 4-5, April-May 1909, 23.

After the restoration of the constitution, when Turkish Armenians were afire with the hope that their long-standing suffering was finally over, this horrid blow to the head with an iron mace seemed to tear their nerves to pieces irrevocably. The centuries-long determination with which they had borne oppression and suffering wilted, and Armenians fell hopelessly along the thorny ascent of torture, crying breathlessly, "I cannot go on any more!"

Writer and journalist Yervant Odian, who had always considered the Hamidian retrograde policies to be the root of all the evil in the empire, wrote:

Yes, our delusion was awful, since we naïvely believed that we had reached the peak, but then new heights appeared before us. We now resemble a prisoner who after being chained in a dark dungeon for years is set free, and just as he begins to breathe the air of freedom and turn his eyes to the sun, is now grabbed by the scruff of his neck and thrown back into the dungeon.

The question "Who organized the massacres?" hung in the air at the time. Was it Sultan Hamid and his milieu? The Young Turk revolutionaries and their adherents? "According to what we have seen, besides the name, there is no difference between the Young Turks and the Old Turks," wrote Ashdjian. "Both are the enemies of the Christians; both think that Turkey is for the Turks and the Muslims first. It is a gift for the Christians to live in this country. They should thank their lucky stars for it, no matter that massacres or wars occur."^{*}

They were fashioned from the same clay. Both were mortal enemies of the Armenians. The massacre was organized and carried out by age-old despotism.

REACTIONS TO THE MASSACRES

The great national tragedy gave rise to bottomless pain and desperate fury among the expatriate Armenians, who could do nothing apart from managing to publish articles truthfully representing the reality in a few foreign newspapers and organizing several public meetings in one or two countries.

The massacres were still taking place when a meeting was organized on April 12 (25) by local Armenians in the hall of the *Café du Globe* on Boulevard de Strasbourg in Paris.^{††} Eight hundred people attended the gathering.

* *Shinag*, no. 11, April 18, 1909, 241-243.

† *Arvelik*, no. 7112, June 1, 1909.

‡ Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaeye Housher*, 90.

** Madenataran, Archive of Matteo Izmirlian, RG 34, file 14, item 206.

†† *Anahid*, no. 1-2, April-May 1909, 47.

including many Frenchmen. After opening remarks by Dikran Khan Kelegian, who presided over the meeting, speeches were made describing the unbearable situation in which the Cilician Armenians found themselves. Several French people made statements as well, condemning the indifference displayed by Europe and criticizing the Young Turks with the connivance of whom the massacres were still going on. At the end of the meeting, two delegations were formed; one went to file a complaint with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stéphen Pichon, and the other went to see the Ottoman ambassador to Paris, Naum Bey. After the meeting, a fundraising commission was set up to assist the ill and wounded survivors, the orphans, and other Cilician Armenians who were starving to death.* One of the documents adopted by the gathering was addressed to the British Consul in Mersin and read: "The large meeting convened by the Armenian community in Paris unanimously voted to express its warmest gratitude for your utter devotion when you intervened to defend the Armenians during the recent massacre."[†]

The massacres of the Armenians and other Christians in Cilicia did not receive such wide publicity throughout Europe, Russia, and in other countries as did the 1895–1896 Armenian massacres that claimed more than 300,000 victims. Europe listened to the sad news of the latest Armenian massacres with indifference and fatigue.[‡] The tragedy only occupied the political circles and press of other countries for a short period of time.

Historian Leo (Arakel Babakhanyan) wrote, "The Adana massacre did not even attract the attention of European diplomacy—first of all, because a part of the European press considered Armenians to have caused it, and, secondly, because the ARF did not make much ado about it in the international arena, did not organize diplomatic missions, or other similar forlorn tricks."^{††}

The massacres in Cilicia, especially in Adana, were addressed to some extent by the parliaments of France, England, Italy, and Switzerland. On May 17, Member of Parliament Denis Cochin spoke against the massacres in the French Parliament, describing the horrors that had taken place.^{††} He read letter written on April 13 (26) by a Frenchman from Mersin that said:

* *Arevik*, no. 7076, April 18, 1909.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3818, April 21 (May 4), 1909.

‡ *Shirg*, no. 16, May 25, 1909, 334.

†† Leo, *Türkahay heghapokhtutyan gaghapanbanutisune* [The ideology of the Turkish Armenian revolution] (Paris, 1935), 2:59.

†† *Anahid*, no. 1–2, April–May 1909, 48.

It is beyond my power to describe the latest events in our province, which history will note in the darkest colors. Indeed, the human mind cannot accurately imagine the incidents of incredible savagery and brutality that have taken place here. The infamous Tamerlane would not have dared to commit such atrocities before the eyes of the civilized world... The numerous corpses thrown into the river in Adana have reached Mersin and cover the surface of the sea.

In a powerful speech, Cochin expressed regret that the French government had not intervened resolutely and effectively to save the people condemned to massacre, and at the same time he demanded that the government take decisive measures in the event of a renewed outburst of slaughter. In such a case, he argued, the French warships in the Mediterranean Sea were to have given orders to immediately disembark troops on the Cilician shore to take the Armenian population under their protection.[†]

When Cochin suggested that the Parliament appeal to the government to send troops to Adana, the following exchange took place between him and the leader of the French socialists, Jean Jaurès:

Jaurès: The first intervention [sending the warships] will be enough.

Cochin: It will not. I do not agree with you on that.

Jaurès: I fully agree with you in wishing that France do as much as possible to protect the Armenians more effectively. But I am confident that by sending troops ashore, we will not be able to achieve the goal, since by doing so we will stir up the religious fanaticism of the Muslims against the Armenians even more.

Cochin: If the massacres recur after the French troops have disembarked, the troops will have to open fire on the slaughterers at once, and without a second thought. The instigators of the slaughter and the disgrace that take place must be held responsible.[‡]

Minister of Foreign Affairs Stéphen Pichon, Member of Parliament Edouard Vaillant, and others also took the floor.^{††} The Foreign Minister consented to Cochin's proposals, noting that when the government had received the news about the massacres, it had immediately sent several warships to the Cilician shore. According to *Piuzantion*, "The Jules Michelet,

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 627–628.

† *Anahid*, no. 1–2, April–May 1909, 18.

‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 639–640.

†† *Ibid.*, 640–641.

Jules Ferry, and other warships exerted great efforts and transferred a great number of Armenians to safe locations.”

The House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom only briefly touched upon the events in Cilicia. Member of Parliament Henry Lynch asked the Foreign Secretary how many people had been killed during the Adana incidents and among them, how many were Armenians and Turks. He also inquired as to whether the government intended to inform the House of Commons about it. The Foreign Secretary replied that the information about the massacres was deficient and contradictory. He said that according to the April 14th memorandum from the British Consul in Mersin, twenty thousand people had been killed in the city of Adana, including six hundred Muslims. Together with the fatalities in the areas neighboring Adana, the number of people killed came to twenty-five thousand. After this brief exchange, the British Parliament did not again address the Adana tragedy, and as for the government, it kept complete silence, since it had confidence in the Young Turks, believed in the sincerity of the Itrihat party, and did not want to “complicate their cause.”

The German parliament and government were even more indifferent. Germany strove to please the new regime of the Ottoman Empire at all costs, and considered everything it did to be legitimate. Neither the parliament nor the government issued any reprimand to the Ottoman Empire, in order to demonstrate that only Germany was its true friend.

Unfortunately, the protests and debates in the European parliaments had no positive effect, and the situation remained unchanged, subject to the whim of the governments of the time.

Bartevian noted that “the Armenians—utterly abandoned by European diplomacy and having given up their hopes in it—were not even offered consolation or sympathy in their fathomless grief, but met with only complete indifference toward the immense disaster that had befallen them.”⁷

The European public was influenced, more or less, by the publications in the press. Politicians, intellectuals, and those who had witnessed the massacres wrote for the press. Articles appeared describing the innocent people put to the sword, the countless orphans, and the crowds of deranged and desperate people who had once again chosen the route of mass exodus.

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3833, May 9 (22), 1909.

† Bartevian, *Gilgyan Arhavirkus*, 5.

Cochin condemned the crimes committed against Armenians by Turks in the May 9, 1909 issue of the Parisian *Le Journal Officiel*: “It is impossible to describe the monstrous scenes that have appeared. All of Cilicia has been destroyed, falling victim to hunger and misery... The presence of the European ships did not avert the massacres.” Cochin then appealed to the government: “In the name of humanity, I ask you at this tragic moment to do whatever is possible. The most effective measure would be to ascertain the obligations and the accountability of the administrators and military commanders of the Armenian provinces.”

Other organs of the French press expressed indignation and protest against the Cilician massacres.

The majority of the European press, however, reflected the distorted news, the bogus assurances intended if not to justify the barbarism perpetrated, then to lay the blame for it on the shoulders of the unfortunate Armenians to some extent and, at the same time, to excite pity for the criminals.[†] Among such newspapers were *Le Figaro* and especially, *Le Journal Officiel* in France, *The Times* of London, the German *Rheinische Zeitung*, and other periodicals. Many authors argued on the pages of these and other newspapers that following the constitutional revolution, the Armenians had become insolent and intolerable, which was the reason for the anger of the Muslim population against the Christian Armenians. Moreover, they alleged that Armenians had demonstratively discussed their far-reaching goals, such as seceding from the Ottoman Empire and establishing an independent Armenian state, and for that purpose they had disseminated pictures of their national heroes, staged plays in theatres that ridiculed the Turks and exaggerated the atrocities committed by the Ottoman Sultans, and so on. Naturally, even the European Turkophiles who believed and cited these “realities” had to admit that it was all a pretext for the Turks to unleash massacres in which the Armenian peasantry, which had nothing to do with political propaganda and minded its own business, suffered the most.

The German newspapers, which carried out advocacy for the Turks in Europe, stood out among the press. The press in Germany used the same evil tongue to describe the Adana events as it had during the 1895–1896 general massacre of Armenians. On May 25, Armenian clergyman Basil (Parshegh) wrote to Constantinople’s *Piuzantion* from Munich that the Ottoman Ambassador in Berlin had in his published statements put the number of

* *Anahid*, no. 1–2, April–May 1909, 48.

† Fonds of Krikor Zohrab, no. 2175/1, p. 2, Museum of Literature and Arts.

overall fatalities during the Cilician massacres at less than four thousand, and at the same time, he claimed that the number of Muslims killed had been twice that of the number of Christians. Basil added with regret that the German newspapers were filled with insulting accusations and slander against the Armenian people. The Armenians were mainly blamed for being rebellious.^{*}

The absolute majority of German newspapers refused to make use of information published in the unbiased Turkish press. Periodicals that condemned the bloodshed and pointed to the real instigators did exist. Armenians were grateful to the editorial boards of *Servet-i Fünun*, *Siper-i Saika-i Hürriyet*, and a few other Constantinople newspapers for their impartiality.[†]

In addition to articles in the press, books describing the events were published in Europe, including the work by a French journalist of Greek descent Alexandre Adossides, *Arméniens et Jeunes Turcs: Les Massacres de Cilicie* (Armenians and Young Turks: The Massacres of Cilicia) (Paris, 1910); the compendium of documents by Georges Brézol (Petros Aznavour), *Les Turcs ont passé là... - recueil de documents, dossiers, rapports, requêtes, protestations, suppliques et enquêtes établissant la vérité sur les massacres d'Adana en 1909* (The Turks have been there... collection of documents, records, reports, petitions, protests, and surveys establishing the truth about the massacres of Adana in 1909) (Paris, 1909); and the brochure by Frederick Zaccus, Duckett Ferriman, *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor during April 1909* (London, 1913).[‡] These were later followed by the works of Emile Doumergue, *L'Arménie, les Massacres et la Question d'Orient* (Armenia, the Massacres and the Eastern Question) (Paris, 1917); Herbert Adams Gibbons, *The Blackest Page of Modern History* (New York, 1916); French missionary Paul du Véou, *La passion de la Cilicie* (The Passion of Cilicia) (Paris, 1913),^{**} and others.^{††}

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3839, May 16 (29), 1909.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3828, May 2 (15), 1909.

‡ In 2008, it was published in French in Champigny-sur-Marne, translated by Jean Bariguan.

** Arshag Tchobanian wrote a detailed and favorable review of this book that has remained unpublished. See Fonds of Arshag Tchobanian, file 421, pp. 1–8, National Archives of Armenia.

†† Historian Varuzhan Poghosyan from Yerevan published an interesting study titled 1909: Kilikiya Haykakan Kotratsnery Fransiakan Patmagrutyan Gnahatmamb [The 1909 Armenian massacres in Cilicia in French historiography]. Also see *Haygazian Haykidagan Hantes* [Haykazian Armenological Review] (Beirut) 27 (2007).

Though these works do not present the full picture of the massacres and other atrocities, the authors, nevertheless, describe the events with deep emotion and pain. Vividly describing the Turkish atrocities committed against Armenians, including women, children, and elderly, Gibbons, who witnessed the massacres, wrote: "This massacre was more horrible than those in the days of Abdul Hamid... Those Armenians who had managed to escape with their lives during the first massacre were now annihilated ... Adana has turned into hell."^{*}

Turkish, Arabic, Greek, and Bulgarian newspapers, and numerous Muslim religious leaders, public figures, and politicians, condemned the massacres.

The renowned Egyptian writer Mohammed Lutfi el-Manfaluti wrote an article titled "There is No Cruelty in Islam" in which he expressed scorn for the instigators of the mass killings of the Armenians. Addressing the Muslims who had taken lives of innocent Christian Armenians, he asked:

Of what stone, what boulder are your hearts carved, that they are not horrified at the sight of the blood-soaked victims and the moans of those lying on the ground? Of what are your eyes hewn that you are capable of looking through them at the flames devouring the bodies of little children and at their mothers unable to help, since the flames have robbed them of legs that can walk and arms that can move? I do not applaud you for your success and victory, as I believe that killing the innocent is a deed of the coward and the weak, and one should express grief and pity for you for shedding blood with savagery.[†]

Sheikh Selim al-Bahri, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University, a center of Arabic literature and Islamic learning, was so moved by the deplorable incidents in Adana and Aleppo vilayets that he issued a fatwa. Copies were wired to all notable religious leaders, governors, mayors of large cities, and editorial boards of Arabic and Turkish periodicals, personally covering the expenses for printing and distributing the copies.[‡] In his fatwa, the Grand Imam made the following appeal:

...The Islamic religion prohibits murder, violence, attacks, and robbery equally for Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Muslims residing

* Herbert Adams Gibbons, *Poslednie Izbenia v Armenii* [The Latest Massacres in Armenia] (Petrograd, 1916), 26.

† Mustafa Lutfi el-Manfaluti, "Chka Vayagutyun Islami Mej" [There is No Cruelty in Islam], trans. Norik Levonyan, *Azk* (Yerevan), April 24, 2008.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3831, May 6 (19), 1909.

in those regions and other places must beware of actions banned by God through His Sharia. Bringing forth murders and fires is forbidden... If the murders in Adana and elsewhere are in fact taking place, the instigators of these events have incurred the wrath of God and the Prophet and have defiled the Sharia. Islam will not hesitate to remove such forbidden acts and their perpetrators from the glory of Islam. I hope that upon hearing these words, Muslim brothers will beware of the recurrence of such painful developments, which compromise the followers of this high religion and are a tool in the hands of the enemies.*

Naturally, not all Muslims welcomed the telegram received from Al-Bahri. Among those who did not was one of the instigators of the massacre, the mufti of Adana, who justified the massacre in his letter addressed to Al-Bahri. He lied, saying that before the events, the Armenians had already chosen their king and were very close to creating an independent state in Cilicia, and therefore, there were two options left—to pack up and run from the Armenian army, or to punish the Armenians mercilessly and without distinction. And in order to save the Fatherland, the genuine patriots had chosen the second option.†

Fernand Braun, the editor-in-chief of *Le Journal du Caire* published in Cairo, strongly criticized the xenophobic attitude of the mufti and wrote:

The murderers should not have tried to pretend to be innocent; they will never succeed. Nothing can justify the barbarity and bestial frenzy of men who torture and watch the flow of blood. An animal can find an instinctive joy in that, but an animal is devoid of reason and follows its nature without resistance. A man has an organized mind and is able to think. But is it possible to reckon among the human race all of the packs of man-eaters, when merely reading about the atrocities committed by them arouses turmoil and pity among us, even from the distance of so many days and so many miles?‡

Veliuddin Yeken, a prominent Muslim leader and intellectual of Turkish descent, published the following letter of protest in the Egyptian weekly *Al-Muqattam*:

* For the Armenian translation of the *fatwa*, see *Piuzantion*, no. 3819, April 22 (May 5), 1909.

† *Droshak*, no. 6, June 1909, 67.

‡ For the Armenian translation, see *Shirag*, no. 20, June 20, 1909, 441.

Oh, Islamites,

Have you not feared God, have you not felt ashamed for killing and turning your Christian brothers to enemies? This deed of yours, oh, merciless ones, is the greatest proof that there is no intelligent Muslim or man of honest heart among you. Did your hands not shake? What have you gained from this riot that has not seen its match in centuries? Which one of the barbarian tribes resorted to such crimes?

"Woe to the parents who begot you, woe to the honorable country that has nourished you with its fruit, has satiated you with the water of its rivers, and has kept you under its protection.

"Oh, Ulema,

"Those turbans with which you have weighted your heads and which you have used as a tool to mislead the illiterate people soon will cover your eyes with shame and will poison you as they drop to your mouths. Allah, Mohammed, and the Koran are invincible—none of these three will forgive your deeds. Show us your books and laws that have licensed you to carry out that ruthlessness and murder. We do not know any religion that considers such atrocities permissible. And if such a thing is found among them, we will turn away from it and hate it. Keep us far from it, may we be free of it, as Heavenly Allah is pure and faultless.

"Oh, Turks,

"The world admired you and nations glorified you. The blood coursing through my veins courses through your veins as well. I tell myself that since Allah created me as a Turk I should die as a Turk. But today I blush with shame and I want to hide behind a curtain and not catch anyone's eye. I wish to know whether there is a link between you and human conscience; I would like to find out whether you have human compassion. I wish that the blood that prompts you to fratricide did not circulate in my children. It is not only I who think like this, but every Ottoman, moreover, every man, who respects human life.

"Oh, Ottomans,

"Have you lost your minds? Do you not see where are you headed? Today, at this very moment, as you are reading these lines, our bereaved brothers are being massacred, their houses are being burned and they are being subjected to such suffering as they have never been subjected to by any human being. Now we picture before

our eyes a nation whose only crime was that they have always had a grateful confidence in their neighbors and compatriots, who now butcher them as they have thousands of others. This red and boiling blood flows over their native land.

“Oh, Poets and Writers,

“Put aside reveries and descriptions of black hair, red cheeks, and so on. Stand up—not with me, but with justice, let us together put the black deeds and red days to shame. Use your pens on paper, depict the savage acts, for it is the duty of the poet and writer to dishonor the ruthless and console the sufferers. You have to weep first in order to make your readers’ hearts weep. In this bloodshed, we have returned to the primal bloodshed, and thus we also need to go back to the lamentations of ancient times. Woe is the nation that we have lived with for centuries and that now is falling victim to savagery.

“Stand up, oh, Liberals, stand up.

“You are not numerous, but the fanatics are. If there is no hope of dispersing them, of tearing them apart, of avenging our tormented brothers, then the minimal measure of following the martyred is to die. We live in such a time that we should avoid through a bitter death. We are lost in our vanity and false virtues. Living in such conditions is torture.

“Oh, Western Nations,

“Stand against us, as we deserve blame, but when you move your pens, remember that there [in Turkey] there are Ottomans who weep blood instead of tears, who do not wish for the life they have, and who will never accept the events that have taken place in that historic land.

“Oh, Ottomans Residing in Egypt,

“Hurry to bring about a unity here that would be able in this honorable country to establish laws and to achieve through propagating justice such a situation whereby we all voluntarily go to Anatolia... Let us go to Adana and elsewhere to put out the fire blazing in those lands, to ascend the mountains, bring the survivors together and protect them, and to avenge the slain. And if we do not do that, none of us will have the right to be called a patriot. The objection that one has a family and children are unacceptable. I have a family and children too, let them be a sacrifice to the fatherland

and a burnt offering to the butchered. Let us die there; let the fatherland live, but let us avenge the atrocity and raze all its traces.”*

This article by Yeken, an extremely honest Turkish intellectual, is an exceptional, staggering document, the unique outpouring of a clear and pure human soul.

Egyptian newspapers widely responded to the humanitarian attitude displayed by the Cairo Turks. At the end of April, the city’s Turks formed a delegation that went to the Armenian Church to express their condolences for the widespread Armenian massacres. The parish priest expressed his gratitude and was told by the head of the delegation:

You need not thank us, since we are here to offer our condolences. The occurrence has caused us as much sorrow as it has you, for we are all Ottomans, we have one fatherland, and we are all consumed with grief. We want to emphasize one point—the Islamic religion rejects such sorrowful incidents. History teaches us that the Islamic religion is a religion of humanity, justice, and goodwill. It is deplorable that some ignorant persons in the guise of ulema are endeavoring to deceive the people. But rest assured, we have educated ulema who are able to counter their efforts and dispel the darkness they brought forth with the light of truth. What we have done so far has been to send the necessary telegrams to organize immediate assistance for the sufferers. And now we are working with all our hearts to render aid.†

The Armenian clergymen responded by saying, “Long live the Ottoman homeland! Long live fraternity!”‡

One Turkish newspaper that condemned the widespread massacres of Armenians in a series of articles was *Siper-i Saika-i Hürriyet*. An article titled “Our Armenian Compatriots” and signed A. Tch. read notwithstanding the fact that nine months had passed since the constitution had proclaimed fraternity between the Armenians and the Turks:

the horrible events in Adana took place, making the souls of all genuine Ottomans weep. The deep sorrow that this incident brought forth has not vanished yet, since the bloody wound opened in the body of our friendship is not one that easily heals. While here,

* Veliuddin Yeken, *Al-Mugattam*, no. 18, April 16 (29), 1909). The Armenian translation was first published in *Arevelk* (no. 7085, April 29, 1909).

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3822, April 25 (May 8), 1909.

‡ *Ibid.*

we fill our bellies with delicacies and spend our selfish lives in comfortable beds. There, fatherless orphans and brotherless widowed women wander about, starving, naked, and barefoot, and thousands of families flee our homeland. We are confident that the government is doing its best, but what has happened is a disaster of such a scale that might keep a state occupied for years. No matter how much devotion we demonstrate, it will not be enough, since the happiness of the homeland depends only upon healing such bloody wounds as soon as possible.*

The article goes on:

The government's obligation is very great and very heavy. The entire Ottoman nation is obliged to protect and take care of this deprived people, since we owe a great deal to the Armenian blood for the freedom we enjoy today. We should not forget that so far, this unfortunate tribe has seen only cruelty, that for the last twelve years it has constantly been oppressed and exploited, and has suffered thousands of human losses. We have to try to assure them that the times of massacres are over and to assuage them with all our heart, with our existence. The responsibility of the government in providing protection is very hard as well, since our Armenian compatriots live among nomadic tribes... It must be declared publicly and repeatedly that one of the most important causes of the Ottoman nation is to protect and uphold the interests, the life, and the property, which are cherished rights, of the Armenians as well as those of other tribes.†

In another issue of the same newspaper, Ahmed Shukri Effendi, a member of the Ottoman Parliament representing Sivas, praised the impartial attitude of *Siper-i Saika-i Hürriyet* and made an appeal to heal the deep wounds of the Cilician Armenians.‡

Yet all of the thunderous publications by newspapers inside and outside the Empire, statements by members of parliaments, appeals, and alarms raised by politicians, public figures, men of science, and intellectuals, remained just empty calls.

* A. Tch, "Our Armenian Compatriots," *Siper-i Saika-i Hürriyet*. For the Armenian translation of the article, see *Piuzantion*, no. 3861, June 23 (July 6), 1909.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3 86 1, June 23 (July 6), 1909.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3863, June 25 (July 8), 1909.

As we see, the Cilician Armenians had no protectors who were able to catch the criminals red-handed, and those who could have done anything contented themselves with pallid protests from distant Europe. The feelings of sympathy and grief arising out of a general humanity that were expressed here and there never transformed into positive actions. Though the feelings expressed offered only moral solace, they sometimes stirred up renewed excitement among the organizers and perpetrators of the massacres.

Where would this awful, intolerable situation end? If the massacres of the Cilician Armenians were at least the last outbursts of the deep crisis in the Near East, one might still have had a distant and imaginary consolation that the Turkish Armenians were offering their last sacrifices on the altar of a better future.

And that was the crucial question—whether the Cilician massacres were to be the final slaughter of the Turkish Armenians.

And if not?

THE CILICIAN CALAMITY DISCUSSED BY THE OTTOMAN PARLIAMENT

The Cilician tragedy—or "the events"—merited the attention of the Ottoman Parliament. The Chamber of Deputies considered the matter for the first time on April 18 (May 1). The session was chaired by the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Ahmed Riza Bey.

Ahmed Riza informed the deputies that in due time he had made an inquiry and asked that the governor of Adana, Mehmed Djevad Bey, send him a cable regarding the situation in the vilayet and, in particular, the causes of the massacres. He then read the April 13th telegram that Djevad Bey had sent in response, which asserted that the entire responsibility for the events rested with a few fedayeen.*

Heated discussions evolved around the telegram. Some of the Young Turk deputies, influenced by information they had received from Armenians, were inclined to severely punish the members of the Adana vilayet administration and, first of all, dismiss Governor Djevad Bey.

First, Deputy Arif Ismet Bey took the floor and declared that Djevad Bey's telegram had distorted the truth about the painful and deplorable disaster in Adana. In a heartfelt speech, he characterized what had happened as a "heart-rending crime." "The vicegerents are used to trying to justify themselves by playing with words... Our brothers were slaughtered, massacred... Those who caused and participated in this slaughter, this heartbreaking drama, must be

* Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 9.

punished." Stressing that the Chamber of Deputies could not remain indifferent towards an occurrence "in which blood flowed like a river and thousands of people died," Arif Ismet Bey suggested sending a parliamentary commission to Cilicia to assess the situation, submit recommendations to the parliament, and punish those responsible for the events.^{*}

After Arif Ismet Bey, Vartges (Hovhannes Serengoulian) took the floor. He rejected the provocative scenario regarding the Armenian fedayeen and stated that what had happened had been a deed committed by reactionaries. Addressing himself to "the constitution-granting army and government," he asked pointedly, "Where are the beautiful principles which you fought for and swore to maintain unblemished? Why have you permitted the killing of innocent people who had embraced the constitutional order? How are you going to distinguish yourselves from the criminal Abdul Hamid? Do you want us, too, to take up arms and go into the streets? These crimes are unforgivable for you..."[†] Vartges recommended that martial law be introduced in Adana, that investigative commissions set up by the Parliament and the army in Salonika be sent to Cilicia, that looted belongings be returned to their owners and, since the former Sultan had had a hand in this black endeavor, that some of his earnings be allocated to the people who had suffered losses.

Similar statements and suggestions were made by Nazaret Daghavarian and Mourad (Hampartsoum Boyadjian).[‡] The latter said, in particular, "We fought in the mountains in the days of despotism; are we compelled to go to the mountains again in this era of the constitution?"[§]

After a debate, a statement jointly signed by deputies Arif Ismet Bey, Vartges, Mourad, Kegham Der-Garabedian, Ali Djenan Bey, Vahan Papazian, Hagop Babigian, and Nazaret Daghavarian was considered. It recommended that Adana Governor Djevad Bey, Interior Ministry Advisor Adil Bey, and other felonious officials, whose professional negligence had brought about the massacres or who had directly participated in the slaughter, be tried before a military tribunal.

The signatories also recommended: (a) declaring a state of siege in the Aleppo vilayet, in Antioch, Zeytoun, and other areas affected by the disaster; (b) sending a court-martial to Cilicia, not from Salonika but from Constantinople; (c) sending a cable demanding an immediate raising of the

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 593-595.

† Vahan Papazian, *Im Housheru* [My Memoirs], vol. 2 (Beirut, 1952), 119.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3818, April 21 (May 4), 1909.

§ Papazian, *Im Housheru*, 119.

siege of Deortyol; and (d) rendering aid to the starving and homeless people without delay.

Member of the Chamber of Deputies Dr. Riza Tevfik also addressed the session with denunciation, in support of the Armenians. He provided facts to illustrate the appalling role played in the Cilician massacres not only by the Hamidians, but by the Ittihat party as well. He underscored that the Sublime Porte, the vicegerent, the local military, and many prominent Muslims and political figures were soaked in blood and demanded that the Interior Minister be summoned to the Parliament for a report.[†]

Both Arif Ismet Bey and Riza Tevfik Bey defended and justified the Cilician Armenians more zealously than the Armenian deputies.[‡] Shortly thereafter, Minister of the Interior Ferid Pasha appeared before the Parliament.

It seemed that the majority of deputies had been inclined to adopt, though with some amendments, the draft decision submitted to the Chamber, but the address by Interior Ministry Advisor Adil Bey changed the course of the discussion. He took the floor and read telegrams and memoranda sent by *valis* and *matasarrifs* from Adana, Kozan, Djebel-i Bereket, and other regions, unanimously accusing Armenians of attacking Muslims, throwing grenades, and committing arson. According to the memoranda, the Muslims had simply been forced to resort to violence in response.[§]

Then, Adil Bey read an April 2nd telegram from Adana Governor Djevad Bey claiming that Armenians had set fire to almost all of the houses belonging to Turks in the city. He read two other telegrams, one stating that when the firemen had tried to put out fires in the city, Armenians had allegedly begun shooting at them. The other telegram read that troops had been sent to Adana from Hadjin to end the disturbances, but Christians shot at them as well.

Adil Bey concealed from the Parliament the fact that Asaf Esad Bey, the *mutasarriif* of the Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak*, immediately upon learning the news of the Adana massacre, applied every effort to extend the massacres to his *sandjak*. Not satisfied with that, during the slaughter and in its aftermath, he sent cables everywhere, and to the Interior Ministry first of all, claiming

* *Arevsek*, no. 7097, May 14, 1909.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 559.

‡ *Arevsek*, no. 7097, May 14, 1909.

§ *Gorts* (Tiflis), no. 81, April 21, 1909.

that the Armenians had stirred up a rebellion and were turning everything upside down. Adil Bey read these cables as well. In one of them, Asaf Esad reported that five thousand Armenians had armed themselves beforehand with grenades and Martini rifles in order to carry out anti-Turkish massacres. In another cable, Asaf Esad urged the government to send troops to Adana vilayet without delay, claiming that otherwise, the entire "Muslim population will face the threat of total destruction." He went on with his provocations, and in yet another telegram sent to Constantinople on April 13 reported, "Today some four thousand Armenians armed with Martini rifles have fortified their positions around Deortyol, cutting down trees and laying down barricades." In another cable of the same day, he reported:

The situation is getting worse—even the police forces in Bahche are not trustworthy. There are about five thousand Armenians armed with Martini rifles in Deortyol. They have surrounded the town with fortifications and set about gradually laying siege to the surrounding [Muslim] villages. The *sandjak* center is under a huge threat. Women are weeping. The *sandjak* is rumbling with wailing and lamentation... The Bahche *kaymakam* reports that numerous Armenians who have come from Zeytoun and Marash are planning to commit the *kaza* to flames. We ask you to give strict orders to the authorities in Aleppo in order to remove the threat.[†]

After reading Asaf Esad's brazen accusations against Armenians, Adil Bey said, "On April 17, I also received a cable from the new governor of Adana, Mustafa Zihni Pasha, stating that Armenians had made cannons from water pipes and many grenades."[‡]

Having finished the reading, Adil Bey threw up his hands and said that he was unable to determine who was right and who was wrong after all, and therefore he believed that the parliament should not make any decision at that point. During Adil Bey's report, many Turkish and Kurdish deputies gave him encouraging applause.[§]

Finally, Member of the Chamber of Deputies Krikor Zohrab took the floor, vigorously repudiating the aspersions cast on Armenians and attributing the blame for the Adana massacres to the government and local authorities. He said:

* Terzian, *Gilgiso Aghedan*, 292.

† *Ibid.*, 293–294.

‡ *Arevak*, no. 7097, May 14, 1909.

§ *Kohak* (Constantinople), no. 6, July 4, 1909.

Adil Bey has just read telegrams from the governors of Adana and Lazkiye as reliable documents providing information that Armenians were the source of the incidents, that they launched attacks with Martinis and grenades, and inflicted damage. All right, but how many people in general were killed during these massacres, and how many among them were murdered by the Armenians with their deadly weapons? One feels pity for the central government, which in the course of fifteen days has not yet gathered information on the number of victims. Adil Bey... does not have information as to how many people were killed, so I will give him the information I have received from an impartial and official source—a telegram sent to Constantinople by the French Consul in Mersin. The French Consul writes that between 20,000 and 30,000 people were ruthlessly massacred.*

Adil Bey and many other deputies considered what Zohrab had said to be an exaggeration and began to snicker. Zohrab said, "Are you laughing instead of crying? It is because I got this information from an impartial and official source that I notify the assembly with confidence. If you wish to hear the news received from the Armenians, they all unanimously communicate that nothing Armenian is left—no house, no building, and no church."[†]

Referring to the accusations made against Armenians, Zohrab said that, "They all are absolute slander. The local administration connived in the Adana massacre; the first thug to attack was an administration official shouting 'Long live Sultan Hamid!'"[‡]

Zohrab read a cable received from the Military Commander of Aleppo, Hassan Bahri Pasha, stating that the massacres in the city of Adana and other areas had been planned in advance by the provincial authorities, and that the military, who had burst into the arsenals, stolen weapons, and joined the mob, played a great role. Upon reading the telegram, Zohrab said resolutely, "With my entire being I reject the malicious talk about Armenians."[§]

In conclusion, Zohrab declared that Adil Bey, who had personal enmity toward him, had been a direct participant in the massacres, since he had sent a telegram to Adana beforehand instructing the local administration how to organize the slaughter.

* *Arevak*, no. 7077, April 20, 1909.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*

Adil made remarks from his seat. They were followed by applause and shouts of approval from Turkish and Kurdish deputies. Zohrab exclaimed angrily, "Well then, there exists a conspiracy to annihilate Armenians even in this assembly. If so, we have nothing to do with such a parliament."^{*}

At that juncture, some Turkish deputies expressed their regret for the incidents and agreed that the executive authority should send material aid to the survivors of the massacres.

At its April 18th session, the Parliament finally adopted the following ambiguous and purely declarative resolution: "The Parliament recommends that the government send 20,000 gold liras to Adana and Aleppo vilayets to assist the people who have suffered damages; punish high- and low-level officials who caused the incidents; and immediately dispatch a court-martial."[†]

Perhaps even this decision would not have been adopted if it had not been for the fear of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly did not provide a political assessment of the massacres in Cilicia or those who inspired and took part in them irrespective of their official rank and social position. Moreover, the Assembly launched the official bogus scenario of Armenian culpability.

True, facing imminent death, Armenians had until the last moment done everything they could to withstand the attacks of the mob. The Adana massacres had given Armenians occasion to demonstrate to Turks that the Armenian people were not as helpless as they used to be, that when they became organized they were capable of defending their lives and property. They did not stick out their necks with sheep-like obedience as the swords were drawn and the bullets fired. This was what the Turks—Old and Young—could not swallow, and a short while later, the Porte was to exert every effort to prove *à la Turka* that Armenians were the criminals, that they had slaughtered Turks. It instructed its ambassadors in Europe to inform their host governments that the Armenians had unleashed a war in Cilicia to massacre them and create a purely Armenian-populated state.

The reports on the April 18th session of the Ottoman Parliament provoked a painful reaction among the Armenian public and aroused their disillusionment and wrath.

* *Arvelk*, no. 7077, April 20, 1909.

† *Ibid.*

In response to the slander disseminated by Turkish public figures, the Geneva office of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation issued the following statement:

We were astonished to hear that the at the April 18th (May 1st) session of the Chamber of Deputies, the government, based on mendacious information received from the local authorities, ascribed the latest massacres committed in Adana province to Armenian revolutionaries, and presented Armenians as the initial assailants. We protest against this malicious ascription, which has as its object the concealment of the real criminals, and is a rebuke to the tormented and ill-fated Armenian people. The Armenian revolutionaries have no connection to this shameful slaughter, which was carried out by a fanatical mob on orders from higher authorities. We call for prudence and impartiality to enable the Chamber of Deputies to take effective measures to punish the perpetrators of the crime. The fact that previous such crimes have gone unpunished encourages the instigators of massacres. The heads of local administrations, who are Hamid's creatures, will be an everlasting source of crime, and for that reason, the peace of the country will always be threatened.*

THE APRIL 28, 1909 SESSION OF THE CHAMBER

Among other issues, the incidents in Cilicia were addressed perfunctorily at this session. An official paper from Minister of the Interior Ferid Pasha was read at the session; it included just one sentence on these events. Ferid Pasha wrote that one of the members of the Chamber of Deputies had insisted that 25,000–30,000 Armenians had been massacred in Adana vilayet, without presenting any exhaustive data. Time was needed to determine the exact number of killed and wounded, he wrote, adding that according to the information he had, 1,924 Muslims had been killed and 500 had been wounded during the tragedy, and as for the non-Muslim population, 1,455 people had been killed (469 fewer) and 382 wounded (151 fewer).

After the paper was introduced, there was no exchange of views. It was simply taken into consideration.

THE APRIL 30, 1909 SESSION OF THE CHAMBER

Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha sent a note informing the Chamber that it had been decided at the Interior Ministry's initiative to dispatch to Adana an

* *Arvelk*, no. 7080, April 23, 1909.

investigative group consisting of four members—two Armenians and two Muslims. Two of them were to be government officials and the two other members of parliament. Since the government had already appointed two commission members, Behaa Bey and Haroutiun Mosdichian Effendi, Hilmi Pasha was asking the Chamber of Deputies, in a government missive, to appoint the two remaining commission members. At the same time, he informed the Chamber that the government had already made a decision regarding the investigators' remuneration.

A debate followed the Grand Vizier's offer, with arguments in favor and against. Some of the Armenian delegates (Zohrab and Vartges) demanded that two commission members be immediately appointed and sent to Adana. Some Muslim deputies (Ismail Pasha, Arif Ismet Bey, Vehib Effendi, and others) seconded the Grand Vizier's proposal, but they believed that the two commission members should be elected by a secret ballot. Other Muslim deputies (Mustafa Effendi and Emrullah Effendi) believed that it would be preferable to dispatch an independent parliamentary investigative commission to Adana, rather than to participate in the government commission. Parliament member Talaat Bey declared that he was against sending any investigative commission at all.^{*}

Finally, the proposal to form a mixed commission (as suggested in the government missive) was put to a secret vote, and the Chamber of Deputies chose Hagop Effendi Babigian and Shefik Bey as the two members of the investigative commission to be sent to Adana.[†]

THE MAY 10, 1909 SESSION OF THE CHAMBER

After discussing other issues, the Chamber considered a note sent by Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha informing the Assembly that Member of Parliament Shefik Bey, elected earlier as a member of the mixed investigative commission, had resigned his position, and that it was therefore necessary to hold a new election, with the understanding that the newly elected parliamentarian would also act as the chairman of the commission.

Ömer Fevzi proposed Talaat Bey for the position but the latter withdrew his candidature. Ahmed Riza Bey announced that a parliament member who spoke French should be elected to the commission, since it would be necessary in communicating with foreign consuls in Adana and Aleppo.

* Terzian, *Gilgilo Aghedu*, 610.

† *Ibid.*, 611.

Yusuf Kemal Bey, a Member of Parliament representing Kastamoni and the Chairman of the College of Advocates, was elected to the commission by secret ballot.^{*}

THE MAY 11, 1909 SESSION OF THE CHAMBER

Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha attended the session to report to the Chamber on the work done by his Cabinet and its future plans. In his report, he made a reference to the issue of overcoming the consequences of the Adana disaster.

The Grand Vizier noted that the disaster extended over three out of four *sandjaks* in the Adana vilayet (the *sandjak* of Icel being the exception) and the *sandjaks* of Marash and Antioch in the Aleppo vilayet. He emphasized that 20,000 gold liras allocated by the Parliament to meet the needs of these regions had already reached its destination, and that the same amount (20,000 liras) had been loaned by *Ziraat* (agricultural) bank.

Hilmi Pasha informed the deputies that the Adana vicegerent and the Djebel-i Bereket *mutasarrif* had been dismissed, and the Mersin *mutasarrif* had been given a bonus for preventing the spread of the disaster to the territory under his jurisdiction. "The criminals must be punished so that the painful incidents do not ever recur," the Grand Vizier declared.

AUDIENCE WITH SULTAN MUHAMMAD V

The Turkish Armenian public and political circles were greatly dissatisfied with the inadequate reaction to the Cilician incidents at the April 18th, April 28th, and April 30th sessions of the Ottoman Parliament, and deeply insulted by the demeanor of the legislature. In their turn, the Constantinople Armenians resolutely urged the Armenian Patriarchate to form a delegation to call on the Sultan to seek justice. Many people believed that such a delegation would succeed, since in his inaugural address delivered in the Parliament at the time, the Sultan had referred to the Adana massacres and said the following:

The Adana events have greatly saddened me. Now these incidents are over, and the guilty must be punished and the needs of those who suffered losses must be met. God willing, such incidents that are contrary to religion, patriotism, and unity will not recur in the future. It is my wish to take the appropriate measures to that end. In order for the insurrections by minorities to stop and for the people to enjoy happiness, administrative, judicial, and financial reforms

* *Ibid.*

are necessary; we need to strengthen the military and maritime forces, and to develop education and industry."

In order to satisfy the public demands, the Patriarchate set up a delegation with the following figures: Patriarchal Vicar Bishop Hovhannes Arsharouni, Chairman of the Religious Assembly Archbishop Hmayag Timaksian, Assembly Members Supreme Vartabed Knel Kalemkerian and Krikoris Vartabed Balakian, Chairman of the Political Assembly Sdepan Effendi Karayan, Judge of the Court of Cassation of the National Assembly Khnir Simonian, Member of the National Assembly Hagop Pahlri, merchant Aram Haladjian, and editor-in-chief of *Pinzantion* Piuzant Kechian.[†]

On May 2 (15) the delegation went to Dolmabahçe Palace, where Sultan Mohammed V (Mehmet V) received them with sympathy. The Sultan asked Patriarchal Vicar Bishop Arsharouni what the purpose of the visit was. The bishop invited Sdepan Effendi Karayan to speak, and he presented a lengthy historical treatise on the more than six-century-long loyalty and devoted service of Armenians to the Ottoman throne. He emphasized that Armenians never had an intention to secede from the Ottoman fatherland, and had always been confident that they could preserve their nationality, religion, language, and ethnic traditions under the patronage of Ottoman rule. However, over the last twenty years, Armenians had been subjected to repressions and massacres, as a result of inappropriate condemnations.

After the proclamation of the constitution, they had for a moment breathed freely, but then a new, horrific calamity arrived—the bloody massacre of Adana Armenians. That was the response to the Armenians' naïveté in having faith in the constitution.

The Emperor interrupted: "This is very surprising. How could being supporters of the constitution be considered a crime? What is the constitution for? Is it not for the good of the entire country?"[‡]

The Chairman of the Political Assembly, Sdepan Karayan, responded that when an attempted coup had been unleashed in Constantinople, it had provoked massacres of Armenians in Cilicia. A threat to Armenians still existed in other provinces. The repressions against them were continuing. The mob that had tasted looting was ready for massacre "if there is no effective prohibition from this high center. This is the reason that the representatives of a long-suffering nation have considered it their duty to

* *Akhuryan* (Alexandropole), no. 34, May 10, 1909.

† *Pinzantion*, no. 3829, May 4 (17), 1909.

‡ *Pinzantion*, no. 3829, May 4 (17), 1909.

come and ask their compassionate father to protect the tormented Armenian people."

Sultan Mohammed V replied, "Certainly everyone should be granted protection. Such things should not happen; the things you have told me of are intolerable."

Karayan Effendi went on, asking the Emperor to "issue a decree declaring that the time of massacre, robbery, and violence is over, that the newly enthroned Sultan and the Caliphate command that no discrimination be practiced between Turks and Armenians, and that people everywhere must be aware that the Constitution, Sharia, and orders of the Sultan and the Caliphate demand that the repressions against the Armenians be stopped."

The Emperor responded:

These words are correct. I will summon the Grand Vizier first thing tomorrow morning and tell him to take the issue into consideration and to write down and implement whatever is necessary. Such massacres, pillage, and rape... By no means can I allow such hideous things to happen in my time. Every drop of blood of my subjects drips from my own heart. The entire country is like one organism; the pain of one of its members is felt, of course, by the whole organism. I consider all of my subjects to be equal. I am very sorry for what has happened and am astonished as well. During the reign of my father, we never heard of such things. The architects working for our dynasty were Armenian; I knew them. The majority of workmen were Armenian. Leading gunpowder makers and suppliers, craftsmen, and high-level officials were Armenian. There existed absolute love and solidarity between Armenians and Muslims. They all were sons of one fatherland. We made no distinction between them. But what has happened in the course of the last thirty years that everything has changed so much, I really cannot understand. From now on, I hope that the evil will be cured. The instigators of the Adana crimes will certainly be punished and the stolen goods will be returned to their owners. What are the constitution, the Sharia, if not prosperity, justice, and equality for the people? I wish this to be the case during my reign. As a kind

* *Ibid.*

father wishes good for his children, I wish the entire country to be happy during my days. Be assured that I will take care of this.⁶

When Mohammed V had spoken, Bishop Hovhannes handed him a petition asking him to release Armenians converted to Islam and those imprisoned, to return abducted women, not to consider self-defense a crime, to return stolen property, and to take orphans under his protection. Accepting the petition, the Sultan promised, "I will certainly take into consideration what is written here and implement it accordingly."⁷ After the half-hour-long audience, the delegation left with words of gratitude and blessing.

Arevlyan Mamoul commented that the Ittihatists were smiling wryly and saying, "Don't these Armenians have anything better to do than appeal to Parliament, send a delegation to the Sultan, and bother the Grand Vizier? The fight was conducted on our patch, not in parliament or government."⁸

The meeting with Sultan Mohammed V had no positive impact.

The sole practical move by the Sultan was that he gave 500 Ottoman gold liras—1/50th of the amount allocated from the state budget to the fund set up under his high patronage—to the mixed commission, though he pledged that "if it were possible, I would donate for this purpose my entire income."⁹ Moreover, in the course of its subsequent sessions, the Ottoman Parliament made the issue of the Cilician massacres disappear, demonstrating that the real master of the country was the Ittihat party.

TURKISH JUSTICE IN PRACTICE

The images of the first days of the Adana atrocities were fresh and very grave, and Interior Minister Ferid Pasha, fearing stiff interference by European powers, requested that their governments "wait and trust their [the Young Turks'] administration of justice."¹⁰ The Turkish minister was not yet convinced that Europe would remain as unmoved as it did, for the most part, in the face of the rabble's brutality and bloodshed.

Immediately after the massacres, the Adana vilayet administration appointed an investigative team that was supposed to conduct an impartial investigation and punish the guilty, though in fact its real purpose was to lay the entire blame on Armenians. It was assumed that during the

⁶ *Pruzanion*, no. 3829, May 4 (17), 1909.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Arevlyan Mamoul*, no. 22, May 26, 1909, 518.

⁹ *Pruzanion*, no. 3848, May 27 (June 9), 1909.

¹⁰ *Droshak*, no. 6, June 1909, 67.

interrogations, a great deal of evidence would accumulate to justify the vilayet leaders, should they be made answerable.

Immediately upon being set up, the investigative team looked through the lists of surviving Armenian men, arrested them at its discretion, and interrogated them rigorously.¹¹ The investigators asked the arrested Armenians leading questions: "Was it you who was shooting at Muslims from the window after the first massacre? What revolutionary party do you belong to? How many fedayeen are under your command? You were one of the members of the group that brought weapons from Europe; tell us, what quantity of weapons did you bring here? Don't deny it, we have witnesses; don't you understand what might happen to you later?"

The work of the investigative team did not last long. After only one month, it was replaced by the commission sent from Constantinople.

The spiritual leader of Armenians in Europe, Bishop Kevork Utudjian, informed the Catholicos of all Armenians Matteos II (Izmirlian) that in response to his inquiry, he had received a handwritten letter from Ahmed Riza Bey, stating that none of the instigators of the Adana massacres would go unpunished. He considered this to be reassuring and believed that certain steps by the central government should be expected.¹²

The Ottoman Parliament sent its investigative commission to Adana. It comprised of two members, deputies Hagop Bey Babigian and Yusuf Kemal Bey, who arrived on May 16 (29).

Another investigative commission set up by the government (*heyeti tahkikiye*) went to Cilicia as well. It consisted of three people—a member of the State Council, Faik Bey (chairman), a legal investigator from Manastiri, Haroutian Mosdichian, and the *mutassarif* of Mersin, Esad Reuf Bey.¹³

At first, the government commission conducted an impartial investigation. A May 28th telegram from Mosdichian to the Grand Vizier and the Interior Minister, sent from Erzin and also signed by the other two Turkish members of the commission, Faik Bey and Esad Reuf Bey, is evidence of that. On behalf of the suffering people, the commission members asked the government to urge the court-martial to conduct the trial proceedings as soon as possible in an unbiased manner, and to take measures to "set free as

¹¹ *Akburyan*, no. 33, May 7, 1909.

¹² Archive of Matteos Izmirlian, RG 34, file 14, item 507, Madenataran.

¹³ Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniyaye Housher*, 30.

soon as possible the detainees who have been subjected to arbitrary treatment" by this body.*

On June 27, the first comprehensive memorandum signed by Faik Bey, Mosdichian, and Esad Reuf Bey was sent to the central government, specifying the results of the impartial investigation by the commission. A bill of particulars compiled by the commission and signed by Mosdichian and Faik Bey was also sent to the government on the same day.

On June 29, the Cabinet of Ministers discussed the findings of the commission and based on its memorandum and the bill of particulars, decided to try the following people in the Adana court-martial: former *vali* Djevad Bey, Army commander (*firka kumandana*) Mustafa Remzi Pasha, Governor of Djebel-i Bereket Asaf Esad Bey, editor-in-chief of *İtidal İhsan Fikri*, editor of the same newspaper, İsmail Sefa, and prominent Adana Turks Baghdad Zade Abdul Kader and Bosnali Salih. According to the decision, in addition to these men, all public officials who had neglected their duties and who had "upset tranquility" by inciting the people were also subject to be handed over to the court-martial. But as the subsequent events showed, this decision by the cabinet of ministers was adopted pro forma and, in particular, in order to mislead Europe. The decision was not implemented.

Over the course of time, two Turkish members of the commission adopted an increasingly biased position. At the same time, when the Turkish public learned that a number of Muslims had also been killed in Adana, the Young Turks, even those who had previously supported Armenians, took the side of their fanatical kinsmen and *khodjas*. They could not tolerate the idea that in some places, especially during the first Adana massacre, not only had Armenians succeeded in defending themselves, but had even killed 350–400 of the rabble. Infuriated by the fact of organized resistance by Armenians, Old and Young Turks alike shut their ears to the Christians' grievances.

In its turn, the military high command sent to Adana a military tribunal (court-martial) comprised of military officers from Rumelia. *Mirliva* (Lieutenant General) Yusuf Kenan Pasha was the chairman of the tribunal (*Divan-a Harb-i Örfi*), and İsmail Fazil Pasha, *Miralay* (Colonel) Abdurrahman Ziya Bey, Omer Nabih Bey, Osman Ali Bey, Lutfi Bey, Mustafa Effendi, *Yüzbaşı* (Captain) Ziya Bey, and *Yüzbaşı* Refih Bey were its members.† Upon arriving in Adana, the tribunal set up three courts martial

* Ibid.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 30.

(*Divan-i Harb-i*) for Adana, Erzin, and Antioch, comprised only of Young Turk military men. They, in turn, formed subcommittees composed mainly of criminal elements, whose task was to obtain materials for the tribunal.* A few weeks after the military tribunal began its investigation, *Mirliva* Kenan Pasha was replaced by İsmail Fazil Pasha.

The course of the investigation deeply disappointed Armenians, who had pinned special hopes on the military tribunal. Before the tribunal arrived in Adana, *Arevelk* wrote, "Let us wait patiently for the results that the investigation by the military commission sent to the region of blood from Constantinople by the Liberation Army will yield. It is impossible for such a body, which is comprised of impartial, ingenious, honest-minded, and upright officers selected from the superb Army of Rumelia, not to bring the truth to light, and to put the events in the pillory... All our hopes are focused on this military tribunal."[†]

But the expectations of Armenians came to nothing. The military tribunal did everything to strangle the truth and conceal the obvious involvement of the army in the massacres, and to lay the blame for the destruction on Armenians, ignoring the minimal demands of common sense. All of its verdicts were based on the testimony of the instigators and executors of the massacres. They not only deemed Armenians guilty for everything, but also made unjustified threats, claiming that if the tribunal dared to condemn any Turk, it would trigger an overall and more dreadful massacre of Armenians in Anatolia.[‡] All of the assurances made by Turkish official circles that the court proceedings would be fair and impartial proved to be false. "Ottoman justice has not come to the Armenians' aid," wrote the newspaper *Dashink*.[§]

As on many other issues, in terms of assessing the work of the tribunal, Governmental Commission member Haroutiun Mosdichian strongly disagreed with his Turkish colleagues. He reminded them that judging from the court proceedings of the military tribunal, Armenian and other Christians in Cilicia still had no peace and were afraid that massacres might be unleashed with renewed force. The court had done everything it could to ensure that thousands of monsters remained at large. In essence, the perpetrators had been proclaimed immune from prosecution.[¶] Titular

* *Pinzanton*, no. 3847, May 8 (June 8), 1909.

† *Hairenik*, no. 34 (539), August 17, 1909.

‡ *Druhak*, no. 5, May 1909, 56; no. 6, June 1909, 66.

§ *Tashink* (Smyrna), no. 228, May 5 (18), 1910.

¶ *Hairenik*, no. 34 (539), August 17, 1909.

Counselor Shokrovnikov, who became well aware of the events in June 1909 while in Adana, wrote of the court proceedings:

The real guilty ones and the murderers, in other words the authorities and the Macedonian (Young Turk) Army, do not even think about hiding, they do not feel the need, since they themselves are members of the military tribunal and the investigating commissions, they themselves now maintain law and order in the country where 25,000 to 30,000 Christians were killed at their hands.

No important Muslim was sentenced to death.[†] True, a military unit commander, some other military men, public officials, and *iofiats* were hanged in Constantinople, but they had been condemned for zealous anti-Ittihat activity in the days of the March 31st Hamidian coup d'état and for shedding Muslim, not Christian, blood.

No chief of police was tried, despite the fact that a great many of them had greatly contributed to the spread of the massacres. Many Turkish policemen had even advised the mob on how to massacre the unarmed Christians with the greatest efficacy.

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, Senem Khanum Khanum and her entourage slew Armenian men and burned women and children in the village of Hayirli and neighboring farms. These criminals remained at large; they were not even reprimanded.[‡] The Adana *vali* Mehmed Djevad Bey, who caused the bloody massacre, received the absurdly light punishment of being deprived of holding a public office for six years, and the army commander in the vilayet, Mustafa Remzi Pasha, who had sufficient manpower to prevent the massacre but did not do so, was sentenced just to three months' imprisonment.^{**}

The *mutassarif* who had turned the Djebel-i Bereket vilayet upside down, Mehmed Asaf Esad Bey, was fully acquitted^{††} and after being released from pretrial detention, fled to an unknown location.^{‡‡}

* *Genotsid Armanian v Osmanskoi Imperii. Sbornik dokumentov I materialov*. [The Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire: A Compilation of Documents and Materials] (Yerevan, 1966), 172.

† National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 5, file 19, p. 1.

‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 428.

** *Ibid.*, 427.

†† National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 5, file 19, p. 2.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, 3.

Ihsan Fikri, the editor-in-chief of *Itidal*, which set Muslims against Christians with its incendiary publications, and Ismail Sefa, the author of the article titled "A Dreadful Uprising," the publication of which was one of the main causes of the second massacre, were sentenced to just one year of imprisonment each.^{*}

After the massacres and until his arrest, the immoral, self-serving Fikri wrote positively about Armenians in his newspaper, out of fear, and at the same time criticized the "naïve and short-sighted" Kurds who had caused the destruction and loss of a huge quantity of arms and ammunition by burning down Armenian houses. This prompted great surprise on the part of Armenian public figures. Souren Bartevian reacted with disgust:

"Oh, unconscionable Fikri, the most disreputable among the Adana executioners, for you betrayed your beliefs as well; you who just a few months ago joined Armenians with a Judas kiss and accused the damned *vali* of Adana in your paper of being tyrannical and Yildiz's basest creature—how could you, oh revolting apostate, how could you go hand-in-hand with him to destroy Armenians, and now cynically sing his praises? How did you change your tune? How could you forget about the privations suffered by Armenians in this country, about the crocodile tears you shed over Armenians' misfortune in the same dirty rag that you are now raising as a flag over Armenian blood and destruction?"[†]

When Fikri and Sefa realized that the military tribunal would barely punish them, the pages of *Itidal* again filled with spiteful material about Armenians.[‡]

When Christians lodged justified complaints against wild and ruthless criminals, they were paid no attention. As a result of the trials, some fifty Muslims were sentenced to death, twenty of them by hanging. They were mainly oblivious criminals blinded by religious hypnosis, who had become tools in the hands of high-ranking slaughterers. For the other thirty criminals, the death sentences were replaced with life imprisonment, and on December 20, 1912, a general amnesty was declared and they all were set free.

As a matter of form, some two hundred brutes—out of tens of thousands vicious criminals who had taken part in the Cilician massacres—were

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 428; *Kohak*, no. 15, September 5, 1909.

† Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 63–64.

‡ Ihsan Fikri did not live long. He died of consumption on March 27, 1910 in a Beirut hospital.

sentences to various jail terms. Most of them were soon pardoned, and the remaining eighty-six criminals were freed by the aforementioned general amnesty.

Several Armenian newspapers in Constantinople and the Caucasus printed the following harrowing telegram sent to the Patriarchate by Armenian women in Antioch:

A calamity such as the one in Antioch has never before been seen anywhere. Courts-martial were set up, but the death sentences of the evildoers have not been carried out. Husni, Nihat [Khalef Agha Zade Vahid], and Rafet [Bereket Zade Rifat] Aghas, who killed our husbands and children and looted our houses before our very eyes, and who were sentenced to exile, have been set free. We have been unable to regain our stolen belongings. We are doomed to a pitiful and miserable existence. The blood we have shed and the howls we have emitted are rising to the skies. Who can we turn to?

No one paid attention to the petitions and grievances. This was not by accident. The account for more than thirty thousand innocent Armenians murdered in Cilicia had been, in essence, settled once and for all.

And who was guilty? Of course, those who were helpless and abandoned were the guilty ones. It was not to even cross anyone's mind that the Turkish authorities could be responsible for the massacres, since they were "law-abiding" and "impartial," and for ordinary Muslims, it was impossible even to imagine, since they were almost saints.

Instead of arresting the real criminals, the military tribunal began inhuman persecutions all over Cilicia against the Armenians who had barely escaped from the barbarians.

Shelkownikov wrote, "What is going on in the military tribunal, especially in Adana, under the pretext of justice is a malicious parody of justice... One gains the impression that it was the Armenians who killed thirty thousand unarmed Muslims and now are being punished for it."[†]

Those arrested were subjected to cruel torture before they were even interrogated. The age-old Turkish passion for atrocity and religious fanaticism had not been satiated, even after such carnage and bloodshed.

It never even crossed the minds of the tribunal members to carry out a fair investigation and to punish the criminals commensurately to the crimes

* *Horizon*, no. 15, January 22, 1910.

† *Genocid Arman v Osmanskoj Imperii*, 172.

committed. The sole criterion the tribunal applied to the criminals was national-religious; in other words, the accused was the Armenian and the just was the Turk, the Kurd, or the Circassian.

All over Cilicia, the freedom of movement for Armenians was restricted, and their houses were subjected to arbitrary, cruel searches. In accordance with a decision by the Sublime Porte, "inflammatory telegrams sent to the parties from Constantinople and the provinces" were banned "until tranquility has been restored."

The military tribunal and its three subsidiary courts set up in Adana had declared at the very beginning of the investigation that they did not think "the Armenians, too, were culpable." However, three or four days on, they were already insisting that the main guilty party was the Armenians, since "they attacked first." From that moment on, they conducted the investigation so as to make sure that "the criminals are strictly punished." In the beginning, punishment was meted out not only to Turks, but to Armenians as well, but soon only Armenians were punished.

Armenians were accused of all kinds of preposterous deeds. All crimes had been committed by Armenians; the blame for the calamity was hung around their necks. Armenians had set fire to the foreign Consulate which had served as their last shelter, they had been their own slaughterers (they wished to die and did so), desiring their own impoverishment, Armenians had burned down their own houses, thrown their own furniture and other belongings into the street with their own hands, and ruined their communal public buildings. And they did it all in order to lay the blame on the Muslims.

The "just" military tribunal did not content itself with changing the roles of victim and perpetrator, but also committed itself to defaming the victims, and by doing so, breaking the spirit of Armenians and pushing them to utter desperation. Thus, the Young Turk government, by right of the mighty, restrained the victims that had been stripped of all rights, forcing them to keep silent and swallow their tears.

In addition to charges against certain individuals, three serious accusations of a political nature were raised against Armenians: (1) For years Armenians had been obtaining large quantities of arms and ammunition and accumulating them in their basements, which had turned into real arsenals; (2) They had stirred up a rebellion in order for the Adana and Aleppo provinces to secede from the Ottoman Empire and to establish an

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3818, April 21 (May 4), 1909.

independent kingdom; (3) All their actions were led by Armenian revolutionary national parties.

This was cynicism and nonsense. Armenian political and religious figures, writers, and journalists proved with various forms of evidence and by force of logic that the accusations were false and fabricated. Even Turks themselves did not believe the provocative allegation that Armenians had large quantities of arms and ammunition.

During the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid, no one had seen any weapons in the possession of the "gavurs of Cilicia." In 1895–1896, the Armenians in Turkey did not have weapons, and therefore, they passively surrendered to their fate and were slaughtered. This proved the truth once again that Armenians in Turkey were always under the threat of annihilation, as long as they were devoid of weapons or the capability and desire to use them. Both the massacres that took place in the unarmed settlements and the fighting in self-defense proved once more that the Turkish and Kurdish mob was savage and unyielding, brave and bloodthirsty, when it faced unarmed and powerless people, but was equally irresolute, fearful, and cowardly when faced with the slightest threat.

Under the constitutional government, when arms had been sold freely in the Empire, an insignificant portion of Armenian men of Adana had managed to get hold of weapons, mainly hunting rifles. This group of Armenians armed themselves with these trifling weapons only when they saw how the Young Turks, with their two-faced policy, were encouraging the mob to arm itself.

Some of the Cilician Armenians had been compelled to obtain weapons, since large quantities of arms and ammunition was being transferred to the state arsenals in Cilicia. The gunpowder sent from Constantinople was only sold to Turks; the local Hamidians received a donation of a few thousand gold liras from the capital city. The quarrels and personal contradictions among Turkish political parties had prepared fertile ground for an anti-constitutional outburst; a great many officials among the Sharia supporters did not conceal that they were getting ready for a decisive blow against the constitution. Prelate of Adana Bishop Moushegh Seropian wrote:

The Cilician Armenians armed themselves—albeit inadequately, since they had tremendous faith in the constitution on the one hand, and they were poor and hungry on the other—because they had the bloody experience of many years that at the moment of internal political upheaval, whatever its nature and circumstances,

the first sacrificial victims to be thrown before the barbarism of the mob were to be Armenians.*

When the Cilician massacre began, the unarmed Armenian communities, or those who had imprudently surrendered their weapons, were ruthlessly slaughtered by the mob. For instance, in Tarsus, the Armenians did not have even a single rifle, and therefore had nothing to unload. In other places such as Hamidiye, Bahche, Antioch, Suedia, and Kessab, they did have some weapons, but not many people used them, or no one used them at all, and they were punished by being ruthlessly slain.

If the Armenians had known that they would be subjected to assaults and other inhuman deeds at the hands of their neighbors, they might have thought about having arms and armaments and preparing themselves.

In Adana, where Armenians put up quite a resistance during the massacres, they had not made any special preparations for armaments, and it is not surprising that the cohesive, 20,000-strong Armenian community had only 50 or 60 Martini rifles and as many other types of rifles. As for the military positions, their homes were their positions. In order to defend themselves from attack by the Turkish mob and troops, the Armenians withdrew to their houses, and many of them broke out and gathered in the houses of foreign nationals, or in the buildings of European and American institutions. With regard to accumulating food reserves, they never thought of it, and as a result, starting from the fourth day of the massacres, some of them died of starvation.

Only Zeytoun was armed, and this was not in order to stir up a rebellion. The Zeytoun Armenians had always had weapons to withstand threats. But this time, they did not use their weapons, for the slaughterers did not dare to attack their stronghold. It remained proud and intact.

In a number of places, Armenians with an insignificant number of weapons managed to block the enemy's way and emerge victorious against thousands. For example, Adana was destroyed, but its people did whatever they could until the last moment. Deortyol (Chork Marzban) did not allow the mob that outnumbered them several times to invade and commit slaughter and looting. As has been described, the attackers blocked the source of the brook that flowed into Deortyol and the people nearly died of thirst. But would they not have made the necessary preparations for water if they had known what was going to come down upon their heads? Hadjin escaped with not many losses. There, people were mountain dwellers and therefore

* Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadouneru*, 59.

had weapons, but they did not have sufficient ammunition. They owed the success of their resistance to their naturally inaccessible position. There were even villages that resisted the attackers for days. Among them was the village of Shar near Hadjin with 120 households, which resisted fierce attacks by more than 6,000 slaughterers for 13 days under the command of schoolteacher Hagop Chaylian. There were also numerous very small villages where the residents, albeit defeated, sold their lives at high costs.

Neither the mob nor the military and the authorities could bear or accept this reality. How dared the *gávurs* not bend their necks before their masters?

Bartevian addressing the Turkish provocateurs who steadily embellished the tale of Armenians' being armed to the teeth wrote, "Blood-sucking liars, you saw with your own eyes that after the first three days of resistance [in the city of Adana] there were no pistol bullets left, and you did not hear a single shot fired at your second mob."^{*}

The events in Cilicia had fully exposed that the secure coexistence of Armenians with armed Turks and Kurds was conditioned upon their ability to meet them with real force. If at crucial junctures Armenians had been able to display such force, they could have avoided the massacres. The Armenians could survive among their armed neighbors only if they maintained a balance of power. All nations in Turkey had either to arm themselves in the interests of peace or to disarm, again in the interests of the same peace.

The scenario of the Armenian rebellion was as absurd and senseless as the previous one.

İtidal, *Hurriyet*, *Musavat*, *Adalet*, and other newspapers stuffed their pages with lies about the "Armenian uprising," and as for the Armenian-hating editor of *İtidal*, İhsan Fikri, he considered "the rebellion stirred up by the Armenians" to be the sole (not even the main or principal) cause of the massacres.[†]

In response to this slander, *Arevelk* posed a question in an editorial:

What facts or logic do you rely on when you say that the Armenians have been trying to gain independence? Six hundred years of history are enough to prove that Armenians have never had such a tendency. In any environment, Armenians succeeded in becoming a nation of merchants and craftsmen through their inherent decency... On behalf of Turkish Armenians, we ask you, masked editor, when, on which date (in the course of 600 years) have Armenians rebelled? And if over the last quarter of a century, cries of protest have rung

* Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 63.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3861, June 23 (July 6), 1909.

out from time to time, they were merely justified resentment against the awful regime of the Hamidian government, which has been doing everything possible to neutralize Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin."

The Prelate of Adana, Bishop Moushegh, also asked the question of why Armenians should have fomented a rebellion. Were they not the first to welcome the constitution, to champion its ideas, and were they not now ready to die in its defense? Armenians, with all their political parties, had no plan of secession. The Turkish statesmen and people had to be convinced by then that the good faith of Armenians toward the Ottoman homeland was an undeniable truth. Cilician Armenians, too, as an important segment of the Armenian nation, had no other purpose but to contribute to the prosperity of the country by means of trading, craftsmanship, and farming. He wrote:

If the official circles of Adana and the surrounding area and the criminals that obey them had the slightest bit of reason, they would not make an exhibition of themselves with such cheap and cynical accusations, believing that people who organized an uprising would not want to send their beloved children to the fields and gardens on the morning of the massacre, so as not to make them a target for Turkish bullets and swords, would not want to open their schools and make thousands of their children a prey to cruelty, and especially would not want to raise the banner of such an imaginary revolt at a time when their wealth was ripening in the fields and gardens and when, because of the season, up to 60,000–70,000 Turkish and Kurdish laborers had flooded into the Adana plain, redoubling the already large number of enemies.[†]

Making use of the same logic, the editor of *Arevelk* reasoned that if Armenians had premeditated a rebellion, naturally, so many of their kin would not have gone to the fields, and if they had in fact been armed, then on their return they would not have been butchered by the ruthless mob, they would have armed Armenians coming to Adana from the surrounding villages, and if not the goods in the stores, they would at least have hidden the money, jewelry, and other valuables in some unnoticeable, secure places. Who ever heard of such a thing, that massacre organizers would shelter in their houses or hide in the corners of buildings, and that those subjected to the massacre would initiate the attack? And finally, why had Armenians been

* *Arevelk*, no. 7092, May 8, 1909.

† Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadoweru*, 55.

slaughtered and their houses burned down, but the houses of Turks and Kurds remained erect?*

Piuzantion asked, "Let us suppose that this accusation is true; then why were Bishop Moushegh and his friends not arrested and the revolutionary idea not averted in time? In addition, who has ever heard that for the sake of the criminal ideas of a few people, a massacre of the entire Christian population could be undertaken?"†

The accusation of "Armenians fomenting a rebellion" for the independence of Cilicia was refuted, based on various evidence, by other Armenian press outlets in Turkey, the Caucasus, and elsewhere.

The Young Turk press circulated the false claim that from the very beginning of the reactionary movement unleashed on March 31, Cilicia Armenians had joined Abdul Hamid and the Hamidians against the Young Turks. This foolish explanation could only provoke a smile, *Arevelk* wrote, adding: "We will not comment, since the allegation is so foolish. It is possible that Armenians might join Satan, but it is inconceivable that Armenians would join this Satan of Satans."‡

Souren Bartevean wrote of the baseless accusation of rebellion:

'A rebellion?'... In Adana, with a few dozen rifles and a handful of boys carrying revolvers, the number of which surely will not exceed a hundred? 'A rebellion' against a Muslim crowd which is four times bigger and hundreds times better armed? 'A rebellion' against a government that hands out bullets by the thousands? 'A rebellion,' when you see that people had not even laid aside enough bread for a few days, in the city center, inside the Armenian quarter besieged by you on all sides? Is this where the Adana Armenians were going to declare 'a kingdom'? Alas, there was no one among them who would show them their king.

The activity in Cilicia of the two Armenian national parties, the Hnchags and the ARF, had never overstepped the law. The Armenian political parties, which even under the Hamidian regime had never dreamed of achieving independence or having a kingdom, but instead had aspired toward bringing about basic wellbeing, had

* *Arevelk*, no. 7092, May 8, 1909.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3861, June 23 (July 6), 1909.

‡ *Arevelk*, no. 7097, May 14, 1909.

after the Ottoman revolution solemnly abandoned even this modest demand.

Each party had the indivisibility of the Ottoman Empire as its first principle. Just as before, following the proclamation of the semi-perfect constitution, no secessionist movement or notion was perceptible in their *modus operandi*. The idea of decentralization that they advocated was not secessionism, but the only guarantee of the future existence of the multiethnic empire.*

All of the attempts to portray the Armenian political parties as the organizers of a rebellion were refuted by Armenian press outlets with specific facts. For example, they demonstrated that in Hadjin, there was no party. There were Hnchag and ARF organizations in Deortyol, but they represented no military strength. Though these two parties had powerful organizations and sufficient money in Adana, they had made no attempt to stockpile ammunitions in advance. Even during the first massacre, there were only thirty or forty party members among the more than one hundred young men defending the Armenian quarters, although the two parties numbered about one thousand members in the city. In Tarsus, only the Hnchags had a chapter, headed by Dr. Toumanian. He was among the first to escape through the swamps along with a group of his fellow party members, none of whom fired a single gunshot. In Mersin, the leader of the Hnchags, Hampartsoum Der-Mardirosian, and the leader of the ARF, Kevork Keshishian, fled at the first opportunity to take shelter on foreign steamships. There were no party organizations in other places in Cilicia, though there were individual party members. These realities were enough to assert that Armenian political parties had no intention to organize a rebellion.

True, the Armenian committees made naïve mistakes, believing with extreme simplemindedness that a constitutional order of liberty and equality had been indeed established in the country, and considering the holding of rallies, manifestations, and meetings under these circumstances to be nothing out of the ordinary. Indeed, in the first months after the Ottoman revolution, Armenian youth, under the influence of local committees, took to the streets of Adana and other cities in Cilicia singing songs of freedom with childlike naïveté and demonstrating that they were no longer afraid of yesterday's executioners. How could this youthful bravado, which was nothing more

* It is worth mentioning that the Armenian national liberation movement had not pursued the goal of the secession of Western Armenia from the Ottoman Empire at all, it had striven for reforms.

than a natural release and a cry of the heart of people who had just cast off the fetters of prolonged oppression, cause the horrendous monstrosity in Adana? After all, "the boys were going to get tired of shouting, crowing, and boasting," Bartevian wrote. "The uproar was going to gradually wind down, to exhaust itself, and everyone would go back to his business. It appears as if even expecting that much political wisdom from the new rulers of Turkey is excessively demanding on our part."^{*}

No matter how many tactical mistakes Armenian committees had made, the sincerity of their statements denying any secessionist aspiration or any conspiratorial-rebellious leadership was absolutely beyond the slightest doubt. In other words, if the Armenian political parties and their committees in Cilicia had manifested any errors in tactical matters, their conduct vis-à-vis strategy was flawless.

Bartevian, who committed his thoughts to paper, wrote:

But if the government for reasons of constitution, liberty, and who knows what else found the existence and activity of the committees suspicious or dangerous, why had it permitted their entry into Turkey? And if it turned to this nonexistent threat of late, why did it not confine its austerities to the committees? What did it want from the peaceful people? What did it want from women, the elderly, and children?[†]

What indeed, did the thousands of ill-fated Armenians unaware of politics have to do with parties or their committees? Which committee had calamity victim Mrs. Bouldoukian dealt with, that she was crucified, that her husband was thrown into the flames, that her breasts were cut off and forced upon her children, and then the children were butchered one by one before their mother's eyes? After all these horrors, the executioners mocked the woman as she went out of her mind with agony, shouting, "Come down and save your cuts!" Or the enormously unfortunate Mrs. Nadjarian, in whose hand the executioners put a knife, and holding this feeble hand in their claws, forced the mother to stab her own children. Did this lady and her children know anything at all about Armenian political parties and their committees?

Armenians who had survived the massacres asked whether this was the "Armenian-Turkish brotherhood" that certain Armenian political forces and their press, the leaders of the ARF and its newspapers and magazines, in particular, had so enthusiastically promulgated. The fact was, the Turks had

* Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 67–68.

† *Ibid.*, 66.

never appreciated the value of that "brotherhood," had not had the slightest sense of how impossible the Cilician massacres would be to recover from. Even more, "instead of soothing our broken hearts and looking at us with eyes full of tears, they looked askance at the Armenians," and after all that, they gnashed their teeth at the victims.^{*}

The greatest sin of Armenians was their earnest and naïve devotion to the constitution. This was the case with Bishop Moushegh as well, who after the restoration of the Ottoman constitution and before he departed for Adana from Constantinople[†] on October 28, 1908, issued a special address to provincial Armenians consisting of five points, emphasizing the necessity to build up genuine solidarity between the Turks and the Armenians. He advised his parish:

Show goodwill toward local Turkish peoples. It is true that in the past, they subjected us to a great many privations, but they were not responsible for their deeds. The bloodthirsty clique in Yildiz [Palace] was the instigator of all the perpetrated crimes. Let us put aside feelings of vengeance, for if the fruit of tyranny was the feeling of vengeance, the fruit of liberty is love, and let us live with the Turks as the children of one Fatherland as long as they are constitution-loving. And let us devote ourselves with love and solidarity to our country, to the advancement of our Ottoman Fatherland.[‡]

In his address, the Reverend Father expressed confidence that the representatives of the old regime would never succeed in turning the constitutional government against Armenians. He wrote:

I am confident that as long as the country's present liberal government and the army are friends of liberty, these wicked and venal people will never succeed in their evil intentions. Do not listen to them, and watchfully defend your own and the country's interests, as you go about your business. Under all circumstances, assist the local administration to maintain peace in the country. And demonstrate effectively that the respect we have for the Ottoman Fatherland and our goodwill towards our Turkish compatriots is sincere and long-lasting... If you, individually or collectively, ever

* Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 67–68.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3855, June 16 (29), 1909.

‡ Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badashkanadoweru*, 27–28.

face deprivations or unlawful actions, boldly and fearlessly appeal to the local administration.*

The Prelate's address was translated into Turkish and sent to the Muslim spiritual leaders of Adana province, and the Armenian original was read out loudly in all Armenian churches and printed in the Armenian press. The unlawful actions of the military tribunal tried the patience of the Christian spiritual leaders in Adana, who after due deliberation decided to intervene in the court proceedings. For that purpose, they set up a joint body comprised of the leader of the Armenian Catholics, Bishop Boghos Terzian, the Patriarchal Vicar of the Syrian Catholics, Father Piliptos Shaggal, the Patriarchal Vicar of the Chaldeans, Father Istefan Maksabuh, the Vicar of the Armenian Prelacy, Father Arsen Yemenijyan, the spiritual leader of the Armenian Evangelicals, the Reverend Hampartsoum H. Ashdjian, the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Patriarchal Vicar, Father Mansur, the Patriarchal Vicar of the Orthodox Greeks, Father Avram, and the spiritual leader of the Greek Catholics, Father Ilias.†

On May 7 (20), this group of religious leaders sent a written complaint consisting of fifteen points, which was paid no heed. Like the religious leaders, the heads of various organizations and individuals also sent a number of telegrams protesting the unjust investigation by the military tribunal to Constantinople—to the Sultan, the Grand Vizier, the President of the Parliament, and the Interior Minister—but no action was taken on any of these complaints, either.

The Armenian national authorities in Constantinople considered the decisions by the military tribunal illegal. They appealed to the government, calling for the overturning of the decisions taken by the body and the commissions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and for the establishment of new commissions and a new military tribunal to conduct impartial investigations. But the central authorities, as expected, paid no attention to this demand. As time passed, the authorities, along with the Turkish public, became more zealously protective of the actions of the military tribunal.

The only exception was Grand Vizier Husein Hilmi Pasha, who while presenting a report on May 11 on the activity of the Cabinet of Ministers to the Parliament, made a reference to the Cilician calamity and, in essence,

* Ibid., 28.

† Bartevian, *Gilguyan Arhavirku*, 116.

deemed the Armenians innocent, while laying the principal responsibility for the massacres upon the local authorities.

The Grand Vizier addressed the issue again on June 1, in a special statement emphasizing that it had been clearly proven that the Armenian people had never veered from its allegiance to the mighty Ottoman government.† Lastly, he touched upon the issue in his July 31st special statement, declaring that Armenians had not been guilty for what had happened.‡

After that statement by Hilmi Pasha, the Cabinet of Ministers issued decrees right and left regarding the arrest of several criminals previously mentioned (Mehmed Djevad Bey, Mustafa Remzi Pasha, Ihsan Fikri, Mehmed Asaf Esad Bey, and others), which was stipulated not by a desire to bring the criminals to justice, but in order to salvage the honor and reputation of the constitutional state vis-à-vis European public opinion.

Even the government's inadequate reaction to the Armenian massacres brought about bitter displeasure among the Ittihatists, not to mention the monarchists.

The pro-forma decrees by the cabinet of Hilmi Pasha on arresting a few criminals were subjected to severe criticism by the inglorious newspaper *İtidal*, which was echoed by a number of other periodicals.

Thus, the Turkish newspaper *Nedjad*, which was based across from the Holy King Armenian Church in Kadiköy near Constantinople, wrote in relation to the "pro-Armenian" actions by the government that no Muslim should be tried, since Armenians had fomented an uprising to break Cilicia from the empire, and the Armenians had allegedly distributed the flags of their ancient kingdom decorated with *aegricanes* (ram's heads),‡ which allegedly symbolized the severed heads of Muslims.

It became clear to Armenians, who had held an unshakable belief in the ideals of the Ottoman revolution, that the "constitutional" Turkish officials and the fanatical Islamists had not adapted themselves one iota to the spirit of the constitution. The radical differences in opinion brought forth new problems in the relationship between the Young Turks and the Armenian political forces.

* Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 56.

† National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 5, file 14, p. 2; Yeghiayan, *Adanayi Hayots Badmoustian*, 263.

‡ Bartevian, *Gilguyan Arhavirku*, 116–117.

PUNISHING THE "CRIMINAL" ARMENIANS

Dissatisfied with laying the entire blame for the crime on Armenians, the military tribunal did all it could to manufacture culprits responsible for the farfetched rebellion, looking for them first of all within the ranks of the ARF and Hnchag party.

Armenians were summoned for questioning and arrested based on false statements that were taken by the military tribunal as irrefutable truths. There was no lack of so-called witnesses among the Muslim population. They were also able to find witnesses from among self-seeking Armenians. The fact that the military tribunal managed to recruit so many traitors, who by spinning such a number of tales and scenarios betrayed and slandered the living and the dead, was an intolerable humiliation and an incurable sorrow. Based on their false statements, the investigators applied force and coerced arrested Armenians into signing statements prepared in advance that laid the blame for the massacres on Armenians. Based on such evidence, dozens of innocent people were arrested and tortured each day.

The tribunal highly appreciated this phenomenon of moral perversion. In its memoranda sent to the central government, it praised the "invaluable" service rendered by these treacherous vermin. According to a decision by the tribunal, the traitors were given part of their stolen property back.

The temporarily arrested Muslims were kept separate from the arrested Armenians. Zabel Yesayan, who studied the unbearable condition of the detained Armenians up close, wrote: "It is easy to distinguish our kinsmen; they all are in chains... Yes, all of them, even a pitiful priest. While the Turkish detainees are free in their movement, the Armenians are chained tightly."

On May 26 (June 7), 1909, Hagop Babigian sent the following telegram to Grand Vizier Hilmi Pasha: "We respectfully ask you to postpone the enforcement of the verdicts by the Military Tribunal until our investigation is over."^{*} But the telegram had no effect. Quoting Article 56 of the Criminal Code, the Tribunal sentenced twelve Armenians to death, six of whom — Garbledoukian brothers: Hovhannes, 40 years old, Haroutiun, 26, and Garbed, 24, Misak Sarkisian, 28 years old, Khachig (Khacho) Garabedian, 24, and Kevoik Chenesizian, 50,[†] from Adana—were hanged in the city of Adana on May 28 (June 11). They all worked as butchers and were falsely accused of killing Turks in the *Poklu Khan* in Adana. In fact, their only

* Yesayan, *Averagueroun Mech*, 214.

† Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 48.

‡ *Tashink*, no. 228, May 5 (18), 1910.

"crime" was that they tried to defend the lives of their loved ones. The Armenian national authorities in Constantinople learned the names of the men sentenced to death only after their execution."

The other six men sentenced to death were from Hadjin—Karekin Adjemian, 24, Hrant Blkhian, 27, brothers Zadig, 28, and Sarkis, 32, Chkrgian, Asadour Pachapanosian, 15, and Nazaret Shkhrdman, 28. The death sentence of the last four men was substituted by life imprisonment.[†] The six Adana men sentenced to death were hanged in three central locations in Adana—near the bridge, at the *Bugda Bazaar*, and at the railway station.

Butcher Misak Sarkisian was taken to the bridge to be hanged. When they got there, he saw the gallows and an Armenian priest was brought to administer the last sacraments. When the priest tried to perform his duties, Misak interrupted him, saying, "Father, I am going to be hanged, but I am innocent, I committed no crime. I ask our nation to look after my family. I entrust my old and feeble mother, my wife, and my children to the care of my nation..."[‡]

When Misak climbed upon the stool under the gallows, several kind-hearted Turkish women from nearby houses, who had known the unfortunate youth well, began to plead loudly with the soldiers: "Have pity for his youth, for the love of God, take pity on this sweet boy!"^{**} Everyone in Adana knew the kind and well-spoken Misak. When the noose was put around his neck, he turned to the commanding officer and asked to be allowed to recite a poem. And in a plaintive voice he sang his heart-rending death song.^{††} Then he said to the officer: "I have a silver coin in my pocket; tomorrow morning, buy two boxes of soda with this money; take one box to our church, the other to the mosque, and have my countrymen drink it [soda water] for my soul. And give my shoes and my fez to my mother; I have nothing else to give her. Let her look at them and remember her Misak. I say goodbye to everyone and die an innocent man..."^{‡‡}

The following day, the stunning news of Misak's slaying spread throughout the city with lightning speed, breaking the already weak hearts of Armenians. An eyewitness wrote, "Brawny Misak was swaying in the air..."

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3850, June 10 (23), 1909.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 377.

‡ National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 5, file 15, p. 4.

** Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 285.

†† For the Armenian transliterated Turkish text of the song and its translation into Armenian, see *Azrag* (Beirut), January 1, 2009, 133.

‡‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 285.

Even his lifeless body struck terror into his enemies. Even residents of distant villages had come to see the renowned brave heart, Misak, on the gibbet.*

At the same time, the three Bouldoukian brothers were hanged at the square of the *Bugda bazaar*. Two of them asked the soldiers to hang them simultaneously to avoid seeing each other's torments. And so they did.

Two other Armenians were hanged near the railway station, right in front of the British Consulate. Their last supplication was, "Help us, Mr. Consul." He had been informed of the sentence in advance and was calmly watching the scene from his balcony.

Eyewitnesses wrote later, "The bodies, hard as wood, were taken down from the gallows and transported to the cemetery in garbage trucks. The relatives and friends of the hanged men and countless other weeping Armenians followed the trucks. The mothers of the Bouldoukian brothers and of Misak were particularly undone; they were tearing their hair and beating their breasts. And no one could refrain from crying and being perturbed at the sight."[†]

In Erzin, Karekin Adjemian from Hadjin, who had killed a Turkish man in self-defense, was brought to the gallows together with the *mufiti* of Bahche, Ismail, who also had been sentenced to death. Karekin behaved bravely, with the dignity of a true Armenian. He asked the priest present there to pray for his soul and then mounted the stool with equanimity and exclaimed: "Long live justice! Long live liberty! Long live my nation!" Then he put the noose around his neck with his own hands and instructed the soldier at his side to cut the stool from under his feet. Nearby, the ferocious Turkish *mufiti* was shouting and wailing, writhing on the ground, and pleading for his life, but to no avail. The soldiers forcibly dragged the struggling criminal and took him to the gallows.

The sending of innocent Armenian men to the gallows aroused a new wave of desperation and hopelessness among the Armenians. The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian, wrote to the Catholicos of All Armenians, Matteos II. "The attitude assumed by the government and the courts-martial has left us disillusioned about the possibility of achieving just results, and, being unable under these circumstances to be of benefit in my capacity, I have resigned..."[‡]

* *Ibid.*, 390.

† *Ibid.*, 391–392.

‡ National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 5, file 14, p. 3.

In addition to these twelve Armenians, Bishop Moushegh Seropian, was also sentenced to death in absentia. He was accused of being "one of the principal organizers of the rebellion" and of being the head of the local chapter of one of the Armenian revolutionary parties.

The military tribunal represented Bishop Moushegh as a mutineer and a preacher of insurrection. This falsehood penetrated into the Paris periodicals *Le Figaro* and *Le Journal*, and the magazine *Le Temps* echoed them in a ponderous editorial.

Bishop Moushegh was a young man, a well-known figure in the Hnchag party, and later on in the reorganized Hnchag party.* During the evil years of Abdul Hamid II, Moushegh had managed to preserve and protect his parish and create relatively tolerable conditions for the activity of Armenian revolutionaries, thanks to good relations with the previous governor, Bahri Pasha, a Kurd. Both under the old and new regimes, the young Reverend Father contributed to the economic and intellectual development of the community and ensured the peaceful existence of the parish entrusted to him.

A reporter from *Le Figaro* wrote that Bishop Moushegh had fled Cilicia during the massacres. But the fact of the matter was that a month before the calamity he had gone to Egypt to raise money from wealthy Armenians to replenish a fund created to open an agricultural college in Adana.[†] Upon receiving news of the first massacre, the Reverend Father obeyed the call of duty and rushed to Adana, but the Turkish authorities prohibited him from entering the province and he was compelled to return to Alexandria.[‡]

Bishop Moushegh was in Alexandria when the Adana governor, Djavad, spread another of his slanderous rumors that the Prelate's "instructions inflamed Armenians and set them against Muslim people and the government,"[§] prompting the priest to send a response on May 14, 1909.[¶] The Reverend Father noted that the false denunciation by Mehmed Djavad Bey, a creature with the conscience of a hyena, after he had committed

* For the account by the Secretary of the Adana Prelacy in 1905–1915, Kerovbe Papazyan, see Yeghiayan, *Atanayi hayots patmuryun*, 296.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3818, April 21 (May 4), 1909.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3861, June 23 (July 6), 1909.

§ Adana governor Ahmed Djemal Pasha, one of the leaders of the Young Turks, later on expressed a similar opinion about Bishop Moushegh and wrote that he regretted very much that he had been unable to catch him and send him to the gallows alongside the *mufiti* of Bahche. See Djemal Pasha, *Haykakan Hartse* [The Armenian Question] (Yerevan, 1927), 25, 29; National Archives of Armenia, fonds 413, RG 1, file 869, pp. 11–15; and Yeghiayan, *Adanayi Hayots Badmoutiun*, 275.

crimes, was not unexpected and that his attempts at self-justification would backfire. With this conviction, Bishop Moushegh naively hoped that "sooner or later, when justice begins to cut the awful Gordian knot of Cilicia, you will never be able through any self-justification to cleanse yourself of the blood of thousands of innocent people, and its traces will be marked on your forehead as an eternal brand of disgrace for the massacres that have bloodied and defamed the Ottoman Fatherland."

But as events unfolded, the optimism of Bishop Moushegh evaporated like an August cloud. Even after that, he kept sending letters and telegrams asking the Turkish authorities to let him return to Adana.[†] Although he did not manage to do so, the military tribunal commuted his death sentence to 101 years of imprisonment[‡] and eventually was compelled to acquit him without having evidence of a crime.^{**}

Dozens of other Armenians were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment (ten, fifteen, and twenty years or life) on false charges. The merciless, inexorable sentences were tantamount to a condemnation of the nation as a whole. The official justification and consecration of the awful crime caused greater despair than massacres, ravages, and devastation.

In order to justify its inhuman actions, after two months of arrests and trials, the military tribunal on July 24, 1909 presented to the central government a voluminous defamatory report, with which it essentially closed the book on the investigation into the Cilician massacres. The entire report was filled from cover to cover with malicious words about, and hatred and rancor towards, Armenians. Not having learned their lesson from the 1895 events, the report stated that the Armenians of Adana vilayet, in order to take vengeance on the Muslims, had over the years concentrated a large number of their kinsmen from near and distant provinces, and four or five families were living in every Armenian house, without being registered by the censuses.

†† On the basis of this response, Bishop Moushegh wrote a brochure that was published in Alexandria under the heading *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadounere* [The Adana Massacres and Their Instigators]. A second edition of the brochure was published in Boston. The first edition was translated into French and published in Alexandria (*Les Yèvres siciliennes – Les Responsabilités – Faits. Documents*) with a foreword by Max de Colanto, the director of the Cairo newspaper *Le Progrès*. The French edition was amended with some important documents.

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 755.

† Bartevean, *Giligyan Arhavirk*, 66.

‡ *Abharyan*, no. 47, July 1, 1909.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3862, June 24 (July 7), 1909.

The report alleged that Turkish Armenians and their organizations had purposely chosen the site for the uprising, since in the coastal vilayet the interests of the Europeans, as Christians, were more in accord with those of the Armenians.

The compilers of the report alleged that in parallel with the unimaginable growth in their numbers, the Armenians in the vilayet had begun to consider themselves the masters of Adana and had stirred up a rebellion. After that, the report listed numerous false and imaginary facts. At the same time, not a single harsh word was said about the Turks.

The military tribunal's report was followed by a similarly slanderous report[†] sent to the central government by the former *vali* of Adana vilayet, Djevad, in which he, too, laid all the blame for the events on Armenians. This report was hastily published to stir up the Turkish population once again.

While innocent Armenians were being sent to the gallows and thrown in jail by the hundreds in Adana for exercising their basic right to self-defense, the murderers were rejoicing in Constantinople and elsewhere. In the streets and cafés of the capital city, people pointed at the "patriots" who had played an active role in the Adana massacres. With especial vainglory and delight, these people were saying that the government had promoted them in appreciation of their work. Indeed, the officials who had moved from Adana were assuming higher positions with better pay in Bursa, Konya, Adrianople, and elsewhere.[‡] This was the state's reward to the Armenian-hating "heroes." All of this was taking place before the eyes of Armenians, filling them with indignation. "This is not a state, but a slaughterhouse," wrote *Aztag*.^{**}

Under these circumstances, instead of learning a lesson and working with healthy forces to organize the self-defense of the Armenians, the ARF unfortunately made yet another grievous error—it worked even harder to consolidate its alliance with the Young Turks, allegedly "to prevent the danger of a new massacre" that menaced Armenians.

On August 11 (24), 1909, the ARF signed a new agreement with the Ittihat party in which the Adana massacre was presented as an accidental misunderstanding, an act committed by irresponsible individuals and not a

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 714–741.

† *Ibid.*, 743–754.

‡ Stepan Sapah-Gulian, *Pataakhanatunere* [Those responsible], 3rd. ed. (Beirut, 1974), 109.

** *Aztag* (Constantinople), no. 17, April 11 (24), 1909.

heinous crime planned in advance by the state and the ruling party. The agreement stated:

In order to secure the liberty of the Fatherland, to preserve forever its territorial and political integrity, to clear up the misunderstanding among some persons, the Committee of Ittihat ve Terakki and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation have come together to a complete agreement on the following clauses: (1) To work toward implementing the constitution and to fight jointly, sparing no efforts; (2) to act jointly, resolutely, and purposefully within the framework of all the means permitted by the law against potential rebellious movements; (3) to preserve, having as the goal of their joint activity, the cherished Ottoman Fatherland from secession and division, the two parties will work to effectively dispel the talk among the general public—left as a legacy of the despotic regime—that the Armenians are striving for independence; (4) to expand as agreed upon by the two parties the rights of the provinces, which will secure the development and progress of our common Ottoman Fatherland.*

The agreement then stated: "Acknowledging the March 31 events and the painful Adana massacres as an instructive warning, the Committee of Ittihat ve Terakki and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation have decided to work hand in hand toward the fulfillment of the aforementioned clauses."[†]

Later on the periodical *Hovid* wrote in reference to this disgraceful deal:

The Armenian press of the time [after the Cilician massacres] neither advocated taking up arms in self-defense, nor invited the European powers to come and occupy Armenia. On the contrary, in those black days, a party that had established a monopoly on the salvation of the Armenian nation—the Armenian Revolutionary Federation—dipped its pen into the warm blood of thousands of innocent Armenians shed in Cilicia and signed an agreement with the Committee of the Young Turks, who had destroyed Cilicia and drowned it in blood. And what is more awful, the leaders of this so-called revolutionary party—of course, in pursuance of their agreement—had passed through the Armenian blood that spread

* *Banber Hayastani Archiveri*, no. 3 (55), 1979, 72.

† *Ibid.*

throughout Cilicia and reached as far as America to act as a traveling salesman for the Young Turks wrecking Cilicia."[†]

While the ARF was signing a new agreement with the Ittihat party, which had stained its hands in Armenian blood in Cilicia, Armenian national hero Antranig Ozanian assumed leadership of the nation and reminded the politicians again and again that it was necessary to prepare for self-defense.

One and a half months before the Adana massacre, Antranig had secretly traveled from Bulgaria to Constantinople and met with several leaders of the ARF. The latter suggested that the hero stay in Turkey and fight alongside them for the advancement of the constitutional Ottoman fatherland. Antranig categorically rejected the offer, and at the same time urged the representatives of the ARF to go underground or move abroad. He was convinced that the Young Turks were going to organize more awful Armenian massacres and that they—the ARF leaders who pinned their hopes on the Young Turks—would fall victim to the massacres.

"These beasts," he said, "will slaughter us again; what they are doing is just more deception, and you are misleading our people. Do not abandon the idea of self-defense, and guide the people in that direction. There are 160,000 armed Kurds from Diyarbekir to the Persian frontier. The Young Turks will not disarm them and will use them to massacre us at the earliest opportunity."[†]

Antranig repeated the call he had made before the Adana massacre for armed self-defense many times in the following years, right up to the 1915 Armenian Genocide, to which a number of prominent ARF figures fell prey.

HAGOP BABIGIAN'S REPORT

As previously mentioned, the Ottoman Parliament dispatched to Cilicia an investigative commission consisting of Hagop (Nshan) Babigian and Yusuf Kemal Bey, with Babigian acting as the head of the commission.

Hagop Babigian was born on February 23, 1856 in Adrianople (Edirne). He graduated from local Armenian and French schools. For two years beginning in 1887, he worked as an assistant to the Director of the Inspectorate for Foreign Affairs in Bosnia. After returning to his hometown, he worked for two years as a secretary at the Commercial Court. From 1881 to 1891, he was a member of the Court of Appeals in Adrianople. From 1891

* *Hovid*, no. 36, September 16, 1912.

† Antranig Toros Ozanian, *Hayagan Arantsin Harvatsogh Zoramisu* [Armenian Detached Assault Regiment] (Boston, 1921), 227.

to 1902, he worked as a lawyer in Constantinople, and in 1902 he again returned to Adrianople to practice law.

Babigian was known for his ardent Turkophilia.^{*} He was an earnest Ottoman patriot and an active Itrihattist. He was convinced that the strength and indivisibility of the Empire and its future were conditioned by the final victory of Ottomanism (i.e., the idea of a united Ottoman homeland). Babigian was fully aware that being comprised of various peoples, the Empire could not be unified from a national standpoint. Neither was unification possible from a religious standpoint, since the religions with all their various branches that existed in the country were different from and even hostile to each other. Therefore, only the idea of homeland remained, around which all Ottomans were to rally, irrespective of their national or religious affiliation.

Before the Cilician calamity, Babigian had never been involved in Armenian issues, though in his environment and among his kinsfolk, he was known as truthful and honest, steadfast and unprejudiced, and as a man of high moral qualities.

The Armenian population of the province of Rodosto, on the coast of the Sea of Marmara not far from Constantinople, was very small compared to the Turkish population, but since Babigian had long been affiliated with the local chapter of the Committee of Unity and Progress, it supported his candidature in the elections and he was elected a member of parliament. He rarely took the floor during parliamentary sessions, due to his innate modest self-effacement, but he worked actively on various commissions, and especially, as a member of the constitutional commission. As an Itrihattist, he defended Turkish interests in the parliament in good faith.

Babigian had always remained loyal to the Committee of Union and Progress, even at times of crisis for the Young Turks, including the immediate aftermath of the March 31st events, when other Armenian members of parliament such as Zohrab, Vartges, Kegham, and others supported the *Osmanli Ahrar Firkasi* (Party of Ottoman Liberals) parliamentary faction.

When the leaders of parliament nominated Babigian to be a delegate in the Adana investigation, they had great confidence in his Ottomanist attitude and believed that he would certainly do whatever the Turks might fail to do—serving, paradoxically, Turkish interests and the government's inclinations in general.

* Hampartsoum Yeramian, *Hovhartsian Van-Vasbouragani* [Monument to Van-Vaspouragan] (Alexandria, 1929), 2:109.

Within the Armenian community of Adana, in contrast, Babigian's nomination as an investigator had aroused displeasure and protest, taking into consideration his Turkophilic attitude. Cilician Armenians were convinced that he could not conduct an impartial and just investigation and reveal the truth. The same mood permeated the pages of the Armenian newspapers of Constantinople, where many articles unsympathetic to Babigian appeared.[†]

Babigian, Faik Bey, Haroutiun Mosdichian, and Yusuf Kemal Bey left Constantinople on board a ship on May 12 and reached Adana on May 16. "When we departed, I thought that the news about these painful occurrences had been exaggerated,"[‡] Babigian wrote.

Upon reaching his destination, Babigian saw the immense scale of the crime committed and undertook the investigation of the events in a fearless and unbiased manner. Though he was soft-spoken and sensitive, he could not tolerate injustice, and boldly stood up against it. The unimaginable atrocities committed there caused him fathomless sorrow and pain. He asked how had it been possible to allow a local, isolated incident to result in committing an entire province to sword and blood. If in every province an insignificant incident caused such scenes of slaughter, one week would have been enough to wipe out the entire Armenian population from Ottoman soil. "This Armenian who had been indifferent to his race and almost renounced by it," Bartevian wrote, "wept tears of blood over the Cilician graves, which he visited one by one. No one writhed in pain as much as he did before the orphans, misery, and all of that ongoing suffering. 'This is not something to be endured,' he was saying, squeezing his soul between his teeth."[§]

Prominent Armenian intellectual Tlgadintsi (Hovhannes Haroutiunian) wrote of the mental anguish Babigian underwent in those days in Adana: "This poor man—and at the same time this refined and true Armenian—melted like a burning candle as he saw with his own eyes and heard up close what had happened..."^{**}

The course of investigation into the frightening facts of the Armenians' innocence' brought forth a deep upheaval in his consciousness. The centuries-old spirit of his race had awakened inside Babigian, and as if by the touch of a magic wand, it forced the Turkophilic feelings out and made them

^{*} *Shing*, no. 25–26, August 15, 1909, 469.

[†] Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghbernu*, 12.

[‡] Bartevian, *Gilgigan Arhavirku*, 107.

^{**} *Anahid*, no. 11–12, March–April, 1910, 273.

vanish." Not long thereafter, *Arevêk* wrote, "Apparently, this man first of all has a veracious and a justice-loving soul before everything else."[†] In the course of the investigation, he came into conflict with the second commission member, his colleague Yusuf Kemal Bey, but did not hesitate to make statements about his findings freely and fearlessly.

The spiritual leader of the Armenian Evangelicals of Adana, Reverend Hampartsoum Ashdjian, later recalled:

Many a time he had arguments with his colleague Yusuf Kemal Bey in my presence. I told him, 'Babigian Effendi, do not act like this; whatever had to happen has happened, whoever had to go has gone. Do not clash so much with your comrade, or he will not sign your joint report.' He responded, 'Reverend Father, I cannot tolerate this; they behave one way in our presence and differently in our absence. I cannot bear such hypocrisy.'[‡]

In his first telegram of May 25 addressed to Grand Vizier Hilmi Pasha, this exquisite human being openly manifested the courage to confront the awful reality. It was impossible to wire detailed, accurate information from Cilicia to Constantinople and elsewhere, because the censors altered the composition of the telegrams.^{**} In spite of that, Babigian chose the wording he found appropriate. No one dared to fling his fury, loathing, and rage in the executioners' face in Adana as did this brave-hearted intellectual, who had all his life been reserved. In his telegram, he asked the Grand Vizier to instruct the military tribunal to temporarily suspend its activity until the commission had concluded its investigation. He also informed the Grand Vizier that the tribunal had passed over the true guilty ones, leaving them at liberty, and was instead trying the innocent. He quoted one of the numerous facts: "A reliable source has informed us that in Hadjin a large number of Armenians have been put into irons in groups of seven or eight people, and are suffering the most brutal treatment."^{††}

Even before the investigation by the two-member parliamentary commission had been concluded, Babigian drafted another well-grounded and factual telegram to be sent to Hilmi Pasha, and asked fellow commission member Yusuf Kemal Bey to co-sign it. His Turkish colleague, who was

* Djizmedjian, *Badmoustion Amerigahay Kaghakakan Gousagsousyants*, 174.

† *Arevêk*, no. 7132, June 24, 1909.

‡ Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniyayi Housher*, 53.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3815, April 17 (30), 1909.

†† Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadouneru*, 46–47.

inclined to diminish the scale of the disaster, turned the offer down, and Babigian was compelled to send the telegram on his own on June 8.

In that second telegram, Babigian again raised the issue of the tribunal saying, "I respectfully request that you postpone the execution of the sentences by the military tribunal until our investigation is concluded."^{*}

He again informed the Grand Vizier of the flagrant injustice that had taken place in the work of the tribunal. "The military tribunal," he wrote, "is only occupied with investigating the alleged Armenian uprising and condemning Armenians who saved themselves through self-defense, based on testimony by civil and military officials and the most wicked individuals... No incident ever was caused by Armenians in the *sandjak* of Djebel-i Bereket, and according to my thorough calculations, three thousand Armenians were slaughtered in this *sandjak*, and except for Deortyol, which was saved through self-defense, no Armenian home was spared in all other places."[†] Describing the countless losses suffered by Armenians and their ongoing inhuman treatment by the military tribunal, Babigian concluded his telegram as follows: "I am informing you for the last time that if the repressions against the remaining Armenians by the military tribunal are not halted, and if no measures are taken in this respect immediately, there is no doubt that wounds will open up that can never be healed. From now on, it is up to you to give the necessary order in this regard."[‡] And then: "My sentiments as a true Ottoman prompt me to conclude that such events will make it impossible to establish friendly relations among the constituents, not only in these parts, but also in the Empire as a whole."^{**}

After concluding the investigation, Babigian headed for the capital from Cilicia by sea, carrying with him the mental anguish of all Armenians. On the way, the ship stopped in Smyrna, and a reporter from the Young Turk newspaper *Ittihat* published in Constantinople came onboard to conduct the following interview:

Reporter: Is your mission in Adana over, or are you going to return there again?

Babigian: The work I was supposed to do is over. There are no more issues to investigate for me.

* Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadouneru*, 48.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 442–446.

‡ *Ibid.*, 446.

** Moushegh, *Adanayi Chartu yev Badaskhanadouneru*, 45.

Reporter: What is the result of the investigation? What was the cause of the massacres?

Babigian: The results of my investigation show that beginning with the Proclamation of Liberty, the adherents of the despotic regime manifested signs of discontent and intended to massacre the Christians; this is obvious and is proved by official judicial documents.

Reporter: Did Sultan [Abdul] Hamid take part in this?

Babigian: There are disagreements in this regard in Adana, but in the course of the investigation I was not able to find proof of it.

Reporter: Did the local administration or the central government play a role in the massacre?

Babigian: The central government did not take part in it, but was the reason for it. And the local administration took part in it. In particular, Governor Djevad, military commander Mustafa Remzi Pasha, Djebel-i Bereket *mutasarrif* Asaf Bey, Baghdadi Zade [Abdul] Kadir Effendi, Boshnak Salih Effendi, and the editor-in-chief of *Itidal*, Ihsan Fikri Effendi were absolutely involved.

Reporter: Did the Christians cause the massacres?

Babigian: The Christian did not cause the massacres; I am absolutely convinced of that.

Reporter: What do your colleagues think?

Babigian: My colleagues agree with me; only Yusuf Kemal Bey had some disagreements, but eventually he was convinced as well.

Reporter: Will peace be lasting after this in Adana? Have measures been taken to prevent such incidents from recurring?

Babigian: By virtue of strict and just measures, the government will be able to maintain peace, tranquility, and order in Adana. The military tribunal has not been guided by impartiality. If it is impartial, there will be no problematic issues left.*

Another rather extensive interview with Babigian by one of the editors of the newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar* is of interest as well. Below are some excerpts:

Editor: What did you see when you arrived in Adana?

Babigian: Regarding what I saw, I can tell you in brief that the details of the Adana incidents published in European newspapers, compared to what I saw, do not overstate the situation, but rather understate it.

Editor: In your view, what was the cause of the events?

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3861, June 23 (July 6), 1909.

Babigian: The Adana events had two powerful causes—the forces of reaction and despotism. In the beginning of July, despotic tendencies appeared. The former *mufiti* of Bahche was going here and there, declaring that the constitution and liberty were the doing of the Christians and that they were against the Sharia, and thus he agitated the Muslims against the Christians and the Constitution. The joy and elation of all strata of the population in the first days after the proclamation of the constitution were replaced by hostility and vindictiveness against the non-Muslims.

Editor: It is said that Armenians caused the insurrection—is that true?

Babigian: The documents I have with me will prove that this assumption is absolutely wrong.

Editor: It is said that Armenians wanted to declare independence in Cilicia—is that true?

Babigian: The investigation proves that this assumption is absolutely baseless. The talk and reports about the Armenians aspiring for independence are the result of either a flawed inquiry or the deliberate distortion of the truth.

Editor: How are the victims going to make their living henceforth?

Babigian: For now, they have no means of subsistence. The majority of Armenians are preparing to emigrate to America and elsewhere...*

At that moment, a group of members of the Ottoman Parliament traveling to Europe, including Dr. Riza Tefvik, Talaat Bey, Suleiman al-Bustani (an Arab deputy), Nesim Mazliah Effendi (a Jewish deputy), and others was in Smyrna. Having learned that Babigian was in Smyrna, they met with him, listened to his story with interest and sympathy, and encouraged him.† The meeting strengthened Babigian's conviction that he would achieve justice in the capital.

After his interview with Babigian, the editor of *Tasvir-i Efkar* met with the head of the governmental commission, Faik Bey, who was returning from Adana. He declared that according to his study, six thousand people—mostly Muslims—had been killed in Cilicia. The editor noted that this number was very far from the figures cited by Babigian and received the following response: "It is possible that Babigian Effendi has a personal opinion on this, but such an opinion of Babigian Effendi cannot serve as a guide for the

* Fonds of Krikor Zohrab, no. 2175/II, p. 3, Museum of Literature and Arts.

† Bartevian, *Giligyan Arhavirku*, 109.

investigative commission. In any case, I repeat once again, the [governmental] investigative commission has never mistrusted the military tribunal."^{*}

Upon returning to Constantinople, Babigian compiled an extensive report in French and presented it to the Chamber of Deputies. It is worth noting that the formulations in the report were even more radical and bold than those of the interview in Smyrna. The main points of the report were the following:

(1) The principal conclusion of the deputy was that the Adana incidents occurred through no fault of the Christians. He emphasized that Armenians had not caused or incited the massacres in the city, that they had taken up arms only in self-defense, and that the true instigators and ringleaders had been the local Turkish officials.[†]

(2) The central government was responsible for the massacres, and the local administration was a direct accomplice. He wrote: "I have to add with the utmost regret that members and leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress in Adana aided in organizing and carrying out the attacks against Armenians."[‡]

(3) The military tribunal (courts-martial) conducting the investigation in Adana was not impartial.^{**}

(4) The massacre of Armenians and other Christians was carried out in the most loathsome way, with inconceivable cruelty. Babigian emphasized that he had witnessed massacres in Bulgaria, Herzegovina, and Edirne during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid, but he had never seen anything "similar to the massacre and pillage carried out in Adana province," which "surpassed in their horror" all the previous massacres, "since under that regime there was at least some discipline. The elderly, sick, women and children were spared, the pillage was not as widespread and the damage had never been so huge. Whereas in Adana everything they found was burned, wounded, and killed. All males over twelve years of age were murdered in Misis, Hamidiye, Bahce, Hasanbeyli, and Osmaniye."^{††}

In his report, Babigian presented detailed data on the fatalities, the wounded, the destruction, and the material losses and stressed, "I tried to hide nothing and present the truth that is the result of my investigation, and I have never altered my personal convictions about the bloody actions in

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3866, June 29 (July 12), 1909.

† Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 12–16.

‡ *Ibid.*, 35–38; *Arevelk*, no. 7132, June 24, 1909.

** Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 38–40.

†† Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 13–14.

Adana." Moreover, he openly stated in his report his future plans: "I will strive to prove that the purpose of the massacres was to annihilate the Armenians and Christians."[†]

Praising the work done by Babigian, *Arevelk* wrote in an editorial entitled *The Truth in March* that "he speaks the truth without taking anything into consideration; he characterizes the crime and points out the criminals like a relentless judge. He is the first person who came out of the furnace of the crime to earn laurels of truthfulness."[‡]

The Ittihat party stubbornly rejected the conclusions of the report at first, but the collected facts were so vivid that eventually the Young Turk leadership admitted that it generally agreed with Babigian's conclusions. The Turkish parliament members and state officials, in contrast, received the report with hostility.

An extensive interview with Babigian published in the June 25, 1909 issue of *Tasvir-i Efkar* generally reflected the contents of the report. The upright and thunderous statements made by the parliamentarian in his interview caused considerable shock in Constantinople.^{**} The Turkish press and the parliament addressed these statements.

On July 7, 1909, the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament addressed, among other issues, the question of Cilicia as well. A report by the financial commission of the parliament on the Adana massacres was presented. The commission gave its approval to the government's proposal to allocate 10,000 gold liras to Adana province and 20,000 gold liras to Aleppo province.

For its part, the commission proposed allocating an additional 50,000 gold liras to the merchants and shopkeepers in Adana to restore their businesses and reconstruct the burned-down schools.

Parliament Member Munif Bey, elected from Adana, took the floor and proposed to allocate 100,000 gold liras instead of 50,000, since "There are merchants in Adana whose losses amount to more than 50,000 gold liras."

Yusuf Kemal Bey, who was a member of the parliamentary commission along with Babigian and had just returned from Adana, informed the Chamber of Deputies that he would present his report for discussion in a few days' time, but since the issue of aid was a priority, he suggested rendering assistance to the widows and children immediately to enable them to survive.

* *Ibid.*, 17–21.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Arevelk*, no. 7132, June 24, 1909.

** *Arevelyan Manoul*, no. 29, July 14, 1909, 671.

He seconded the proposal by Munif Bey to allocate 100,000 gold liras to the merchants and shopkeepers since "Adana is a province that is capable of returning this sum in one or two years." The Chamber of Deputies approved the proposals unanimously.

To carry out the Parliament's decision, the government set up an ad-distributing body and allotted a certain sum to it, and a few days later transferred 100,000 gold liras to the Ottoman Bank of Adana. In addition, the *Zinat* Bank allotted 50,000 gold lira for the farmers and merchants who had incurred losses. The government also allocated 25,000 gold liras for the widows and orphans as a five-year loan, but soon reduced it to 10,000 gold liras.

The funds allocated by the Turkish government were distributed very unfairly—the lion's share was given to the families of the slain or wounded Muslims. Widespread embezzlement was committed during the distribution of funds, mainly by the members of the distributing body of Adana; in other words, by the massacres' organizers.

At the July 8th session, during the discussion of the items on the agenda, Ismail Hakki Bey (who was a son of the dismissed *vali* of Adana, Mustafa Zihni Pasha, and later replaced Ahmed Djemal Bey in that position) demanded that the Minister of the Interior provide an explanation as to why he had ordered the arrest of Ihsan Fikri and a prominent Adana resident, Baghdadi Zade Abdul Kadir. One of the deputies suggested to Hakki Bey that he send a written inquiry to the minister.

During the July 13, 1909 session, a written response to Ismail Hakki's inquiry was read out, stating that Ihsan Fikri and Baghdadi Zade Abdul Kadir had been arrested as participants in the massacres. Not satisfied with the response, Hakki Bey stressed that the constitution had been violated, since the government had no right to arrest these two persons. That was within the competence of the judicial authorities. More than half the deputies supported Ismail Hakki.

Babigian and Vartges expressed their astonishment that those who supported the Hakki proposal were defending those two persons because they were Muslims, whereas 21,000 people had been killed in Adana and no one talked about that. Hakki replied that it was a figment of Babigian's imagination that so many people had been massacred, and Talaat added that

* Before his arrest, this slaughterer chaired a body in Adana that dealt with donations to the sufferers.

there was no accurate information regarding the massacres and that "Babigian Effendi says that it is said that 21,000 people were killed." Babigian angrily shouted from his seat: "Not 'it is said' but 'he says.'"¹

Parliament Chairman Ahmed Riza tried to silence Vartges, who attempted to support Babigian, with threats. Vartges asked the chairman: "Do I not have a right to speak as the other [Muslim] deputies do?"

One of the deputies suggested returning to the issue when the parliamentarians who had returned from Adana had presented their report for discussion.

As previously mentioned, Babigian's report was extremely unwelcome to the Young Turks and the government. On July 20, 1909, Babigian "died suddenly" and the report "disappeared." No one believed this fabricated version of events. There is no doubt that Babigian was poisoned to death.

French politician and man of letters Francis de Pressensé noted in reference to Babigian's death that "ill-fated Babigian was deprived of life for having the imprudence to study the incidents and commit them to paper, and for making public some of his findings."²

When the sad news of Babigian's death reached Adana, the grateful local Armenians, prompted by feelings of sorrow and regret, refurbished one of the city's ruined churches and held a memorial service for the dead. Special prayer services were also held by the Adana Greeks and Assyrians.³ Everyone murmured words of regret.

Babigian's death aroused national mourning and sorrow. In their hearts and minds, the entire nation was present at the funeral of the great defender of the heartrending cause of Cilician Armenians. The regrets multiplied when people recalled how their kinsmen had jeered at him, alleging that he had gone to Adana to cover up the crimes of the slaughterers. An Armenian intellectual noted at the time that this honorable man had never spoken of patriotism or his devotion to the nation, but when time had come, he sacrificed his life to speak the truth about the calamity that had befallen a part of his nation.⁴

At the same time, Babigian's death taught Armenians to show discretion at every turn. "We have to be discreet in our joy and in our hatred," *Aztag* wrote, "since under conditions of such hyper-excitement of mind and soul, all

¹ Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 13–14.

² Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniazey Housher*, 52.

³ Fonds of Krikor Zohrab, no. 2175/II, 1, Museum of Literature and Arts.

published lines and all uttered words are being transformed into action, and there is blood behind every action.”

After Babigian's funeral, the Ottoman Parliament addressed in passing the issue of providing assistance to the family of the deceased deputy in its sessions of July 23, July 25, and July 26.

Babigian had earlier become a widower and had four daughters and two sons in his care. Not only was he a role model as a man, he also was a role model as a father. And now his children had been left helpless orphans.

At the June 23rd session, after the agenda had been exhausted, a Turkish deputy expressed sorrow about Babigian's death, but no one reacted. Then Chairman Ahmed Riza informed the Chamber of Deputies that Member of the Parliamentary Commission Yusuf Kemal had submitted his report on the Adana events to the Chamber, and that it was scheduled to be published at the next session. Vartges demanded that Babigian's report be published at the same session as well. The chairman posed a question: “The author of the report is not alive. If questions arise about the facts he addressed in the report, who will answer them?” To which Vartges replied: “Let the report be read out, and if questions arise, there will be an exchange of views.” The Chamber of Deputies decided to publish both reports at the July 25th session.

At the July 25th session, Yusuf Kemal and three other Turkish deputies handed a petition to the Chairman requesting that assistance be provided to Babigian's family, taking into consideration his patriotic service and the fact that he had not left his orphaned children with means of subsistence. The authors of the petition suggested asking the government to grant a pension to Babigian's children until they had attained their majority, and to assist the ten-year-old son of the deceased, Babig, with his admission to the Galatasaray Lyceum. After the petition was read out, many parliament members expressed their approval, and deputy Asim Bey expressed confidence that the Parliament would approve the proposal unanimously. But the opposite happened. Member of Parliament Nadji Pasha criticized the authors of the petition, saying, “We have been elected as members of the parliament, not to spend additional money but to defend the interests of the state treasury.” Deputy Shukri Effendi seconded him, saying angrily, “The times of Abdul Hamid are over; it is impossible to grant monthly pensions to everyone anymore.”^{*}

* *Azrag* (Constantinople), no. 19, May 8 (25), 1909.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 621.

Encouraged that his position had met with support, Nadji Pasha reiterated that it was unacceptable to spend the nation's money on insignificant things. Ismail Hakki Bey reproved Nadji Bey, saying, “Shut your mouth!” A deputy from Aleppo, Mustafa Bey, whirled around angrily and ran toward Ismail Bey, shouting: “I will rip your mouth off, what right do you have to reproach and silence people? You think you are the chairman, do you?” Ismail Bey asked, “Who are you?”

The irritated response of Mustafa Bey followed: “This is a disgrace. Only the chairman has the right to call the chamber to order.” After saying that, he left the hall.^{*}

And thus the Ottoman Parliament ended all discussion of the deceased deputy Hagop Babigian.

The July 26th session was the last one to address the Cilician calamity. Before closing the session, Chairman Ahmed Riza informed the deputies that it was more expedient to discuss the Yusuf Kemal Bey report on the Adana events—which was scheduled to be read out at that very session—in a temporary parliamentary commission first, and then to present it to the Chamber of Deputies. To that end, at his proposal, a thirteen-member commission was elected, which never convened, and Yusuf Kemal's report was never published, to say nothing of the vanished report compiled by Hagop Babigian. The Chamber of Deputies closed the issue of the Cilician massacres and pillage for the authorities once and for all.

The public was aware that the ill-fated Babigian had submitted a report to the Parliament before his mysterious death, but both the contents and the original document remained under a veil of secrecy. It was several years before Armenians managed to lay their hands on a rough draft of the report and secretly publish and distribute it. A copy fell into the hands of a reporter from the British *Times*, who published extensive excerpts with an analytical preface in the newspaper. The Parisian *Pro Armenia* first published the report in full in French on April 25, 1913 with a foreword by Francis de Pressensé.

Convinced that the principal responsibility for the Adana massacres rested with the Turkish government, this good friend of the Armenians warned that the Adana slaughter could be the prelude to more widespread massacres. “No one has the right to deny the true danger that is hanging over Armenia and, therefore, over the civilized world,”^{*} he wrote.

* Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 622–623.

† Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 8.

Attributing the lead role among those who destroyed Adana province to Kurds, de Pressensé expressed alarm that it was probable they would cause a new misfortune for Armenians. The news coming from the interior provinces was increasingly outrageous, he stressed. It was especially clear that the Kurds intended to renew their raids of twenty years earlier. The majority of working people—the Armenians—lived in uncertainty, under permanent threat of attack. The Turkish authorities in Constantinople had neither the time, nor the strength, nor, perhaps, the willpower to stand up against the brigand tribes from Kurdistan and make them show respect for law, order, and peace.

De Pressensé, underscoring that the Ottoman Empire—be it the tyranny of Abdul Hamid's or the constitutional government of the Young Turks—was unable to guarantee the security of life and property of Armenians, considered the appointment of an Administrator from Europe over the Armenian provinces of Turkey to be the solution.[†]

Babigian's report was translated into Armenian by Hagop Sarkisian and was first published in 1919 in Constantinople.

PHILANTHROPY VERSUS MISANTHROPY

The only consoling thing in the days of the Cilician calamity was the selfless devotion of humanitarians. As was previously mentioned several times, many compassionate individuals and groups played an exceptional role in saving Armenians and other Christians.[‡] It is a duty of the heart to recall their names once again.

The American and European missionaries, and the foreign missionary and charity organizations working in Cilicia, played a very important role. The consulates of foreign powers and the crews of warships in the Cilician harbors lent a helping hand to the people in trouble as well, though they may not have done all that they could.

During the 1895–1896 massacres of the Armenians, when the ambassadors of European states in Constantinople had lodged protests with Sultan Abdul Hamid, he had responded, "Why do you complain? Is it not true that none of your subjects or officials has gotten so much as a bloody nose?" But this time in Cilicia, not only Europeans but also Americans were killed.

* Ibid.

† Babigian, *Adanayi Yeghernu*, 11.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3815, April 17 (30), 1909.

About a dozen Protestant missionaries, mostly from the United States, were killed in Adana. Among them were renowned missionaries Daniel Miner Rogers and Henry Maurer. This disturbed the U.S. government. President William Howard Taft requested that the Porte inform him of the measures it had taken to protect the American missionaries.

American missionaries Herbert Adams Gibbons, William N. Chambers, sisters Elizabeth and Mary Webb, G. Kennedy, English nurse Miss Wallace, and others helped the Christians in Adana in every possible way, putting their own lives in danger.

In Tarsus, the headmaster of the local American college, Thomas D. Christie, his wife Carmelite, their daughter Mary Phelps Christie, and other Armenians came to the Armenians' aid. Thanks to their efforts more than five thousand people were rescued.[†]

On April 1, Colonel Doughty-Wylie, the British Consul in Mersin, and his noble wife came to Adana. When the survivors of massacres were driven out of the city and deprived of all means of subsistence, Mrs. Doughty-Wylie gave her jewelry in pledge to the Ottoman Bank and used the money to feed the needy people until assistance from Constantinople and abroad reached Adana. In addition, she personally tended to many wounded women, children, and old people and dressed their wounds.[‡]

The service of French missionaries and officials was invaluable. They opened the doors of their houses and hospitals to the sufferers. Deep gratitude is due to Franciscan Padre Sabatino del Gaizo of Kessab, the owner of the cotton mill in Hamidiye, D. Sabatier, his wife, their daughter Antoinette, and son Charles, who saved more than three hundred Armenians from the massacre by sheltering them in their homes. The good deeds performed by the Jesuit Fathers are unforgettable. It can be said that Rose Lambert saved the entire town of Hadjin. Jesuits led by Father Jouve and Father Rigal rescued many innocent people. French Consul in Aleppo Fernand Roqueferrier, after hurrying to render direct assistance to the ill-fated Armenians, suffered profound shock and died in mental anguish after being confined to bed for three months. Immeasurable efforts to rescue the Armenians were applied by Lazarist Father Dillange, Trappist Father Etienne Labardin, Marist Brother Dioscore, Antoine Ressicaud, Mother Melanie of the Sisters of Saint-Joseph College, the manager of the *Régie de Tabac*, the

* Terzian, *Giligio Agbedu*, 801.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaye Housher*, 52.

Christian Arab Abboud, and others. Among them, Dioscore rendered the greatest service to the Armenians; risking his own life, he rescued some five thousand people who had huddled together inside Adana's St. Stepanos Church and its vicinity, condemned to slaughter.^{*}

Special mention is due to the German manufacturers Stöckel and Lutz, the dragoman of the Russian Consulate Artemis Yanko and his mother, the Greek community of Latakia and the Italian and French Consuls there, the dragoman of the German consulate, the director of the American Hospital of Adana, and others who spared no effort to assist the suffering Armenians.[†]

The attitude assumed by the great powers, however, differed. In order not to spoil their relations with the Young Turk government, they did nothing to stop the criminals. Foreign officials from Berlin, London, Saint Petersburg, and Paris looked on indifferently as the horrible events unfolded. The European warships anchored in the harbor of Alexandretta came to the rescue of a few thousand Armenians at the personal initiative of their captains. The European diplomatic missions in Mersin and Adana, with the exception of the British, did not lodge any protest with the Turkish authorities, and the German diplomatic officers in Adana scattered crumbs of bread from the Consulate windows before the starving Armenians for fun and photographed the scene.[‡]

When immediately after the massacres, wheat purchased by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople reached the port of Mersin, the German manager of the railroad categorically turned down the request of the Patriarchate representatives, refusing to provide railway wagons to transport the wheat to Adana to save the survivors from starvation.[§] The European governments did not attempt to take under their protection those Armenians who at different times had left the Armenian Apostolic Church and adopted Catholicism or Protestantism.^{¶¶}

It is wrong to sin against the truth; it is wrong in the case of the Cilician massacre as well. Armenians have never been ungrateful; they have never

* Terzian, *Gilgjo Aghedu*, 493.

† *Ibid.*, 804.

‡ Azat Hambaryan, "Kilikiyasi 1909 Kotovatsneri" [The 1909 Massacres in Cilicia], *Parmanbanasirakan Handes* [Historical-Philological Journal], no. 4 (Yerevan, 1988), 24.

¶¶ *Ibid.*, 24.

†† *Ibid.*, 24.

forgotten the unique instances of humaneness manifested toward the ill-starred Armenians in those bloody days by various Muslim individuals.

Indeed, it would have been impossible to live in Turkey, where cases of horrific crimes committed by insatiable hyenas followed one upon the other, if all Turks or Kurds had been predators and Armenians had been crying victims. Fortunately this was not the case. Along with thousands of instances of bestiality and barbarity, there were also instances of humanity; the number of these was unfortunately small and insignificant, but they were encouraging and heartening for Armenians, nonetheless, and gave them reason to think that perhaps the time would come when Armenians could have a decent life in Turkey without worrying for their lives.

A small number of Muslim individuals were guided in their behavior by noble sentiments. Many of them excited the anger of their coreligionists and even put themselves at risk by the attitude they manifested toward Armenians. It is clear that if there had been no such Muslims deserving to be called human beings, Armenian losses would have been much greater.

Turks lent a helping hand to Armenians in several places. Khalil Agha and his sons Osman, Mustafa, Ali, and Shukri rescued forty-five Armenians in the city of Adana. The Adana *hakim* (judge) saved Armenians who had gathered near the town hall during the second massacre. A resident of the city's Turkish neighborhood of Eski Hamam, Kadem Zade Hadji Osman Effendi, sheltered in his house and saved the lives of seventy people during the first massacre and one hundred people during the second massacre.

In Nadjarli, a kind-hearted man named Keor Ahmed sheltered in his house and saved thirty-two Armenians from Hadjin. The *kaymakam* of Karaisali lent a helping hand to one hundred and forty Armenians facing imminent death. There were good-hearted men in Tarsus as well; one of them was Esad Agha, who rescued a number of Armenians, and another, Abidin Zade Shefik, saved more than two hundred people. Also in Tarsus, Guvend Zade Mukhtar saved the lives of twenty-three Armenians, and another conscientious Turk, a humane man called Momodjan, endangering his own life to rescue fifty Armenians. In spite of the danger, a prominent Muslim from Bahche, Poyraz Oglu Mehmed Effendi, saved 168 people. In Miurfet, near Kars-Bazar, *khodja* Mahmud Effendi rescued two hundred Armenians. The *mudir* of Hekimhan, Gharib Agha Zade, rescued sixty-two Armenian families. Similar humanistic deeds were performed by the *khodja* of Eyriboudjak, Mustafa Effendi, and the mullah from Osmaniye, Ahmed Effendi. Also in the village of Osmaniye, a Turkish shopkeeper sheltered

about fifty Armenians in his house, fed them and cared for them until passions had settled down, and then escorted them to their homes. Before the massacre in Hamidiye, the local Turkish officials blocked the mob's way and for a long while did not let the rabble into the village. Only after the crowd began threatening the officials and shouting that they had converted to Christianity were they no longer able to resist, and under the threat of death they were compelled to yield. Even so, a Turkish landlord in Hamidiye managed to keep dozens of Armenians in his house for twenty days and care for them there.

Several villages in the district of Kharni were saved from the massacre thanks to their Turkish neighbors. When the Armenian-populated village of Islahiye (Keller) in the Djebel-i Bereket *sandjak* was subjected to attack, the residents managed to escape to the mountains, but four days later, facing starvation, they were compelled to return to the plain and were sheltered by their Turkish neighbors that cared for them and handed them over to the authorities only after peace had been established.

The *mutasarrif* of the same *sandjak* armed the Turkish residents of the village of Erzin, and they surrounded two hundred Armenians sheltered in the village inn, threatening to slaughter them all. Two Turkish clergymen stood before the mob and quoted verses from the Koran convincing the rabble that killing innocent people was a sin and that the Prophet Mohammed would never forgive the sinners. The Turkish mob dispersed and the Armenians were saved.¹ In the village of Teyi-Keoy of the same district, eighty Armenians were massacred, but sixty-one people were saved thanks to fellow villager Baitaro Ali Effendi, who sheltered them in his house and then escorted them to Deortyol.

As mentioned earlier, an army commander in Misis, Lutfi Bey, took a few hundred local and newly arrived Armenians under his protection, despite the fact that the enraged mob was threatening to slaughter all of them. This was indeed what happened when Lutfi Bey left with his military squad for Hadjin to rescue seven American women there.

The Aintab *kaymakam*, Kemal Bey, succeeded in preventing an imminent massacre. During the massacre in Kessab, many Muslims manifested a humane attitude. The following are some of them: The *mutasarrif* of Latakia, Muhammad Ali Bey, rescued thousands of refugee Armenians who had burst into the city. This kind man, deeply disturbed by the heart-rending scenes,

* Fonds of Krikor Zohrab, no. 2175/II, 1, Museum of Literature and Arts.

took exhausted children in his arms, patted their heads, and wept. He tended to the sufferers with the utmost care and provided them with bread and water while they stayed in Latakia. Ali Bey's subordinate, local military unit commander Subhi Bey, enthusiastically assisted his superior in his benevolent endeavor, doing his part lawlessly. Hadji Ahmed from the Turkmen populated village of Fakihasan, located fifteen kilometers from Kessab, sheltered in his home and rescued many Armenians. Along with his brothers, he went round the mountains gathering the hidden Armenians and taking them safely to rescue steamships. A prominent Turkmen from the town of Ordou, Sadik Khoja, was prompted by his sense of human duty to do everything in his power to prevent the Turkish youths gathered in Ordou from attacking Kessab. Unable to succeed, he began calling down curses upon the bloodthirsty slaughterers. Latif Agha was another humane man from Ordou; risking his life, he did a great deal to alleviate the losses and the grief of the Kessab Armenians.*

The wife of the well-known Kessab doctor Soghomon Apelian had been hiding in a cave for four days, hungry, thirsty, and terrified, with her eight children, her sister, and two orphans from Antioch. A group of Turks discovered their hiding place, robbed them, and subjected them to hideous violence. At that moment, a notorious criminal from Ordou named Arif, who had spent most of his life in jail, happened to be passing by. When he saw the awful scene, he attacked his kinsmen like a noble knight, killing one of them and frightening the others away. He then escorted the grateful Armenians and delivered them into the care of the local Greek priest.[†]

The Armenians of Kayseri were not massacred thanks to the strong will of the humane governor, Ferid Pasha.[‡] This honorable man declared that the Turks, Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks were equally important to him, and that the loss of any one of them should cause pain to the others. A letter sent to Constantinople by Kayseri Armenian reads: "Here too we sensed great danger, and if it were not for Ferid Pasha, who knows what calamities we would have faced. Ferid Pasha gave strict orders and made quite a number of arrests; some bombs were found and the malefactors were transferred to Salonika to face courts martial."[§]

* Terzian, *Gilgjo Aghedu*, 803-804.

† *Ibid.*, 685-686.

‡ *Pinzantion*, no. 3824, April 28 (May 11), 1909.

§ *Ibid.*

In various places Cilician Kurds also saved Armenians. In those hard times, some of them differed from the Kurds of Armenia proper, who were extremely hostile towards the Armenians. In some places, not only did Kurds not take part in the crimes, but they also sheltered Armenians and helped them escape to safe places.

There were also individuals among the Circassians who rescued Armenians in those days. The Circassian Mehmed Bey returned the loot taken by his tribesmen to the Armenians from several villages of the district of Geoksun. Many villages in the district of Hadjin were not destroyed, thanks to Circassian men and women. The reason that there were no massacres in the district of Vahka was that the Circassian *kaymakam* did not allow the Kurdish mob to enter the Armenian-populated villages.

But the number of humane individuals among the fanatical population was unfortunately small. The majority of them were blind tools in the hands of the *mullahs* and officials, and actively implemented their Armenian-hating policy.

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

After the massacre, it was mainly widows and orphans who were left in Adana and other settlements in Cilicia. The number of registered widows or unprotected women (women who had lost their husbands, adult daughters, and childless brides) was over ten thousand.² It was impossible to hold back one's tears when encountering widows. Almost all of them had been subjected to ruthless violence and unheard-of torments.

The life of Armenian women, especially in Western Armenia, had always been a quiet martyrdom. From ancient times, they had constantly been persecuted by insecurity of life, fierce and obscene encroachments by foreigners, and the lewd gazes of Turks and illiterate Kurds, but they had always bravely stood up against alien oppressors, had been untouchable, preserving the purity, honor and dignity of their families. With their inexhaustible diligence and inspiring virtue, Armenian women had perpetuated the Haykazian tribe through the centuries-long nightmare.

During the despotic reign of Abdul Hamid, especially in 1895–1896, when Armenian lands became a slaughterhouse, Turks had as an object to reduce Armenian women to continuous supplication, and thereby to humiliate them morally. But they did not succeed in that, for the Armenian widow preferred death to dishonorable begging. On the one hand, she

² National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 5, file 14, p. 18.

lamented her losses, and on the other she found the strength to save her orphans from starvation through hard work, and to preserve through her purity the spotless dignity of her race.

In the days of the Cilician calamity, whether on the Adana plain, in the highlands of the Taurus or Amanus, in Zeytoun or Kessab, Armenian women manifested a valiant and selfless spirit and an unyielding honor.

In order not to place their lives and honor into lascivious hands, Armenian women willingly chose to throw themselves into the flames, into the currents of the Sihoun and Djihoun (Ceyhan) Rivers, or to be butchered by axes and *yataghans* along with their husbands.

All of this struck and fascinated the subhuman creatures who wished to violate the honor of the Armenian women.

Who would be able to measure the anguish of the grief-filled hearts, the depth and bitterness of their pain? Where were their beloved husbands, children, and brothers?

One would think that everything had been lost, but it was not. Widows who had been subjected to unprecedented calamity now, in the days of peace, as they drained the cup of misfortune to the dregs and sat among the ashes, understood that they were duty bound to save their young children from hunger and disease. They had to find the strength to fight not only for life, but also against moral delusion and degradation. After all, Armenian women had always known how to endure in grief and how to grow bolder in the depths of turmoil. Now they had the duty to care for and protect the future of the nation under the banner of uncomplaining and steadfast hard work as the key to survival.

The spiritual leader of Hadjin, Bishop Nerses Tanielian, reminded Armenian women, "Laziness and inertia are the mother and the root of all sorts of evil and delusion, especially for women. Lazy, indolent women shall be more inclined to err and fall prey to delusion. Idle hands need not have a mouth since they do not deserve to live."

The path to salvation for Armenian women and their children—deprived of homes and property, craving a crust of dry bread—was once again hard work. Addressing himself to his "ill-starred widowed sisters," the Bishop said, "Be aware and assured that the alms given to you will undermine your moral vigor, will destroy the noble sense of dignity inside you, will ruin and defile

³ Bishop Nerses Tanielian, *Gatil Mu Chour Ayradz Sderov* [A Drop of Water to Burnt Hearts] (Constantinople, 1912), 56.

your modest decency, which is the glory of Armenian women and the pride and consolation of our tormented race. The Armenian woman cannot be a beggar and never has been."^{*} At the same time, the Bishop gave them hope that they would not be abandoned. "The Armenian nation forced the mob who slew your husbands and made you widows to understand that if the world and God forsake the Armenian race, the Armenians will never forsake their families, even if only one Armenian is left in the world."^{*}

This is why when the unfortunate survivors began to gradually recover themselves, the political, social, and charity organizations, and above all, the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, devoted themselves to creating jobs for Armenian widows. The governments of several nations came to their aid as well. The U.S. government donated \$50,000 to the sufferers.[‡] In addition, American women's relief committees distributed clothes for eighteen thousand needy people.^{**} The British and French Consulates in Tarsus, Adana, Mersin, and Antioch were instructed by their governments to provide assistance to the Armenians.

Assistance came also from the Armenian communities and political and social organizations abroad. The Armenians of North America provided \$60,000, and the Egyptian Armenians provided 40,000 francs to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.^{††}

First of all, the Patriarchate set up trusteeship commissions for widows and orphans under the chairmanship of Sarkis Effendi Suiss, which got down to business very responsibly upon their arrival in Adana.

According to the data of the Commission on Widows, 3,285 women had been widowed in the province of Adana and 787 women in the province of Aleppo, making the total number of widows 4,072.^{‡‡} In Hadjin alone there were more than fifteen hundred widows with four or five children each. For them, workshops for carpet weaving, embroidery, knitting, and other production were opened, funded by or with the support of the Patriarchate. In the same way, workshops for knitting and sewing were also opened in

* Ibid.

† Tanielian, *Gatil Mu Chour Ayrazd Srdrou*, 57.

‡ Teotig, *Amenoun Daretsouytsi* [Everyone's Almanac] (Constantinople, 1910), 4:40.

** S.Z. *Adanskiy Chernye Dni*, 37.

†† Ibid.

‡‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 833.

Adana, Tarsus, Misis, Kozuluk, and other places, where hundreds of widows found jobs.^{*}

The government also provided some assistance in creating jobs for the widows. The *vali* of Adana, Baban Zade Mustafa Zihni, who replaced Mehmed Djevad on April 28 (May 11) 1909, was unable to do a satisfactory job, and three months later the government recalled him and appointed the governor of Uskudar, Ahmed Jemal [Cemal] Bey [one of the Young Turk triumvirate, also known as Djemal Pasha], as the *vali* of Adana.[†] He arrived in Adana on August 6. One of his first acts was to allocate funds from the local budget for the care of orphan and the protection of widows.[‡]

With funds provided by the government, American missionary William N. Chambers and doctor Hampartsoum Salibian opened a large weaving-mill in Adana, where a large number of widows found jobs. In addition to weaving fabric on looms, the women made lace, embroidered handkerchiefs, and sewed napkins.^{**}

One of the greatest concerns facing Armenian society was the problem of orphans. The famished, heartbreaking orphaned children were the sacred memory of the martyred husbands, the only remnant of the tormented and shattered lives, the last spark of extinct hearths and, at the same time, the only hope and solace for the wounded hearts of Armenian mothers.

Drowning in a sea of misfortune, the pure young souls longed for salvation. "...it seems as if the heart-rending cries and lamentations of the ill-fated Armenian virgins and the innocent children victimized by the enemy echo still," wrote Bishop Nerses Tanielian, long after the massacres.^{††}

A May 23, 1909 memorandum signed by the Vicar of the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople and submitted to the Sublime Porte stated that the total number of orphans in Cilicia amounted to ten thousand, including more than two thousand in Adana and its suburbs alone.^{‡‡} These figures were not accurate, as future studies yielded greater numbers.^{***} *Horizon* reported that Turkish, Kurdish, and Circassian mobs had abducted

* Tanielian, *Gatil Mu Chour Ayrazd Srdrou*, 58; *Piuzantion*, no. 3836, May 13 (26), 1909.

† Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaze Housher*, 30.

‡ Ibid., 73.

** Ashdjian, *Adanayi Yeghernu yev Koniaze Housher*, 122.

†† Tanielian, *Gatil Mu Chour Ayrazd Srdrou*, 50–51.

‡‡ Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 560.

*** Fonds of Krikot Zohrab, no. 2175/II, p. 2, Museum of Literature and Arts.

more than four thousand orphans.* Orphans bereft of both mothers and fathers constituted a large number. Who was to rescue the orphaned children, who was to wipe away their tears?

Bishop Hovhannes Arsharouni, considering taking care of such a large number of orphans to be beyond anyone's power, wrote in those days, "Nothing is left to the Armenians except to pray to God."[†] In spite of this pessimism, the nation stood by its orphaned children and hurried to its crying and needy orphans.[‡]

On May 25, 1909, Adana Prelate Bishop Moushegh Seropian appealed from Cairo to Armenians worldwide, urging them to save the orphans, widows and the elderly of Cilicia from starvation. The appeal reads:

Help all the orphaned boys and girls who drink suffering in place of food and who drench the ruins and the ashes with their tears, who have drained the cup of death and blood to the dregs.

Help the fatherless and motherless children; the breasts they were feeding from have been dried out and torn off by the hands of fanatical Turks...

Help those remaining children, the childless, orphans, and widows of the martyred people who have been tortured, crucified, and burned alive, who have personally experienced all the vicious kinds of deadly torment and suffering, and in the name of whom I call upon you, with their pain in my breast and their bloody tears in my eyes.

Help, help, help! ...if you do not wish Cilicia to be completely annihilated.**

It was the foreign consulates that first undertook to tend to the orphans. They opened wide the doors of their orphanages that were already in place and rapidly established new ones, pledging to care for the orphans until national orphanages were set up. The existing orphanages, however, were able to accommodate only an insignificant fraction of the parentless children. Thus, the buildings and gardens adjacent to the consulates and the missionary schools were turned into shelters and oases of salvation, where the children gathered there were provided with just enough food not to die of starvation.

* *Horizon*, no. 9, January 15, 1912.

† Terzian, *Giligio Aghedu*, 560.

‡ *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 21, May 19, 1909, 600–601. ³ *Taraz* (Tiflis), no. 5–6, May–June 1909.

** *Taraz* (Tiflis), No 5–6, May–June, 1909.

Though the material and moral conditions in Cilicia were not fit for opening orphanages, the Patriarchate and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) chose to keep the majority of the orphans in Cilicia. The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian, informed the Catholicos of All Armenians Matteos II of this decision in a letter.

In order to succeed in the hardest task of assembling and accommodating the orphans, the Patriarchate of Constantinople set up the Central Relief Commission for Orphans of Cilicia (CRCO), which set to work immediately.[†] The commission made a touching appeal to Armenians worldwide to raise funds for "the Adana orphans." The appeal stated:

Our eyes are still wet with the bitter tears that have been shed for thousands of our brothers and sisters, whose blood-soaked and butchered bodies have turned the beautiful land of Cilicia into a horrible and sorrowful place, but our fatherless pain should not stupefy us and lead us to disregard our duty under such unfortunate circumstances, and we should not waste a second. Let us hold in our mind's eye those thousands of young, fragile, and helpless children whose heart-rending voices are crying out to us, who are searching in vain for their loving mothers and gentle fathers. The stones of Cilicia offer but sad echoes in response to these plaintive cries and moans. Their fathers have turned into blood-soaked corpses, and their mothers, if still alive, have just sad, thin arms for them to fall into and flood with their desperate and dismal tears. What harrowing stories these little ones have! One of them, consumed by longing for his mother and unable to bear it anymore, left the walls of the orphanage at night to find his mother and throw himself into her arms. Will we dare to avert our faces from the tragic sight of wandering orphans? They are our kind. While the Armenian nation exists, they should not be abandoned and orphaned; we are their fathers and mothers. Their parents were our brothers and sisters; they have fallen there, in bloodstained Cilicia, as victims and martyrs, and with their splintered hands they put these orphans into our charge.[‡]

National orphanages began opening in early June 1909.** By the end of the year, seven orphanages had been established in Adana, Hadjin,

* National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 5, file 14, pp. 7–11.

† *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 17, April 21, 1909, 583–584.

‡ National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 2, file 1202, p. 28.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3848, May 27 (June 9), 1909.

Hasanbeyli, Chork Marzban, Aintab, Marash, and Mersin, though the facility in Mersin was soon closed due to a lack of funds. The six institutions accommodated fifteen hundred orphans.^{*} Another twenty-five hundred orphans were registered, but still stayed with their mothers. To maintain these 4,000 orphans, 24,000 Ottoman gold liras were needed annually, but only 10,000 liras were collected at the time.[†]

Since it was not possible to open more orphanages, the national authorities decided to move the remaining orphans to Beirut, Alexandria, Cyprus, Constantinople, Smyrna, and other places with an Armenian presence. The Patriarchate and political and public organizations called upon their fellow Armenians to adopt orphans if possible. The passage of time showed that the call did not yield results.

The role played by the Patriarchate and its relief commission led by Sarkis Effendi Souni in bringing the orphans together and taking care of them was invaluable. Sarkis Effendi and his colleagues traveled all over Cilicia—from village to village, from one city to another—and through selfless efforts gathered thousands of barefoot, half-naked orphans who had been caught up in the tempest and placed them in the newly opened orphanages. A fundraising campaign was launched in Constantinople, Smyrna, and elsewhere for that purpose. Theatrical performances were staged with all the proceeds being donated to the orphanages. For example, Armenian actor Vahram Papazian presented Gnedich's drama *Don Corrado* in Uskudar Theatre of Constantinople and donated all of the proceeds to Souni's relief commission. Every day, a variety of donations were sent to the commission from different Armenian communities.[‡]

The Patriarchate and local charity organizations were unable to provide the orphans with adequate food, and therefore, at the initial stage, the children were half-starved. An eyewitness described their supper:

Only a small piece of bread and cheese was handed out to them. And they started to eat... Ah! This supper of the orphans and their bottomless, indescribable sadness... But it seemed that the bread they ate gave the orphans new liveliness; some began giggling and joking with each other. Others, the littlest ones, cried and called for their mothers, since they had not yet reconciled themselves to the idea of their departure; their irreversible disappearance had not yet

* National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 2, file 1202, p. 18.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3839, May 16 (29), 1909.

accepted the irrevocable fact of their vanishing, have not yet conceived of their death...^{*}

Despite the dire situation in the orphanages in the beginning, many mothers who had survived and needed help tried to place their children in orphanages. According to *Arakadz* weekly published in New York, one of these unfortunate mothers pleaded: "For Heaven's sake, there is no other way out, I have no remedy... I have no one left on the face of the earth but my son; I cannot take care of him, strike me blind... Is there any other mother like this? I am handing him over to the *millet* [nation] for a few years..."[†] It was possible to accommodate only a very small number of children in the orphanages. The majority of them stayed with their widowed mothers, lacking food and clothes.

The orphanages were being established exclusively at the expense of Armenian and foreign donors. The only exception was the orphanage for boys opened in Adana by Ottoman authorities, where 500 orphans were placed.[‡] *Arakadz* reported that when it became known the conditions in that orphanage were extremely inauspicious for the boys and that the task of the Turkish nurses was to Turkify them, the mothers who had survived the massacre, "having learned the news, rushed to the orphanage and tried to take their boys back... There was a new type of horror on their faces, already wasted by tears and misery... "It doesn't matter," they would say, "let them die in our presence—after all, we have seen how other children died—but do not give them to the enemy."[§]

In an editorial titled "Our Cilician Orphans," *Arakadz* reproached the Armenians for not being able to procure enough money to prevent the children who had survived the calamity from going cap in hand to the very state that had both organized and carried out the murder of their parents.[¶] Similar censures were expressed by Constantinople's *Aztag*,^{‡‡} Smyrna's *Arevelyan Mamoul*,^{***} and other periodicals.

Two leading members of the Ramgavar party, Levon Mgrdichian and Vahan Malezian, expressed concern in their correspondence that the

* Bartevian, *Gilguyan Arhavirku*, 137.

† *Arakadz* (New York), no. 17, August 17, 1911, 197.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*

¶ *Ibid.*, 193–194.

‡‡ *Aztag* (Constantinople), no. 23, June 25 (July 8), 1909.

*** *Arevelyan Mamoul*, no. 20, May 12, 1909, 557–559.

fundraising organized in Constantinople, Smyrna, and elsewhere, as well as in Armenian communities abroad, had not yielded the expected results. It had been mainly the lower social strata of Armenians of Constantinople, Smyrna, and other places that had participated in the fundraising activity.

In a letter to Malezian, Levon Mgrdichian considered it inexcusable that wealthy Armenians, in particular, had consigned the widows and orphans of Cilicia to neglect.*

In a surviving document, bitter words were addressed to those who had not lent a helping hand to the starving Armenian children. Appealing to those who possessed great riches but were devoid of patriotic sentiments, the author, who is unknown, wrote:

We know that your gold is more valuable to you than your lives... You did not even have the magnanimity to make a single donation of 500, 600, or 1,000 liras at this sorrowful hour; you did not consider that in Adana and its surroundings there were people as rich as you are who are in need of bread now, and that one day you might find yourselves in their position and be wanting for food; you did not think about all of this, and if you did, then you did not have the fine quality of donating, of giving. You have the pleasure of saving, but you will never be able to comprehend the sublimity of the pleasure in giving, for you are so ignorant as to think you can take your wealth to the netherworld.

At this troubled time, when all of Cilicia, the most prosperous part of Armenia, is on the verge of obliteration, people will not be able to forget that our rich men could have donated thousands of gold liras, but confined themselves to a few dozen. It is not only a disgrace but an insult, spitting in the face of Armenians. Who is going to take up the gauntlet thrown down by our rich in the face of our misery? Of course, the people, and the people will never forget.

Move, oh, rich people, move! Cilicia is on the verge of destruction, the Armenians of Cilicia are in agony. Help them generously; do it willingly and good-naturedly. Hurry! Your compatriots in Cilicia are

* Fonds of Vahan Malezian, RG 1, file 381, p. 8, Museum of Literature and Arts (Yerevan).

in need of medicine, healing, and succor. Give it to them! Enough talk! Make a spontaneous move just once in your lives..."

Souren Bartevean wrote, in his turn:

...Our rich people, so stingy with regard to the gruesome plight of our nation, this time, too, did not deprive themselves of their pleasurable annual journeys to Europe, on which each one of them will spend five times, if not ten times more than they gave to surviving Cilicia... They will not suffer from visions of the Cilician bloodshed while taking a comfortable swim in the waters of Vichy, Marienbad, or Aix-en-Provence... Oh! How naïve, ignorant, not to say stupid, literature sometimes makes human beings, for such impossible things to cross their minds...†

The Armenians of Russia remained aloof from raising funds for the Cilician victims.

As early as May 29, 1909, the CRCOC appealed to Holy Echmiadzin asking for monetary support. A similar letter was sent to Echmiadzin on June 5.‡ In response to these letters, the synod of Echmiadzin informed the CRCOC that it was sending 100 rubles collected among its members.¶ On October 25, the CRCOC appealed to the Catholicos personally, asking him not to ignore the orphans of Cilicia who "are wasting away without a murmur, yearning for a piece of bread."††

On November 25, the CRCOC received the response from Echmiadzin that "a new body to raise funds for the suffering people of Adana" had been formed. In fact, this was the former "Fundraising Sub-commission" for the Armenian victims in Turkish Armenia, which had resumed its activity. This body made an appeal to Russian Armenians stating: "...in accordance with the permission of the highest Imperial government, the Armenian population of the Empire is hereby called upon to hasten to lend a helping hand... to the orphans who have been left unattended and helpless after the dreadful massacres in Adana... to alleviate [their] bitter grief and to save them."‡‡ But

* Archive of the Catholicos, file 2378, document 323, item 6 (a scrap of paper missing the periodical's title, the date and author's name), Madenataran.

† *Arvelyan Mamoul*, no. 25, June 16, 1909, 577.

‡ National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 2, file 1202, p. 3.

¶ National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 2, file 1202, p. 5.

†† *Ibid.*, 6-7.

‡‡ *Luma* (Tiflis), no. 5-6, May-June 1909, 87.

the fundraising effort did not yield the expected results; only 3,000 rubles was collected in the Caucasus and Russia.*

In a letter dated December 23, 1909 to the Catholics of All Armenians, the retired Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian, expressed gratitude for the 3,000 rubles, stating at the same time that it would have been better if "our honorable brothers in Russia had become more keenly aware of the situation through the agency of Your Holiness, and thereby would continue to show mercy and concern for our victimized brothers."[†]

On January 15 (28), 1910 the CRCOC leadership appealed to Echmiadzin for the last time, asking it "to direct the orphan-loving feelings of our brothers in Russia to the orphans of Cilicia."[‡] Nevertheless, the 3,000 rubles received from the Russian Armenians remained their only assistance to the Cilician widows and orphans.

Mshak, *Baku*, *Horizon*, *Luma*, and other periodicals addressed this odd phenomenon, trying to identify its causes. In its issue no. 9 of 1909, the organ of the ARF, *Horizon*, saw as the cause of this phenomenon the fact that the Armenian people, especially its intelligentsia, were not accustomed to administering charity of their own free will, and that was why the revolutionary organizations were compelled to resort to violence. Other organs of the Armenian press in the Caucasus searched for other reasons. *Luma* summarized the various justifications, confirming or challenging them.

In contrast to the viewpoint of *Horizon*, *Luma* noted that since the beginning of Armenia's history, facts had attested to the opposite. "The Armenian people, though not the swindling intelligentsia and rich men of today, have always administered charity of their own free will... When there existed neither the ARF nor Hnchags, the Armenian people gave with utmost willingness the results of their hard labor, worth millions..."[§]

Philanthropy had been bred in the bone of Armenians from time immemorial, and once Christianity spread throughout Armenia it had become a *modus vivendi*. By the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., hospitals and shelters for the poor had been established in many villages and cities of Armenia, thanks to the voluntary donations of philanthropic Armenians. The

* National Archives of Armenia, fonds 57, RG 2, file 1202, p. 3.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*, 17–18.

§ *Luma*, no. 7–8, July–August 1909, 89–90.

writings of Armenian historians of the early Middle Ages, Movses Khorenatsi, Pavsdos Puzant, Agathangelos, and others, attest to that.

The traditions of charity had been alive through the late Middle Ages and beyond. It was also known, *Luma* wrote, that Armenians had made large voluntary donations in modern times. It was thanks to donations that the charitable organizations of Baku, Tiflis, and other cities, the colleges of Calcutta and Echmiadzin, the Lazarian Academy in Moscow, numerous printing houses, periodicals, and public organizations had been called into existence.

The periodical attributed the lack of aid from Armenians to the residents of Adana to a number of reasons. It claimed that the Russian Armenians were tired of helping the Turkish Armenians. It also claimed that in order to acquire weapons for the protection of the Turkish Armenians, the two Armenian revolutionary parties—the ARF and Hnchag party—had committed numerous violent acts and even resorted to assassinations (the Zhamharians, the Adamovs, and others) among wealthy Russian Armenians, as a result of which not only rich men but also ordinary people refused to make donations for Turkish Armenians anymore, even after the Adana tragedy. After all, "one cannot appeal for sympathy in the name of which violence had been committed."[†] *Luma* wrote. A portion of an article in its July–August issue read:

In no other nation do revolutionaries assassinate private persons for the sake of ideas and money. Show me a case where English, French, German, or even Russian revolutionaries in Russia demanded money for an idea from private individuals and then committed murder when they were refused. But such things are considered acceptable among us—among Armenians, Georgians, and Turks, since we are far away from genuine culture and our revolutionaries are not men of principle.[‡]

Luma also wrote that:

Over the last twenty-five years, Russian Armenians have given Turkish Armenians several million rubles. The late Ardzruni alone raised more the 200,000 rubles for the starving. We Russian

* Pavsdos Puzant, *Patmutyun Hayots* [History of Armenia] (Saint Petersburg, 1883), 63–64; Agathangelos, *Hayots Badmoutiun* [History of the Armenians] (Tiflis, 1883), 146–148.

† *Luma*, no. 7–8, July–August 1909, 89–90.

‡ *Ibid.*, 90–91.

Armenians have also had our disasters; our Akhalkalak and Shamakhi were destroyed by earthquakes, thousands of people were killed, and thousands of families were left wretched in the course of the Turkish massacres of Armenians. But did our Turkish Armenians—among whom there are many wealthy people who are no less rich than our Mantashovs—send even a hundred rubles?*

The periodical provided an additional example as well. On the eve of the 1905 Russian revolution, the government, in the person of Prince Golitsyn, made a senseless move. Surmising that Echmiadzin was in possession of millions of rubles and had made it available to the revolution, he committed a lamentable act against the 1,600-year-old Armenian Church by seizing all of Echmiadzin's properties, dooming thousands of people to starvation. *Luma* wrote:

In the days of that great national disaster, when not only did Russian Armenians put hundreds of thousands of rubles at the disposal of their Catholics, but also thousands of people were sent into exile, imprisoned, or killed, did our Turkish Armenian brothers send us even a kopeck then? Furthermore, not only did not a single traitor or turncoat appear, but neither was there a single renegade willing to carry out Prince Golitsyn's orders (if only we could make public how many *donosi* [tip-offs] by Turkish Armenians figure in the cases of people who are today kept in prisons). There was only one person among the Turkish Armenians who rendered great moral assistance to Echmiadzin, and the Turkish Armenians dishonored him with black ingratitude; this man was Patriarch Ormanian, who along with a few other clergymen, made the most powerful and clever protest against Prince Golitsyn's order.†

Luma went on to state that in contrast to the Sultan Hamid era, the Young Turk government had allocated tangible amounts to Cilicia, which would make it possible to heal the wounds.‡

Lastly, the periodical explained:

We do not help the Adana residents since the current situation of the Russian Armenians is much worse than that of the Turkish Armenians. The book by Simon Zavarian—who enjoys broad

* *Luma*, no. 7–8, July–August 1909, 88.

† *Ibid.*, 89–90.

‡ Only an insignificant part of the sums provided by the Ottoman government reached the Armenians.

sympathy among the freedom-loving Armenian political parties—written in Russian (the prominent patriots who play a role in Armenian circles in general do not know and do not like to speak or write in the mother tongue) and titled *Ekonomicheskoye Polozheniye Krestyan Erivan'skoy Gubernii* [Economic Condition/situation of Peasants in Erivan Province] informs us that the Armenian peasants in the province of Yerevan are landless and live in awful conditions. Our Zangezour, Akhalkalak, Bayazit, and Aparan are destitute, and the residents of the mountainous villages of our Agulis only manage to grow wheat among the rocks on every inch of land through backbreaking work.

Are we able today, against the backdrop of such an economic crisis, to help our Turkish Armenian brothers as generously as before, when we had not yet felt the consequences of the Golitsyn regime and the activity of various Armenian revolutionaries? Certainly not!*

These were the main reasons given by Caucasian Armenian newspapers, and by *Luma* in particular, for the lack of assistance sent by Russian Armenians to the Armenians in Cilicia.†

In any event, the efforts exerted by Turkish Armenian religious, public, political, and charitable organizations yielded positive results. The number of national orphanages was gradually growing. By the fall of 1909, more than ten foreign and national orphanages were operating in several large Armenian communities of Cilicia.

Throughout the following two or three years, the Armenians of Constantinople and those abroad, including the Armenian General Benevolent Union and other charitable organizations, continued to give donations and other assistance to the orphans and widows of Cilicia.

THE FORCED ISLAMIZATION OF ABDUCTED ARMENIAN WOMEN

As previously described, the massacres of Cilician Armenians were accompanied by the abduction of thousands of Armenian women and girls, and their forced Islamization or matrimony. With the authorities' encouragement, these evil deeds went on for months, even after the massacres were over. Numerous instances were recorded after the massacres in which public officials continued to abduct Armenian girls, brides, and widows, forcing the women into marrying them or their relatives. The vicar of the

* *Luma*, no. 7–8, July–August 1909, 91.

† We will refrain from evaluating the arguments cited by *Luma*, leaving that to the reader.

Asyintab Prelacy informed the Patriarchate of Constantinople of such cases in Islahiye, asking that measures be taken to put an end to such an "awful situation."^{*}

Nevertheless, even accepting the idea of converting to Islam did not spare people from imminent death in many instances, especially for Armenian males.[†] For example, the *bashi-bazouks* who attacked Kirikhan "coerced the people into becoming Turks; poor Armenians had to agree, but in order to make their conversion official, they were told to go to the mosque of Mustafa Pasha; people again had to agree, but as soon as they left the town, the wild mob killed all the males and divided the women and the girls among themselves."[‡] Nazaret Tepedjian, a lawyer from Alexandretta, provided *Piuzantion* with a list of five Armenian women from this town who had been forcibly converted to Islam and married off.^{**} One of these women, Victoria—the widowed young wife of the murdered Kaloused Meliksetian—was abducted and taken as a wife by the Kurdish Mullah Salman. When Kaloused's brothers demanded the return of their sister-in-law, the brigand told them rudely that "she has turned into a Turk and married me; she is content." The Meliksetians appealed to the consuls of Great Britain and France, but to no avail.^{††}

The Armenian national authorities were deeply concerned about the cruel fate that had befallen thousands of Armenian women. The Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Prelacies did everything in their power to return those unfortunates to the fold of the Armenian Church. The delegation of the Armenian National Assembly of Constantinople raised this issue on May 2 (15), 1909 in its meetings with Sultan Muhammad V, Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha, Interior Minister Ferid Pasha, Sheikh ul-Islam Sahib Bey, and President of the Chamber of Deputies Ahmed Riza, and received assurances that were never to be fulfilled. The Grand Vizier reassured the delegation that "forcible conversion to Islam is unacceptable, and those who object must be set free," but the editor-in-chief of *Piuzantion*, Piuzant Kechian, told him that those women "are now in captivity and are afraid to say a word" and called upon him to issue an order setting the converted Armenian women free. Hilmi Pasha pretended he did not hear the demand.

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3828, May 2 (15), 1909.

† Yesayan, *Averagnerous Mech*, 115.

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3818, April 21 (May 4), 1909.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3831, May 6 (19), 1909.

†† *Piuzantion*, no. 3832, May 8 (21), 1909.

and Ferid Pasha told the delegation, "We have read the telegram sent by the *vali* of Adana, which denies the fact of forcible conversion of Armenian women to Islam. The Armenian women and girls have voluntarily applied to adopt Islam, but under the current circumstances, the government has decided not to comply with their requests and has ordered their return to their religious leaders."^{*} Commenting on Ferid Pasha's statement, Piuzant Kechian wrote, "It is odd that in the troubled times of the Adana massacres, Armenian women and girls have chosen to voluntarily apply to adopt Islam." The *vali* of Aleppo, too, attempted to explain the forcible conversion of the Armenian women as voluntary actions.[†]

The abducted Armenian women were taken even to very remote places. For example, the Prelate of Sivas, Supreme Vartabed Torkom Koushagian, wrote that "Mustafa from Darende [who took part in the slaughter of the Armenian Evangelical leaders in Saygchid] abducted the sixteen-year-old daughter of Keshishian from Kirikhan and entered into a *nikâh* [marriage] with her in Darende. This girl was brought to the provincial center, and during an interview in the town hall declared that she had adopted Islam of her own free will." The Prelate asked the national authorities in Constantinople to provide instructions as to "what the attitude should be toward those women who have stated that they converted to Islam voluntarily."[‡]

The Prelate of Aleppo, Shahe Vartabed Kasparian, was especially worried about the fate of the forcibly Islamized Armenian women, and sent telegrams to the Patriarchate of Constantinople one after another, asking that the issue be raised with the central authorities. In connection with a telegram that the prelate sent a month and a half after the massacres, *Piuzantion* wrote that "the pressure to adopt Islam continues in many places, and the previous instances are considered to be accomplished deeds."^{***}

There were numerous reports in the press about the abduction and forcible Islamization and marriage of Armenian women and girls.^{††} *Piuzantion*, in particular, reported a large number of cases that aroused discontent on the part of the authorities. During the ten-day suspension of the newspaper described earlier, its owner and editor-in-chief, Piuzant Kechian, was tried by the court-martial of Constantinople. During the court

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3829, May 4 (17), 1909.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Piuzantion*, no. 3841, May 19 (June 1), 1909.

** *Piuzantion*, no. 3843, May 21 (June 3), 1909.

†† *Piuzantion*, no. 3833, May 9 (22); no. 3837, May 14 (27), 1909.

proceedings, the presiding judge "expressed regret" regarding a May 21st editorial "stating that the Turks have sometimes forcibly Islamized Christians." In his editorial, Kechian had written, among other things, "The Turks have at one time or another Islamized Christians, when it was possible... and the mob's taking Armenian girls and boys captive and Islamizing them in today's Cilicia is a clear throwback to the beloved methods of their Turkish ancestors." The Turkish military judge found that this statement did not correspond to reality and rejected *Piuzantion's* accusation that forcible Islamization was state policy in Turkey. Kechian refuted the judge's assertion with historical facts, adding that during the May 2nd meetings of the Armenian National Assembly delegation with the highest officials, Turkish officials had demonstrated understanding regarding the issue that he raised about the unacceptability of forcible Islamization.[†]

The surviving Armenian women, too, were very worried about the fate of their sisters. When Zabel Yesayan met with local Armenian women in Kars-Bazar, they asked her, "Is it true that the Islamized Armenian women do not wish to return?" Yesayan responded that not all of them were returning, because of fear. At that moment an Armenian woman shouted with the centuries-old pride of Armenian women: "No Armenian woman from Kars-Bazar will marry a Turk... even if someone cuts their flesh, they will not move... no one who has seen our brave men will marry a Muslim..."[‡]

In order to use Armenian women to satisfy their animal desires, the beasts-in-human-form continued to commit murder months after the massacres, and these acts went unpunished. The Prelacy of Aleppo informed the Patriarchate of one such case. A certain Tokhlouch Oghlu Mehemed abducted Trfanda Ekshiyani (whose husband had been killed in a massacre) and Akabi Djiyersizian from Kirikhan. This criminal forcibly Islamized and married the first woman, and then he decided to marry Akabi as well. She refused, saying that she had a legal husband who was alive and present there. Mehemed shot and killed Akabi's husband on the spot, and then turned to the terror-struck woman and said: "There it is, I have solved the problem of your husband." Shahe Vartabed Kasbarian added in his memorandum that he had appealed to the Beylan administration, but they had refused to return this unlucky woman. The *vali* of Aleppo, too, turned down the Pastor's request, stating that the return of a woman who had already converted to

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3843, May 21 (June 3), 1909.

† *Piuzantion*, no. 3849, June 9 (22), 1909.

‡ Yesayan, *Averageroun Mech*, 115.

Islam to a Christian priest would agitate Muslims. Shahe Vartabed stated that there were hundreds of similar cases and demanded that the authorities "ban the conversion to Islam for the time being, as was done in 1895." Even during the Hamidian massacres of 1894–1896, the authorities had from time to time returned those Armenians who had converted under the threat of death to their nation and the Church. Thus, the Young Turks, who acted under the false slogans of liberty, justice, and equality, surpassed the Bloody Sultan in this regard, too. This would later be admitted by one of the architects of the Armenian Genocide, Talaat Pasha, who boasted that the Ithihatsists had succeeded in doing in the course of just a few years something that Abdul Hamid had been unable to accomplish throughout the thirty-three years of his reign.

In defiance of all the persistent efforts by the Armenian national institutions, the central government did not send any instruction to the regions prohibiting the forcible Islamization of Armenians, and the Armenian women who were forcibly converted to Islam under the threat of death, with the connivance of the authorities, reconciled themselves to their situation and were lost to the Armenian nation without a trace.

SONGS OF MOURNING

Following the massacres in Cilicia, the poets of the Armenian world devoted numerous elegies, epicists created narratives, and minstrels lamented over the inexorable fate of the nation.

The very gifted Siamanto (Atom Yardjanian) was the first to address the Armenian tragedy of Cilicia in verse in June–July 1909. He expressed his feelings in a specific poetic way, as a foreword ("Grief") and eleven letters in verse "received from a friend," under the titles "The Dance," "The Atonement," "The Son," "The Bath," "The Dagger," "The Cross," "Their Song," "The Blind," "The Mulberry Tree," "Strangled," and "A Victory." This series of poems was published as a separate book titled *Bloody News from My Friend* (Constantinople, 1909). Each of these titles was flooded with the great poet's grief, fury, and distress. He was convinced that Genghis Khan and Tamerlane would have envied the perpetrators of the Cilician massacres for the unimaginable atrocities they had committed.

Eyewitnesses had written about people buried alive, burned alive, and raped in 1894–1896 in Western Armenia, but none of this was as appalling and ghastly as the atrocities in Cilicia, the poet believed.

* *Piuzantion*, no. 3833, May 9 (22), 1909.

Here the perverted human mind had operated in one direction—to invent the most horrific methods of committing crimes so as to torment the victims and satisfy its animal instincts.

In his foreword, Siamanto called upon the people who had seen the blood and the grief of their race not to give way to despair in response to what was written in his friend's letters.

As you walk through the crossroad of merriment
don't let a speck of gladness or a tear
stain grief's majesty.

Because for the vanquished, tears are cowardly
and for the victors, the smile is frivolous, a wrinkle.

(Siamanto, "Grief")

In the first letter ascribed to his friend, Siamanto told an unspeakable story: "Corpses [were] piled high as trees" and not far from there, Turkish men were lashing twenty brides and forcing them to dance. When "twenty graceful brides collapsed" exhausted, they brought a jug of kerosene, "the brides were anointed," and "with a torch, they set the naked brides on fire." Describing the tortures of the newest Armenian martyrs and condemning the marked indifference of the world's powers towards yet another carnival of blood in Cilicia, the poet exclaimed with fathomless bitterness and sorrow, putting his words into the mouth of a German eyewitness:

Human justice, I spit in your face...

(Siamanto, "The Dance")

In the second letter, "The Atonement," the poet castigated the cowards who were ready to stoop to any baseness to save their own lives. In the next letter, "The Son," Siamanto asserted through epic symbols the truth that for the Armenians, the only means of salvation from the slaughterers was the implacable fight against them. After drawing a picture of the martyrdom of Armenian brides in "The Bath," the poet in the next act, "The Dagger," relates something that became a common occurrence in the days of the Cilician massacres—the murderer forces the mother to thrust a dagger into her child's heart. The terrified mother's heart breaks and she falls to the ground lifeless. The criminal executes his own order and stabs the dead mother's son in the heart with a dagger. The sixth letter, "The Cross," tells of

* Hereinafter, the translations are quoted from Siamanto, *Bloody News from My Friend: Poems by Siamanto*, trans. Peter Balakian and Nevart Yaghlian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

yet another atrocity committed against the "orphaned race" before the eyes of a human race that has betrayed them. "A mother [was] pleading for her only son, pulling out her hair," but the mob gathered in the churchyard told her, "Don't be mad; we sacrificed your son on the altar with white cloths and candles." Then they took off her dress and soaked it in her son's blood.

Then one of the Turks took the bloody dress
and painted a cross on the chapel wall.

He pointed to the cross:

"Kneel down and pray.
We'll do it to you like you did it to Christ.
Hey mother, pray to your son.
Have you no faith in the resurrection?"

(Siamanto, "The Cross")

In the seventh letter, "Their Song," Siamanto wrote that the bloodthirsty crowd considered their unheard of crimes to be a righteous cause, an implementation of the will of Allah. One of the executioners shouts to his men:

There's no law anymore,
and the king of slaves is brute force.
Drink from my cup the blood of young virgins.

Time runs. Justice changes its course. Drink from this virgin's skull.
What's gold or silver next to this?"

Let their song shake the dead in the earth . . .
Only the living are motionless, but men and women don't cry,
they are motionless like stones.
Only mercy is pitiless, only thought is doubt, and faith, folly.
(Siamanto, "Their Song")

The anti-Armenian obsession in Cilicia contaminated both the old and the young, even the disabled, including the blind. They all took up arms to "fulfill the will of God." This phenomenon was presented through a typical example in the eighth letter, "The Blind." An eighty-year old man, blind from birth, makes his way with a walking stick through the mob in a state of euphoria, because in "these days of righteousness" his fellow believers had scattered countless corpses of "infidels" everywhere.

His son is among the murderers. He says, "The other day I armed him, anointed him with my blessing and sent him to fight for Allah." He is sorry not to be able to enjoy it all with his petrified eyes.

How badly I want to feel a dead body with my hands.

I smell the ashes—

May you live a thousand years, blessed ones—

...

Isn't there any among you, a friend, a neighbor, who would put a

dagger in my hand, and bring me a fair-haired Armenian girl?

My blindness shouldn't deprive me of my heaven. Bring me a virgin
whose body's tender as a dove."

(Siamanto, "The Blind")

A moment later, one of the rabble delivers an Armenian virgin, holding
her by her plait, and puts a dagger into his hand. And then:

Where is her heart, my son?

"Wait, let me guide your hand."

As the blood splattered his face

like flaming poppies,

he shouted to the crowd:

"My eyes are clear. I've seen the light."

(Siamanto, "The Blind")

In the letter titled "The Mulberry Tree," Siamanto described the sorrow of
a hunched old woman burying the body of her murdered grandson in an
orange grove. "Let them ruin my world, but spare my grandson..." she wails.
The butchers not only kill her grandson, but they also cut down the mulberry
tree she planted the day her grandson was born, wiping out his last memory.

"No home, no family. I'm alone with my own death," the old woman
sobs, cursing fate that she is still alive. She weeps as she recollects the sight of
the awful murder:

I screamed 'kill me in my grandson's place, kill me,'
but no one heard.

No one heard and they threw the half-dead boy in the cart
of corpses that passed from the convent.

I still see his eyes. For a long time
they were opened—staring at me—as he gave up the ghost.
I still hear the cart creaking."

(Siamanto, "The Mulberry Tree")

"Strangled" is the title of the tenth letter. Forty people "like terrified
cattle" hide in a dug-out cellar.

Out there, the Turks like thousands of jackals,
not tired from wasting our orchards and villages

...

Through the walls we heard shrieks, mute breathing, the ghost
given up.

...

Then, a newborn began to squeal. The mother was sobbing . . .
"God have mercy, my breasts are dry and he's already sucked
my blood."

"We gotta strangle him," someone said. "It's the only way," the
others said. "Strangle me first, then my son."

...

In the dark, the mother

offered her throat, then her son's...

Then like snakes, two arms found the infant, and the silence in the
cellar was a storm.

...

And the killers leave.

(Siamanto, "Strangled")

"Was this salvation? Can slaves be saved?" the author asks. As for the
mother,

Every day that mother, half-naked, stands by the road
Delirious, hanging on the skirt of the stranger,
the enemy, the passerby.

I strangled my baby. It's true.
Have pity on me; I'm a coward.
You could wring my neck in a second.

Have you no heart?
(Siamanto, "Strangled")

While the ten letters from the series *Bloody News from My Friend* are
mixed with blood and tears, the last poem, the eleventh, titled "A Victory," is
dedicated to the heroic defenders of Chork-Marzban (Deortyol). It troubled
Siamanto deeply that the Armenians of Cilicia had been unable to make a
stand against the enemy, to defend their lives, honor, and rights.

We've begged too long in silence.
Enough of frankincense, of the crosses, the sneering God.
Enough of cannibal humanity.
We've been beggars too long, digging out our eyes.

What we've witnessed, centuries haven't witnessed.

(Siamanto, "A Victory")

Chork-Marzban cleared the stigma from the Armenian's brow. The will of the town's defenders was armored with a profound faith in victory. The poet glorified the brave men, each one of whom had been a rod of red-hot iron. Everyone stood up—the old and the young, the men and the women.

Our women have turned all the copper and lead, the tin
and brass into bullets and bayonets.

(Siamanto, "A Victory")

They all armed themselves with whatever came to hand, and victory was won because all of Armenians of the city had united in one fist. They had proved that they were invincible if they were united and cohesive. The poem's commandment is that the Armenians should pin their hopes on their own strength and weapons.

My chest is cut open,
but . . . use my body as a barricade.
Victory, brothers.
The starry sky in your irises.
Fire!

(Siamanto, "A Victory")

With a heavy heart, Taniel Varouzhan described the harrowing pictures of death in his poem "The Ashes of Cilicia" from the series *The Heart of the Race*. It was the invaders from afar that had tormented and murdered the Armenians on this native land of theirs, where at the foot of the Taurus they sang the "Deification of Life," where for centuries "Hetums won victories," where the skilful hands of the Roupenids built roads on which "the creaking carts" "loaded with abundant marble from the mountains and plentiful wine from the gardens" and other fruits of the creative spirit of the Armenians traveled far away to the East and West.

But the beasts in human form had turned all of this into a memory, reducing magnificent Cilicia to a pile of ashes.

After having witnessed so many crimes, how were the Armenians to live on the land that was soaked with the gushing blood of their wives and innocent children; the land where "the doves have died and the peach trees have withered?" Unable to endure the Great Pain, many people had abandoned their native land and "gone to distant places for the joyful blossoming of spring."

The indifference of the Europeans toward his unfortunate people caused the poet endless pain. They sailed on mighty ships to our "fertile bays" as Cilicia was being butchered.

Have they come... to help? ...oh, no ... for the remnants of death:
They've come just to dig our virgin, fertile mountains,
And to milk the splendid ore from the embracing earth,
To milk the ore and create idols of their own egos...

(Taniel Varouzhan, "The Ashes of Cilicia")

And what were the butchered Cilician Armenians to do in this cruel life?

Here am I, walking down this height
And wrapped in my mantle, sorrowful
I shall again go wandering about the city of victims.
I am to bury the dead and consecrate the martyrs.
The head of a wounded man lies on the granite...
A sister, by the spring, is in her death throes, alone and abandoned...
I am to dig countless graves tonight,
And sew radiant shrouds till all hours.
I am to erect gravestones, create monuments
And inscribe my songs as epitaphs on the marble.*

(Taniel Varouzhan, "The Ashes of Cilicia")

On May 19 (June 1), 1909, *Piuzantion* published a poem by Arshag Tchobanian dedicated to the victims of the Cilician calamity, written in Paris on March 10 and titled "A Vision." The renowned writer and public figure likened the Armenians of Cilicia to the main fruits of the fertile Cilician soil—the grapes and wheat—that had been trampled and razed by inhuman savages. Tchobanian mourned the bitter centuries-long fate of the industrious Armenian people under the deadly Turkish tyranny.

In his poem "The Last Lullaby" published in the 1910 *Everyone's Almanac*, Roupen Sevag described an Armenian woman tormented by numerous wounds singing her last lullaby to her baby, who is still unaware of the surrounding world, as she tries to drown out his wounded father's moans. On the brink of death, this defiant woman does not mourn for the twilight of her unfortunate life, but entrusts her son with the will, courage, and perseverance to hold onto the Cilician land.

In his poem "Toward Siboun," Levon Yesadjanian cursed justice, calling it "a whore," which in the bloody days was "lying with the scabby and goatish mob." The author called the surviving Cilicians to vengeance:

* The poem has been translated literally.

We shall not say it's been enough,
 We have sworn on our honor
 That we shall retaliate without fail.
 We have sworn on our honor.*

(Levon Yesadjanian, "Toward Sihoun")

A similarly defiant and vengeful spirit sounded in the poetic testament to the Armenian generations, "To the New Married Couples of Adana" by Edward Kolandjian (1911).

New man and new wife on the altar of life
 Take the clothes scorched by the flame,
 And with new folds over the old ones
 Be the guides of tomorrow's generation.
 ... Make the blood of tomorrow's generation ring.

(Edward Kolandjian,

"To the New Married Couples of Adana")

The author dreamed of seeing such new men and women whose eyes would flash lightning capable of destroying enemy swords. Singing praises to the Power of Beauty, he calls upon the newcomers to make the forests of embers their bed, and cling to the bloodstained ground, and train the muscles of tomorrow's generation amid the flames that devoured the Armenian children.

New man and new wife in the ruthless wasteland
 Bend your knees before the pyramid of skulls
 In place of the temples razed to the ground— For the edification of
 tomorrow's generation.
 New man and new wife for the new great Faith— Make cymbals
 from the torn off breasts,
 Even with the godlessness of our calamity— Be the God for
 tomorrow's generation.†

(Edward Kolandjian,

"To the New Married Couples of Adana")

The Great Golgotha of the Cilician Armenians was recreated in a poem titled "The Song of Adana" by historian-novelist Smpad Piurad, who was martyred in the 1915 Genocide. It was subsequently set to music and became popular.

* The poem has been translated literally.

† The poem has been translated literally.

Let the Armenians cry, the cruel massacre
 Turned magnificent Adana into a desert,
 The fire and the sword and the merciless plunder
 Ruined, alas, the House of the Rupinians!

...

Three days and nights the fire from inside,
 The enemy's sword and bullet from outside
 Exterminated the Armenians from the face of the earth
 Blood ran down the Armenian streets...

(Smpad Piurad, "The Song of Adana")

Armenians still sing "The Song of Adana" today.

There were also many Turkish-language lamentations written by Armenians. One example was Levon Ebeyan's "The Epic of Adana," which was set to music and became popular among the Turkish speaking Armenians of Cilicia and Armenia proper.

Just six years later, in 1915, it was the fate of the Armenians of Cilicia, along with the Armenians from all of Western Armenia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, to be subjected to a crime against humanity—the first genocide of the twentieth century.

In the memory of Armenians, the 1909 massacre in Cilicia has always been perceived as the first stage of the 1915 Genocide. This was reflected in the song "Adana" by a Yerevan musician, Ara Gevorgyan, dedicated to the ninetieth anniversary of the Genocide. This piece was first presented on April 23, 2005 at the Komitas Chamber Music Hall in Yerevan. The lyrics of the song were written by an American, Daniel Decker, and the work was performed by singers from ten countries:

Keepers of the sword, marched in one accord
 Striking down the weak, without a single word
 Ruthlessly they came, with one deadly aim
 Kill all who believed in Jesus' name.†

(Daniel Decker, "Adana")

Among the Cilician Armenians who had miraculously escaped the bloody crimes and spread throughout the world, the lyrics of the sorrowful song "Giligya" acquired new meaning. Not many descendants of the Cilician

* This translation is quoted in *The course of the Armenian Genocide according to the testimonies of the eyewitness survivors*, by Verjine Svazlian. See <http://armeni.hayem.org/english/thecourseofthegenocide.htm>.

† Daniel Decker, *Adana* (2005), <http://www.aragevorgyan.net/lyrics.htm>.

Armenians know the tune of the song, but everyone knows the following lines by heart:

I wish to see my Giligya,
The country that gave me the sun.

Poor ill-fated generations...

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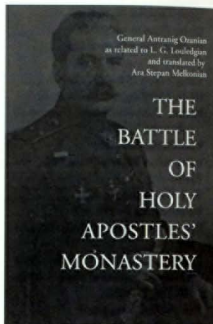
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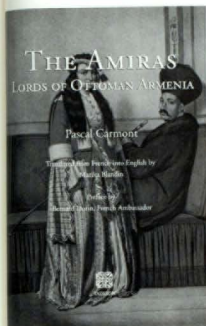
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General Antranig Ozanian
as related to L. G. Lousdeljan
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Ara Stepan Melkonian

THE BATTLE OF HOLY APOSTLES' MONASTERY

General Antranig Ozanian, *The Battle of Holy Apostles' Monastery*. (Taderon Press, 2008)

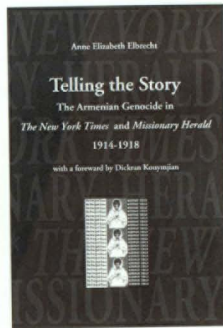


THE AMIRAS LORDS OF OTTOMAN ARMENIA

Pascal Carmont

Translated from French into English by
Lucy Hadden
Foreword by
Richard Christie, French Ambassador

Pascal Carmont, *The Amiras: Lords of Ottoman Armenia*, (Taderon Press, 2012)



Anne Elizabeth Elbrecht

Telling the Story

The Armenian Genocide in

The New York Times and Missionary Herald
1914-1918

with a foreword by Dickran Koussjian



Abbe Elizabeth Elbrecht, *Telling the Story: The Armenian Genocide in the Pages of The New York Times and the Missionary Herald (1914-1919)*. (Gomidas Institute, 2012)

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One of the greatest massacres in late Ottoman history took place in April 1909, when Armenians were the target of two massive waves of violence organized by Ottoman authorities. The massacres took place in Cilicia (i.e. Adana province and surrounding areas) with an estimated 30,000 victims plus huge material losses. Most Armenian historians consider these massacres to have been a prelude to the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

Hrachik Simonyan's *The Destruction of Armenians in Cilicia, April 1909* is a detailed account of the 1909 massacres based on Armenian primary and secondary sources. His work helps us to better understand the victimization of Armenians and the polarization of Ottoman society along ethno-religious lines barely a year after the Ottoman constitutional revolution of 1908.

PHOTO: The Armenian quarter in Adana city centre after it was razed during the 1909 massacres.

