



Հարգելի՛ ընթերցող.

ԵՊՀ հայագիտական հետազոտությունների ինստիտուտը, չհետապնդելով որևէ եկամուտ, իր կայքերում ներկայացնելով հայագիտական հրատարակություններ, նպատակ ունի հանրությանն ավելի հասանելի դարձնել այդ ուսումնասիրությունները:

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VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE  
AND  
THE PEOPLE'S HISTORICAL MEMORY



*Dedicated  
to the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the Armenian Genocide*



ACADEMIE NATIONALE DES SCIENCES DE LA REPUBLIQUE D'ARMENIE  
MUSEE-INSTITUT DU GENOCIDE ARMENIEN  
ET INSTITUT D'ARCHEOLOGIE ET D'ETHNOGRAPHIE

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**  
**LE GENOCIDE ARMENIEN ET LA MEMOIRE**  
**HISTORIQUE DU PEUPLE**

Editions «Guitoutium» ANS RA  
EREVAN – 2005  
\* \* \*

NATIONALE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN DER REPUBLIK ARMENIEN  
MUSEUM-INSTITUT FÜR DEN VÖLKERMORD AN DEN ARMENIERN  
UND INSTITUTS FÜR ARCHÄOLOGIE UND ETHNOGRAPHIE

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**  
**DER GENOZID AN DEN ARMENIERN UND DIE HISTORISCHE**  
**ERINNERUNG DES VOLKES**

Verlag „Gitutjun“ NAW RA  
JEREWAN – 2005  
\* \* \*

ERMENİSTAN CUMHURİYETİ ULUSAL BİLİMLER AKADEMİSİ  
ERMENİ SOYKIRIMI MÜZE-ENSTİTÜSÜ VE ARKEOLOJİ VE ETNOGRAFYA ENSTİTÜSÜ

**VERJİNE SVAZLIAN**  
**ERMENİ SOYKIRIMI VE HALKIN TARİHSEL HAFIZASI**

EC UBA “Gitutyun” Basımevi  
ERİVAN – 2005  
\* \* \*

НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК РЕСПУБЛИКИ АРМЕНИЯ  
МУЗЕЙ-ИНСТИТУТ ГЕНОЦИДА АРМЯН  
И ИНСТИТУТ АРХЕОЛОГИИ И ЭТНОГРАФИИ

**ВЕРЖИНЕ СВАЗЛЯН**  
**ГЕНОЦИД АРМЯН И ИСТОРИЧЕСКАЯ ПАМЯТЬ**  
**НАРОДА**

Издательство “Гитутюн” НАН РА  
ЕРЕВАН – 2005  
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ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԱՎԱԴԵՍԻԱ  
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**ՎԵՐԺԻՆԵ ՍՎԱԶԼՅԱՆ**  
**ՀԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ**  
**ԵՎ ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԻ ՊԱՏՄԱԿԱՆ ՀԻՇՈՂՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ**

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատարակչություն  
ԵՐԵՎԱՆ – 2005  
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**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE**  
**REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**MUSEUM–INSTITUTE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**  
**AND**  
**INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY**

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**

**THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**  
**AND**  
**THE PEOPLE’S HISTORICAL MEMORY**

“Gitutium” Publishing House of the NAS RA  
YEREVAN – 2005

Printed by decision of the Scientific Councils  
of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide  
and  
of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography  
of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

Translated from the Armenian by **Tigran Tsulikian**  
English editor **Aris G Sevag (USA)**  
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### **SVAZLIAN VERJINÉ**

**THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AND THE PEOPLE'S HISTORICAL MEMORY** / Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide and Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. - Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2005, 140 pages.

*This study presents an overall outline of the history and events of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1922), which have been detailed and substantiated with authentic testimonies communicated by eyewitness survivors and written down, audio- and video-recorded by the author over an almost 50-year span in Armenia and in the Diaspora (Greece, France, USA, Turkey).*

*This study also contains a map of the deportation and the Genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, photographs of the eyewitness survivors, and summaries in English, French, German, Turkish, Russian and Armenian.*

*This volume is intended for politicians, diplomats, lawyers, historians, linguists, ethnographers and general readers.*

**ISBN 5-8080-0600-7**

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### **FROM THE EDITOR**

*The present study comprises the oral testimonies and songs directly recorded from the generation that survived the Armenian Genocide; they have been recorded with great patience and devotion over the course of nearly 50 years by Verjiné Svazlian, Doctor of Philological Sciences.*

*This work is of great historical and even political value and significance. It includes numerous memoirs depicting the harrowing scenes of the Armenian Genocide and the popular Armenian- and Turkish-language songs expressing the sufferings of the victims in the desert of Deir-el-Zor in Mesopotamia. These tragic reminiscences are most impressive.*

*An enormously laborious and gratifying work has been undertaken to save and perpetuate the unique memoirs and songs depicting the tragic and heroic history of the Western segment of the Armenian nation, of those who survived the Armenian Genocide (who are no longer alive) from the danger of fading memory and eternal oblivion.*

*These materials are actually the most important historical documents for reproducing, in a live popular language, the shocking scenes of the greatest tragedy of the Armenians.*

*In this study, the author has skillfully conjoined her rich and diverse materials with actual historical evidence, and these materials have become popular, original documents certifying, substantiating and detailing the historical truths. It should be noted that the author is the first to put into scientific circulation the aforementioned materials woven about the Armenian Genocide, particularly the popular memoirs and the Turkish-language songs.*

*The work is enhanced with the photographs of the survivors and, most importantly, the Turkish-language songs are accompanied by their English translations, which greatly facilitate their comprehension.*

*The above-cited memoirs of the eyewitnesses and, especially, the Turkish-language songs are equivalent in value to historical documents, for they not only allow the reader to correctly understand and grasp the tragic history of the Armenian nation of that period, but they also support, to a great extent, the defense of the Armenian Case and, in particular, they refute the distorted and revisionist accounts of that history, as written by Turkish and pro-Turkish historians.*

**SARKIS HARUTYUNIAN**

*Associate-member of the  
National Academy of Sciences of the  
Republic of Armenia*



Doctor of Philological Sciences, ethnographer Verjiné Svazlian writing down the tragic memoirs and songs narrated by the Genocide survivor, Mariam Baghdishian (born in 1909, Moussa Dagh)

Writing down (also tape-recording and video-recording) word by word, fragment by fragment, over an almost 50-year period, I have compiled and completed the oral histories that constitute the core of this study, having as original sources the popular memoirs and songs of historical character.

I express my deep gratitude to those who miraculously survived the Armenian Genocide and who, while heroically facing cruel circumstances in life, retained in the abysses of their memory and communicated to me what they had seen and remembered. Thus, they have saved from a total loss the collective historical memory of the Armenian nation with a view to presenting it to the righteous judgment of the world and mankind.

V. S.

## THE TYPOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF THE TESTIMONIES OF EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS

The Armenian Genocide, as an international political crime against humanity, has become, by the brutal constraint of history, an inseparable part of the national identity, the thought and the spiritual-conscious inner world of the Armenian people.

As the years go by, interest toward the Armenian Genocide grows steadily due to the fact of the recent recognition of this historical evidence by numerous countries. However, the official Turkish and the pro-Turkish historiographers try, up to the present day and in every possible way, to distort the true historical facts pertaining to the years 1915-1922, a fatal period for the Armenian nation.

Numerous studies, collections of documents, statements of politicians and public officials, artistic creations of various genres about the Armenian Genocide have been published in various languages, but all these colossal publications did not include the voice of the people: the memoirs and popular songs narrated and transmitted by eyewitness survivors who had created them under the immediate impression of the said historical events. These memoirs and songs also have an important historico-cognitive, factual-documental and primary source value. Inasmuch as the Armenian nation itself has endured all those unspeakable sufferings, consequently, the nation itself is the object of that massive political crime. And, as in the elucidation of every crime, the testimonies of the witnesses are decisive, similarly, in this case, the testimonies of the eyewitness survivors are of prime importance; every one of them has, from the juridical point of view, its evidential significance in the equitable solution of the Armenian Case and in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

I started this work as early as 1955, when it was not possible to speak explicitly about the Armenian Genocide in Soviet Armenia, when the

exiled repatriates, the eyewitness survivors miraculously rescued from the massacres were living in fear of being unjustly accused and deported anew. At that time, I was a student at the Yerevan Khachatour' Abovian Pedagogical University. Despising the difficulties of all kinds and conscious of the historico-scientific and the factual-documental value of the materials associated with popular oral tradition, I followed the call of my Western-Armenian blood in the beginning and acted on my own initiative. Later, starting from 1960, I continued my work under the patronage of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia (being engaged, at the same time, in other scientific research works). Under the scorching summer sun and in the icy winter cold, I went on foot, from district to district, from village to village, searching and finding eyewitness survivors miraculously rescued from the Armenian Genocide. I approached them tactfully, without diverting their attention with irrelevant questions, and let them freely express their immediate impressions. I wrote down (and also tape-recorded) the bewildering memoirs, the impressive stories and the diverse historical songs which they narrated and sung. None of these materials had been recorded and published previously, either in the Motherland or in the Diaspora. [Svazlian 1984, 1994, 1995]

Subsequently, by making use of the possibilities provided by the directorate of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia founded at Dsidernakaberd (Yerevan), in 1995, I have continued the work started [Svazlian 1997a, 1997b, 1999], not only by writing down and tape-recording, but also by video-recording (operator: Galust Haladjian) the memoirs narrated by the eyewitness survivors. These, coupled with other memoirs and songs written down and video-recorded by me in the past and ensuing years, have been deciphered and included in the voluminous edition *"Hayots Tseghaspanutiun. Akanates veraprogneri vkayutiunner"* (*"The Armenian Genocide. Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors"*) (in Armenian). [Svazlian 2000]

\* The Library of Congress system of transliteration has been used for the phonetic transcription of the Eastern Armenian proper names (V. S.):

ω>a	ḡ>e	ḡ>i	ḡ>kh	ḡ>dz	ḡ>h,y,-	ḡ>ch	u>s	g>ts	o>o
ḡ>b	q>z	ḡ>zh	ḡ>ds	ḡ>gh	ḡ>n	u>p	ḡ>v	ḡ>v	ḡ>f
q>g	ḡ>e	ḡ>i	ḡ>k	ḡ>j	ḡ>sh	ḡ>dj	un>t	ḡ>p	
ḡ>d	ḡ>c	ḡ>l	h>h	ḡ>m	n>vo,o	n>r	ḡ>r	ḡ>k	

The original references of the present study, that is, the fragments of the memoirs narrated by the eyewitness-survivors and the historical songs communicated by the latter, are quoted from the above-mentioned collection (600 units) with the corresponding numeration, as well as from the unpublished materials (60 units) added subsequently.

The original texts, the audio- and the video-tapes of all the popular materials assembled in this volume are kept at the archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of NAS RA.

The great majority of the eyewitnesses who have transmitted these popular materials are representatives of the senior generation; they are Armenians, who were forcibly exiled from their historical native cradle, deported during the Armenian Genocide, in the years 1915-1922, from Western Armenia, from Cilicia (1921) and the Armenian-inhabited provinces of Anatolia (1922, the Izmir calamity).

In the course of these historical events, the vast majority of the Western Armenians (more than 1.5 million) were ruthlessly exterminated, while those who, having been plundered, left destitute and exhausted, were miraculously rescued, reached Eastern Armenia or scattered to different countries of the world, after going through the harrowing experience of deportation and witnessing the victimization of their kinsfolk and compatriots. Subsequently, a fraction of those survivors was repatriated periodically to the Motherland Armenia from Turkey, Greece, France, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, the Balkan countries, and USA. Those repatriates settled in the newly built districts on the outskirts of Yerevan, which symbolize the memory of the former native cradles in Western Armenia (Aygestan, Sari Tagh, Nor (New) Butania, Nor Aresh, Nor Kilikia, Nor Arabkir, Nor Zeytoun, Nor Sebastia, Nor Malatia, Nor Marash, as well as in Nor Kharbert, Nor Kessaria, Nor Hadjn, Nor Ayntap, Nor Moussa Ler (Dagh), Nor Yedessia (Urfa), Etchmiadzin, Hoktemberian (now: Armavir), Ararat, Talin, Hrazdan, Leninakan (now: Gyumri), Kirovakan (now: Vanadzor) and elsewhere).

Upon meeting the eyewitness survivors miraculously saved from the Armenian Genocide, I always found them silent, reticent and deep in thought. There was valid reason for this mysterious silence, since the political obstacles prevailing in Soviet Armenia for many decades did not allow them to tell about or to narrate their past in a free and unconstrained manner. Consequently, I have discovered them and recorded the said materials with great difficulty.

During almost fifty years, owing to my consistent quests in the various regions of Armenia, as well as during my short-term personal or scientific trips to Greece, France, the USA and Turkey, I have constantly searched and discovered representatives of the senior, middle and junior generations of survivor-witnesses of the Armenian Genocide. I have gotten closely acquainted with them and have tried to penetrate the abysses of their souls.

Yielding to my solicitous exhortations, they began to narrate, with bursting agitation and tearful sobs, reliving anew their sorrowful past, the heart-breaking experiences they had retained in their memories, about how the policemen of the Young Turks had forcibly expelled them from their Motherland, from their well-organized and flourishing homes, and had inhumanly dismembered their parents and kinsfolk, had dishonored their mothers and sisters, and had crushed the new-born infants with rocks right in front of their eyes...

The popular memoirs narrated by the eyewitness survivors cover a wide range of topics: they reflect the beauty of the native land, their daily patriarchal life and customs, the era in which they lived, the conditions of the communal-political life, the important historical events, the cruelties (the extortion of taxes, the mobilization, the arm-collections, the burning of people alive, the exile, the murder and the slaughter) committed in their regard by the leaders of the government of Young Turks (Talaat, Enver, Djemal, Nazim, Behaeddin Shakir), the forcible deportation organized by the latter to the uninhabited deserts of Mesopotamia (Deyr-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, Rakka, Homs, Hama, Meskene, Sourouj...), the inexpressible afflictions of the Armenians (walking till exhaustion, thirst, hunger, epidemics, dread of death...), as well as the righteous and noble struggle of the various sections of the Western Armenians against violence to protect their elementary right for life (the heroic battle of Van in 1915, the struggle for existence in Shatakh, Shapin-Garahissar and Sassoun, the heroic battles of Moussa Dagh and Urfa, and later, in the years 1920-1921, those of Ayntap and Hadjn), the national heroes distinguished in the heroic self-defensive battles (Andranik Ozanian from Shapin-Garahissar, Armenak Yegarian from Van, the Great Murad [Hambartsum Boyadjian], Yessayi Yaghoobian from Moussa Dagh, Mkrtych Yotneghbayrian from Urfa, Adoor Levonian from Ayntap, Aram Cholakian from Zeytoun, the national avenger Soghomon Tehlerian), and numerous other well-known and

unknown Armenians, who struggled shoulder to shoulder with the popular masses, who were martyred, who often warded off the danger and survived...

Every one of the eyewitness survivors told his/her memoir in his/her own Armenian parlance, often in dialect or in Armenian mixed with foreign languages, also in Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, English, French, or German.

The popular oral materials I have written down, tape-recorded or video-recorded are the eyewitness survivors' recollections of their direct impressions, their meditations, reflections and testimonies with the true and authentic reproduction of the live pictures of the lot befallen the Western Armenians. All the eyewitness survivors, irrespective of their specialty, are, as a result of the cruel life experience they have had, enriched and sagacious individualities, for whom, first and foremost "*a man should be a man, whether he is an Armenian or a Turk*," as **Artavazd Ktradsian** (born in 1901 in Adabazar) has noted in the beginning of his memoir. [Svazlian 2000<sup>1</sup>: Testimony<sup>1</sup> 220, p. 360]

In earlier times, the Armenians and the Turks had lived on friendly terms with each other. **Arakel Tagoyan** from Derjan (born in 1902) has testified to the friendly and peaceful neighborly relations with the Turkish and Kurdish populations, especially during the days of pilgrimage to the Monastery of St. Karapet in Moosh: "*...Besides the pilgrims, Turkish and Kurdish inhabitants also gathered, ate the offering with us, rejoiced with us, sang and danced. They brought sick people on the tomb of St. Karapet to be healed.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 96, p. 203]

It should be noted that, even after experiencing so much affliction and tribulation, the Armenian survivors did not entertain hatred toward the ordinary Turkish people. "*...I should say also that not all the Turks were bad; there were nice people among them, too. That was the work organized by the Young Turks; otherwise, the people were good and we were constantly in good relations with the Turks. There were good people among them, too; that is also a fact,*" related **Nektar Gasparian**, from Ardvin (born in 1910). [Sv. 2000: T. 74, p. 157]

In the present study, the true historical facts have been assembled, detailed and supplemented with the authentic testimonies communicated

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<sup>1</sup> Svazlian 2000 – henceforth: Sv. 2000. Testimony – henceforth: T.



by the eyewitness survivors, representing, thus, the general historical course of the Armenian Genocide.

The memoirs (300 units) transmitted by the eyewitness survivors provide also the possibility of subjecting the genre typological peculiarities of similar materials to a scientific investigation.

The memoirs narrated by the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, as a variant of the popular oral tradition, are either brief and concise in structure or voluminous and protracted, and include also various dialogues, citations, diverse genres of popular folklore (lamentations and heroic songs, tales, parables, proverbs, sayings, benedictions, maledictions, prayers, oaths) to confirm the trustworthiness of their narrative, to render their oral speech more reliable and more impressive. In particular, *the survivors themselves have felt a moral responsibility and a sense of duty with regard to their narratives. Many of them have crossed themselves or have sworn before communicating their memoirs to me.* And an oath is a sacred word and a holy thing, which does not tolerate falsehood. As **Loris Papikian** (born in 1903), from Erzurum, told at the beginning of his memoir: *"...I should tell you first that if I deliberately color the events and the people, let me be cursed and be worthy of general contempt..."* [Sv. 2000: T. 90, p. 191]

By subjecting the said memoirs and historical songs to a scrupulous quantitative and qualitative analysis, I have ascertained that, as there is no man without memory, similarly, *there cannot exist a nation without memory*, inasmuch as memory is the life of a man or a nation, the past and the history of the years he or it has lived, as the Jews, the Greeks, the Gypsies and the other aggrieved nations have. [Porter 1982] And if any nation, in the present case the Turkish nation, has not preserved its historical memory, therefore it has not lived and has not felt all those afflictions. It is appropriate to mention here certain passages of the interview "Counterattack in the Virtual World" of Babur Ozden, the founder of the Turkish servers "Superonline" and "Ixir," where he noted that the Armenians had placed in the Internet Turkish-language memoirs and songs of historical character of the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide (it also concerns my book: V. Svazlian. *The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eyewitness Survivors.* Yerevan, "Gitutium" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 1999, as well as the Site: <http://www.geocities.com/vsvaz333/>) and he added:

"...I found out that the "genocide sites" in virtual reality [are] the monopoly of the Armenians. ...We have to be organized. Turkey is not organized. ...However, it is very difficult to bring out these stories [life-stories of the survivors] in our culture. We have the cultural disadvantage of lacking self-promotion and individualization. ...They [the Armenians] required a myth to keep their culture and past together. This is their only connection to their past. ...We [Turks] don't require such a connection. We want to forget the past and look forward. Our families got mixed up. [In the past] whatever was written was in a different alphabet. We could not get it [life-stories of the survivors] across. I cannot read my grandfather's notes. A person knowledgeable in old Turkish [Ottoman] is reading them. ...There is no gain in putting professors [and] historians on the Internet. Archives don't affect people. ...People are not affected by the life-stories of those like them, whose parents get destroyed [or] dispersed. They are affected as if they are hearing it [the story] firsthand. ...The Armenians even have "genocide songs" sections on the Internet in Turkish and English." ("Milliyet," 28.01.2001, p. 19)

It should be pointed out also that the materials of the above-cited collection of memoirs and songs [Sv. 2000] I have written down, recorded and published on my own initiative are increasing with every passing day, following their publication in Armenia, and that is an interminable process, inasmuch as every Armenian has his family grief and losses. Besides, there are countless testimonies (in different languages, in different dialects, hand-written, audio- and video-recorded) in all the countries where thousands of Western Armenians were dispersed as a result of the Genocide, gathered in various archives and in private ownership. These also have to be deciphered, published and put into scientific circulation as factual-documentary testimonies of the collective historical memory of the Armenian nation about the Armenian Genocide.

*The Armenian Genocide*, which was perpetrated at the beginning of the twentieth century, has been directly perceived by the senses of the eyewitnesses and it *has been indelibly impressed in their memory*. As a survivor from Ardvin, **Nektar Gasparian** (born in 1910), has confessed: *"...More than 80 years have passed, but I cannot forget up to this day my prematurely dead beloved father, mother, uncle, grandmother, our neighbors and all my relatives who were brutally killed, and we were left lonely and helpless. During all my life I have always remembered those*

*appalling scenes, which I have seen with my own eyes and I have had no rest ever since. I have shed tears so often...*" [Sv. 2000: T. 74, p. 157]

**Verginé Gasparian** (born in 1912), from Ayntap, has also narrated: "...*The Turks slaughtered my father Grigor, my mother Doudou, my brother Hakob and my sister Nouritsa before my eyes. I have seen all that with my own eyes and cannot forget until this day...*" (The survivor began to cry and was not able to continue narrating her memoir – V. S.). [Svazlian: Personal archive. Unpublished materials]

The eyewitness survivors of those historical events, dolefully reliving their sad past, have transmitted to us their personal memoirs about their historical native cradle, their native hearth and their beloved kinsfolk, who, alas, have long since died. They have carried those personal memorial pictures during their whole life, unable to free themselves from the oppressive nightmare. And since the *memoirs narrated by the survivors* represent the immediate impressions of the particular historical events that became the lot of the Western Armenians, therefore they *are saturated with deep historicity*.

Objectively reproducing the life, the customs, the political-public relations of the given period, *the memoirs communicated by the survivors are spontaneous, truthful and trustworthy, possessing the value of authentic testimonies*. As **Yeghsa Khayadjanian**, from Harpoot (born in 1900), has bitterly testified: "*Now, out of our 7 families, only I have survived.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 108, p. 218]

**Verginé Nadjarian**, from Malatia (born in 1910), has also confirmed: "...*Our family was very large, we were about 150-200 souls. My mother's brothers, my father's sisters and brothers. They slaughtered them all on the road to Deyr-el-Zor. Only three of us were left: I, my mother and my brother...*" [Sv. 2000: T. 125, pp. 239-240] This fact has also been confirmed by **Hazarkhan Torossian** (born in 1902), from Balou: "...*So many years have passed, but up till now I cannot get to sleep at nights, my past comes in front of my eyes, I count the dead and the living...*" [Sv. 2000: T. 120, p. 232] Thus, even the numerical calculations they have communicated are true. **Hrant Gasparian** (born in 1908), from Moosh, has particularly emphasized that circumstance, asserting at the end of his narrative: "...*I told you what I have seen. What I have seen is in front of my eyes. We have brought nothing from Khnous. We have only saved our souls. Our large family was composed of 143 souls. Only one sister, one brother, my*

*mother and I were saved.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 12, p. 71].

*These factual evidences, calculated one by one, analyzed point by point during the whole of the eyewitness survivors' subsequent lives and assembled with the historical events, are beyond any doubt.* They, nearly always, speak in their memoirs of the senior members of their family, their grandfathers, grandmothers, parents, as well as their close relatives and other members of the family, often mentioning their names and dates of birth. Consequently, the data they have transmitted to us are so exact and trustworthy, that even kinsfolk who had lost one another in the turmoil of the Genocide, by reading the memoirs printed in my books, have sometimes, after decades, found each other from various continents of the world and expressed their gratitude to me.

The main person appearing in memoir-telling is the *character of the narrator*. He/she not only tells about the important historical events, incidents and people, but is also interpreting them, displaying the main traits of his/her outlook and of his/her personality, the specific point of view of his/her approach, his/her particular language and style. Consequently, *the memoir narrated by the eyewitness is unambiguous by its uniqueness*; it is the personal biography of the given individual and his/her interpretation of the past, and its main essence remains practically unchanged every time it is retold, since *the eyewitness has communicated it as a mysterious confession*. And I, with my professional responsibility as a folklorist-ethnographer and remaining loyal to the oral speech of the witnesses, have written down word for word their narratives, realizing that they were entrusting to me their innermost and most sacred secrets *to be transmitted to the future generations*. It is appropriate to mention here the words of a venerable 90-year-old Zeytouni of proud bearing, **Karapet Tozlian** (born in 1903). Although he was not literate, "*he had murmured every evening, before going to sleep, his memoirs and songs like a prayer, so that he would not forget them.*" Consequently he has communicated to me, with a sacred affection, his recollections so that "*they would be written down, they wouldn't be forgotten and would be learned by the coming generations.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 342, note 3, p. 413] Worthy of remembrance, in this respect, are the words spoken by the survivor, the well-known literary critic **Garnik Stepanian** (born in 1909), from Yerznka, at the end of his narrative: "...*That which befell our nation in 1915 was horrible. Of our large family, which consisted of more than a hundred people, only fif-*

*teen remained alive. My mother's kinsfolk were all killed or thrown alive into a large pit and covered with earth, which was moving over them. Among the victims of the Genocide were also all the Stepanians, the families of my father's four sisters. It was a full-scale holocaust. I always muse over those events and think about whether we can ever forget them, but we have no right to forget them, since we are small in number. I do not call for revenge, but I cannot advise my people to forget. The Armenian nation cannot forget that which it saw with its eyes. And, as Avetis Aharonian<sup>2</sup> has said: 'If our sons forget so much evil, let the whole world blame the Armenian nation'.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 95, p. 202]

At the same time, *the memoirs told by the survivors are also similar, inasmuch as the memoirs narrated in different places, by different sex-age groups (men, women, senior, middle, junior generations) depict, independently from one another and almost identically, the historical events of the same period, the analogous historical happenings and characters, the same horrifying scenes and cruelties, which, when put together, confirm each other, continue and complete one another, tending to move from the personal and the material toward the general and the pan-national.* One of the survivors, **Tigran Ohanian** (born in 1902), from Kamakh, had this circumstance in mind when he concluded his memoir with the following words: "...*My past is not only my past, but it is my nation's past as well.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 97, p. 207] *Consequently, the memoirs of the eyewitnesses, with their contents, describe not only the given individual and his environment, but also the whole community, becoming thus the collective historical memory of the Armenian people.*

Nevertheless, *the historical memory of the nation also has the capacity to perpetuate.* Although about 90 years have elapsed after these historical events and many of the miraculously saved eyewitness survivors are no longer in the land of the living, yet the narratives of the representatives of the senior generation have been so much heard, so many times repeated in their families that they have also become the heritage of the coming generations and, being transmitted from mouth to mouth, have continued to perpetuate also in the memory of the next generations as **historical tales** (60 units). These historical tales have been mainly written down from the subsequent generations as testimonies of the fact that *the*

<sup>2</sup> Avetis Aharonian (1866, Igdirmava - 1948, Paris) – a public and political man, writer, member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) party.

*historical memory of the nation never dies, but it continues to persist also in the memory of the coming generations.*

I have succeeded also in writing down **the songs and the ballads of historical character** (300 units) communicated by the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide, which also form an inseparable part of the people's historical memory. The words of these songs are simple and unornamented; they artistically reproduce the various aspects of the public life of that period in Turkey, namely, the mobilization, the arm-collection, the deportation and the massacres of the Armenians organized by the government of Young Turks, as well as other factual, affecting and impressive episodes.

The authors of those historical songs were mainly the Armenian women. The psychological traumatic effect of the national calamity was perceived by every woman or girl in her own manner. Those horrifying impressions were so strong and profound that these songs have often taken a poetic shape as the lament woven by the survivor from Sassoun, **Shogher Tonoyan** (born in 1901), which she communicated us with tearful eyes and moans:

*Morning and night I hear cries and laments,  
I have no rest, no peace and no sleep,  
I close my eyes and always see dead bodies,  
I lost my kin, friends, land and home.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 343, p. 414]

Women who were emotional and sensitive by nature have borne on their scraggy shoulders the whole weight of the sufferings of the deportation, the exile and the massacres. Consequently, they have vividly described in detail what they have seen with their eyes and felt in the abysses of their souls. Since the Armenian mothers have seen off, with tearful eyes, their husbands and sons to serve in Turkish army; these soldiers, however, were not given arms, but were sent to toil in the '*Amelé tabours*' (Labor battalions) and they either died of exhaustion there or were killed and thrown in the pits they had dug themselves ("Songs of mobilization, arm-collection and of the imprisoned"). Subsequently, the Turks have compelled the Armenian women to leave their homes, orchards and belongings and to take the road of exile with their children and with their elderly and feeble parents. They have marched under the

scorching sun, hungry and thirsty, on their feet bleeding from weariness and under the whip strokes of the Turkish gendarmes to the Syrian deserts of Deir-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn, Rakka, Meskené and Surudj. Both in the memoirs and the songs communicated by the eyewitness-survivors, they have described the roads they have passed, the pillage and plunder of the Turkish gendarmes, the Kurd brigands, the Chechen and Circassian slaughterers, the kidnapping and murder of the Armenian girls, their impalement, their crucifixion and torture to death, the cutting of live women's bellies in search of gold and of pregnant women to extract the unborn baby and the like. That is why the innocent and desperate Armenian girls have thrown themselves, hand in hand, into the Euphrates River in order not to fall into the hands of the Turks, in order not to become the Turks' wives and not to bear Turkish children ("Songs of deportation and massacre"). A special section has been assigned to the sad songs about the sufferings of the mothers of kidnapped children, of the fatherless and motherless orphans and about the orphanages ("Songs of child-deprived mothers, orphans and orphanages"). Songs reflecting the Armenians' righteous protest and indignation, those created in protection of their elementary human rights of living and of not tolerating violences, as well as bold songs of struggles and battles composed by men are also presented ("Patriotic and heroic battle songs"). And finally, songs of regret for the lost native land and of hopes of regaining it are likewise included ("Nostalgic songs").

*With their originality and ideological contents, these songs are not only novelties in the field of Armenian folklore, but they also provide the possibility for comprehending, in a new fashion, the given historical period with its specific aspects.* Consequently, having been created under the immediate impressions of the peculiar historical events that befell the Western Armenian segment of the Armenian nation, *the popular and epic songs of this order are saturated with historicity and have the value of authentic documents.*

These historical songs, created by endowed unknown individuals, have been widely spread in their time, have been transmitted to a large extent and, since the people's anguish was of a massive character, consequently the popular songs, too, had a massive diffusion. They have passed from mouth to mouth, giving rise to new, different variants, so that similar songs have been created simultaneously in different variants and versions,

*a fact, which testifies to the popular character of these historical songs.*

During my numerous interviews and recordings, the same popular song or its similar variant has been communicated to me by so many informants that it was impossible to mention the names and surnames of all of them. Hence, I have only put in order the variants in the table of Commentaries of my book, mentioning the name, surname, and date of birth of the eyewitness survivor, who communicated the given song (or memoir), the time, place, language and character (handwritten, audio- and video-) of the recorded material, as well as its number in the archival fund (according to Dr. Prof. Isidor Levin's Method of Documentation of popular oral materials).

I should also point out, that the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide (men or women) have recalled with a bursting emotional experience and tearful sobs the popular songs concerning the abuses and the outrages (mobilization, deportation, exile, murder and slaughter) perpetrated by the Turkish government, as well as about child-deprived mothers, orphans, orphanages and about the lost Motherland, inasmuch as these events were directly connected with their historical memory. This circumstance construes the emotional-psychological peculiarity of this class of popular historical songs.

The diverse variants of those popular songs, in addition to their historical veracity, are distinguished by their concise figurativeness and by the subtle tunefulness characteristic of the medieval Armenian lament songs. Every line and phrase of those songs is an entire picture, a horrifying scene of the massive tragedy, and the plaintive refrains carry to completion the emotive-psychological aspect of the poetic, vivid mind. Some of the popular historical and epic songs (22 units) are presented also with their musical notation. [Sv. 2000]

*The songs of historical character have been created not only in Armenian, but in the Turkish language as well,* since under the given historico-political circumstances the use of the Armenian language in certain provinces of Ottoman Turkey had been prohibited.

Not excluding the mutual influences of the spiritual cultures of both nations in the course of a prolonged coexistence, it should be noted that, according to testimonies, "those who pronounced an Armenian word had their tongues cut; consequently, Armenians living in a number of towns of Cilicia (Sis, Adana, Tarsus, Ayntap) and their environs had lost their moth-

er tongue,” [Galoustian 1934: p. 698] or “the oppression and the persecution by the Turks were so severe that the Armenian-speaking Ayntap became Turkish-speaking, like the other principal towns of Asia Minor. And the last sharp blow to the Armenian speech came from the Yenicheris who mutilated the tongues of those speaking Armenian.” [Sarafian 1953: p. 5]

The ethnographer-folklorist Sarkis Haykouni, living at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, has described the political, economic and spiritual state of the Western Armenians of his period and has written: “The Armenian language was forbidden by Turk mullahs and the use of seven Armenian words was considered a blasphemy, for which a fine of five sheep was established.” [Haykouni 1895: p. 297]

There are numerous testimonies in the memoirs I have recorded, stating that the Armenians living in Keutahia, Bursa, Adana, Kayseri, Eskishehir and other localities were mainly Turkish-speaking. According to the testimony of **Mikael Keshishian** (born in 1904), from Adana: “*It was already forbidden to speak or to study Armenian and infringers not only had their tongue cut, but hot eggs were placed in their armpits to make them confess that they were teaching Armenian to others, and if they confessed, they were sent to the gallows or killed.*” [Sv. 2000: T. 182, p. 318]

The following fragment of a popular Armenian song I have written down also testifies to that fact; it was communicated to us by the survivor from Konia, **Satenik Gouyoumdjian** (born in 1902):

*They entered the school and caught the school-mistress,*

*Ah, alas!*

*They opened her mouth and cut her tongue,*

*Ah, alas!*

[Sv. 2000: T. 352, p. 415]

since the school-mistress had dared to teach Armenian to the Armenian children. During the deportation and on the roads of exile, these strict measures had been reinforced. Therefore, the Western Armenians were compelled to express their grief and affliction in the Turkish language as well.

Taking into account the public-political aspects of this sad phenomenon representing the initial level of linguistic assimilation, I have not

failed, along with the materials recorded in various dialects, to pay attention also to *the Turkish-language (but explicitly of Armenian origin) popular historical and epic songs*. Though the latter were created by Armenians and not with a perfect knowledge of the Turkish language (Armenian words and expressions, Armenian names of people and localities are often mentioned, grammatical and phonetic errors are noted), they have, with their ideological content, an important historico-cognitive value. The Turkish-language songs have been presented, along with the dialectal originals, in their literal English translations.

While recording and deciphering the memoirs and the songs, *I have endeavored to keep unaltered the original peculiarities of the oral speech of the survivors*, presenting them with the accepted dialectal transliteration. When writing down the dialectal originals, I have taken into consideration the linguistic shades of the Armenians from historical Armenia, as well as of those from Cilicia and Anatolia.

In writing down, tape- and video-recording the popular materials, *I have made special efforts to include eyewitness survivors deported from about 100 localities* (densely populated with Armenians) *of Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia* (Sassoun, Moosh, Bitlis, Shatak, Van, Bassen, Sghert, Moks, Bayazet, Igdir, Alashkert, Kars, Ardivin, Ardahan, Babert, Shapin-Garahissar, Sebastia, Devrik, Kurin, Derendé, Erzroom, Khnous, Yerznka, Derjan, Kamakh, Tokhat, Arabkir, Harpoot, Kghi, Balou, Malatia, Tigranakert, Merdin, Adiyaman, Urfa, Zeytoun, Fendedjak, Hadjn, Marash, Ayntap, Moussa Dagh, Kessab, Beylan, Deurtyol, Adana, Hassan Bey, Tarson, Mersin, Konia, Ordou, Nidé, Kayseri, Talas, Tomarza, Everek, Afion-Garahissar, Eskishehir, Izmir, Yozghat, Sivrihissar, Stanoz, Amassia, Samsun, Adabazar, Nikomedia, Partizak, Bursa, Banderma, Biledjik, Keutahia, Kastemouni, Chanak Kalé, Rodosto, Istanbul and others) with a view to giving a fuller idea of the afflictions endured by all the Western Armenians, of their emotional sphere and their meditations.

## THE COURSE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONIES OF THE EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS

Following the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid's reign and the declaration of the 1908 Constitution, the party of the Young Turks, "Ittihat ve Terakki" (Unity and Progress), which formed the government, adopted Sultan Hamid's massacre (1894-1896) policy and, professing the Pan-Turkish and Pan-Islamic ideologies, endeavored not only to preserve the Ottoman Empire, but also to brutally annihilate or to amalgamate and forcefully Turkify the Armenians and the other subject Christian peoples and to create a universal Pan-Turanic, Pan-Islamic state extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Altai territory.

The eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1922), who, for the most part are no longer alive presently, remembered in every detail, during my recordings, the historico-political circumstances of the first genocide perpetrated in the twentieth century. The representatives of the senior generation even remembered the establishment of the Turkish Constitution in 1908, which had the motto: "Freedom, justice, equity, irrespective of nationality and religion." A nationwide exultation prevailed in the country, since equal rights were to be secured by law to all the nations living in Turkey.

A survivor from Harpoot, **Sarkis Khachatrian** (born in 1903), has told us about this unprecedented event: "*I remember in 1908 when the Sultan's reign was overthrown, people were singing in the streets.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 110, p. 222]

*Kalkın, hey vatandaşlar!  
Sevinelim yoldaşlar!  
İşde size hürriyet:  
Yaşasın Osmanlılar!*

Get up, compatriots!  
Let us rejoice, friends!  
Freedom has come to you:  
Long live the Ottomans!

[Sv. 2000: T. 337, p. 412]

<sup>1</sup> In the various Turkish-language original songs we have recorded, it is possible to observe deviations from the grammatical and phonetic rules of the Turkish language or to encounter Armenian words and morphemes in them. With a view to keep unaltered the information communicated by the survivors, we have remained faithful to their oral speech (V. S.).

While a survivor from Bitlis, **Hmayak Boyadjian** (born in 1902), has testified in his memoir: "*...When Hurriyet (Liberty) was declared in 1908, everybody, in the beginning, was of the opinion that Armenians and Turks would live like brothers. There were even festivities in our village and fusillades were performed.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 17, p. 77]

An eyewitness survivor born in Sassoun as far back as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, **Yeghiazar Karapetian** (born in 1886), remembering the historical happenings of the past, has noted: "*...The Hurriyet (Liberty) offered freedom to all the political prisoners, after which the Armenians, Turks and Kurds would have equal rights. Everywhere cries of joy were heard. The law of Hurriyet put an end to the humiliation, beating, blasphemy, robbery, plunder and contempt of the Armenians. Anyone involved in a similar behavior would be subject to the severest punishment; he would even be liable to be sent to the gallows. The two nations were put in a state of complete reliance. The Armenians would have the right of free voting, were allowed to elect and propose their delegate. This was a new renaissance in the life of the Western Armenians...*" [Sv. 2000: T. 1, p. 42]

Nevertheless, a year had not elapsed since the declaration of the Turkish Constitution, when the town of Adana and the neighboring Armenian-inhabited villages, which had been saved from Abdul Hamid's massacres (1894-1896), became the target of the hatred of the Ittihad officials.

During the Holy Week of 1909, from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, Adana and its environs were on fire. The blood-thirsty crowd attacked the Armenian-inhabited quarters of Adana and the neighboring villages, plundered all the shops, slaughtered the unarmed and unprotected Armenians, not sparing even the women and the children.

The massacre of Adana was premeditated. This fact is testified by the telegram sent by the councillor of Internal Affairs of Turkey, Adil Bey, to all the Turkish officials of the region of Cilicia, where it was written: "Great care should be taken that no damage is caused to the foreign religious institutions and consulates." [Jizmejian 1930: p. 174]

The Turkish government commissioned the Ottoman Armenian deputy of Edirné, Hakob Papikian, to go to Adana, to investigate the situation on the spot and to prepare an official Turkish-language report for the Legislative Assembly. H. Papikian left for Adana, scrupulously investigated the events and noted in his detailed "Report" that "...not only did the

number of victims exceed 30,000 Armenians, but it was an evident fact that the masssres had been organized with the knowledge and by order of the local authorities.”<sup>2</sup> [Papikian 1919: p. 28]

The historian-novelist, Smbat Byurat, has, under the immediate impressions of those sad happenings, created the following poem of great popularity as a truthful reproduction of the event, which has been communicated to me by the above-cited survivor from Zeytoun, **Karapet Tozlian** (born in 1903):

*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 Rubinians!*

*Unarmed Armenians, in a moment  
Fell before the mob under the swords,  
Churches and schools were lost in flames,  
Thousands of Armenians ruthlessly died.*

*The merciless Turks deprived  
The child from his mother, the bride from her groom,  
Smashed everything on their way,  
Swallowed and got repleted with Armenian blood.*

*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...*

[Sv. 2000: T. 342, pp. 413-414]

The following popular Turkish-language song saturated with expressive depth and descriptiveness has been created under the immediate impressions of those historico-political events:

*Hey, çamlar, çamlar, alaçık çamlar!*      Hey, cedars, cedars, variegated cedars!  
*Her güneş vurunca sakız damlar,*      The resin drips whenever the sun strikes,

<sup>2</sup> H. Papikian had just completed his historical “Report,” when the Young Turks managed to poison and kill him, and thus the report was not published. After the author’s death, the rough copy was translated into Armenian and published in 1919 in Constantinople.

*Sakız damlarsa: yüregim aglar:  
Adana ırmagı sel gibi akar,  
İşte geldim sana, kıyma Adana!  
Of, of, işte gördüm sizi, kıyma çocuklar!*

When the resin drips, my heart sheds tears,  
The Adana River flows like a torrent,  
I’ve come to see you, slaughtered Adana!  
Alas! I’ve seen you, massacred children!

*Adana köprüsü tahtadır, tahta,  
Ermeni muhaciri gelir bu hafta,  
Adana ırmagı leş ile kanlar,  
Kaldırın leşleri, Adana kokar,  
İşte geldim sana, kıyma Adana!  
Of, of, işte gördüm sizi, kıyma çocuklar!*

The bridge over Adana is wooden,  
The Armenian refugees will arrive this week,  
The Adana River is full of blood and corpses,  
Take the corpses away, Adana will stink,  
I’ve come to see you, slaughtered Adana!  
Alas! I’ve seen you, massacred children!

[Sv. 2000: T. 340, p. 413]

An eyewitness survivor from Adana, **Mikael Keshishian** (born in 1904), has told us with emotion: “*In 1909, at the time of the massacre of Adana, I was five years old. That horrible night was named in Turkish ‘Camuz dellendi’ (The buffalo went mad). And indeed, the Sultan had gone mad. According to his order, people were slain, about thirty thousand Armenians were killed, their houses were demolished and burnt to ashes. ...They gathered all the remaining people and took them to the bank of the Adana River, they sent a message to Sultan Hamid, saying that they had gathered all the Armenians and had brought them to the riverbank and were waiting for his orders. There was water on one side and fire on the other. My father was clasping me in his arms. I remember, I was looking over his shoulder. My mother was also with us. We were all gathered on the riverbank. Then an order of pardon came from the Sultan. They compelled us to shout ‘Padişahim çok yaşa!’ (Long live the King!). We returned home, but those who were killed were no longer alive.*” [Sv. 2000: T. 182, p. 318]

During the massacres of Adana, dozens of Armenian towns and villages were ravaged and burnt down, while Moussa Dagh, Deurtyol, Hadjn, Sis, Zeytoun, Sheikh Mourad, Fendedjak and a number of other localities stopped the attack of tens of thousands of Turks with their heroic self-defense and were saved from the slaughter.

In actual fact, that was the beginning of the Great Genocide, when the Young Turks feverishly prepared the total extermination of the Armenian nation, waiting for a propitious occasion. That occasion presented itself when the First World War broke out. Turkey entered into the war, having

expansionistic objectives and a monstrous scheme of realizing the annihilation of the Armenians.

That invasive war has also been reflected in the following popular song:

<i>Pencereden kar geliyor,</i>	Snow is penetrating through the window,
<i>Bak dışarı kim geliyor?</i>	Look who is coming from outside?
<i>Ölüm bana zor geliyor,</i>	Death is hard to bear for me:
<i>Uyan, sultan, zalım sultan!</i>	Wake up, sultan, cruel sultan!
<i>Kan ağlıyor bütün cihan!</i>	The whole world is weeping blood!
<i>Aman! Aman! Mayrik!<sup>3</sup></i>	Alas! Alas! Mayrik! <sup>3</sup>

[Sv. 2000: T. 338, p. 412]

The bitter frost of the snow-covered winter is compared with the horror of death (war), while the ruler of the country (*zalım sultan*) is indifferent to the people's fate, even at a time when "the whole world is weeping blood."

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1914, the German-Turkish alliance treaty was signed in Constantinople. Referring to the note sent by the Turkish government, the German ambassador Wangenheim declared: "If the Ottoman government, remaining faithful to its obligations, enters into the war against the Triple Entente, Germany will guarantee Turkey several advantages." One of the six clauses of the concluded agreement stipulated: "Germany will use pressure to adjust the eastern frontiers of the Ottoman Empire so as to secure the immediate contact of Turkey with the Mohammedan population living in Russia." [Lazian 1946: p. 78]

In February 1915, the party of "Unity and Progress" created a special commission entitled "Three-membered Executive Committee" (Behaeddin Shakir, Doctor Nazim, Midhat Shukri) to organize the exile and massacre of the Armenians of Turkey. The Committee elaborated plans concerning the dates and routes of the forcible deportations of the Armenians, the places of extermination, the mode of action of the slaughterers, the release of criminals from the prisons, the formation of gangs of robbers (under the name of "Teşkilatı mahsuse" – special organization) operating under the command of Young Turk chieftains, which should realize the genocide of the Armenians.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1915 a secret order signed by the minister of Internal Affairs of the Turkish government, Talaat pasha, the war minister,

<sup>3</sup> The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

Enver pasha and the general secretary of Ittihad and minister of education, Doctor Nazim, was sent to the authorities concerning the deportation and the extermination of the Armenians. And Talaat pasha warned with violent hatred: "We have to square accounts with the Armenians," and promised to spare nothing for that purpose. [Antonian 1921: p. 232]

During one of the sessions of the executive committee of Ittihad, Behaeddin Shakir had declared that it was necessary to immediately begin and finish the deportation of the Armenians and, in the meantime, massacre the people. "We are at war," he had added, "there is no fear of interference from Europe and the great States, the world press also cannot raise any protest and, even if it does, it will be without much result and, in the future, it will be considered as a fait accompli." [Mesrob 1955: p. 258]

The minister of Internal Affairs of the government of Young Turks, Talaat pasha, had issued a special order: "The right of living and working of the Armenians on Turkish soil is completely removed. In accordance with this, the government orders not to spare even the infants in the cradle..." [Nersissian 1991: pp. 564-565]

The executive committee of Ittihad had foreseen to carry out the deportation and the massacre of the Armenians without the help of the army or the police, entrusting the job to the criminals and murderers released from the prisons, as well as to the Kurds, the Circassians and the Chechens.

In these historico-political circumstances, the general mobilization (*Seferberlik*) had become the greatest evil for the Christian nations living in Turkey, including the Armenians. Under the pretense of recruitment to military service, Armenian males aged 18-45 were drafted to serve in labor battalions (*Amelé tabour*) and according to the special order of the war minister, Enver pasha, were taken to secluded places and were killed out of sight of viewers.

"...In 1914 Turkey declared a general mobilization," a survivor from Harpoot, Sarkis Khachatryan (born in 1903), has narrated, "and drafted the Armenian young men into the Turkish army. They took them and made them work in the 'Amelé tabour' (Labor battalions) and then they killed them all." [Sv. 2000: T. 110, p. 223]

Sarkis Martirosian (born in 1903), from Harpoot, in his turn, has referred to that fact in more detail: "They drafted the Armenian youth to the army during the First World War, about three hundred thousand Armenian young men were sent to serve in the Turkish army. At first, they



were given arms, but later Enver pasha had declared 'We need working hands to construct roads.' But in reality, they had made them dig pits and buried them in those pits after killing them." [Sv. 2000: T. 111, p. 224]

The song transmitted by a survivor from Tokhat, **Annik Marikian** (born in 1892), composed under these historical circumstances, substantiates the testimonies communicated by the eyewitness survivors:

*I wasn't given a rifle, but was enlisted in the labor battalion,  
The Tokhat village of Yatmish was less than four days distant,  
The stones of Yatmish had to be broken down;  
I go, I go, I go as a soldier,  
I go to break stones.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 295, p. 404]

And the fate of those working in the labor battalion was decided in advance – it was death!

*They took the soldiers to Balou,  
Mothers and sisters sat down and wept,  
There they made the soldiers dig many pits  
And then buried the soldiers in those pits!*

[Sv. 2000: T. 296, p. 405]

This is what **Hazarkhan Torossian** (born in 1902), from Balou, has recalled tearfully.

**Harutyun Grigorian**, born in Erzroom (in 1898), a participant of the deportation from Harpoot, has testified: "At the time of the deportation from Harpoot, I was seventeen years old. I remember it well. They beat the drum in the streets and the town-crier proclaimed 'Seferberlik dir' (General mobilization) because of the war. Later, it was announced that the Armenians would be exiled. Perquisitions started in the town on the pretext of searching for arms, but they were plundering everything; if they found any money, it was theirs, they took away even the knife for cleaning onions. Those who did not return arms had their fingernails pulled out, were beaten or were forced to give money for buying arms... In the town and villages, they imprisoned the wealthy Armenians and the people remained as shepherdless sheep. They nailed horse-shoes to the feet of some influential people, some others had their teeth forcibly extracted,

those who were in prisons burned themselves to put an end to their tortures. ...The Armenian soldiers in the Turkish army were disarmed and killed. At first they were drafted into the army to be sent to the front; instead, they formed the 'Amelé tabour' (Labor battalions), where the Armenian soldiers were condemned to penal servitude as convicts. The ruthless commanders employed the Armenians in road construction without distinction between those who had paid their 'bedel' (ransom – sum paid to assure freedom from military service) and those who had not. They were forced to march for hours, hungry and thirsty, surrounded by policemen on horseback. The insults and the offenses of the policemen were soon transformed into blows. On the roads to Parchandj and Kessirik, when they approached a fountain, they did not give permission to two thousand people to drink water and those who dared to do so received a heavy blow with the rifle-butt on the head. Nearly all of them perished and their corpses were thrown into a common pit. The same was done with the two thousand workmen sent to Diarbekir. Young schoolboys and disarmed soldiers of Harpoot were sent to Karmir Ghonagh (Red House) to be tortured and their tormented corpses were shed one over the other and were in the process of decaying. In every corner there was blood, vomit and excrement. Those lying on the ground looked like corpses fallen on a battlefield. Thus, one after the other, the adult or aged people, on the one hand, were brought from villages and boroughs to Karmir Ghonagh and, on the other hand, the arrested people were sent to Yedessia as though to work on the railways. After the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 1915, all the young men were sent to the slaughter-house..." [Sv. 2000: T. 89, pp. 187-188]

A survivor from Yozghat, **Veronica Berberian** (born in 1907), has also referred to the Turkish mobilization: "...On Saturday, toward the evening, they came to mobilize all the males to serve in the Turkish army, but they detached the Armenians from the Turks. My grandfather, a priest, Rev. Fr. Hakob Berberian, who was authorized to protect the Armenians' rights, asked why the Armenians had been separated from the Turk recruits. The Turkish major answered: 'Papaz (priest) efendi, the Armenians will go to construct roads and the Turks will go to the Russian front.'

The following day was Sunday. My grandfather had finished celebrating Mass and had just come home, when the sad news arrived. Artin agha's son, who was a miller, had gone to work in the early morning and had seen numerous human heads, feet and hands near the mill. Tongue-

tied of horror, he had run home panting and told what he had seen. Artin agha came to us with his son and told my grandfather: 'Those who were taken to the army were slaughtered at night.' My grandfather advised them to go and complain to the kaymakam (prefect). Artin agha went to present his protest to the kaymakam, but he did not come home at night....

The next day, Monday, two Turkish gendarmes came to our house armed with clubs. At other times, when the gendarmes came to us, they always asked my grandfather politely to get dressed and to go with them. When they came this time, they shouted rudely: 'Haydi, kalkın!' ('Get up, quick!'). They took my grandfather to the kaymakam. Along with my grandfather, they had taken also other local notables, tradesmen and intellectuals. A Turk said to my grandfather: 'Papaz efendi, your last hour has come, what have you got to say?' My grandfather knelt and started to pray. A Turkish soldier struck him with an axe and my grandfather's head tumbled to the ground. They began to play football with my wise grandfather's head..." [Sv. 2000: T. 214, pp. 353-354]

The mobilization in Turkey was followed by the arms collection. That was accompanied by ubiquitous round-ups, during which, on the pretext of collecting "arms," the Turkish policemen ravaged the houses of the Armenians, plundered their properties, arrested and killed many of them.

The same survivor, **Veronica Berberian**, has added: "Before the Genocide the Turkish policemen came to collect the arms. The son of the rich Karapet agha had said: 'We have no arms.' The policemen had searched and found a weapon. They had pulled out his fingernails and they had placed hot boiled eggs in his armpits and tied him. After that, they had not left behind even a simple kitchen knife." [Sv. 2000: T. 214, pp. 353-354]

**Hakob Holobikian**, from Harpoot (born in 1902), recalling how the Turkish policemen demanded arms from his father, has narrated: "Getting a negative answer from my father, they beat him with a whip and, finally, they dragged him out and took him to prison. Seeing these cruelties, my mother exclaimed: 'Butchers.' For that word, they incarcerated my mother in a vacant house. I, my sister and my brother were left alone. I ran behind my mother and looked through the door slit; my mother said: 'My son, go to your uncle Grigor's house.' ...In those days my uncle Grigor was still in office as a mayor. They had spared him. He interceded, something which wasn't done without bribery, and we brought my father home;

he was set free. One of my father's friends, a blacksmith named Levon Khochikian, took him home on his shoulder since he was unable to walk. My mother also returned home from her prison. Father, after his torture, lay on his belly; he couldn't lie on his back. My father told us how many misfortunes he had suffered in one night. Corporal Ahmed, a fierce-looking officer, had brought my father from the prison cell to his room to torture him and had made him lie on his belly; other policemen, armed with oak truncheons, waited, on both sides, for his orders. Once more, he had demanded from my father mauser and mossin rifles, revolvers: 'You either hand them over or lie down! Start beating him!' had ordered the Corporal. After forty blows, they had put him in a sitting position. Corporal Ahmed had continued: 'I say, don't you want to bring your arms?' According to my father, Corporal Ahmed had summoned also to his room the Armenian song teacher of the church and of the school, Armenak Petrossian, and had made him sit by his side, which meant that the next turn would be his. 'Efendi (sir), I have no arms.' Again they had delivered forty blows and again the same question and the same answer. Before making him lie down for the third time, Ahmed had asked: 'Then tell me who has got arms.' My father could not be a traitor. Even if he knew, he would not tell. After one hundred and twenty blows, they had dragged him, half-dead, to the gaol. This is my father's narrative..." [Sv. 2000: T. 109, p. 220]

In the following Armenian-mixed Turkish song, which is widely known among the Western Armenians, the Turkish officer asks the young Armenian:

"Ulan gâvur,<sup>4</sup> doğru söyle:  
Sende martin varımız?"

"Hey! gâvur,<sup>4</sup> tell the truth,  
Have you got a gun?"

The Armenian youth denies the accusation, considering it a slander:

"Hayır, efendim! İftiradır:  
Bilmem, görmedim,  
Bilmem, görmedim."

"No, sir, it's a lie,  
I don't know, I haven't seen,  
I don't know, I haven't seen."

But then he adds secretly in Armenian:

*It's hanging on the wall, I won't tell.  
I won't betray the Armenian nation.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 323, p. 408]

<sup>4</sup> Gâvur (unbeliever) – special humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians.

The Armenian youth who had received the call-up papers (*vesica*) and was forcibly drafted to the Turkish army had the presentiment that “*that was the road to death*” and in fact “*lots and lots of Armenians were there.*”

*Ana! uyandır beni, gideyim talime,  
Aynalı-martını alayım elime,  
Gütmeye doğru vatan yoluna,  
Buna ölüm yolu, derler,  
Allah saklasın!  
Ermeniler çokdur, derler,  
Allah kurtarsın!*

Mother, wake me up, let me go to the training,  
Let me take in hand my mirrored-rifle,  
And go straight on the road of the homeland,  
This, they say, is the road to death,  
God, protect us!  
There, they say, are lots of Armenians,  
God, save us!

[Sv. 2000: T. 301, p. 405]

If, in this song, the Armenian youngster was ready to serve in the Turkish army and to perform his civil duties in regard to the native land (*vatan*) he was living on, he subsequently became aware that the “mobilization” was a pretext to isolate him from his kinsfolk.

*Odalar yaptırıldım bir uçdan uca,  
İçinde yatmadım bir gün, bir gece,  
Konma, bülbül, konma mezar taşına,  
Neler geldi Ermeninin başına!*

I had rooms built end to end,  
I didn't sleep in them a day, a night,  
Don't perch, nightingale, don't perch on the grave stone,  
The Armenians suffered so many misfortunes!

*Tiifengim çadırda asılı kaldı,  
Ceyizim sandıkta basılı kaldı,  
Konma, bülbül, konma mezar taşına,  
Neler geldi Ermeninin başına!*

My gun remained hanging in the tent,  
My dowry remained folded in the trunk,  
Don't perch, nightingale, don't perch on the grave stone,  
The Armenians suffered so many misfortunes!

[Sv. 2000: T. 459, p. 431]

And the mobilized Armenian young man implored the cruel Circassian to show mercy to him, otherwise “*his new fiancée would become a widow.*”

*Kıyma, Çerkez, kıyma tatlı canıma:  
Yeni nişanlım var karalar bağlar...*

Cherkess, spare my sweet life,  
I have a new fiancée; she will be bound in black...

[Sv. 2000: T. 311, p. 406]

In fact, his fiancée was shedding salty tears like the salty roasted hazelnuts of Istanbul and mourning for his absence.

*Tuzlu olur İstanbulun fıstığı,  
Taştan olur Ermeninin yastığı,  
Kör olasun şu meydanın dostluğu.<sup>5</sup>*

The hazelnut of Istanbul is salty,  
The cushion of the Armenians is stony,  
Cursed be this sham friendship.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> It concerns the Constitution of Ottoman Turkey proclaimed in 1908, which formally promised all the peoples living in Turkey “Freedom, Justice, Brotherhood, Equity,” irrespective of their nationality and religion.

*Aldılar nazlı yarım, duyan ağlasın,  
Aman! Aman! Mayrik!<sup>6</sup>*

They abducted my beloved, let the hearer cry,  
Alas! Alas! Mayrik!<sup>6</sup>

[Sv. 2000: T. 338, p. 413]

There were at that time special instructions in Turkey to isolate the Christians serving in the army from their regiments without any offense and to shoot them in secluded places, away from the public eye, or to make them starve to death in prisons.

*Haniya da benim tuz-ekmegim yiyenler,* Where are those who have eaten my salt-bread,  
“*Ahbab ölmeden, ben ölürüm*” *diyenler...* Those who said “let me die before my friend does...”

Meanwhile his faithful Armenian friends

*Tığlık' Sarkis,<sup>7</sup>  
Taslak' Misak<sup>8</sup> vurulmuş...*

Teghlik(ian)<sup>7</sup> Sarkis<sup>8</sup> and  
Taslak(ian)<sup>7</sup> Missak<sup>8</sup> were killed...

The Armenian soldier himself was imprisoned:

*Mahpushanede üstümüze damlıyor...* It's dripping on us in the prison...

And his kinsfolk:

*Anam da baş üstümde ağlıyor,  
Biçare nişanlım karalar bağlıyor...*

My mother is weeping over my head,  
My poor fiancée is tying black...

[Sv. 2000: T. 334, p. 411]

Besides the prison and the dungeon, death awaited the Armenian soldier every moment:

*Varın, söyleyin anama: damda yatmasın;* Tell my mother: not to sleep on the roof,  
“*Oğlum Toros' gelir diye*” *yola bakmasın,* Not to look at the road expecting her son Toros' to return,  
*Anama deyin: bohçamı açmasın;* Tell my mother: not to open my bundle of clothes,  
*Çuha şalvarıma uçkur takmasın,* And not to pass a cord to my woolen breeches,  
*Çayrı ben sılama varamaz oldum,* I am already not able to help my Motherland,  
*İskuhi' nişanlım göremez oldum.* Unable to see my fiancée Iskuhi,<sup>9</sup>  
*Daracak sokaktan geçemez oldum.* And not able to come out of this narrow path.

[Sv. 2000: T. 335, p. 412]

And the mother of the Armenian soldier cursed the mobilization,

<sup>6</sup> The Armenian word “mayrik” (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>7</sup> Armenian surname.

<sup>8</sup> Armenian name.

<sup>9</sup> Armenian name.

which was more like a massacre, since the young Armenians went away with the spring roses and nightingales, only forever:

*Atımı bağladım delikli taşta,<sup>10</sup>* I tied my horse to the hollow stone,<sup>10</sup>  
*Kör olasin sen, Enver paşa!* You should lose your sight, Enver pasha!  
*Ermeni cahil kalmadı.* No more Armenian youths were left,  
*Gitti gül, gitti bülbül, ne diyelim!* The rose and the nightingale went away, what should I say!  
*İstersen ağla, istersen gül, ne diyelim!* You may cry, you may laugh, what should I say!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 448, p. 428]

The people's hatred was gradually transformed into a mockery and Talaat pasha's exterior was outlined in a few concise words, which denoted also his internal character:

*Talaat paşa eşek gibi,* Talaat pasha like an ass,  
*Biylıkları yular gibi...* His moustaches thin as reins...  
[Sv. 2000: T. 453, p. 428]

The arrest of the Armenian intellectuals followed the mobilization and the arms collection; it pursued the purpose of depriving the Armenian nation not only of its fighting force, but also of its leading minds. On Saturday, April 24, at midnight, 273 Armenian notables of Constantinople were forcibly taken to police quarters and subsequently were sent to the deserts of Mesopotamia and exterminated. Among those who were deported to the deserts of Changhere and Ayash and exterminated were the well-known lawyer, member of the Ottoman Parliament and writer, Grigor Zohrap, the poets, writers and physicians Daniel Varouzhan, Siamanto, Ruben Zartarian, Ruben Sevak, Hovhannes Telkatintsi, Melkon Kyurdjian, Yerookhan, Smbat Byurat, Tigran Chyokurian, Nazaret Taghavarian and numerous celebrated people from Istanbul, Svaz, Diarbekir, Marzvan, Erzroom, Kayseri, Izmir and other Armenian-inhabited localities.

A survivor from Adabazar, **Marie Yergat** (born in 1910), has told us about them: "...They took us to *Eskishehir* and we were housed in an overcrowded inn. The neighboring inn, which was dark and dirty as ours, was sheltering all the intellectuals exiled from Istanbul. All of them wore suits, starched collars and ties, but in tatters. We heard every night their lam-

<sup>10</sup> Delikli taş (hollow stone) – a stone ring fitted to the wall near the entrance of Armenian country houses to tie the horse reins.

tations and sighs, because the Turkish officers and policemen were beating them ruthlessly. After a few days they took them all away. We heard that they had killed them after severe tortures." [Sv. 2000: T. 226, p. 366]

Everywhere the Armenian schools and colleges were being closed.

Besides the Armenian educational institutions, the Armenian churches were also ravaged. The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was incorporated into the Catholicosate of Sis, and Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan was recognized as the spiritual leader of the Armenians of Turkey.

On March 15 and April 3, 1915, the Russian Intelligence informed about Turkey that Armenians were arrested throughout the country, systematic massacres were committed in Erzroom, Deurtyol and Zeytoun; bloody clashes took place in Bitlis, Van and Moosh; atrocities, plunder and murders occurred in Akn; economic collapse and a general massacre of the population were noted all over Asia Minor.

A survivor born in 1905 at the village of Kem of the Armenian valley of Van, **Sirak Manassian**, has testified about the horrible state of the Western Armenians: "*On the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1915, we heard that they had killed the public servant-educator, Mr. Ishkhan*" in the neighboring village of Hirj. That was at the time when the Turks were summoning, through Djevdet pasha, all our eminent leaders and were slaughtering them. In those dreadful days they unexpectedly killed Mr. Ishkhan and threw him in the well. Not satisfied with this crime, they also threw his two children alive into the well. When we heard that, we and all our compatriots got much alarmed and started to get ready for the attack of the Turks.

On March 5, 1915, a strong artillery bang was heard. The people assembled in the square and then crowded in the church. The Turks had already mobilized and taken away the young men. Since there were no young people, we had to leave our positions and go to the neighboring villages. We went to the Armenian village of Kukyants. There several thousands of people were gathered, they lodged us in barns. Every day the Turks caught the Armenians and hanged or slaughtered them before our very eyes. One of them was my uncle Petros. He was a farmer. When we

<sup>11</sup> Ishkhan – Nikoghayos Poghos Mikaelian (1881-1915), an active leader of the Armenian self-defensive movement. Opposing the Turkish rulers, he has defended the interests of the Armenians of Van, has given an impetus to education. He was killed on the eve of the self-defensive battles of Van in April by order of the vice-regent Djevdet pasha.

saw Petros in that state, we did not recognize him.... They isolated us in a special barn. They locked the door and assigned a sentry to watch over us. Horrified by those events, we wanted to flee from that village. There wasn't even any fodder in the barn. I managed to escape and go to the village and find our family. ...On the following day we climbed the mountains, which were densely forested. We were on the slope of the Kerker Mountain where our village was situated. The immense Shaghbat River and the Shamiram canal were passing near by. We ascended to the summit of the mountain, in the forest, and saw how the Turks and the Kurds were plundering our animals, our beds and our linen. We saw also that, every morning, Turkish lads came and fired at a certain target on the ground. When the Turks left, our boys descended and, upon approaching, saw that the target was my grandfather's head. The pitiless Turks had buried my grandfather in the ground, leaving his head outside, and were firing at it repeatedly. When we returned to our village, we buried with difficulty my grandfather's dead body, which was already in decay.

I cannot forget the year 1915 when we passed through mountains and villages; it was in March; there was rain, storm and an awful cold. The last village, which led to Varag, was Berdak. We saw there in the streets naked and killed people, who were swollen and putrefied. They were stinking. We passed through all this and set off to Varag. At dawn, the Turks, who had taken position in the mountains of Varag, saw us and started to shoot at us. Our people were crying in terror. ...After staying there for a month or two, we fled and approached Van. We were always moving at night, since we were pursued in the day-time. When we approached Van and were about to enter the town, the Turks stopped us and started to look for males. The heroes of Van, who were probably watching with field glasses, began to fire. Some of the Turks fell, others fled and we were saved and entered Van. We were lodged in Van in the school building. Every morning the brass band marched, playing, in the streets of Van, followed by the children. The self-defense of Van had already begun. An Armenian told us: 'Children, go and collect the used bullets so that they can prepare new ones.' We went and collected the bullets and handed them to the workshop. The day came when the battle became more intense in Van and Aygestan. The Vaspourakanis, who had gathered there, defended with unyielding will and determination Aygestan and the centre of Van, Kaghakamedj, where violent combats took place. Hearing that the

Russian army was advancing from Salmast to Van, the Turks departed panic-stricken. Our heroes attacked and not only did they exterminate the Turks but also acquired a considerable amount of artillery units, bullets, etc.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of May the Armenian flag waved over the citadel of Van. The Vaspourakanis welcomed with great love the Russian soldiers and the Armenian volunteers under the leadership of General Andranik Ozanian." [Sv. 2000: T. 30, pp. 101-102]

In the villages surrounding Van, the Turks had time to exterminate on the spot thousands of Armenians and, when the Russian army entered Van, accompanied by the Armenian writers Hovhannes Toumanian and Alexander Shirvanzadé, they became witnesses of bewildering scenes. "...Wherever they had the opportunity, they had massacred the Armenians," wrote H. Toumanian in his memoirs, "and mainly the males, and had taken away the beautiful women. And if they had had sufficient time and when the terror of the Russian army and the Armenian volunteers had not been close, they had invented barbaric amusements: they had crucified people, various body parts of live people had been cut and arranged in different patterns; games had been invented: people had been put below the waist in cauldrons and boiled so that the live half could see and feel...; they had cut with red-hot iron bars the various parts of the body and roasted them on fire; they had roasted live people; they had massacred children before the eyes of parents and parents before the eyes of children." [Toumanian 1959: pp. 212-213]

Naturally, if the Armenians had not had recourse to self-defense in Van, they would have been martyred in the same manner. It is appropriate to mention here the following words of a survivor from Van, **Ardsroun Harutyunian** (born in 1907): "Self-defense is born when there is violence against the people..." [Sv. 2000: T. 35, p. 109]

And therefore, the heroic self-defensive battles fought in Van, Shatak and other localities constituted the noble outbreak of the Western Armenians revolting against the acts of violence committed by the Ittihad government, their voice of protest addressed to the great states of the world. This is also attested to by the following fragment of a popular song:

*Van, a little town with its districts,  
Full of corpses in hundreds and thousands,*

*The field was colored red with blood,  
The clouds, the sky and the stars raised their voice  
And roared and ordered loud enough  
To be heard in Europe and America.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 532, p. 444]

However, neither Europe nor America interfered and only the national heroes succored the helpless people.

From the beginning of the First World War all the Western Armenians, including also the Sassounis, were subjected to new and brutal pursuits, plunders and murders.

In March 1915, the Turkish hordes also invaded Sassoun. In April-May, the first combats of the Sassounis took place. Exhibiting a heroic resistance to the Turkish army, but suffering great losses, the Armenian fighters retreated to the slopes of the Andok Mountain and continued the self-defense. In June, unyielding fights took place in the region of Assank. The combatants of the Monastery of Gomuts and of Talvorik provoked confusion among the Kurdish hordes and seized the Satan Bridge; the inhabitants of Ksak came to their rescue. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, the Sassounis liberated Shenik, but the enemy occupied the stables situated on the slopes of Andok with a new assault. The Sassounis heroically defended themselves from the attacking Turks and Kurds in the mountains of Andok, Tsovassar and Gerin. The survivors rescued from the massacres of Moosh and its environs, about thirty thousand in number, who had taken refuge in the mountains of Kana and Havatorik, displayed a heroic resistance. However, that heroic self-resistance was cruelly suppressed.

*“The Turks attacked and began to massacre,”* a survivor from Sassoun, **Arakel Davtian** (born in 1904), related. *“They took away the beautiful girls and women. There was a freedom-fighter in our village, named Missak, who had a gun. He went into the monastery and started to fight. We had no arms. Sassoun resisted for two months. The Turkish soldiers came and besieged us. We had no help whatsoever and they slaughtered many of us.”* [Sv. 2000: T. 4, p. 55]

An eyewitness from the Shenik village of Sassoun, **Khachik Khachatrian** (born in 1900), has also narrated: *“The Turkish army came, about sixty thousand in number. They came and surrounded the village. Our fighters resisted bravely. Twice the Turkish army invaded the village*

*and twice our freedom-fighters and those who had arms drove them out. Our combatants were gathered in the center of the village. Three days before our people had left the village and gone to Andok, the children, with the women, and I had gone with them. It was the beginning of July. There was no bread, no water, no salt; we had only unsalted meat. We stayed there for about forty-five days and the battle went on. After that, our provisions ran out. We were fed only with roasted flour. The Turkish soldiers came and invaded Andok. The valleys were filled with the corpses of children. Their mothers were not able to save them. The Turks and the Kurds were firing. People fell by the dozen. The young brides were taken away. At the end, they were dropping the people from the mountain top into the river to spare the bullets. The river carried away innumerable bodies...”* [Sv. 2000: T. 2, p. 53]

Another eyewitness survivor from Sassoun, **Yeghiazar Karapetian** (born in 1886), has related these historic events in more detail: *“The attacks of the Kurds on the Armenians were, seemingly, of an unofficial character, but there was a general belief that they were all performed according to the instructions of the government, something which was proved by the fact that the Armenians' protests were not heard and their appeals remained unanswered. Servet pasha, a Young Turk, was the pasha (governor) of the district and a man faithful to Islam. Consequently, he had to perform his duties like the other pashas of the other districts. Beginning from June 10, the Kurd ashirat-leaders, surrounded with numerous horsemen, entered Moosh, received instructions and returned to their places. Every night, weapons and bullets were carried with carts out of the town to arm the Kurds. A special program had been designed by the government with a view to successfully bringing to an end the massacre of the Armenians; a division of the villages had been planned, the day and the hour of the attack had been determined with such accuracy that the extermination of the Armenians of one hundred and five villages of the Moosh plain would be completed in a single day, not sparing a single child. The distribution had been planned as follows: the massacre of the thirty-five villages situated on the right of Moosh till the source of Meghraget River had been entrusted to Hadji Moussabek, who had at his disposal three thousand five hundred Kurd horse- and infantry-men. The slaughter of the fifteen villages situated on the northwestern side of the town had been consigned to Sleman agha from Fatkan, who had under his*

*command one thousand armed Kurds. The carnage of the Armenians of the twenty villages of the region of Soorb (St.) Karapet had been committed to the assistant chieftain, the Young Turk Rashid efendi (sir), who had a force of five hundred brigand-horsemen, which was reinforced by the garrison stationed at the Soorb Karapet Monastery and the superintendent at the village of Ziaret with his gendarmes. On the northeastern flank of the field, the massacre of the fifteen villages had been assigned to Derboyi Djendi from Djebran, to Kolotoyi Zuber and to the superintendent of Aghchan, who had at their disposal more than a thousand Kurds and gendarmes. On the right flank of the field, the extermination of the twenty villages of Chekhour had been consigned to Sheikh Hazret, who had under his command one thousand two hundred horsemen composed of Kurds from Zilan and Kossour. Besides these regular forces, a sacred task had been assigned to all Mohammedans: to kill and exterminate without mercy any Armenian they met. The existing state of things suddenly changed. The Armenians could no longer go from the villages to the town and come back; the Turks violently beat and tortured the Armenians they met; cases of murder also occurred. Aged women, who were obliged to go on an errand to town, were always subjected on their way to pursuit and disgraceful blasphemies. People were filled with anxiety; they had no sleep and no rest.*

*On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, one hundred Kurdish horsemen from Bakran settled on the slopes of the Krenkan Gyol Mountain. On the following day, ten horsemen came to our village and claimed from the village notables ten sheep, ten measures of flour and ten felt-gowns. They received all this free of charge and without any objection and, being well-acquainted for a long time with the denizens of Havatorik or being conscience-stricken, Ali of Tamo said: 'Armenians, I have often eaten your bread and salt, now I have to tell you a truth. An order has come from the Sultan that we have to mercilessly massacre all the Armenians living on the Ottoman soil. Now if you stand up and have a look at the Slivan field, you will see that the wheat fields have ripened and the spikes have fallen one upon the other, but there is not a single sparrow there. It is deserted. We have completely exterminated the Armenians of that locality and the government has called us here with the purpose of slaughtering the Armenians of the Moosh plain and of Sassoun. In a few days, massacres will begin here also and it should be so that men giving the name of Jesus Christ will not*

*remain alive on this land.' The Kurds took away what they demanded, while we remained pensive. ...Thus, this Armenian-populated province, which was bound to the land and the plough for centuries, became, in the course of one day and one night, deserted and uninhabited, while its real owners were slaughtered with swords, burned in fire, drowned in water by the hands of the ruthless Turks and Kurds in a monstrous operation; its victims were the Armenian dwellers, of both sexes, of one hundred and five villages, totaling seventy to eighty thousand souls in number. Their wealth, worth millions, was pillaged. ...The 28<sup>th</sup> of June was the Sunday of Vardavar (the Transfiguration of Christ), the merry holiday of the Armenian nation, which, alas, was converted into the Sunday of Martavar (burning of people) for the Armenians of the Taron plain." [Sv. 2000: T. 1, pp. 44-45]*

**Shogher Tonoyan** (born in 1901), from Moosh, has also given an account about the above-cited Vardavar holiday: "...On the day of Vardavar (the Transfiguration of Christ), 1915, the Turkish askyars (policemen) brought Chechen brigands from Daghestan to massacre us. They came to our village and robbed everything. They took away our sheep, oxen and properties. Those who were good-looking were taken away. My aunt's young son, who was staying with me, was also taken away, together with all the males in the town. They gathered the young and the elderly in the stables of the Avzut village, set fire and burned them alive. They shut people in the stables of Malkhas Mardo, they piled up stacks of hay round them, poured kerosene and set on fire. Sixty members of our great family were burned in those stables. I do not wish my enemy to see the days I have seen, lao!<sup>12</sup> Only my brother and I were saved. From the beginning, they took away the young pretty brides and girls to Turkify them and also they pulled away the male infants from their mothers' arms to make them policemen in the future. The stable was filled with smoke and fire, people started to cough and to choke. Mothers forgot about their children, lao! It was a real Sodom and Gomorrah. People ran, on fire, to and fro, struck against the walls, trod upon the infants and children who had fallen on the ground. ...What I have seen with my eyes, lao, I don't wish the wolves of the mountain to see! They say that the Turkish mullah

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<sup>12</sup> Lao (my child) – an affectionate expression in the Sassoun dialect used when speaking to a daughter or son.

hung himself at the sight of these distressing scenes. During that turmoil, the majority of the people choked and perished. The roof of the stable collapsed and fell upon the dead. I wish my little brother and I had been burned in that stable and had not seen how sixty souls were burned alive. I wish I had not seen the cruel and ungodly acts of those irreligious people. The Armenians of the neighboring villages of Vardenis, Meshakhshen, Aghbenis, Avzut, Khevner and others were burned in the same manner in their stables. I do not wish my enemy to see what I have seen.... When the roof of the stable collapsed, the flames and the smoke escaped from the opening and air penetrated in the stable. My uncle's daughter, Areg, and I took my unconscious brother by the arms and legs and, treading on burnt logs and corpses, we came out through the breach. There we saw the Turkish soldiers dancing in a circle, swinging and striking their sabres and singing merrily 'Yürü, yavrum, yürü!' ('Walk, my child, walk!'). Up to this day that song resounds in my ears..." [Sv. 2000: T. 8, p. 61]

Another eyewitness from Moosh, **Sedrak Harutyunian** (born in 1904), has testified, similar to many, many others: "I have seen not only the slaughter of my village, but also the panic-stricken flight from the villages of our region. Corpses were stretched out on our ground like a straw-mat..." [Sv. 2000: T. 9, p. 63]

Referring to the unspeakable sufferings of the inhabitants of Moosh, the well-known historian, Professor Vahakn Dadrian, who has elucidated the shadowy aspects of the Armenian Genocide, has noted: "...Indeed, the massacre of the Armenian population of Moosh and of nearly 100 villages of the Moosh plain, numbering about 90,000 souls, was one of the most bewildering and horrifying episodes of the Armenian Genocide. Three facts are most characteristic of the Moosh massacre: in the first place, the Turkish army, the Kurdish gangs of robbers and the Ottoman governmental authorities have, hand in hand, contributed to the realization of the monstrous scheme of the Ittihad party; secondly, the role of that army was unusual in the sense that 10-20 battalions were specially brought there from Harpoot and, after encircling the Armenian quarters of Moosh with a net of cannons, they devastated and razed them to the ground by rumbling bombardments, exterminating the whole Armenian population under the ruins of their own houses, in spite of the fact that only a few houses were fortified and offered an armed resistance; thirdly, they packed the great majority of the population of the Moosh plain, amounting to

70,000-80,000 souls and composed of women, children and elderly people, in barns and stables, set fire to them and burned them all alive..." [Dadrian 1995: p. 14]

**Hrant Gasparian** (born in 1908), from Khnous, has testified: "I told you what I have seen. What I have seen is in front of my eyes. We have not brought anything from Khnous. We have only saved our souls. Our large family, as a whole, was composed of one hundred and forty-three souls. Only one sister, one brother, my mother and I were saved..." [Sv. 2000: T. 12, p. 71]

If only four people were saved out of a large patriarchal family of 143 souls, then it is possible to imagine how many thousands of Armenians were sacrificed in the prototypes of Nazi gas-chambers, the stables and barns set on fire, long before the Jewish Holocaust.

The following popular song has been woven with reference to these historic events:

*...The province of Sassoun with its forests,  
With its high mountains as ramparts  
Always withstood the Turkish army,  
Sassoun smells now of hot blood.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 531, p. 443]

The smell of "hot blood" was spread also in the heroic towns of Shapin-Garahissar, Shatakh, Karin, Pontos, Moosh, Svaz, Harpoot, Malatia, Diarbekir and in the Armenian-inhabited localities of Western and Central Anatolia, Izmit, Bursa, Ankara, Konia and elsewhere. They exterminated, with unspeakable cruelty, all the Armenians, not sparing even the infants.

And when the Russian troops retreated, a great number of Armenians, who had heroically fought in the self-defensive battles of Van, Sassoun, Shatakh, Shapin-Garahissar, Moosh, Bitlis, Alashkert, Bayazet, Babert, Erzroom and other localities, were obliged to migrate after them to Eastern Armenia. They left, in despair and in tears, their homeland, their thousand-year historical cradle and started, whimpering, on their exile journey. That indescribable, great national grief has been expressed, in a condensed form, in the following dirge composed by the talented survivor from Sassoun, **Shogher Tonoyan** (born in 1901):



*We left ownerless the sweet plains and meadows of Moosh,  
Our sacred lodges, houses, roofs and homeland  
Chapels and monasteries, books and canons, Bibles  
Were left ownerless and remained in the hound's muzzle.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 557, p. 453]

The road of exile was a real tragedy.

**Vardouhi Potikian** (born in 1912), from Van, has painfully recalled that horrible turmoil. "...*May my enemy not see that day. Woe! Let it be a black day! We had come and reached the bridge over the Berkri River. Suddenly the people began to yell: 'Flee.' We saw in the dark: the Berkri valley was narrow and the Armenians hadn't reached the river yet, when the Turks and the Kurds attacked. As the Armenians tried to escape, their feet slipped and they fell into the river and got drowned. Some tried to cross the river on animals, some entered the water all by themselves and the current carried them down the river. They were yelling, screaming and crying. The Kurds were firing on us. Mothers forgot about their children.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 49, p. 128]

The following popular vivid song has been created under the immediate effect of those distressing scenes of exile:

*The Turks came down the black Berkri Mountain,  
Corpses were scattered in thousands and thousands,  
May you be ravaged, you, ruthless Berkri River,  
You drank the blood of thousands and thousands!*

[Sv. 2000: T. 344, p. 414]

Suffering countless victims, the exhausted and agonizing human flood moved forward, sad and wistful, through clouds of dust. **Shogher Tonoyan** (born in 1901), a survivor from Sassoun, has woven this lament:

*..Carts came rocking,  
Mothers came grumbling...*

[Sv. 2000: T. 344, p. 414]

When I asked an eyewitness-survivor from Van, **Aghassi Kankanian** (born in 1904), who had become a well-known chemist, to tell me about

his deportation, he said, reliving with great emotion and tearful eyes, his sorrowful past: "...*Till we got to Igdirdir we marched under the rain and the sun, in the mud, half-starving and thirsty, for ten days. On the roads, the Kurds often attacked us, killed people and plundered. The most terrible attack took place near the Bandimahu Bridge over the Berkri River, where there was an accumulation of deportees. Numerous mothers, clasping their infants in their arms, threw themselves into the river, so as not to fall into the hands of the Turks. Those who were killed or died during our march were left on the roadside, mostly unburied. Seeing so many unburied corpses, I was so much affected that I became melancholic and that state continues up to the present day. I cannot feel completely glad.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 28, p. 98]

Destitute, exhausted and leaving their dead kinsfolk unburied on the roadside, the remaining Western Armenians arrived, after great difficulties, in Igdirdir (Surmalu), which would suffer the same fate. The words of the following popular song about Surmalu have been communicated to me by the well-known and beloved singer, **Hayrik Mouradian**, a survivor from Shatak (born in 1905):

*Eh, Surmalu, dear Surmalu!  
There's no sound of bells and no Armenian speech,  
You've become a forest of nest-destroying wolves,  
You that were rich in schools, you populous province.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 559, p. 453]

The life of the Armenians in Cilicia had also become a nightmare.

The Baghdad railway, which had a particular economic importance, passed through Armenian-populated Cilicia. This circumstance troubled the Turkish government, since the laborious and active Armenians living in Cilicia could, by their prosperous state, become predominant in Turkey's economy. The Armenian villages and settlements were scattered in mountainous Cilicia from Hadyun, Zeytoun to Deurtyol; and their populations, although engaged in silk-production, carpet-making and other national handicrafts, had a sufficiently enlightened new generation, owing to the presence of Armenian and foreign schools and colleges, which had played an important role in the formation of their mental-conscious outlook. Besides, the outrages and the massacres, which had started in many

provinces of Turkey, coupled with the promised, but not realized, "Reforms" following the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, had not completely exterminated the naturally freedom-loving Cilicians. Zeytoun, the eagle-nest of Cilicia, had, for a long time, become the flash point of Turkish tyranny and it was high time to square accounts with the bold inhabitants of Zeytoun as well.

The details of these events were divulged in the narratives of the eyewitness survivors from Zeytoun, **Gyurdji Keshishian** (born in 1900), **Karapet Tozlian** (born in 1903), **Hovsep Bshtikian** (born in 1903), **Eva Chulian** (born in 1903), **Sedrak Gaybakian** (born in 1903), **Samvel Ardjikian** (born in 1907) and **Gayané Atoorian** (born in 1909). [Sv. 2000: TT. 137-143, pp. 254-269]

The Cilicians, who were the worthy inheritors of the last Armenian kingdom (11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries) and had glorious traditions of the national-emancipatory struggle of the past, could once again fight in self-sacrifice, but this plan was hindered by the Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahak Khabayan, and many other Armenian notables, who, deceived by the false promises of the Turkish government, called the Armenians to obedience, arguing that "a little movement could endanger all the Armenian population of the provinces of Turkey."

The Turkish government had already, as in the other localities, collected the Armenians' weapons and drafted the young men into the Turkish army, although many of them had been able to escape from the army and hide themselves in Zeytoun. Khurshid pasha came with an army of three thousand soldiers to claim the deserters who had taken refuge in the ancient St. Astvadsadsin (Holy Virgin) Monastery, built on the top of the Berzenka Mountain. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, the enemy started to shell the monastery. The self-defensive fighters of Zeytoun, under the leadership of Panos Chakerian, responded to the enemy's attack, sparing their scanty bullets.

**Karapet Tozlian** (born in 1903), from Zeytoun, has told me: "...*The monastery was just opposite the town of Zeytoun and we, the Zeytounis, were standing and watching. Suddenly we saw a few policemen who were carrying gazyagh (kerosene) in tin containers to burn the monastery, but the eshkhies (gunmen) fired at them from inside the monastery and killed them.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 139, p. 262]

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 300 notables of Zeytoun were taken to the military

barracks, followed also by their families, who were all deported to unknown places. These were the first exiles. The forcible deportation from Zeytoun started. First, the district of the monastery was deprived of its inhabitants and subsequently all the villages surrounding Zeytoun were deserted. Then the eagle-nest Zeytoun was ravaged.

The deportation and massacre of the Armenian population of Cilicia started in the spring of 1915. One after the other, Marash, Ayntap, Hadjn, Antiok, Iskenderun, Kessab and other Armenian-inhabited localities were deserted.

*Sürgünlük çıktı, köy boşaldı,  
Benim kıymetli malım Türklere kaldı,  
Çoluk-çocuk yolcu olduk,  
Alan-talan başladı.*

The exile started, the village was deserted.  
My valuable possessions were left to the Turks,  
The infant and old took the road,  
Robbery and plunder started.

[Sv. 2000: T. 366, p. 418]

The chairman of the missionaries in the Middle East, Johannes Lepsius, has noted, referring to the deportation of Zeytoun, in his secret report "Massacres of Armenia": "...The deportation of the whole Armenian population of Zeytoun took place within a short time. They were about twenty thousand in number and were divided into numerous caravans following one another. The town had four districts. The inhabitants were carried one after the other, the women and children being often separated from the male adults; since one male from each profession was allowed, only six men were permitted to remain. The deportation process lasted for several weeks. In the second half of May, the town of Zeytoun was completely evacuated. Of the denizens of Zeytoun six to eight thousand people were sent to the marshy regions of Karapunar and Suleimanieh situated between Konia and Ereyli, while the fifteen-sixteen thousand people were deported to Deyr-el-Zor, to the treeless plain of Mesopotamia near the Euphrates River. The endless caravans passed through Marash, Adana and Aleppo. Food was scarce, and nothing was being done to establish the deportees in some definite place or to bring the deportation to an end..." [Galoustian 1934: p. 178]

"The forcible deportation of the Armenians was only a fraudulently veiled death sentence," the French publicist René Pinon has written in his published work entitled "La suppression des Arméniens. Méthode allemande - travail turc" ("*The Extermination of the Armenians: German Method - Turkish Work*"). [Pinon 1916: p. 27]

On the roads of exile, the ruthless policemen and the criminals and murderers, set free from the prisons and wearing military uniforms, plundered and robbed everybody, ravished and dishonored the women and the girls.

The disarmed, leaderless and helpless Armenian people were driven, with tearful eyes, from their native flourishing homes under the strokes of whips and bayonets. The genocidal policy initiated by the Turkish government had embraced almost all the Armenian-inhabited localities.

A survivor from Bassen (Erzroom), **Ishkhan Haykazian** (born in 1909), shared his meditations with me: "...Sometimes I think of my past life: how could the Turks massacre the unarmed Armenian people so brutally. It's true that we also fought during World War II, we also killed people, but that was war and both sides had weapons. While, at that time, the Armenian people were completely defenseless and had no weapons..." [Sv. 2000: T. 93, p. 199]

The extermination of the Armenians was realized both on the spot and in the places of exile, in the vast deserts of Mesopotamia, especially in Rakka, Havran, Ras-ul-Ayn, Meskene, Suruj and Deyr-el-Zor.

**Martiros Gyoalian** (born in 1898), from Beylan, who, after enduring the hardships of deportation and exile, had found refuge among the desert Arabs and thus survived thereafter, remembered his past with deep indignation: "...The Turk's yataghan scattered the Armenians' homes. They plundered our properties, they turned our houses and fields upside-down and they drove us to the deserts of Arabia, hungry, thirsty and reduced to mendicity, we did not know where we were going..." [Sv. 2000: T. 175, p. 314]

**Mushegh Hakobian** (born in 1890), from Nicomedia, also remembered, with bitter regret, the sufferings of the roads of exile: "...They demolished our house, plundered what was inside and took away all the animals. On the road of exile, there came on order to collect a gold coin from every one of us. They were so pitiless that they made us return and walk the same road through hills and valleys anew so as to exhaust us completely. We had already no bread and no water..." [Sv. 2000: T. 228, pp. 368-369]

**Davit Davtian** (born in 1908), a survivor from Bursa, has told me: "...Our large family consisted of sixty-two people, only four survived. Some were drafted into the Turkish army and were massacred there, oth-

ers died or were slain on the roads of exile. My uncle, who had escaped with great difficulty from the Turkish army, was pursued and killed. My father had also escaped from the Turkish army and hid himself in a farm in Konia until the armistice. My mother, my sister and my grandfather fell ill with typhus, because they were infested with lice. We were walking on the arid steppes of Konia, thirsty and hungry..." [Sv. 2000: T. 235, p. 372]

A survivor from the town of Bursa, **Avetis Norikian** (born in 1909), has also narrated: "...We stayed there for four years. We gathered grass and the last grains of wheat in the fields and ate them. My grandmother died on the road. My three uncles and their families were exiled to Deir-el-Zor and all of them were massacred..." [Sv. 2000: T. 236, p. 374]

**Smbiyul Berberian** (born in 1909), from the town of Afion-Garahissar, was a diligent and active woman of eighty. When we requested her to narrate her past, she refused at first, she was moved to tears and started to hum all by herself. We found out later that that was the sad dirge she had composed. That sorrowful song, which was the story of her miserable life, interrupted, at times, her narrative. That was a whole tragedy. This is a passage from her memoir: "...I do not remember my father. The Turks had killed my father and had tortured and slaughtered my mother's brother. They drafted my elder brother into the Turkish army. Later they drafted also my younger brother. We heard afterwards that, together with seventeen other Armenian young men, they had massacred them by night and had thrown them under the bridge. Thus, when we were deported, there were no males left in our family. They took away my five aunts in Deyr-el-Zor; later they cut their heads, impaled the heads with their bayonets to show them to us and then they threw their corpses into the Euphrates. We found only half of the body of my mother's aunt. My mother buried her in the earth. They massacred everybody. My mother wept so much that she lost her eyesight..." [Sv. 2000: T. 200, pp. 335-336]

**Arshakouhi Petrossian** (born in 1903), another survivor from Yozghat, did not want to speak at first, arguing that her heart would not bear the tragic experience afresh. Later on, she gathered her forces and began to tell me her unending memoir, of which only a passage is presented: "...For six days we climbed the Yozghat mountains. There was no water, no bread. Our mouths had dried up. ...They led us like sheep. We suddenly saw behind us a group of robbed, tortured, beaten and bloody Armenians who approached us and started to cry, saying: 'We wish we

had joined you.' The gendarmes came over, started to yell and wanted to separate us from that group, saying: 'Don't mix with each other.' The latter were in a worse condition than we were, thirsty, hungry and wounded. During that commotion, a dark cloud unexpectedly came and covered us. The gendarmes lost sight of us. We started to help those Armenians with the little we had, a few crumbs of bread or a little grass, or else we tore our garments and bound up their wounds. We did not know that those ruthless, ungodly Turks would leave us soon in a similar state. The dark clouds dissipated and the gendarmes started again to strike us with whips and chains and ordered us to get going. They took us to houses supposedly to rest. At night they broke the doors and they attacked us with arms and plundered us. My mother had a few gold coins sewn under her garments. They took them also and left us completely naked.... A crier came on the following day and began to shout: 'Haydi, gâvur'<sup>13</sup> kesmeye gidelim, balta-kürek alalım, gâvur kesmeye gidelim' ('Come on, let us go and slaughter the gâvurs, take up your axes and spades, let us go and slaughter the gâvurs'). When I recall all these miseries, my heart stops beating. There was a Turkish village nearby. Turkish women came and started crying over us as if we were dead. Before butchering those wounded Armenians they removed all their clothes to search for hidden gold coins. Their tin cans were full of gold coins. They took the wounded Armenians and slaughtered them not far from us, on the border of the valley. Other Turks approached the massacred people to search for any gold coins left. ...We were crying our hearts out in despair and shivering. We were all women, girls and children, there were no adult males among us. There were only two seventeen-year-old boys, whom we had hidden under the bales. Tears and wails. Allah yardım olsun, hey, Türk, Allah'dan bulasin, alçak Türk! (God, save us, hey, Turk, may God Himself punish you, wicked Turk!). Then, several high-ranking officers came and began to talk with us gently: 'Sisters, mothers, we ask you to think well. Are you willing to become Turks or not? You have seen the slaughtered people. Would you like to be similarly treated? Isn't it better for you to become Turks, otherwise you shall also be butchered.' ...Alas, my child, what should I tell you, which one should I disclose to you? I suffered so many misfortunes...' [Sv. 2000: T. 212, pp. 345-346] And the sobs choked the poor old woman's throat.

<sup>13</sup> Gâvur (unbeliever) – special humiliating epithet used by the Turks to denote Christians.

**Samvel Patrian** (born in 1900), from Eskishehir, recalled the localities they had passed through during the deportation and the distress they had suffered: "...When the Turks exiled us in 1915, I remember how they led us, on foot, from Eskishehir to Sivrihissar, then to Haymana, Ghershehir and ultimately to Kayseri. What we have seen and suffered on the roads is unspeakable." [Sv. 2000: T. 204, p. 339]

"...Only I remained alive in our village," informed the 80-year-old **Eva Chulian** (born in 1903), a survivor from the region of Zeytoun: "The Turks came and drove us all out of the village. They were forcing us to march with whip strokes. They tied our hands behind and gathered us in a high place resembling military barracks. They disrobed us totally and we stood completely naked as the day we were born. Then they broke one's hand, another's arm, still another's leg with axes and daggers. Behind us a little boy, whose arm was broken, was crying and calling for his mother, but the mother had already died by an axe. That place was Deyr-el-Zor. It was very cold; we lay on each other to get warm. ...They came in the morning, assembled us and started once more to kill and drop the bodies in water. Below the cave, the River Khabur was flowing. They cut someone's head, another's leg, still another's hand and all these human parts were piled one upon another on the ground. Some were not yet dead, but had their bones shattered or their hand severed. Some were crying, others squeaking. There was the odor of blood on the one hand and hunger on the other. People who were alive started to eat the flesh of the dead..." [Sv. 2000: T. 140, p. 266]

**Aram Keusseyan** (born in 1908), from Harpoot, has also testified: "I was seven years old in 1915 when the order of deportation from Harpoot came. We set out duly dressed as if we were going to a wedding ceremony. The plunder started on the road, not once, but repeatedly; they robbed us in every possible manner. At the end, we were left with our underclothes, which were torn to pieces. I was in the cart. My mother used to close my eyes so that I would not see the dead people lying on the ground. Eventually, my mother and my brother were unable to walk and remained on the road. I do not know whether they died or not... The Turks were coming behind us and were collecting the children. We did not know if they would kill us or take us as their children. ...We had walked so much that we were exhausted. At last they ordered us to come to a halt. We stopped in a valley. They began to ask the adults: 'Are you Turkish or Armenian?'

*Those who replied, 'I am an Armenian,' were set apart and those who said, 'I am a Turk,' were put on another side. The ones that did not deny their Armenian origin were taken to a remote place and slaughtered. The others who agreed to become Turks were saved. At night, they gathered us, the children, on top of a small hill. We were so tired, that we lay down and fell asleep. At daybreak, we found out with horror that we were surrounded by innumerable cut human heads, which formed a hill; we had ignorantly slept all night on that hill of cut heads...* [Sv. 2000: T. 115, pp. 228-229]

The below-cited heart-rending dirge of the afflicted people has been woven under these ghastly impressions:

*The nightingale sings, it's spring,  
Don't uncover our wound; it's deep, deep,  
Oh! Merciful Lord, what is this Der-Zor?  
Weeping and weeping our eyes got blind!*

[Sv. 2000: T. 364, p. 418]

And since it was prohibited to speak Armenian, they had to express their sorrow and affliction mostly in the Turkish language.

I have written down these popular songs, which have a great historico-factual value, in different periods, from survivors of different localities and in different variants, a fact which testifies that the said songs, being the immediate reflection of those historical events, were of a nationwide character. Meanwhile, those quatrains of epic character entitled "*In the Desert of Deir-el-Zor*" (more than 70 in number) are linked to each other by their thematic similarity and their refrains, objectively depicting the inexpressible sufferings endured by the Armenians.

The Genocide survivor, **Yeghissabet Kalashian** (born in 1888), from Moussa Dagh, who is my first Turkish-language song performer, has narrated her mournful past: "*At the time we were in the Arabian desert; we were living like animals – no clothes, no manner of life, no washing, no drinking. Even during the fulfillment of our natural needs the gendarmes stood by, showing an indecent behavior to women and girls. Food? What food? We gathered grass, we grazed on grass like animals. If we found salt, we ate grass with salt. Sometimes Arabs were seen in the distance. The Arab Bedevis (Bedouins) had a lot of sheep but they had no houses and lived in tents. These Arabs took pity on us and occasionally gave us*

*some pilaf, which we ate voraciously, since life is sweet.... My three little children died on the roads of exile. That is why I am all alone at this age...* [Sv. 2000: T. 367, note 2, pp. 418-419]

This woman, aged seventy in 1956, who lived in the district of Vardashen, in Yerevan, was the first to communicate us quatrains of the Turkish-language Derzorlian series of songs created by the Armenians. She sang these, recalling her miserable past, the children she had lost, while the tears ran down incessantly from her eyes, her voice coarsened and she could not sing; she took a breath, started to sing anew and cry again.

According to the information provided by my narrators, the massacre began in April, on Easter Sunday, so that the Armenians, too, would be worthy of the Passion of Christ. "The Armenians will dye their Easter eggs with their own blood," said the Turks, while the affliction of the Armenians, turned into a song, resounded in a heart-breaking manner:

<i>Zatik-kiraki<sup>14</sup> çadır söktüler,</i>	They dismantled the tents on Zatik-Kiraki, <sup>14</sup>
<i>Bütün Ermenileri çöle döktüler,</i>	They drove all the Armenians into the desert,
<i>Keçi gibi Ermenileri kesdiler;</i>	They slaughtered the Armenians like goats,
<i>Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!</i>	Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

[Sv. 2000: T. 386, p. 421]

And the indescribable tortures of the Armenians began:

<i>Ağaçlardan kuş uçtu,</i>	The birds flew away from the trees,
<i>Yandı yürek tutuştu.</i>	My heart is on fire, blazing,
<i>Yanma, yüreğim, yanma!</i>	Don't burn, my heart, don't be afire!
<i>Bu ayrılık bize düşdü,</i>	This separation was our fate,
<i>Bu muhacırlık bize düşdü,</i>	This emigration was our fate,
<i>Bu Derzorluk<sup>15</sup> bize düşdü.</i>	This derzorlik <sup>15</sup> was our fate.

[Sv. 2000: T. 367, pp. 418-419]

Since the desert of Deyr-el-Zor had become the living cemetery of the Armenian Genocide, where there was no hope of salvation:

<i>Der Zor'a gidersem, gelemem belki,</i>	If I go to Der-Zor, I won't return may be,
<i>Ne eknek, ne su ölüürüm belki.</i>	Without bread, without water I'll die may be.

[Sv. 2000: T. 368, p. 419]

<sup>14</sup> The Armenian words "Zatik-Kiraki" (Easter Sunday) have been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>15</sup> Exile to Deyr-el-Zor.

The mass media was silent, while a laborious, creative and most ancient people were martyred and exterminated before the very eyes of the civilized mankind for the only sin of being Armenian:

*Der Zor'a varmadan* Before getting to Der-Zor  
*Ermeni muhaciri oturmuş* The Armenian exile sat,  
*Hüngür-hüngür ağlıyor...* And cried his heart out...  
[Sv. 2000: T. 368, p. 419]

because the condition of the Armenian people was horrible:

*Der Zor çölünde üç ağaç incir,* Three fig-trees in the desert of Der-Zor,  
*Elimde-kelepçe, boynumda zincir,* Handcuffs on my hands, a chain on my neck,  
*Zincir kıvıldıkca, yüreğim incir:* My heart aches every time the chain moves,  
*Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 391, p. 421]

The deported Armenians passed this death road barefoot and blood-stained, with thirsty lips under the scorching sun:

*Der Zor çölünde bitmedi yeşil,* Green grass did not grow in the desert of Der-Zor,  
*Kurşuna düzdüler elli bin kişi:* Fifty thousand people were shot down,  
*Meraktan döküldü milletin dişi,* The people's teeth fell down from affliction,  
*Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 388, p. 421]

And everything was stained with the blood of the shot people:

*Der Zor çölleri büründü duman,* The desert of Der-Zor was covered with mist,  
*Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!* Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
*İnsan ve yeşil boyandı kana* People and grass were stained with blood,  
*Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 370, p. 419]

The Armenian people were exterminated ruthlessly:

*Der Zor çölünde çürüdüm kaldım,* I rotted and remained in the desert of Der-Zor,  
*Karğalara tahin oldum, kaldım,* I remained and became a meal for the crows,  
*Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!* Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
*Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.* At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.  
[Sv. 2000: T. 409, p. 423]

Whereas the condition of the living was more disconsolate:

*Der Zor çölünde yaralı çoktur,* There are many wounded in the desert of Der-Zor,  
*Gelme, doktor, gelme, çaresi yoktur,* Don't come, doctor, don't come, it's useless,  
*Allah'dan başka kimsimiz yoktur,* We have no one but the Lord Himself,  
*Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 410, p. 424]

Lonely and helpless were the Armenian people in their distress, and the mournful song of the Armenian people was changed into a prayer to the "Almighty God":

*Çıka-çıkta çıktım yokuş başına,* I climbed and rose to the top of the mountain,  
*Neler geldi Ermeninin başına!* So many misfortunes fell on the Armenians!  
*Hızor<sup>16</sup> Allahım, hızor,<sup>16</sup> yetiş!* Almighty<sup>16</sup> God, Almighty,<sup>16</sup> help us!  
*Ermeni milletini kurtar, geçir!* Deliver the Armenian people. save us!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 432, p. 426]

The tragic condition of the people was contrasted with the radiant beauty of nature, in which the indifferent "Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun" to kill the Armenians:

*Sabahtan kalkdım, güneş parlıyor,* I got up in the morning; the sun was shining,  
*Osmanlı askeri silah yağlıyor,* The Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun,  
*Ermeniyeye baktım – yaman ağlıyor,* I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly,  
*Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 394, p. 422]

While the desert air was saturated with the stench of corpses:

*Der Zor'un içinde naneler biter,* Mint has grown in the desert of Der-Zor,  
*Ölmüşlerin kokusu dünyaya yeter,* The stench of corpses has spread all over the world,  
*Bu sürgünlük bize ölümden beter,* This exile is worse than death for us,  
*Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 381, p. 420]

Not only was the desert air polluted, but also the water was poisoned:

*Der Zor'un içinde zincirli kuyu,* A well with a chain in Der-Zor,  
*Ermeniler içti zehirli suyu...* The Armenians drank the poisonous water...  
[Sv. 2000: T. 421, p. 425]

The social evil was complicated also with a natural calamity: the typhoid epidemic:

*Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş,<sup>17</sup>* A row of apricot-trees in the desert of Der-Zor,  
*Ermeni muhaciri tifoya düşmüş,* The Armenian exiles were infected with typhoid,  
*Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!* Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
*Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.* At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.  
[Sv. 2000: T. 379, p. 420]

<sup>16</sup> The Armenian word "hzor-hzor" (almighty) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

<sup>17</sup> The Arabic word "mishmish" (apricot or apricot-tree) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

And in another variant:

*Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş,  
Ermeni muhaciri açlıktan ölmüş,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.*

A row of apricot-trees in the desert of Der-Zor,  
The Armenian exiles died of hunger,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.

[Sv. 2000: T. 380, p. 420]

There was no salvation from that widespread evil, since the condition of the living was more inconsolable. Then the bewildering scenes followed one another:

*Der Zor çölünde uzanmış, yatmış,  
Kellesi yoktur, ki yüzüne bakayım,  
Ermeniler bu güne olmuş,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!*

He was sprawling, lying in the desert of Der-Zor,  
He had no head so that I could see his face,  
The poor Armenians had such a fate,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

[Sv. 2000: T. 431, p. 426]

And their dull sighs of agony were heard:

*Sıvaz'dan çıktım başım selamet,  
Der Zor'a varınca koptu kıyamet,  
Bu kadar muhacir kime emanet?  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!*

I came out of Svaz with a serene head,  
There was a great turmoil in Der-Zor,  
Who are so many exiles entrusted to?  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

[Sv. 2000: T. 377, p. 420]

The countless corpses of the “*Armenians dying for the sake of faith*” were scattered everywhere, since the Ottoman soldiers had become “*butchers*”:

*Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,  
Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesaba,  
Osmanlı efradı dönmüş kasaba,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!*

The place called Der-Zor was a large locality,  
With innumerable slaughtered Armenians,  
The Ottoman chiefs have become butchers,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

[Sv. 2000: T. 373, p. 419]

The Armenian people were passing their death road in an indescribable suffering:

*Gide-gide, gitmez oldu dizlerim,  
Ağla-ağla, görmez oldu gözlerim,  
Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.*

Walking and walking, my legs were unable to move,  
Crying and crying, my eyes were unable to see,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.

[Sv. 2000: T. 382, p. 420]

Or something more horrible had happened: the deportees were com-

pelled to leave on the road their aged parents, who were unable to walk, and to continue on their way to death with tearful eyes and under the shower of whip strokes of the Turkish policemen. These details have been narrated and sung in different variants by **Gayané Atoorian** (born in 1909), from Zeytoun, and **Sirena Alajajian** (born in 1910), from Adabazar, whose faces had been tattooed with blue ink by the Arabs, as well as by many others:

*Der Zor çölünde yorıldım, kaldım,  
Anamı, babamı yolda bıraktım,  
Oy anam, oy anam halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.*

I stayed weary in the desert of Der-Zor,  
I left on the road my father and mother,  
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.

[Sv. 2000: T. 405, p. 423]

It is sufficient to cite here a quotation from the narrative of the well-known specialist in literature, **Garnik Stepanian** (born in 1909), a native of Yerznka: “...*We came out of Yerznka. There was a bitter frost. My grandmother Vardanush was walking on the road of exile with great difficulty. Suddenly she stopped and said: ‘Shoot me! Kill me! I can walk no longer.’ She sat on the ground. The gendarmes tried to drag her and finally left her on the road. They drove us forward.... We were marching and looking behind every now and then. It was snowing heavily and the snow was covering her entire body. Soon my grandmother became a statue of snow. ...We reached Malatia. It was already spring. They had massacred all the Armenians. There were mounds everywhere, under which fifty to a hundred people were buried. Some of them were still alive, since the earth over them was moving...*” [Sv. 2000: T. 95, p. 200]

An eyewitness survivor from Sebastia, **Andranik Gavoukjian** (born in 1905), has also referred to similar miseries of the deportation: “...*Thus, our misery started. The gendarmes were driving us forward with whips for we had to go a certain distance. Those who could not walk fell down and remained on the roadside. When the whip didn't help, they shot or killed them with bayonets, so they might not escape back. ...Thus, about one and a half million Armenians were massacred. Only very few survivors were collected, after the war, from the Syrian deserts...*” [Sv. 2000: T. 82, p. 178]

**Trvanda Mouradian** (born in 1905), a survivor from Harpoot, has also told me about the unspeakable atrocities perpetrated by Turkish gendarmes on the roads of exile: “*They took us out of our village, they con-*

*fined all the young people in a cave-like place, poured kerosene from an opening in the roof and set fire to them. Then they gathered all the women and smashed their heads with stones. They killed my mother and grandmother with stones, too. They separated the children like lambs from their mother-sheep. I had a three-year-old sister; they took her also, together with the other children near the Balou Mourad (Euphrates) River bridge, cut their throats and threw them into the river... Two gendarmes drove 500 people to exile..." [Sv. 2000: T. 112, p. 226]*

Another survivor from Meds Nor Gyugh of Bursa, **Ashot Ohanian** (born in 1905), remembered with emotion his mournful past: "...In 1914, the Turkish government collected all our adult males and drafted them in the Turkish army, after which they announced to all families: 'Hire carts, we are going a short distance. Those who had money hired carts. Those who hadn't came on foot. We were small children then; we held onto our mother's skirt and went on foot a great distance. Our first stop was Konia. Instead of entering the town, they kept us in the nearby mountains under the surveillance of gendarmes, hungry and thirsty. The following morning, they took us to Bozgur and still farther. We were walking on foot for days and weeks. Our feet were bleeding. The policemen were beating us with whips. Many could not endure the sufferings and died on the road. The corpses remained on the ground and were eaten by the wolves at night. We were still marching on foot. Our number had already diminished, since many had died. We reached a village called Idé. There they attacked us and the plunderers started shouting: 'Paranız yok? Çıkarınız!' ('Don't you have any money? Take them out!')." [Sv. 2000: T. 221, p. 361]

A 96-year-old survivor from Nicomedia, **Geghetsik Yessayan** (born in 1901), also recollected the inconceivable sufferings of the roads of deportation and exile: "At the time of the Armenian Genocide, in 1915, I was fourteen years old. The exile started. Our family was composed of twelve people when we set out. Only two survived. They beat us on the roads with whips, they tormented us, they did not give us water. We traversed, on foot, through the towns of Devlet, Eskishehir, Konia, Ereyli, Bozanti, Kanlı Geçit (Bloody Pass), Bab, Meskene, Abu Arar, Tigranakert, Deyr-el-Zor." [Sv. 2000: T. 231, p. 370]

An 80-year-old eyewitness survivor from Sebastia, **Suren Sarkisian** (born in 1902), recalled, in detail, his past days: "...After two days we arrived at the village of Ferendjelar, which was a small negligible village

*but which became notable in the history of the Armenian nation. According to the governmental plan, the people had to climb, on foot, up the Tavros Mountains and surmount a height of 3900 meters on their road of exile. Hundreds and thousands of caravans came here to their crucifixion, whence they went to their death. Women, children, newly born babies were being abandoned, forsaken and helpless. My sister Knarik remained there with her newborn infant. She was ill and was unable to walk. Ferendjelar (name of a locality – place of concentration of deportees)! Ferendjelar! Abandoned children, old, lonely women, diseased people lying here and there in agony, putrefied corpses under rags or in the streams."*

Then, the same eyewitness **Suren Sarkisian** reported about the horrible condition of the boys and girls: "...The next day the Kurds came, bringing with them the notorious Zeynal bey and his brothers, the wicked executioners. They collected among the caravan all the little boys, bound their arms and took them farther on the mountain top, where the bonfires were burning. There they cut their heads with axes and threw them into the valley. They had done the same to the children of the previous caravans. That is why that valley was called 'Kanlı dere' ('Valley of blood'). ...Our caravan, which was reduced to half, settled down in the south of Samosat, on the bank of the Euphrates River. Everywhere corpses, corpses, dead women and children on the sands, in the fields, everywhere we heard the moans of the half-dead, diseased people and saw the suppliant, help-seeking gazes of moribund people and beside them swollen, putrefied and stinking corpses, mainly of women. Dante's hell was on the bank of Euphrates. ...Then they brought girls in white clothes. In the darkness of the night, they impaled them all with sharp stakes. Our ears became deaf to their and their mothers' screams, cries and heart-rending clamors. They took us to Urfa and from there they drove us to a desert, where no people lived and there were only a few trees. It rained that night and a cold wind blew. At night hundreds of people died. They brought some Kurds and had a large pit dug. The Kurds fell on the people, trod on those who were lying, whether sick or dead, tied a rope around their necks, dragged them to the pit and threw them in. Then they returned to drag the next one. They even dragged away those who were alive, without paying attention to the screams and cries of their kinsfolk. From there they drove us south, to another deserted place. Women, sick with typhoid, were begging for water..." [Sv. 2000: T. 80, pp. 167-170]



Among the songs of Deyr-el-Zor, the tragic pictures of despoiled, child-deprived mothers and virgin girls form a separate series:

"*Şu dağın ardında Ermeni kızı var, "There is an Armenian girl on this mountain slope,  
Gidin, bakın çantasında nesi var?"* Go and see what she's got in her bag?"  
"Güzel gözleri var,  
Sırma saçları var." "She has beautiful eyes  
And has silky hair."

[Sv. 2000: T. 489, p. 437]

The Turkish policemen and commanders treated the Armenian girls and women with unspeakable cruelty:

*Sabahtan kalkdım kapı kapalı,  
Binbaşı geliyor eli sopalı,  
Uğruna bırakmış kör ve topalı,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* I got up in the morning and found the door closed,  
The major came, a club in his hand,  
The blind and the lame spread before him,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

[Sv. 2000: T. 392, p. 422]

**Karapet Mkrtchian**, from Tigranakert (born in 1910), narrated to me, with emotion and with a trembling voice, the images impressed on his childhood memory, murmuring at the same time the following lines:

*Der Zor'a geldi bir Şekir paşa,  
Atını bağladı delikli taşta,  
Ermeni sığmadı dağ ile taşta:  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* A certain Shekir pasha came to Der-Zor,  
He tied his horse to the hollow stone,  
No room was left for the Armenians in the valley,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

[Sv. 2000: T. 428, p. 426]

Subsequently, the same survivor, **Karapet Mkrtchian**, continued:  
"...Finally we came and reached the northern part of the desert of Deyr-el-Zor, the town of Merdin, where the train passed on its way to Aleppo. They made us stop there in a green field. There was a valley below. They separated us, the children, and took the adults towards the valley and made them stand in a line. There were about three to four hundred adults and we, the children, were nearly as many. They made us sit on the green grass and we didn't know what was going to happen. Breaking from the line, my mother came several times to us, she kissed and kissed us and went back. We, my elder brother, I and my one-year-old brother, saw from afar a line of women moving forward; our mother was among them. On coming out of our house, mother was dressed in her national costume – a velvet dress, embroidered in gold thread; her head was adorned with gold coins; on her neck was a gold chain; twenty-five gold coins were secretly sewn inside her dress on both sides. When our mother came for the last

*time and kissed us madly, I remember she was clad only in her white underwear; there were no ornaments, no gold and no velvet clothes. We, the children, were unaware of the events happening there. In reality, they had taken off their clothes, one after the other, had arranged the garments on one side, had stripped the women completely, had cut their heads with axes and had thrown them into the valley..."* [Sv. 2000: T. 128, pp. 242-243]

The following folk song has also been composed on the basis of these historical events:

*Sabahtan kalkdım, çantama baktım,  
Ağlaya-sızlaya boynuma taktım,  
Malımı-mülkümü dovlatı sattım,  
Pahasını sorsa: yarım ekmeğe!* I got up in the morning and looked at my bag,  
Crying and lamenting I hung it from my neck,  
I sold all my possessions to the State,  
For the price of half a loaf of bread!

[Sv. 2000: T. 398, p. 422]

That is why the Armenian mothers, who were deprived of the elementary conditions of survival, after giving away their properties to the Turkish government and the armed brigands and feeling their imminent death, preferred to leave their beloved children to the kind Arabs, in order to preserve the children's life in case they themselves would be martyred.

**Barouhi Chorekian** (born in 1900), from Nicomedia, told us:  
"...When they exiled us, we remained in the desert for twelve months. I and my three sisters fled to the forests. Swimming across the River Khabur (river flowing near Deyr-el-Zor), we arrived near the Arab Bedouins. They sheared our lice-infested hair; they tattooed our face with ink in order to hide our Armenian origin. They gave us their sheep to graze."  
[Sv. 2000: T. 229, p. 369]

A 90-year-old survivor, **Grigor Gyozealian** (born in 1903), remembered with a feeling of infinite gratitude the kind old Christian-Arab woman from the village of Muhardi on the road to Homs-Hama, who distributed in secret every evening the rice she had cooked and the pieces of bread thrust in her belt to the Armenian orphans lying exhausted at the base of the walls and then disappeared secretly in the darkness. [Sv. 2000: T. 163, p. 294]

The same fact has also taken a poetical form in the following song, where the child-deprived mother hurried to cross the river and find her child sheltered "in the Arab village":

*Yol ver, Habur,<sup>18</sup> yol ver, geçelim çölü,  
Evlatum çıs-çıplak Arabın köyü,  
Amanum yaman, halimiz yaman!  
Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.*

Khabur,<sup>18</sup> make way for me, let me cross the desert,  
My child is in the Arab village, bare and naked,  
Alas! Our condition was lamentable,  
At the time we were in the desert of Der Zor.

[Sv. 2000: T. 414, p. 424]

**Karapet Farashian** (born in 1906), from Balou, also related to me what he had seen: “...*A little later, a Turk by the name of Mehmet hoja (teacher), came and they told me to go with him. I remember he grabbed my hand and took me to the government house. He had me registered there as his foster-son under the name of “Hussein Islam” and took me to his village. When we were crossing over the bridge on the Aratsani River, built by Tigran the Great, I saw that the river was bloody. They took the Armenians there and, after cutting their throat, they threw them down the bridge, into the river; thus this place was named “Kanlı Geçit” (Bloody Pass). Mehmet hoja took me to his house in the country, in a locality called Gohanam. He introduced me to his wife and said: ‘I brought you a boy, his name is Hussein’...*” [Sv. 2000: T. 121, p. 234]

**Mariam Baghdishian** (born in 1909) has also narrated that she was five or six years old when, on the roads of exile, together with her sister, they played with the curls of their mother lying on the sands of the desert, unaware that she was already dead; then a certain Arab woman took her home, where the little Mariam carried water from the well with a jug over a four-year period. Once, when they wanted to tattoo her face with blue ink, she ran secretly away and took refuge in the Armenian orphanage with the help of a priest. [Sv. 2000: T. 168, p. 305]

*Türkler başladı evlat kaçırmaya,  
Analar kıymadı yüzü öpmeye,  
Baktım ki gizlice ağlıyor yaman,  
Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!*

The Turks started to kidnap children,  
Before mothers had time to kiss their cheeks,  
I saw them crying bitterly in secret,  
Armenians dying for the sake of faith!

[Sv. 2000: T. 402, p. 423]

A heart-rending account was related to me by an eyewitness of these tragic events, **Arshakouhi Petrossian** (born in 1903), from Yozghat: “...*And then they started to take away the girls, they slaughtered the women, they decapitated the children and kicked their heads to and fro like balls. They also took away Filor’s mother and slew her. They behead-*

*ed another woman breastfeeding her child. The child was still sucking his dead mother’s nipple, but they cut the child’s head, too, and used it as a football...*” [Sv. 2000: T. 212, p. 347]

**Evelina Kanayan** (born in 1909) from Iğdir also testified to similar atrocities: “...*The Turks were approaching. They cut open the bellies of pregnant Armenian women with their knives, took the babies out and impaled their heads on stakes. Iğdir was flooded with corpses...*” [Sv. 2000: T. 54, pp. 136-137]

The same fact has also been confirmed by **Loris Papikian** (born in 1903), from Erzroom: “...*On the way I saw how the Turks were laughing at Armenian girls and women. I came upon such a horrible, beastly scene that not a single barbaric people, in the entire world history – from pre-historic times to our days – had done to women. Four officers, the dregs of humanity, who had acquired the fierceness of wild hyenas and had lost their human form, were seated at a table, had gathered near them, standing, a group of pregnant women who would probably give birth in a few days, and they were betting whether the child in the woman’s womb was a male or female, and then they ordered the soldiers to open the woman’s womb with a dagger and bring the child out. What terrible atrocities have those human-like beasts perpetrated! If I hadn’t seen that spectacle with my own eyes and if anyone had told me about it today or if I had read it in books, I wouldn’t believe that such beastly actions could take place...*” [Sv. 2000: T. 90, pp. 193-194]

**Hambartsoum Sahakian** (born in 1898), from Sebastia, also testified to what he had seen with his own eyes: “*I remember, my step-mother was pregnant, they killed her, they thrust a sword into her belly, took out the baby, they began to laugh that it was a boy and then threw him on the ground. I can never forget that scene...*” [Sv. 2000: T. 79, p. 162]

Testimonies on analogous facts have also been given by the eyewitness survivor **Samvel Patrian** (born in 1900), from Eskishehir: “...*I recall the girls and the women who crossed themselves and jumped into the river in order not to fall into the hands of the gendarmes. In those times, people put much value on honor and loyalty. I remember one day two Turkish officers who made a bet on an Armenian pregnant woman:*

“*Şu karının karında nesi var?*” (“What is in this woman’s belly?”)

“*Gâvurdir: kız olur.*” (“She is a gâvur: it’s a girl.”)

“*Yok, oğlan olur.*” (“No, it’s a boy.”)

<sup>18</sup> Habur/Khabur – river flowing near Deyr-el-Zor.

*They made a bet and, before my very eyes, they cut open the woman's belly with a dagger. I have seen that with my own eyes. ...When we reached Kayseri, they gathered us all in a large hall. The governor of Kayseri came in and asked: 'Armenian sisters, has anybody annoyed you on the road?' Our Armenian women took courage and started telling him how the Turkish watchmen-gendarmes had beaten us at night, had taken away the Armenian girls and brides and had brought them back in the morning, exhausted. The governor got angry and said: 'Shame on them. And these are the sons of our nation...'. "* [Sv. 2000: T. 204, p. 339]

And in fact, the Turkish policemen had become butchers:

*Aman! Mahmud paşa, sen gel imana:* Ah! Mahmud pasha, have pity on us:  
*Candarmalar dönmüş kasaba,* The gendarmes have become butchers,  
*Amanım yaman, halimiz yaman!* Alas! Our condition was lamentable,  
*Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.* At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.  
 [Sv. 2000: T. 427, p. 425]

It happened also that the Turks kidnapped the children, raped the young brides and the girls and then, tying them up, threw them into the valley or into dried wells and, setting fire to them, burned them all alive:

*Ermenileri mağaraya doldurdular,* They gathered the Armenians in a cave,  
*Kirec döküp, ateş verip yaktılar,* They covered them with lime, set fire and burned them,  
*Amanım yaman, halimiz yaman!* Alas! Our condition was lamentable,  
*Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.* At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.  
 [Sv. 2000: T. 390, p. 421]

While the survivors wailed over their losses:

*Hayatın çeşmesi buz gibi akar,* Ice-cold water is flowing from the fountain in the yard,  
*Türk bacıları çadırdan bakar,* Turkish women are looking from the tent,  
*Ermeni geliyor elleri bağlı:* Armenians are coming with hands bound,  
*Analar ağlıyor – çocuğum diye,* Mothers are crying over their children,  
*Gelinler ağlıyor – kocam diye,* Brides are crying over their husbands,  
*Kızlar ağlıyor – namusum diye.* Girls are crying over their honor.  
 [Sv. 2000: T. 484, p. 436]

In this infernal turmoil, mothers lost their children; children lost their parents:

*Der Zor çölünde şaşırđım, kaldım,* I stayed confused in the desert of Der-Zor,  
*Yitirdim anamı, yitirdim babamı,* I lost my mother and father there,  
*Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!* Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,  
*Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.* At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.  
 [Sv. 2000: T. 406, p. 423]

It should be supposed that during this indescribable tumult, the parentless, helpless orphan children themselves have composed songs of this sort:

*Der Zor köprüsü dardır, geçilmez,* The bridge of Der-Zor is narrow and impassable,  
*Kan olmuş sular, bir tas içilmez,* The water is bloody and undrinkable,  
*Anadan, babadan vazgeçilmez,* It is hard to part with one's mother and father,  
*Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!* Armenians dying for the sake of faith!  
 [Sv. 2000: T. 422, p. 425]

Although the partly estranged Armenian orphan was compelled to express the grief of his soul in Turkish, however, he had not yet forgotten the sacred Armenian word "mayrik":<sup>19</sup>

*Yeşil kurban olayım geçen günlere, mayrik!* Let me be a tender sacrifice to the past days, mayrik!  
*Kırıldı kanatlarım, kaldım çöllerde* My arms were crumbled, I was left in the desert  
*Anasız, babasız, mayrik!* Without mother, without father, mayrik!  
*Düşdüm diyar gurbete, mayrik!* I found myself in alien places, mayrik!  
*Ya ben ağlamayım, mayrik,* If I don't cry, mayrik,  
*Kimler ağlasın, mayrik?* Who will cry then, mayrik?  
 [Sv. 2000: T. 486, p. 436]

Although the Armenian orphans, deprived of their fathers and/or mothers, who had taken refuge with foreign families, had forgotten their mother tongue, they had not, however, forgotten to cross themselves as Christians.

A survivor from Adabazar, **Sirena Alajajian** (born in 1910), whose beautiful face had been tattooed with blue ink by the desert Arabs, described to me how the orphan-collectors had, after the armistice, ascertained her Armenian origin by making her cross herself and had taken her to the Armenian orphanage. [Sv. 2000: T. 227, p. 367]

Another eyewitness survivor from Nicomedia, **Barouhi Silian** (born in 1900), whose face was also tattooed, communicated to me: "...We remained for twelve months in the desert. We had no bread, no water, no dwelling, nothing at all. From among our family of nine, only I remained alive; they killed my mother in front of my eyes, they took away my sister, my other younger sister, who was very young, fell ill and died, another sister got lost, we could not find each other. The gendarmes caught my sister-in-law, who was pregnant, and made a bet: 'What is inside this gâvur's

<sup>19</sup> The Armenian word "mayrik" (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

belly?' said one of them. The other cut open her belly with a sword before our eyes and replied: 'Gâvurs do not bear boys, see!' I fled, with four other girls, to the forest and then swam across a river. An Arab took me to his home and told me: 'My daughter, I know you have no similar custom, but let me tattoo your face with blue ink, so that they will not take you for an Armenian.' I cried. I had neither bed, nor clothes. They tattooed my face, they sheared my thick braids. I did the housework there..." [Sv. 2000: T. 230, p. 369]

There are also a great number of testimonies in the memoirs I have written down from the survivors concerning the murder or the forcible apostasy of Armenian children, since that was the ideological scheme outlined by the government. As Talaat pasha had said: "We have to square accounts with the Armenians." [Antonian 1921: p. 232] This official ideology was being put into practice by the Young Turk military officer-corps and the policemen, the gendarmes and the bandit gangs. That has been confirmed also by the narrative of **Satenik Doghramadjian** (born in 1903), from Sebastia: "...They had sent an order to the village saying: 'You must convert all the Armenians of the village to the Islamic religion, if not, you must set them on fire and burn them.'" [Sv. 2000: T. 81, p. 117]

The sermons of the Mohammedan sheikh were also in harmony with the governmental order. **Garegin Touroudjikian** (born in 1903), from Harpoot, has noted in his memoir: "'Whoever kills seven gâvurs,' sheikh (Muslims' spiritual leader) Aref said, 'will go to paradise...'" [Sv. 2000: T. 119, p. 232]

**Marie Vardanian** (born in 1905), from Malatia, has also testified to the same fact: "...The Mohammedan Turks said: 'Who kills a gâvur, his soul goes to paradise...'" [Sv. 2000: T. 124, p. 238]

Besides that, it happened also that the boys were abducted, circumcised, forced to speak only Turkish, while the girls were raped or killed by crucifixion.

The following popular song testifies also to that fact:

*Three mullahs dug the ground,*

*Ah, alas!*

*They buried the Armenian young man all alive,*

*Ah, alas!*

*They took away his sister and crucified her,*

*Ah, alas!*

*They brought her down the cross and threw her into the sea,  
Ah, alas!*

[Sv. 2000: TT. 350-351, p. 415]

**Yeghsa Khayadjanian** (born in 1900), from Harpoot, who was having frequent convulsions and was bitterly crying while relating her memories to me, also remembered: "...The Turks asked us: 'Now, will you become Turks or not?' The priest said: 'Pardon us, God.' They killed all the priests, old and young. They cut Mr. Gevorg's tongue: he was an Armenian Protestant teacher, who taught Armenian, and then they cut also his head..." [Sv. 2000: T. 108, p. 218]

**Rober Galenian** (born in 1912), from Harpoot, also alluded to the policy of Turkification and forcible apostasy conducted by the Young Turks: "...The Turks apostatized the small children. They made them say: 'Mohamed Rassul Allah (Mohammad is God's Apostle),' they circumcised them, they changed their names and forced them to speak Turkish..." [Sv. 2000: T. 118, p. 231]

In his testimony, **Hakob Terzian** (born in 1910), from Shapin-Garahissar, mentioned the joint cooperation of Turkish military men and spiritual leaders, the mullahs, in the realization of the same policy: "...I am already 79 years old. I am from Shapin-Garahissar. When we resisted the Turks, they killed some of us and they took the children of my age to the Turkish orphanage. They stripped us. The officer drew out his sword, put it on our throat and the mullah said: 'I give up the Christian faith and adopt the Islamic religion.' They made us repeat these words..." [Sv. 2000: T. 78, p. 161]

In 1999, I met by chance **Sarkis Saroyan** (born in 1911), from Balou (now a citizen of USA), in Paris, in one of the halls of the Louvre museum, where I wrote down, on the spot, his sorrowful recollections, in which he, too, confirmed and detailed that same fact, as to how they had forcibly Islamized him and the other males: "...A mullah came and he changed my name to Sefer. They circumcised me, my uncle and Hovhannes, whom they named Hasso. I remember: I felt a terrible pain. They burnt that part of my body as if by fire, put that excised piece of flesh in the sun to dry and kept it as a proof..." [Sv. 2000: T. 122, p. 237]

An 81-year-old survivor, **Harutyun Alboyadjian** (born in 1904), from Fendedjak, also recalled with bitterness his sorrowful childhood: "...When

they killed my parents they took me and other under-age children to the Djemal pasha<sup>20</sup> Turkish orphanage and Turkified us. My surname was '535' and my name was Shukri. My Armenian friend also became Enver. They circumcised us. There were many others who did not know Turkish, they did not speak for weeks, with a view to hide their Armenian origin. If the gendarmes knew about it, they would beat them with 'falakhas' (heavy club used as an implement of torture); the punishment consisted of twenty, thirty or fifty strokes on the soles or looking directly at the sun for hours. They made us pray according to the Islamic custom, after which we were compelled to say three times 'Padişahım çok yaşa!' ('Long live my King!'). We were clothed in the Turkish manner, a white robe and a long black, buttonless coat. We had a müdür (head-master) and several kho-jakhanums (women-teachers). Djemal pasha had ordered that we should be given proper care and attention, since he appreciated the Armenians' brains and graces and hoped that, in case of victory, thousands of Turkified Armenian children would, in the coming years, ennoble his nation and we would become his future support..." [Sv. 2000: T. 144, p. 269]

That is why, in order not to deny their faith, not to become the wife of a Turk and not to bear Turkish children:

...Hand in hand, Armenian girls threw themselves  
Into the Euphrates River...

[Sv. 2000: T. 362, p. 417]

wiping her tears, survivor **Mariam Baghdishian** (born in 1909) sang in a heart-breaking tone and continued, remembering her sad childhood:

<i>Giden, giden Ermeni kızlar!</i>	Armenian girls going, going!
<i>Bir gün ölüm bize düşer,</i>	One day death will come upon us,
<i>Düşmana avrat olmamaya,</i>	Before becoming the enemy's wife,
<i>Yeprat'in içinde ölüm bulayım.</i>	Let us find our death in the Euphrates.

[Sv. 2000: T. 496, p. 438]

**Mushegh Hakobian** (born in 1890), from Nicomedia, remembered with similar distressing impressions what he had seen with his own eyes

<sup>20</sup> Djemal pasha (1872–1922) – Turkish statesman, one of the leaders of the party "Unity and Progress," a member of the "Triple leading committee" (Talaat, Enver, Djemal) of the Young Turks, one of the principal criminals of the Armenian Genocide.

on the roads of exile: "...I saw with my eyes forty or fifty Armenian girls who, hand in hand, threw themselves from a height into the Euphrates River in order to escape the Turks. ...They lifted up little infants on their swords and slew them..." [Sv. 2000: T. 228, p. 369]

The memoirs of **Mkrtich Khachatrian** (born in 1907), from Shapin-Garahissar, also provide evidence to that fact: "...We reached Divrik. It was quite far, near Zvané, where the Euphrates and Tigris rivers joined. There the Armenian girls held each other by the hand, as if to dance, and threw themselves, near the Divrik valley, into the Euphrates River in order not to be raped... We weren't afraid of death, we were afraid of the Turks..." [Sv. 2000: T. 77, p. 161]

The eyewitness survivor, **Garnik Stepanian** (born in 1909), a native of Yerznka, has recalled with emotion other tragic events, too: "...We were near Deyr-el-Zor, in April, in a locality named Hekimkhana, when a dreadful thing happened. They had joined thirty beautiful brides from Zvané to our caravan. One night they took them all away. They had undressed them and had forced them to dance and amuse them. When they brought them back, with disheveled hair and in a disfigured state, they threw themselves, hand in hand, from a height into the Euphrates River." [Sv. 2000: T. 95, p. 200]

**Loris Papikian** (born in 1903), from Erzroom, remembered in more detail the said event, describing vividly what he had seen: "The Turkish gendarmes were feasting near the bridge around their tents and were having a good time with the Armenians girls and brides they had kidnapped and brought there by force to satisfy their lewd passions. I witnessed how the Turk officials had chosen the most beautiful Armenian girls, about thirty in number, had tied them together and wanted to transfer them, under the surveillance of sentries, to their dens for their further mean aims. But the girls, getting on the bridge over Euphrates, threw themselves, as one person and with lightning speed, from that dreadful height into the Euphrates River, instantly putting an end to their further tortures and torments. The girls' act filled the leaders of the Turkish gendarmes with fury: they ordered to tie all those alive – old people, women, children – and throw them into the river in groups. The deep river, which was more than 200 meters wide, was covered with human corpses and it looked as if blood was flowing instead of water..." [Sv. 2000: T. 90, p. 192]

Meanwhile, **Soghomon Yetenekian** (born in 1900), from Mersin, has

recalled with the same deep emotion what he had seen: "...I do not wish my enemy to see what we have seen on our way to Deyr-el-Zor. My heart stops beating when I remember all that... Girls and women, three to four hundred in number, united their belts, fastened themselves together and, one after the other, jumped into the Euphrates River, in order not to fall in the Turks' hand. The current of the river could not be seen then, the corpses had risen to the surface and were piled up one upon the other like a fortress; the dogs got enraged by eating human flesh..." [Sv. 2000: T. 188, p. 322]

**Aharon Mankrian** (born in 1903), from Hadjn, also, confirmed the same fact, remembering the scenes he had witnessed: "...The water of the Euphrates was bloody, it was impossible to drink it; the corpses floated down the current..." [Sv. 2000: T. 145, p. 271]

That historical event has also been expressed in poetic language and converted into a verse:

<i>Der Zor çölleri taştır, geçilmez, Yeprat getirin' suları acıdır, Bir tas içilmez! Ermeni kanıyla su da içilmez.</i>	The desert of Der-Zor is stony and impassable, The waters of the Euphrates River are bitter, You can't drink a single cup! You can't drink water mixed with the blood of Armenians.
	[Sv. 2000: T. 420, p. 425]

The Armenian people were martyred in the cruelest manner; few people miraculously returned from the roads of forcible deportation and exile:

<i>Meyvasız ağaçlar meyvaya döndü, Muhacir gidenin yarısı dönmedi.</i>	The fruitless trees became laden with fruits, Half of the deportees did not come back.
	[Sv. 2000: T. 434, p. 426]

An eyewitness of these events, **Poghos Supkukian – Ashugh** (Minstrel) **Develli** (born in 1887), from Moussa Dagh, communicated to me in 1956 his staggering impressions about the deportation from Cilicia in the form of the following ballad he had composed spontaneously:

*The Turk pashas Enver and Talaat  
Instigated the exile  
And totally exterminated the Armenian nation.  
Plague on them! They ordered  
In nineteen hundred and fifteen  
The massacre of the Armenians of Cilicia!*

<sup>21</sup> The Armenian word "get" (river) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

*What was the sin of the little infants?  
If only those sword-holding hands were broken!  
How can we forget the Armenian children?  
They threw themselves in water together with their sisters,  
No one protected the Armenian nation.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 360, p. 416]

And indeed, "no one protected the Armenian nation," which, unarmed and deprived of its leaders, was being driven along the roads of exile. The deportation and massacre initiated by the tyranny of the Young Turks had, within a few months, attained enormous proportions, involving the regions of Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia. The towns of Svaz, Shapin-Garahissar, Harpoot, Malatia, Diarbekir, Izmit, Bursa, Ankara, Konia and the other Armenian-inhabited localities of Central and Western Anatolia were being deserted one after the other.

**Vardges Alexanian** (born in 1911), from Van, terminated his memoir with the following conclusion: "...I often think, ...why did England, France, Germany allow so many Armenians to be massacred, so many children to become orphans, waifs and strays... I have come from Western Armenia. The Turks wanted to take possession of Armenia and with the consent of Germany, France and England, Western Armenia passed under the Turkish rule. The Armenians have never been aggressors. The Turks have always attacked, killed, drowned and martyred us..." [Sv. 2000: T. 46, p. 126]

During these tragic days, however, the bold spirit of heroism, coming from the depth of centuries and inherited with the blood, reawoke in the soul of the Armenian people, who preferred "cognizant death" to slavery and decided to withstand violence with joint forces.

Under the circumstances of the extensive slaughter organized by the Young Turks, the Armenians were able to organize, in a number of regions, an uneven combat against the superior forces of the Turkish army, but these self-defensive battles were fought without a definite plan, in a spontaneous manner and isolated from one another. Nevertheless, as a result of those heroic battles, tens of thousands lives were saved from the Young Turks' atrocities in Van, Shatakh, Moosh, Sassoon, Shapin-Garahissar and elsewhere.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, an order for the deportation of the Armenians of

Kessab arrived. During these very days, the Very Reverend Tigran Andreassian, a preacher, escaping from the group of people deported from Zeytoun, had returned to his native Moussa Dagh and had told about the inexpressible sufferings of the poor exiles. Seeing that their turn would come soon, nearly all the inhabitants of the seven villages of Moussa Dagh united together, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July, and decided to disregard the disastrous order of deportation.

**Movses Panossian** (born in 1885), a 106-year-old participant of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh, narrated those events to me with a juvenile ardor peculiar to him, recalling the oath of the inhabitants of Moussa Dagh: *"I was born here, I will die here. I will not go as a slave to die with tortures under the enemy's order; I will die here, with a gun in my hand, but I will not become an emigrant."* [Sv. 2000: T. 156, p. 282]

The details of that historical event have been related to me by the participants of the heroic self-defensive battles of Moussa Dagh, **Movses Balabanian** (born in 1891), **Hovhannes Ipredjian** (born in 1896), **Tonik Tonikian** (born in 1898) and many other natives of Moussa Dagh. [Sv. 2000: TT. 156-171, pp. 279-306]

Another participant of the heroic battle of Moussa Dagh, **Poghos Supkukian – Ashugh** (Minstrel) **Develli** (born in 1887) has, with the dignity of the inhabitants of Moussa Dagh, communicated to me the epopee he had composed, of which a passage is presented below:

*Yessayi Yaghoobian's words resounded:*

*'Let us all go up the mountain,' he said,*

*'We will not bend our necks before the enemy,*

*Let us strike, be stricken and die on our land.'*

[Sv. 2000: T. 360, p. 416]

Everybody was filled with the feeling of protest and vengeance. Men and women, children and old people left their homes and orchards and ascended the inaccessible summit of Moussa Dagh to defend their honor and dignity, to withstand the attack and to fight against the innumerable soldiers of the enemy. All, without exception and without delay, started, in an orderly manner, to set up tents, to dig trenches, to build ramparts with solid walls, leaving small embrasures from inside. In some places, they cut down the thick forest to enable them to see the enemy. Even the little boys, the so-called *"telephone boys,"* worked as signal men. The women

organized the food, the girls and the young brides carried water for the fighters from afar. Step by step, the enemy approached the positions of the Moussa Dagh fighters, but gunfire opened from different spots created the impression of a complete encirclement and the Turks fled, terror-stricken, leaving hundreds of dead soldiers.

During fifty-three days, violent battles were fought under the command of Yessayi Yaghoobian, Petros Demlakian and the Very Reverend Tigran Andreassian. During this period, four serious battles took place on the heights of Kezeldja, Kuzdjeghaz, Damladjik and Kaplan-Duzagh. On this occasion, the following imposing popular historical-epic song has been woven:

*We are courageous Moussadagh braves,  
We are all well-trained gun-carriers,  
The Turks want to deport us  
And exterminate us in the deserts.*

*We do not wish to die like dogs,  
We wish to leave a good memory,  
To die with glory is an honor for us,  
To be martyred is our nation's praise.*

*We are mountaineers, all of us braves,  
We will not bow before the enemy,  
We will fight courageously like lions  
And will scatter the army of the Turks.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 539, p. 446]

The enemy concentrated new forces to chastise the rebellious Armenians. The provisions and armaments of the Moussa Dagh people were exhausted. The heavy rain had rendered the three hundred shot-guns they had, all in all, unfit for use. Being in despair and hoping to receive aid from the sea, they tied white bedsheets together, they wrote on one of them *"The Christians are in danger, save us!"* and on the other they drew the sign of the Red Cross and displayed them on the mountain slope overlooking the sea.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, the French battleship "Guichen" passing off-

shore in the Mediterranean Sea noticed them and slowed down its course. With a metallic box, containing a petition written in foreign language and hung from his neck, Moses Gereguian jumped into the sea. He reached the ship swimming and, crossing himself, presented the letter to the captain. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, the French steamship "Jeanne d'Arc," escorted by British battleships, approached Moussa Dagh and, taking on 4200 inhabitants of Moussa Dagh, transported them to Port-Saïd, where they were sheltered under tarpaulin tents.

The Moussa Dagh people lived in Port-Saïd for four years, during which they earned their living by comb-making, spoon-making, rug-making, embroidery and other national handicrafts.

When relating their childhood memoirs, the survivors still remembered the way they had learned the Armenian alphabet by writing the letters on the hot sands of the desert with their fingers, up to the time when the Siswan School, established by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, began to operate in some tents, in addition to the hospital and the orphanage.

The heroic Moussa Dagh people who have fought for their freedom have poetically described their exploit with the following popular historical-epic song:

<i>Osmanlının askerleri,</i>	The Ottoman soldiers,
<i>Musa dağın yiğitleri,</i>	The braves of Moussa Dagh,
<i>Bin-binlerce martinleri,</i>	The rifles in thousands and thousands,
<i>Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!</i>	Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!
<i>Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!</i>	You became famed all over the world!

<i>Osmanlının bombaları,</i>	The Ottoman bombs,
<i>Musadağ'ın metarışları,</i>	The ramparts of Moussa Dagh,
<i>Bin-binlerce topları,</i>	The cannons in thousands and thousands,
<i>Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!</i>	Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!
<i>Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!</i>	You became famed all over the world!

<i>Fransızın vapurları,</i>	The French steamships,
<i>Musadağ'ın duaları,</i>	The prayers of the Moussa Dagh people,
<i>Gelin, kızlar, çocukları,</i>	The brides, the girls and the children,
<i>Uyan, Musadağlı, uyan!</i>	Wake up, Moussadaghian, wake up!
<i>Nam kaldırdın cümle cihan!</i>	You became famed all over the world!

[Sv. 2000: T. 538, p. 446]

The heroic battle of Moussa Dagh shook the world; it demonstrated to the world the immense capabilities of a handful of people who have heroic traditions and unanimous will power.

In his book "The Forty Days of Moussa Dagh," the notable Austrian writer Franz Werfel has artistically depicted in vivid colors the exploit of the Moussa Dagh people. However, the world did not pay attention in due time to the alarm raised by the great Austrian writer and a greater evil, Fascism, was born, as a consequence of which 6 million innocent Jews and millions of people of other nationalities were martyred.

In May 1915, the new mutasarrif (governor) of Urfa (Yedessia), an Ittihad member, Ali Haydar organized the arrest of forty local Armenian notables and demanded from all the Armenians to hand over their arms in forty-eight hours. At the end of July, the enlightened primate of the Armenian Diocese of Urfa, the Very Reverend Artavazd Galenterian, was put under arrest. In August, one thousand five hundred young Armenian recruits from Urfa were slain in the localities of Gutemé and Karaköprü. Subsequently, they apprehended one hundred Armenian tradesmen and collected bribes from their kinsfolks saying that they would let them free, but they killed them all. They captured also one hundred others, who were destined to the same lot. In those days, the caravans of the exiled Zeytounis and of the poor Armenians deported from the other provinces of Turkey, all, dispossessed of their valiant youths, arrived in Urfa, together with the sobs and laments of the child-deprived mothers, the horrifying stories about the young girls and innocent infants. The thirty-five thousand denizens of Urfa decided, after a special deliberation, to have recourse to arms similar to the inhabitants of Moussa Dagh.

In October 1915, the heroic self-defense of Urfa was organized, under the command of Mkrtitch Yotneghbayrian and Harutyun Rastkelenian. The whole Armenian population of Urfa rose up. Children and old people, boys and girls fought like one man, in self-oblivion, during twenty-five days and nights uninterruptedly. The Armenian quarters were divided into six fighting regions, where eight hundred fighters were positioned. The Urfans took an oath: "We are ready to die the arm in our hands." [Sahakian 1955: p. 818]

However the Turkish policemen and the rabble made a new attack and occupied the Armenian Catholic Church. The Urfans let the enemy soldiers invade the Armenian quarter and, lying in ambush, annihilated them.



Their intrepidity had become proverbial.

*Urfa büyük, ayrılmaz,* Urfa is large; it cannot be separated,  
*Dibi gayım, dağılmaz,* Its ground is firm; it cannot be dispersed,  
*Urfa'nın yiğitleri* The braves of Urfa  
*Hiç bir yerde bulunmaz.* Are alone of their kind.

[Sv. 2000: T. 542, p. 447]

Meeting an obstinate resistance, a regular army composed of six thousand soldiers under the command of Fakhry pasha was sent to Urfa, to which were joined twelve thousand brigands. The defenders of Urfa opposed a heroic resistance and inflicted heavy losses on the Turkish murderers. Fakhry pasha, enraged, declared in a worried tone: "What will our situation be if, in these critical days, several Urfas stood against us?" [Arzoumanian 1969: p. 453]

Seriously wounded in the knee and lying on a stretcher, Mkrtich Yotneghbayrian passed from one position to another and encouraged the fighters. Fakhry pasha sent a mediator, the German factory-owner M. Eckart, to M. Yotneghbayrian, exhorting him to stop the battle and to surrender. But the heroic son of Urfa answered him: "If you have the feelings of a civilized and Christian man, save the innocent Armenian nation, which is being massacred in the deserts!" [Memory-Book 1965: p. 804]

The next day, the enemy tightened the siege and destroyed the Armenian quarter with a heavy cannonade. The condition of the Armenians became more critical day after day. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, the Turks invaded the Armenian quarter and cruelly slaughtered the devoted heroes of Urfa and deported the surviving eight hundred families of the neighboring Armenian-inhabited village of Kamurdj to Deyr-el-Zor and ruthlessly massacred the majority of them on the road.

These historical events were narrated to me by three of the survivors of Urfa, **Khoren** (born in 1893), **Khacher** (born in 1893) and **Nvard** (born in 1903) **Ablabutians**. [Sv. 2000: TT. 132-134, pp. 246-254]

Thus, the deportation and the massacre had already embraced the entire Ottoman Turkey. As a consequence of the inhuman and Armenian-annihilating policy conducted by the government of Young Turks, more than one and a half million Armenians became the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian exiles, dispossessed of their dwellings and properties, of their beloved kinsfolk, who had experienced all the afflictions of the

deportation and the genocide, have, on their road to death, expressed their indignation with curses:

*Şu muhacirlik icat eden* May the person who planned this exile  
*Cennet yüzü görmesin!* Be unworthy of paradise!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 433, p. 426]

Or:

*Şu sürgünlük icat eden* May the person who planned this exile  
*Cehennem yoluna kurban olsun!* Be sacrificed on the road to hell!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 434, p. 426]

The Armenian people have cursed also the leaders of the Turkish government, especially Talaat and Enver, who had systematically organized the monstrous massacre of the Armenian people:

*Atımı bağladım delikli taşta,* I tied my horse to the hollow stone,  
*Kör olasın sen, Enver paşa!* You should lose your sight, Enver pasha!  
*Sen olmayaydın, sen gebereydin,* You shouldn't have been born, you should perish,  
*Şun<sup>22</sup>-Talaat paşa!* You, hound-Talaat pasha!  
*Ermenileri dağıttın dağlardan taşta.* You dispersed the Armenians in mountains and deserts.  
[Sv. 2000: T. 449, p. 428]

Besides the songs, the eyewitness survivors have also referred in their memoirs to the leaders of the Ittihad government, who organized that massive carnage. According to **Yervand Karamian** (born in 1903), from Hadjn: "*In 1915, Talaat, Djemal and Enver pashas had come to an agreement and had schemed their plans together. Hence, when they deported us, they plundered us from all sides and took away all our properties. They attacked us with daggers and brutally slaughtered everybody...*" [Sv. 2000: T. 146, p. 271]

Criticizing the deportation organized by the government of Young Turks, a survivor from Zeytoun, **Samvel Ardjikian** (born in 1907) told me the following: "...*Talaat, Djemal and Enver pashas organized that all the Armenians should be slain with poniards. I was seven years old when we came out of Zeytoun. The Ottoman government deported the Armenians without shoes and without bread.... It was a murdering, robbing and plundering government.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 142, p. 267]

Referring to the mode of action of the Ittihad government, a survivor from Sebastia, **Khoren Gyulbenkian** (born in 1900), added: "*The government had instigated the Turkish people against the Armenians, saying*

<sup>22</sup> The Armenian word "shoon" (hound) has been used in the Turkish-language song

*that the latter were infidels, that they were covetous of the Turkish lands; consequently, to tear them to pieces and to kill them would not be sinful.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 87, p. 182]

During the years of his office as the Ambassador of the United States of America in Turkey (1913-1916), Henry Morgenthau condemned the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Ittihat government, Talaat pasha, exhorting him to discontinue the violence with regard to Armenians and declared: "...The Americans are outraged by your persecutions against the Armenians. You must base your principles on humanitarianism, not on racial discrimination, otherwise the United States will not regard you as a friend and an equal... You will find the public opinion against you everywhere and particularly in the United States. Our people will never forget these massacres. The Americans will always bear the Turks a grudge for the massive extermination of Christians in Turkey. They will look upon it as nothing but willful murder and will seriously condemn all the men who are responsible for it. You will not be able to protect yourself relying on your political regulations and say that you acted as Minister of Interior and not as Talaat. You are defying all ideas of justice as we understand the term in our country..." [Amerikyan despan 1990: pp. 278-279]

While Talaat pasha had declared boastfully: "In solving the Armenian problem, I did more work in three months than Abdul Hamid had done during thirty years." [Amerikyan despan 1990: p. 284]

An eyewitness-survivor from Malatia, **Verginé Nadjarian** (born in 1910), also testified to that fact: "...*The Turks took into consideration neither children, nor adults. The Turks said: 'We will exterminate the Armenian nation, so as to leave one Armenian in the museum...'*" [Sv. 2000: T. 125, p. 240]

As it can be seen, the Armenophobic policy adopted by the government of Young Turks had also its effect on the sentiments of certain public strata. A number of unfavorable expressions with respect to the Christians and particularly the Armenians, which circulated in that period, testify also to that fact: "*Ters gâvur*" (Malicious gâvur), "*Nankör gâvur*" (Ungrateful gâvur), "*Gâvura iyilik yaramaz*" (It isn't worth being good to the gâvur), "*Gâvuru ne kadar kesersen, o kadar sık biter*" (The more you slay the gâvur, the thicker he grows), or the proverbs-sayings, which are used in the popular spoken language: "*İt derisinden kürk olmaz, Türk Ermeniye dost olmaz*" (Dog-skin cannot become a fur, the Turk cannot

become a friend to the Armenian), etc. [Svazlian: Personal archive. Unpublished materials. **Ashkhen Poghikian's** testimony (born in 1908, Erzroom)]

However, there were a significant number of individuals among the Turkish population, who, exposing their lives to danger, rescued Armenian adults and children. I have written down historical tales concerning this fact in 1996 and 1997 from grateful representatives of the Armenian Community in Turkey. [Sv. 2000]

Referring to the historical events, it should be pointed out that in the days of the First World War, in 1916, two of the Allied countries, England and France, had signed a secret agreement (Sikes-Picaud) that, in case of the defeat of Turkey, Cilicia, having two million six hundred thousand hectares of arable and fertile lands, would pass under the supervision of France. The English and French authorities had agreed with the Armenian National Delegation that, if the Armenian volunteers fought against Turkey, the Armenians would enjoy ample political rights after the victory and the Armenian volunteers would constitute the garrison of the towns of the newly formed Autonomous Armenian Cilicia.

Consequently, Armenian young men from the Turkish army, from the roads of exile, from various places and even from America (natives of Moussa Dagh, Ayntap, Marash, Kessab, Hadjn, Hoosenik, Chengoosh, Sebastia, Harpoot, Arabkir and other localities) were enlisted in the French Army, creating the Oriental (Armenian) Legion.

The Armenian volunteers, filled with a feeling of vengeance for their numerous innocent martyred kinsfolk and defying death, defeated the Germano-Turkish armies and won the magnificent victory of Arara, near Nablous – Palestine. These historical events, too, have found their artistic reflection in popular Turkish-language songs:

<i>Birer-birer saydım dört sene oldu,</i>	One by one I counted four years,
<i>Ermeni askeri Nablus'u aldı,</i>	The Armenian soldiers occupied Nablous,
<i>Ermeni askeri bin beş yüz kişi,</i>	They were one thousand five hundred in number,
<i>İngiliz, Fransız şaşdı bu işe.</i>	The English and the French were amazed.

[Sv. 2000: T. 451, p. 428]

And indeed, the French and the British commanders-in-chief praised the brave Armenian legionaries. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 1918, General Allenby sent a telegram to the President of the Armenian National Delegation, Noubar Pasha, saying: "I am proud to have the Armenian

regiment under my command. They fought courageously and had a great share in the victory.” [Keleshian 1949: p. 592]

When the government of the Young Turks was overthrown, their activities, in general, and their anti-Armenian crimes, in particular, were condemned both in Turkey and in the whole world. The new rulers, who were subject to the Entente States, adopted the position of condemning the leaders of the Young Turks’ regime.” The eminent Armenian historian, the political figure and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, John Kirakossian, in his book “The Young Turks Before the Judgement of History” has cited the testimonies of Turkish and foreign newspapers and political men, as well as documents of the Turkish archives, which also confirm the absolute truthfulness of the testimonies communicated by our popular eyewitness survivors. Here are a few quotations:

“...During the months of November-December, 1918, the pages of the press in Constantinople were full of abundant testimonies favoring the elucidation of the truth. The newspapers published copies of the anti-Armenian orders and circulars of Talaat, Behaeddin Shakir and Nazim. One of them contained the following sentence: “Carry out exactly the orders given to you concerning the murder of the Armenians.” (“Zhamanak,” Istanbul, 11.12.1918) In the same issue of that newspaper there was also published Behaeddin Shakir’s circular in cipher, written in verse and addressed to the provincial governors as a signal:

<i>Silah patlamasin,</i>	No gun should be fired!
<i>Asker yapmasin,</i>	No soldier should be involved!
<i>Ermeni kalmasin,</i>	No Armenian should remain!
<i>Buyukleri kesmeli,</i>	Slaughter the adults!
<i>Guzelleri secmeli,</i>	Choose the pretty ones!
<i>O birleri surmeli.</i>	And exile the rest!

The Turkish newspaper “Alemdar” had expressed, in 1918, its views about Talaat and his companions: “They hanged, killed, exiled and slaughtered and, at the same time, they ordered to slaughter, to exile and to kill the Armenians. They are double murderers, since they gave orders to kill and they killed.” (“Renaissance,” Istanbul, No. 127, 30.04.1919)

The Turkish newspaper “Istiklal” had confessed: “The First World War engendered in us a spirit of brutality and immorality. To deny the bitter truth means to deny the sunlight.” (“Renaissance,” Istanbul, No. 173, 22.06.1919)

The president of the Senate of the Legislative Assembly, Ahmed Riza, a former political figure of the Young Turks, declared: “For all the faults and crimes, the massacres, the public offenses..., the confiscation of estates and buildings ... and the oppressions committed by the government since the day of our participation in the war (30<sup>th</sup> of October, 1914) till the overthrow of the government of Talaat pasha (7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1918), I have demanded the prosecution to find out all the criminals at once and to start legal proceedings against them.” In accordance with this formulation, the Senate passed a takrir (resolution – V. S.), which was sent to the executive authorities. (“Zhamanak,” Istanbul, 05.11.1918) In reply to Ahmed Riza’s formulation, the Minister of Justice noted: “For the offenses committed during the deportation, the governors and the military men should, in all cases, be brought to trial in ordinary courts of law as ordinary people.” (“Zhamanak,” Istanbul, 25.07.1918) When they started to arrest the governors and the other officials, the Turkish newspaper “Tasfiri Evkyar” published the following article entitled “From the palace to the prison dungeon,” where the following lines were printed: “It is really sad that many of these personalities were enjoying, two months ago, glory and honor in our provinces and today they are taken to prison as ordinary criminals. It is difficult to comprehend why these people did not think that one day they would also be called to account for all the crimes perpetrated by the government of Talaat pasha, even if we were triumphant in the war.” (“Renaissance,” Istanbul, No. 7, 15.12.1918) “We have no doubt, that, if requested, the libraries of Istanbul or Ankara can immediately put at the disposal of the Turkish State officials the collections of “Renaissance,” “Tasfiri Evkyar” and other newspapers. Let them read and study their own country’s history ... and stop lying,” concluded John Kirakossian and continued, “at the end of 1918, the ‘Ittihad’ party [and] the Young Turks were outlawed in Turkey. The European public opinion was strictly anti-Young Turk. The eminent orientalists, the German Josef Markwart and the French Jacques de Morgan demanded publicly to take into the International Tribunal for trial the principal criminals of the Armenian-massacring policy. In his speech delivered in January 1919, the German scientist Josef Markwart demanded from his government to make every effort to find Enver, Talaat and the other criminals, to hand them over to the Entente, to bring them to trial in the International Tribunal.

...The international public opinion was following and was comment-

ing, on a large scale, the different aspects of Turkish life after the end of the war. The newspapers published testimonies of eyewitnesses relating about the anti-Armenian policy of the Turkish criminals.

...Already in the years 1918-1919, a great number of books were published in the West, in which the authors not only condemned the criminals, but also demanded that their lawsuit be organized with the participation of representatives from the Entente and the USA.

...On July 13, 1919, the "New York Times" informed that "Turkey had condemned its military leaders of the period," that the military tribunal had sentenced to death Enver pasha, Talaat pasha and Djemal pasha and that "the three of them had taken to flight." The paper informed also that Djavid bey and several others (including the Sheikh-ul-Islam) had been condemned to fifteen years of penal servitude.

...The court sessions continued for months. ...Two charges were imputed to the Young Turk leaders: the involvement of Turkey in the war and the extermination of the Armenian nation. **This was already the official recognition** of the monstrous crime perpetrated by the government officials of the Young Turks," has concluded J. Kirakossian. [Kirakossian 1983: pp. 163, 170-171, 176, 208]

The Treaty of Sèvres, signed after the war, provided that the Entente countries should establish a supervision over Cilicia and that the Turkish troops should have already been evacuated from Cilicia. Numerous Armenian deportees, miraculously rescued from Deyr-el-Zor, Ras-ul-Ayn and other living cemeteries, exhausted, emaciated and destitute, gradually returned and resettled in Cilicia. With hope and faith with regard to the future, they began to restore the ravage and to cultivate the abandoned orchards. The Turks, however, succeeded in coming to an agreement with the Allied States and urged the French to evacuate their peace-maintaining forces from Cilicia.

Not only did the French military administration not undertake serious measures to ensure the security of the Armenians, but they left the local authority in the hands of the Turkish military officials, who, furthermore, were not disarmed.

Ignoring the Treaty of Sèvres and taking advantage of the indecision and weakness of the French military administration, the Turkish forces and the local bandits directed their arms towards the Armenian population of Cilicia.

Starting from January 1920, the Turkish forces launched an attack on the Armenian localities of Cilicia. During the violent battle, which lasted for twenty-two days, the Armenians of the town of Marash were slaughtered and burned to ashes.

A miraculously saved eyewitness from Marash, **Verginé Mayikian** (born in 1898) narrated us in detail the horrifying events she had seen, bitterly reliving her grievous past: "...*Karapet agha was very rich, he was a very skilled shoemaker. He made the shoes of the Turk leader of Marash, Jutki efendi (sir) and felt very safe, but as he had no weapon, he couldn't defend himself. One night, breaking the gate of the garden, the Turk rabble rushed in, entered his house, killed every member of his family, from old to infant, threw them into the well of the garden; they plundered his property and shared it among themselves. After this event the Armenians began to think about self-defense. They transferred, for safety, the women and the children to the church of Karassoun Mankants (Holy Martyrs'). The Karassoun Mankants Church was the largest and safest church, since it was surrounded by ramparts. They transferred there all the women, the young brides and the children of our region, on the whole, more than two thousand people. It was simply crammed. The altar, the vestibule and the upper hall were full of people. Our freedom-fighters guarded the church on all sides. But the Turkish rabble was enraged and was thirsty for Armenian blood. From every side the voices of the Turks were heard: 'In the name of Muhammad's sacred vow, we'll slaughter all the Armenians.'* The Turkish armed mob surrounded the Karassoun Mankants Church and encircled it like a chain. They didn't even let the doors be opened, saying that they would open it at night. That was the order. The Karassoun Mankants Church was built on a hilltop. The road leading to it was a few hundred meters in length and its width was almost four meters, and there were trees on both sides. The Armenians inside the church waited for the doors to be opened at night. Ten o'clock in the evening came, then eleven o'clock, then midnight, but nobody opened the door. People were overcrowded inside. There was no water and no light inside the church, there was ordure everywhere, one was crying, another lamenting, still another praying. In one word: a complete commotion. We heard their voices from the cellar of our house where we were hidden. At half past one after midnight, we noticed from our narrow casement that a few Turks were climbing over the arched roof of the church and were throwing kerosene-soaked

*burning rags through the church cupola. The smell of burning spread all over. The voices reaching from the church were heart-breaking. People were crying, shouting, screaming and entreating to open the door. Their voices seemed to come from under the earth. They were sighing and moaning so loud that their echoes reached us; these echoes diminished with every passing hour. But the smell of burning flesh and bones remained. The monsters had realized their plan. Nobody was alive any more in the church and in the neighborhood. The space of several hundred meters around the church, which was paved with large stones, was apparently covered with a thick layer of soap: it was, in reality, the grease of the burned Armenians, two inches in thickness, which had flowed down the threshold of the church and had hardened. The footsteps of the first passersby were printed on that layer of grease, like on the snow. Suddenly we saw Turkish women, everyone with a sieve in her hand, running toward the church. We were watching from afar, but I couldn't hold myself back; I wanted to go and see what had happened there. I put on something like a robe, wrapped my head with a bed sheet and covered my nose and mouth. I already spoke Turkish very well and was sure that I would not betray myself. I set out to go to the Karassoun Mankants Church, the sooty walls of which were in a dilapidated state, while the molten grease of the burned people had flown from under the door down the hill. I trod on it and my feet clung to the ground. At last I saw a Turkish woman passing by, with a sieve in her hand, who asked me: 'Badji (sister), why didn't you take a sieve with you?' Without getting confused, I said: 'I'll come back and fetch one.' She smiled and replied: 'Do you think anything will remain when you come back?' It was already the third day, the walls of the church were still hot and reddened like a potter's oven. I went into the church and what did I see? Every one of the Turkish women had appropriated a section of the church and did not allow the others to trespass on her property; they shouted at each other: 'I'll kill the one who crosses my borderline...' The woman who had come with me turned her face to me and said: 'If the gâvurs are filthy, their gold is clean.' It was worth seeing how those monstrous-looking women rejoiced when they found a molten piece of gold in the sifted ashes...' [Sv. 2000: T. 148, p. 274]*

The following concise, though figurative, popular song has been composed under the direct impressions of those bewildering historical events:

*Maraş'a Maraş derler, yaman, yaman!  
Maraş, bu nasıl Maraş derler?  
Maraş'ın içinde kilise yanar,  
Kilise içinde Ermeni yanar!*

Marash is called Marash, alas!  
Marash, how do they call you Marash?  
When they burn a church in Marash,  
And they burn Armenians in the church!  
[Sv. 2000: T. 456, p. 429]

Thirteen thousand Armenians perished during the massacres of Marash. Subsequently, the surviving eight thousand residents of Marash, together with six thousand Armenians from Urfa, were forcibly deported to Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem, Baghdad and to the regions of Anatolia found under Greek domination.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1920, the Turks besieged Ayntap. The life of about ten thousand Armenian refugees from Ayntap and eight thousand from Sebastia, who had just re-established and found peace there after the end of the war and the armistice, became once more turbulent. The Armenians of Ayntap took up a self-defensive position. A central military committee adjoining the National Union was created on the spot under the leadership of Adoor Levonian. The latter took stock of the arms and the ammunition of the 750 fighters and organized the manufacture of shells.

These historic events have been recounted us with inspiration by **Gevorg Hekimian** (born in 1937) who had heard the narrative from his mother: "In 1920, Ali Kelendj attacked Ayntap with a tremendous army. The leader of the self-defensive committee of Ayntap was Adoor Levonian. Adoor pasha collected the copper cauldrons from the inhabitants of Ayntap and had them melted to make shells. He and his volunteers attacked the enemy and broke through the siege, forcing the twenty-four thousand soldiers commanded by Ali Kelendj to flee in dismay in one night shouting: 'Gâvurun gözü kan doldu' (The gâvur's eye is filled with blood. That is: The Armenians are full of revenge). They had composed this song about Adoor Levonian in our Ayntap, 'said my mother and sang:

*Adur paşa! Kalk seni,  
Çam çırayı, yak seni!  
Türkler hücum ediyor:  
Kamavorlar<sup>23</sup> arş edin!"*

Adoor pasha, get up!  
Light your kindlings!  
The Turks are attacking:  
Charge with your volunteers!"

[Sv. 2000: T. 545, note 3, p. 448]

<sup>23</sup> The Armenian word "kamavorlar" (volunteers) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

In the meantime, the commander-in-chief of the occupation of Cilicia, Gozan oghlu Doghan bey, with his innumerable soldiers laid siege to the town of Hadjn; the town initially had an Armenian population of 35,000, of which only 6,000 had been rescued from the Genocide.

<i>Doğan Bey de geldi girdi Hacın'a...</i>	Doghan bey came and entered Hadjn...
<i>Yazık oldu sana, koca Hacın...</i>	How regrettable for you, immense Hadjn...
<i>Orada kapıştı epeyi bizim malımız...</i>	Our possessions were pillaged there...
<i>Ayak altına gitti sahabsız Ermeni!</i>	The Armenians were trampled down there!

[Sv. 2000: T. 549, p. 450]

In the enemy's opinion, "the complete destruction and extermination of the Armenian citadel of Cilicia, Hadjn, was an hour's job and that they would be capable of burying the six thousand Armenians with a slight attack." [Terzian 1956: p. 241] The inhabitants of Hadjn, however, were resolute. They formed the superior council of the self-defense of Hadjn under the leadership of their governor, advocate Karapet Chalian, and elected as the defense commandant officer Sarkis Jebejian, General Andranik's comrade-in-arms. Four military companies and a squadron composed of sixty cavalrymen were organized. Hadjn and its environs were divided into four defense regions. Trenches were dug. Everybody was in fighting trim. The available 132 rifles were distributed to the 1200 males aged 16-50, who were capable of taking up arms. Subsequently, 300 more rifles were obtained, but these were also insufficient to fight against the Turkish army, which was armed with the inexhaustible Bolshevik ammunition. This fact was testified also in the memoir narrated by the eyewitness **Hovsep Bshtikian** (born in 1903), from Zeytoun. [Sv. 2000: T. 138, p. 260]

That is why the Hadjn people, who were in great need of arms, waited impatiently for the help expected from abroad through the National Union of Adana; the help included not only arms and ammunition, but also new fighting forces. Nevertheless, no help was received and the condition of the population of Hadjn became desperate, since the French high-ranking military representatives conducted an equivocal policy and, though they had promised to provide provisions and ammunition for the self-defense of Hadjn, they not only broke their word, but informed also the Turks about the organization of the self-defensive plan of the Armenians. The freedom-fighters of Hadjn seized the enemy's enormous cannon with great difficulty, but they could not use it to defend themselves for the lack

of shells. Starvation caused a great distress to the inhabitants of Hadjn. "People were obliged to eat cats, mice, dogs, leather, the bark of trees, moccasins." [Aspet 1961: p. 242] These facts were confirmed also by **Aharon Mankrian** (born in 1903), a survivor from Hadjn, in the memoir he related to me. [Sv. 2000: T. 145, p. 271]

The enemy reinforced the army with new cannons and innumerable regular armed forces. After prolonged and obstinate battles and a heroic resistance, which lasted for eight months, the Turkish forces were able to destroy and to burn down all the stone houses of Hadjn by cross-wise heavy cannonade. Hundreds of valorous combatants fell on the fortifications; thousands of Hadjn denizens were cruelly massacred. Only 380 people succeeded in accomplishing a breakthrough by fighting and came out of the terrible encirclement of fire.

This heroic self-defensive battle has also been praised in various songs, which are sung by the people:

*Three hundred Armenian braves,  
All armed with rifles,  
Gave a blow to Doghan bey's army,  
Hadjn fell shouting "Vengeance!"*

[Sv. 2000: T. 553, p. 451]

With yells of "*Vengeance*" the town of Ayntap also fell; it heroically resisted, fighting intermittently for 314 days, as well as the ancient capital of Cilicia, Sis, the valiant eagle-nest, Zeytoun, the town with a historic past, Tarson, the commercial center Adana and various other Armenian-inhabited localities of Cilicia.

**Verginé Mayikian** (born in 1898), from Marash, also referred in her memoir to the political events of that period, which had disappointed the Armenians: "...*We led our comparatively peaceful life until 1918-1920, when the French authorities were still in Cilicia. The French and Armenian newspapers always wrote that the French forces would eternally remain in Cilicia, because the prestige of France had grown after the First World War, while that of Turkey had, on the contrary, decreased. But that peace, alas, did not last long. We felt gradually that the Turks began to hate us. And one day, we woke up and knew that the French had co-vered the hoofs of their horses and had left Marash silently. We got up in the morning and were astonished, since nobody knew anything about it.*

*Even the famous Hakob agha Khrlakian, who supplied the French army with rations free of charge, had heard nothing from General Dumont concerning their departure. Thus, the French army was no longer in Marash in September 1920. It seemed that the Turks knew about it beforehand; at night there were some gun-shots here and there to frighten us...* [Sv. 2000: T. 148, pp. 273-274]

The French government, breaking its obligations as an ally, handed Cilicia over to Turkey by an agreement signed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1921, in Ankara, condemning the Armenian population of Cilicia to the danger of massacre.

Although the Turkish government cruelly suppressed the heroic resistance and the self-defensive battles started in various localities, nevertheless, the devoted Armenian heroes, who struggled for their elementary human rights and for the physical survival of their nation, recorded brilliant pages in the history of the national-emancipatory struggle of the Armenian people.

It was at that time that the national hero Soghomon Tehlerian took revenge for the millions of victims of the Armenian Genocide by killing Talaat pasha in Berlin.

On June 2-3, 1921, the regional law court of Berlin heard the case of Talaat's murderer, Soghomon Tehlerian, and acquitted the Armenian avenger, since he had carried into effect the death sentence passed by the Turkish tribunal.

The Armenian nation has also imparted a poetic tinge to that startling event:

*Talaat pasha fled to Berlin,  
Tehlerian caught him up,  
He shot him in the forehead and knocked him down,  
Fill your cup with wine, brother!  
Fill your wine and drink to our health!*

*They buried Talaat pasha in the ground  
And sent the news to his bitch mother.  
Long live the German judge!  
Fill your cup with wine, brother!  
Fill your wine and drink to our health!*

[Sv. 2000: T. 554, p. 452]

Although the "German judges" acquitted the Armenian avenger showing an understanding attitude, nevertheless, the condition of the Western Armenians did not improve therewith...

In 1921, after the forcible deportation of the Armenian population of Cilicia, it was the turn of the Armenians of Anatolia, whose majority had been ruthlessly massacred during the Genocide and those who were miraculously rescued continued their existence in the Armenian-inhabited localities under Greek domination and especially in the port of Izmir.

In 1922, the Turks also burned down the Armenian and Greek quarters of Izmir, driving the Christians to the seashore. That horrible event has been recorded in the memory of the Western Armenians as "the calamity of Izmir."

According to the statement of a survivor from Yerznka, **Garnik Stepanian** (born in 1909): "...In 1922, Mustafa Kemal's soldiers burned Izmir, they poured petrol and kerosene and burned the Armenians and the Greeks gathered in the churches..." [Sv. 2000: T. 95, p. 201]

A survivor from Afion-Garahissar, **Arpiné Bartikian** (born in 1903), remembered with emotion the ghastly scenes she had witnessed and told me: "...And then the Milli (Nationalistic) movement started, Izmir was committed to the flames. They burned the Armenian quarter, Haynots, in the first place and set fire to the Saint Stepanos Church, since all the Armenians had taken shelter in it; we fled and ran to the seashore. There were numerous boats in the sea, but the Turks had drilled holes in all the boats in order to prevent the Armenians from escaping. The poor Armenians sat in the boats and sailed to the open sea, but, after some time, the boats were filled with water and sank. The swollen bodies of the drowned people floated on the surface of the sea. They took us with the rest to Baldjova and lodged us in wooden huts near the shore. They started to inspect us. They dragged and forcibly took away the pretty girls. I was a puny, undersized girl and hid myself under the skirts. Our Mary had her face blackened with soot and her hair was shorn and she had an ugly appearance. They looked at her and left her saying: 'Yaramaz dir' ('She is useless'). A little farther we heard the voices of the Turks who were sharpening their knives to slaughter us. An Armenian girl saw that her turn was approaching, she threw herself down from the window, but she did not die. Other gendarmes had been standing under the window ... they brought her after a few days in an unrecognizable state..." [Sv. 2000: T. 197, p. 334]

An eyewitness survivor, familiar to us from the deportation episodes of Deyr-el-Zor, **Smbul Berberian** (born in 1909), from the town of Afion-Garahissar, also remembered with equal emotion and tearful eyes what she had seen during the calamity of Izmir: "...Somewhere, the Turks had made a bonfire, and they were throwing the Armenians into the flames. They caught my mother and cast her into the fire. I and my sister began to shout and cry, but we could not rescue our mother from the fire... Then other Turkish soldiers came and found us. They made us stand in line, selected two men among us; they made them lie down on the ground and began to flay them, laughing and saying: 'We are slaughtering cows.' They skinned the men with difficulty. Those two poor men were being tortured alive; they were shouting and screaming painfully. In the end, they skinned them completely... The Turkish gendarmes pierced everyone, the Armenians and the Greeks, with bayonets and threw them into the sea without distinction of age: infants, children, old people and mothers. You could not see the water because of the human corpses..." [Sv. 2000: T. 200, pp. 336-337]

Then the survivor sobbed and, with tears running down her eyes, sang with deep emotion the long dirge she had composed herself, of which two verses are given below:

*We came out of Afion<sup>24</sup>  
And came to the town of Izmir,  
I didn't find my dear mother  
And sobbed my heart out.*

*Ah, dear mother, they deceived us,  
They separated me from you,  
They threw you in the fire  
And burnt you, they charred you...*

[Sv. 2000: T. 467, p. 433]

The situation was fatal and inextricable. There was fire behind and water in front. Only those who gave their last gold coins and ornaments to the Turks to save their lives were rescued from the hell-like turmoil, while those who had no means, threw themselves into the violent sea-waves and, defying death, tried to swim to the ships anchored at a distance and

<sup>24</sup> The town of Afion-Garahissar.

bearing European flags, which would carry the homeless Armenians to unknown destinations:

*We fled from there to Greece,  
Many others – to France,  
Still others – to Egypt,  
Thus we were dispersed in all directions.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 468, p. 433]

Thus, the Armenian Diaspora was created as a historical reality.

Uprooted from their paternal land, the Armenian exiles were in foreign lands, unaware of foreign languages and laws, only fit to work as cheap labor, despite the fact that the talented skill of the Armenian artisans and the elegant handiwork and carpets of the diligent Armenian women had won the admiration of foreigners. Moreover, the dread of assimilation, degeneration and, particularly, unemployment gave the wandering Armenians no rest.

*We found ourselves in foreign lands,  
I yearn and long and cry,  
May the Armenian Problem be solved soon,  
Have patience, my soul, have patience!*

*Rejoice and do not cry in grief,  
Stand firm on your feet,  
You will soon hear about repatriation,  
Have patience, my soul, have patience!*

[Sv. 2000: T. 567, p. 456]

The caravans of repatriates of Western Armenians, deprived of their homes and Motherland, followed each other to Eastern Armenia, from 1920 to 1930, from Turkey, France and Greece and, subsequently, in 1946-1948, a massive repatriation was organized from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, France, Greece, the Balkan states and from distant America...

Although the Western Armenians, resettling on a territory 10 times smaller than that of historic Armenia they had lost, created new boroughs and districts symbolizing the memory of their historical native cradle, nevertheless, the anguish of the former ruined house and of the extinguished hearth continued to fume in their memory and the vision of the lost homeland, transformed into a call of the soul, was transmitted from generation to generation:



*When the doors of hope will be opened  
And we shall return to our country again,  
Our Homeland, our magnificent country  
Which was taken from us with violence.*

*I wish to see my Cilicia,  
Its air is pure, its water clear,  
I wish to see my Cilicia,  
Monasteries and fortresses are plenty there.*

*When the Armenian Problem will be solved  
And our ancestors' land will be given to us,  
We will cultivate our fields  
And will populate our villages.*

*I wish to see Sassoun and Van;  
Zeytoun, Hadjn and Moussa Dagh,  
Tarson, Marash, Sis and Ayntap,  
We, certainly, will embellish.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 562, p. 454]

The repatriates came to Soviet Armenia full of hope and faith. They came in dense caravans encouraged by the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War and, particularly, by its official claim for the Armenian and Georgian lands presented to Turkey on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 1945.... And together with the great expectations, the popular song was woven from mouth to mouth:

*I want to go to Armenia,  
I want to see Yerevan,  
I want to hoist the flag  
On the top of Mount Ararat!*

[Sv. 2000: T. 570, p. 457]

And the song of the people resounds as a claim:  
*We want them, we want them,  
Kars and Ardahan are ours...*

*Kars and Ardahan will  
Soon be returned to us.  
In order that we transform  
Those deserted lands into a paradise.*

[Sv. 2000: T. 575, p. 457]

The Turkish diplomats, however, burying in culpable oblivion all those historical events that happened not long ago, have declared: "We have no debts to anyone in terms of Turkish lands and rights. We shall live as honorable people, we shall die as honorable people." [Lazian 1946: pp. 372-373]

On the other hand, according to the authentic historical facts of the Armenian Genocide and the testimonies we have recorded from the eyewitness survivors and thousands and thousands other evidences, the past of Ottoman Turkey has never been "honorable."

As **Hakob Holobikian** (born in 1902), from Harpoot, has concluded, after describing in detail the afflictions he and his compatriots had suffered: "...*This crime committed by the Turkish Ittihad members will never be forgotten and should never be forgiven...*" [Sv. 2000: T. 109, p. 222]

The painter **Elena Abrahamian** (born in 1912), from Kars, has, after narrating her sorrowful memoir with tearful eyes, come to the conclusion: "...*The Turks don't admit that they have massacred the Armenians. ...The Turk is a Turk. Whatever shirt he puts on himself, he will remain the same Turk. Granting that they do not admit the Armenian Genocide, then what was it that we saw with our own eyes and heard with our own ears? And what I have seen in only a drop of what the Turks have done. If the Turks do not admit what they have done, there can be no conciliation with them.*" [Svazlian: Personal archive. Unpublished materials]

At the end of her narrative, **Evelina Kanayan** (born in 1909), from Igdir, has declared with deep emotion, but self-confidently: "...*Even if the representatives of the United Nations come, I'll tell them all I have seen...*" [Sv. 2000: T. 54, pp. 136-137]

**Ghoukas Karapetian** (born in 1901), from Mokka, has summed up his memoir as follows: "...*What happened in 1915 will never be forgotten. The Turks want all that to be forgotten and they don't admit it, but may God help us and be a righteous judge for us, the Armenians.*" [Sv. 2000: T. 52, p. 130]

Meanwhile, **Dsirani Matevossian** (born in 1900), from Harpoot, has proposed in a simple popular language: *“May the Turks die, they brought all this disaster upon us; we got deprived of our country, of our riches, of our kin. And now, they declare impudently that the Armenians have slaughtered the Turks. Our gold, our houses and lands were left to the Turks. I am surprised how the Armenians can't make short work of the Turks. Let all what we have told be written in a book and let all the peoples of the world read it and know who is guilty, who is righteous and who is the aggrieved party...”* [Svazlian: Personal archive. Unpublished materials]

The Turkish propaganda and official historiography of today are not sparing any efforts to distort the historical evidences with a view to carefully concealing from the coming generations the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Turkish State. They are trying to sidestep the truth that the Turkish authorities themselves undertook, from the beginning of 1919, the organization of the trial of the Young Turk criminals. And later, when the conspiracy organized by the Young Turks against the first president of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal, was unveiled, Kemal Atatürk himself, in an interview given to the newspaper “Los Angeles Examiner” (on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1926) also condemned the criminals: *“...That attempt of murder against my person was organized by the members of the Young Turk ‘Ittihad’ party... It was that party that should answer for the life of our millions of Christian citizens, who were cruelly deported on a mass scale from their dwelling-places and were exterminated...”* [Papazian 2000: p. 87]

So that, the deplorable historical reality is an irrefutable fact and is not subject to any doubt.

Having this circumstance in view, **Hakob Papazian** (born in 1891), from Sivrihissar, a graduate from the Istanbul Medical University, who had served in the Turkish army as a medical officer and had seen all these inhuman cruelties with his own eyes and thoroughly analyzed them, has concluded: *“...When I recall all that I think to myself: none of the civilized countries took any step towards humanism. Therefore, willy-nilly they encouraged the Turks to annihilate millions of unarmed and defenseless, innocent Armenians of Western Armenia, a whole nation, from the old to the young with such cruelty that hadn't been heard or written in the history of mankind: people were tortured and tormented to death, held cap-*

*tive, kidnapped, raped, forcibly turned into Turks, slaughtered, sent to the gallows, some were hanged head-down and left to die in torments. They imprisoned hundreds of people in churches and barns, hungry and thirsty, for several days and then they poured kerosene on them and burned them to ashes. Countless, innumerable people were drowned in the Euphrates River. On both sides of the road of exile they buried small children alive up to their neck and left them to die, and the deported people were led by the same road to see these atrocities and to feel violent grief. The Turks cut open the bellies of pregnant women with swords, they violated the young virgin girls, kidnapped young women to make them concubines in their harems, they forced aged and young people to become Turks and speak only Turkish... The Armenian nation was isolated and was in a tragic situation. The Armenians lost their historical native land, millions of Armenians were martyred ruthlessly. And all that took place before the eyes of civilized humanity, by their knowledge and permission. The Great States acted as Pilates for their future material interests and willy-nilly allowed the Grey Wolf – the Turks – to torture and devour an unarmed and defenseless nation. They encouraged the Turks, thus becoming accomplices in the Armenian Genocide...”* [Svazlian: Personal archive. Unpublished materials]

And **Pargev Makarian** (born in 1915), from Ayntap, has added: *“The Great Powers deceived the Armenians; they gave Cilicia to the Turks. The Armenians of Zeytoun, Adana, Sis, Marash, Kilis, Ayntap, Urfa, Kamourdj and other towns left their native lands. We were forced to leave Cilicia. We were obliged to abandon our country. And in 1922 they incited the disaster of Izmir; the Armenians and the Greeks escaped through flames, threw themselves into the sea; all those, who were saved, went to other countries. Thus they “cleaned” Turkey of the Christians. Turkey remained to the Turks, together with Western Armenia and Cilicia...”* [Svazlian: Personal archive. Unpublished materials]

In actual fact, the international community, too, did not warn in time and did not condemn at its true worth the first genocide, The Armenian Genocide, perpetrated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that fact gave birth, as a logical sequel, to “Fascism” and, most recently, to “International Terrorism,” with its unpredictable manifestations and universally disastrous consequences, since unpunished crimes repeat themselves in prejudice of mankind.

Thus, the memoirs and songs of historical character communicated by the eyewitness survivors, saved, in this manner, from a total loss and entrusted to the coming generations, become, owing to their historico-cognitive value, testimonies elucidating, in a simple popular language, the Armenian Genocide and the historical events following it; they are authentic, objective and documental evidences, which are not only attestations of the past, but are also a warning for the future...

That is why it is particularly important to expose and to put, by means of the present study, into scientific circulation the popular factual-documentary testimonies of the eyewitness survivors concerning the whole course of the Armenian Genocide, the innocent martyrs and the lost homeland, since GENOCIDE is a CRIME, which should be brought to light also with the help of the eyewitnesses. And **the greatest witness is the People**, who, painfully reliving, have narrated and continue to narrate and testify their tragic past. That past, which is the past of the Armenian people, their history, their collective historical memory, which should be presented to the world and to the righteous judgement of mankind.

As I have already pointed out, the Turkish government itself was the first to condemn, in 1919, the leaders of the Young Turk government; subsequently, a number of states and organizations officially recognized the first great tragedy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Armenian Genocide: Argentine (in 1985), Uruguay (in 1985), the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations (in 1985), the European Parliament (in 1987), Cyprus (in 1990), the Russian Federation (in 1995), Greece (in 1996), Lebanon (in 1997), Belgium (in 1998), Sweden (in 2000), France (in 2001), Switzerland (in 2003), Canada (in 2004), as well as 36 States of the USA, and this march continues and will continue, since we have to call things by their proper names, and that is the demand of the conscience of mankind on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century aiming to perfection and democracy and, particularly the demand of the historical truth.

It is time, therefore, that the present government of the Republic of Turkey, adopting now the road of progress, has the courage of admitting the obvious historical truth, which has been substantiated over and over again by written as well as oral evidences and is not in need of any further proofs. That historical truth is called **the Armenian Genocide**.

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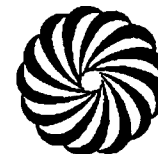
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**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**  
**THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**  
**AND**  
**THE PEOPLE'S HISTORICAL MEMORY**  
*(Summary)*

During the past few years, interest toward the Armenian Genocide (1915-1922) has grown, primarily due to the fact of the recognition of this historical evidence by numerous countries. The official Turkish and pro-Turkish historiography, however, continues to distort and deny the true historical facts.

In this respect, the popular testimonies communicated under the immediate impressions of the said events are also, besides the official documents published in various languages, of an important historico-factual value. Inasmuch as the Armenian nation itself is the object of that massive political crime and, as in the elucidation of every crime, the testimonies of the eyewitnesses are decisive, similarly in this case, the testimonies of the eyewitness-survivors are of prime importance, since each one of these testimonies has, from the juridical point of view, an evidential significance in the equitable solution of the Armenian Case and in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

As a result of the deportation and the genocide, a considerable part of the Western Armenians (more than 1.5 million) was exterminated, while those who were miraculously saved were dispersed in different countries of the world, creating the Armenian Diaspora as a historical reality. Many of the eyewitness-survivors of these tragic events have periodically been repatriated, beginning from the 1920s, from the Diaspora to Soviet Armenia and settled in the newly built localities symbolizing their former native cradles.

Beginning from as early as 1955 and during 50 years, I have

written down, tape- and video-recorded (remaining faithful to the popular speech) the testimonies (660 units) communicated by eyewitness survivors, who were miraculously saved from the Armenian Genocide; the originals of these testimonies are kept at the archives of the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

The ethnographic materials of this study have been quoted from my book: Verjiné Svazlian. *The Armenian Genocide. Testimonies of the Eyewitness-Survivors*. Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House NAS RA, 2000, 500 p. (in Armenian).

The present study represents the course and the historical events of the Armenian Genocide, which have been completed, substantiated and confirmed by the testimonies and the songs of historical nature (in Armenian and Turkish languages) communicated by the eyewitness-survivors of the Armenian Genocide, forcibly deported from about 100 localities of Western Armenia, Cilicia, Anatolia and resettled in Armenia and the Diaspora (Greece, France, Italy, Germany, USA, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, the Balkan countries, Turkey).

These factual testimonies authentically reproduce the mobilization, the arms collection, as well as the massive deportations and massacres of the Armenians organized by the government of the Young Turks during the First World War.

These popular materials become, with their uniqueness and historico-cognitive value, objective, factual, authentic and irrefutable testimonies elucidating, in a simple, popular language, the Armenian Genocide.

It is time, therefore, that the present government of the Republic of Turkey, adopting now the road of progress, has the courage of admitting the obvious historical truth, which has been substantiated over and over again by written as well as oral evidences and is not in need of any further proofs. That historical truth is called **the Armenian Genocide**.

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**  
**LE GENOCIDE ARMENIEN**  
**ET**  
**LA MEMOIRE HISTORIQUE DU PEUPLE**

*(Résumé)*

Durant ces dernières années, l'intérêt envers le génocide arménien (1915-1922) a augmenté grâce, en premier lieu, au fait de la reconnaissance de cette évidence historique par de nombreux Etats. Cependant, l'historiographie officielle turque et pro-turque continue à falsifier et à nier ces faits historiques certains.

Dans ce sens, les témoignages populaires communiqués sous l'impression immédiate de ces événements sont, outre les documents officiels publiés en diverses langues, d'une valeur historique et documentaire importante. C'est la nation arménienne elle-même qui a fait l'objet de ces crimes politiques massifs et, de même que dans l'élucidation de chaque crime les dépositions des témoins oculaires sont décisives pour rendre le verdict, dans ce cas également les témoignages des survivants sont d'une importance primordiale, d'autant plus que chacun d'eux a, au point de vue juridique, une valeur probante pour la solution équitable de la Cause arménienne et la reconnaissance du génocide arménien.

Par suite de la déportation et du génocide, la majeure partie des Arméniens de l'Arménie Occidentale (plus de 1.5 million) a été exterminée et ceux qui ont été miraculeusement sauvés se sont dispersés dans différents pays du monde, créant ainsi la diaspora arménienne en tant que réalité historique. A partir des années 1920, de nombreux témoins survivants de ces événements tragiques ont été rapatriés de la diaspora en Arménie Soviétique et se sont établis dans des bourgs nouvellement construits portant le nom de leurs villages natals.

A partir de 1955 et pendant 50 ans, nous avons inscrit, enregistré sur bande audio et bande vidéo (en restant fidèle au langage populaire), les récits communiqués (660 unités) par les témoins survivants, miraculeusement rescapés du génocide arménien. Les originaux de ces témoignages sont gardés dans les archives du Musée-Institut du Génocide Arménien de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences de la République d'Arménie.

Les documents ethnographiques de cette étude ont été publiés dans notre ouvrage: Verjiné Svazlian. *Le génocide arménien. Témoignages des survivants*. Erévan, Editions «Guitoutiun» ANS RA, 2000, 500 p. (en arménien).

La présente étude représente le déroulement et les événements historiques du génocide arménien, qui ont été complétés, argumentés et confirmés par les témoignages et les chants de caractère historique (en langues arménienne et turque) communiqués par les témoins oculaires sauvés par miracle du génocide, déportés d'environ 100 localités de l'Arménie Occidentale, de la Cilicie et de l'Anatolie et établis en Arménie et dans la diaspora (Grèce, France, Italie, Allemagne, Etats-Unis d'Amérique, Syrie, Liban, Iraq, Egypte, pays balkaniques, Turquie).

Ces témoignages probants reflètent d'une façon véridique le recrutement des soldats, la confiscation des armes, ainsi que les déportations massives et les massacres des Arméniens organisés par le gouvernement des Jeunes Turcs pendant la Première Guerre mondiale.

Ces témoignages deviennent, par leur valeur historique et cognitive, des documents objectifs, documentaires, authentiques et irréfutables élucidant, dans un langage simple et populaire, le génocide arménien.

Il est donc grand temps que le gouvernement actuel de la République turque, qui aspire elle aussi au progrès social, ait le courage de reconnaître et de condamner cette réalité historique évidente qu'on nomme **génocide arménien** et qui est confirmée tant par les documents officiels écrits que par les témoignages populaires oraux.

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**  
**DER GENOZID AN DEN ARMENIERN**  
**UND**  
**DIE HISTORISCHE ERINNERUNG DES**  
**VOLKES**

*(Zusammenfassung)*

In den letzten Jahren ist das Interesse am Völkermord an den Armeniern (1915-1922) gestiegen. Das lässt sich vor allem damit erklären, dass zahlreiche Staaten diese historische Tatsache anerkannt haben. Jedoch hören die offizielle Türkei und die protürkische Geschichtsschreibung nicht auf, die historische Wahrheit zu verzerren und zu leugnen.

Neben den in verschiedenen Sprachen veröffentlichten offiziellen Dokumenten erwiesen sich die Zeugnisse aus der Bevölkerung, die durch die unmittelbare Beteiligung der Menschen an diesen schrecklichen Ereignissen entstanden waren, als historisch-faktographische wertvolle Tatsachen. Da das armenische Volk selbst das Objekt dieses politischen Massenverbrechens war und da die Berichte der Augenzeugen bei der Aufklärung eines jeden Verbrechens von erheblicher Relevanz seien, muss man sich auch in diesem Fall auf die Aussagen der Zeugen stützen. Jede dieser Aussagen ist, vom juristischen Standpunkt gesehen, von Bedeutung, denn sie haben Beweiskraft zur gerechten Lösung der Armenischen Frage und zur Anerkennung des Genozids an den Armeniern.

Infolge der Vertreibungen und des Völkermordes ist ein beträchtlicher Teil der Westarmenier (über 1,5 Millionen Menschen) vernichtet worden; diejenigen, die sich gleichsam durch ein Wunder retten konnten, verstreuten sich über die ganze Welt, und so entstand die armenische Diaspora als eine historische Realität. Viele von diesen Augenzeugen der tragischen Ereignisse kamen seit den 20er Jahren des letzten Jahrhunderts in großen und kleinen Gruppen in die Armenische Sozialistische Sowjetrepublik und ließen sich in die neuen

Siedlungen nieder, die einen Symbolcharakter ihrer einstigen Heimstätten hatten.

Seit 1955 haben wir 50 Jahre lang Berichte von Augenzeugen, die dem Völkermord entrinnen konnten, aufgeschrieben und auf Audio- und Videokassetten aufgezeichnet (660 Einheiten). Die Originale dieser Beweismittel werden im Archiv des Instituts für den Völkermord an den Armeniern der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften der Republik Armenien aufbewahrt.

Die ethnographischen Forschungsergebnisse dieser Abhandlung werden aus unserem Buch (Verjiné Svazlian. *Der Genozid an den Armeniern. Zeugnisse der Überlebenden Augenzeugen*. Jerewan, Verlag „Gitutjun“ der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften der Republik Armenien, 2000, 500 Seiten, arm.) zitiert.

In dieser Abhandlung werden die historischen Ereignisse während des Genozides an den Armeniern geschildert, die um Aussagen und historische Gesänge (in armenischer und türkischer Sprache) der aus 100 Ortschaften Westarmeniens vertriebenen Überlebenden ergänzt und mit diesen begründet werden; diese Überlebenden leben heute in der Republik Armenien und in der armenischen Diaspora (in Griechenland, Frankreich, Italien, Deutschland, Syrien, Libanon, Irak, Ägypten, in den Balkanstaaten, den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika und in der Türkei).

In diesen dokumentarischen Zeugnissen kommen die Einberufung der Armenier in die türkische Armee während des ersten Weltkriegs sowie ihre Massendeportationen und Pogrome, die die Regierung der Jungtürken organisiert hatte, wahrheitsgetreu zum Ausdruck.

Diese ethnographischen Original-Materialien, die einen großen historischen Wert haben, werden zu objektiven, authentischen und unwiderlegbaren Zeugnissen, die in einer einfachen Volkssprache die Ereignisse des Völkermordes an den Armeniern widerspiegeln.

Es ist an der Zeit, dass die Regierung der heutigen Türkei, die nach Europa strebt, ebenfalls den Mut aufbringt, die mit schriftlichen und mündlichen Zeugnissen begründete offensichtliche historische Wahrheit anzuerkennen, die keiner Beweisung bedarf und **Genozid an den Armeniern** heisst.



**VERJİNE SVAZLIAN**  
**ERMENİ SOYKIRIMI**  
**VE**  
**HALKIN TARİHSEL HAFIZASI**  
(Özet)

Son yıllarda Ermeni Soykırımı'na (1915-1922) duyulan ilgi daha da arttı. Bu her şeyden önce o tarihsel olayın birçok ülke tarafından tanınmasından ileri gelmektedir. Ancak, resmi Türk tarihçiliği ve Türk tezlerini benimseyen tarihçilik doğruluğu kesin tarihi olayları çarpıtmaya ve reddetmeye devam etmektedir.

Oysaki, çeşitli dillerde yayımlanmış resmi belgelerin yanısıra, halk tarafından söz konusu olayların doğrudan etkisi altında anlatılanların da önemli bir tarihi belge değeri vardır. O kitlesel siyasi cürümün nesnesinin Ermeni halkının ta kendisi olması nedeniyle, ve nasıl ki her suçun aydınlanmasında tanıkların verdiği ifadeler belirleyici rol oynuyorsa bu vakada da, görgü tanıklarının anlattıklarını temel almak gerekmektedir. Bu anlatımlardan her biri Ermeni Davası'nın adil bir biçimde çözümlenmesi ve Ermeni Soykırımı'nın tanınması çalışmasında hukuki açıdan kanıt değeri taşımaktadır.

Tehcir ve soykırım neticesinde batı Ermenilerinin hissedilir bir kısmı (1,5 milyonu aşkın insan) yok oldu; mucize eseri olarak kurtulanlar ise tarihsel bir gerçeklik olarak Ermeni Diasporası'nı oluşturmak üzere dünyanın çeşitli ülkelerine dağıldılar. O trajik olayların görgü tanıklarından birçoğu 1920'li yıllardan itibaren düzenli aralıklarla Diaspora'dan Sovyet Ermenistanı'na dönmüş ve kendi evvelki memleketlerini simgeleyen yeni inşa edilmiş yerlere yerleşmişlerdir.

1955 yılından itibaren, 50 yıl boyunca, (halkın kullandığı dile sadık kalarak) Ermeni Soykırımı'ndan mucize eseri olarak kurtulmuş görgü tanıklarının ve hayatta kalanların anlattıklarını

(660 birim) yazıya döktük; bunların ses ve görüntülerini kaydettik. Bu hikâyelerin orijinaleri Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti Ulusal Bilimler Akademisi Ermeni Soykırımı Müze-Enstitüsü'nün arşivlerinde saklanmaktadır.

Bu incelemedeki etnografik konular Ermenice kitabımızdan alınmıştır (Verjine Svazlian. *Ermeni Soykırımı. Hayatta Kalan Görgü Tanıklarının Anlattıkları*. Erivan, EC UBA "Gitutyun" Basımevi, 2000, 500 sayfa).

Bu araştırmada Ermeni Soykırımı'nın gidişatı ve tarihsel olayları sunulmuş; bunlar, Batı Ermenistan, Kilikya ve Anadolu'daki yaklaşık 100 yerleşim yerinden zorla tehcir edilen, Ermenistan'a ve Diaspora'ya yerleşen (Yunanistan, Fransa, İtalya, Almanya, ABD, Suriye, Lübnan, Irak, Mısır, Balkan ülkeleri, Türkiye) Ermeni Soykırımı'ndan kurtulmuş görgü tanıklarının anlattıklarıyla ve tarihsel nitelikli (Ermenice ve Türkçe) şarkılarla tamamlanmış, gerçekleşmiş ve teyit edilmişlerdir.

Olayları kaydeden o tanık hikâyeleri Birinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında Jön Türk Hükümeti'nin organize ettiği, Ermenilere yönelik seferberliği, silah toplama faaliyetlerini, kitlesel tehcir ve kıyımları gerçeğe uygun bir şekilde yeniden yansıtmaktadırlar.

Halktan elde edilen o konular, tarihin kavranması açısından taşıdıkları önem ve özgünlükleri nedeniyle, Ermeni Soykırımı'nı halkın kullandığı sade dille aydınlatan, objektif, olaylara dayanan, güvenilir ve inkâr edilemez tanık hikâyeleri haline gelmektedirler.

Dolayısıyla, ilerleme yolunda gayret sarf eden Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti için, hem yazılı hem de sözlü kanıtlara dayanan, ispatlanmasına gerek olmayan ve **Ermeni Soykırımı** adı verilen doğruluğu apaçık ortada o tarihi gerçeği kabul etme cesaretini göstermenin zamanı gelmiştir.

# ВЕРЖИНЕ СВАЗЛЯН ГЕНОЦИД АРМЯН И ИСТОРИЧЕСКАЯ ПАМЯТЬ НАРОДА (Резюме)

За последние годы еще более возрос интерес к Геноциду армян (1915-1922 гг.). Это обусловлено прежде всего признанием факта Геноцида армян со стороны многих государств. Однако официальная турецкая и протурецкая историография не перестает искажать и отрицать подлинные исторические события.

В свете сказанного, помимо опубликованных на разных языках официальных материалов, особый историко-фактологический интерес представляют также свидетельства лиц, непосредственно переживших названные события. Ведь сам армянский народ стал объектом данного массового политического преступления. Известно, что при раскрытии любого преступления решающую роль играют показания свидетелей, и в данном случае следует основываться на показаниях очевидцев-свидетелей. Каждое из этих показаний, с юридической точки зрения, имеет доказательственное значение для справедливого решения Армянского вопроса и признания Геноцида армян.

В результате депортации и геноцида значительная часть западных армян (более чем 1,5 миллиона) была уничтожена, а чудом спасшиеся рассеялись по всему миру, создав Армянскую Диаспору как историческое явление. Многие из очевидцев-свидетелей этих трагических событий, начиная с 1920-х годов, репатриировали в Советскую Армению и поселились во вновь отстроенных селениях, символизовавших их былую историческую родину.

Начиная с 1950-х годов, в течение 50 лет, нами были

записаны (в том числе на аудио- и видеокассетах) свидетельства (660 единиц) очевидцев, спасшихся от Геноцида. Оригиналы этих материалов хранятся в архиве Музея-института Геноцида армян Национальной Академии Наук Республики Армения.

Народоведческие материалы данного исследования цитируются по нашей книге: Вержине Свазлян. *Геноцид армян. Свидетельства очевидцев*. Ереван, Изд.-во "Гитутюн" НАН РА, 2000, 500 с. (на арм. яз.).

В настоящем исследовании представлены исторические события, имевшие место во время Геноцида армян, которые дополнены и подтверждены свидетельствами и историческими песнями (на армянском и туркоязычном), записанными нами с уст очевидцев, депортированных из около 100 местностей Западной Армении, Киликии и Анатолии и проживающих в Армении и за ее пределами (Греция, Франция, Италия, Германия, США, Сирия, Ливан, Ирак, Египет, балканские страны, Турция).

Названные фактологические свидетельства правдиво отображают организованные младотурецким правительством воинские призывы и военные сборы во время Первой мировой войны, а также массовую депортацию и резню армян.

Эти народоведческие материалы, в силу их самобытности и несомненной историко-познавательной ценности, становятся неопровержимыми объективными, фактологическими свидетельствами Геноцида армян.

Поэтому настало время, чтобы правительство нынешней Турецкой Республики, вступившей на путь прогресса, нашло в себе мужество принять не нуждающуюся в доказательстве историческую истину, именуемую **Геноцидом армян**.

**ՎԵՐԺԻՆԵ ՍՎԱԶԼՅԱՆ  
ՐԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՍՊՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ  
ԵՎ  
ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԻ ՊԱՏՄԱԿԱՆ ԸԻՇՈՂՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ  
(Ամփոփում)**

Վերջին տարիներն ավելի է մեծացել հետաքրքրությունը Հայոց ցեղասպանության (1915-1922 թթ.) նկատմամբ: Այն պայմանավորված է նախ և առաջ բազմաթիվ երկրների կողմից պատմական այդ փաստի ճանաչման իրողությամբ: Սակայն պաշտոնական թուրք ու թուրքամետ պատմագիտությունը շարունակում է նենգափոխել և ժխտել պատմական ստույգ իրողությունները:

Այնինչ, տարբեր լեզուներով հրատարակված պաշտոնական փաստաթղթերին առընթեր, պատմափաստագրական կարևոր արժեք են ներկայացնում նաև հիշյալ իրադարձությունների անմիջական տպավորությունների տակ հաղորդված ժողովրդական վկայությունները: Քանի որ հայ ժողովուրդն ինքն է այդ զանգվածային քաղաքական ոճրագործության առարկան (object) և ինչպես ամեն մի հանցագործություն բացահայտելիս որոշիչ են վկաների ցուցմունքները, նույնպես և այս պարագայում պետք է հենվել նաև ականատես-վկաների հաղորդած վկայությունների վրա, որոնցից յուրաքանչյուրն իրավաբանական տեսակետից ապացուցողական նշանակություն ունի Հայ Դատի արդարացի լուծման և Հայոց ցեղասպանության ճանաչման գործում:

Տեղահանության ու ցեղասպանության հետևանքով արևմտահայության զգալի մասը (ավելի քան 1,5 միլիոն) ոչնչացվել է, իսկ հրաշքով փրկվածները ցրվել աշխարհի տարբեր երկրներ՝ ստեղծելով Հայ Սփյուռքը որպես պատմական իրողություն: Այդ ողբերգական իրադարձություններին ականատես-վկաներից շատերը սկսած 1920-ական թվականներից Սփյուռքից պարբերաբար հայրենադարձվել են որհրդային Հայաստան և բնակություն հաստատել իրենց երբեմնի բնօրրանները խորհրդանշող նորակառույց բնակավայրերում:

Դեռևս 1955 թվականից, 50 տարիների ընթացքում, հավատա-

րիմ մնալով ժողովրդական խոսքին, գրառել, ծայնագրել ու տեսագրել են Հայոց ցեղասպանությունից հրաշքով փրկված ականատես-վերապրողների հաղորդած վկայությունները (660 միավոր), որոնց բնագրերը պահվում են Հայաստանի Հանրապետության Գիտությունների Ազգային Ակադեմիայի Հայոց ցեղասպանության թանգարան-ինստիտուտի արխիվում:

Սույն ուսումնասիրության ժողովրդագիտական նյութերը մեջբերված են մեր հայերեն գրքից՝ Վերջինե Սվազլյան, *Հայոց ցեղասպանություն. Ականատես վերապրողների վկայություններ*, Երևան, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2000, 500 էջ:

Ուսումնասիրության մեջ ներկայացված են Հայոց ցեղասպանության ընթացքն ու պատմական իրադարձությունները, որոնք լրացված, հիմնավորված և հաստատված են Արևմտահայաստանի, Կիլիկիայի և Անատոլիայի շուրջ 100 տեղավայրերից բռնի տարագրված, Հայաստանում և Սփյուռքում (Հունաստան, Ֆրանսիա, Իտալիա, Գերմանիա, ԱՄՆ, Սիրիա, Լիբանան, Իրաք, Եգիպտոս, բալկանյան երկրներ, Թուրքիա) բնակություն հաստատած Հայոց ցեղասպանության ականատես վերապրողների հաղորդած վկայություններով ու պատմական բնույթի երգերով (հայերեն և թուրքալեզու):

Փաստագրական այդ վկայությունները ճշմարտացիորեն վերարտադրում են Առաջին համաշխարհային պատերազմի ընթացքում երիտթուրքական կառավարության կազմակերպած հայերի զորահավաքն ու զինահավաքը, ինչպես նաև զանգվածային տեղահանություններն ու կոտորածները:

Ժողովրդական այդ նյութերն իրենց ինքնատիպությամբ և պատմաճանաչողական արժեքով դառնում են Հայոց ցեղասպանությունը ժողովրդական պարզ լեզվով լուսաբանող առարկայական, փաստացի, վավերական ու անժխտելի վկայություններ:

Ուստի ժամանակն է, որ առաջադիմության ձգտող ներկայիս Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության կառավարությունը ևս քաջություն ունենա ընդունելու ինչպես գրավոր, նույնպես և բանավոր փաստերով հիմնավորված, ապացուցման կարիք չունեցող, պատմական այն բացահայտ ճշմարտությունը, որը կոչվում է **Հայոց ցեղասպանություն:**

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE  
EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS OF THE  
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**



**Senekerim Kozmanian**  
(1882, Sebastia)



**Movses Panossian**  
(1885, Moussa Dagh)



**Vardan Mazmanian**  
(1886, Ardvin)



**Azniv Agha-Chrakian**  
(1886, Constantinople)



**Yeghiazar Karapetian**  
(1886, Sassoun)



**Paydsar Yerkat**  
(1887, Kayseri)



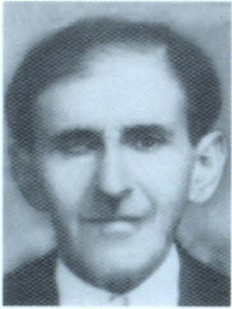
**Poghos Soupkoukian**  
(1887, Moussa Dagh)



**Hovhannes Paronian**  
(1890, Eshkisehir)



**Mushegh Hakobian**  
(1890, Nicomedia)



**Movses Balabanian**  
(1891, Moussa Dagh)



**Dolorés Zohrap-Lipman**  
(1892, Constantinople)



**Khacher Ablapootian**  
(1893, Urfa)



**Kamsar Khachatryan**  
(1898, Bayazet)



**Verginé Mayikian**  
(1898, Marash)



**Tonik Tonikian**  
(1898, Moussa Dagh)



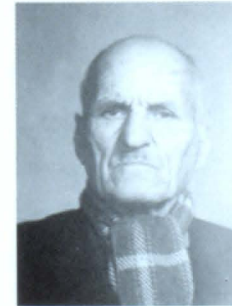
**Khoren Ablapootian**  
(1893, Urfa)



**Tonakan Tonoyan**  
(1893, Moosh)



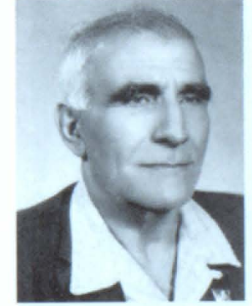
**Ovsanna Abikian**  
(1893, Nicomedia)



**Hambartsum Sahakian**  
(1898, Sebastia)



**Verjin Taghavarian**  
(1898, Sebastia)



**Harutyun Martikian**  
(1899, Harpoot)



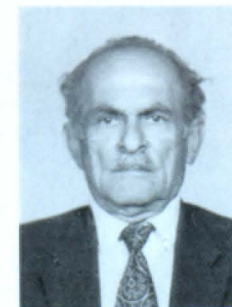
**Harutyun Tsulikian**  
(1896, Kayseri)



**Hovhannes Ipredjian**  
(1896, Moussa Dagh)



**Endsa Jemberjian**  
(1898, Amassia)



**Gevorg Karamanukian**  
(1900, Ayntap)



**Khoren Gyulbenkian**  
(1900, Devrik)



**Gyurdji Keshishian**  
(1900, Zeytoun)



Soghomon Yetenekian  
(1900, Mersin)



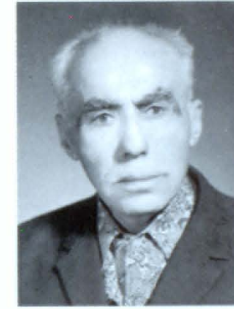
Barouhi Silian  
(1900, Nicomedia)



Artavazd Ktradsian  
(1901, Adabazar)



Hazarkhan Torossian  
(1902, Balou)



Arakel Tagoyan  
(1902, Derjan)



Hovhannes Gasparian  
(1902, Eskishehir)



Sokrat Mkrтчian  
(1901, Bitlis)



Shogher Tonoyan  
(1901, Moosh)



Petros Safarian  
(1901, Moussa Dagh)



Nerses Galbakian  
(1902, Konia)



Zabel Vardian  
(1902, Marash)



Souren Sarkisian  
(1902, Sebastia)



Asatoor Soupoukian  
(1901, Moussa Dagh)



Geghetsik Yessayan  
(1901, Nicomedia)



Andranik Simonian  
(1902, Alashkert)



Nouritsa Kyurkdjian  
(1903, Ayntap)



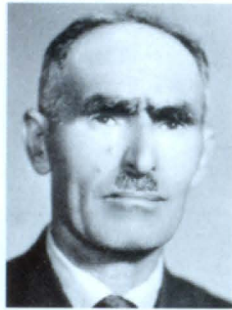
Arpiné Bartikian  
(1903, A.-Garahissar)



Nvard Ablapootian  
(1903, Urfa)



Hovsep Bshtikian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Sedrak Gaybakian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Karapet Tozlian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Gyulinia Moosoyan  
(1903, Kessab)



Mikael Keshishian  
(1904, Adana)



Garnik Svazlian  
(1904, Kayseri)



Eva Chulian  
(1903, Zeytoun)



Loris Papikian  
(1903, Erzroom)



Sarkis Khachatryan  
(1903, Harpoot)



Sedrak Harutyunian  
(1904, Moosh)



Aghassi Kankanian  
(1904, Van)



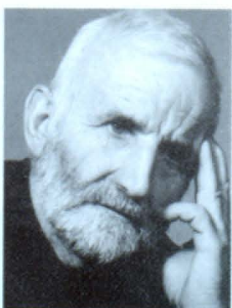
Hovhannes Kyoroghlian  
(1904, Tigranakert)



Grigor Gyozalian  
(1903, Moussa Dagh)



Arshakouhi Petrossian  
(1903, Yozghat)



Hovhannes Abelian  
(1903, Kessab)



Harutyun Alboyadjian  
(1904, Fendedjak)



Anooch Gasparian  
(1905, Ardvin)



Arshaluys Ter-Nazaretian  
(1905, Babert)



Marie Vardanian  
(1905, Malatia)



Davit Davitian  
(1905, Moussa Dagh)



Andreas Gyulanian  
(1905, Shatak)



Sarkis Yetarian  
(1907, A.-Garahissar)



Stepan Stepanian  
(1907, Harpoot)



Angele Tekeyan  
(1907, Kayseri)



Hayrik Mouradian  
(1905, Shatak)



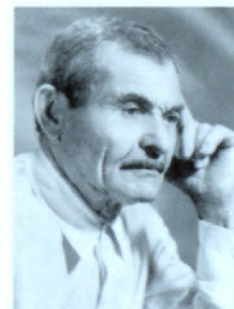
Varsik Abrahamian  
(1905, Van)



Sirak Manassian  
(1905, Van)



Veronica Berberian  
(1907, Yozghat)



Mkrtich Khachatrian  
(1907, Sh.-Garahissar)



Gevorg Zoolalian  
(1907, Chanakkale)



Petros Kikishian  
(1906, Arabkir)



Yebrouhi Djertekhian  
(1906, Hadjn)



Patrik Saroyan  
(1906, Van)



Ghazar Gevorgian  
(1907, Van)



Ardsrun Harutyunian  
(1907, Van)



Yervand Shirakian  
(1907, Van)





**Makrouhi Sahakian**  
(1907, Van)



**Haykouhi Azarian**  
(1908, Adabazar)



**Davit Davtian**  
(1908, Bursa)



**Kadjberouhi Shahinian**  
(1908, Van)



**Vardouhi Potikian**  
(1908, Van)



**Loussik Martirossian**  
(1909, Alashkert)



**Mariam Ter-Mkrтчian**  
(1908, Erzroom)



**Levon Evrengedjian**  
(1908, Marash)



**Hrant Gasparian**  
(1908, Moosh)



**Srbouhi Kikishian**  
(1909, Arabkir)



**Aghavni Mkrтчian**  
(1909, Bitlis)



**Avetis Norikian**  
(1909, Bursa)



**Hovhannes Chaderdjian**  
(1908, Sebastia)



**Nshan Abrahamian**  
(1908, Van)



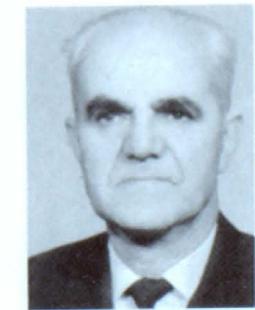
**Silva Byuzandian**  
(1908, Van)



**Garnik Stepanian**  
(1909, Yerznka)



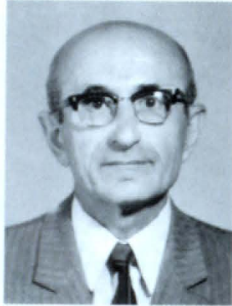
**Gayané Atoorian**  
(1909, Zeytoun)



**Ishkhan Haykazian**  
(1909, Erzroom)



**Sirarpi Svazlian**  
(1909, Constantinople)



**Aram Momdjian**  
(1909, Marash)



**Mariam Baghdishian**  
(1909, Moussa Dagh)



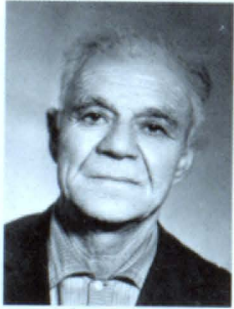
**Massis Kodjoyan**  
(1910, Babert)



**Dsaghik Chinimian**  
(1910, Igridir)



**Peproné Tumassian**  
(1910, Kars)



**Gevorg Chiftchian**  
(1909, Van)



**Varazdat Harutyunian**  
(1909, Van)



**Marie Yerkat**  
(1910, Adabazar)



**Verginé Nadjarian**  
(1910, Malatia)



**Mesrop Minassian**  
(1910, Samsun)



**Hovhannes Dudaklian**  
(1910, Moussa Dagh)



**Nvard Gevorgian**  
(1910, Alashkert)



**Nektar Gasparian**  
(1910, Ardvin)



**Stepan Hovakimian**  
(1910, Ardvin)



**Ardsvik Terzian**  
(1910, Van)



**Rehan Manukian**  
(1910, Taron)



**Karapet Mkrтчian**  
(1910, Tigranakert)



Sarkis Saroyan  
(1911, Balu)



Srbouhi Mouradian  
(1911, Bitlis)



Hrant Khondkarian  
(1911, Igridir)



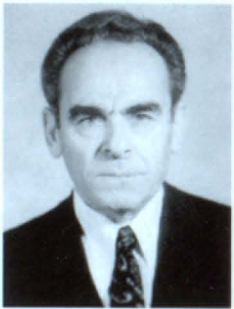
Parandzem Ter-Hakobian  
(1912, Kars)



Tagouhi Halabian  
(1912, Marash)



Derenik Saroyan  
(1912, Van)



Asatoor Makhoolian  
(1911, Moussa Dagh)



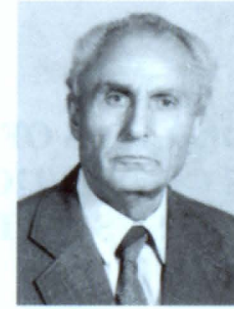
Vardges Alexanian  
(1911, Van)



Shoghik Mkrтчian  
(1911, Van)



Marie Voskerchian  
(1913, Izmir)



Aghassi Karoyan  
(1913, Kars)



Sahak Bazian  
(1913, Shatakh)



Yeranouhi Chaparian  
(1912, Adana)



Nvard Mouradian  
(1912, Bitlis)



Khanuma Djalil  
(1912, Kars)



Emma Asatrian  
(1914, Kars)



Shaké Zoolalian  
(1914, Constantinople)



Vardouhi Petikian  
(1916, Constantinople)

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE  
FOLLOWING GENERATION OF THE  
EYEWITNESS SURVIVORS**



**Zohrap Ghassabian**  
(1919, Constantinople)



**Hakob Ter-Poghossian**  
(1920, Deurtyol)



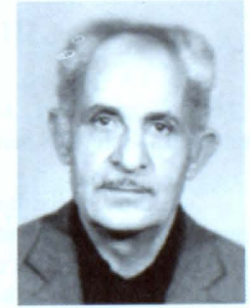
**Mariam Ghassabian**  
(1921, Bursa)



**Grigor Ekizian**  
(1921, Malatia)



**Adriné Alajajian**  
(1921, Constantinople)



**Kirakos Danielian**  
(1923, Balou)



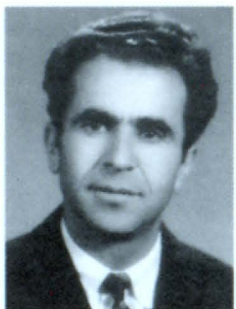
**Yervand Albarian**  
(1923, Beirut)



**Vahe Kitapjian**  
(1924, Alexandria)



**Nazeni Satamian**  
(1926, Beirut)



**Artashes Balabanian**  
(1926, Moussa Dagh)



**Mariam Mirzayan**  
(1927, Tomarza)



**Gevorg Hekimian**  
(1937, Aleppo)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**, ethnographer and folklorist, was born in 1934 in Alexandria (Egypt) in the family of the writer and public man, Garnik Svazlian, himself an eyewitness survivor of the Armenian Genocide.

In 1947, she was repatriated with her parents to the Motherland, Armenia.

In 1956, she graduated with honors from the Department of Armenian Language and Literature of the Yerevan Kh. Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University.

Beginning from 1955, she, on her own initiative, started to write down and thereby saved from a total loss the various folklore relics communicated in different dialects by the repatriates forcibly deported from Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia, as well as the memoirs and the songs of historical character narrated by the eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

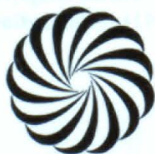
From 1958, she started to work at the M. Abeghian Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia. During her post-graduate studies, she has been a M. Abeghian grant-aided student (under the scientific leadership of the Academician K. Melik-Ohandjanian).

Beginning from 1961 up to the present time she is working at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia and, from 1996, also at the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

She has maintained her Candidate thesis in 1965 and her thesis for a Doctor's degree in 1995.

She has participated in a number of republican and international conferences, discoursing upon folklore, ethnography and the Armenian Case.

She is also the author of a number of scientific papers published in the Motherland and in the Diaspora.



## Publications:

- Sarkis Haykuni.** *Kyankn u gordse [Sarkis Haykuni. Life and Work].* 'Hay asgagruyuyun ev banahyusutyun' ['Armenian Ethnography and Folklore']. Vol. 4. Yerevan, Publishing House of the AS ASSR, 1973 (in Armenian).
- Artsakh-Ootik.** 'Hay zhoghovrdakan hekiatner' ['Armenian Folk Tales']. Vol. 6. Yerevan, Publishing House of the AS ASSR, 1973 (in Armenian).
- Taron-Turuberan.** 'Hay zhoghovrdakan hekiatner' ['Armenian Folk Tales']. Vol. 12. Yerevan, Publishing House of the AS ASSR, 1984 (in Armenian).
- Moussa Ler [Moussa Dagh].** 'Hay asgagruyuyun ev banahyusutyun' ['Armenian Ethnography and Folklore']. Vol. 16. Yerevan, Publishing House of the AS ASSR, 1984 (in Armenian).
- Kilikia.** *Arevmtahayots banavor avandutyune [Cilicia. The Oral Tradition of the Western Armenians].* Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 1994 (in Armenian).
- Meds Yeghern.** *Arevmtahayots banavor vkayutyunner [The Great Genocide. Oral Evidences of the Western Armenians].* Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 1995 (in Armenian).
- Meds Yegherne arevmtahayots hooshapatumnerum ev toorkalezu ergerum [The Great Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Western Armenians].** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 1997 (in Armenian).
- Genotsid v vospominaniiaxh i turkoiazыchnikh pesniakh zapadnykh armian [The Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Western Armenians].** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 1997 (in Russian).
- Van-Vaspourakan.** 'Hay zhoghovrdakan hekiatner' ['Armenian Folk Tales']. Vol. 15. Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 1998 (in Armenian).

- The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eyewitness Survivors.** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 1999.
- Bolsahayots banahyusutyune [The Oral Tradition of the Armenians of Constantinople].** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2000 (in Armenian).
- Hayots tseghaspanutyun. Akanates veraprogneri vkayutyunner [The Armenian Genocide. Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors].** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2000 (in Armenian).
- Hayots tseghaspanutyune ev patmakan hishoghutyune [The Armenian Genocide and Historical Memory].** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2003 (in Armenian).
- The Armenian Genocide and Historical Memory.** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2004.
- Le génocide arménien et la mémoire historique du peuple.** Erevan, Ed. «Guitoutiun» de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences d'Arménie, 2005.
- Der Genozid an den Armeniern und die historische Erinnerung des Volkes.** Jerewan, Verlag „Gitutjun“ der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften der Republik Armenien, 2005.
- The Armenian Genocide and the People's Historical Memory.** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2005.
- The Armenian Genocide and the People's Historical Memory.** Yerevan, "Gitutiun" Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2005 (in Russian).
- Ermeni soykirimini ve halkin tarihsel hafizasi.** Istanbul, "Belge" Uluslararası Yayıncılık, 2005.

## Honors:

- In 1985, she was awarded the "*Praise Certificate*" of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR.
- In 1985, the General Compatriotic Union "Moussa Dagh" granted her the Gold Medal of "*Honorable Denizen of Moussa Dagh.*"
- In 1992, the Historico-Cultural Union "Zeytoun" awarded her the title of "*Honorable Denizen of Zeytoun.*"
- In 1999, the Compatriotic Union "Van-Vaspourakan" awarded her the title of "*Honorable Denizen of Vaspourakan.*"
- On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 2000, on the occasion of the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, she was awarded the "*Diploma of Honor* of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia for her scientific investigations conducted in the field of the History of the Armenian Problem, the Armenian Genocide and the Diasporan Armenians."
- In 2002, she was awarded the Diasporan literary-philological prize "*Haykashen Ouzounian*" of the Tekeyan Cultural Union.
- On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 2003, the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia and the International Committee "The Veritables for the Armenians" granted her the "*Fridtjof Nansen's Memorial Medal* for the scientific and public activity directed toward the condemnation of the Armenian Genocide and toward the establishment of philanthropic principles."
- In April, 2004, she was awarded the title of *Professor of the Armenological Academy "Ararat" in Paris.*

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**VERJINÉ SVAZLIAN**

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AND  
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Computer type-setting by  
*Knarik Avakian*

Technical editor  
*Lusine Yavroian*

*"Vard Hrat" Ltd. Co.*  
Printing House

**MAP OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE  
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# THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1915-1922)

