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THE ARMENIAN “GENOCIDE”?

Facts & Figures

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The so-called "*Armenian Question*" is generally thought of as having begun in the second half of the nineteenth century. One can easily point to the Russo-Turkish war (1877 -78) and the Congress of Berlin (1878) which concluded the war as marking the emergence of this question as a problem in Europe. In fact, however, one must really go back to Russian activities in the East starting in the 1820's to uncover its origins. Czarist Russia at the time was beginning a major new imperial expansion across Central Asia, in the process overrunning major Turkish Khanates in its push toward the borders of China and the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, Russian imperial ambitions turned southward as the Czars sought to gain control of Ottoman territory to extend their landlocked empire to the Mediterranean and the open seas. As an essential element of this ambition, Russia sought to undermine Ottoman strength from within by stirring the national ambitions of the Sultan's subject Christian peoples, in particular those with whom it shared a common Orthodox religious heritage, the Greeks and the Slavs in the Balkans and the Armenians. At the same time that Russian agents fanned the fires of the Greek Revolution and stirred the beginnings of Pan-Slavism in Serbia and Bulgaria, others moved into the Caucasus and worked to secure Russian influence over the Catholicos of the Armenian Gregorian Church of Echmiadzin, to which most Ottoman Gregorians had strong emotional attachments. The Russians used the Catholicos' jealousy of the Istanbul Patriarch to gain his support to such an extent that Catholicos Nerses Aratarakes himself led a force of 60,000 Armenians in support of the Russian army that fought Iran in the Caucasus in 1827 -1828, in the process capturing most of Iran's Caucasus possessions, including those areas where the Armenians lived. This new Russian presence along the borders of eastern Anatolia, combined with the support of the Catholicos, enabled them to extend their influence among Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Russian pressure in Istanbul finally got the Patriarch to add the Catholicos' name to his daily prayers starting in 1844, furthering the latter's ability to influence Ottoman Armenians in Russia's favor in the years that followed. Most Ottoman Armenians were still too content with their lot in the Ottoman lands to be seriously influenced by this Russian propaganda, but those who immigrated to Russian Caucasus to join the Russian effort against Ottoman stability and power. The lands that they abandoned were turned over to Muslim refugees flooding into the Empire from persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe. This led to serious land disputes when many of the Armenian emigrants, or their descendants, unhappy with life in Russia, sought to return to the Ottoman Empire in the 1880's and 1890's.

The Russians were not the only foreign power seeking to exploit the Ottoman Christians for political purposes. England and France sponsored missionary activities that converted many Armenians to Protestantism and Catholicism respectively, leading to the creation of the Armenian Catholic Church in Istanbul in 1830 and the Protestant Church in 1847. However these developments were not directly related to the development of the "*Armenian Question*", except perhaps as indications of the rising discontent within the Gregorian church which the Russians were seeking to take advantage of in their own way.

On the other hand, the Reform Proclamation of 1856 was of major importance. While not

abolishing the separate millets and churches and the institutions that they supported, the Ottoman government now provided equal rights for all subjects regardless of their religion, in the process seeking to eliminate all special privileges and distinctions based on religion, and requiring the millets to reconstitute their internal regulations in order to achieve these goals. Insofar as the Armenians were concerned, the result was the Armenian Millet Regulation, drawn up by the Patriarchate and put into force by the Ottoman government on 29 March 1862. Of particular importance the new regulation placed the Armenian millet under the government of a council of 140 members, including only 20 churchmen from the Istanbul Patriarchate, while 80 secular representatives were to be chosen from the Istanbul community and 40 members from the provinces. The Reform Proclamation of 1856 led England and France to be more interested in Armenians which in return intensified the interests of Russia in the same ethnic group. Their concern was based on their own imperialist interests rather than their affection for Armenians. Russia now sought to gain Armenian support for undermining and destroying the Ottoman state by promising to create a "*Greater Armenia*" in eastern Anatolia, which would include substantially more territory between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean than the Armenians ever had ruled or even occupied at any time in their history.

It was against this background that the Ottoman-Russian war (1877 - 78) awakened Armenian dreams for independence with Russian help and under Russian guidance. Toward the end of the war, the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul, Nerses Varjabedian, got in touch with the Russian Czar with the help of the Catholicos of Echmiadzin, asking Russia not to return to the Ottomans the east Anatolian lands occupied by Russian forces. Immediately after the war, the Patriarch went to the Russian camp, which by then was at San Stephano, immediately outside Istanbul, and in an interview with the Russian Commander, Grand Duke Nicholas, asked that all of Eastern Anatolia be annexed to Russia and established as an autonomous Armenian state, very much like the regime then being established for Bulgaria, but that if this was not possible, and the lands in question had to be returned to the Ottomans, at least Russian forces should not be withdrawn until changes favoring the Armenians were introduced into the governmental and administrative organization and regulations of these provinces.¹ The Russians agreed to the latter proposal, which was incorporated as Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stephano. Even as the negotiations were going on at San Stephano, moreover, the Armenian officers in the Russian army worked frantically to stir discontent among the Ottoman Armenians, urging them to work to gain "*the same sort of independence for themselves as that secured by the Christians of the Balkans.*" This appeal gained considerable influence among the Armenians of Eastern Anatolia long after the Russian forces were withdrawn.

The Treaty of San Stephano did not, however, constitute the final settlement of the Russo-Turkish war. Britain rightly feared that its provisions for a Greater Armenia in the East would inevitably not only establish Russian hegemony in those areas but also, and even more dangerous, in the Ottoman Empire, and through "*Greater Armenia*" to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, where they could easily threaten the British possessions in India. In return for an Ottoman agreement for British occupation of Cyprus, therefore, to enable it to counter any Russian threats in Eastern Anatolia, Britain agreed to use its influence in Europe to upset the provisions of San Stephano, arranging the Congress of Berlin to this end. As a result of its deliberations, Russia was compelled to evacuate all of Eastern Anatolia with the exception of the districts of Kars, Ardahan

¹ URAS, Esat,Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi, 2nd Edition, Istanbul, 1976, pp. 212 - 215.

and Batum, with the Ottomans agreeing to institute "reforms" in the eastern provinces where Armenians lived under the guarantee of the five signatory European powers. From this time onward, England in particular came to consider the "Armenian Question" as a useful tool to advance its own ambitions, and to regularly intervene to secure its solution according to its own designs.

A delegation sent by the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul attended the Congress of Berlin, but it was so unhappy at the final treaty and the Powers' failure to accept its demands that it returned to Istanbul with the feeling that *"nothing will be achieved except by means of struggle and revolution"*² Russia also emerged from the Congress without having achieved its major objectives, and with both Greece, and Bulgaria being left under British influence. It therefore renewed with increased vigor its effort to secure control of Eastern Anatolia, again seeking to use the Armenians as a major instrument of its policy. Now, however, it was resisted in this effort by the British, who also sought to influence and use the Armenians by stirring their national ambitions, though in this respect, in the words of the French writer Rene Pinon, who is in fact known with his pro-Armenian views, *"Armenia in British hands would become a police station against Russian expansion."* Whether under Russian or British influence, however, the Armenians became pawns to advance imperial ambitions at Ottoman expense.

It had been British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and the Tories who had defended Ottoman integrity against Russian expansion at the Congress of Berlin. But with the assumption of power by William E. Gladstone and the Liberals in 1880, British policy toward the Ottomans changed drastically to one which sought to protect British interests by breaking up the Ottoman Empire and creating friendly small states under British influence in its place, one of which was to be Armenia. In pursuit of this policy, the British press now was encouraged to refer to eastern Anatolia as "Armenia"; British consulates were opened in every corner of the area to provide opportunities for contact with the local Christian population; the numbers of Protestant missionaries sent to the East was substantially increased; and in London an Anglo-Armenian Friendship Committee was created to influence public opinion in support of this new endeavour. The way how Russia and Great Britain used Armenians as a tool for their own ambitions has been adequately documented by numerous Armenian and other foreign sources. Thus, the French Ambassador in Istanbul Paul Cambon reported to the Quai d'Orsay in 1894 that *"Gladstone is organizing the dissatisfied Armenians, putting them under discipline and promising them assistance, settling many of them in London with the inspiration of the propaganda committee."* Edgar Granville commented that *"There was no Armenian movement in Ottoman territory before the Russians stirred them up. Innocent people are going to be hurt because of this dream of a Greater Armenia under the protection of the Czar,"* and *"the Armenian movements intend to attach Eastern Anatolia to Russia."* The Armenian writer Kaprielian declared proudly in his book *The Armenian Crisis and Rebirth* that *"the revolutionary promises and inspirations were owed to Russia."* The Dashnak newspaper *Hairenik* in its issue of 28 June 1918 stated that *"The awakening of a revolutionary spirit among the Armenians in Turkey was the result of Russian stimulation."* The Armenian Patriarch Horen Ashikian wrote in his *History of Armenia* *"The protestant missionaries distributed in large numbers to various places in Turkey made propaganda in favor of England and stirred the Armenians to desire autonomy under British protection. The schools that they established were the nurseries of their secret plans."* And the Armenian religious leader Hrant Vartabed wrote that

² URAS, Esat, op. cit., pp. 250 - 251.

"The establishment of protestant communities in Ottoman territory and their protection by England and the United States shows that they did not shrink from exploiting even the most sacred feelings of the West, religious feelings, in seeking civilization", going on to state that the Catholicos of Echmiadzin Kevork V was a tool of Czarist Russia and that he betrayed the Armenians of Anatolia..³

In pursuit of these policies, starting in 1880 a number of Armenian revolutionary societies were established in Eastern Anatolia, the Black Cross and Armenian societies in Van and the National Guards in Erzurum. However these societies had little influence, since the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire still lived in peace and prosperity and had no real complaints against Ottoman administration. With the passage of time, therefore, these and other such Armenian societies within the Empire fell into inactivity and largely ceased operations. The Armenian nationalists therefore moved to center their organizations outside Ottoman territory, establishing the Hunchak Committee at Geneva in 1887 and the Dashnak Committee at Tiflis in 1890, both of which declared to be their basic goal the *"liberation"* from Ottoman rule of the territories of Eastern Anatolia and the Ottoman Armenians.

According to Louise Nalbandian, a leading Armenian researcher into Armenian propaganda, the Hunchak program stated that:

*"Agitation and terror were needed to "elevate the spirit" of the people. The people were also to be incited against their enemies and were to "profit" from retaliatory actions of these same enemies. Terror was to be used as a method of protecting the people and winning their confidence in the Hunchak program. The party aimed at terrorizing the Ottoman government, thus contributing toward lowering the prestige of that regime and working toward its complete disintegration. The government itself was not to be the only focus of terroristic tactics. The Hunchaks wanted to annihilate the most dangerous of the Armenian and Turkish individuals who were then working for the government as well as to destroy all spies and informers. To assist them in carrying out all of these terroristic acts, the party was to organize an exclusive branch specifically devoted to performing acts of terrorism. The most opportune time to institute the general rebellion for carrying out immediate objectives was when Turkey was engaged in war."*⁴

K. S. Papazian wrote of the Dashnak Society:

*"The purpose of the A. R. Federation (Dashnak) is to achieve political and economic freedom in Turkish Armenia, by means of rebellion ... terrorism has, from the first, been adopted by the Dashnak Committee of the Caucasus, as a policy or a method for achieving its ends. Under the heading "means" in their program adopted in 1892, we read as follows: The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak), in order to achieve its purpose through rebellion, organizes revolutionary groups. Method no. 8 is as follows: To wage fight, and to subject to terrorism the Government officials, the traitors, ... Method no. 11 is: To subject the government institutions to destruction and pillage."*⁵

One of the Dashnak founders and ideologists, Dr. Jean Loris-Melikoff wrote that:

"The truth is that the party (Dashnak Committee) was ruled by an oligarchy, for whom the particular

³ SCHEMSI, Kara, op. cit, pp. 20 - 21.

⁴ NALBANDIAN, Louise, Armenian Revolutionary Movement, University of California Press, 1963, pp. 110-111.

⁵ PAPAZIAN, K. S., Patriotism Perverted, Boston, Baker Press, 1934, pp.14-15.

*interests of the party came before the interests of the people and nation.. They (the Dashnaks) made collections among the bourgeoisie and the great merchants. At the end, when these means were exhausted, they resorted to terrorism, after the teachings of the Russian revolutionaries that the end justifies the means"*⁶

The same policy was described by the Dashnak ideologist Varandian, in History of the Dashnakzoutune (Paris, 1932).

Thus as Armenian writers themselves have freely admitted, the goal of their revolutionary societies was to stir revolution, and their method was terror. They lost no time in putting their programs into operation, stirring a number of revolt efforts within a short time, with the Hunchaks taking the lead at first, and then the Dashnaks pursuing, planning and organizing their efforts outside the Ottoman Empire before carrying them out within the boundaries of the Ottoman country.

The first revolt came at Erzurum in 1890. It was followed by the Kumkapi riots in Istanbul the same year, and then risings in Kayseri, Yozgat, Corum and Merzifon in 1892 -1893, in Sasun in 1894, the Zeytun revolt and the Armenian raid on the Sublime Porte in 1895, the Van revolt and occupation of the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul in 1896, the Second Sasun revolt in 1903, the attempted assassination of Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1905, and the Adana revolt in 1909. All these revolts and riots were presented by the Armenian revolutionary societies in Europe and America as the killing of Armenians by Turks, and with this sort of propaganda message they stirred considerable emotional reactions among Christian peoples. The missionaries and consular representatives sent by the Powers to Anatolia played major roles in spreading this propaganda in the western press, thus carrying out the aims of the western powers to turn public opinion against Muslims and Turks to gain the necessary support to break up the Ottoman Empire.

There were many honest western diplomatic and consular representatives who reported what actually was happening, that it was the Armenian revolutionary societies that were doing the revolting and slaughtering and massacring to secure European intervention in their behalf.

In 1876, the British Ambassador in Istanbul reported that the Armenian Patriarch had said to him:

*"If revolution is necessary to attract the attention and intervention of Europe, it would not be hard to do so."*⁷

On 28 March 1894 the British Ambassador in Istanbul, Currie reported to the Foreign Office:

*"The aim of the Armenian revolutionaries is to stir disturbances, to get the Ottomans to react to violence, and thus get the foreign Powers to intervene."*⁸

On 28 January 1895 the British Consul in Erzurum, Graves reported to the British

⁶ LORIS-MELIKOFF, Dr. Jean, la Revolution Russe et les Nouvelles Republiques Transcaucasiennes, Paris, 1920, p.81.

⁷ URAS, Esat; op. cit, p. 188.

⁸ British Blue Book, Nr. 6 (1894), p. S7.

Ambassador in Istanbul:

*"The aims of the revolutionary committees are to stir up general discontent and to get the Turkish government and people to react with violence, thus attracting the attention of the foreign powers to the imagined sufferings of the Armenian people, and getting them to act to correct the situation."*⁹

Graves also told New York Herald reporter Sydney Whitman that:

*"If no Armenian revolutionary had come to this country, if they had not stirred Armenian revolution, would these clashes have occurred", answering "Of course not. I doubt if a single Armenian would have been killed."*¹⁰

The British Vice-Consul Williams wrote from Van on 4 March 1896:

*"The Dashnaks and Hunchaks have terrorized their own countrymen, they have stirred up the Muslim people with their thefts and insanities, and have paralyzed all efforts made to carry out reforms; all the events that have taken place in Anatolia are the responsibility of the crimes committed by the Armenian revolutionary committees."*¹¹

British Consul General in Adana, Doughty Wily, wrote in 1909:

*"The Armenians are working to secure foreign intervention."*¹²

Russian Consul General in Bitlis and Van, General Mayewski, reported in 1912:

"In 1895 and 1896 the Armenian revolutionary committees created such suspicion between the Armenians and the native population that it became impossible to implement any sort of reform in these districts. The Armenian priests paid no attention to religious education, but instead concentrated on spreading nationalist ideas, which were affixed to the walls of monasteries, and in place of performing their religious duties they concentrated on stirring Christian enmity against Muslims. The revolts that took place in many provinces of Turkey during 1895 and 1896 were caused neither by any great poverty among the Armenian villages nor because of Muslim attacks against them. In fact these villagers were considerably richer and more prosperous than their neighbors. Rather, the Armenian revolts came from three causes:

- 1. Their increasing maturity in political subjects;*
- 2. The spread of ideas of nationality, liberation, and independence within the Armenian community;*
- 3. Support of these ideas by the western governments, and their encouragement through the efforts of the Armenian priests."*¹³

In another report in December 1912, Mayewski wrote that:

"The Dashnak revolutionary society is working to stir up a situation in which Muslims and Armenians

⁹ British Blue Book, Nr. 6 (1894), pp. 222 - 223.

¹⁰ URAS, Esat, op. cit., p. 426.

¹¹ British Blue Book, Nr. 8 (1896), p.108.

¹² SCHEMSI, Kara, op. cit., p. I 1.

¹³ General MAYEWSKI, Statistique des Provinces de Van et de Bitlis, pp.11-13, Petersburg, 1916.

will attack each other, and to thus pave the way for Russian intervention."¹⁴

Finally, the Dashnak ideologue Varandian admits that the society "*wanted to assure European intervention*,"¹⁵ while Papazian stated that "*the aims of their revolts was to assure that the European powers would interfere in Ottoman internal affairs*"¹⁶ At each of their armed revolts the Armenian terrorist committees have always propagated that European intervention would immediately follow. Even some of the committee members believed in this propaganda. In fact, during the occupation of the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul the Armenian terrorist Armen Aknemi committed suicide after having waited in desperation the arrival of the British fleet. It can be seen thus that the basis for the Armenian revolts was not poverty, nor was it oppression or the desire for reform; rather, it was simply the result of a joint effort on the part of the Armenian revolutionary committees and the Armenian church, in conjunction with the Western Powers and Russia, to provide the basis to break up the Ottoman Empire.

In reaction to these revolts, the Ottomans did what other states did in such circumstances, sending armed forces against the rebels to restore order, and for the most part succeeding quickly since very few of the Armenian populace supported or helped the rebels or the revolutionary societies. However for the press and public of Europe, stirred by tales spread by the missionaries and the revolutionary societies themselves, every Ottoman restoration of order was automatically considered a "*massacre*" of Christians, with the thousands of slaughtered Muslims being ignored and Christian claims against Muslims automatically accepted. In many cases, the European states not only intervened to prevent the Ottomans from restoring order, but also secured the release of many captured terrorists, including those involved in the Zeytun revolt, the occupation of the Ottoman Bank, and the attempted assassination of Sultan Abdulhamid. While most of these were expelled from the Ottoman Empire, with the cooperation of their European sponsors, it did not take long for them to secure forged passports and other documents and to return to Ottoman territory to resume their terrorist activities. Whatever were the claims of the Armenian revolutionary societies and whatever the ambitions of the imperial powers of Europe, there was one major fact which they simply could not ignore. The Armenians comprised a very small minority of the population in the territories being claimed in their name, namely the six eastern districts claimed as "*historic Armenia*" (Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Elaziz, Diyarbakir and Sivas), the two provinces claimed to comprise "*Armenian Cilicia*" (Aleppo and Adana) and finally Trabzon which was later claimed to have an outlet to the Black Sea coast. Even the French Yellow Book, which among western sources made the largest Armenian population claims, still showed them in a sizeable minority:

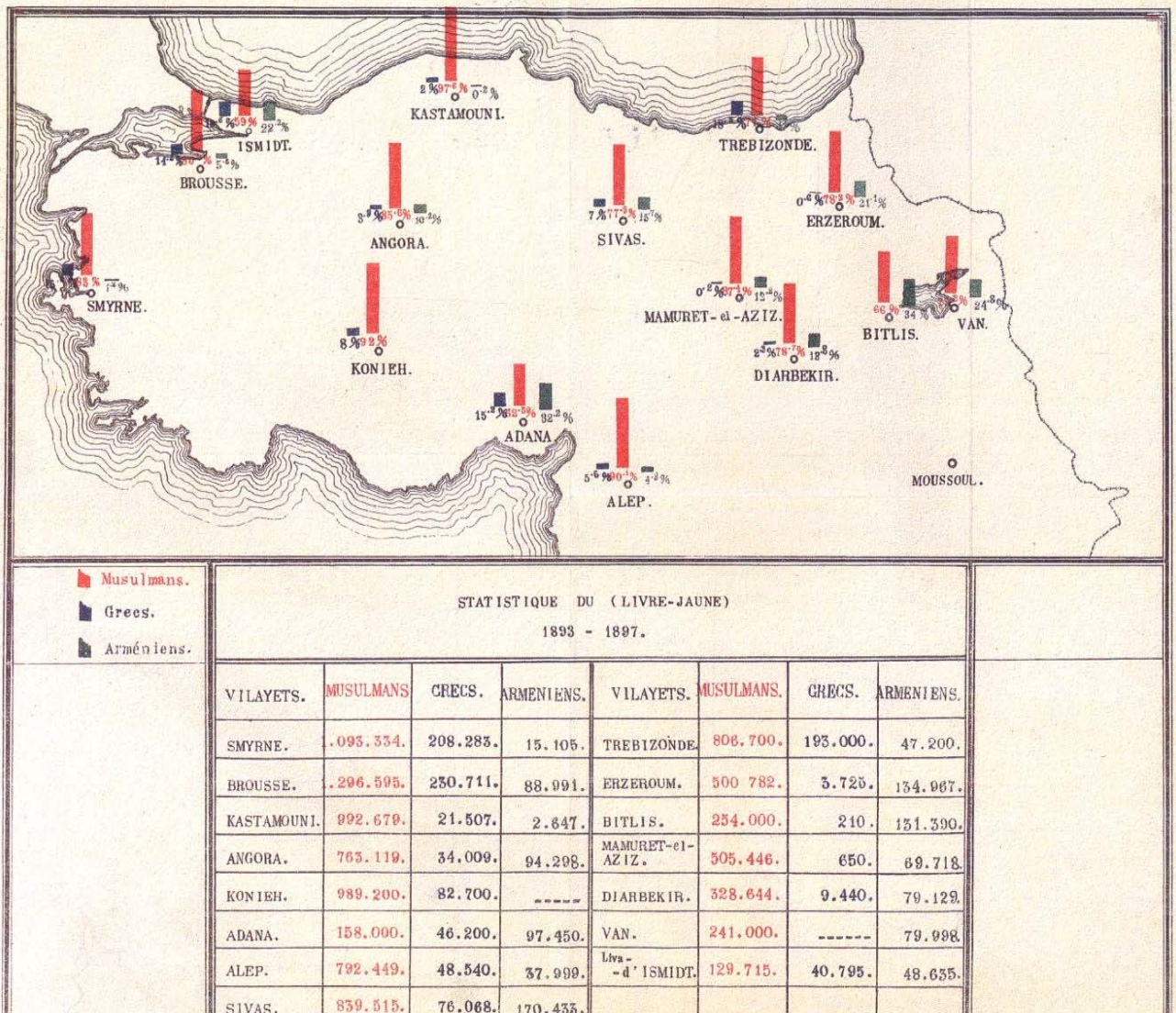
¹⁴ SCHEMSI, Kara, op. cit, p.II.

¹⁵ VARANDIAN, Mikayel, History of the Dashnagtzoutune, Paris, 1932, p. 302.

¹⁶ PAPAIZIAN, K. S., op. cit, p. 19.

	Total Population	Gregorian Armenian Population	Armenian Percent of Total Population
Erzurum	645,702	134,167	20.90
Bitlis	398,625	131,390	32.96
Van	430,000	79,998	18.79
Elazığ	578,814	69,718	12.04
Diyarbakır	471,462	79,129	16.78
Sivas	1,086,015	170,433	15.68
Adana	403,539	97,450	24.14
Aleppo	995,758	37,999	3.81
Trabzon	1,047,700	47,200	4.50

Proportions des populations musulmanes, grecques et arméniennes en Asie-Mineure
d'après la statistique du Livre-Jaune (Affaires Arméniennes 1893-1897)



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Proportions des populations musulmanes, grecques et arméniennes en Asie-Mineure
d'après la statistique du Livre-Jaune. (Affaires Arméniennes 1893-1897). [FO 371/7873]

Thus, even by these extreme claims, the Armenians still constituted no more than one third of the provinces' population. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica of 1910, the Armenians were only 15 percent of the area's population as a whole, making it very unlikely that they could in fact achieve independence in any part of the Ottoman Empire without the massive foreign assistance that would have been required to push out the Turkish majorities and replace them with Armenian emigrants.

Russia in fact was using the Armenians only for its own ends. It had no real intention of establishing Armenian independence, either within its own dominions or in Ottoman territory. Almost as soon as the Russians took over the Caucasus, they adopted a policy of Russifying the Armenians as well as establishing their own control over the Armenian Gregorian church in their territory. By virtue of the Polijenian Law of 1836, the powers and duties of the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin were restricted, while his appointment was to be made by the Czar. In 1882 all Armenian newspapers and schools in the Russian Empire were closed, and in 1903 the state took direct control of all the financial resources of the Armenian Church as well as Armenian establishments and schools. At the same time Russian Foreign Minister Lobanov-Rostowsky adopted his famous goal of "*An Armenia without Armenians*", a slogan which has been deliberately attributed to the Ottoman administration by some Armenian propagandists and writers in recent years. Whatever the reason, Russian oppression of the Armenians was severe. The Armenian historian Vartanian relates in his History of the Armenian Movement that "*Ottoman Armenia was completely free in its traditions, religion, culture and language in comparison to Russian Armenia under the Czars.*" Edgar Granville writes, "*The Ottoman Empire was the Armenians' only shelter against Russian oppression.*"

That Russian intentions were to use the Armenians to annex Eastern Anatolia and not to create an independent Armenia is shown by what happened during World War I. In the secret agreements made among the Entente powers to divide the Ottoman Empire, the territory which the Russians had promised to the Armenians as an autonomous or independent territory was summarily divided between Russia and France without any mention of the Armenians, while the Czar replied to the protests of the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin only that "*Russia has no Armenian problem.*" The Armenian writer Borian thus concludes:

"Czarist Russia at no time wanted to assure Armenian autonomy. For this reason one must consider the Armenians who were working for Armenian autonomy as no more than agents of the Czar to attach Eastern Anatolia to Russia."

The Russians thus have deceived the Armenians for years; and as a result the Armenians have been left with nothing more than an empty dream.

ARMENIAN REBELLION AND THE RELOCATION IN 1915

The beginning of World War I and the Ottoman entry into the war on November 1, 1914 on the side of Germany and Austria - Hungary against the Entente powers was considered as a great opportunity by the Armenian nationalists. Louise Nalbandian relates that *"The Armenian revolutionary committees considered that the most opportune time to begin a general uprising to achieve their goals was when the Ottoman Empire was in a state of war"*,¹⁷ and thus less able to resist an internal attack.

Even before the war began, in August 1914, the Ottoman leaders met with the Dashnaks at Erzurum in the hope of getting them to support the Ottoman war effort when it came. The Dashnaks promised that if the Ottomans entered the war, they would do their duty as loyal countrymen in the Ottoman armies. However they failed to live up to this promise, since even before this meeting took place, a secret Dashnak Congress held at Erzurum in June 1914 had already decided to use the oncoming war to undertake a general attack against the Ottoman state.¹⁸ The Russian Armenians joined the Russian army in preparing an attack on the Ottomans as soon as war was declared. The Catholicos of Echmiadzin assured the Russian General Governor of the Caucasus, Vranzof-Dashkof, that *"in return for Russia's forcing the Ottomans to make reforms for the Armenians, all the Russian Armenians would support the Russian war effort without conditions."*¹⁹ The Catholicos subsequently was received at Tiflis by the Czar, whom he told that *"The liberation of the Armenians in Anatolia would lead to the establishment of an autonomous Armenia separated from Turkish suzerainty and that this Armenia could be made possible with the protection of Russia."*²⁰ Of course the Russians really intended to use the Armenians to annex Eastern Anatolia, but the Catholicos was told nothing about that.

As soon as Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire, the Dashnak Society's official organ Horizon declared:

*"The Armenians have taken their place on the side of the Entente states without showing any hesitation whatsoever; they have placed all their forces at the disposition of Russia; and they also are forming volunteer battalions."*²¹

The Dashnak Committee also ordered its cells that had been preparing to revolt within the Ottoman Empire:

*"As soon as the Russians have crossed the borders and the Ottoman armies have started to retreat, you should revolt everywhere. The Ottoman armies thus will be placed between two fires: of the Ottoman armies advance against the Russians, on the other hand, their Armenian soldiers should leave their units with their weapons, form bandit forces, and unite with the Russians."*²²

¹⁷ NALBANDIAN, Louise, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁸ Aspirations et Agissements Revolutionnaires des Comités Arméniens avant et après la Proclamation de la Constitution Ottomane, Istanbul, 1917, pp.144 -146.

¹⁹ TCHALKOUCHIAN, Gr., he Livre Rouge, Paris, 1919, p. 12.

²⁰ TCHALKOUCHIAN, Gr., op. cit.

²¹ URAS, Esat, op. cit., p. 594.

²² HOCAOGLU, Mehmed, Tarihte Ermeni Mezalimi ve Ermeniler, Istanbul, 1976, pp. 570-571.

The Hunchak Committee instructions to its organizations in the Ottoman territory were:

*"The Hunchak Committee will use all means to assist the Entente states, devoting all its forces to the struggle to assure victory in Armenia, Cilicia, the Caucasus and Azerbaijan as the ally of the Entente states, and in particular of Russia."*²³

And even the Armenian representative in the Ottoman Parliament for Van, Papazyan, soon turned out to be a leading guerilla fighter against the Ottomans, publishing a proclamation that:

*"The volunteer Armenian regiments in the Caucasus should prepare themselves for battle, serve as advance units for the Russian armies to help them capture the key positions in the districts where the Armenians live, and advance into Anatolia, joining the Armenian units already there."*²⁴

As the Russian forces advanced into Ottoman territory in eastern Anatolia, they were led by advance units composed of volunteer Ottoman and Russian Armenians, who were joined by the Armenians who deserted the Ottoman armies and went over to the Russians. Many of these also formed bandit forces with weapons and ammunition which they had for years been stocking in Armenian and missionary churches and schools, going on to raid Ottoman supply depots both to increase their own arms and to deny them to the Ottoman army as it moved to meet this massive Russian invasion. Within a few months after the war began, these Armenian guerilla forces, operating in close coordination with the Russians, were savagely attacking Turkish cities, towns and villages in the East; massacring their inhabitants without mercy, while at the same time working to sabotage the Ottoman army's war effort by destroying roads and bridges, raiding caravans, and doing whatever else they could to ease the Russian occupation. The atrocities committed by the Armenian volunteer forces accompanying the Russian army were so severe that the Russian commanders themselves felt compelled to withdraw them from the fighting fronts and send them to rear guard duties. The memoirs of all too many Russian officers who served in the East at this time are filled with accounts of the revolting atrocities committed by these Armenian guerillas, who were savage even by the relatively primitive standards of war then observed in such areas.²⁵

Nor did these Armenian atrocities affect only Turks and other Muslims. The Armenian guerillas had never been happy with the failure of the Greeks and Jews to fully support their revolutionary programs. As a result in Trabzon and vicinity they massacred thousands of Greeks, while in the area of Hakkari it was the Jews who were rounded up and massacred by the Armenian guerillas.²⁶ Basically the aim of these atrocities was to leave only Armenians in the territories being claimed for the new Armenian state; all others therefore were massacred or forced to flee for their lives so as to secure the desired Armenian majority of the population in preparation for the peace settlement.

Leading the first Armenian units who crossed the Ottoman border in the company of the Russian invaders was the former Ottoman Parliamentary representative for Erzurum, Karekin

²³ Aspirations et Agissements revolutionnaires des Comités Armeniens, pp.151-153.

²⁴ URAS, Esat, op. cit., pp. 5% - 600.

²⁵ Journal de Guerre du Deuxième Regiment d'Artillerie de Forteresse Russe d'Erzeroum, 1919.

²⁶ SCHEMSI, Kara, op. cit., p. 41 ancfp. 49.

Pastirmaciyen, who now assumed the revolutionary name Armen Garo. Another former Ottoman parliamentarian, Hamparsum Boyaciyan, led the Armenian guerilla forces who ravaged Turkish villages behind the lines under the nickname "*Murad*", specifically ordering that "*Turkish children also should be killed as they form a danger to the Armenian nation.*" Another former Member of Parliament, Papazyan, led the Armenian guerilla forces that ravaged the areas of Van, Bitlis and **Mush**.

In March 1915 the Russian forces began to move toward Van. Immediately, on April 11, 1915 the Armenians of Van began a general revolt, massacring all the Turks in the vicinity so as to make possible its quick and easy conquest by the Russians. Little wonder that Czar Nicholas II sent a telegram of thanks to the Armenian Revolutionary Committee of Van on April 21, 1915, "*thanking it for its services to Russia.*" The Armenian newspaper Gochnak, published in the United States, also proudly reported on May 24, 1915 that "*only, 1,500 Turks remain in Van*", the rest having been slaughtered.

The Dashnak representative told the Armenian National Congress assembled at Tiflis in February 1915 that "*Russia provided 242,000 rubles before the war even began to arm and prepare the Ottoman Armenians to undertake revolts*", giving some idea of how the Russian-Armenian alliance had long prepared to undermine the Ottoman war effort.²⁷ Under these circumstances, with the Russians advancing along a wide front in the East, with the Armenian guerillas spreading death and destruction while at the same time attacking the Ottoman armies from the rear, with the Allies also attacking the Empire along a wide front from Galicia to Iraq, from the Dardanelles to Caucasus, the Ottoman decision to relocate Armenians from the war areas was a moderate and entirely legitimate measure of self defense.

Even after the revolt and massacres committed against Muslims at Van, the Ottoman government made one final effort to secure general Armenian support for the war effort, summoning the Patriarch, some Armenian Members of Parliament, and other delegates to a meeting where they were warned that drastic measures would be taken unless Armenians stopped slaughtering Muslims and working to undermine the war effort. When there was no evident lessening of the Armenian attacks, the government finally acted. On April 24, 1915 the Armenian revolutionary committees were closed and 235 of their leaders were arrested for activities against the state. It is the date of these arrests that in recent years has been annually commemorated by Armenian nationalist groups throughout the world in commemoration of the "*massacre*" that they claim took place at this time. No such massacre, however, took place, at this or any other time during the war: In the face of the great dangers which the Empire faced at that time, great care was taken to make certain that the Armenians were treated carefully and compassionately as they were relocated to the southern territories of the Empire, generally to Syria and Palestine when they came from southern Anatolia, and to Iraq if they came from the north. The Ottoman Council of Ministers thus ordered:

"When those of the Armenians resident in the aforementioned towns and villages who have to be moved are transferred to their places of settlement and are on the road, their comfort must be assured and their lives and property protected; after their arrival their food should be paid for out of Refugees' Appropriations until they are definitively settled in their new homes. Property and land should be distributed to them in accordance with their previous financial

²⁷ URAS, Esat, op. cit, p. 604.

situation as well as their current needs; and for those among them needing further help, the government should build houses, provide cultivators and artisans with seed, tools, and equipment."²⁸

And it went on to specify:

"This order is entirely intended against the extension of the Armenian Revolutionary Committees; therefore do not execute it in such a manner that might cause the mutual massacre of Muslims and Armenians."

*"Make arrangements for special officials to accompany the groups of Armenians who are being relocated, and make sure they are provided with food and other needed things, paying the cost out of the allotments set aside for emigrants."*²⁹

*"The food needed by the emigrants while traveling until they reach their destinations must be provided ... for poor emigrants by credit for the installation of the emigrants. The camps provided for transported persons should be kept under regular supervision; necessary steps for their well being should be taken, and order and security assured. Make certain that indigent emigrants are given enough food and that their health is assured by daily visits by a doctor... Sick people, poor people, women and children should be sent by rail, and others on mules, in carts or on foot according to their power of endurance. Each convoy should be accompanied by a detachment of guards, and the food supply for each convoy should be guarded until the destination is reached... In cases where the emigrants are attacked, either in the camps or during the journeys, all efforts should be taken to repel the attacks immediately..."*³⁰

Out of the some 700,000 Armenians who were resettled in this way until early 1916, certainly some lives were lost, as the result both of large scale military and bandit activities then going on in the areas through which they passed, as well as the general insecurity and blood feuds which some tribal forces sought to carry out as the caravans passed through their territories. In addition, the relocation and settlement of the transferred Armenians took place at a time when the Empire was suffering from severe shortages of fuel, food, medicine and other supplies as well as large-scale plague and famine. It should not be forgotten that, at the same time, an entire Ottoman army of 90,000 men was lost in the East as a result of severe shortages, or that through the remainder of the war as many as three to four million Ottoman subjects of all religions died as a result of the same conditions that afflicted the relocated Armenians. How tragic and unfeeling it is, therefore, for Armenian nationalists to blame the undoubted suffering of the Armenians during the war to something more than the same anarchical conditions which afflicted all the Sultan's subjects. This is the truth behind the false claims distorting historical facts by ill-devised mottoes such as the *"first genocide of the Twentieth Century"*.

After the World War I, the Armenian allegations were investigated between 1919 and 1922 as part of a legal process against the Ottoman officials. The Peace Treaty of Sevres, which was imposed upon the defeated Ottoman Empire, required the Ottoman government to hand over to the Allied Powers those persons who were accused of "massacres". Subsequently, 144 high Ottoman officials were arrested and deported for trial by Britain to the island of Malta. The information which led to the arrests was mainly given by local Armenians and the Armenian Patriarchate. So while the deportees were interned on

²⁸ Council of Ministers Decrees, Prime Ministry's Archives, Istanbul, Volume 198, Decree 1331/163, May 1915.

²⁹ British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, 371/9158/E 5523.

³⁰ British Foreign Office Archives, 371/9158/E 5523.

Malta the British occupation forces in Istanbul which had absolute power and authority in Ottoman capital, looked frantically everywhere to find evidence in order to incriminate the deportees.

An Armenian scholar, Haig Kahzarlan, appointed by the British, conducted thorough examination of documentary evidence in the Ottoman and British archives. However, Khazarian could not find any evidence demonstrating that the Ottoman government and the Ottoman officials deported to Malta either sanctioned or encouraged the killings of the Armenians.

Thereupon, the British Foreign Office thought that the American government would doubtlessly be in possession of a large amount of documentary evidence compiled at the time of the “massacres”. Indeed, if alleged massacres took place in 1915-1917, the Americans must have been in possession of a mass of material, since at that time American diplomatic and consular officials were freely performing their duties in Turkey. **Furthermore, the American Near East Relief Society, ubiquitous institution of missionaries, was allowed by the Ottoman government to fulfill its relief work in Anatolia during the relocation of the Armenians.** Therefore, they should have witnessed crimes and gathered a lot of evidence against the Ottoman officials.

So, in desperation the British Foreign Office turned to the American archives in Washington. On March 31, 1921, Lord Curzon telegraphed to Sir A.Geddes, the British Ambassador in Washington the following.

“The are in the hands of His Majesty’s Government a Malta a number of Turks arrested for alleged complicity in the Armenian massacres. There are considerable difficulties in establishing the proofs of guilt... Please ascertain if the United States are in possession of any evidence that would be of value for purposes of prosecution.”

On July 13, 1921, the British Embassy in Washington returned the following reply:

“I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that a member of my staff visited the... State Department... He was permitted to see a selection of reports from United States Consuls on the subject of the atrocities... I regret to inform Your Lordship that there was nothing therein which could be used as evidence against the Turks...”

At the conclusion of the investigation, no evidence was found that could corroborate the Armenian claims. After two years and four months of detention in Malta, all Ottoman deportees were set free without trial. No compensation was ever paid to the detainees.

STATEMENTS & ASSESSMENTS ON THE ARMENIAN REBELLION AND THE RELOCATION IN 1915

Hovhannes Katchaznoui: (The First Prime Minister of the independent Armenian Republic says in his report, entitled “Dashnagtzoutiun Has Nothing To Do Anymore”, submitted to the 1923 Dashnagtzoutiun Party Convention:) (1)

“...At the beginning of the Autumn of 1914 when Turkey had not yet entered the war..., Armenian revolutionary units began to be formed in Transcaucasia with great enthusiasm and, especially, with (pp.36) much uproar.

“...In the fall of 1914 Armenian volunteer units organized themselves and fought against the Turks...

“...The winter of 1914 and the spring of 1915 were periods of greatest enthusiasm and hope for all the Armenians in the Caucasus, including, of course, the Dashnagtzoutiun. We had no doubt that the war would end with the complete victory of the Allies; Turkey would be defeated and dismembered, and its Armenian population would at last be liberated. (pp.37-38.)

“We had embraced Russia whole-heartedly without any compunction... we believed that the Tsarist government would grant us a more-or-less broad self-government in the Caucasus in the Armenian “vilayets” liberated from Turkey **as a reward for our loyalty, our efforts and assistance.**

“...We overestimated the ability of the Armenian people, their political and military power and overestimated the extent and importance of the services our people rendered to the Russians...” (pp.38)

“...The proof is, however-and this is essential- that the struggle began decades ago against which the Turkish government brought about the deportation...

(1) “Dashnagtzoutiun Has Nothing To Do Anymore, Hovhannes Katchaznoui (The First Prime Minister of the independent Armenian Republic), Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, April 2006.

“...This was the terrible fact. (pp.39)

“...Are we not capable of doing in the Soviet Armenia what we did in the Turkish Armenia, for tens of years?

We certainly are.

“We might establish a base in the Iranian Qaradağ and send people and arms to the other side of Araxe, (just as we did in Salmas once). We might establish the necessary secret relations and armed “humbas” in the Sunik and Dereleghez mountains just as we did in the Sasun mountains and the Chataq stream (in eastern Turkey). We might provoke the peasants in some far off regions to rise and then we might expel the communists there or destroy them. Later we might create great commotion even in Yerevan and occupy a state building at least for a few hours **just as we occupied the Ottoman Bank** or we might explode any building. **We could plan assassinations and execute them just as we killed the officials of the Tsar and the Sultan...; in the same way, just as we did to Sultan Abdülhamid, we could plant a bomb under Myasnikov’s or Lukashin’s feet.**

We could do all these, I think we could.

However, there is this question: Why? What are our aims and hopes?

“...when we created a great hubbub in Turkey, we thought we would attract the attention of the great powers to the Armenian cause and would force them to mediate for us, but now we know what such mediation is worth and do not need to repeat such endeavors...” (pp.85)

Délégation Nationale Arménienne

*17, Avenue de l'Assemblée
Paris*

Le Ministre

319 1

En France, par leurs Volontaires enrôlés dès les premiers jours dans la légion étrangère, où ils se sont couverts de gloire sous le drapeau français;

En Palestine et en Syrie, où les Volontaires arméniens, recrutés par la Délégation Nationale à la demande même du Gouvernement de la République, ont formé plus de la moitié du contingent français et ont pris une grande part à la victoire du Général Allenby, ainsi que au dernier et leurs Chefs Français l'ont officiellement déclaré;

Au Caucase et, sans parler des 150,000 Arméniens dans l'Armée Impériale Russe, plus de 40.000 de leurs Volontaires ont contribué à la libération d'une partie des villages arméniens et et, sous le commandement de leurs Chefs Antranik et Bazarbakoff, ils ont sauvé de tous les peuples du

Son Excellence
Monsieur S. Pichon
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères

PARIS.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, la nouvelle assurance de ma plus haute considération.

Le Président,

Armenian National Delegation

Translation of the Letter, dated 30 November 1919, from Boghos Nubar (Head of Armenian National Delegation to Paris Peace Conference, 1919) to the French Foreign Minister:

“Dear Minister,

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

The Armenians have been, since the beginning of the war, de facto belligerents, as you yourself have acknowledged, since they have fought alongside the Allies on all fronts, enduring heavy sacrifices and great suffering for the sake of their unshakable attachment to the cause of the Entente:

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

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

In the Caucasus, where, without mentioning the 150,000 Armenians in the Imperial Russian Army, more than 40,000 of their volunteers contributed to the liberation of a portion of the Armenian vilayets, and where, under the command of their leaders, Antranik and Nazarbekoff, they alone among the peoples of the Caucasus, offered resistance to the Turkish armies, from the beginning of the Bolshevik withdrawal right up to the signing of the armistice.”

Admiral Mark Bristol, U.S. Ambassador in Istanbul, states the following in his correspondence with the U.S. State Department in 1921: (1)

“...I see that reports are being freely circulated in the United States that the Turks massacred thousands of Armenians in the Caucasus. Such reports are repeated so many times it makes my blood boil. The Near East Relief has the reports from Yarrow and our own American people which show absolutely that such Armenian reports are absolutely false. The circulation of such false reports in the United States, without refutation, is an outrage and is certainly doing the Armenians more harm than good. I feel that we should discourage the Armenians in this kind of work, not only because it is wrong, but because they are injuring themselves... I was surprised to see Dr. McCallum send through a report along this line from Constantinople. When I called attention to the report, it was stated that it came from the Armenians but the telegram did not state this, nor did it state that the Armenian reports were not confirmed by our own reports. I may be all wrong; but I can't help feeling that I am not, because so many people out here who know the conditions agree with me that the Armenians and ourselves who lend to such exaggerated reports are doing the worst thing we possibly can for the Armenians. Why not tell the truth about the Armenians in every way? Let us come out and tell just what the Armenians are and then show our sympathy and do everything we can to make the future of these people what it should be for human beings. I am sure that the mass of people at home believe the Armenians are Christians in action and morals, and that they are able to govern themselves. You and I, and others that know them, know that this is not the case. We believe that they have been made what they are by the conditions that they have been compelled to live under, and we want to get them out from under these conditions so that they can become Christians and able to govern themselves. But I cannot believe that right is ever produced by wrong-doing...”

1. Source: Excerpts from correspondence of Admiral Mark Bristol, U.S. High Commissioner in Istanbul (1921), U.S. Library of Congress: “Bristol Papers” –General Correspondence-Container #34 (Bristol to Barton Letter of March 28, 1921), pp.2.

The letter of James L. Barton addressed to Admiral Mark Bristol, U.S. Ambassador in Istanbul

**“To Admiral Mark Bristol,
U.S. High Commissioner and Ambassador
Letter dated May 6, 1921**

With reference to the false reports that come through reporting massacres of the Armenian by the Turks, there is no one who can deprecate this more than I do. But there is situation here which is hard to describe. There is a brilliant young Armenian, a graduate of Yale University, by the name of Cardashian. He is lawyer, with office down in Wall Street, I believe. He has organized a committee, so called, which has never met and is never consulted, with Mr. Gerard as Chairman. Cardashian is the whole thing. He has set up what he calls an Armenian publicity bureau or something of that kind, and has a letterhead printed. Gerard signs anything that Cardashian writes. He told me this himself one time. Cardashian is out with his own people and with everybody else, except Gerard and perhaps one other leading Armenian who was in London a month ago, Pasmermadjian. Not long since Cardashian came out with a pamphlet in which he charged the Near East Relief and the American missionaries as being the greatest enemies Armenia ever had, claiming that they, in cooperation with President Wilson, had crucified Armenia, and a lot of other matter in this character. He claims to have the latest and fullest information out from Armenia and keeps in pretty close touch with Senator Lodge, the President, the State Department, and others in Washington. He has Gerard's backing. We have had many a conference with Armenian leaders as to what can be done to stop this vicious propaganda by Cardashian. **He is constantly reporting atrocities which never occurred and giving endless misinformation with regard to the situation in Armenia and in Turkey.** We do not like to come out and attack him in public. That would injure the whole cause we are all trying to serve, because concern. We have tried in New York Office to give publicity to nothing we did not have every reason to believe to be correct. We are therefore trying to keep controversial matters out and only keep before the public the actual needs in Armenia.
James L. Barton”

**Bristol Papers, US Library of Congress,
General Correspondence, Container #34.**

Arnold J. Toynbee (British historian and co-author of the infamous “British Blue Book”): (1)

“...Yet at the very time when the agreement (*) was being made, **I was being employed by His Majesty’s Government in a ‘Blue Book’, which was duly published and distributed as war-propaganda !** The French Government made use of the Armenians in a different way. They promised to erect an autonomous Armenian state, under their aegis, in the Cilician part of their Anatolian Zone and **the promise brought them several thousand Armenian volunteers, most of whom were enrolled in the Legion d’Orient and served for the rest of the War.**(pp.50-51)

“...There were also something like **300,000 Armenian refugees ... in the territory of the Erivan Republic**, who had been living there for five years (i.e., since 1915) in extreme destitution...(pp 191)

“...It is true that there would in any case have been trouble in Cilicia, **owing to the irresponsible policy of the French authorities, who tried at first to lessen the burden on their regular army by partly garrisoning Cilicia with the Armenian volunteers of the Legion d’Orient. They even permitted the Armenians to raise and arm irregular bands...** In fact, this French attempt to play off the Armenians against the Turks in Cilicia was of a piece with the British statesmanship that sent the Greeks to Smyrna...”(pp.312)

1. Toynbee, Arnold J., The Western Question in Greece and Turkey, Howard Fertig, Inc. Edition, New York, 1970.

(*) The secret agreement, a.k.a. the Sykes-Picot Agreement, signed in May 1916 between Great Britain, France and Russia envisaging partitioning of Turkey and establishing “zones” assigned to each Power.

Guenter Lewy (Professor emeritus of political science at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst): (1)

“...The key issue in this controversy is not the extent of Armenian suffering...Historians do not dispute these events although they may squabble over the numbers and circumstances. Rather the key question in the debate concerns premeditation. Did the Young Turk regime organize the massacres that took place in 1916?

Most of those who maintain that Armenian deaths were premeditated and so constitute genocide base their argument on three pillars: actions of Turkish military courts of 1919-20, which convicted officials of the Young Turk government of organizing massacres of Armenians, the role of the so-called “Special Organization” accused of carrying out the massacres, and the Memoirs of Naim Bey which contain alleged telegrams of Interior Minister Talat Pasha conveying orders for the destruction of the Armenians. Yet when these events and the sources describing them are subjected to careful examination, they provide at most a shaky foundation from which to claim, let alone conclude, that the deaths of Armenians were premeditated.(pp.1)

“...It is ironic that lobbyists and policymakers seek to base a determination of genocide upon documents most historians and scholars dismiss at worst as forgeries and at best as unverifiable and problematic...Three pillars of the Armenian claim to classify World War I deaths as genocide fail to substantiate the charge that the Young Turk regime intentionally organized the massacres. Other alleged evidence for a premeditated plan of annihilation fares no better...(pp.7)”

1. Lewy, Guenter, “Revisiting the Armenian Genocide”, Middle East Quarterly, Fall 2005.

(*) The “Special Organization” (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa), a special volunteer force led by professional officers in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, was equivalent to a modern special operations force.

(**) Major Stange, a Prussian artillery specialist and a member of the German military mission to the Ottoman Empire during World War I, was assigned to command the Erzurum fortress artillery.

Edward J. Erickson, (Ph.D., International Research Associates):

- "...Many historians find military chronicles dry and difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless, when it comes to the controversy over the fate of Armenians in 1915, they are crucial. Many contemporary historians accuse the Special Organization (*) and Major Stange (**) of complicity in genocide. The records, though, do not lend such accusations credence.
- "... From the record of unit assignments and locations on the front, it appears that the Special Organization units associated with Stange were not redeployed from the Caucasian front to deport and massacre Armenians...
- **"...Accusations of genocide demand authentic proof of an official policy of ethnic extermination. Vahakn Dadrian has made high-profile claims that Major Stange and the Special Organization were the instruments of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Documents not utilized by Dadrian, though, discount such an allegation. (1)**

1. Erickson, Edward J., Ph.D., (He is a retired U.S. Army officer at International Research Associates, *"Armenian Massacres: New Records Undercut Old Blame, Reexamining History*, Middle East Quarterly, Summer 2006, pp. 6-7.

(*) The "Special Organization" (Teşkilat-I Mahsusa), a special volunteer force led by professional officers in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, was equivalent to a modern special operations force.

(**) Major Stange, a Prussian artillery specialist and a member of the German military mission to the Ottoman Empire during World War I, was assigned to command the Erzurum fortress artillery.

Justin McCarthy (Professor of History, University of Louisville):

“...In 1800, a vast Muslim land existed in Anatolia, the Balkans, and southern Russia. It was not only a land in which Muslims ruled, but a land in which Muslims were the majority or, in much of the Balkans and part of the Caucasus, a sizeable minority...By 1923, only Anatolia, eastern Thrace, and a section of the southeastern Caucasus remained to the Muslim land. The Balkan Muslims were largely gone, dead or forced to migrate, the remainder living in pockets of settlement in Greece, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. The same fate had overcome the Muslims of the Crimea, the northern Caucasus, and Russian Armenia-they were simply gone. Millions of Muslims, most of them Turks, had died; millions more had fled to what is today Turkey. Between 1821 and 1922, more than five million Muslims were driven from their lands. Five and one-half million Muslims died, some of them killed in wars, others perishing as refugees from starvation and disease. (pp.1)

“...Despite the historical importance of Muslim losses, it is not to be found in textbooks. Textbooks and histories that describe massacres of Bulgarians, Armenians, and Greeks have not mentioned corresponding massacres of Turks. The exile and mortality of the Muslims is not known...(pp.2)

“...The history that results from the process of revision is an unsettling one, for it tells the story of Turks as victims, and this is not the role in which they are usually cast. It does not present the traditional image of the Turk as victimizer, never victim, that has continued in histories of America and Europe long after it should have been discarded with other artifacts of nineteenth-century racism...(pp.3)

“...Devoid of its historical context, the Ottoman decision to deport the Armenians appears to have been irrational, motivated primarily by hatred of a minority. In fact, from the history of events in the Balkans and the Caucasus, the Ottomans knew what to expect from nationalist revolution and Russian invasion of eastern Anatolia. In Bulgaria, Greece, and Macedonia, the same processes had led to the slaughter of Turks. Could the Ottomans expect any difference in Anatolia? For 100 years, the Russians had expanded by pushing out Muslims. They had forced out the Crimean Tatars and the Circassians. In the southern Caucasus, they had replaced Turks with Armenians. In 1915, the Russians were poised to advance once again. Armenian revolutionary groups had already begun their rebellion all over eastern Anatolia, killing Muslim villagers and even seizing the city of Van. What fate could the Muslims of the east expect when the Russians invaded? The same fate that befell the Turks of Bulgaria or Macedonia. (pp.335)

1.McCarthy, Justin, “Death And Exile”, The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922, The Darwin Pres, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, Third Printing, 1999, pp.1.

The Transcript of the Cyrus Hamlin Letter, printed for ease of legibility

"All Armenian "revolutionary party" is causing great evil and suffering to the missionary work and to the whole Christian population of certain parts of the Turkish Empire. It is a secret organization and is managed with a skill in deceit which is known only in the East. In a widely distributed pamphlet the following announcement is made at the close.

HUNTCHAGIST REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

This is the only Armenian party which is leading on the revolutionary movement in Armenia. Its center is Athens, and it has branches in every village and city in Armenia, also in the colonies. Nishan Garabedian, one of the founders of the party, is in America, and those desiring to get further information may communicate with him, addressing Nishan Garabedian, No. 15 Fountain Street. Worcester, Mass., or with the center, M. Bernard. Poste Restante, Athens, Greece.

A very intelligent Armenian gentleman, who speaks fluently and correctly English as well as Armenian, and is an eloquent defender of the revolution, assured me that they have the strongest hopes of preparing the way for Russia's enhance to Asia Minor to take possession. In answer to the question how, he replied: **"These Huntchagist bands, organized all over the empire, will watch their opportunities to kill Turks and Kurds, set fire to their villages and then make their escape into the mountains. The enraged Moslems will then rise and fall upon the defenseless Armenians and slaughter them with such barbarities that Russia will enter in the name of humanity and Christian civilization and take possession."** When I denounced the scheme as atrocious and infernal beyond anything ever known, he calmly replied: "It appears so to you, no doubt, but we Armenians are determined to be free. Europe listened to the Bulgarian horrors and made Bulgaria flee. She will listen to our cry when it goes up in the shrieks and blood of millions of women and children." I urged in vain that this scheme will make the very name of Armenian hateful among all civilized people. He replied. "We are desperate; we shall do it." "But your people do not want Russian protection. They prefer Turkey, bad as she is. There are hundreds of miles of conterminous territory into which emigration is easy at all times. It has been so for all the centuries of the Moslem rule. If your people preferred the Russian Government there would not be now an Armenian family in Turkey." "Yes," he replied, "and for such stupidity they will have to suffer." I have had conversations with others who avow the same things, but no one acknowledges that he is a member of the party. Falsehood is, of course, justifiable where murder and arson are.

In Turkey the party aims to excite the Turks against Protestant missionaries and against Protestant Armenians. All the troubles at Marsovan originated in their

movements. **They are cunning, unprincipled and cruel. They terrorize their own people by demanding contributions of money under threats of assassination---a threat which has often been put hi execution.**

I have made the mildest possible disclosure of only a few of the abominations of tin's Huntchagist revolutionary party. It is of Russian origin, Russian gold and craft govern it. Let all missionaries, home and foreign, denounce it. Let all Protestant Armenians everywhere boldly denounce it. It is trying to enter every Sunday school and deceive and pervert the innocent and ignorant into supporters of this craft. We must therefore be careful that in befriending Armenians we do nothing that can be construed into an approval of this movement, which all should abhor. While yet we recognize the probability that some Armenians in this country, ignorant of the real object and cruel designs of the Huntchagists. are led by their patriotism to join with them, and while we sympathize with the sufferings of the Armenians at home, we must stand aloof from any such desperate attempts, which contemplate the destruction of Protestant missions, churches, schools and Bible work, involving all in a common ruin that is diligently and craftily sought. Let all home and foreign missionaries beware of any alliance with, or countenance of, the Huntchagists.”

Cyrus Hamlin, *A Dangerous Movement Among the Armenians*, The Congregationalist, December 28,1897.

The German Embassy's census data, dated January 29, 1914, limiting the total number of the Armenians in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire to less than 1/2 million.

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ARCHIVES.

TURKEY

CONFIDENTIAL.

[January 29.]

SECTION 5,

[4947]

No. 1.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

(No. 27.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 29, 1914.

THE German Ambassador to-day left the enclosed paper with me, and said that the German Government supported the Turkish view on this point, as they thought it reasonable.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Memorandum.

LE Gouvernement Impérial ottoman est tombé d'accord avec les Ambassadeurs d'Allemagne et de Russie sur tous les points pour la nomination et les attributions des deux inspecteurs étrangers dans les deux secteurs de l'Anatolie orientale, sauf le point suivant: M. de Giers demande que, jusqu'à ce qu'un nouveau recensement soit fait (ce qui, je crains, peut tarder indéfiniment par suite de l'opposition des populations non musulmanes), les conseils généraux des vilayets soient formés par un nombre égal de membres musulmans et non musulmans, sans tenir compte de la proportion existant entre ces deux éléments.

Le Grand Vizir a répondu comme suit: Le Gouvernement a adopté le principe de la représentation proportionnelle entre les musulmans et les non-musulmans pour les élections des membres des conseils généraux des vilayets, en vue de sauvegarder les intérêts des non-musulmans, qu'il ne peut, en aucun cas, admettre la représentation égale des populations musulmanes et non musulmanes, étant donné que ce mode arbitraire constituerait un empiétement flagrant sur le droit de la majorité, qui est musulmane, et créerait une animosité entre ces deux éléments et entraverait conséquemment l'exécution de toute réforme. Les populations non musulmanes étant dispersées dans tout le territoire ottoman, le nombre de celles qui se trouvent dans les vilayets orientaux n'atteint même pas le quart de la population totale. Toutefois, pour donner une preuve de notre esprit de bonne entente nous acceptons jusqu'au prochain recensement la représentation égale des musulmans et des non musulmans dans les vilayets de Van et de Bitlis, où le nombre des non-musulmans n'atteint pas pourtant le tiers de la population totale. Pour procéder à l'élection des membres non musulmans, nous admettrons comme base, dans les mêmes conditions que pour les élections législatives les registres dressés par les communautés elles-mêmes.

STATISTIQUE.

	Population totale.	Musulmans.		Arméniens.	
		Hommes.	Femmes.	Hommes.	Femmes.
Vilayet de Trébizonde	1,063,918	436,943	437,047	16,282	15,170
Sivas	1,216,368	502,919	489,913	74,390	69,400
Baïdjak de Djanik	382,277	180,642	127,742	13,686	12,314
Vilayet de Van	251,422	96,516	77,190	37,758	28,165
Mamuret-ul-Aziz (Kharput) ..	314,025	217,987	207,388	38,638	34,383
Bitlis	419,806	159,528	135,846	65,232	45,230
Erzeroum	771,995	336,670	295,251	65,885	57,618
Vilayet de Diarbékir	390,785	160,042	147,897	26,895	25,519

Ambassade d'Allemagne, Londres,
le 29 janvier, 1914.

The letter of the Armenian National Defense Committee of America addressed to British Foreign Minister E. Grey. The letter, dated April 09, 1915, exposes the Armenian revolt and collaboration with the Entente Powers against the Ottoman Empire.

ARMENIAN NATIONAL DEFENCE
COMMITTEE OF AMERICA

3917 P. O. Box
Boston Mass.

41444
9 APR 1915

Boston, Mar. 28, 1915

His Excellency,
Sir Edward Grey,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
London, England.

Your Excellency:-

The War created by the ambitions of German Militarism and the entry of Turkey into the European conflict, affords a long sought for opportunity for the liberations of the Christians of Asia and especially of the Armenian Race.

Turkey's participation in the War as the ally of Germany may be justly considered as a suicidal act, and let us add, an act of extreme ingratitude towards England and France who have in the course of the last century, shed their most precious blood for the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey and Germany are by the very nature of their military and state organizations, natural Allies, and are, moreover, the inveterate enemies of the Emancipation of the unredeemed and downtrodden nations. The whole civilized world is on the side of the Powers of the Triple Alliance, and are struggling heroically hand in hand at this juncture for the enfranchisement of nations.

The Armenians have from the beginning of these hostilities expressed their sympathies towards the Allies and have given ample proofs of this. No sooner was the European War declared, than they sent volunteers to the battlefields of France, and thousands of them are now in the ranks of the Russian Army as volunteers of the Great Sacred Cause for which the Allies are the standard bearers against Turkish tyranny.

The Armenian National Defence Committee, which has been organized throughout the States in America, while using all its efforts for the purpose of sending volunteers to the Caucasus and extending relief to the Armenian Refugees who have sought shelter under the Russian flag in Armenia, is, moreover, making due preparations for the purpose of sending volunteers to Cilicia, where a large section of the Armenian population will unfurl the banner of insurrection against Turkish rule, a circumstance which would greatly help to disperse and to prevent the onward march of the Turks against Egypt.

This insurrectionary movement of the Armenians will be able to bear fruit, inasmuch as it will extend from the seashore, viz:- From that part of the country known as Souedien and Tchekmarzovan through Giasourgh to Marash and Fundekak, and thence to Zeitoun, Furnuz, Eadjin and Sis

ARMENIAN NATIONAL DEFENCE
COMMITTEE OF AMERICA

3917 P. O. Box
Boston Mass.

Boston, _____ 1915

-2-

in thus establishing a war zone extending from the Taurus to the sea.

In order that this insurrectionary movement, which from the point of view of the Armenians, will greatly help the cause of the Allies, should be crowned with full success, it is necessary,

1. That the English and the French men of war should attack Sevdian, Alexandretta, Aynas and Mesina and at the same time land marines and troops for the military occupation of those cities as also that of Adana.
2. It is indispensable that the historic pass known as Guleg should be fortified by adequate artillery and that the railroad bridges connecting that part of the country with Constantinople, should be at once destroyed.
3. Although the Armenian National Defence Committee will do all that it is possible to equip and arm the volunteers to be sent to the war, it is urgently prayed that the English and French government be pleased to supply them with ammunition and artillery.
4. Should the movement outlined above be approved and authorized by the Allied governments as a tribute of the Armenians toward the struggle by the Allied Powers in the name of Justice and for the cause of the Emancipation of nations, the Armenian National Defence Committee humbly begs to express the wish that you may notify it as soon as possible so that the volunteers from America should at once start for Cyprus where they may camp and get drilled under your auspices and accompany your soldiers and allies to the seat of their future operations.

We are, your Excellency's most humble and obedient servants.

Mirza Sevanke Chairman.
M. D. Manukian Treasurer.
Y. Sivart Secretary.

REPRODUCTION OF THE STATEMENT BY AMERICAN SCHOLARS AND HISTORIANS ADDRESSED TO THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(Published in New York Times on May 19, 1985)

Attention Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

The undersigned American academicians who specialize in Turkish, Ottoman and Middle Eastern studies are concerned that the current language embodied in House Joint Resolution 192 is misleading and/or inaccurate in several respects.

Specifically, while fully supporting the concept of a "National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man," we respectfully take exception to that portion of the text which singles out for special recognition:

"... the one and one half million people of Armenian ancestry who were victims of genocide perpetrated in Turkey between 1915 and 1923..."

Our reservations focus on the use of the words "Turkey" and "genocide" and may be summarized as follows:

- From the fourteenth century until 1922, the area currently known as Turkey, or more correctly, the Republic of Turkey, was part of the territory encompassing the multi-national, multi-religious state known as the Ottoman Empire. It is wrong to equate the Ottoman Empire with the Republic of Turkey in the same way that it is wrong to equate the Hapsburg Empire with the Republic of Austria. The Ottoman Empire, which was brought to an end in 1922, by the successful conclusion of the Turkish Revolution which established the present day Republic of Turkey in 1923, incorporated lands and peoples which today account for more than twenty-five distinct countries in Southeastern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, only one of which is the Republic of Turkey. The Republic of Turkey bears no responsibility for any events which occurred in Ottoman times, yet by naming "Turkey" in the Resolution, its authors have implicitly labeled it as guilty of the "genocide" it charges transpired between 1915 and 1923;

- As for the charge of "genocide": No signatory of this statement wishes to minimize the scope of Armenian suffering. We are likewise cognizant that it cannot be viewed as separate from the suffering experienced by the Muslim inhabitants of the region. The weight of evidence so far uncovered points in the direction of serious inter-communal warfare (perpetrated by Muslim and Christian irregular forces), complicated by disease, famine, suffering and massacres in Anatolia and adjoining areas during the First World War. Indeed, throughout the years in question, the region was the scene of more or less continuous warfare, not unlike the tragedy which has gone on in Lebanon for the past decade. The resulting death toll among both Muslim and Christian communities of the region was immense. But much more remains to be

discovered before historians will be able to sort out precisely responsibility between warring and innocent, and to identify the causes for the events which resulted in the death or removal of large numbers of the eastern Anatolian population, Christian and Muslim alike.

Statesmen and politicians make history, and scholars write it. For this process to work scholars must be given access to the written records of the statesmen and politicians of the past. To date, the relevant archives in the Soviet Union, Syria, Bulgaria and Turkey all remain, for the most part, closed to dispassionate historians. Until they become available the history of the Ottoman Empire in the period encompassed by H.J. Res. 192 (1915-1923) cannot be adequately known.

We believe that the proper position for the United States Congress to take on this and related issues, is to encourage full and open access to all historical archives, and not to make charges on historical events before they are fully understood. Such charges as those contained in H.J. Res. 192 would inevitably reflect unjustly upon the people of Turkey, and perhaps set back irreparably progress historians are just now beginning to achieve in understanding these tragic events.

As the above comments illustrate, the history of the Ottoman-Armenians is much debated among scholars, many of whom do not agree with the historical assumptions embodied in the wording of H.J. Res. 192. By passing the resolution Congress will be attempting to determine by legislation which side of a historical question is correct. Such a resolution, based on historically questionable assumptions, can only damage the cause of honest historical enquiry, and damage the credibility of the American legislative process.

Signatories of the Statement of H.J. Res. 192 addressed to the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives:

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Suzanne Berman Associate Professor of Turkish Language & Literature Dept. of Near Eastern Studies University of Wisconsin at Madison	Thomas Childs Professorial Lecturer SAS, Johns Hopkins University	Alan Fisher Professor of History Michigan State University	Basil Hachis University Professor of Ottoman History & Member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences	Clayton K. Kopp Professor of History University of Kentucky	Robert Chase Associate Professor of History University of Kentucky	John Nason Smith, Jr. Professor of History University of California at Berkeley	Margaret L. Vreeland Assistant Professor of History Dickinson College (Pennsylvania)
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INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATIONS
ARE NOTED FOR IDENTIFICATION
PURPOSES ONLY

**THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT BY AMERICAN SCHOLARS AND
HISTORIANS ADDRESSED TO THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(Published in New York Times on May 19,1985)**

“ATTENTION

MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**SIGNATORIES TO THE STATEMENT ON H.J. RES. 192
ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF
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